

PALESTINE

**CHALLENGING APARTHEID IN PALESTINE:
RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE, FORMULATING A VISION**



EDITED BY
SAMI A. AL-ARIAN

 **istanbul Zaim**
Üniversitesi

Academic Partners and Co-Sponsors

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (IZU),
Istanbul, Türkiye
Prof. Dr. İsmail Küçük
Rector

Center for Islam and Global Affairs
(CIGA), Istanbul, Türkiye
Dr. Sami A. Al-Arian
Director

The Turkish Republic Ministry of Culture
and Tourism
Ankara, Türkiye

Kudüs Platformu of the Association
for Wisdom and Civilization (IMD)
Istanbul, Türkiye
Belkis İbrahimhakkıoğlu
President

The European Centre for Palestine Studies
(ECPS), Exeter, UK
Prof. Ilan Pappé
Director

The Center for Middle East Studies
(CMES), Denver, USA
Prof. Nader Hashemi
Director

The Global Coalition for Quds and
Palestine (GCQP), Beirut, Lebanon
Dr. Muhammad Akram Adlouni
Executive Director

The Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC)
South Africa
Mr. Na'eem Jeenah
Director

Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative, Formulating a Vision

Edited By Sami A. Al-Arian

Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center (CIGA)

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Press

Copyright © 2026 Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center

All rights reserved
Printed in Istanbul, Türkiye
First published as a paperback in 2026

For information about permission to reproduce selections
from this series, write to: Center for Islam and Global Affairs,
Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Halkalı, Küçükçekmece, 34303
Istanbul, Türkiye

Web: ciga.izu.edu.tr
Tel.: +90-212-692-9689
Fax.: +90-212-693-8229
E-mail: ciga@izu.edu.tr

Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center (CIGA)
Director: Dr. Sami A. Al -Arian

A catalog record for this publication is available from
Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (IZU)
Rector: Prof. Dr. İsmail Küçük

ISBN: 978-625-7558-51-8

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Publications, No: 109

No reproduction of any part of this volume may take place
without the written permission of the Center for Islam and Global Affairs.

CONTENTS

	Preface & Acknowledgements	7
	Conference Welcoming Addresses	9
	<i>Mehmet Bulut</i>	
	<i>Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan</i>	
	<i>Fr. Manuel Musallam</i>	
	<i>Sheikh Ekrima Sabri</i>	
	<i>Belkıs İbrahimhakkioğlu</i>	
	<i>Zeinat Adam</i>	
	<i>Nader Hashemi</i>	
1	Introduction - Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative, Formulating a Vision <i>Sami A. Al-Arian</i>	26
2	Racism as Inherent, Apartheid as Expedient <i>Richard Falk</i>	33
3	The Palestinian Nakba: Decolonizing History, Reclaiming Memory <i>Salman Abu Sitta</i>	47
4	Decolonization: The Only Way Forward for Palestine <i>Ilan Pappé</i>	54
5	Denial of Repatriation: A Crime of Apartheid and Persecution <i>John Quigley</i>	69
6	Decolonizing Knowledge on Palestine Through Media <i>Ahlan Muhtaseb</i>	74

7	Narrative Unravelings: A Tripartite Personal Assessment of the Nonprofit, Academic and Grassroots Role in Challenging Israeli Apartheid Propaganda <i>Omar Zahzah</i>	84
8	Examining the Realities on the Ground: A Hard Look at the Facts <i>Helga Baumgarten</i>	92
9	US Foreign Policy and its Impact on Palestine and Palestinians <i>Phyllis Bennis</i>	102
10	Growing US Support for Palestinian Rights in the Context of Historical US Opposition to Zionism <i>Josh Ruebner</i>	110
11	Unholy Alliance: Exposing US Right Wing Movements in Supporting Israeli Apartheid <i>Estee Chandler</i>	120
12	Confronting Apartheid: The Role of Academia, Education, Politics, Media, and Culture <i>Osama Abu Irshaid</i>	129
13	How the Israel Lobby Industry Functions in Academia and Education <i>Rabab Abdulhadi</i>	137
14	Palestine's Lost Cities: Ethnic Cleansing's Devastating Effect on Culture <i>Rawan Damen</i>	165

15	Narrative Unravelings: A Tripartite Personal Assessment of the Nonprofit, Academic, and Grassroots Role in Challenging Israeli Apartheid Propaganda <i>Loubna Qutami</i>	168
16	Grassroots Women's Mobilization in Palestine: A Brief History <i>Maha Nassar</i>	178
17	The Role of Economics in the Struggle against Colonialism <i>Taher Labadi</i>	185
18	Normalization and Resistance in the Arab and Muslim Context