

RACE TRAITOR

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TREASON TO WHITENESS IS LOYALTY TO HUMANITY

Race Traitor

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contents

NOEL IGNATIEV. Introduction.....	1
RONIT LENTIN. Guest Editor's Introduction.....	14
OMAR BARGHOUTI. Relative Humanity: The Fundamental Obstacle to a Secular Democratic State Solution.....	24
ILAN PAPPE. The One-state Solution in Historical Perspective.....	49
NASEER H. ARURI. U.S. Policy and the Single State in Palestine/Israel	61
ELI AMINOV. Why Secular Democracy?.....	72
AS'AD GHANEM. The Binational Solution for the Israeli/ Palestinian Crisis: A Realistic Option	90
ADAM SABRA. Binationalism or a Unitary State? A Response to As'ad Ghanem	107
GHADA KARMI. The Right of Return and the Unitary State in Israel/Palestine	109
ISRAEL SHAMIR. Russians in the Holy Land	117

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INTRODUCTION

BY NOEL IGNATIEV, FOR THE EDITORS

The aim of *Race Traitor* is to abolish the white race, which is neither a biological nor a cultural formation but a social construct, existing only because of the privileges its members enjoy within the state and the legacy of those privileges. Given our stand it is logical that we would be led to the struggle against Zionism, which defines “Jew” not by language or religion but by descent (or ascribed descent)—the essence of race.

I am a history professor. On September 11, 2001, I was delivering a lecture in my first-year survey class in U.S. history. Since it was near the beginning of the semester I had only reached the Seventeenth Century and the wars between the Puritan settlers of New England and various indigenous peoples, wars that led to the elimination of the indigenous peoples from that region. A colleague poked her head in the door and informed me that someone had just flown an airplane into the World Trade Center. Uh huh, I said, and continued with my lecture. A few minutes later, someone came around and told me that the school was being closed. I ignored her: What better use could I make of my time, I asked myself, than to provide students with some history that might explain why someone would want to attack the World Trade Center? However, a few minutes later one of the senior administrators entered my classroom and ordered me to leave immediately. I bowed to superior force, and dismissed the class.

Recalling that incident highlights something a friend has recently pointed out to me, that the United States of America was the world’s first Zionist state: that is, it is the first place settled by people who arrived with the certainty that God had promised them the land and authorized them to dispossess the indigenous population. It is the similarity in origin of the two states as much as anything that leads Americans to see their image in Israel and support it notwithstanding the opinion of most of the rest of the world.

From the beginning of the Zionist project, it was evident that the establishment of the Jewish state demanded the expulsion of the indigenous Palestinians. As was stated by one of the most authoritative figures in the Zionist state:

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2 RACE TRAITOR

Among ourselves it must be clear that there is no place in our country for both peoples together... The only solution is Eretz Israel, or at least the western half of Eretz Israel, without Arabs, and there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, transfer all of them, not one village or tribe should remain...¹

Moshe Dayan, former Defense Minister, stated in a famous speech before students at the Israeli Institute of Technology in Haifa in 1969:

Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist. Not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Huneifis; and Kefar Yehushua in the place of Tal al-Shuman. There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.²

It is a mistake to draw a moral line between Israel and the Occupied Territories. It is all occupied territory. The 1967 war, as a result of which Israel conquered and occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank of the Jordan River, and the Sinai Peninsula, was a continuation of the process that began in 1948. It will be drearily familiar to any who know the history of the displacement of the Indians from the lands they occupied in North America.

Unlike many countries, including the United States since the Civil Rights Acts, the Israeli state does not belong, even in theory, to those who reside within its borders, but is defined as the state of the Jewish people, wherever they may be. That peculiar definition is one reason why the state has to this day failed to produce a written constitution, define its borders, or even declare the existence of an Israeli nationality. Moreover, in the "outpost of democracy," no party that opposes the existence of the Jewish state is permitted to take part in elections. It is as if the United States were to declare itself a Christian state, define "Christian" not by religious belief but by descent, and then pass a "gag law" prohibiting public discussion of the issue.

If one part of the Zionist project is the expulsion of the indigenous population, the other part is expanding the so-called Jewish population. But here arises the problem that has tormented Israeli legal officials for fifty years, what is a Jew? (For a century-and-a-half, U.S. courts faced similar problems determining who is white.) The Zionists set forth two criteria for determining who is a Jew. The first is “race,” which is a myth generally and is particularly a myth in the case of the Jews. The “Jewish” population of Israel includes people from fifty countries, of different physical types, speaking different languages and practicing different religions (or no religion at all), defined as a single people based on the fiction that they, and only they, are descended from the Biblical Abraham. It is so patently false that only Zionists and Nazis even pretend to take it seriously. In fact, given Jewish intermingling with others for two thousand years, it is likely that the Palestinians—themselves the product of the mixture of the various peoples of Canaan plus later waves of Greeks and Arabs—are more directly descended from the ancient inhabitants of the Holy Land than the Europeans and others displacing them. The claim that Jews have a special right to Palestine has no more validity than would an Irish claim of a divine right to establish a Celtic state all across Germany, France, and Spain on the basis that Celtic tribes once lived there. Nevertheless, on the basis of ascribed descent, the Zionist officials assign those they have selected a privileged place within the state.

Zionist ideology has led to widespread bigotry that would inspire outrage in respectable circles in the U.S. Israeli law forbids the marriage of a Jew with a non-Jew. An Israeli company has required thousands of Chinese workers to sign a contract promising not to have sex with Israelis.³ According to the Israeli Institute for Democracy, “As of 2003, more than half (53 per cent) of the Jews in Israel state out loud that they are against full equality for the Arabs; 77 per cent say there should be a Jewish majority on crucial political decisions; less than a third (31 per cent) support having Arab political parties in the government; and the majority (57 per cent) think that the Arabs should be encouraged to emigrate.”⁴ Consider the following:

If a European cabinet minister were to declare, “I don’t want these long-nosed Jews to serve me in restaurants,” all of Europe would be up in arms and this would be the minister’s

last comment as a minister. Three years ago, our former labor and social affairs minister, Shlomo Benizri, from Shas, stated: "I can't understand why slanty-eyed types should be the ones to serve me in restaurants." Nothing happened.... And if a European government were to announce that Jews are not permitted to attend Christian schools?... But when our Education Ministry announces that it will not permit Arabs to attend Jewish schools in Haifa, it's not considered racism...

What would happen if a certain country were to enact legislation forbidding members of a particular nation to become citizens there, no matter what the circumstances, including mixed couples who married and raised families? No country anywhere enacts laws like these nowadays. Apart from Israel. If the cabinet extends the validity of the new Citizenship Law today, Palestinians will not be able to undergo naturalization here, even if they are married to Israelis.... And if the illegal Israeli immigrants in the United States were hunted down like animals in the dark of night, the way the Immigration Police do here, would we have a better understanding of the injustice we are doing to a community that wants nothing other than to work here?

What would we say if the parents of Israeli emigrants were separated from their children and deported, without having available any avenue of naturalization, no matter what the circumstances?... What would happen if anti-semites in France were to poison the drinking water of a Jewish neighborhood? Last week settlers poisoned a well at Atawana, in the southern Mount Hebron region...

And we still haven't said anything about a country that would imprison another nation, or about a regime that would prevent access to medical treatment for some of its subjects, according to [their] national identity, about roads that would be open only to the members of one nation or about an airport that would be closed to the other nation.⁵

The Zionists are so desperate to increase the loyal population of the state that they are willing to admit hundreds of thousands of people who do not meet the official definition of a Jew because they

have only a male grandparent or are merely married to a Jew. Since there is no such thing as Israeli nationality in Israel (there being only Jewish nationality and "undetermined"), these people who do not qualify as Jews (mainly from the former Soviet Union), are therefore registered as "under consideration." Again, the parallel with the U.S. is evident: the first U.S. naturalization law was passed in 1790, followed by the militia law of 1792. The standards for eligibility were the same in both: "white" (in the case of the militia, there was the added qualification "male"). Thus, "citizen" meant "white," and "white" meant someone who could be relied on to suppress Indian wars and slave rebellions. So in Israel, "Jew" means anyone who can be relied on to repress the indigenous Palestinians.

Those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. Recently the Israeli press reported on a group of Indians from Peru who had converted to Judaism and moved to Israel, where they were relocated on what was once Palestinian land. Nachson Ben-Haim (formerly Pedro Mendosa) said he had no problem with that. "You cannot conquer what has in any case belonged to you since the time of the patriarch, Abraham." Ben-Haim said he was looking forward to joining the Israeli army to defend the country. Ben-Haim and his coreligionists had moved to Israel with the agreement of the Jewish community in Peru, which did not want them because of the Indians' low socioeconomic status.⁶

The Peruvian case points to the second criterion for being recognized as Jewish: conversion by an approved religious official, which means Orthodox rabbis only. In Israel today, Conservative and Reform rabbis are prohibited from leading their congregations; there is no civil marriage for Jews, and—in a measure reminiscent of medieval Spain—all residents are taxed to support the established church, in this case the Orthodox rabbinate. The stranglehold of organized religion in a state where the majority of the Jewish population is secular and even atheistic is the price paid to maintain the Biblical justification for Zionist occupation. "God does not exist," runs the popular quip, "and he gave us this land."

Israel is a racial state, where rights are assigned on the basis of ascribed descent or the approval of the superior race. In this respect it resembles the American South prior to the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts, Ireland under the Protestant Ascendancy, and, yes, Hitlerite Germany. But in its basic structures it most closely resembles the old South Africa. It is therefore not

surprising that Israel should have developed a close alliance with South Africa when that country was still under apartheid. After the first talks held in 1970 between Shimon Peres and South Africa's Defense Minister Botha, cultural, commercial, and military cooperation between the two racial regimes developed. These relations were publicly celebrated during the visit of South African Prime Minister Vorster to Israel in 1976—the same Vorster who held during the Second World War the rank of general in the pro-Nazi Organisation *Ossewabrandwag*.⁷

Israel's greatest support comes from the United States, three to five billion dollars a year, more than the U.S. gives to any other country and exceeding the total of U.S. grants to the whole of Africa south of the Sahara. Every shell fired into a Palestinian village, every tank used to bulldoze a home, every helicopter gunship is paid for by U.S. dollars.

Not only does Zionism shape U.S. policy, it stifles discussion of alternatives. To cite a personal example: In 2001 a PBS reporter interviewed me on the eve of the U.N.-sponsored conference on racism about to be held in S. Africa. I made some remarks about Israel, and afterwards I asked her if she would use what I said. "Of course not," she replied. "I agree with you, and so do all the journalists I know, but we can't run any criticism of Israel without following it by at least ten refutations."

The greatest ideological weapon in the Zionist arsenal is the charge of antisemitism. Students and faculty members at Harvard begin a campaign to make the university sell off its stock in companies that sell weapons to Israel (modeled on past campaigns seeking divestment from South Africa), and the president of Harvard denounces the organizers of the campaign as "anti-semitic in effect, if not in intent." A faculty committee at the Massachusetts College of Art invites eminent poet Amiri Baraka to deliver a lecture, and members of the Critical Studies faculty circulate a petition calling upon the college president to denounce Baraka as an anti-semite, citing as its main evidence a poem he wrote about the historic oppression of black people in which he refers to alleged acts by the Israeli government prior to the World Trade Center attack.⁸

Cynthia McKinney, Afro-American Congresswoman from Atlanta, was the most outspoken critic in Congress of U.S. Middle East policy, including unconditional support for Israel. As a result, Jewish groups around the country targeted her and, by channeling

money to her opponent, succeeded in defeating her bid for reelection in 2002. Were they within their legal rights to do so? Yes, they were; there is no law barring people in one district from contributing to a campaign in another. But do they think their intervention went unnoticed by black voters in Atlanta and around the country? People will reap what they sow. If American Jews insist on identifying themselves with Israel, should they be surprised if others make the same mistake?

Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa said, “The Israel government is placed on a pedestal [in the U.S.] People are scared in this country to say wrong is wrong because the Jewish lobby is powerful—very powerful.”⁹ If U.S. ruling circles ever decide to distance themselves from Israel, they will suddenly “discover” that it is the number one outlaw state in the Middle East, has defied scores of United Nations resolutions, been condemned by the UN more than any other member or non-member, and is the only state in the Middle East that possesses actual weapons of mass destruction. And they will find a tremendous response, more than anyone anticipates, from many ordinary people who go along with U.S. support of Israel in the same absent-minded way they go along with all of America’s imperial adventures but among whom there is a growing resentment of Israel’s defenders for constructing a picture of the past that makes discussion impossible and cheapens the lives of all those, Jews and non-Jews, who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. We need to pose a challenge to the “anti-semitism” discourse of the Zionists. We simply do not believe that the non-Jewish peoples of this earth are motivated by a primordial hatred of Jews. To the extent that superstition exists, we confess our inability to overcome it by argument. But superstition is being defeated by modern life. Those who insist that Jews have always been and will always be hated must be confronted.

But of course Jews by themselves could not determine U.S. Middle East policy, any more than the Florida Cubans by themselves could determine U.S. Caribbean policy. By no means does all the organized support for Israel in the U.S. come from Jews. Aside from imperialist interests—and it is not clear whether Israel is an asset or a liability in this regard—Israel has gained support from a surprising quarter:

At first sight, the scene is very familiar: one that happens in Washington, D.C. and other major American cities all the time. On the platform, an Israeli student is telling thousands of supporters how the horrors of the year have only reinforced his people's determination. "Despite the terror attacks, they'll never drive us away out of our God-given land," he says.

This is greeted with whoops and hollers and the waving of Israeli flags and the blowing of the shofar, the Jewish ceremonial ram's horn. Then comes the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, who is received even more rapturously. "God is with us. You are with us." And there are more whoops and hollers and flag-waves and shofar-blows.

But something very strange is going on here. There are thousands of people cheering for Israel in the huge Washington Convention Centre. But not one of them appears to be Jewish, at least not in the conventional sense. For this is the annual gathering of a very non-Jewish Organization indeed: the Christian Coalition of America.

... [T]here is little doubt that, last spring, when President Bush dithered and dallied over his Middle East policy before finally coming down on Israel's side, he was influenced not by the overrated Jewish vote, but by the opinion of Christian "religious conservatives"—the self-description of between fifteen and eighteen percent of the electorate. When the president demanded that Israel withdraw its tanks from the West Bank in April, the White House allegedly received one hundred thousand angry emails from Christian conservatives.

What's changed? Not the Book of Genesis...

What has really changed is the emergence of the doctrine known as "dispensationalism"....

Central to the theory... is the Rapture, the second coming of Christ, which will presage the end of the world. A happy ending depends on the conversion of the Jews. And that, to cut a long story very short, can only happen if the Jews are

in possession of all the lands given to them by God. In other words, these Christians are supporting the Jews in order to abolish them.

Oh yes, agreed Madon Pollard, a charming lady from Dallas who was selling hand-painted Jerusalem crystal in the exhibition hall at the conference. "God is the sovereign. He'll do what he pleases. But based on the scripture, those are the guidelines." She calls herself a fervent supporter of Israel...

This conference began with a videotaped benediction straight from the Oval Office. Some of the most influential Republicans in Congress addressed the gathering including—not once, but twice—Tom DeLay [majority leader of the House of Representatives, arguably the most powerful man on Capitol Hill].

"Are you tired of all this, are you?" he yelled to the audience.

"Nooooooo!" they roared back. "Not when you're standing up for Jews and Jesus, that's for sure," he replied.

... Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, [was] reportedly greeted "like a rock star" by Christian evangelicals in Jerusalem last month.

... DeLay was followed by Pat Robertson, the coalition's founder, sometime presidential candidate and the very personification of the successful American TV evangelist. Robertson... cites the stories of Joshua and David to prove Israel's ownership of Jerusalem "long before anyone had heard of Mohammed".¹⁰

Osama Bin-Laden was speaking no more than the truth when he said that the Islamic world is facing an alliance of Crusaders and Zionists. It may have been the strength of that alliance that reportedly led Sharon to brag that he had Arafat under house arrest in Ramallah and Bush under house arrest in Washington.

Less extreme supporters of Israel advocate the partition of Palestine into two states. But history has shown, in Ireland, India, Cyprus, and everywhere else it has been tried, that

partition of a territory along lines of descent—whether called “racial” or “religious”—is a guarantee of permanent war. In the view of the editors, there is only one solution: a single state in historic Palestine (the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River), in which every person is recognized as a citizen and has one vote. The special advantages given to “Jews,” including the “right of return,” must be terminated, and the Palestinians who were forced into exile after 1948, and their descendants, must be granted the right to live there, with the state undertaking practical measures to make it possible for them to do so. Both Hebrew and Arabic (at least) must be declared official state languages, residents must be granted the right to publish newspapers and maintain cultural institutions in any language they choose, and the special position of Orthodox Judaism must be ended.

As I write these words, July 14, the anniversary of the French Revolution, the idea of one-person, one-vote—the democratic secular state—is seen to be so subversive that it can scarcely gain a hearing even among critics of Israeli policy. To those who hold that after all the blood that has been shed and the bitterness that has accumulated it will not be possible for “Israelis” and “Palestinians” to live together, we have three responses: the first is the experience of South Africa, a place whose history of bitterness is no less than Palestine’s; the establishment of majority rule there, while it by no means solved all the problems, did not cause the earth to open and swallow the people. Our second response comes from Sherlock Holmes: after you have eliminated all the impossible solutions, Watson, the one remaining, no matter how improbable, must be the right one. Our third response is to cite recent indications that the idea of the single democratic secular state is again coming to seem plausible to an increasing number of Palestinians. Its reemergence is in part a response to Israel’s gobbling up so much territory that nothing is left for a Palestinian state. The new reality is acknowledged by no less than columnist Thomas L. Friedman, who quotes a prominent Israeli Arab:

If Palestinians lose their dream to have an independent state, then the only thing that might guarantee for them a dignified life will be asking to live in one state with the Israelis. When this struggle starts, it will find allies among the one million Palestinian Arabs inside Israel... We will say, ‘Don’t

evacuate even a single West Bank settlement. Just give us the vote and let us be part of one community.’

Friedman reports a poll showing that twenty-five to thirty percent of Palestinians now support the idea of one state—“a stunning figure, considering it’s never been proposed by any Palestinian or Israeli party.” (This is not quite true: it was for many years the official goal of the PLO, and was abandoned under U.S. pressure.) He calls it “the law of unintended consequences.”¹¹

If Israel appears to the outsider to be in convulsion, neither is all well in the First Zionist State. The flavor of life in the U.S. has been well captured in a recent novel by an immigrant who has lived there for many years and is consequently able to look at the country with the eyes of an outsider:

I drove toward the bleeding strip of neon, the solitary cars here and there, seeing the small drive-in windows, glass tombs encasing high-school dropouts, mostly young girls, some male misfits, the dim of mind, all banished to the night shift for minimum wage. It was this new destiny of strip malls and eateries that scared the shit out of me, that made me wince and understand why people kill each other.... Along these strips of neon were the killing fields of our post-industrialism, these glasshouse eateries of disaffection where people get big eating bleeding burgers, clogging up their arteries and going about dying slowly over black tar coffee. Out here at this hour you bore witness to the attenuated deaths, the casualties that go uncounted. And when the sun rises, the radio whispers of the night that passed, it gives the grim statistics of pulverising rapes, robberies where clerks were pistol-whipped and tied up in freezers, or shot in the face and left to bleed to death, a young woman with two children missing from a seven-eleven [convenience store], a solitary sentry, working alone of course—margins of profit dictate there can’t be two clerks on duty. And it passes itself off, this violence, this madness, as nothing to do with politics. Somehow we are an apolitical nation. There are no collective actions of warfare. Everything can be dismantled to the level of the individual. Each act of violence is isolated; it forms no mood; it feeds into no general rebellion. It’s maybe the greatest secret we possess as a nation: our sense

of alienation from everyone else around us, our ability to have no sympathy, no empathy for others' suffering, a decentralised philosophy of individual will, a culpability that always lands back on each of us. "You can be whatever you want to be"... It was the mantra of our society...¹²

Anyone who understands human psychology knows that the time must come when the perpetual, generalized, undirected violence described here so well, this constant road-rage where millions of people turn into crazed killers whenever they get behind the wheel of an automobile, must sooner or later explode. The form of the explosion cannot be predicted. But there can be no doubt that it will open up possibilities of striking for freedom for many, including the indigenous people of Palestine, now held down by the power of the U.S. That same explosion will also open up possibilities for tyrannies beyond even those of the last century. The outcome in Palestine will play a large part in determining which of the two possible futures comes to pass.

History offers occasional examples of small groups to whom it is given to play a greater role in world events than their numbers would normally indicate. The indigenous people of Palestine are such a group. When the present nightmare is ended, the human race, and North Americans in particular, will record a great debt to the Palestinian people, whose refusal to submit to overwhelming power has set a shining example, and may even succeed in humanizing the mighty United States of America, whose residents need all the help they can get.

The U.S.A...., South Africa...., Israel..., and Ireland..., four states that developed along parallel lines, four states where racial constructions were historically central to the formation of the state.¹³ It is more than accidental, then, that the guest-editor of this special issue is herself an Israeli citizen born in Palestine under the British mandate, who lives in Ireland, where she is active in the movement against immigration restrictions, and seeks to "cherish all the children of the nation equally." We are honored that she agreed to pull this issue together, and proud to present it to our readers.

NOTES:

¹ Joseph Weitz, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) from 1951 to 1973, former Chairman of the Israel Land Authority, quoted in Uri Davis, *Israel: Apartheid State* (London, 1987), 6.

² *Ha'aretz*, April 4, 1969, *ibid*, 21.

³ *Associated Press*, December 23, 2003.

⁴ <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2004/678>.

⁵ *Ha'aretz*, July 18, 2004

⁶ *Ha'aretz*, 18 July 2002.

⁷ Roger Garaudy, *The Case of Israel: A Study of Political Zionism* (London, 1983), 139.

⁸ In his poem Baraka charged that the Israeli government knew in advance about the impending attacks, and closed its offices in the WTC two weeks before September 11, pulling out two thousand Israeli workers. His charge was based on reports in a number of mainstream European and Israeli newspapers. He insisted later that his target was the Bush Administration, which he accused of ignoring advance warnings, and that he did not mean to imply Israeli complicity in the attacks. I give no credence to the reports: the Israeli government has shown repeatedly that it doesn't give a damn for the lives of ordinary Jews, and would have been happy to sacrifice two thousand of its citizens in return for the sympathy of the American public.

⁹ *Guardian*, April 29, 2002.

¹⁰ *Guardian*, Feb. 28, 2002.

¹¹ *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2003. Readers interested in the idea of a single democratic secular state in the Middle East are referred to the Association for One Democratic State in Palestine/Israel (<http://www.one-democratic-state.org/>), which brings together people of various ethnicities and creeds from around the world.

¹² Michael Collins, *The Keepers of Truth* (London, 2000), 205–06.

¹³ A good comparative study of the four places is Stanley B. Greenberg, *Race and State in Capitalist Development* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1980).

GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

*"Where should we go after the last frontiers
where should the birds fly after the last sky?"¹*

BY RONIT LENTIN

This wall will always remind me of our resistance, of our screwed up reality... of our past, of their fear. Every time they build it [the wall] higher, my grandmother laughs and tells the soldiers who are sitting all day long beside our house... that the more they do things, walls, curfews, closures, violence... the more we know that they are scared of us... because they know that we are the rightful owners. I sit, listen to my grandmother and laugh with her... but I also know that my present, my ability to move, visit friends or go to University will be negatively affected by the wall. —SIHAM, A NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD PALESTINIAN STUDENT, CITED BY NADERA SHALHOUB KEVORKIAN²

The decision, in July, 2004, by the International Court of Justice, regarding the illegality of the Israeli Separation Wall, means, according to Jeff Halper, the coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition (I.C.A.H.D.), that the highest legal authority in the world named the Israeli occupation unacceptable and challenged Israel's presentation of itself as an innocent victim merely protecting itself. While international law, enacted by the United Nations and therefore by the world's nation-state regime, has already many times—albeit ineffectually—condemned Israeli post-1967 occupation of Palestinian territories, the I.C.J. ruling shifts the stakes in being a supra-state cosmopolitan law ruling, declaring loud and clear that Israel is not an innocent victim, but rather a military superpower, which produces ten percent of the world's arms, and which is holding almost four million Palestinians in bondage with no regard for their fundamental human rights. The ruling has been derided by Israel in the name of "security," and it is doubtful that *Ronit Lentin is a writer, sociologist, and antiracist activist. Born in Haifa during the British Mandate in Palestine, she has lived and worked in Jerusalem and in Dublin. Among her books are Conversations with Palestinian Women (1982) and Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation (with Nahla Abdo, 2002).*

cosmopolitan law would succeed where international UN resolutions did not.

David Theo Goldberg argues, in *The Racial State* (2002), that all modern nation-states are racial states, which exclude in order to construct homogeneity, which he sees as “heterogeneity in denial,” and in which race and nation are defined in terms of each other to produce a coherent picture of the population. The racial state is *a state of power*, asserting its control over those within the state and excluding others outside the state. Through constitutions, border controls, the law, policy making, bureaucracy, and government technologies, such as census categories, invented histories and traditions, ceremonies, and cultural imaginings, modern states, each in its own way, are defined by their power to exclude (and include) in racially ordered terms, to categorize hierarchically, and to set aside.

As articles in this special issue of *Race Traitor* amply demonstrate, Israel is clearly one of the world’s most illustrative—even paradigmatic—“racial states,” where racism operates without “race” as a biological signifier to differentiate and discriminate, yet where racial discrimination between “Jews” and their *others* operates at all layers. Israel, constructed and maintained as the state of the “entire Jewish nation”—a nebulous and questionable entity—is racial in specific ways, even though using the term “racism” in the Israeli context is frowned upon because of “the absence of legitimacy for the term in the dominant discourse in Israel and a strong tendency to construct the discourse about the relations between Jews and Palestinian-Arabs in national rather than civil terms.”³

Let me give some illustrations: Israel grants automatic citizenship to any Jew wishing to immigrate, by strength of the racially discriminating “Law of Return,” while opposing the right of return to Palestinians made refugees by the establishment of Israel in 1948 and by subsequent expulsions following the 1967 war and the occupation of Palestinian territories. Furthermore, as Eli Aminov demonstrates in this journal, land ownership in the state of Israel is limited to those defined as “Jews” at the expense of Palestinian citizens of the state. Citing demographic anxiety, according to which Jews might become a minority by 2020, the Israeli state continues to enact racial laws based on Jewish belonging—Jewishness here is conceptualized not merely as religion, but also as nationality and

ethnicity—to preserve Jewish demographic superiority. Recent examples are the “Citizenship and Entry Act” (2003), which prohibits non-Jewish (read: Palestinian) spouses of Israeli Jewish citizens from entering the state, and the proposal to deport hundreds of Israeli-born children of migrant workers. According to Israel’s Minister of the Interior, the Nationality Law will affect 21,298 families and will also deny citizenship to children born of an Israeli citizen resident in the Occupied Territories. Such children will be allowed to remain in Israel—with special permission from the Minister of the Interior—only until they are twelve, when they will be uprooted and forced to leave the state.⁴

That Israel is a racial state is painful to me, a Jewish Israeli citizen born in Haifa, Palestine, during the British Mandate. I define my Jewishness along similar lines as the “non-Jewish Jew” Isaac Deutscher:

If it is not race, what then makes a Jew?

Religion? I am an atheist. Jewish nationalism? I am an internationalist. In neither sense am I, therefore, a Jew. I am, however, a Jew by force of my unconditional solidarity with the persecuted and exterminated. I am a Jew because I feel the Jewish tragedy as my own tragedy; because I feel the pulse of Jewish history; because I should like to do all I can to assure the real, not spurious, security and self-respect of the Jews.⁵

For centuries “the Jewish tragedy” meant the dialectic racialization of Jewish people, through both religious and political anti-Semitism, but also Jewish people racializing their *others*, be they internal—Jewish Arabs, whom Ella Shohat called “Zionism’s Jewish victims,”⁶ or external—Palestinian Arabs. Jewish people in all their heterogeneities have also been dialectically and complexly positioned in relation to other racial groupings throughout history: in the U.S., for example, Jewish people were assigned whiteness and “off-whiteness” periodically, ultimately “becoming white folk.”⁷ In the Twentieth Century, it was the Nazi genocide which racialized and targeted Jewish and other “racially inferior” people for annihilation.

All this makes it rather painful to consider Zionist racialization of its *others*, but also—in a climate of a western guilt/racism complex—nearly impossible to act rationally in relation to the

position of Jewish people and the Jewish state in global political contexts. Indeed, in recent times, it is becoming increasingly difficult to be an anti-Zionist Jewish critic of the Israeli occupation, the accusation being that such criticism is “anti-semitic” or that the critic is a “self-hating Jew.” I, for one, am proud to be included in the self-hating Jews SHITLIST website (<http://masada2000.org/shitlist.html>), even though I believe that criticizing Israel and the Israeli occupation policies works *against* anti-semitism. After all, justice is ultimately indivisible: if we seek justice for Jews against racist attacks, can we be blind to Israeli state racism against the Palestinians? As Edward Said asked, how long are we going to deny that the cries of the people of Gaza are directly connected to the policies of the Israeli government and not to the cries of the victims of Nazism?

However, this special issue, although it does that, too—see in particular Ilan Pappé and Eli Aminov’s articles—does not aim to reiterate the racial history of Zionism, but rather to serve as a forum for an overdue discussion of the little articulated vision for the ending of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict—the one secular democratic state of Palestine/Israel.

Democracy, as George Monbiot insists in *The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order* (2004), may be far from perfect, but it is the best we have. And a secular democracy, not differentiating along nationality, religion, gender, class, and race, and making civil rather than ethnic characteristics the basis of citizenship, is better than best, despite the obvious risks democracy poses, such as the tyranny of the majority and the potential for restraining not only the oppressor but also the oppressed, as Monbiot reminds us.

Ever since the 1967 war, in the face of much opposition—there were times when merely meeting with Palestinians was an indictable offence—several “progressive” Israeli thinkers and political activists have bravely posited the two-state option as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such proposals were first voiced by *Matzpen*, the Israeli Socialist Organization.

However, it is clear that what Israelis call “facts on the ground” (of which Ariel Sharon in his various military and ministerial positions was a key architect) has rendered the two-state idea long past its sell-by date. As Jeff Halper demonstrates, since 1967 Israel has rendered the very idea of an independent Palestinian state as part

of a two-state solution redundant. Halper lists five elements defining the creation of Palestinian Bantustans, making territorial continuity, crucial for any state, obsolete.

(a) Creating three areas on the West Bank, differing in their degree of Palestinian “autonomy”: Israel has also repeatedly attacked densely populated civilian centers in cities such as Rafah, Ramallah, Jenin, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Hebron with tanks, bombs, artillery, laser-guided missiles and snipers.

(b) A policy of closure and house demolition: since 1967 Israel has demolished eleven thousand Palestinian homes and expropriated hundreds of thousands of dunams of Palestinian land for its own settlements.

(c) Creating seven Israeli settlement blocs, defining what Sharon has unashamedly called “Palestinian cantons.” Cantonization is an idea also reiterated as “progressive” by supporters of binationalism such as Meron Benvenisti, as I show below.

(d) Constructing an infrastructure of control, encompassing a three billion dollar system of highways and bypass roads integrating the settlements into the metropolitan areas of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Modi’in and separating Palestinian population blocs.

(e) And finally, constructing the separation wall⁸ which, according to Zionist observers, offers the best hope for a two-state solution.⁹ All of these measures, as noted by Aruri and Barghouti, have been generously bankrolled by Israel’s powerful ally, the United States.

Yet, even though any two-state solution has been superseded by the above “facts on the ground,” and even though, as Meron Benvenisti argued already in the 1980s, the occupation has become “irreversible,” nationalism exercises a major pull, particularly, but not exclusively, for many Palestinians who confront the Israeli occupation on a daily basis. In our joint introduction to *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation* (2002), my Palestinian co-editor Nahla Abdo wrote: “My nationalism is an expression of my support of the ongoing popular movement which is using all means... to resist Israeli colonialism...” She agreed with me that a democratic secular state is a long-term project which has been debated by the Palestinian left, but which “requires readiness and commitment on the part of Israeli Jews,” and said that, “A new form of trust must be genuinely articulated between Arabs in general and the Palestinians

in particular, on the one hand, and ordinary Israeli Jews, people at grass-roots level, on the other. As it stands, Palestinians do not trust Israelis and vice versa." For the time being, pragmatically, in this era of globalization and in the context of the Middle East and its dictatorships, monarchies, autocracies, and theocracies, Abdo doubts that the time for what she calls my "ideal solution" has come.

A similar illustration of the debate between idealism and pragmatism was an exchange between contributors to the British Trotskyite journal, *Workers Liberty*. Paul Flewers opposed the two-state solution or "partition" (*à la* India or Northern Ireland), which would mean the Palestinians would get only "a few tracts of land" and reinforce growing reactionary trends in Israel. In reply, Martin Thomas argued that the two-state solution would mean self-determination for both "nations," even though the land area would "regrettably" not be divided evenly. Self-determination, according to Thomas, while not an end in itself, would help to unite the world's workers, and "partition" has been a fact of life since 1948. Partition, while pragmatic, is seen by these veteran lefties as a short-term solution, which, Moshe Machover argues, as socialists, we ought to resist. Instead, Machover suggests that the short-term goals should be confined to immediate Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination, equal individual rights to all people, and the recognition of the rights of the Palestinian refugees.¹⁰

However, even Machover, a socialist and a long-time opponent of Zionist ideologies, stops short when it comes to a secular democracy. First coined by *Fateh*, the main affiliated group of the PLO, in the late 1960s, a "secular democracy," according to Machover, is nothing but a clever ideological ploy for re-defining the problem as a religious/sectarian one, according to which Israeli Jews constitute not a national, but a religious group. Palestine, according to the Palestinians who conceived the secular democracy idea, would be configured as Arab in the national sense, in which Israelis would be recognized as one of three "religious" denominations. For Machover, a democratic Palestine should not be simply secular, but "binational." As I said, the lure of nationalism is too strong, even though I agree with Machover that configuring the proposed secular democratic Palestine on religious terms is too narrowly focused.

Binationalism is discussed in this volume by As'ad Ghanem, with a response by Adam Sabra. It is also the focus of an interview

given to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, in August, 2003, by writer and former *Matzpen* member Haim Hanegbi and former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti, who initiated the current—though limited—public debate on a one-state solution. Both of these veteran lefties speak poetically about the *de facto* oneness of the two people: “I am a son of this land. But this land was always a land with Arab people. It is a land whose landscape is Arab people, its natives. Therefore I am not afraid of them. I cannot see myself living here without them.” (Benvenisti) “It started a long time ago, at home... (our) neighbourhood was mixed, and father’s workplace—the Jerusalem municipality—was mixed... Therefore Arabs were never foreign to me. They were always part of the landscape. Part of the land. And I never doubted the possibility of living with them... House by house, street by street.” (Hanegbi)¹¹

Hanegbi and Benvenisti are true Jewish-Israeli sons of “the land” whose imagined geography of “the place” does not renounce the idea of nation, and therefore do not move beyond a binational state of *Israel*, even though the very notion of Israel as *both* Jewish and democratic is, to say the least, illogical. This does not, however, deter these two binationalists:

Ultimately we need to think binationally... Ultimately we need to establish here a new Israel, a binational Israel, like the new South Africa, the multiracial South Africa. Because there is no other choice. We need to give up the attempt to maintain a closed, bounded Jewish sovereignty. We need to recognize that we will live in this land as a (Jewish) minority... [which] would participate in the democratization of the Middle East. And which would be able to live and die here, fuck and be fucked here, establish mixed cities, mixed neighbourhoods and mixed families. But for this to happen we need to give up the nightmare of sovereignty, the nightmare that has caused so much bloodshed... (Hanegbi)

Although Hanegbi and Benvenisti both recognize that the two-state model cannot be put into practice, since, as Benvenisti says, the reality is a “binational reality,” and “the land cannot contain a border,” their binationalist vision does not undo the settler-colonial illusion of coexistence, described once by the veteran Israeli writer Amos Elon as “the coexistence between the horse and its rider.”

Benvenisti says it is painful for him to part with his father's dream of a national Jewish state, because as soon as the Zionist movement decided not to annihilate the Arabs, that dream became unachievable, "because the land could not take two sovereignties." However, his work-in-progress solution is that of a "federal structure which will encompass all of western Eretz Israel":

Under this (federal) structure there will be ethnic cantons. The Palestinian citizens of Israel will have their own cantons. They will have autonomy which will express their group rights. And it's clear that the settlers will have their own canton. And the government of this federation will balance the two nationalist groupings. I have no problem with equality: one against one... I am aware that I am full of internal contradictions... Federations have not worked anywhere in the world. But my diagnosis is correct: even within the 1967 borders Israel is already becoming a bi-national state... Perhaps we should announce the death of the Zionist revolution. And fix a date for abolishing the Law of Return... Start speaking differently, stop believing in the ridiculous ideas of a Palestinian state, or of a separation wall...

As argued by Shamir, demography is clearly not on the side of the Jews in Palestine/Israel, which is why the arch-hawkish Sharon is so keen to part with Gaza: a two-state solution may be the only way of maintaining a Jewish majority in the Zionist state. As for the illusion of Israel as both democratic and Jewish, already in 1993, Ariel Sharon, speaking at the Likud Party Annual General Meeting, defended the Party's opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state, by saying plainly: "Some say this is not democratic. Perhaps, but our grandparents did not come here to establish a democracy, but a Jewish state."¹² In 1998, As'ad Ghanem, Nadim Rouhana, and Oren Yifchattel discussed whether Israel can be termed "democratic." With particular reference to Sammy Smootha, who suggested that Israel is an archetypical "ethnic democracy," Ghanem and his associates argued that Israel breaches several fundamental principles of democracy, chiefly equal and inclusive citizenship, minority rights and consent, and demarcations of clear boundaries of sovereignty. They argue that a state that facilitates an ongoing process of

ethnocentric colonization and domination cannot be considered an “archetype” of democracy.¹³

According to Deutscher, capitalism has driven the Jews to see their own state as the solution to the “Jewish tragedy.” However, though embracing the nation-state was a paradoxical consummation of the Jewish tragedy, Deutscher stresses that Jews should at least be aware of this paradox and realize that their intense enthusiasm for “national sovereignty” is historically belated. “I hope,” he writes, “that, together with other nations, the Jews will ultimately become aware... of the inadequacy of the nation-state and that they will find their way back to the moral and political heritage that the genius of the Jews who have gone beyond Jewry has left us—the message of universal human emancipation.”

In 1903, the *Bund*, the Jewish Socialist Party, spoke of Jewish “cultural autonomy” for Jews wherever they lived. The majority of Jewish people have historically not chosen Zion, opting instead to enact their Jewishness elsewhere, along different levels of racialization. I am thankful for the opportunity to work with *Race Traitor* on this special issue and look forward to being a member—albeit a long-distance one—of a Jewish minority in a future secular democratic Palestine, which will entail closing a historic circle towards a non-nationalist Jewish existence as envisaged by Deutscher: united by shared history, disunited by religion and nation, and reintegrated into humanity.

NOTES:

¹ Mahmoud Darwish.

² Nadera Shalhoub Kevorkian, 2004. “Voices of Palestinian women facing the wall,” unpublished paper.

³ Hannah Herzog, “Both an Arab and a Woman: Gendered, Racialised Experiences of Female Palestinian Citizens of Israel,” *Social Identities*, 10/1, 2004, pp. 53–82.

⁴ The law violates Israel’s commitment to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and builds on a series of attempts by the State of Israel to limit the numbers of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship.

⁵ Isaac Deutscher, “Who is a Jew?” in *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1968.

⁶ Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” *Social Text: Theory, Culture, Ideology*, 19–20, 1988, pp. 1–34.

⁷ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folk and What That Says about Race in America*. Rutgers University Press, 1998. See also Daniel Itzkovitz, “Secret

Temples," in J. Boyarin and D. Boyarin (eds.), *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

- ⁸ Jeff Halper, *Obstacles to Peace: A Re-framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, 2004, second edition.
- ⁹ See, e.g., the article by Alex Brummer, deputy editor of *The Daily Mail* and member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, writing in *The Observer*, January 11, 2004.
- ¹⁰ "The first item is a letter from Paul Flowers to the journal *Workers' Liberty*. W.L. is a Trotskyist group, which, unlike all other groups on the British radical left, is "soft" on Zionism and supports the two-state "solution." Paul Flowers is an independent leftist, member of the editorial boards of the journal, *Revolutionary History*, and the discussion forum, *New Interventions*.
- "The second item is a reply by Martin Thomas, a leading member of W.L.
- "The third item is my contribution to the discussion.
- "The whole dialogue was subsequently published in *New Interventions*." Moshe Machover, personal email communication.
- ¹¹ Ari Shavit, "Forget Zionism," *Ha'aretz Magazine*, August 8, 2003, pp. 18–22.
- ¹² Tal, Yerach, 1993. "Netanyahu in the Likud Conference," *Ha'aretz*, May 18: 1.
- ¹³ Smooha, Sammy, 1998, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies*, vol. 2/2: 198–241; Ghanem, As'ad, Nadim Rouhana, and Oren Yifchatel, 1998, "Questioning 'Ethnic Democracy'," *Israel Studies*, vol. 3/2:253–267.

RELATIVE HUMANITY

THE FUNDAMENTAL OBSTACLE TO A SECULAR DEMOCRATIC STATE SOLUTION

BY OMAR BARGHOUTI

Conquest may be fraught with evil or with good for mankind, according to the comparative worth of the conquering and conquered peoples. —Theodore Roosevelt¹

Good riddance! The two-state solution for the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is finally dead. But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on and explore the more just, moral, and therefore enduring alternative for peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Mandate Palestine: the one-state solution.

Blinded by the arrogance of power and the ephemeral comfort of impunity, Israel, against its strategic Zionist interests, has failed to control its insatiable appetite for colonial expansion and has gone ahead and devoured the last bit of land that was supposed to form the material foundation for an independent Palestinian state.

Since the eruption of the second Palestinian Intifada, Israel has entered a new critical phase where its military repression against the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza has reached new lows, and its flouting of U.N. resolutions new heights, where its incessant land grab has led it to erect a wall around Palestinian population centers, separating Palestinians from their lands—thus dispossessing them yet again—and where moral corruption and racial discrimination have more lucidly eroded the internal coherence of Israeli society, as well as its marketed image as a “democracy.” As a result, Israel’s standing in world public opinion has nose dived, bringing it closer to the status of a pariah state.

This phase has all the emblematic properties of what may be considered the final chapter of the Zionist project. We are witnessing the rapid demise of Zionism and nothing can be done to save it, for Zionism is intent on killing itself. I, for one, support euthanasia.

Going back to the two-state solution: besides having passed its expiration date, it was never a moral solution to start with. In the

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best-case scenario, if U.N. Resolution 242 were meticulously implemented, it would have addressed *most* of the legitimate rights of less than *one-third* of the Palestinian people over less than a *one-fifth* of their ancestral land. More than *two-thirds* of the Palestinians, refugees plus the Palestinian citizens of Israel, have been dubiously and shortsightedly expunged from the definition of *the* Palestinians. Such exclusion can only guarantee the perpetuation of conflict.

But who is offering the best-case scenario to start with? No one. The best offer so far falls significantly short of even 242—not to mention the basic principles of morality. After decades of trying to convince the Palestinians to give up their rights to the properties they had lost during the *Nakba*, the 1948 catastrophe of dispossession and exile, in return for a sovereign, fully independent state on all the lands that were occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, Israel has shown that it really never had any intention of returning all those illegally acquired lands. From Camp David II to Taba to Geneva, the most “generous” Israeli offer was always well below the minimal requirements of successive U.N. resolutions and the basic tenets of justice.² Admitting that justice is not fully served by his government’s offer at Camp David, for instance, former Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami gave the Palestinian the choice between “justice or peace.”³

Peace decoupled from justice, though, is not only morally reprehensible but pragmatically unwise as well. It may survive for a while, but only after it has been stripped of its essence, becoming a mere stabilization of an oppressive order, or what I call the master/slave peace, where the slave has no power and/or will to resist and therefore submits to the dictates of the master, passively, obediently, without a semblance of human dignity. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau once wrote:

The strongest man is never strong enough to be master all the time, unless he transforms force into right and obedience into duty... Force is a physical power; I do not see how its effects could produce morality. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will; it is at best an act of prudence. In what sense can it be a moral duty?⁴

Well, the Palestinians’ “prudence” is running out. The yielding of their official leadership to force merely led to more colonization and promises of more to come.

Relative Humanity and the Conflict

From the onset, the two main justifications given by the Zionists for their colonization of Palestine were:

A) Palestine was a land without people, an uncivilized wasteland.

B) Jews had a divine right to “redeem” Palestine, in accordance with a promise from no less an authority than God, and because, according to the Bible, the Israelites had built their kingdoms all over the Land of Canaan a couple thousand years ago, which gave them historical rights to the place. Thus, any dispossession of the natives of Palestine, if they existed, was acceptable collateral damage to the implementation of God’s will. If this sounds too close to Bush’s jargon, it is mere coincidence.

By now, both the political and the religious arguments have been shown to be no more than unfounded myths, thanks in no small part to the diligent work of Israeli historians and archaeologists.⁵

Doing away with both political fabrication and Biblical mythology, Joseph Weitz, head of the Jewish Agency’s Colonization Department in 1940, explained the truth about how this “redemption” was to be carried out:

Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country. We shall not achieve our goal if the Arabs are in this small country. There is no other way than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighboring countries—all of them. Not one village, not one tribe should be left.⁶

At the core of the rationalization of the expulsion lies an entrenched colonial belief in the irrelevance, or comparative worthlessness, of the rights, needs, and aspirations of the native Palestinians. For instance, the author of the Balfour Declaration wrote:

The four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.⁷

It is a classic case of what I call *relative humanization*.

I define *Relative Humanity* as the belief, and *Relative Humanization* as the practice based on that belief, that certain human beings, to the extent that they share a common religious, ethnic, cultural, or other substantial identity attribute, lack one or more of the necessary attributes of being human, and are therefore human only in the relative sense, not absolutely, and not unequivocally. Accordingly, such *relative humans* are entitled to only a subset of the otherwise inalienable rights that are due to “full” humans.

Perceiving the Palestinians as relative humans can explain why Israel—supported by the U.S. and in many cases by Europe too—has gotten away with a take-it-for-granted attitude towards the Palestinians that assumes that they cannot, indeed, ought not, have equal needs, aspirations, or rights with Israeli Jews. This factor has played a fundamental role in inhibiting the evolution of a unitary state solution, as will be shown below.

Besides relative humanization, there are many impediments on the way to a morally superior solution. Given the current level of violence, mutual distrust, and hate between the two sides, how can such a solution ever come true? Besides, with the power gap between Israel and the Palestinians being so immense, why would Israeli Jews accept a unitary state, where, by definition, Jews will be a minority? Is Israeli consent really necessary as a first step, or can it be eventually achieved through a combination of intense pressure and lack of viable alternatives, as in South Africa?

These concerns are valid and crucial to address, but rather than delving into each one of them, I shall limit myself to showing how the alternatives to the one-state solution are less likely to solve the conflict, partially because the principle of equal human worth, which is *the* fundamental ingredient in any lasting and just peace, is conspicuously ignored, breached, or repressed in each of them. This in itself may not logically prove that the one-state solution is the only way out of the current abyss, but it should at least show that such a solution certainly deserves serious consideration as a *real* alternative.

Paths to Ending the Conflict

At the present, and given the impossibility of achieving a negotiated two-state solution that can give Palestinians their minimal inalienable rights, there are three logical paths that can be pursued:

1) Maintaining the status quo, keeping some form of the two-state solution alive, if only on paper;

2) "Finishing the job," or reaching the logical end of Zionism, by implementing full ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians out of the entire Mandate Palestine. Since genocide on the scale committed to rid America or Australia of their respective natives is not politically viable nowadays, ethnic cleansing is the closest approximation;

3) Launching new visionary and practical processes that will lead to the establishment of a unitary democratic state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

Let us explore each of the three options:

Maintaining the Status Quo

Above everything else, the status quo is characterized by three attributes:

- A) Denial of the Palestinian refugees' rights,
- B) Military occupation and repression in the West Bank and Gaza, and
- C) Zionist version of apartheid in Israel proper.

DENIAL OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES' RIGHTS

Far from admitting its guilt in creating the world's oldest and largest refugee problem, and despite overwhelming incriminating evidence, Israel has systematically evaded any responsibility. The most peculiar dimension in the popular Israeli discourse about the "birth" of the state is the almost wall-to-wall denial of any wrongdoing. Israelis by and large regard as their "independence" the ruthless destruction of Palestinian society and the dispossession of the Palestinian people. Even committed "leftists" often grieve over the loss of Israel's "moral superiority" *after* occupying the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, as if prior to that Israel were as civil, legitimate, and law-abiding as Finland!

In a classic self-fulfilling prophecy, Israelis have always yearned for being a *normal* state to the extent that they actually started believing it so.⁸ It is as if most of those Israelis who actively participated or bore witness to the *Nakba* were collectively infected by some chronic selective amnesia.

This denial has its roots in the Holocaust and in the unique circumstances created as a result of it, which allowed Israel to argue

that, unlike any other state, it was obliged to deny Palestinian refugees their unequivocal right to return to their homes and lands. Preserving the *Jewish character* of the state, the argument went, was the only way to maintain a safe haven for world Jewry, the “super-victims,” who are unsafe among the *Gentiles*, and that, of course, was of much more import than the mere rights of the Palestinians. Even if we ignore the compelling comparison between the safety of Jews in Israel vs. Jews in France, Morocco, Spain, the United States, or, for that matter, Germany, we cannot overlook the fact that no other country on Earth today can ever get away with a similarly overt, racist attitude about its right to *ethnic* purity.

Besides being morally indefensible, Israel’s denial of the right of return also betrays a level of moral inconsistency that is in many ways unique.

The Israeli law of return for Jews, for instance, is based on the principle that since they were expelled from Palestine over two thousand years ago, they had a right to return to it. So by denying the rights of Palestinian refugees, whose fifty-five-year-old exile is a much younger injustice, to say the least, Israel is essentially saying that Palestinians cannot have the same right because they are just not equally human.

Here are some more examples of this moral inconsistency:

* Thousands of Israelis whose grandparents were German citizens have successfully applied for their right to return to Germany, to gain German citizenship and receive full compensation for pillaged property. The result was that the Jewish population of Germany jumped from twenty-seven thousand in the early 1990s to over one hundred thousand last year.⁹

* Belgium has also passed a law “enabling properties that belonged to Jewish families to be returned to their owners.” It also agreed to pay the local Jewish community fifty-five million euros in restitution for stolen property that “cannot be returned” and for “unclaimed insurance policies belonging to Holocaust victims.”¹⁰

But the quintessence of moral hypocrisy is betrayed by the following example, reported in *Ha’aretz*:

More than five centuries after their ancestors were expelled from Spain, Jews of Spanish origin... called on the Spanish government and parliament to grant them Spanish nationality... Spain should pass a law “to recognize that the

descendants of the expelled Jews belong to Spain and to rehabilitate them," said Nessim Gaon, president of the World Sephardic Federation. ... Some Sephardic Jews have even preserved the keys to their forefathers' houses in Spain... ¹¹

Since supporting the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homes is, in my view, the *litmus test of morality* for anyone suggesting a just and enduring solution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, many, including the entire spectrum of the Zionist left in Israel, have flunked the test.

Left and right are relative terms everywhere, but in Israel the distinction can be totally blurred at times. On the issues of ethnic purity, demography, and chauvinism, Israeli politicians and intellectuals on the left, even those self-proclaimed as "the left,"¹² have made the far-right parties of Europe sound as humane as Mother Teresa. The crucial difference, however, is that in the case of Israel, the immorality is aggravated by the fact that, unlike the foreign immigrants to Europe, the *Others* are the natives of the land.

Despite the above, one must not deny that the right of return of Palestinian refugees does indeed contradict the requirements of a *negotiated* two-state solution. Israel simply will never accept it, making it the Achilles' heel of any negotiated two-state solution, as the record has amply shown. It has nothing to do with the merit or skill of the Palestinian negotiators, lacking as they may have been, but rather with an imbalance of power that allows an ethnocentric and colonial state to safeguard its exclusivist nature by dictating conditions on a pathetically weaker interlocutor. This is precisely why the right of return cannot really be achieved except in a one-state solution. That would allow the Palestinian weakness to be turned into strength, if they decide to adopt a nonviolent path to establishing a secular democratic state, thereby gaining crucial international backing and transforming the conflict into a nondichotomous struggle for freedom, democracy, equality, and unmitigated justice. Again, South Africa's model has to be tapped into for inspiration in this regard, with one main caveat: issues of social justice must be omnipresent at all stages of conflict resolution.

MILITARY OCCUPATION: WAR CRIMES¹³, LARGE AND SMALL

Following a visit to the completely fenced Gaza Strip, Oona King, a Jewish member of the British Parliament, commented on the irony

that Israeli Jews face today, saying: "...in escaping the ashes of the Holocaust, they have incarcerated another people in a hell similar in its nature—though not its extent—to the Warsaw ghetto."¹⁴

Any human being with conscience who has recently visited the Occupied Territories cannot but agree with King. Faced with the Palestinians' seemingly inextinguishable aspiration for justice and emancipation, Israel has resumed for the last three years a campaign of wanton destruction, indiscriminate atrocities, and medieval sieges with the clear intention of collectively punishing the Palestinians, potentially forcing them to abandon their lands en masse. The rest are mere details, painful and tormenting as they may be.

ISRAEL'S APARTHEID WALL¹⁵: PALESTINIAN HUMAN RIGHTS VS. ISRAELI ANIMAL & PLANT RIGHTS

Although Israel is *now* trying to present the wall as a security barrier to "fend off suicide bombers," the truth is that the wall is anything but new.¹⁶ It has been recommended to Ariel Sharon by the infamous "prophet of the Arab demographic threat," Israeli demographer, Arnon Sofer, who insists that the implemented map was all his. And unlike the slick Israeli politicians, Sofer unabashedly confesses that the wall's path was drawn with one specific goal in mind: maximizing the land to be annexed to Israel, while minimizing the number of "Arabs" that would have to come along.

But Sofer may be taking too much credit for himself. Ron Nahman, the mayor of the West Bank settlement of Ariel, has revealed to the mass-circulation *Yedioth Ahronoth* that, "the map of the fence, the sketch of which you see here, is the same map I saw during every visit [Ariel Sharon] made here since 1978. He told me he has been thinking about it since 1973." There weren't many "suicide bombings" going on then!

Four years ago, well before the Intifada started, Ariel Sharon himself, it turned out, had evocatively called the wall project the "Bantustan plan," according to *Ha'aretz*.

Despite the wall's grave transgression against Palestinian political, economic, and environmental rights, a "near total consensus"¹⁷ exists among Israeli Jews in supporting it. Several official and nongovernmental bodies in Israel, however, are concerned about the adverse effects the wall might have on animals and plants.

The Israeli environment minister Yehudit Naot protested the wall, saying:

The separation fence severs the continuity of open areas and is harmful to the landscape, the flora and fauna, the ecological corridors and the drainage of the creeks. The protective system will irreversibly affect the land resource and create enclaves of communities [of animals, of course] that are cut off from their surroundings. I certainly don't want to stop or delay the building of the fence, because it is essential and will save lives... On the other hand, I am disturbed by the environmental damage involved.¹⁸

Her ministry and the National Parks Protection Authority mounted diligent rescue efforts to save an affected reserve of *irises* by moving it to an alternative reserve. They've also created tiny passages for animals and enabled the continuation of the water flow in the creeks.

Still, the spokesperson for the parks authority was not satisfied. He complained:

The animals don't know that there is now a border. They are used to a certain living space, and what we are concerned about is that their genetic diversity will be affected because different population groups will not be able to mate and reproduce. Isolating the populations on two sides of a fence definitely creates a genetic problem.¹⁹

Even Thomas Friedman has predicted—quite accurately, in my view—in *The New York Times*,²⁰ that the wall will eventually “kill” the two-state solution, thereby becoming “the mother of all unintended consequences.”

SMALLER CRIMES OF THE OCCUPATION

Not all the crimes of the Israeli military occupation are as overbearing as the wall. I shall address below only four examples of smaller, yet rampant, war crimes:

Birth and Death at an Israeli Military Checkpoint

Rula, a Palestinian woman, was in the last stages of labor. Her husband, Daoud, could not convince the soldiers at a typical military checkpoint to let them through to meet the ambulance that was held up by the same soldiers on the other side. After a long wait, Rula could no longer hold it. She started screaming in pain, to the total

apathy of the soldiers. Daoud described the experience to *Ha'aretz's* exceptionally conscientious reporter, Gideon Levy, saying:

Next to the barbed wire there was a rock... My wife started to crawl toward the rock and she lay down on it. And I'm still talking with the soldiers. Only one of them paid any attention, the rest didn't even look. She tried to hide behind the rock. She didn't feel comfortable having them see her in her condition. She started to yell and yell. The soldiers said: "Pull her in our direction, don't let her get too far away." And she was yelling more and more. It didn't move him. Suddenly, she shouted: "I gave birth, Daoud! I gave birth!" I started repeating what she said so the soldiers would hear. In Hebrew and Arabic. They heard.²¹

Rula later shouted: "The girl died! the girl died!" Daoud, distraught and fearing for her life, was forced to cut the umbilical cord with a rock. Later, the doctor who examined the little corpse at the hospital revealed that the baby girl had died "from a serious blunt force injury received when she shot out of the birth canal."

Commenting on the similar death of another Palestinian newborn at another Israeli checkpoint, a spokeswoman for the Israeli Physicians for Human Rights said:

We don't know how many have died like this because many people don't even bother to set out for hospital, knowing the soldiers will stop them... These people offer no threat to Israel. Those who do, like the suicide bombers, of course never go through roadblocks, which exist only to control, subjugate and humiliate ordinary people. It is like a routine terrorism.²²

Hunting Children for Sport

The veteran American journalist Chris Hedges exposed²³ in *Harper's Magazine* how Israeli troops in Gaza systematically curse and provoke Palestinian children playing in the dunes of southern Gaza. Then, when the boys finally get irritated enough and start throwing stones, the soldiers premeditatedly respond with live ammunition from rifles fitted with silencers. "Later," writes Hedges, "in the hospital, I will see the destruction: the stomachs ripped out, the gaping holes in limbs and torsos." He then concludes, "Children

have been shot in other conflicts I have covered... but I have never before watched soldiers entice children like mice into a trap and murder them for sport.”

Patients and the Siege

Reporting on a particularly appalling incident, Gideon Levy writes in *Ha'aretz*:

The soldiers made Bassam Jarar, a double amputee with kidney disease, and Mohammed Asasa, who is blind in both eyes, get out of the ambulance. Both men had come from dialysis treatment. About half an hour passed, and then blood started to drip from the tube that is permanently inserted in Jarar's lower abdomen.

“I told the soldier on the tank that I was bleeding. He told me to sit there and that they'd take me to a doctor. We sat there in the sun for almost an hour.”...The bleeding increased. After about an hour, two soldiers came and lifted up Jarar and placed him on the floor of their jeep. “I told them that I couldn't travel in a jeep. They said that's all there was and that they were going to take me to a doctor. The guy drove like a maniac and I was bouncing up and down and my whole body hurt. I told them that it hurt. They said, ‘Don't be afraid, you're not going to die.’ There were four soldiers in the jeep and I was on the floor. He wouldn't slow down. And the soldiers were laughing and not looking at me at all.”²⁴

Sexual Assault

In another crime, two Israeli Border Police officers coerced a Palestinian shepherd to wear on his back the saddle of his donkey and walk back and forth before them; and then, at gunpoint, one of the two forced him to have sex with his donkey for half an hour,²⁵ as documented by B'Tselem.

Based on this culture of relative humanization of “the other,” Nathan Lewin, a potential candidate for a federal judgeship in Washington and former president of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, writes:

If executing some suicide-bomber families saves the lives of even an equal number of potential civilian victims, the exchange is, I believe, ethically permissible... It is a policy born of necessity—the need to find a true deterrent when capital punishment is demonstrably ineffective.²⁶

Diplomacy aside, “civilian” stands for “Jewish” only, of course.

Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz has also advised Israel to level any Palestinian village that harbors a suicide bomber.²⁷

Little wonder, then, that Shulamit Aloni, the former member of Knesset, finds it necessary to say: “We do not have gas chambers and crematoria, but there is no one fixed method for genocide.”²⁸

Do Israelis Know?

In my view, the British journalist Jonathan Cook hit it right on when he wrote:

[Israelis] know exactly what happens: their Zionist training simply blinds them to its significance. As long as the enemy is Arab, as long as the catch-all excuse of security can be invoked, and as long as they believe anti-Semitism lurks everywhere, then the Israeli public can sleep easy as another [Palestinian] child is shot riding his bike, another family’s house is bulldozed, another woman miscarries at a checkpoint... It seems that a people raised to believe that anything can be done in its name—as long as it serves the interests of Jews and their state—has no need of ignorance. It can commit atrocities with eyes wide open.²⁹

This is not new. Zionist thinker, Ahad Ha’am, described the anti-Arab attitude of the Jewish settlers that came to Palestine to escape repression in Europe, long before Israel was created, as follows:

Serfs they were in the lands of the Diaspora, and suddenly they find themselves in freedom [in Palestine]; and this change has awakened in them an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination.³⁰

But if that's the case, then two possible explanations—not necessarily mutually exclusive—may be put forth to explain the Israelis' acceptance of, and sometimes fervent support for, this systematic violation of basic human rights:

1) Widespread belief that their demographic war against the Palestinians could be won by implementing the suggestion of cabinet minister, Benny Elon, who called for intensifying the siege and repression in order to “make their life so bitter that they will transfer themselves willingly.”³¹

2) Secular or not, the root of the entrenched Israeli perception of the Palestinians as less human is nourished by a racist colonial tradition and rising *Jewish fundamentalism*.

I'll expand a bit on this last point.

It is commonplace to read about Islamic fundamentalism and its militancy, anachronism, and intrinsic hate of “the other.” Jewish fundamentalism, on the contrary, is a taboo issue that virtually never gets mentioned at all in the West for reasons that are beyond the scope of this essay. But, since Jewish fundamentalism is increasingly gaining ground in Israel, making the state, as the veteran British journalist David Hirst describes it, “not only extremist by temperament, racist in practice, [but also] increasingly fundamentalist in the ideology that drives it.”³²

For example, referring to Jewish Law, or *Halacha*, Rabbi Ginsburg, the leader of a powerful Hassidic sect, defended the 1994 massacre of Muslim worshippers in a mosque in Hebron, saying:

Legally, if a Jew does kill a non-Jew, he's not called a murderer. He didn't transgress the Sixth Commandment... There is something infinitely more holy and unique about Jewish life than non-Jewish life.³³

Rabbi Shaul Israeli, one of the highest rabbinic authorities of the National Religious Party and of religious Zionism in general, justified the 1953 Qibya massacre, perpetrated by an Israeli army unit led by Ariel Sharon, also by citing Jewish law. He wrote:

We have established that there exists a special term of “war of revenge” and this is a war against those who hate the Jews and [there are] special laws applying to such war... In such a war there is absolutely no obligation to take precautions during warlike acts in order that non-combatants would not

be hurt, because during a war both the righteous and wicked are killed... the war of revenge is based on the example of the war against the Midianites in which small children were also executed, and we might wonder about this, for how they had sinned? But we have already found in the sayings of our Sages, of blessed memory, that little children have to die because of the sin of their parents.³⁴

ISRAEL'S SYSTEM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: INTELLIGENT, NUANCED, BUT STILL APARTHEID

U.S. academic Edward Herman writes:

If Jews in France were required to carry identification cards designating them Jews (even though French citizens), could not acquire land or buy or rent homes in most of the country, were not eligible for service in the armed forces, and French law banned any political party or legislation calling for equal rights for Jews, would France be widely praised in the United States as a "symbol of human decency" (*New York Times*) and paragon of democracy? Would there be a huge protest if France, in consequence of such laws and practices, was declared by a U.N. majority to be a racist state?³⁵

Advocating *comprehensive*, unequivocal equality between Arabs and Jews in Israel has become tantamount to sedition, if not treason. An Israeli *High Court justice* recently stated on the record that, "It is necessary to prevent a Jew or Arab who calls for equality of rights for Arabs from sitting in the Knesset or being elected to it."³⁶

A recent survey by the Israel Democracy Institute reveals that fifty-three percent of Israeli Jews oppose full equal rights for the Palestinian citizens of Israel and a staggering fifty-seven percent believe they should be "encouraged to emigrate." One main finding was that when Israeli Jews say "we" or "us," they hardly ever include the Palestinian citizens of the state.³⁷

In land ownership rights, the inequality is categorical. "It is forbidden to sell apartments in the Land of Israel to Gentiles," said Israel's Chief Rabbi in 1986, commenting on an attempt by a Palestinian to buy an apartment owned by the Jewish National Fund in East Jerusalem.³⁸

In other vital areas of life, including marriage laws, urban development, and education, Israel has perfected a comprehensive

apparatus of racial discrimination against its Palestinian citizens that is unparalleled anywhere today.

From all the above-described dimensions of the military occupation, the status quo is untenable, if not because of Palestinian resistance, then due to rising international condemnation.

Ethnic Cleansing: Israel's Final Solution to the Palestinian Demographic Threat

Israeli politicians, intellectuals, and mass media often debate how best to face the country's demographic "war" with the Palestinians. Few Israelis dissent from the belief that such a war exists or *ought to* exist. The popular call to subordinate democracy to demography,³⁹ however, has entailed the adoption of *retroactive* population control mechanisms to keep the number of Palestinians in check.

In a stark example of such mechanisms, the Israeli Council for Demography was reconvened last year to "encourage the Jewish women of Israel—and only them—to increase their childbearing; a project which, if we judge from the activity of the previous council, will also attempt to stop abortions," as reported in *Ha'aretz*. This prestigious body, composed of top Israeli gynecologists, public figures, lawyers, scientists, and physicians, focuses on how to increase the ratio of Jews to Palestinians, by employing "methods to increase the Jewish fertility rate and prevent abortions."⁴⁰

Besides demographic engineering, this all-out "war" on Palestinian population growth has always involved enticing non-Arabs, Jewish or not, from around the world—preferably, but not necessarily, the *white* part of it—to come to Israel, and be eventually *Israelized*.⁴¹ Israeli scholar Boaz Evron writes:

Fear of the "demographic threat" has haunted Zionism from the very beginning. In its name Ethiopians were turned into Jews over the objections of rabbis. In its name hundreds of thousands of Slavs came here wearing the Law of Return as a fig leaf. In its name emissaries have gone out across the world seeking out more and more Jews.⁴²

With the support of the Israeli government, for example, one Zionist organization, Amatzia,⁴³ has organized the adoption of foreign children to Jewish families that have fertility problems, insisting only on the condition of converting all the children to Judaism upon arrival in Israel. Romania, Russia, Guatemala,

Ukraine, and the Philippines were the main sources of children; but now, after they've "dried up," India has become the source of choice, mainly for the relative ease of acquiring the "goods" there. Amatzia's director, Shulamit Wallfish, has sought children from the northern parts of India in particular, "where the children's skin is lighter, which would better suit Israeli families," according to her.

More concerned about the imminent rise of an Arab majority between the Jordan and the Mediterranean than with the oft-invoked and sanctified "Jewish purity," Ariel Sharon has indeed called on religious leaders to smooth the progress of the immigration and absorption of non-Arabs, even if they weren't Jewish, in order to provide Israel with "a buffer to the burgeoning Arab population," reports the *Guardian*.⁴⁴ The Israeli government's view is that "while the first generation of each wave of immigration may have difficulty embracing Israel and Jewishness, their sons and daughters frequently become enthusiastic Zionists. In the present climate, they are also often very right-wing."

Albeit vastly popular, such a policy is not endorsed across the board. Eli Yishai, the leader of the largest Sephardic Jewish party Shas, for example, who is particularly alarmed at the influx of gentiles, hysterically forewarns:

By the end of the year 2010 the state of Israel will lose its Jewish identity. A secular state will bring...hundreds of thousands of goyim who will build hundreds of churches and will open more stores that sell pork. In every city we will see Christmas trees.⁴⁵

The Israeli far-right minister, Effi Eitam, prescribes yet another alternative: "If you don't give the Arabs the right to vote, the demographic problem solves itself."⁴⁶

One conscientious Israeli who is revolted by all this *retroactive* language of demographic control is Dr. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin of Ben-Gurion University. He writes: "It's frightening when Jews talk about demography."⁴⁷

Also dissenting from the mainstream Israeli view, Boaz Evron argues that:

When we give up defining our national essence by religious criteria, and forcing conversion on people who are good Israeli citizens, and give up the effectively illegal prefer-

ences afforded to Jews, it will suddenly become apparent there is no need to worry about the “demographic threat.”⁴⁸

But, by far, the all-time favorite mechanism has always been *ethnic cleansing*.

Incessantly practiced, forever popular, but persistently denied by the Zionists, in the last few years ethnic cleansing has been resurrected from the gutters of Zionism to occupy its very throne.

The famous historian, Benny Morris, has recently argued that completely emptying Palestine of its indigenous Arab inhabitants in 1948 might have led to peace in the Middle East.⁴⁹

In response, Baruch Kimmerling, professor at Hebrew University, wrote:

Let me extend Benny Morris’s logic... If the Nazi programme for the final solution of the Jewish problem had been complete, for sure there would be peace today in Palestine.⁵⁰

Then why doesn’t Israel act upon its desire *now*, one may ask? Prof. Ilan Pappé of Haifa University has a convincing answer:

The constraints on Israeli behaviour are not moral or ethical, but technical. How much can be done without turning Israel into a pariah state? Without inciting European sanctions, or making life too difficult for the Americans?

Offering a diametrically opposing explanation, Martin Van Creveld⁵¹, Israel’s most prominent military historian, who supports ethnic cleansing, arrogantly shrugs off any concern about world opinion, issuing the following formidable warning:

We possess several hundred atomic warheads and rockets and can launch them at targets in all directions, perhaps even at Rome. Most European capitals are targets for our air force... Let me quote General Moshe Dayan: “Israel must be like a mad dog, too dangerous to bother.”... Our armed forces are not the thirtieth strongest in the world, but rather the second or third. We have the capability to take the world down with us. And I can assure you that that will happen, before Israel goes under.

That should amply explain why Europeans recently ranked Israel *first* among countries considered a threat to world peace.⁵²

Yet a third explanation, which concurs with Pappé's, is that Israel currently enjoys the best of both worlds: it *is* implementing—on the ground—an elaborate mesh of policies that make the Palestinians' lives progressively more intolerable, creating an environment conducive to gradual ethnic cleansing, while not making any dramatic—Kosovo-like—scene that would alarm the world, inviting condemnation and possible sanctions.⁵³

Israel: The Untenable Essential Contradictions

Israel's *inherent* racial exclusivity, as demonstrated above, has convinced many Palestinian citizens of the state that they are not just on the margins, but altogether unwanted. Ameer Makhoul, the General Director of Ittijah, the umbrella organization of Palestinian NGO's in Israel, writes:

The state of Israel has become the most significant source of danger for the million Palestinians who are citizens of the state that was forced upon them in 1948; a state that was erected on the ruins of the Palestinian people... The Palestinian citizens of Israel cannot defend themselves by relying on the legal system and the Knesset. This public has no trust in the state and its institutions, because the Israeli rules of the game enable only discrimination, racism and repression of collective aspirations.⁵⁴

Aside from what Palestinians think or want, the question should be posed: can a state that insists on ethnic purity ever qualify as a democracy, without depriving this concept of its essence? Even Israel's loyal friends are losing faith in its ability to reconcile the fundamentally irreconcilable: modern liberal democracy and outdated ethnocentricity. Writing in the *New York Review of Books*, New York University Professor Tony Judt affirms that:

In a world where nations and peoples increasingly intermingle and intermarry, where cultural and national impediments to communication have all but collapsed, where more and more of us have multiple elective identities and would feel constrained if we had to answer to just one, in such a world, Israel is truly an anachronism. And not just

an anachronism, but a dysfunctional one. In today's "clash of cultures" between open, pluralist democracies and belligerently intolerant, faith-driven ethno-states, Israel actually risks falling into the wrong camp.⁵⁵

Avraham Burg, a devoted Zionist leader, reached a similar conclusion.⁵⁶ Attacking the Israeli leadership as an "amoral clique," Burg asserts that Israel, which "rests on a scaffolding of corruption, and on foundations of oppression and injustice," must "shed its illusions and choose between racist oppression and democracy."

Secular Democratic State: New Horizons

No matter what our hypocrites, Uncle Toms, or "false prophets" may say, Israel, as an exclusivist and settler-colonial state,⁵⁷ has *no hope* of ever being accepted or forgiven by its victims—and as *it* should know, those are the *only* ones whose forgiveness really matters.

Despite the pain, the loss, and the anger which relative humanization undoubtedly engenders in them, Palestinians have an obligation to differentiate between justice and revenge, for one entails an essentially moral *decolonization*, whereas the other descends into a vicious cycle of immorality and hopelessness. As the late Brazilian educator Paulo Freire writes:

Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human... [The] Struggle [for humanization] is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed... In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.⁵⁸

Rejecting relative humanity from any side and insisting on ethical consistency, I believe that the most moral means of achieving a just and enduring peace in the ancient land of Palestine is to establish a secular democratic state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, anchored in *equal humanity* and, accordingly, *equal*

rights. The one-state solution, whether binational—a notion which is largely based on a false premise that the second nation in question is defined⁵⁹—or secular democratic, offers a true chance for the decolonization of Palestine without turning the Palestinians into oppressors of their former oppressors. The vicious cycle launched by the Holocaust must come to an end altogether.

This new Palestine should:

1) First and foremost allow and facilitate the return of and compensation to all the Palestinian refugees, as the *only* ethical restitution acceptable for the injustice they've endured for decades. Such a process, however, must uphold at all times the moral imperative of avoiding the infliction of any unnecessary or unjust suffering on the Jewish community in Palestine;

2) Grant full, equal, and unequivocal citizenship rights to all citizens, Jews or Arabs;

3) Recognize, legitimize, and even nourish the cultural, religious, and ethnic particularities and traditions of each respective community. As a general rule, I subscribe to what Prof. Marcelo Dascal of Tel Aviv University insightfully proposes⁶⁰:

the majority has an obligation to avoid as much as possible the identification of the state's framework with traits that preclude the possibility of the minority's commitment to it.⁶¹

Israelis should recognize this moral Palestinian challenge to their colonial existence not as an existential threat to them but rather as a magnanimous invitation to dismantle the colonial character of the state, to allow the Jews in Palestine finally to enjoy normalcy, as equal humans and equal citizens of a secular democratic state—a truly promising land, rather than a false Promised Land.

That would certainly confirm that Roosevelt is not only dead but is also DEAD WRONG!

This article was previously published in Palestine Chronicle (www.palestinechronicle.com); Znet (www.zmag.org); Counterpunch (www.counterpunch.org); and, in French, www.solidarité-palestine.org.

NOTES:

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- ² For more details on Barak's myth of the "generous offer," refer to: David Clark, "The Brilliant Offer Israel Never Made," *The Guardian*, April 10, 2002, or Faisal Husseini, "The Compromise that Wasn't: Why Camp David II Failed to Satisfy Minimal Palestinian Conditions," www.AMIN.org, December 12, 2000, or Tanya Reinhart, "The Camp David Fraud," *Yedioth Ahronoth*, July 13, 2000.
- ³ Barbara Demick, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 16, 2001.
- ⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Penguin, p. 52.
- ⁵ Several archaeological studies have shown that most of the stories in the Bible used by Zionists to buttress their claim to Palestine were indeed not supported by the region's history, which is "based on direct evidence from archaeology and historical geography and is supported by analogies that are primarily drawn from anthropology, sociology and linguistics," as archaeologist Thomas L. Thompson has written (www.bibleinterp.com/articles/copenhagen). His findings are supported by the extensive, painstaking and authoritative research of distinguished Israeli archaeologists, including Ze'ev Herzog (www.prometheus.demon.co.uk/04/04herzog) and Israel Finkelstein (see Aviva Lori, "Grounds for Disbelief," *Ha'aretz*, May 10, 2003).
- ⁶ Joseph Weitz, *A Solution to the Refugee Problem*, Davar, September 29, 1967; cited in Uri Davis and Norton Mevinsky, eds., *Documents from Israel, 1967-1973*, p. 21.
- ⁷ *The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem*, U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/aec80e740c782e4852561150071fdb0?OpenDocument).
- ⁸ Henry Kissinger defined as Israel's ultimate objective, "a normality that ends claims [from Palestinians] and determines a permanent legal status." Consequently, he has consistently counseled Israel, in return for recognizing a Palestinian state, to insist on a *quid pro quo* that included "a formal renunciation of all future [Palestinian] claims." That, he maintained, was "the essence of reasonableness to Americans and Israelis." Henry Kissinger, "The Peace Paradox," *Washington Post*, December 4, 2000.
- ⁹ Reuters, "Germany: Growing Number of Israelis Seeking Citizenship," *Ha'aretz*, Monday, June 17, 2002.
- ¹⁰ Yair Sheleg, "Belgian Prime Minister Apologizes for His Country's Actions during Holocaust," *Ha'aretz*, October 7, 2002.
- ¹¹ DPA, "Sephardi Jews Demand Recognition from Spanish Government," *Ha'aretz*, October 15, 2002.

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- ¹² Celebrated Israeli writers A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz wrote: "We shall never be able to agree to the return of the refugees to within the borders of Israel, for the meaning of such a return would be the elimination of the State of Israel." A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, "Support Barak Conditionally," *Ha'aretz*, December 19, 2000.
- ¹³ Amnesty International's examination of Israel's conduct during the current Intifada led it to conclude that: "There is a pattern of gross human rights violations that may well amount to war crimes." (www.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/meast/11/01/mideast.amnesty.reut).
- ¹⁴ Oona King, "Israel Can Halt This Now," *The Guardian*, June 12, 2003 (www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,975423,00).
- ¹⁵ The dubbed "Separation Barrier" has been shown by many researchers to, in effect, separate Palestinians from their lands and isolate them in restrictive bantustans, fully under the control of the Israeli military. As such, the only proper and accurate name that can be applied to this mammoth barrier is the Apartheid Wall, as many have begun to call it. For details on the wall, refer to the Amnesty International report at web.amnesty.org/pages/isr-index, which considers the wall a form of collective punishment, and therefore illegal, or the Human Rights Watch report at www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/ga10179.doc, the B'Tselem detailed position paper at www.btselem.org, or the UNGA resolution condemning the wall at www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/ga10179.doc.
- ¹⁶ Meron Rappaport, "A Wall in their Heart," *Yedioth Ahronot*, May 23, 2003. Reproduced at www.gush-shalom.org/archives/wall_yediot_eng.
- ¹⁷ *Ha'aretz* Editorial, "A Fence Along the Settlers' Lines," October 3, 2003.
- ¹⁸ Mazal Mualem, "Old Habitats Die Hard," *Ha'aretz*, June 20, 2003.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Thomas Friedman, "One Wall, One Man, One Vote," *New York Times*, September 14, 2003 (www.nytimes.com/2003/09/14/opinion/14FRIE).
- ²¹ Gideon Levy, "Birth and Death at the Checkpoint," *Ha'aretz*, September 12, 2003.
- ²² John Pilger, "Israel's Routine Terrorism," *The Mirror*, September 16, 2002 (www.mirror.co.uk/news/allnews/page.cfm?objectid=12202728&method=full&siteid=50143).
- ²³ Chris Hedges, "A Gaza Diary," *Harper's Magazine*, October 2001.
- ²⁴ Gideon Levy, "Wanted Men," *Ha'aretz Friday Magazine*, November 8, 2002.
- ²⁵ B'Tselem, "Sexual Assault in Zeita," June 2003 (www.btselem.org).
- ²⁶ Ami Eden, "Top Lawyer Urges Death for Families of Bombers," *The Forward*, June 7, 2002.

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- ²⁷ Alan Dershowitz, *Jerusalem Post*, March 11, 2002; cited in Rod Dreher, "Muslims vs. Dersh," *National Review*, November 22, 2002 (www.nationalreview.com/dreher/dreher112202.asp).
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- ²⁹ Jonathan Cook, "Eyes Wide Open," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, August 21–27, 2003 (weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/652/op42).
- ³⁰ Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest*, New York: Olive Branch Press, 1991.
- ³¹ Shulamit Aloni, *ibid.*
- ³² David Hirst, "The War Game," *The Observer*, September 21, 2003.
- ³³ Israel Shahak, www.cactus48.com/jewishlaw.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Edward S. Herman, "Israeli Apartheid and Terrorism," *Z Magazine*, April 29, 2002 (zena.secureforum.com/Znet/ZMag/articles/may94herman).
- ³⁶ Herman, *ibid.*
- ³⁷ *Ha'aretz*, May 22, 2003.
- ³⁸ *Ha'aretz*, January 17, 1986.
- ³⁹ Lily Galili, "A Jewish Demographic State," *Ha'aretz*, July 1, 2002.
- ⁴⁰ Gideon Levy, "Wombs in the Service of the State," *Ha'aretz*, September 9, 2002.
- ⁴¹ "Israeli assimilation" of non-Jewish foreigners is eating away at the Jewish majority, according to recent demographic studies. According to the most conservative—and, in my opinion, misleading—statistics, about ten percent of the supposed Jewish population of Israel is really non-Jewish. For further details, refer to Yair Sheleg, "Demographic Balancing Acts," *Ha'aretz*, June 13, 2002.
- ⁴² Boaz Evron, "Demagogy as the Enemy of Democracy," *Ha'aretz*, September 11, 2002.
- ⁴³ Ruth Sinai, "Israelis Can Now Adopt Children from India," *Ha'aretz*, November 11, 2003.
- ⁴⁴ Chris McGreal, "Sharon Takes on Rabbis Over Jewish Identity," *The Guardian*, December 31, 2002.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

- ⁴⁶ Yuli Tamir, "Divide the Land or Divide Democracy," *Ha'aretz*, April 14, 2002.
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- ⁵¹ Ferry Biedermann, "Interview with the Israeli Military Historian Dr. Martin van Creveld," January, 2003 (www.de.indymedia.org/2003/01/39170).
- ⁵² Thomas Fuller, "European Poll Calls Israel a Big Threat to World Peace," *International Herald Tribune*, October 31, 2003.
- ⁵³ Peace activists Gadi Algazi and Azmi Bdeir explain: "Transfer isn't necessarily a dramatic moment, a moment when people are expelled and flee their towns or villages. It is not necessarily a planned and well-organized move with buses and trucks loaded with people... Transfer is a deeper process, a creeping process that is hidden from view... The main component of the process is the gradual undermining of the infrastructure of the civilian Palestinian population's lives in the territories: its continuing strangulation under closures and sieges that prevent people from getting to work or school, from receiving medical services, and from allowing the passage of water trucks and ambulances, which sends the Palestinians back to the age of donkey and cart. Taken together, these measures undermine the hold of the Palestinian population on its land." Ran HaCohen, "Ethnic Cleansing: Past, Present, and Future," www.antiwar.com, December 30, 2002.
- ⁵⁴ Ameer Makhoul, "Looking for a Different Framework of Legitimation," *Between the Lines*, March 2002 (www.between-lines.org).
- ⁵⁵ Tony Judt, "Israel: The Alternative," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 50, #16, October 23, 2003 (www.nybooks.com/articles/16671).
- ⁵⁶ Avraham Burg, "The End of Zionism," *The Guardian*, September 15, 2003. Reprinted with permission of *The Forward*, which translated and adapted this essay from an article that originally appeared in *Yediot Aharonot*.
- ⁵⁷ Even the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Meron Benvenisti, says: "In the past two years I reached the conclusion that we are dealing with a conflict between a society of immigrants and a society of natives. If so, we are talking about an entirely different type of conflict... Because the basic story here is not one of two national movements that are confronting each other; the basic story is that of natives and settlers. It's the story of natives who feel that people who came from across the sea infiltrated their natural habitat and dispossessed them."

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- ⁵⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Herder & Herder: NY, 1972, p. 28.
- ⁵⁹ Binationalism makes two problematic assumptions: that Jews are a nation and that such a nation has a right to exist as such in Palestine. Clearly binationalism cannot work between Palestinians on the one hand and world Jewry on the other. But will Israeli Jews define themselves as a nation? Most probably not, since that would contradict the fundamental premise of Zionism. Then do Israelis regard *themselves* as a nation? Certainly not, since aside from parting with Zionism, that would include the twenty percent Palestinian minority within it.
- ⁶⁰ Marcelo Dascal proposes this as a current principle that Israel and its Palestinian citizens ought to uphold as a means of alleviating the conflict between the two identities in opposition. This same principle, however, can be quite useful if applied to the future of a unitary state.
- ⁶¹ Marcelo Dascal, "Identities in Flux: Arabs and Jews in Israel," in G. Weiss and R. Wodak (eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) pp. 150–166.

THE ONE-STATE SOLUTION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY ILAN PAPPE

The purpose of this article is to stress the pattern of continuity in Palestine's modern history as a unitary political entity. Apart from a relatively short period of partition, from 1948 to 1967, the land was under one political rule which seemed always feasible, although not always for the benefit of the people living on the land. The attempts after 1967 to revive the partition failed, in particular since a partitioned political structure failed to address the core issues of the conflict: the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in 1948, the refugee problem, and the acceptance of the Jewish community as a legitimate part of the modern Middle East.

One-state Solutions under British Rule

Palestine in the Ottoman period was divided into administrative units, but had a kind of cohesion distinguished by dialect, customs, and the people themselves. The country was composed of three principal Ottoman subdistricts, Acre, Nablus, and Jerusalem, which were connected by history and tradition. These similarities had all along been recognized by the people themselves, which is why the people of Jabal Nablus had made every possible effort to remain connected to Jerusalem. When Nablus was officially annexed in 1858 to the villayet of Beirut, a protest movement arose, so massive that it turned into a bloodbath in which, according to the British consul in Jerusalem, three thousand people were killed. (He was, however, known to have exaggerated in the past, so the number could well have been much lower).¹

Towards the end of the era, in 1918, the three districts were reunited into one geopolitical unit by the British; (a similar act of unification took place in Iraq at the same time). The making of a unitary mandatory state was a smooth historical process that

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generally improved people's relative well-being and added to the already existing geopolitical cohesiveness of Palestine and its society. This process in fact only ended in 1923, but by 1918 Palestine was more united administratively than in the Ottoman period. While waiting for final international approval on Palestine's status, the British government negotiated the final borders of the land, creating a better-defined space for the national movements to struggle over, and produced a clearer sense of belonging for the people living in it. On the other hand, the final shaping of the borders helped the Zionist movement find out for the first time what it meant geographically by the concept of Eretz Israel, or the land of Israel; with Zionism came also the idea of partitioning Palestine.

The political elite of the indigenous population conceived Palestine as a unitary state. In fact, in the very early years of British occupation and nascent Zionist presence it imagined the future more in pan-Arabist than Palestinian terms. But the balance of forces on the ground undermined the dream of a unitary Arab state stretching from Morocco to Iran and brought crashing down even less ambitious plans such as creating a Greater Syria out of the eastern Mediterranean countries. By 1922, the majority of the Palestinian leaders, and one guesses the population at large, conceived Palestine as the national homeland of the Palestinians stretching from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean. When this was the trend, the Palestinians were ninety percent of the population, and their leaders, aware of the new game in the post-World War I Middle East, asked to be included in the system of nation states which were marching towards independence on the principle of democracy and self-determination. Had their wish been granted, Palestine would have been today in a similar position to that of Syria or Iraq.

But the mandatory charter included the Balfour declaration and with it the ambiguous British promise to make Palestine a homeland for the Jews, without prejudicing the interests or ambitions of the local population. A few bursts of violence and more reflective British strategic thought led London to rethink its previous concepts. But until 1937, the British also visualized the future within a one-state paradigm. In 1928, these fresh insights turned into the first significant peace initiative. In a country that had a majority of Palestinians (eighty-five percent of the population), the British must have felt triumphant when they succeeded in persuading the Executive Committee of the Palestine National Congress—the de

facto government of the Palestinians—to share the land with the Jewish newcomers. The idea was to build a state on the basis of parity in the executive, legislative, and judiciary systems. It was a concept of a unitary state that was accepted by a Palestinian leadership, in a rare moment of unity in a polity that hitherto and after was divided by clannish cleavages of prestige and ancestry.²

It was also an opportune moment for allowing the two communities to try and coexist within an acceptable political structure. But the Zionist leadership refused to partake in such a solution. Interestingly, as long as Zionist leaders had been aware of a total rejection of the idea on the Palestinian part, the official Zionist position was that this kind of a solution is acceptable. Once the intelligence unit of the Jewish Agency reported a change of wind on the Palestinian side, the Jewish leadership reversed its policy and rejected the idea of parity.³ The Zionist leaders preferred the idea of partition, with the hope of annexing more of Palestine when favorable conditions for such expansion developed.

When the future of Palestine was discussed once more in the wake of the British decision to leave Palestine in February 1947, the Zionist leadership, although representing the minority of Jewish newcomers, determined the peace agenda. A very inexperienced inquiry commission was appointed by the U.N., the international body that took responsibility for Palestine after the British withdrawal. The new commission acted within a vacuum easily filled by Zionist ideas. In May, 1947, the Jewish Agency provided the inquiry commission, U.N.S.C.O.P., with a map that included a Jewish state over eighty percent of Palestine, more or less equal to Israel of today without the occupied territories. In November, 1947 U.N.S.C.O.P. reduced the Jewish State to fifty-five percent of Palestine and formulated the plan as U.N. Resolution 181. The Palestinian rejection of the plan, which did not surprise anyone, as they had been opposed to partition ever since 1918 and the Zionist endorsement of it, which was foretold since partition was, after all, a Zionist solution to the problem, were in the eyes of the international policing body a solid enough base for peace in the Holy Land. However, imposing the will of one side on the other was hardly a productive move towards reconciliation and, indeed, rather than bringing peace and quiet to the torn land, the resolution triggered violence on a scale unprecedented in the history of modern Palestine.⁴

The Partitioning of Palestine, 1947–1967

The Jewish leadership returned to its May, 1947 map; if the Palestinians rejected the Zionist idea of partition, it was time for unilateral action. The map showed clearly which parts of Palestine were coveted as the future Jewish state. The problem was that, within the desired eighty percent, the Jews were a minority of forty percent (660,000 Jews against one million Palestinians). But this was also a passable hurdle. The leaders of the *Yishuv* had been prepared for such an eventuality ever since the beginning of the Zionist project in Palestine. They advocated the forced transfer of the indigenous population so that a pure Jewish state could be established. Therefore, on March 10, 1948, the Zionist leadership adopted the now infamous *Plan Dalet* which ordered the Jewish forces to ethnically cleanse the areas regarded as the future Jewish State in Palestine.

The international community realized that the partition plan was more an incentive for bloodshed than a peace program and, five days after the 1948 war erupted, it made another attempt at a reconciliation effort. The mission was entrusted to the U.N.'s first mediator in the post-mandatory conflict, the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte. Bernadotte offered two proposals to end the conflict by partitioning the land into two states. The difference between them was that, in the second proposal, he suggested the annexation of Arab Palestine to Transjordan. But in both proposals he stipulated the unconditional repatriation of Palestinian refugees as a precondition for peace. He was ambivalent about Jerusalem, wishing it to be the Arab capital in the first proposal but in the second preferring it to remain international. In any case, he seemed to place the refugees and Jerusalem at the center of the conflict, and perceived these two dilemmas as indivisible problems, for which only a comprehensive and just solution would do.⁵

Even after Bernadotte's assassination by Jewish extremists in 1948, the Palestine Conciliation Commission appointed to replace him pursued the same policy. The three members of this commission wished to build the future solution on three tiers: the partition of the land into two states, not according to the map of the partition resolution but corresponding to the demographic distribution of Jews and Palestinians, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the

unconditional return of the refugee to their homes. The new mediators offered the three principles as a basis for negotiations, and while the Arab confrontational countries and the Palestinian leadership accepted this offer, during the U.N. peace conference in Lausanne, Switzerland in May, 1949, as the U.N. General Assembly had done before them in Resolution 194 of December, 1948, it was nonetheless buried by the intransigent David Ben Gurion and his government in the summer of that year. At first, the U.S. administration rebuked Israel for its policy and exerted economic pressure on it, but later on, the Jewish lobby succeeded in reorientating U.S. policy onto pro-Israeli tracks, where it has remained until today.⁶

Palestine was not divided. It was destroyed, and most of its people expelled. The expulsion and the destruction kindled the conflict ever since. The P.L.O. emerged in the late 1950s as an embodiment of the Palestinian struggle for return, reconstruction, and restitution. But its struggle was not particularly successful. The refugees were totally ignored by the international community and the regional Arab powers. Only Gamal Abdel-Nasser seemed to adopt their cause, forcing the Arab League to show at least concern for their case. As the ill-fated Arab maneuvers of June, 1967 showed, this was neither effective nor sufficient.

A more systematic conceptualization of the one-state emerged when the P.L.O. phoenix hatched (1948–67). In the paper *Filastinuna*, several writers envisaged a secular democratic state as the only viable solution for the Palestine problem. But a thorough reading shows that the concern was an unidentified “Palestinian entity” that would trigger the rebirth of the movement, rather than a focus on actual political models or structures.⁷ The debate was mainly between a pan-Arabist point, wishing to oppose what they called separatism from the *qawmi* (the pan-Arabist version of nationalism) future in the name of a Palestinian *watniyya* (nation-state territorialism).

Neither was the nature of a future Palestinian entity seriously discussed in the regional or international arenas. There was a lull in the peace efforts in the 1950s and 1960s, although schema such as the Anglo-American Alpha Program and the Johnston Plan were thrown into the air.⁸ These and more esoteric initiatives, almost all of them American, wished to adopt a businesslike approach to the conflict. This meant a great belief in partition according to security

interests of Israel and its Arab neighbors, while totally sidelining the Palestinians as partners for peace. The Palestinians were diminished as a political partner in this businesslike approach. They existed only as refugees whose fate was treated within the economic aspect of the American Cold War against the Soviet Union. Their problem was to be solved within a new Marshall plan for the Middle East. This plan promised American aid to the area to improve the standard of living as the best means of containing Soviet encroachment. For that, the refugees had to be resettled in Arab lands and made to serve as cheap labor for their development (distancing them from Israel's borders and consciousness). Although the P.L.O. showed enough resistance to encourage Arab regimes to leave the refugees in their transitional camps, despite their being perceived as a destabilizing factor, the association of the P.L.O. with the Soviet Union, on the other hand, pushed the Palestinians, wherever they were, from any prospective *Pax Americana*.

The Partition Formula and Its Demise: 1967–2000

In June, 1967, the whole of Palestine became Israel—a new geopolitical reality that necessitated a renewed peace process. At first, it was the UN that took the initiative, but it was soon replaced by American peacemakers. The early architects of *Pax Americana* had some original ideas of their own which were flatly rejected by the Israelis and hence remained on paper. Then the mechanism of American brokering became a proxy for Israeli peace plans. At the center of the Israeli perception of a solution stood three assumptions: the first was that Israel should be absolved from the 1948 ethnic cleansings by not mentioning the issue any more as part of a prospective peace agenda; secondly and consequently, negotiations for peace would only concern the future of the areas Israel had occupied in 1967, namely the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; and, thirdly, the fate of the Palestinian minority in Israel was not to be part of a comprehensive settlement for the conflict. This meant that eighty percent of Palestine and more than fifty percent of the Palestinians were excluded from the efforts of making peace in the land of Palestine. This formula was accepted unconditionally by the U.S. and sold as the best offer in town to the rest of the world.

At the heart of this formula stood an equation of territories for peace, produced by the Israeli peace camp and marketed by the Americans. It is a strange formula if you stop and think about it: on the one end of the equation you have a quantitative and measurable variable, on the other, an abstract term, not easily conceptualized or even illustrated. It was less bizarre as a working basis for bilateral peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, where indeed it operated quite well, for a while, in the case of Egypt and Jordan. And yet we should remember that even in the case of these two countries it produced “cold peace,” as it did not offer a comprehensive solution to the Palestine question. And, indeed, what had this equation to offer to the ultimate victims of the 1948 war, whose demand for “justice” is the main fuel kindling the conflict’s fire?

The architects of the Oslo Accord thought it could. They resold the merchandise of “peace for territories,” including hollow concepts such as Israeli recognition by the P.L.O. and “autonomy” for the Palestinians, which were meant to strengthen the businesslike approach to the conflict. The reality on the ground was one state, twenty percent of which was under indirect Israeli military occupation, which, however, was represented as the making of a two-state solution with the display of a dramatic discourse of peace.⁹

I am not underestimating the progress made in Oslo, but one should never forget the circumstances of the Accord’s birth, as they tell why it was such a colossal failure. Dramatic changes in the global and regional balance of power and an Israeli readiness to replace the Hashemites of Jordan with the P.L.O. as a partner for peace opened the way to an even more complicated formula of “territories for peace.” Oslo was a celebration of the idea of partition: territories, and everything else which is visible and quantifiable, could be divided between the two sides. Thus the only non-Jewish parts of post-1948 Palestine—twenty-two percent of the land—could be redivided between Israel and a future Palestinian autonomous entity. Within that twenty-two percent of Palestine, the illegal Jewish settlements could be divided into eighty percent under Israeli control and twenty percent under Palestinian authority. Furthermore, most of the water resources were to be given to Israel, most of Jerusalem would remain in Israeli hands. Peace, the *quid pro quo*, meant a Palestinian state robbed of any say in its defense, foreign, or economic policies. As for the Palestinian right of return, according to the Israeli interpretation of Oslo, which is the one that counts, it

should be forgotten and erased. This Israeli concept of a solution was presented to the world at large in the summer of 2000 at Camp David.

For Palestinians, the summit in Camp David was meant to produce the final stages in the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza strip, in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338 of the U.N. Security Council, and prepare the ground for new negotiations over a final settlement on the basis of U.N. Resolution 194, the return of the refugees, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and a full sovereign Palestinian state. Even the U.S. voted in favor of this resolution, at the time and ever since.

The Israeli left, in power since 1999, regarded the Camp David summit as a stage for dictating to the Palestinians their concept of a solution: maximizing the divisibility of the visible (evicting ninety percent of the occupied areas, twenty percent of the settlements, and fifty percent of Jerusalem), while demanding the end of Palestinian reference to the invisible layers of the conflict: no right of return, no full sovereign Palestinian state, and no solution for the Palestinian minority in Israel. After Camp David, an acceptable solution for the Israelis meant that as long as the Palestinians do not succumb to the Israeli dictate, the occupation, exile, and discrimination would continue. With or without Ariel Sharon's violation of the sacredness of *Haram al-Sharif* in September, 2000, the second uprising broke out in the territories and in Israel a month later, and is still going on while this article is written.

The Revival of the One-state Idea

"Territories for Peace" is no longer on the negotiations table, ever since the outbreak of the second Intifada. An uprising that spilled over into Israel itself, leading the Palestinian minority there to call for the de-Zionization of the Jewish state, allowing West Bankers to demand the Palestinization of Muslim and Christian Jerusalem, the inhabitants of Gaza to raise arms against the continued occupation, and uniting refugees around the world in their call for the implementation of their right of return. What the current Intifada has made clear was that in the eyes of the Palestinians, the end of occupation is a precondition for peace and cannot be peace itself. The Israeli peace camp, so we are told by its "gurus," was insulted in October, 2000. The narrative provided by Ehud Barak, the Israeli

prime minister at the time of the Camp David summit, was widely accepted by the Israeli peace camp. According to this version, the Israeli leadership maximized the equation of “territories for peace” by offering most of the territories Israeli occupied in 1967.

This version was endorsed by the United States, although several European governments and personalities doubted its validity. This narrative delineates clearly what the final settlement means in the eyes of the political camp led at the time by the Labor Party and its leader, Ehud Barak. Such a “comprehensive” solution is, in essence, an Israeli demand that the Palestinians recognize the Zionist narrative of the 1948 war as exclusively right and valid. According to this narrative, Israel has no responsibility for the making of the refugee problem and the Palestinian minority in Israel—now twenty percent of the population—is not part of the solution to the conflict. It also includes an Israeli demand that the Palestinians acquiesce in the new reality Israel created in Greater Jerusalem and the West Bank. A final peace settlement is therefore one in which the world recognizes as forever Jewish the settlement belt encircling Jerusalem and planted at the heart of Palestinian cities such as Nablus and Halil (Hebron).

The drive for a comprehensive settlement can therefore not be associated only with Israeli withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, which constitute only twenty-two percent of historical Palestine. It requires a reconciliation process that is based on a historical perspective and which touches upon questions of accountability and responsibility. From the Palestinian perspective, it means a recognition by Israelis of their state’s role as colonizer, expeller, oppressor, and occupier.

I have written elsewhere on the various mechanisms for such a process¹⁰; here I would like to associate the end of conflict and the question of the desirable political structure that should accompany such a process and eventually a solution. I use the term accompany, as I believe the process of mediation and reconciliation between Israel and its Palestinian victims is a first preconditioned stage that should commence even before the final construction of an appropriate political structure.

A historical perspective on peace efforts up to now indicates that the attempt to focus on the fate of the territories Israel had occupied in the June 1967 war—territories which constitute twenty-two percent of Palestine—has been a total failure. Even the various

Israeli offers to withdraw from most the territories (from Oslo, through Camp David 2000, the Ayalon Nusseibah Initiative, the Road Map, to the Geneva Accord) could not elicit meaningful Palestinian consent to end the conflict. All these offers had one thing in common: they emptied the concept of statehood from its conventional and accepted notion in the second half of the twentieth century. All these peace offers, without exception, limited the future independence of the Palestinians to that twenty-two percent, giving Israel an exclusive say in security, foreign, and economic matters in the future mini-state of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The mini-state structure failed to offer a solution to the refugee questions that would entail the implementation of the right of return, nor did it suggest that the 1.4 million Palestinians inside the state of Israel would cease to be second-class citizens.

These issues have a better chance of being dealt with in a one-state structure, a solution that may remain in the short term a virtual reality, as the majority of the Jews in Israel and quite a considerable number of West Bankers oppose it. In the long run, it may be, for better or worse, the only game in town, as recognized even by those who still are ardent supporters of the idea of two states, such as the Palestinian leader Mustafa Barghouti.

In Israel, two long-time comrades of Barghouti's struggle for two states, Haim Hanegbi and Meron Benvenisti, decided at the end of the summer of 2003 that the time has come to forsake the two-state solution. The former sees it as a just solution to the question; the latter as unfortunately the only feasible one, given the range of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, the unwillingness of any Israeli government to massively withdrew settlers, and the growing demographic balance of Palestinians inside Israel. However, both advocate a binational model, a kind of federation between two national entities who share the executive, legislative, and constitutional authorities on a parity and consensual basis.

The more veteran advocates of such a solution tend to prefer the idea of a secular democratic state for all its citizens, but it seems that, as Tony Judt has claimed recently in the *New York Review of Books*, it will be easier to win over those disappointed with the chances of a two-state solution to the notion of a binational state, already suggested by Asad Ghanem and Sara Ozacky in the late 1990s.

It may be early to detail the nature of the political structure that would replace the two-state solution, and the two models of the

secular state and the binational that would compete in the theoretical discussions on the subject. These two models are still used as a threat by the Palestinian Authority should Israel execute unilateral moves to annex half of the West Bank and erect the ghetto wall as a wedge between ten percent of Palestine and the enlarged state of Israel. But the total failure of the two-state solution may come sooner than later and those of us with hindsight should prepare the alternatives now.

Ever since 1987, the outbreak of the first Intifada, I have been doubting the effectiveness of the option from within. It still remains for me the best way of bringing about a lasting solution to the question of the refugees, the predicament of the Palestinian minority in Israel, and the future of Jerusalem. There are necessary steps to be taken on the way to such a solution, which would probably be best served within a one-state structure. But it will take time before this settlement would be accepted as reasonable and feasible, and for that we need to convince and negotiate with whomever we think should be part of the future state.

The non-Zionist left is now thinking of a political structure that would prevent a civil war in Israel, grant equal rights to the Palestinian minority in Israel, and provide fair solutions to the Right of Return and the status of Jerusalem. This can only be achieved within a one-state solution. Such a solution has not yet been properly worked out by this part of Israeli political scene (made up mainly of Palestinian citizens, post-Zionist academics, and grassroots organizations active in supporting the draft-refusal movement and opposing the occupation).

The demand not to instrumentalize the memories of the catastrophes of both Jews and Palestinians is, of course, directed to both sides. Such a demand cannot be accepted unless the political structure of the future solution is a-national or binational. Only in such a political formation can one hope for non-ethnocentric, polyphonic reconstruction of the past that can produce in turn more reflective and humanistic attitudes toward the suffering of both sides. This can happen in a "state for all its citizens" born out of the distaste for nationalism and ethnicity that guided the political formations in the past. It is difficult to appreciate how many victims such a break with past identities necessitates. Admittedly, the comparative historical lessons are not encouraging in this respect. Therefore, the by-product of the one-state solution can be seen as an ideal model that would probably be implemented in a more restricted

way on the ground. This is indeed the difference between the one-state and binational models. The latter imposes many restrictions on our hope for a multicultural and polyphonic future, but it is less rigid than the two-state solution as a political framework that allows deviations from being enslaved to national narratives and historical interpretations.

NOTES:

- ¹ See more details in Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 14–26.
- ² Eliakim Rubenstein, “The Treatment of the Arab Question in Palestine in the Immediate Period after the 1929 Events and the Establishment of the Political Bureau: Political Aspect,” in Ilan Pappé (ed.), *Jewish-Arab Relations in Mandatory Palestine: A New Approach in the Historical Research*, Institute of Peace Research, Givat Haviva 1995, pp. 65–102 (Hebrew).
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ This is detailed in Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947–1951*, I. B. Tauris, New York and London, pp. 16–46.
- ⁵ Ilan Amitzur, *Bernadotte in Palestine 1948: A Study in Contemporary Humanitarian Knight-errantry*, Macmillan, London, 1989.
- ⁶ See Pappé, *The Making*, pp. 203–243.
- ⁷ Helena Cobban, *The PLO*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, 28–29.
- ⁸ Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York and London, 2000, pp. 109–110.
- ⁹ See Ilan Pappé, “Breaking the Mirror: Oslo and After,” in Haim Gordon (ed.), *Looking Back at the June 1967 War*, Praeger, Westport Connecticut and London, 1999, pp. 95–112.
- ¹⁰ Ilan Pappé, “Fear, Victimhood, Self and Other,” *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies*, May 2001.

U.S. POLICY AND THE SINGLE STATE IN PALESTINE/ISRAEL

BY NASEER H. ARURI

Washington has never predicted, nor even contemplated, that its own policies, subsumed under the misleading title, “peace process,” might someday prove to have been a contributory agent to a single state in pre-1948 Palestine. U.S. accommodation to Israeli settlement policies and creeping annexation over several decades has created facts and conditions that could initially make a binational, multi-ethnic state, to hopefully lead to a secular democracy, the only viable resolution, should apartheid and ethnic cleansing be deemed unacceptable options in the Twenty-first Century.

During the past dozen years or so, Israel and the United States have pursued policies which dealt a crippling blow to the two-state solution, while continuing to pay lip service to the concept of an independent Palestinian state. One wonders whether they failed to realize that those policies have unwittingly paved the way to a single pluralistic state for Arabs and Jews in what the former call historic Palestine and the latter call Eretz Israel.

The derailment of the two-state solution was accomplished by the accumulation of fruitless diplomatic efforts carried out by numerous U.S. presidents from Nixon to Clinton and Bush II. The question is whether these efforts, which span more than three and a half decades and involve more than a dozen “peace plans,” have even been meant for implementation. In this article, I look at two recent processes, the Oslo Accords (1993–2001), and the Sharon/Bush “war on terror” (2001–2004), which led to Bush’s unreserved support for Sharon’s disengagement plan, and examine their impact on the prospects for a two-state solution. Between the signing of Oslo in 1993 and the present, the two strategic allies succeeded in creating their own rules of diplomatic engagement, which removed the Palestinians from the negotiating table and transformed the “honest broker” to cobelligerent. Similarly, they

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created their own jurisprudence for an Israeli/Palestinian deal, which arbitrarily bestowed the West Bank on Israel, leaving Bush's vision of a sovereign, contiguous Palestinian state a mere rhetorical exercise.

This paper argues that the Oslo process sealed the fate of Palestinian statehood and that the subsequent "war on terror" made it possible for Bush to grant Sharon a new Balfour Declaration in April 2004, ironically leaving the vision of a single state for two equal communities as the only dignified solution. Both of these processes, carried out by two U.S. presidents and several Israeli prime ministers, have totally undermined the basic principles of international law, while leaving an eventual pluralist existence in pre-1948 Palestine as the only viable alternative to perpetual conflict.

Oslo and the Demise of the Two-state Solution

There is a new reality, unwittingly produced by the Oslo Accords, which may have escaped the minds of many who euphorically watched the "historic" signing. These accords have dealt a crippling blow to the foundations of the global consensus, which had defined the prerequisites for a just and durable peace during the 1970s and 1980s: peace was predicated on the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent state alongside Israel. Peace was to occur after Israel completed its withdrawal from occupied territories, in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, and after the Palestinians recognized Israel's existence and sovereignty in the largest part of their own national patrimony. That consensus was buried beneath the rubble of Oslo.

By early 2000, almost seven years after the "historic handshake," the pursuit of a negotiated settlement based on two states seemed to have run its course. That project was dealt a severe blow by a colossal imbalance of power between Israel and the Palestinians, by a steady and growing Israelization of American Middle East policy, by a vigorous drive of settler colonization, by Arab disarray and failure to respond to the Israeli challenge, and to the exigencies of the post-cold war era.

The Oslo process demonstrated that Israel's negotiating strategy was to keep on negotiating *ad infinitum*. The so-called peace partners were not only far apart conceptually, but were also hopelessly divided over interpretations and what the end results of the process should be. We saw one agreement after another, from Oslo I to Oslo

II, from Cairo I to Cairo II, from early empowerment to the disempowerment of the Hebron Agreement, to the 1998 Wye River Memorandum, and then the Sharm al-Shaykh Agreement, in which Arafat seemed to have acquiesced in the implication that the U.N. resolutions, which constitute the jurisprudence of the Palestine question, have effectively ceased to be the basis for a final settlement.

In 1999 and 2000, we witnessed how the lone superpower had to employ seemingly vigorous diplomatic resources to persuade Prime Ministers Benyamin Netanyahu and, later, Ehud Barak to meet the minimum symbolic requirements of the agreements to reach agreement. The drafting seemed to enable Israel to conquer territory, to oppress, to displace, and to dispossess, without being held accountable. Thousands of dunams (quarter-acres) of land were confiscated and thousands of Palestinians were dispossessed after the Oslo signing, while the built-in impasse continued unabated. It proved to be most efficacious for Israel, which determined the agendas, supplied the draft agreements and maps, and invested in deliberate ambiguity. The letter of Oslo rendered the goal of Palestinian statehood impractical and obsolete, yet the Palestinian Oslo dream continued to hang on its spirit, which was nothing more than a thin thread of hope, devoid of any substance.

Paradoxically, the Oslo process led to an inevitable conclusion, which its own architects had neither envisaged, contemplated, nor pursued: the future struggle is towards integration and not separation, toward a pluralistic existence, not exclusion, towards parity, mutuality, common humanity, and a common destiny. Ironically, this reality might lay the foundation for a joint Palestinian/Israeli struggle, emanating from a realization that the lives of Palestinians and Israelis are inextricably intertwined. There was and remains a common interest in the economy, employment, water distribution, ecology, energy, human rights, and foreign relations. But to date, readiness to translate that commonality into a structural framework that would enable both people to derive equal benefits remains a distant dream, as Israeli tanks and Apache helicopters embark on a campaign of home destruction, starvation, and killing defenseless civilians in the Gaza Strip, which is badly in need of international protection.

Even if the Oslo process had miraculously led to some kind of a breakthrough, the maximum gain for the Palestinians that seemed

possible in 2000 would have been a fractured collection of Bantustans, noncontiguous enclaves, on about forty to fifty percent of the West Bank, and sixty-five percent of Gaza. Under optimal conditions, something called the state of Palestine might have emerged, but would have been only nominally independent. Genuine independence had already been ruled out by the agreement between Labor and Likud in January, 1997. Entitled "National Agreement Regarding the Negotiations on the Permanent Settlement with the Palestinians," it rejected Palestinian sovereignty, removal of the Israeli settlements, negotiation of the status of Jerusalem, repatriation of refugees, and the dismantling of the occupation.

Since Oslo II (1995), the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza began to realize that they are residents of enclaves "separated" from each other and from Israel, but functionally part of a "greater Israel." They were separated from the settlements, from Jerusalem, and from each other, and cut off from other Palestinian cities and even villages, as well as from the Palestinian Diaspora. By 2000, this fragmentation was social, economic, physical, and regional, despite Oslo's call for a contiguous Palestinian entity. On his way to the Camp David summit on July 11, 2000, Prime Minister Ehud Barak reaffirmed the concept of separation, the equivalent of apartheid in the Afrikaans language: "Separation—we here and they there..." (*Yediot Aharonot*, July 11, 2000)

In view of all that, the "state of Palestine," as the end result of Oslo, would have been economically strangled by Israel, dominated by U.S and world financial institutions, and constrained by regional interests and global requirements. It would have continued to be intolerant and repressive towards dissent, now reclassified as "terrorism." Moreover, the price of the facade would have included a permanent deferral of the final status issues. Thus, the absence of any significant change in the status quo was the logical rationale for the pursuit of a real independent state, but one that would have to be contiguous, democratic, secular, and based on equal plurality.

The Threat of Peace

The April, 2004, assassinations of Shaykh Ahmad Yassin and Dr. Abdul-Aziz Rantissi, the top leaders of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, represented an escalation in Israel's ongoing policy of daily incursions, house demolition, economic strangulation, killings of civilians, and other Israeli measures, calculated to block

any initiatives for a political settlement based on a two-state solution. In the short term, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had invited major retaliation, which in turn would facilitate a massive Israeli attack that would spread the conflict beyond the West Bank and Gaza and insure a continuation of the impasse that has been permitted by the self-designated peacemaker, the United States. In the long term, his policies might help to pave the road towards a struggle for a single binational state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Why is peace a threat to Sharon and the Zionist establishment? Thirty-seven years after the occupation, ten years after Oslo, four years after the Mitchell Report, three years after Taba, more than two years after the Zinni mission, and one year after the Road Map, peace has remained hopelessly elusive.

The pre-Oslo as well as the Oslo assumptions of a diplomatic settlement are clearly untenable for Ariel Sharon, who has been engaged during his last three years in power in implementing his 1981 plan: to annex half of the West Bank (itself twenty-two percent of the original, pre-1948 Palestine) and restrict the Palestinians to limited autonomy in fragmented entities, in order to insure that the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea will never accommodate more than a single, sovereign state—Israel.

Sharon was able to convince President Bush that his unilateral plan, which begins with evacuating Gaza, is the cornerstone of a new diplomatic settlement. It would be presented to the Palestinians on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. For the United States, it means a price tag in monetary compensation and acquiescence in Sharon's expansionist designs for the West Bank. Bush, who in 2003 criticized the building of a four hundred-mile wall that "snakes through the West Bank," is not likely to bring that up again in an election year, when the mere mention of a diplomatic settlement is taboo for both U.S. presidential candidates.

For Sharon, the danger of peace emanates from a perceived "demographic threat." By the year 2010, Palestinian Arabs living under Israeli control will become a majority between the Jordan and the Mediterranean, for the first time since 1948. At present, the number of Palestinians living between the river and sea under Israeli control comes to 4.8 million, compared to 5.1 Israelis. Short of giving the Palestinians equal rights in one state, Israel is left with three options: acquiescing in the establishment of a separate

sovereign Palestinian state, expelling much of the Palestinian population, or keeping them confined in apartheid-style cantons, which is essentially Sharon's plan of 1981. Sharon hopes to overcome his demographic concerns and keep a simple conflict about ending a military occupation off not only the global agenda, but even that of his strategic ally whose electoral concerns supersede peace.

A New Balfour Declaration by George W. Bush

The April 14, 2004, exchange of statements and the subsequent joint press conference of President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon created an upheaval regarding the Palestine question, the likes of which have not been witnessed since the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Bush's scripted statement, letter of assurance, and his unrehearsed answers to the media, during the joint White House appearance, released Israel from its legal and moral obligations to the Palestinian people and to the requirements of international law, as far as the lone superpower was concerned. Bush's statement will have a major impact on U.S. policy toward the Palestine/Israel conflict, international law, the U.S./Israeli strategic alliance, and stability in a volatile region of the world. The implied veto of any sovereign and contiguous existence for the Palestinians in the West Bank, together with the abrogation of the rights of refugees to return to their homes, is bound to make the unitary solution as a likely path in the long term.

What Bush has embraced is a unilateral plan by Sharon that aims to relinquish some control over Gaza, which would ease Israel's security problem there. Gaza has always been a costly venture for the Israeli government, since the 7500 Jewish settlers there required a whole army division and several battalions to protect them. Under the Sharon plan, endorsed by Bush, Gaza, which no Israeli faction has ever been interested in retaining forever, is being exchanged *de facto* for the West Bank, which Israel regards as the real economic and strategic prize, not to mention its biblical significance in the eyes of extremist Zionists. Sharon is proposing a partial withdrawal from an unwanted, overpopulated, poverty-stricken swath of land, in return for U.S. acquiescence in a long-term interim agreement that would consolidate and make permanent Israel's control over the West Bank. The deal smacks of the late 1970s dismantling of the Sinai settlement of Yamit and the withdrawal from Sinai and Sharm

El-Sheikh, in exchange for peace with Israel, which enabled the latter to invade Lebanon and deal a crippling blow to Palestinian national aims in 1982. From Sharon's vantage point, the current deal provides him with strategic gains without having to negotiate with the Palestinians, which would inevitably require some concessions on the part of the Israeli leader.

Not unlike Britain during the First World War, the U.S. has just as explicitly endorsed, and not merely "viewed with favor," Israeli sovereignty over the entire area lying between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, thus helping to fulfill a long-standing Zionist aim. By rendering the 1949 ceasefire lines obsolete, while maintaining deliberate silence on the 1967 borders, the U.S. president has, in effect, recognized a permanent Israeli occupation of the remaining twenty-two percent of what Israel did not conquer in 1948.

This action supplanted much of America's diplomatic work for thirty-seven years, creating a dramatic shift in U.S. policy. Although America's diplomatic monopoly has constituted an exercise in futility since the early 1970s, it had never explicitly withdrawn from the widely accepted position that the occupation was temporary and that territorial acquisition by force was impermissible under international law. Although the U.S. has paradoxically played the role of mediator, while acting as Israel's chief diplomatic backer, bankroller, and arms supplier, it nevertheless refrained from conceding publicly that Israel was under no obligation to withdraw from occupied territory. Now, the window dressing has been abandoned; Bush has come out of the closet and *de facto* Israeli annexation of much of the West Bank is certain to follow. The occupation is part of what Bush described as "facts on the ground." 242 is history.

It should be noted that, since 1948, U.S. policy has had two faces: the declared policy and the presumed policy. While it tried, however disingenuously, to masquerade international legality on Jerusalem, the refugees, the occupation, and the settlements, Washington's real and presumed policy deviated from the international consensus, thus becoming the single most important factor in enabling Israel to create today's *fait accompli*. Now, even the pretension of conformity with international law has been dropped by George W. Bush, notwithstanding his meaningless references to an independent Palestinian state.

On the refugee question, the U.S.'s declared policy had been consistent with the requirements of U.N. Resolution 194 from its beginning in 1948 until 1993. That resolution recognized the right of return, compensation, and restitution. In 1993, Madeleine Albright scrapped all U.N. resolutions on Palestine, rendering more than four decades worth of international understanding on the question of Palestine "irrelevant, contentious and obsolete." While the policy on refugees remained vague and cautious during the past decade, Bush's statement now restricts the right of return to truncated and isolated Palestinian Bantustans, fenced in between Israeli highways, settlements, and checkpoints. Even that is doubtful, given Sharon's implied desire to have the entire West Bank empty of Arabs. Having emphasized the ethno/religious character of Israel, calling it the Jewish state, Bush has not only barred the refugees from returning to their homes and property, but also endorsed the racist demographic imperative that Israel must retain its "Jewish character" regardless of the rights of the indigenous Palestinian people. Again, international law, which has been trampled on by the U.S. in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, and elsewhere, has now been explicitly negated in Palestine.

On the issue of Israeli settlements, long considered illegal under international law, U.S. policy under Bush has, for the first time, accepted them as permanent and thus legal. Bush's attitude toward existing U.S. declared policy and the requirements of international law is exemplified by his arrogant answer to a question on Iraq: "Oh, let me call my lawyer." U.S. policy on the status of settlements has steadily grown to accommodate the Israeli position, from "illegal" (Carter), to "not illegal" (Reagan), to an "obstacle to peace" (Bush I), to "a complicating factor in the peace process" (Clinton), to "firmly rooted facts on the ground" and thus permanent, under Bush II. This is certainly a radical departure from the days of Bush's father who tried to take on the mighty pro-Israel lobby in the spring of 1991 over the status of these settlements. His Secretary of State, James Baker III, had simply referred to the settlements in and around Jerusalem, citing U.S. traditional policy as not recognizing Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem, when all hell broke loose. Not only did the younger Bush learn from his father's "mistakes," but his wholesale embrace of Sharon's plan will be used by his re-election campaign to signify that a vote against the President is a vote against Israel.

Moreover, Bush's new manifesto has resulted in the U.S. and Israel making closed-door agreements in Washington regarding the fate of the Palestinians. The Palestinian leadership need not be present when the future of their people is being decided by the intellectually challenged Bush and Sharon, who was indicted in his own country for the massacre of Sabra and Shatila in 1982. In fact, the Palestinian presence has been bypassed entirely both during the past four months of U.S./Israeli negotiations on the basis of Sharon's so-called disengagement plan and at the meetings leading to the April 14 press conference. Incidentally, these negotiations were led on the American side by Elliot Abrams, another criminal convicted (to be pardoned by Bush) for having lied to Congress during the Iran-Contra affair. Saeb Erekat, the P.L.O. chief negotiator, wrote an article in the *Washington Post* on April 25, 2004, appropriately titled, "Why Did Bush Take My Job?" George Bush, acting as Israel's partner and accomplice, has forfeited whatever claims the U.S. may have held to the role of mediator.

Again, the U.S. adhered to what has become accepted practice over the past few decades. Israel provides the framework for a plan, just as it did in 1978, Camp David, and in 1993, Oslo, while the U.S. signs off. Not only did Sharon sell Bush a recycled version of his 1981 plan to keep at least fifty percent of the West Bank, relegating the Palestinians to three fragmented entities (Jenin and Nablus in the north, Ramallah in the center, and Hebron/Bethlehem in the south), but he also guaranteed U.S. acceptance, based on prevailing strategic realities in the region and domestic political realities in the United States.

Another blatant departure from the *declared* U.S. policy, Oslo's designation of a "final status," was summarily dismissed, as Bush proceeded to preempt and foreclose on the issues falling under that status. America's frequently used phrase cautioning against "prejudging" a final settlement evaporated like dust, with Bush's instincts fixated on his electoral prospects and his "war on terror." As long as he, himself, did the prejudging, there seemed to be no need for accounting.

In conceding final status issues, such as boundaries, refugees, settlements, and Jerusalem, Bush seemed either incognizant or oblivious to what his predecessors had put on the negotiating table at Camp David I, Camp David II, Taba, or Clinton's January, 2001, speech in New York, largely to an American Jewish audience. Those

proposals regarding Israeli territorial acquisitions to accommodate Israel's settlers entailed a swap, whereby Israel was under obligation to cede "comparable" land to the Palestine Authority. Bush's generous offer takes no account of such reciprocal arrangements, bestowing upon Israel land which is neither his nor Sharon's. Nor did Bush utter a single sentence about Israel's apartheid wall, which he had previously considered an obstacle to the peace process. Perhaps he was satisfied with Sharon's bogus assurance that the four hundred-mile wall was "temporary... and, therefore, will not prejudice any final status issues including borders."

Remarkably, Bush's new policy gave the Road Map short shrift, despite the hollow reference and the huge diplomatic capital invested in it for more than a year, during which summit meetings were held with Arab leaders, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations. It did not seem to matter to the magisterial Bush that the Road Map was co-sponsored by the so-called Quartet, which should have been consulted when their enterprise was laid to waste at the behest of Sharon and his neo-conservative/Likudist allies in the U.S. Instead, it was effectively set aside after it became known, several months ago, that Israel had stipulated fourteen amendments prior to accepting it as a basis for negotiations. Instead of freezing the Israeli settlements, as required by the Road Map, Sharon, the father of settlements, received a U.S. sanction for keeping the settlements and scrapping the Road Map in a deal that Bush would call historic and courageous. In contrast, the European Union issued a statement on April 15 saying it will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties. Sadly, however, the Quartet joined the U.S. and Israel, in June, endorsing Sharon's "disengagement plan."

In conclusion, the April 14 charade was the inevitable consequence of U.S. policy, which has permitted Israel over the past decades to create facts on the ground, while waiting for propitious regional and international circumstances to legitimize them. The collapse of the Soviet empire, together with Arab disarray and the ascendancy of Washington's neo-conservatives, who exploited the events of September 11, were the exact circumstances that Israel has been waiting for to reap the harvest. It found another James Arthur Balfour in George W. Bush, whose abandonment of the so-called peace process could paradoxically promote the search for different and more creative solutions.

By 2000, a new discourse was already developing about a broader social-economic struggle for equal rights, equal citizenship, and equal legitimacy within a single Israeli/Palestinian polity. Different versions, either a democratic, secular state or a binational state, were being viewed by a growing number of people on both sides as a viable alternative to perpetual conflict. Israeli historian Ilan Pappé said: "In the short term, what people want to do is separate. But it never delivers the goods. All that separation has delivered is more violence... I don't think even a binational state is the last phase. I think it is a democratic, secular state." (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A36478-2004Jul8.html>)

Any realistic alternative to the now defunct Oslo, the Road Map, and Sharon's so-called Disengagement Plan must guarantee the removal of incapacities inflicted on the Palestinians in three spheres: those in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, those inside Israel, and those in the Diaspora. No degree of independence or liberation could be meaningful without removing the legal, social, and economic disabilities which set the Palestinians apart and divide them based on three existing categories. That would require a determined, systematic, and protracted struggle, combining the three segments of the Palestinian people, together with Israeli Jews who wish to be neither master of another people, nor privileged in an apartheid system, nor colonial settlers, who deny the existence of the indigenous natives of the land and wish their disappearance.

The goal of the struggle would have to be equal protection of the law in any such unified state, as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: the illegality of any disparity or classification in protection of the law, the end of group segregation, and its removal from the social, economic, and legal fabric of society. Equality for every single human being in Palestine/Israel would be the motto of the new struggle. This kind of struggle may sound unrealistic and the goal idealistic or utopian, but it certainly has more prospects for success than the whole range of the "peace process," which has already been relegated to the dustbin of history.

WHY SECULAR DEMOCRACY?

BY ELI AMINOV

In the Zionist political lexicon, the term “secular democratic state” is located somewhere between the terms *Shoah* (Holocaust) and *Khurban* (the destruction of the temple), as an impending threat to the Jewish people. On the increasingly rare occasion when a Palestinian spokesperson uses the term, the Zionist propaganda machine alarmingly declares that behind the term hides a Palestinian intention to annihilate the state of Israel. In order to contextualize the debate, this article begins by exploring the term itself.

In reality, most developed nation states are secular democracies: that is, in most states, church and state are separate and citizens elect the parliament on a one-person-one-vote basis.¹

The Zionist leadership regards the idea of a secular democracy, covering the entire area of historic Palestine, in which all citizens enjoy the same political and social rights, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, as anathema. This applies not only to the government of the state of Israel, but to all the Zionist parties along the political spectrum. All Zionist Knesset members, as well as Supreme Court judges, oppose the separation of church and state. In order to understand the material basis for this argument, this article will expose not only the real situation in historic Palestine—the territory where and through the partition of which the state of Israel was established—but also the Zionist interest in opposing a secular democratic state.

I write this article now, ten years since the Oslo Accords, as historic Palestine is awash with blood, in an attempt to chart the only way which, I believe, can point to the end of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

In historic Palestine, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, live some ten million people, over six million of whom are Israeli citizens. This figure includes 1.2 million Palestinians, some

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4.8 million Jews, whose nationality is defined according to the Jewish religion, and members of other religions, of Jewish origin, defined as Jews for statistical reasons, but whose nationality is registered by the Ministry of the Interior as "under consideration." The latter category, mostly immigrants from the former Soviet Union who arrived in Israel with Jewish family members, who number approximately half a million, cannot marry Jewish people in Israel, and if they marry Jewish people abroad, their children's nationality is also registered as "under consideration," even though, for demographic reasons, they would be considered "Jewish." In addition, the territory holds some 3.5 million stateless Palestinians, who live in the territories occupied in 1967 in Bantustans under direct occupation.

The Israeli regime's actions in the territories occupied in 1967 entail not only the murder of citizens and the illegal assassination of those suspected of opposition to the occupation, but also the appropriation of Palestinian land. This appropriation has been carried out continuously since June, 1967, through land confiscations, military edicts, and separation fences. Lands are appropriated not for the benefit of the citizens of Israel, but for the benefit of the "Jewish nation" worldwide. Any Jew, from anywhere in the world, with whatever citizenship, can purchase these lands, at a lower cost than that of private lands, and build on them or trade in them, while non-Jewish Israeli citizens, including Israel's Druze citizens who serve in the Israel Defence Forces (I.D.F.), sometimes even as high ranking commanders in the occupied Palestinian territories, are prevented from doing so.

Thus, because, according to the right-wing Zionist ideology, "it is the right of any Jew to settle anywhere in the land of Israel," that is, in the whole of historic Palestine, half a million Jewish settlers live on lands occupied in 1967, some two hundred thousand of them on lands unilaterally and illegally annexed to Jerusalem and the rest in settlements in the midst of the Palestinian population. The settlements, which are linked by a modern road system built after the Oslo Accords, occupy twenty percent of the West Bank and twenty-five percent of the Gaza Strip. The roads leading to these settlements crisscross the most fertile areas and preclude any potential for territorial continuity among the Palestinian ghettos. These "bypass roads" are, in fact, apartheid roads for Jews only.

In order to conserve the appropriation of lands added to the colonial booty since the Oslo Accords and using as an excuse the current Intifada, Israel is now constructing a new separation wall—supposedly a “security fence”—deep inside the West Bank. This wall, over twice as high and more technologically sophisticated than the Berlin Wall, is intended to conserve and increase the Jewish ghetto and its ethno-religious character and, at the same time, limit the area of the Palestinian Bantustans. More directly, the wall is intended to dislocate a further three hundred thousand Palestinians from their lands in the West Bank and transfer them eastwards. The wall, like other partition plans, partition wars, and partition agreements since 1947, through agreement with the Jordanian Kingdom, the Oslo Accords, or the Geneva Accords, is aimed at perpetuating the division of the Palestinian people and preventing its unification on its land, separating not only Jews and Arabs, but also separating Arabs from the civil, collective, and territorial rights enjoyed by Jews. Above all, this megalomaniac wall represents the essence of the Zionist pretension “to be a fortified (European) defence wall against Asian barbarism,” as envisaged by the founding father of Zionism, Theodor Herzl.

Inside the territory ambiguously termed the state of Israel, whose ever-expanding borders have never been defined, the Jewish ethnic democracy or ethnocracy operates an ethnic regime, inherited from the imperial Ottoman and British regimes. An ethnic regime means that the individual is first and foremost defined as belonging to an ethnic group rather than as the citizen of a territory, governed by a sovereign power, elected by the majority of its citizens. While Palestinians who have Israeli citizenship, defined as “Israeli Arabs,” can elect and be elected to the Knesset, they can only do so on a platform which recognizes the state of Israel as the state of the “Jewish nation,” and not as a democratic state. In other words, Israel is the state of the Jews of Israel, the Jews of Britain, the Jews of the United States, and the Jews of Russia, but not the state of its citizens. I will deal with the discrimination which results from this later, but for now, let me say that the only sovereign power in historic Palestine is the Zionist regime, ruling over ten million people who dream of peace, life, and security, but who are destined to drown in a mire of blood and destruction, under the continued partition of Palestine.

Despite the various partition plans (see Pappé in this journal), historic Palestine is one geopolitical unit, where Jews and Palestinians live together. This geopolitical unit, in contrast to other Middle East states, was constructed during one hundred years of Zionist settlement and the expropriation of its indigenous people. People who support a two-state solution regard the two communities living in Palestine as two nations. If we accept this definition, we must agree that, in actual fact, this territory holds a binational state, even if it is not recognized as such. In reality, however, the Jewish community rules the entire territory and controls all the resources west of the Jordan, while the Palestinian community has to make do with leftovers, even though its size approximates that of the Jewish community.

It is impossible to reform this apartheid state, which is the logical sequel of Jewish settler-colonialism, through parliamentary means. It is impossible to separate the Jewish religion from the Jewish state, just as it is impossible to separate Islam from Islamic states. Ever since its establishment, Zionist Israel was unable to establish a constitution, because it was impossible to institutionalize Zionist apartheid in a written constitution. The state's "basic (constitutional) laws" are deeply dichotomous, moving uncomfortably between democratic and divine law. According to Israel's laws, even if sixty percent of its citizens reject Zionism and decide that Israel is the state of all its citizens, many citizens will be unable to run for elections; the Knesset—the apartheid parliament—accepts only parties which define the state of Israel as the state of all the world's Jews (*Amendment No. 7 to the Basic Law: The Knesset*).

Clearly such an anti-democratic structure should be replaced by a secular democratic regime which recognizes all inhabitants of the territory as equal citizens, in which "the nation" is composed of the entire citizenry, regardless of religion, language, or ethnic origin, in which religion and state are separate, and in which a democratic constitution protects all citizens. Since this structure will not be voluntarily reformed by the current Jewish or Palestinian leadership, this change will only be possible through a deep sociopolitical crisis, to which the Zionist leadership is inevitably leading. When such a crisis occurs and the population is forced to enter the political arena, it should be clear that the solution must be the equal election of representatives to a country-wide representative council, composed of representatives from all groups and communities who live in the

territory, Jews and Arabs alike, including those refugees hitherto prevented from returning. Such a representative council will be given the authority to reunite the divided territory and enact an appropriate constitution, with a view to establishing a state in which religion will be a private affair, in which religious officers will live off the generosity of their congregations (and not as in Israel, where religious officers are financed by the state), and in which Hebrew and Arabic will be equally employed by all public, state, and educational bodies.

In order to make this process work, the representative council will have to protect the population from any attempt to reinstate the old order by the powers which are currently running the Middle East for their own benefit, the United States and its allies. Only breaking away from the interests of the dominant powers will ensure the existence of a stable secular democracy and solve the national question in Palestine, for Jews and Arabs alike.

Zionism and the Jewish State

The sketch presented above is not acceptable to the majority of the Israeli left, the leadership of most developed countries, and most international and local media. For them, the history of Palestine can be broken down into two periods: the "good" period, which ended in June 1967, and the "bad" period, which followed. Some of them believe that the apartheid against the local Arab population originates in the occupation of the remainder of historic Palestine in 1967 rather than being an immanent component of Zionism. Others believe that the current phase results from the failure of the Oslo Accords, a process destined to failure, because it was based on the Palestinian leadership agreeing to be part of U.S.-led sociopolitical arrangements, which left no room for Palestinian self-determination. I would argue that the current phase is an inevitable consequence of Zionist settlement, the 1947 U.N. partition plan, the 1948 war, and support by the international powers.

The state of Israel is the product of the Zionist movement, born in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century, which adopted the anti-semitic assumption that the Jews were a foreign body among the peoples of the world. According to Zionism, the "Jewish question" could only be solved by separating the Jews from the gentiles and settling them in a territory outside Europe, under the auspices of a

colonial power. The various plans to settle the Jews outside Europe included Argentina, Uganda, Madagascar, and finally Palestine. Ultimately the Zionists began settling in Palestine because the crumbling Ottoman Empire allowed the Jewish settlers to elicit the sponsorship of foreign consulates, who expected to use the Jews in order to further their countries' own interests.

The colonization of Palestine was performed by continually displacing the local population from their lands and from labor. The most active was the "labor" settlement stream whose "socialist" ideology originated in the Russian and Polish social democratic petty bourgeoisies. These settlers established communes whose members alienated and displaced the indigenous people from their midst, on the pretext that the "natives" were feudal residues. Thus the colonialists' socialism was an instrument, on the one hand, of unity and deep mutual commitment and, on the other, of displacing the natives. The animosity of the expropriated locals was perceived as reactionary opposition to the settlers' progress and modernism. "Socialist" Zionism became predominant during the 1930s and was the most active force in establishing the Jewish army under the auspices of the British Mandate. It established the Zionist apartheid institutions (such as the Histadrut²) and, due to its policy of separating Jews from non-Jews, gained the support of religious Zionism. Indeed, it was Zionism's messianic element which gave religious Zionism its central place in Israeli politics.

It is worth reemphasising that the Zionist program rests on the separation of Jews from non-Jews and on the myth of an eternal, unique, ahistorical "chosen people." According to Zionism, Jews are a foreign body, as the anti-semites argue, only because they are themselves "a nation." The use of the term "Jewish nation" was deliberately confusing so as to become a new ideology for Europeans of Jewish extraction who had abandoned their forefathers' religion in favour of the Enlightenment and had become modern secular nationalists. Apprehensive about assimilation and the total abandonment of religious Judaism, Zionism undertook to historically represent *halachic* Judaism, albeit in secular, modern terms. Concepts such as "the promised land," "land redemption," "the uniqueness of the Jewish nation," the "chosen people," etc., populated the collective unconscious value system of Zionist Jews.

Now that such a value system has been adopted by the majority of Israeli Jews and a large section of world Jewry, it is hard to

believe that, for a long time, the majority of the world's Jews rejected this value system when it was first articulated. Lucien Wolf, a British Jewish leader, for example, reacted to a Zionist resolution by saying: "I have always fought such views as anti-semitic and now they reappear as Zionist views." Between the two world wars, many walls of European cities were covered by graffiti saying, "Jews to Palestine," and it was hard to know whether they were written by Zionists or anti-semites. And, of course, the Nazis, too, adopted Zionist arguments by also annihilating Jews who had converted to Christianity.

The Jewish state was based on the assumption that the Jews will become "a normal nation" only by having their own separate and defined territory. But after the Zionist movement displaced the local people among whom it had settled, the only links between, say, Russian and Yemeni Jews were the Hebrew language, the Jewish prayer book, and the *Halacha*. In an attempt to avoid true democracy, the fathers of Zionism decided to establish in Palestine a Jewish, rather than a democratic, state. Instead of separating religion and state, they avoided creating a democratic constitution which recognizes all the inhabitants of the territory as equal citizens, so linking the state with the Jewish religion. Thus, anyone wishing to become an Israeli citizen has to be born to a Jewish mother, never mind where, or convert to Judaism. This distinguishes Israel from all other democracies, including those born as colonies. Imagine anyone interested in becoming a French or Dutch citizen having to do it through conversion to Catholicism or Protestantism.

However, the Jewish state is not merely the product of the Zionist movement, which was ultimately a branch of *halachic* Judaism, but also of the interests of those powers which expected to fulfill a dominant role in shaping the Middle East for their own benefit. At first, it was British imperialism which nurtured Jewish settlement and after, World War II, it was the United States which became the actual owner of the strategic resource of the Jewish state.

The need for this strategic resource emanates from its location in the Middle East, where huge reservoirs of oil cannot break the vicious circle of poverty, deprivation, and lack of industrialization and democratization, but furnish cheap energy to the developed world. Israel's role in the region is to guard the status quo and, when necessary, penalize those regimes interested in disrupting the balance of power. Because of this role, Israel receives massive financial

support from the U.S. and enjoys the support of other powers which benefit from the status quo in the region. This is why, despite Israel being a military power which has all sorts of weapons of mass destruction, chemical, biological, and nuclear, which enacts apartheid bordering on genocide on the Palestinians, and which has never missed an opportunity to use its military force, it is not defined as a rogue state. This is the reason why the U.S. supports Israel's demands that the Palestinians recognize it as the state of the Jewish nation, a state in which Palestinians are but temporary tenants and secular Jews are but "the Messiah's ass."³

Although more than seventy percent of Israel's Jewish citizens are secular, they are regulated by *halachic* rules which have been incorporated into Israel's legal statute. Religious laws relating to birth, death, marriage, and divorce, laws forbidding pig breeding and selling bread during Passover, are all incorporated in the statute book. When a godless Danish volunteer wishes to marry an atheist *kibbutz* member, she has to convert to Judaism and become an orthodox Jewish woman. In order to shorten this process, but also because non-Jews are forbidden from living upon "state (national) lands," many secular *kibbutzim* have established "conversion seminaries." (It is, of course, inconceivable for a Palestinian citizen of Israel to be accepted as a *kibbutz* member). Conversions must be done according to the (stricter) dominant Orthodox stream, despite it being a minority religious stream in Israel; people who convert to the Conservative stream are not permitted to join "the Jewish nation."

Thus Zionism has reconstructed, upon Palestinian soil, the East European Jewish ghetto from which its early ideologues attempted to escape. Life in the Middle Eastern Jewish ghetto is pretty convenient, though it is becoming less and less so with time. You can exit the ghetto, but some find it hard to return. An Israeli Jew who spends a few years abroad, acquiring wealth and a foreign passport, will have no problem returning. An Israeli Arab who does the same thing loses his Israeli citizenship and is unable to return. The same goes for non-Jewish spouses of Israeli Jews who immigrated to Israel as a married couple and then divorced. An Arab resident of Jerusalem, who has limited citizenship rights, does not get an Israeli passport but rather travel documents and if he stays aboard more than three years, he cannot return. An Israeli Jewish citizen is unable to marry a non-Jew in "the only democracy in the Middle East," because it does not allow civil marriages and no rabbi,

priest, or *kadi* is allowed to marry such a couple. An Israeli Jewish citizen is not allowed to marry, in his own state, an I.D.F. soldier whose father is Jewish but whose mother is not. When he buys vegetables in the supermarket, he pays ten percent more to cover that ten percent which are destroyed by *kashrut* inspectors, in memory of the tithes paid during the Temple period. Thousands of *kashrut* inspectors in Israel, inspecting markets, restaurants, cattle farms, religious councils, hotels, miquvas, food, pharmaceutical, and detergent factories receive their salaries from the Israeli exchequer. Hundreds of *kashrut* inspectors are sent abroad to inspect the food and drink processing for the benefit of secular Israeli citizens who are not aware that ten percent of the French wine they would consume has been spilled on the soil of Provence or Tuscany in order to save their souls. If they are Zionist atheists they can always console themselves and say, "We know there is no god, but He gave us this land..."

Today Israel is the least safe place for Jews, the place where Jews get killed only because they are Jews. But not only "pure" Jews get killed defending the Jewish state. In September, 2003, Corporal Felix Nicolaiechik, a nineteen-year-old soldier, was killed in a bombing in the Tsrifin barracks. Nicolaiechik had immigrated to Israel seven years previously because his great-grandfather was Jewish. His Christian father, who received Israeli citizenship, asked for a priest for his military funeral, but his request was rejected because "there are no priests in the I.D.F." Felix, who, unlike his father, was not entitled to Israeli citizenship, because he was fourth-generation Jewish and no longer subject to these Nuremberg-style laws, was buried without a religious ceremony, to the chagrin of his father and family. The army of the Jewish state has only rabbis and, to date, has appointed no priest or *kadi* as army chaplain in "the only democracy in the Middle East," even though Muslim—Druze and Bedouin—and Christian Palestinians serve in the I.D.F.

In 2002, the Israeli government decided to erase the "Jewish nationality" category from the identity cards of Israeli Jews. Ministers imagined this as a pragmatic step towards disentangling the mess masterminded by the religious political parties, which demanded that Reform Jews not be registered as Jews, despite the Supreme Court decision. The erasure of the nationality category from the identity papers of Israeli Jews was aimed to please everyone. However, an examination of such accidental acts

demonstrates the failure of Zionism to create a modern nation. The unwillingness to separate religion and state brought about a religion-based nation. The simple notion that the nationality of Israeli citizens could have been termed "Israeli" did not occur, because Zionism does not recognize such nationality. Therefore, the ministers' reluctant decision to erase the category "nationality: Jewish" demonstrates the impossibility of separating the Jewish religion from the Jewish state without abolishing the latter. It was a reminder of the need for a secular democracy, through a representative body of all the inhabitants of historic Palestine, a representative body which would enact an equal constitution for the torn country and establish a state in which religion would become people's private business and the nation would be composed of the whole citizenry.

The Jewish State and the Palestinians

The inferior position of Israel's Palestinian citizens was not based on the May 15, 1948 Declaration of Independence but had already been decided at the time of the U.N. resolution on the partition of Palestine on November 29, 1947. This article does not discuss the political reasons for the partition (see Pappé in this journal), stating merely that the resolution was illegal and anti-democratic, even according to U.N. paradigms, for two reasons. First, the U.N. program for former colonies spoke of secular democracies, and not of ethnic separation. Second, there was no referendum and the inhabitants of the British Mandate territory were not asked. Thus, combining the interests of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the lofty organization left the execution of the partition to the power games between Jews and the Palestinians.

On the eve of partition, the proportion of Palestinians to Jews was two to one, in a population of two million. The military power balance was diametrically opposed: the Zionists had a unitary command structure and some twenty-five to thirty thousand British-trained soldiers, under the auspices of the pre-state armies of the Palmach, the Hagana, and other underground forces. The Palestinians, whose 1936–39 struggle for independence had been beaten by the British with the assistance of Jewish forces, managed to organize, until May, 1948, only twelve thousand combatants, without unitary command structures. The armed struggle began on the morning after the partition resolution, while the British army still

occupied Palestine. In the Zionist annals, the 1948 war is called "the war of independence," in which the Jews supposedly fought foreign powers: the British army and the armies of seven Arab states. This has no basis in reality. When the British left Palestine on May 15, 1948, all the Arab cities on the coastal plane, the Carmel, and the Galilee were in Jewish hands, and only then did the Arab armies invade. The occupation of the Arab cities, Jaffa, Majdal, Lod, Ramleh, Acco, and Bisan, and the mixed cities of Haifa, the new Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Saffed, was completed under the watchful eye of the "foreign" British army. The occupation of these cities, which were the backbone of Palestinian nationalism, and the conversion of their inhabitants to refugees, began the Palestinian *Nakba* (Holocaust), and turned the nation which had been the majority on its own land into a nation of refugees, and the remainder, who lived in villages, to leaderless "human dust."⁴ The liquidation of Palestinian cities began the deliberate Zionist policy of the deurbanization of Palestinian society. The occupation, under the aegis of the British army, was enabled by the supply of armaments by Stalin's regime via Czechoslovakia to the Hagana organization in April, 1948. This military assistance decided the fate of the 1948 war and of the Palestinian people, two-thirds of whom became refugees who are waiting to this day to return to the land from which they were expelled by the Zionist army. The Palestinian people was effectively divided into three: one small part inside the Jewish state, another in the portion of Palestine under the Hashemite rule of Jordan's king Abdallah, who, through a secret accord with Ben Gurion, was able to annex the territories not occupied by the Zionist army, and the third, larger, portion, in exile.

Land "Redemption"

Despite the efforts of the Jewish National Fund, defined as "the caretaker of the land of Israel, on behalf of its owners: Jewish People everywhere,"⁵ as an instrument for "redeeming" the land and expropriating its natives, during its first fifty years, the J.N.F. managed to "redeem" only some one million dunams,⁶ about four percent of the territory. At the time of the 1947 partition plan, Jews held seven percent of the territory, either as private lands or as "national lands" held by the J.N.F. The strategies used by the J.N.F.

to achieve its purposes during the Mandate period included deceit, temptation, bribery, and expropriation.

After the U.N. partition resolution, the British limited themselves to specific areas and the Zionists took off the kid gloves. In the territory allocated by the U.N. to the Jewish state, a process of ethnic cleansing was almost completed prior to the end of the British Mandate. The expropriation of the territory's original inhabitants went on during the 1948 war and after the armistice. The establishment of the State of Israel meant occupying fifty-five percent of the territories allocated by the U.N. to the Palestinian state and transferring seventy percent of the Palestinians from their lands. More than four hundred villages and cities—property, houses, and land—were transferred to the Zionist victors. Of a total of thirteen million dunams, an area ten times larger than what the Zionists had before the war, more than half, or 6,705,567 dunams of farmed land, was robbed, complete with their yield. In addition to thousands of houses, in which more than three hundred thousand “new [Jewish] immigrants” settled later, the Jewish state took over some 7,800 offices, shops, workshops, and stores. The success of this enterprise whetted the Zionist appetite and the State of Israel developed a sophisticated set of land laws aimed at the ongoing “redemption” of land from non-Jews. The legal infrastructure was underpinned by a set of emergency laws, mostly British colonial laws, which, before the end of the Mandate period, the Zionist leadership had termed “worse than Nazi laws.”

From Emergency Laws to Apartheid Laws

In October, 1948, the “Emergency Regulations (Exploitation of Uncultivated Land)” mandated the Minister of Agriculture to take over any uncultivated land and give it over for “temporary” cultivation. Thus expropriated lands were renamed “uncultivated” lands. There were many ways of expropriating the lands’ rightful owners: some were removed from battle zones, supposedly temporarily, others were required, for security reasons, to stay away from lands situated ten kilometers away from the borders with Jordan or Lebanon. But, in most cases, the military government prevented the expropriated from cultivating their lands, which were declared military zones, according to the Emergency Regulations (Security Zones) of 1949. The Palestinians who remained on their

lands had some five million dunams which the Zionists planned to “redeem.” “Uncultivated” lands were redistributed to *kibbutzim* and *Moshavim*,⁷ or formed the basis for the establishment of new Jewish settlements. But although these lands were taken away from their Palestinian owners, the latter remained their legal owners. The cunning Zionist apartheid system needed further laws to turn these lands into ethnic property, closed to non-Jews, while preserving the State of Israel’s private property structure.

The Absentee Property Law of 1950, based on the Emergency Regulations Concerning Absentee Property of 1948, which expropriated the lands of those defined as “absentees,” relates only to the Arab sector, though it apparently expropriated the lands of *all* inhabitants absent from their houses or from Israel’s sovereign territory on September 1, 1948. Thus Palestinians who escaped or were expelled from the battle zones, or who temporarily moved to a neighboring village, became propertyless absentees. This included the Palestinian inhabitants of areas in the Galilee or “the Triangle,” not yet captured by the Israeli army. However, Iraqi Jews, who had purchased investment lands prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, and who, on the relevant date, were resident in “enemy territory,” did not lose their property. The same went for the Jewish residents of the Gush Etzion tract who fell captive to Jordan. In order to declare lands as state property, the statutory Custodian of Absentee Property had to declare their owners absentees and, in the case of Jewish property, the custodian did not do so. This law created the paradoxical status of “present absentees,” that is, Palestinians who are physically present as citizens of the State of Israel but absent in relation to their lands, which were declared “state lands.” These lands were transferred to the state’s Development Authority, according to the Development Property (Transfer of Property) Law of 1950, and later to the Israel Land Administration, which treats them according to J.N.F. regulations, which forbid the sale or lease of lands to non-Jews, even though the J.N.F. holds only seventeen percent of state lands. The Acquisition of Absentee Property Law requisitioned two million dunams, turning them into “state lands.”

The Land Acquisition (Validity of Acts and Compensation) Law of 1953 regulated the robbery of these lands, already distributed to *kibbutzim*, *moshavim*, and housing associations. This law made permanent and legal the temporary land expropriations, enacted through emergency regulations, even though it could be argued these

were no longer necessary. The legal justification for this was the statement that “all lands which, on the relevant date, April 1, 1952, were not in the hands of their legal owners, and all the lands which, since the establishment of the state were used by the authorities for the purpose of development, settlement or security—will be transferred to the ownership of the Government of Israel” (the terms “development,” “settlement,” and “security” are racist terms applicable to Jews only). The 1953 law enabled the Jewish state to take over a further 1.2 million dunams, leaving only 1.8 million dunams in the hands of Palestinian citizens of Israel, though not for long. During the following years, more than half of these lands were expropriated in order to “judaicize the Galilee” and create Bedouin reservations in the Negev desert. Today Palestinian citizens of Israel own less than eight hundred thousand dunams (out of a total area of twenty million dunams).

Land as the Basis for Apartheid

The above-mentioned laws form the legal framework of the Jewish Israeli apartheid regime. Through this policy, the “judaicized” lands became the exclusive property of “the Jewish nation,” instead of the property of the State of Israel and all its citizens. The allocation of this property to a religiously defined (Jewish) collective is the main reason why the State of Israel is not a democracy. The need to preserve this property as belonging to an ethno-religious metaphysical entity prevents the separation of religion and state and the enactment of a constitution which would ensure equality to all citizens. Ultimately, the existence of the “land of the Jewish nation” is the material glue between Zionist racist colonialism and religious Judaism’s racist xenophobia.

The sophistication of the apartheid regime is enabled through bodies such as the Jewish Agency, which, throughout its existence, has exclusively developed Jewish settlements, using national resources such as state lands and state budgets. Between 1948 and 1973, the Jewish Agency established 594 Jewish settlements and not one Arab settlement. At times, the budget of the Jewish Agency, which is destined for Jews only, was larger than the development budget of the Israeli Government. The special agreements between the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency accord the agency national status, but its racist policy is justified by claiming it is a

“private body.” The J.N.F. is one arm of the Jewish Agency. Another way of camouflaging the agency’s work is through laws which discriminate between Jews and non-Jews, and which, without mentioning the word “Jew,” relate to “those entitled to Israeli citizenship according to the legislation controlling the entry to Israel.” This clause is included in all leasing contracts of the State Development Authority and is applicable both to the State of Israel proper, where ninety-five percent of the land is “state land,” and to the West Bank, in which “only” seventy percent of the land is designated “state land.”

The imaginary Zionist lexicon means that the principle of ethnic property hides the exclusively Jewish ownership of land, presented as “collective” ownership, but performed through annulling the collective property rights of rural Palestinian communities. The more lands allocated for exclusive Jewish use, the prouder the Zionist ideologues became at being the creators of a supposedly “new society.” As colonialists who settled in ethnically exclusive settlements, where the “other” had no right of entry, they could self-deceptively claim that what united them and differentiated between them and others was their “progressive” ideology, rather than their racist nationalism, based on principles of ethnic land property. There is, indeed, a similarity between the Zionist attitude to the land and other aspects of the Zionist policy. For example, the term “Hebrew labor” was conceived not as a central tenet of Zionist colonialism, aimed to get rid of Arab labor, but as proof that the expropriating colonial regime was “uncolonial.”

The regulations preventing the use of lands by non-Jews damage the social rights of Palestinian citizens by limiting their rights of abode and occupation and thus blocking their access to sources of livelihood. Furthermore, these regulations damage the principle of property rights, a central principle of liberal civil rights, enshrined by the U.S. Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The latter rights cannot be granted by the State of Israel because ninety-five percent of the land is ethnic property, open only to individual members of the Jewish religion, even if they are not citizens of the State of Israel. This unique form of property law is the reason why the J.N.F. resisted the privatization plan to which the International Monetary Fund committed the government of Israel. The supporters of ethnic

property side with the supporters of private property and defend Israeli apartheid in the name of a national-social commitment.

Boundless "Redemption"

Meanwhile, the Judaization of Arab lands continues. The last land reserves in Arab settlements are expropriated for the construction of exclusive new Jewish neighbourhoods. For example, in the Palestinian Galilee settlement Tarshikha, the last reserve of 1,800 dunams was expropriated for the construction of the Jewish settlement Kfar Vradim. Arab villages of more than twenty thousand inhabitants, redesignated as "towns," are not granted planning permission or land reserves. Though overcrowded, they are not permitted to build on neighboring green spaces, which are reserved for Jewish construction only.

According to the journalist B. Michael (*Yediot Aharonot*, May 23, 1997), for every Israeli Jewish citizen there are 4.2 dunams within Israel proper, while for every Palestinian citizen there are barely 0.7 dunams. In the territories occupied in 1967, the State of Israel has continued its policy of "land redemption." Twenty-eight percent of the Gaza Strip and over seventy percent of the West Bank have been designated "state lands," assigned to Jews only. In the Gaza Strip, Israel continues to own all "state lands," while, in the West Bank, the Government of Israel plans to transfer to the Palestinian Authority just thirty percent of the territory, so that the Palestinian bantustans will encompass a little more than two million dunams. Indeed, on the West Bank, like in the State of Israel, there is 0.7 dunam per Palestinian inhabitant, less than one-sixth of the Jewish per capita area.

The Oslo Accords, which involved a Palestinian leadership anxious to be part of a regional U.S.-led agreement which upheld the security of the State of Israel, were made null and void by Israel, with U.S. support. After September 11, 2001, increasing Israeli confidence in continuing U.S. support made the Zionist leadership careless in relation to its undisguised apartheid regulations. In May, 2002, the Israeli government decided to freeze all Palestinian requests for family reunification and, in September, 2003, this decision was made law by the Knesset. The law states that marriages

between Palestinians from the Occupied Territories and Palestinian citizens of Israel would not accord residency rights for the Palestinian from the Occupied Territories. Thus, if a Hebron woman marries an Israeli citizen from Haifa, she can live with him in Haifa only if she is Jewish. If she is not Jewish, her husband can move to live with her in Hebron or they can have a marriage by correspondence.

Regrettably, the tragedy of the Palestinian people stems not only from the unending appetite of the Zionist leadership and from being ignored by the Arab regimes who support the proposed international agreements, it also stems from various Palestinian leaders, over the past century, who have collaborated both with the region's imperial rulers and with the colonial movements which took over the land. The commitment of the Palestinian leadership to the Oslo process and the Geneva Accords means commitment to U.S. interests, which center on the stability of the State of Israel, a crucial instrument for keeping the region's status quo. Thus, in accepting U.S. hegemony and in obstructing democratic campaigns for change in the region (as opposed to terrorist attacks), Arafat and the Palestinian leadership, in effect, support the partition of the territory and work against Palestinian self-determination. The current Palestinian leadership, while detesting the Oslo process, actually upholds it. The accords continue to exist only because of Palestinian despair and passivity. In a secular democratic republic, where free elections are the rule, it is most unlikely that these leaderships would play a role.

In order to make the State of Israel's ethnic land property a resource available to all citizens, the Zionist political structure must be replaced by a secular, democratic republic. In order to abolish the unfair privileges of the leadership of the Jewish sect and the entire sectarian regime, a secular democracy must be established. A secular democratic state is required in order to resolve the ongoing conflict between Zionism and the native people of Palestine and to guarantee freedom of religion and freedom from religion.

Above all, to allow the Jews brought to Palestine by a colonial movement and their offspring to become a part of a modern nation-state, rather than a threatened population living by the sword, it is necessary to establish in historic Palestine a unified, secular, democratic state.

NOTES:

- 1 There are, of course, several exceptions: the United Kingdom is a monarchic parliamentary democracy, where the Queen, the head of state, is also the head of the Church of England. Similarly, there are many Muslim states, including monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, and non-monarchies such as Pakistan, where Sharia law has been adopted by the state.
- 2 The Histadrut was created in 1920 as a trade union which would organize the economic activities of Jewish workers. The opening resolutions of the first Histadrut conference expressed the goal “to build a Jewish workers’ society.”
- 3 “The Messiah’s Ass” is a term coined by Rabbi Cook when speaking about the Zionist pioneers prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. It denotes people who unconsciously blaze a trail for halachic Judaism.
- 4 The terms “Holocaust,” “remainder,” and “human dust” have been used in relation to the fate of European Jewry under the Nazis.
- 5 The Jewish National Fund was established at the 1898 Zionist Congress with the avowed aim of purchasing land for Jews in Palestine (www.jnf.org).
- 6 Dunam: about a quarter acre. The term “dunam here and dunam there” became a slogan of “land redemption.”
- 7 Kibbutzim are cooperative communes; Moshavim are cooperative agricultural settlements.

THE BINATIONAL SOLUTION FOR THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CRISIS: A REALISTIC OPTION

BY AS'AD GHANEM

During the last three years, since the outbreak of the Intifada and Sharon's rise to power, the fundamental conditions in which the conflict has been conducted are totally different from those that prevailed until the end of Ehud Barak's tenure as prime minister. When the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, they marked the start of a historic process of reconciliation between the two national movements, the Palestinian and the Zionist, and, in practice, the beginning of the implementation of the option of territorial separation between the two states of Israel and Palestine. This stage of the conflict took place in light of Arafat's control of the Palestinian national movement, on one hand, and the pragmatic and conciliatory Labor Party's temporary hold on power in Israel, on the other. The agreement between Arafat and Rabin was made possible by significant support from the United States and major assistance from the Europeans, the Russians, and the Chinese, as well as, of course, the active agreement of Egypt and Jordan and the tacit consent of most Arab countries, with the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia expressing a willingness to extend major financial support.

Since February, 2001, and in light of the Israeli elections and Sharon's rise to power, the option of territorial separation has ceased to be relevant, along with all of the players who had been part of it. Israel has reoccupied the Palestinian cities, strengthened and enlarged the settlements and reinforced the protection of the settlers, closed down Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, and tightened its grip on East Jerusalem. Prime Minister Sharon has repeated his willingness for the establishment of a Palestinian state in about forty percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, knowing that no Palestinian leader could accept such an offer. For two years, now, the parties that supported the separation option have no longer been relevant to events in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

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The Bush administration automatically supports the line sketched out by Sharon and the Israeli government. This administration has no independent line and in practice is not relevant to any fair process of separation. The Europeans, whom the Israeli government suspects of pro-Palestinian sympathies, are excluded from exerting any influence and are not relevant to the conflict; their influence is limited to regular and ineffectual meetings with the parties. The Arab states provide window dressing for an imaginary process, but the positions they stake out from time to time, such as that put forward at the Arab League summit meeting in Beirut, are not relevant for what is taking place in the field; not to mention the fact that they are toothless and have no serious capacity to influence or counteract the Israeli positions.

In Israel and among the Palestinians, the promoters of Oslo and the idea of separation are no longer relevant for what is going on in the field. The Labor Party is irrelevant; at best it can merely provide an attractive wrapper for the right-wing government and its crimes against the Palestinians. Arafat and his cronies are in a hard position. On the one hand, official Israel is abusing them and accusing them of responsibility for terrorism over which they have no control. On the other hand, most Palestinians are disgusted with them and view them as responsible for the stark situation into which they have been forced, accusing them of negligence, corruption, and a lack of concern for the life of the general public.

For three years now, the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis has been waged between two antithetical and belligerent options, with Israeli apartheid on one side and a Palestinian Islamic state on the other. The Sharon government hopes to lead the Palestinians to despair of the possibility of establishing a sovereign Palestinian state. It is working for a total victory in the conflict-riven land and unilateral domination of the entire country, perhaps tempered by a willingness to permit the Palestinians to live in some sort of autonomy (quasi-state) under overall Israeli supervision and control. In practice, construction has begun on the foundations of an apartheid regime, based on the dictatorship of the Jewish majority, with systematic infringement of Palestinian basic rights. In order to realize this option Israel is employing cruel means of repression of a sort not seen in the conflict since the end of the 1948 war and the establishment of Israel.

On the other side, the radical Islamic movements, Hamas and

Islamic Jihad, are pushing for the establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel, perhaps with a willingness to allow Jews to live in that state as a vanquished minority. To advance toward realization of the Islamic option, these movements employ cruel methods against the Jews, of which the harshest manifestation is attacks on Israeli citizens in the heart of Israeli cities.

These three options are not realistic and cannot endure. Separation is not relevant because Israel has crossed the threshold of its willingness to withdraw to the 1967 borders and implement United Nations Resolution 242. Even were the Israeli left to return to power in the foreseeable future, it would not risk a civil war. The option of Israeli control might be possible and in fact already exists on the ground, but it cannot long endure. The Palestinians constitute fifty percent of the total population of the country; they are fighting against Israeli control and are willing to pay a high price. Hence the Israeli apartheid regime will never be stable and will endanger the Israelis just as it harms the Palestinians. An Islamic state has no prospects in the current balance of power in the country and would be rejected by the Jews and a large segment of the Palestinians; it would certainly encounter vigorous opposition on the part of the surrounding Arab countries.

What this means is that we, Palestinians and Jews, must examine the possibility of the fourth option, a binational state. Only Palestinians and Israelis together can sketch this out as a possible escape from the cycle of bloodshed, so they can carry on the conflict in a single political entity while making maximum use of techniques of partnership and compromise on fundamental questions and issues and key positions.

This option attracted great attention among Jews before the birth of Israel and was put forward by Jewish leftists as a solution to the individual and collective existence of the Jews in the country. Today, some Jewish intellectuals are beginning to consider it as a future option for resolving the violent conflict with the Palestinians. Among the Palestinians, too, there have lately been increasing voices that this option is the only outlet for their future collective existence in the country. Those on both sides who consider this option are willing to accept the other, the Jew or the Palestinian, as a partner in a shared state in which the rights of individuals to equality and a life of dignity are recognized, as are the collective rights of both the Palestinians and the Jews to express their national aspirations and

desires in a shared state. Only in this way can there be true concord between the two national movements, the Palestinian and the Zionist. In my opinion, international and Arab parties who wish to be relevant to resolving the conflict must examine this option, too, and orient to realization. Otherwise they will continue to be irrelevant and the conflict will continue to take its toll of human lives and material and other resources, with no realistic solution in sight.

Factors Raising the Likelihood of the Establishment of a Joint Binational State

A working premise justifying separation is based on the principle of reaching agreement on the basis of U.N. Resolution 242, Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I will list below the factors delaying such a separation and perhaps even making it impossible as a political act entailing physical, territorial, and national separation. These factors demand that, sooner or later, we begin to consider a different strategy, namely joint rule throughout the country by representatives of both groups. This seems to be the only practicable way to make progress towards solving the continuing conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians over control of the land.

Different Expectations of Separation

For most Palestinians, separation should lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state throughout the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This state should be able to cooperate on various issues, from a position of power and free choice, with the different states in the region, including Israel. This is the Palestinian leadership's guideline in negotiating with Israel.

The Israeli public is more evenly divided in its position. Most Israelis support a certain separation and a great number also support the establishment of a Palestinian state, limited in its sovereignty and its territory (Arian 1997). The main political parties in Israel, including the Labor Party, which has removed its opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state from its constitution, are not willing to accept an independent Palestinian state, equal to Israel with respect to sovereignty and territory. The perception of most Israelis and their political representatives can be summed up as a longing to "get out of the conflict" and leave the

Palestinians to deal with their problems, while retaining absolute control over security and foreign affairs, with the ability to threaten the Palestinians (and make good the threat) through closures or other punitive measures at any time. Of course, a significant portion of the Israeli public will not accept even partial Palestinian independence or sovereignty. The current Sharon government, at least, and any similar government in the future, will depend upon the support of this minority.

These positions reveal that Israel cannot offer the minimum which the Palestinians require to move from a conflict situation to a peaceable one. Furthermore, there is a high likelihood that this situation will not change rapidly, seeing that the processes of the change in the Israeli position are limited by other factors which prevent separation. These factors are as follows:

Common Issues

There are several common issues between the two parties concerning the two parts of the land to be divided and these call for a common approach. Issues such as water resources, environment, employment, commercial markets, routes of passage, ports, etc., cannot be separated. These shared concerns are currently a major factor hindering separation and will be a major obstacle to its implementation.

On a number of these issues, Israel, as the ruling power, insists that it remains the sole ruler. According to various Israeli sources, Israel cannot share its absolute control over these areas with anyone. Even the government which signed the Oslo Accords could not decide on these issues in the agreement and left them for the negotiations on the final settlement. In truth, no possible final agreement scenario would allow these common issues to be in the exclusive control of one of the parties, even assuming both sides were in favor. Therefore, they will continue to be factors obstructing separation and supporting the establishment of a common system throughout the country.

The Settlements

The Israeli-Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are the result of the settling undertaken by Jews or by the government of Israel since 1967. These settlements today house around two hundred thousand settlers (not taking into account East Jerusalem, which I

will consider separately): ten thousand in the Gaza Strip and the other 190,000 in the West Bank. These settlers, religious and secular, are motivated by a variety of reasons, ideological and financial.

The settlements are spread over large areas and control many parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. If we add the roads leading to them, it becomes obvious that much of the territories are under the control of the settlers and are used by them. This obstructs the cohesion of the areas ruled by the Palestinian Authority and will be a major impediment to the territorial consolidation of the Palestinian entity, which is the supposed outcome of the separation between the two peoples. Furthermore, the settlers, for the most part armed, are a major source of harassment to the Palestinian populace. They are leaders in the expropriation of Palestinian lands and are an inflammatory influence in the various steps taken against the Palestinians. In addition, several Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have been killed or injured by the settlers.

Obviously the Palestinians cannot accept a situation where most of the settlements continue. For the Palestinian entity to succeed, the Palestinian demand for the removal of the settlers must be unequivocal and resolute. Of course, the main question is whether it is objectively possible for the government of Israel to uproot the settlers. The answer depends on several variables. Assuming that the current government continues in power and even gets a second term, there is no reason to expect a change in its basic attitude: obviously it will not agree to uproot the settlers, nor be able to do so. Indeed it will make it much more difficult for any future government to realize such a step, rendering it practically impossible to carry out. In such a case, the two sides would have to examine the possibilities of resolving the conflict while allowing the settlers, or at least most of them, to remain. Such an arrangement is practicable only within a common system and not in a separation of the nations and the country. The settlers and their aspirations have been and will continue to be a major stumbling block to separation and will force the leadership of both peoples to consider other solutions, such as a binational state.

East Jerusalem

After the end of the 1948 war and the establishment of the state of Israel, Jerusalem was divided along the cease-fire line into West Jerusalem, under Israeli control, and East Jerusalem, administratively

a part of the West Bank, ruled by Jordan and, together with the rest of the West Bank, annexed by her in April, 1950. Israel occupied Jerusalem with the rest of the West Bank in the June, 1967 war, and annexed it with an amendment to the Rule and Justice Regulations order, passed in the Knesset already by June 27, 1967. The following day, the government of Israel announced the annexation of about seventy thousand dunams from the territory of East Jerusalem to West Jerusalem.

After the annexation, Israel granted the status of permanent residents to those Palestinians in East Jerusalem who participated in the census held following the annexation. Those receiving the status of a resident could apply for Israeli citizenship and be granted it, provided they met the basic requirements of swearing allegiance to Israel, renouncing any other nationality, and having a knowledge of Hebrew. Most Palestinian residents of Jerusalem still refuse Israeli citizenship and regard their future as similar to that of other Palestinians in the West Bank. They aspire to disengage themselves from Israeli control and be joined to the Palestinian entity ruling the other cities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is also the position voiced by the political leadership of the Palestinians in Jerusalem.

As far as international law is concerned, East Jerusalem is occupied territory and therefore the conquering country may not change its status and annex it. Hence, in international gatherings, Israel refuses to talk of "annexation," preferring the phrase "the integration of Jerusalem in the municipal administration area." Naturally, the Israeli government presents East Jerusalem to Israeli public opinion as an integral part of Israel, subject to all the regulations of Israeli law.

Side-by-side with the annexation, Israel pursues a policy of harsh law enforcement on the Palestinians in East Jerusalem, with the aim of bringing them to accept Israeli control. This policy includes expropriation of lands, a large presence of security forces, neglect in municipal services and planning and building procedures, and large-scale settlement in all the annexed parts of East Jerusalem and beyond. Today, about 180,000 Palestinians live in those parts of East Jerusalem that were annexed, whereas the number of Jews in those areas is 190,000. This is accompanied by a significant change in physical landscape, geographic distribution, and control of the land.

Israel has taken various steps, such as encircling areas of East Jerusalem with Jewish neighborhoods and erecting Jewish neighborhoods within it, encircling it with roads, establishing Israeli government institutions in the lands taken in June, 1967, expropriating land, and strengthening Israeli and Jewish control over them. These steps are clearly and indisputably irrevocable. International law, the stance of most Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and even the specific section in the Oslo agreement dealing with the solution to the problem of control in East Jerusalem as a part of the final agreement are all entirely irrelevant. Israel continues in its policy, designed to serve the national interests of the Jews, and is not willing to consider any gesture towards Palestinian control in East Jerusalem. In fact, even should the sides want redistribution, it is now not possible to carry it out.

As in the previously described reality, where the option of separation is not possible—and where the situation is marked by the determined position of the Palestinians, supported by the Arab world, the Muslim world, and most of the states in the world, as well as by international law—the only possible solution is one of partnership in a framework whose essence is binational control of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, then, could be a model of a binational reality for the whole country.

Refugees

The Palestinian refugees are those Palestinians who lived in Palestine and were deported, or forced to leave for other residences, whether in Palestine or outside, in two major waves. The first arose between the U.N. Partition Resolution 181 of 1947 and the aftermath of the 1948 war. Before and during the war, 750,000 Arabs left their homes because of the intimidating tactics of the Zionist forces. The second wave occurred after the outbreak of the June, 1967 war, when 250,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes. Some of the refugees in the second wave had already been driven out in 1948. In negotiations between Israel and the P.L.O. and elsewhere, the term “refugees” designates those Palestinians living outside the boundaries of Israel, in particular those still living in the countries of the region, and includes those whose origin is in pre-1967 Israel now living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

According to various data, the percentage of refugees within the Palestinian people fluctuates between fifty and sixty percent, that is

between 3.5 and four million, according to the latest survey undertaken by the U.N.R.W.A. (the U.N. special agency for Palestinian refugees). Of that total, seventeen percent still live in refugee camps and eight percent have no stable dwellings.

These refugees have not, for the most part, given up on their right to return to the communities from which they were exiled in 1948 and 1967 and a large part intend to return to the boundaries of mandatory Palestine in the future. The Arabs in Israel, the most moderate of all the Palestinian groups as regards the settling of the conflict, including the refugee issue, still believe, for the most part, that the Palestinian refugees have a right to return to their homes.

International decisions, chiefly Resolution 194 of the U.N. General Assembly (1948), acknowledge the right of the Palestinian refugees to choose between returning to their homes and receiving appropriate compensation for the houses and property left in the country. The Palestinian leadership reiterates at every opportunity the same right. Even the Oslo Accords, the legal basis for the peace process between Israel and the P.L.O., did not reject that right, but rather postponed the settling of the question to the final agreement negotiations. This issue is being hammered out in many joint forums and is one of the subjects of multilateral talks, theoretically still taking place between Israel and the countries of the region, including the Palestinians.

Israel, for its part, has announced that it shall not, under any circumstances, agree to the return of refugees to her territory and has even expressed reservations about the return of refugees to the Palestinian entity to be established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Officially, it denies its responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem, usually blaming the Palestinians themselves and the Arab countries. These positions are upheld by the Israeli public and there are no signs of any weakening in the traditional Israeli position on this issue. It is reasonable to assume that Israel will not agree to Palestinian demands in the future and that this issue will continue to trouble the people of the area, both Israelis and Palestinians, for a long time.

Under the present circumstances, it is obvious that even if Israel were to allow the return of refugees to the Palestinian entity, this entity would be financially incapable of absorbing tens of thousands. Moreover, probably most of the refugees would not wish to "return"

to it, continuing to affirm their right and ability to return in the future to their homes within the Green Line.

In short, any separation will not be able to deal effectively with the refugee problem and presumably only a joint entity could create a Palestinian/Israeli balance, which would necessitate a relative opening of the borders of the state to the return of the Palestinian refugees. This would be a compensation for the absorption of tens of thousands of Jews since 1948. Only cooperation on the issue between Palestinians and Israel, following the foundation of a binational system in the country, could lead to the solution of the refugee problem.

The Image of the "Homeland" for the Jews and the Palestinians

The Jews and the Palestinians see the whole of the country, rather than a part of it, as their homeland. Even Palestinians and Jews proclaiming their willingness for territorial compromise still believe, for the most part, that the entire country is their unique and absolute homeland as far as pure justice goes: Palestine to the Palestinians and the Land of Israel to the Jews. Their willingness to compromise derives from tactical and practical considerations. In a parallel development, the hard-liners in both camps—such as the extreme right and the believers in the "complete Land of Israel" among the Jews and the radical Muslims and radical left among the Palestinians—are not willing to consider compromise solutions and hold that pure justice compels them to fight the other side relentlessly.

Territorial compromise in the form of separation will not satisfy the hard-liners. Neither will it be sufficient ideologically for the compromisers to accept the compromise. Even the Jewish left, in the form of Hashomer Hatza'ir and Ahdut Ha'avoda-Poaley Zion, reluctantly accepted the idea of partition after the establishment of the state of Israel and did not easily give up on the idea of the entire country as one political and territorial unit. For its part, the Palestinian national movement, beginning in the early 1970s, is coming to terms, albeit slowly and painfully, with the idea of separation and territorial compromise. The reason for this pain is the difficulty of reconciling belief in a right to the entire country with the reality of partition. Only a situation in which both Palestinians and Jews could live together in a framework allowing them access to all

parts of the country could satisfy the belief within both communities in their full right to the entire country.

A Possible Model for Jewish/Palestinian Relations in a Binational System

The basic premise guiding me to propose the binational Palestinian/Israeli state is that separation is not practicable: the two nations are bound to live together in a common state. True, the first phase would reflect the balance of power in the area: Jews would continue to control the Palestinians and oppression and discrimination would deepen and grow. Several factors, however, would conspire to incorporate the Palestinians, in terms of equality both as individuals and as a political community, in the running of the state: increasing agitation among the Palestinians, both in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and their willingness to initiate violence against the Jewish rule; the support of Jews in condemnation of the oppression; and the growth of public knowledge of the situation worldwide, leading to international pressure.

In conditions similar to those in South Africa in the late 1980s before the overthrow of apartheid, the Jewish public and its leadership would be forced to recognize the Palestinians as equal partners. They would have to negotiate with their representatives and reach with them an agreement as to the distribution of power and control of the resources. Separate and joint institutions would be established, such as parliaments, governments, and legal institutions. Each national group would have autonomy over its own unique affairs and common matters would be discussed in common forums where both parties were equally represented. The security forces would be comprised of both groups. The representatives of each group would have the right of veto over joint decisions and the control over territory would be redistributed among the members of the two groups. The country would be one administrative unit or be divided into federal and cantonal units, responsible for the running of local matters and subject to centralized rule in the capital, Jerusalem. Jerusalem itself would have a unique distribution of power and control.

These developments, which would promote the possibility of a binational state, would be assisted by the maturation of the peace process and reconciliation between Israel and the surrounding Arab

nations; the peace with Egypt and Jordan, despite problems, is stable and mutually beneficial, and Israel would probably make peace with Syria and Lebanon in the short term. In such a situation, Israel would be sensitive not only to Western pressures but also to its relationships with her Arab neighbors. Even if some of its leaders were to seek to get rid of the Palestinians by a forced "transfer," unlike the situations in 1948 and 1967, it could not be carried out, due to the peace agreements between Israel and its neighbors and the Israeli wish to maintain them. Overall, the peace process between Israel and the Arab states would have a positive influence on the building of an equal and binational system in the country.

Lately, a penetrating discussion is developing, initiated mainly by those supporting the establishment of a secular democratic state. They insist that the nationalist aspirations of both groups must be bypassed and that a secular democratic state must be established, modeled on a liberal democracy, without regard for its citizens' national affiliations. They oppose the binational idea. In my opinion, the proponents of the liberal state do not sufficiently appreciate the power of national affiliation for the two groups. They speak of a utopia which has no chance of being realized. Any future arrangement must take into account the national self-identification of the two groups and the possibility of distributing control and resources on that basis.

In order to promote serious consideration of the binational model, I have made suggestions for a solution to the outstanding issues. I have stressed that an essential change in the character of relations between the Palestinian and Israeli nations is required. This would include a change in the character of the two national movements, Zionist and Palestinian, and their relationships to the respective Jewish and Palestinian diasporas, as well as in relation to the wider Arab national movements. Changes are also required in the attitude of foreign states towards the region and its future and in the nature of relations between the superpowers and states in the region. The proposed binational model paints a picture of inter-community relations entirely and fundamentally different from that of any other option for Jewish/Arab relations in the country.

Relations between the Nations

Today, one group, the Jews, dominates, while the other, the Palestinians, are ruled, the outcome of the struggle between the two

groups since the first Jewish wave of immigration in 1881. In a binational state, the relations between the members of the two groups would be equal, reflected in an agreed distribution of power, resources, territory, etc., either in a proportionate manner or in an equal one which does not take account of the numerical strength of each group. For the dominant group to relinquish its dominance and for the ruled group to assume equality in a binational state would require an amount of pain and perhaps also loss of lives and property. Such a change would oblige the two communities to undergo a major transformation in their attitude to each other and in their educational, social, and political programs.

Changes in Israel and in Palestine

In line with the changes within the two societies, the two states, or the state of Israel and the Palestinian entity, would have to undergo sweeping changes. Each would have to compromise on both the essential and symbolic levels. This would involve changes in the political structure, in the security forces, and in their political, economic, social, and strategic perception of their position and status, both internally and with respect to outsiders. Such changes would be manifested later in the current entities becoming a new, joint entity.

Changes in Orientation of the Two National Movements

In order to ensure the survival of both, the internal and external orientation of the two national movements would have to change fundamentally from a conflict situation, or at least one ruling out any possibility of living together, to one of mutual acceptance and reconciliation. In such a situation, relations between the relevant parties would be fundamentally different from the situation today. This would be true of those between the national movement of the Jews in Israel and diaspora Jewry and also of the relations between the Palestinian national movement, both in Palestine and abroad, and the Arab national movement. The ultimate goals of the movements would be to create the binational system in the country, as a result of which the growth of the separate national movement would become a means, rather than an end in itself.

Furthermore, the binational arrangement would require changes in the nature of its relationship with the rest of the world, in

particular with the major powers, such as the U.S., the European nations, and other states in the Middle East. The binational state would have to balance its ties with these countries.

In more advanced stages of development of the binational regime, as in Belgium or Switzerland, the leading examples (Lijphart 1977; 1984), there would be a need to concentrate on the implementation and development of the following major elements:

1) A broad coalition of the two parties. Stability of the binational state would be dependent upon a strong coalition between a broad spectrum of the elites of both groups and the political leadership representing the majority in each group. Such a coalition would lead the country and be responsible for keeping the peace and for running its internal and external affairs, while striving to reach consensus and compromise on problematic issues.

2) Right of veto for each of the two groups. Running the affairs of the binational state correctly would demand the possibility of either group exercising a right of veto in extreme cases, even in the other group's internal affairs. Thus, the representatives of one group would have to take account of the other group's interests.

3) Fair representation for both groups. The political and public common institutions of the binational system would have to include fair and proportionate representation for each of the groups. Each group would have a "quota" reserved for its representatives. Certain offices, such as president, prime minister, and ministers, would require the two groups to agree on rotation or to have two people in office, one from each group.

4) Internal autonomy for each group. The internal affairs of each, such as education, culture, municipal government, etc., would be administered separately. Such autonomy might be territorial, personal, or mixed, according to the arrangement reached between the two groups. In dealing with overlapping issues or regions of mixed population, representatives of each would have to cooperate in the correct management of even those areas perceived to be separate.

The Present Crisis and the Future of a Solution

At the end of September, 2000, Ariel Sharon, accompanied by various right-wing politicians, Israeli security personnel, and journalists, entered the plaza of the al-Aqsa Mosque (Haram al-

Sharif) in Jerusalem. His visit set off a wave of demonstrations and protests among Palestinians and throughout the Arab world and in practice terminated the Barak government's attempt to reach an accord with the Palestinians and, subsequently, led to Barak's replacement as prime minister by Sharon in the elections of February, 2001. The confrontations between the Palestinians and Israeli security forces and settlers reached a scale unknown since the signing of the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

Hundreds of Palestinians and Israelis have been killed in skirmishes and hostile operations initiated by each side in the other's territory. Inside Israel proper, members of the Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have conducted operations against Israeli citizens; Israeli security forces and settlers have carried out offensive operations in the territory under the control of the P.A. The situation has continued to deteriorate and had reached a critical stage by the year 2003. One notes the following features:

1) The Palestinian side is split. On one side, there is the official position of both Arafat's Fatah organization and the P.A., which advocates presenting the "second Intifada" as a popular struggle of national liberation from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and has reservations about actions directed against Israeli civilians within the Green Line. On the other side, the main oppositionist groups (Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front) hold to the radical line of total struggle against Israel and the Israelis, permitting their members to act both in the territories of the P.A. and in Israel proper, and presenting the confrontation as part of a comprehensive war against Israel and Zionism.

2) Israel has a right-wing government headed by Ariel Sharon. This government asserts that it remains committed to the peace process, but has failed to advance any political program that would make it possible to begin negotiations to end the occupation. On many occasions, Sharon has stated his support for an interim solution based on a long-term accord that would give the Palestinians control of about forty percent of the area of the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians are not willing to even discuss such an arrangement and depict the current government as having no interest in reaching a peace agreement.

3) Officially, Israel continues to encourage Jews to go settle in the West Bank and Gaza, commending the establishment of "new outposts" populated by a few settlers, with the object of asserting control of as much land as possible. In practice, there is an ongoing debate between the two main components of the unity government, Likud and Labor, on the continuation of this situation. In the meantime, however, there seems to be no reasonable prospect of turning the clock back and retrieving the situation that existed before the outbreak of the current round of violence, in September, 2000.

4) There have been no negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians since Sharon became prime minister in February, 2001. The main contact has been through foreign brokers and in the media, replete with mutual insults and accusations alleging the other's responsibility for the situation.

Relations between Israel and the Palestinians have worsened since Sharon came to power. In the field, the complexity of the relations and contacts has become increasingly onerous and the disagreements have amplified. The Palestinians continue to advocate an end to the conflict based on international resolutions, including Israeli withdrawal from the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip, dismantling the settlements, the partition of Jerusalem, and the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland or payment of compensation in accordance with U.N. Resolution 194. On the other side, the Israeli public has stiffened in its rejection of all Palestinian demands as part of a comprehensive solution to the conflict. In practice, the feasibility of separation between Israel and the Palestinians is diminishing and is much less than it was a year ago.

Several options are available to the parties. The most extreme involves unilateral Israeli action aimed at producing another wave of Palestinian refugees fleeing areas adjacent to Israel proper for the heart of the West Bank or even the east bank of the Jordan. Of course this option would produce a wave of Palestinian and pan-Arab resistance and wall-to-wall condemnation in Europe and even North America and would cost Israel dearly, which makes it unlikely. However, it remains possible and is relevant to the current situation. Another option would be prolongation of the current situation for the foreseeable future, with a concomitant willingness by both sides, and especially Israel, to pay a limited price. Such a long-term continuation of the current situation involves more Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the perpetuation of

Israel's iron-fist policy vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

As time passes, isolating the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel will become increasingly impracticable and even irrelevant. This could pave the way for new thinking by many persons on both sides about the possibility of establishing a joint political entity with broad internal autonomy for each group. The continuing situation is liable to augment mutual hostility, but also the mutual dependence between the two. On the Palestinian side especially, more voices can be expected to call for considering the option of a joint political entity that would be the basis for a shared binational Israeli/Palestinian state. It is difficult to envision this today, but a change in leadership and fatigue with the present situation could lead to changes in the scope, nature, and form of the longed-for peace between the two peoples.

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BINATIONALISM OR A UNITARY STATE? A RESPONSE TO AS'AD GHANEM

BY ADAM SABRA

As'ad Ghanem's article, "The Binational Solution for the Israeli/Palestinian Crisis" contains ideas I can agree with and some I cannot. Like Ghanem, I recognize that the "Peace Process" that began with the first Oslo Accords has collapsed in failure. It was impractical from the beginning and, in my opinion, immoral, in that it sidestepped the most basic and just demands of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the endless debates over where to draw the border between two "states" have led to increased violence and hatred. "Peace," it seems, produced its opposite.

Ghanem proposes recognizing that historic Palestine constitutes a geographic unity that cannot be subject to division or partition. On this we agree.

I cannot agree with him, however, that binationalism is the best way to obtain these goals. I have doubts that one can meaningfully compare Palestine with Switzerland or Belgium. The results of Zionist ethnic cleansing and apartheid have resulted in so great an imbalance of power that it is dangerous to assume that the two groups could have equal influence in a binational state. The "Israeli" Jews already control most of the resources of such a state—what would motivate them to treat their "partner" any better than they have treated Palestinians up to now?

It is not clear how the fundamental inequalities between the two groups would be addressed in the binational framework which, as described by Ghanem, allows each community to exercise authority over internal matters. But what is an internal matter? Is the right of Palestinians to lands taken from them along the coast and in West Jerusalem an internal matter, to be decided by the present Jewish majority in that region? This is likely to be a contentious issue, given that "nationality" would be so important to the structure of the state. Admittedly, this would also be an issue in a unitary state based on one person, one vote, but it seems likely that it would be easier for the citizens of a unitary state to recognize commonalities among themselves which would allow them to transcend this division.

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“National” groups and the hatreds they arouse are the cause of the problem. In fact, they resemble more than anything the sectarian groups of Lebanon. Institutionalizing their existence in the constitution of a binational state would only give these groups new lease on life and encourage the citizens of the new state to identify with their “nation” rather than with the larger society. Indeed, it would impede the growth of intergroup alliances based on other interests, such as class, gender, etc. Given that religion is so important to the claims made by both groups, reifying their group identity would likely encourage the growth of religious identity and impede the development of secularism.

Finally, if two nations exist in historic Palestine, what is to stop either from exercising its right to self-determination? It is exactly this approach that led to the partition of Palestine in the first place. If both parties recognize the impossibility of repartition, then why not move beyond “national” groups altogether? If the components of national identity are language, culture, and religion, there is no reason that these cannot be maintained within a unitary state. A state with two (at least) official languages, official recognition for the cultural diversity of its people, and a secular toleration for all religious practice would not only liberate the Palestinians from Zionist apartheid, it would also free secular Jews from the influence exercised by the religious parties over the Israeli state.

Ghanem’s principal objection to a unitary state is that such a solution is unrealistic, in his opinion. On the other hand, with every passing day, it seems to me that such a solution looks more and more realistic. In any case, it is not clear to me why the binational solution Ghanem proposes is any more realistic. It is worth remembering that it was an excess of “realism” that landed us in the situation we are in today. Perhaps it is the time for idealism.

THE RIGHT OF RETURN AND THE UNITARY STATE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE

BY GHADA KARMI

In the last decade I wrote several articles, promoting the idea of a unitary state as the only solution to the longstanding and intractable conflict in Israel/Palestine. This was against the prevailing discourse of the two-state solution as the best possible option under the circumstances, but which I saw as postponing the inevitable. The march of events has only worsened the chances of the two-state solution being implemented. As a result, some of the supporters of this solution have been forced to reconsider and conclude that the only option left is a one-state alternative.

Such conclusions are pragmatic in nature, but the basis for supporting the one-state option should never have been one of political expediency or realpolitik. Rather it should always have been one of confronting the real roots of the conflict, which are not changing variables, dependent on the political climate of the time. The problem underlying this bitter and longstanding conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is the issue of dispossession, of land and of property. The current depredations of the Palestinian people all stem from this initial Zionist act. The Jewish state established in 1948 took the place of the original inhabitants, at their expense, and has tried ever since to justify or deny this fact. And the most stubborn issue in the way of this denial has been the right of return of the dispossessed Palestinians to their homes. Every tactic has been used to fight this right. Israel has produced a new version of history and has tried to demolish all evidence of the Palestinian pre-1948 presence, by destroying villages, changing place names, and concealing historical archives. But the right of return remains outstanding.

The international community, which approved U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194 in 1948 to enshrine this right and affirm what was already accepted in international law, is now renegeing on

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this principled stand and trying to help Israel evade its responsibilities. In the last half dozen years, a host of plans and initiatives have appeared from western sources, advocating the dissolution of the refugee problem in a variety of ways. These include patriation in the host countries where the refugees live now, packages of compensation for them, emigration visas for western countries, and a limited "return" to the Palestinian state, which does not yet exist. As against these moves, there are vigorous campaigns by Palestinians and others promoting the right of return. The Al Awda Coalition in the U.S., with branches in European countries, is but one of these groups, as is the active and effective Badil organization, based in the Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem. Numerous international conferences have convened to affirm the right of return. Many individuals and groups are also working devotedly towards this end and the issue is firmly on the political map.

The right of return is integral to the issue of dispossession, which is at the heart of the problem between Israel and the Palestinians. Any solution to the conflict which does not recognize this fact cannot last. The Palestinian refugees—to say nothing of the millions of others who have been displaced but are not officially so designated—will not evaporate. There are simply too many of them: 3.5 million in the camps and three million outside. However many attempts are made to cheat them out of their right to return, by ignoring the issue, by patriation schemes, or by naked bribery, they will regroup and fight again. That is in the historical nature of such phenomena. In that sense, it is too late for Israel to pretend they can be done away with or that it can enjoy a lasting sense of security while the majority of Palestinians remain dispossessed.

The Two-state Solution and the Right of Return

Over the last two decades, the idea of a two-state solution has become a persistent theme in the discourse on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. How has it dealt with the issue of the right of return? In 1993, when the Oslo Accords were signed, the question of refugees was placed on the agenda for the final status talks, and there was a prevalent view that some solution would be found. In any case, it was assumed that the creation of an independent Palestinian state was only a matter of time and that this would provide a home for at least some refugees. Although the Accords never explicitly said this, indeed they indicated no specific endpoint, this did not prevent the

adoption of this view. In any event, the final status talks never happened and, despite changes on the ground, the official Palestinian position with regard to an independent state remains the same. It has been reinforced by European and U.S. support, verbally at least, and now represents the established view regarding the ultimate aim of Palestinian aspirations. The right of return is now understood to mean limited return to the territory of the Palestinian state with a number of adjustments on offer for the majority of refugees, who will remain outside.

Even without the current situation on the ground, which makes the emergence of any meaningful Palestinian state impossible to imagine, such a solution could never have resolved the refugee problem. The history of the Palestinian state originates with the Palestine National Council (P.N.C.) decision taken in 1974 to establish a Palestinian "authority" on any liberated part of the Palestinian homeland. This was later defined to mean statehood and, since then, the Palestinian leadership has consistently aimed for an independent state, to be set up in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital. But the only position on the right of return in these declarations was the classic one of reiterating U.N. Resolution 194. No one discussed how this would be implemented in the Jewish state, which was unwilling to recognize any Palestinian right, let alone the matter of return.

When Sari Nusseibeh, the director of Al Quds University and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council for Jerusalem, stated the obvious conclusion from this, he was attacked as a traitor by many Palestinians. But what he said was entirely logical: namely, that Palestinian recognition of Israel, as happened at Oslo, meant accepting its Zionist character and this, in turn, would preclude the possibility of any threat to the state's Jewish majority, as would happen through a mass Palestinian return. Hence, he argued, no right of return to Israel was possible within the terms of the Oslo Agreement.

The Arab League accepted "Palestine" as a member state in 1976. In November, 1988, the P.N.C. meeting in Algiers formally accepted the existence of two separate states, Israel and the new Palestine, and all without further discussion of the right of return. In 1997, Yasser Arafat announced that the P.L.O. would declare the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on May 4, 1999. Though this never happened, he still remains committed to the idea of an independent

state “alongside Israel.” Although the exact boundaries of the proposed state have not been defined, despite rumors that came out of the Camp David and Taba talks in 2000–2001, the idea of such an entity has taken firm hold. And it did so despite the fact that the Camp David talks broke down principally over the issue of the right of return and the subject resurfaced at Taba, where the two sides were said to have agreed to an acceptable formula.

There is today widespread, if tacit, acceptance of the two-state idea even in Israel, although there has never been any official Israeli endorsement of a Palestine state. But many recognize this as a probable outcome. As a result, the idea of two states as the preferred solution to the conflict has become so dominant as to exclude all other possibilities. Yet the current Israeli military assault on the Palestinians and Israel’s cantonization and unrelenting colonization of Palestinian land has made it imperative to review this position. Is a Palestinian state in today’s circumstances feasible and, even if it were, how would the right of return be resolved?

The Palestinian State

Irrespective of whether the two-state solution is politically wise or desirable, a glance at the latest map of the Occupied Territories suggests that it might be impossible to realize on logistical grounds alone. The West Bank of today is studded with Jewish settlements encircling Palestinian towns and separating them from each other, crisscrossed by bypass roads built for the exclusive use of Israelis and breaking up Palestinian territory even more. The separation wall, which the current Israeli government is building so vigorously, will encircle every major Palestinian population center. Sharing the territory of the West Bank and Gaza with the Palestinians are over two hundred thousand Jewish settlers and a Jewish population of two hundred thousand in and around East Jerusalem. There is no territorial continuity among the Palestinian areas in the West Bank, which are cut off from each other, from Gaza, and from Jerusalem.

Israel’s vision for a final settlement cedes little to Palestinian aspirations for a state of their own. Israel would keep much of the land and control all the resources. East Jerusalem would remain part of Israel’s “united capital” forever. No Israeli plan so far has offered the Palestinians enough territory for a viable state and, if the current Israeli prime minister’s plans go through, the resulting land will be a

travesty of what the Palestinians had hoped for as their state. After an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, attention will be focused on the West Bank. Here, Sharon's idea is to annex more than half the land with the major settlements to Israel, leaving a "contiguous" territory, that is, one where the Palestinian enclaves are connected by bridges and tunnels, so they can avoid the "inconvenience" of checkpoints. They may, if they wish, call this a state or whatever else they like. Imagining that the right of return could be implemented in such a scenario is laughable.

Without a total removal of the settlements and an Israeli withdrawal from East Jerusalem, the formula hitherto put forward for a Palestinian state, to be set up in the whole of the West Bank and Gaza up to the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, simply cannot occur. In order to realize the aim of the two states, one would have to postulate either a voluntary Israeli renunciation of the settlements and East Jerusalem or an external agency willing to pressure Israel into doing so. Neither of these options is on offer, now or in the conceivable future, and, in any case, the practical difficulties of evacuating all the settlers and disengaging from the West Bank in terms of security, water, and infrastructure would be so formidable as to make an Israeli government of any persuasion unwilling to do it.

The One-state Solution

For these reasons, a Palestinian state as envisaged is not feasible and the situation on the ground makes even a physical separation of the two peoples hard to achieve. Given these circumstances, abandoning the two-state solution in favour of one state, to include both peoples, would seem the obvious alternative. The history of the single state solution on the Palestinian side goes back nearly thirty years. The proposal to create what was then called a secular, democratic state in Palestine was first propounded in 1969 by the left-wing P.L.O. faction, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and formally adopted in the modified version of a "democratic state of Palestine" by the P.N.C. meeting that year. With a few exceptions, the proposal was met with rejection on both sides. The Israelis considered it quite simply a recipe for their destruction and the Palestinians thought it an unacceptable concession to the enemy. It was never followed through by either side and was quietly dropped after 1974, as the option of a West Bank state began to unfold.

In these deliberations, the right of return was also quietly dropped. And yet a moment's thought would have made it obvious that the issue was too fundamental and too important to set aside, even in the interests of realpolitik. In recent times and faced with the current political impasse, the idea of one state for the two peoples has begun to resurface among a small number of leftwing Israelis and Palestinians, albeit from varying perspectives and for different motives. The debate is gaining increasing momentum, as the impossibility and basic injustice of the two-state solution become clearer. Of course, it is not a new idea for either side. Expressed as binationalism, it engaged European intellectual Zionists like Martin Buber, Judah Magnes, and Arthur Ruppin in the 1920s and '30s, who were interested in creating a binational state in Palestine where both communities could live together. Some Zionists proposed living with the Arabs in a cantonization arrangement on the Swiss model. This would give the Jews self-government in the localities in which they lived and the rest of the country could be split up into Christian and Muslim self-governing cantons.

A few Palestinians agreed with the cantonization idea, because they thought it could be a way of halting Zionist ambitions towards creating a Jewish state in Palestine. But the vast majority were opposed to binationalism in any form, since it would have given a foreign minority who had no rights to the country an equal share of Palestine and would enable them to pursue their Zionist aim of domination. On the Jewish side, the advocates of binationalism remained a small, ineffective minority and their ideas were superseded in 1948, when Israel was set up as a Jewish state. The discourse on this theme then went into abeyance, but has resurfaced among a few modern day leftwing Zionists who are concerned with binationalism once again.

In a binational state, Jews and Palestinians would coexist as separate communities in a federal arrangement. Each people would run its own affairs autonomously and be guaranteed the legal right to use its own language, religion, and traditions. Both would participate in government in a single parliament, which would be concerned with matters of supra-communal importance: defence, resources, the economy, and so on. Such a state could be modelled on the cantonal structure of Switzerland or the binational arrangement of Belgium. In the Palestine/Israel case, the cantonal structure would be based on the present demographic pattern of the country; densely Arab-populated areas like the Galilee would become Arab cantons and Jewish ones like

Tel Aviv would be Jewish cantons, and so on. This leaves a number of practical issues to be resolved as, for example, the exact composition and powers of the parliament, the exercise of the right of return for Jews and that for Arabs, and so on.

Implicit in these proposals is a recognition that Israel is in fact something of a binational state already, since one-fifth of its current population inside the Green Line is Palestinian Arab. The democratic, secular state, on the other hand, envisions a one-man, one-vote polity without reference to ethnicity or creed. It would aim to create an equitable pluralist society on the Western democratic model and is opposed to an arrangement of separate communities. Indeed, some see binationalism as no more than the continuation of Zionism under another name. A secular democracy would oppose ethnic or religious divisions. This idea has far fewer adherents and these, outside the tiny ranks of anti-Zionist Jews, like the Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé (see this journal; see, also, Aminov in this journal), are, like myself, mostly Palestinian.

But irrespective of which model is used, from our point of view, the important issue is that a unitary state is the only one that can provide a just and lasting solution to the right of return of the dispossessed Palestinians. There is no other solution, which respects this right and allows its enactment, while also providing for the continued presence of an Israeli Jewish population in the country. More than ever, it is important to defend and protect the Palestinian right of return. Already under threat from the West and Israel, it is now threatened by the top echelons of Palestinian leadership. The Palestinian participants in the recent Geneva Accords signed up to the statement in those Accords which speaks of recognizing Israel *as a Jewish state*. And in an interview with the Israeli newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, on June 17, 2003, Yasser Arafat was reported as guaranteeing the "Jewish character" of Israel in any future solution, a statement he later denied. Nothing could more pointedly attempt to demolish the right of Palestinian return. In these circumstances, presenting a strategy for implementing this right in a way that is both just and humane to all the inhabitants of Israel/Palestine is more urgent than ever.

Objections to the One-state Solution

Irrespective of which system is chosen, the one-state solution is unlikely to find acceptance among the mass of Palestinians or Israelis. The many arguments put up against it are by now well rehearsed in a number of articles and studies. These objections are all valid and deserve discussion and debate. Not least is the accusation that time and effort chasing the unrealistic goal of a unitary state will be diverted from the only feasible option, which is supported by the international community, the two-state solution. And how would the unitary state be created in the unfavorable power imbalance that currently exists?

These questions are hard to answer. There is no real historical precedent to draw on for guidance, though the South African experience is the one usually propounded as a parallel case. The reality is that such issues will be faced when the initial and hardest step is taken: the decision to set up a unitary state. Once that is achieved, the rest must come through discussion and experience. It would be idle to pretend that the Zionist project in Palestine has not created a massive problem for the region. Dealing with its consequences for the Palestinian people will not be easy, but that cannot be a reason for not trying or for aiding the survival of Zionism through supporting the continuation of a Jewish state.

RUSSIANS IN THE HOLY LAND

BY ISRAEL SHAMIR

Quarter of a century ago (time runs fast!), when Israel was far more intimate than it is today, when we did not value privacy and did not know how to spell it, I left my kibbutz in the Galilee and moved into a house in Jaffa to share it with a few families. Such an arrangement was quite common those days.

Once Jaffa was called the Bride of the East and it competed with its neighbours, Beirut and Alexandria. Surrounded by fragrant orange groves, this city of one hundred thousand inhabitants boasted the first cinema in the Levant and housed the headquarters of European companies. Americans and Germans built their red-roofed houses on its outskirts and, in 1909, East European Jews established Tel Aviv further to the north. But Jaffa's days of prosperity were long gone in 1948.

In my days it was (and still is) a dilapidated seaside village to the south of the big city. Bulldozers have torn down every second house and given the town its jagged look. They have also dumped building waste on the seashore, in preparation for big real estate development. Salinger's Esme would love this place of squalor. Still, it is a good place, reminiscent of Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*. Drug dealers' big Cadillacs cruise its unpaved streets; kids in long galabie dresses play on the streetcorners; the bells of St. Anthony's Catholic Church blend with those of St. George's Orthodox Church and with the muezzin call from the nearby Ajami Mosque; fishermen carry their catch to the seaside restaurants for diners from Tel Aviv; Palestinian women crack seeds and chat outside their homes; the smell of fresh falafel comes from market stalls; ten stray cats stare down a king-size rat; the French ambassador returns to his residence; a film crew shoots a Beirut scene. We lived together, one of the few desegregated communities, in a small sliver of land between the road and the sea, a remainder of Jaffa of old.

We lived in a crumbling pink mansion built by a Palestinian trader in the 1920s. It was a classic Arab house: yard-thick walls of soft local *kurkar* stone blocked out the hot easterly wind, wide and high doors allowed bringing in a grand piano without much difficulty, the rooms were spacious, and a broadleaved *shesek*, a native tree with sweet

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apricot-like fruits, besieged our window. Ceilings painted by Egyptian craftsmen rose six yards high above its Italian marble floors. The count's coat-of-arms adorned the front door, as the trader received this title from a grateful Vatican in 1928.

The only entrance to the house led into a spacious hall, big enough for Scarlet O'Hara's maiden dance and, from there, six double doors opened into six big rooms, where we lived: a Moroccan family, owners of a small garage, an Armenian guide, a Russian painter who helped us find the place, a Bulgarian family who ran a small *burekas* stall. The owner's family lived there as well, but now they kept only one room for, in 1948, a Colonel Arad, an old officer in Yitzhak Rabin's command, took over the house.

The Colonel held the legal title to the central hall and was responsible for the rent, paid to the state authority. He had a lot of fun making our life difficult; he did not allow us to pass by "his territory" after eleven o'clock, interfered with our guests, incited quarrels, and carried out the traditional policy of *divide et impera*. He was an East European who set Russians and Bulgarians against Moroccans and Palestinians, a man from the cultured elite against the count and the Russian painter, and a Jew against the count and the Armenian. His strategy worked for a long while—the Moroccans loved to belong to the ruling class Jews; the Palestinian elite was happy to be considered part of the "elite"; and the Russians were rather lost and confused and ready to take up any offer.

Our Israeli lifestyle reminds me of this old Jaffa house. In the center, there are the military and political elites of the land, descendants of the pre-war settlers from Eastern Europe, generals and media barons, the families of Sharon and Barak, Moses and Schocken, Netanyahu and Peres. The side rooms are for the "minorities": Russians and Moroccans, native Palestinians and Orthodox non-Zionist Jews, Ethiopians and Bulgarians. The "minorities" together represent a majority, and a huge one, but the old colonel succeeded in keeping us in eternal strife. One of his preferred tools was "the Jewish State," a device to separate and split the minorities.

We, the dwellers of Israel, never describe ourselves as "Jews," but refer to our community, *eidah* in Hebrew; the only Israelis are the native-born children of the pre-war settlers, but a native-born son of Moroccan, Kurdish, Iraqi Jewish immigrants remains a Moroccan, a Kurd, an Iraqi. "Jews" is an identification used against "Palestinians," as "Ashkenazi" is identification against "Sephardi" or "Mizrahi."

Thus, a Jewish state means a state where East European Jews are on the top, native Palestinians are on the bottom, and other communities vie for their position in between by stressing their Jewishness. This can be seen in shares of property and power: "Israelis" own eighty percent of private property, and hold eighty percent of government ministries, professorial positions in universities, and leading positions in the media.

This stable situation changed with the arrival of the Russians, for one simple reason: many of this community of 1.2 million are not considered "Jews" by the religious law which is the law of the land. Russian Jews intermarried with Russians as much as American Jews with their fellow Americans. What is more important, in the Soviet Union, since the days of Lenin and Trotsky, there was a vast effort to assimilate Jews and it succeeded to a large extent. Russian Jews became Russified, while Russian elites became Jewified.

Russians in Israel (whether of Jewish origin or not) speak Russian, read Russian newspapers, watch Russian TV, and eat Russian pork sausage with Russian beer. What made these ordinary Russians seek the light of Zion?

In Russia, as in the U.S., there are probably at least twenty million people entitled to become Israeli citizens. One does not have to be Jewish. If your daughter from a first marriage was married to an adopted grandchild of a Jew, you can go to Israel with your new family. The former Soviet Republics are in dire straits. Their workers get no salary for months, so many families send their old folk away to Israel, where they get a few thousand dollars upon arrival, a small pension, and public housing, if they are lucky.

The majority of arrivals have had no exposure to, nor were they interested in, Judaism or Jewish culture in Russia. Their Israeli ID cards bear the inscription "ethnic origin and religion uncertain." They are not considered "real Jews" and their dead are buried beyond the fence, in a special plot for those of "dubious origin." The dreadful explosion in the Dolfin discotheque created a visible problem: the religious undertakers refused to bury the dead Russian girls in a Jewish cemetery, even as the Israeli government was bombing Palestinians "to avenge Jewish blood."

In the blessed air of the Holy Land, many of them look for spiritual and religious revival. Judaism attracts only a few, while others turn to the Church for comfort. It is a risky enterprise; by Israeli law, they can be deported for their belief in Christ. They gather and

pray away from prying eyes, but on holidays they throng the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the Nativity Church of Bethlehem, St. George's of Lydda, and St. Peter's of Jaffa.

In 1991, when Russia's future was exceedingly opaque, Israel received a lot of young blood from there. Israel supporters in the U.S. media carried out a two-pronged campaign: they warned of forthcoming pogroms and they promoted the idea of a beautiful, easy life for immigrants. *Newsweek* and *Time* concentrated on the neo-Nazi *Pamyat* group and rampant anti-Semitism. At that time, I was reporting for the *Ha'aretz* from Moscow and interviewed *Pamyat* leaders. I found this sinister organization to number about as many members as the Flat Earth Society. Still, a nice Russian Jewish filmmaker and his wife came to our countryside house to arrange for protection in case of a pogrom. I tried to calm them down, but I could not fight the mighty media machine alone. Ten years later, I met a Russian Jewish lady writer in Jerusalem who told me that she had initiated the rumor of pogroms.

"You Israelis should erect a monument to me," she said.

"Certainly," said I, "any particular reason?"

"I brought you a million Russians—I announced on *Moscow Echo* Radio that there will be a pogrom."

I hadn't the heart to disabuse her. Her announcements would have had no effect if Israel's American friends hadn't amplified them. Anyway, the frightened and seduced Russians rushed for visas to the American embassy and, at that moment, Israel requested the U.S. stop granting them visas. The U.S. gates were closed and this mass of people on the move was forced to go to Israel.

They had a hard time, for the Israeli elite subjected them to the unique Israeli method of "de-development" (as one might call it), a method already tried out on Oriental Jews and Palestinians. The Israeli media described them as a bunch of criminals and prostitutes; they were required to sign contracts and promises in Hebrew which they did not understand; their specialists were sent to sweeping streets or picking oranges. Their rate of divorce skyrocketed and their children were pushed into drugs. In 1991, Israel ceased employing the Palestinians from the occupied territories and yesterday's Russian elite was expected to take their place in low-paid menial jobs. But sheer mass allowed the Russians to create their own state-within-a-state, complete with its own media, shops, and mutual assistance. The Russians survived and figured out the game. The

clever ones went back to Moscow, the adventurous left for the U.S., the peaceable ones departed for Canada. Since then, Israel has been getting mainly old folk, single mothers, and the desperately unemployed.

The Russians are a nice, hard-working, but confused community. They hardly understand where they have landed and incessantly try to compare their situation with that in Baku or Tashkent. A perusal of Russian newspapers shows people at a loss. One writer demands that Palestinians be castrated in order to solve the demographic crisis. Another blames everything on religious Jews, describing them as “blood-sucking parasites.” A third accuses the Oriental Jews of failing to live up to his expectations. They are being taught a brief version of the modern Jewish faith and its single commandment: “Thou shalt hate Arabs.”

Now Prime Minister Ariel Sharon intends to import another million “Russian Jews.” It is possible that, if the American Jewish Friends of Israel put a harder squeeze on Ukraine, ten million Ukrainians may suddenly recover their “Jewish roots.” But it is possible that, in his greed, Sharon will completely undermine the Jewish state, for the Jews/non-Jews dichotomy is not the only possible one. “Jews” in Israel are not an ethnic, cultural, or religious unit, but rather an amalgam of immigrants from various countries, divided by mutual dislike and distrust and united by a mighty propaganda machine which promotes eternal and innate hatred of gentiles. Such a structure has no real life force and can easily break down.

The population of the Holy Land could be subdivided and classified by “Jewishness” into Jews and non-Jews or by country of origin: native or adoptive citizens of European, Asian, American, African stock; or by relation to Christ, into those who accept that Jesus is Christ and those who reject it; they can be divided by class, into poor and rich, working class and exploiters; by language—Palestinian Arabic, Mughrabi Arabic, Modern Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, English, French, Amharic speakers; or by confession—Orthodox, Catholic, Uniate, Monophysite, and Protestant Christians; Sunni, Ahmadie, Alawi, Druze Muslims; Bahai; Sephardi, Iraqi, Yemenite, Ethiopian, Hassids, Litvak and Kookite Jews; or by profession or by place of residence. In other words, “Jewishness” is not the only natural criterion.

For all but the elites, the best solution is the creation of a non-racist, democratic state, in which “Jewishness” has no legal value

Such separation will do a lot of good to members of the Jewish faith abroad: they will be free to deal with the most important thing for every religious man, i.e., with their adoration of the Creator, with their prayers, with their spiritual improvement, and with the study of the Torah. Hopefully, people who tend to consider themselves “Jews” but do not accept the Jewish faith will recognize their mistake and seek their way to God in the way they find fit, for “irreligious Jew” is a concept that survives due to the existence of the Jewish state, as otherwise it would be as meaningless as “atheist Catholic.”

The religious Jewish communities in the Holy Land will prosper as well, for their religious needs won't be intertwined with the civic burden. Without a state-imposed “Chief Rabbinate,” they will be able to worship God the way they find fit, be it Conservative, Liberal, or any other Orthodox or Ultra-Orthodox school they prefer. In the present setup, the Orthodox Jews are discriminated against, forced to go to the army, and their chance of finding a profession is severely curtailed, while the Oriental Jewish communities are forced to accept ways of worship which are foreign to them. The Ultra-Orthodox Jews were always against the Jewish State, for they considered it a revolt against God. Thus, even for religious Jewish groups, the democracy option is the solution.

Probably the united Palestine will not remain a laical state of individuals forever. The fire of the prophets is not dead there. But instead of infighting, the people of the Holy Land will look for an all-embracing way to serve God. To those who say, “But you are dreaming,” we shall reply with the words of Sami Aldeeb, who presides over the Association for One Democratic State in Palestine/Israel: “Do you prefer the present nightmare?”

A Neo-Canaanite Manifesto

We recognise that the people of the Holy Land—whether called “Israelis” or “Palestinians”—are descendants of Abraham and of Bene Israel of old, sharing our common ancestry and united by love of the Land and its Creator. Disestablishment of state-endorsed Judaism removed a heavy obstacle in the way of new integration of the separated tribes. Now is the time to understand the errors of the first Zionists, who recognized their affinity to the Jewish communities overseas but failed to recognize their most important brotherly affinity to the People of the Land. The Zionists were right in their love and

adoration of our home, the Holy Land, but they were wrong by considering it an exclusive feeling. They came back as a Prodigal Son, to find place among their brethren who never left home. By bringing back the Prodigal Son, the family of Bene Israel completes its period of wandering.

Now we shall reorganize life in the Holy Land on the basis of the Union of Tribes, as it was in the days of old. The territorial tribes—North Highlands (Nablus), South Highlands (Halil), the Valleys (Afula), Lower Galilee (Nazareth), Upper Galilee (Safed), Western Galilee (Acre), the Seashore (Tel Aviv), Philistia (Gaza), Shefela (Beth Gubrin), Negev (Beer Sheva), Arava (Eilat), and Jerusalem (from Ramallah to Bethlehem)—will incorporate all dwellers of their respective territories, whether native sons of the land or returnees. Each tribe will possess the highest level of autonomy and there will be no free unhindered population movement between the tribes. Every tribe will rule on the acceptance of returnees, whether of Jewish or Palestinian origin, as it finds fit.

The Temple of Jerusalem already exists. It is the Haram al-Sharif, the great mosque of the city. There is no reason to return to the routine of sacrifices rejected by the prophets and by the Almighty Who destroyed the temple of old, as He prefers prayer to the blood of lambs. Every tribe will decide on its way of worship and mode of behaviour. While the Prodigal Son comes home enriched by all earthly riches and much wisdom, it is the People of the Land who nourished it and preserved it. The representatives of the tribes will gather and establish the New Covenant of the Holy Land. They will erase all laws and ban all ideas causing discrimination. We shall reconstitute the Jubilees of the land and every fifty years all debts will be voided and land redistributed in fair portions to the dwellers of the land. Amen.

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

The white race is a historically constructed social formation. It consists of all those who partake of the privileges of the white skin in this society. Its most wretched members share a status higher, in certain respects, than that of the most exalted persons excluded from it, in return for which they give their support to a system that degrades them.

The key to solving the social problems of our age is to abolish the white race, that is, to abolish the privileges of the white skin. Until that task is accomplished, even partial reform will prove elusive, because white influence permeates every issue, domestic and foreign, in U.S. society.

The existence of the white race depends on the willingness of those assigned to it to place their racial interests above class, gender, or any other interests they hold. The defection of enough of its members to make it unreliable as a predictor of behavior will lead to its collapse.

Race Traitor aims to serve as an intellectual center for those seeking to abolish the white race. It will encourage dissent from the conformity that maintains it and popularize examples of defection from its ranks, analyze the forces that hold it together and those that promise to tear it apart. Part of its task will be to promote debate among abolitionists. When possible, it will support practical measures, guided by the principle, **Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity.**

In Memorium

Herbert Hill died on August 15, 2004, at the age of eighty. In his capacity as National Labor Secretary of the NAACP, he was a frequent expert witness on job discrimination and a key participant in the fair-employment demonstrations at construction sites that shook the country in the 1960s, demonstrations for which he coined the slogan, "If we don't work, nobody works." He so angered some of the most powerful labor unions that they threatened to withhold money from the NAACP unless he was fired, but the executive director, Roy Wilkins, supported him.

Regarding some onetime union allies with whom he had parted ways, Hill said, "I cannot be friends with the enemies of black progress." After he left the NAACP, he became a professor of Industrial Relations and Afro-American history at the University of Wisconsin. He wrote articles and edited books about labor, the law, and Afro-American culture, and was a friend of C.L.R. James, Leroi Jones, and other outstanding figures. He was radical, anti-Stalinist, internationalist, widely cultured, and a great storyteller—a splendid example of the "non-Jewish Jew" (a type now nearly extinct). *Race Traitor* published two articles by him on black–Jewish conflict in the labor unions.

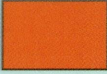
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 Jewish Landownership

 Palestinian and Publicly Owned Land

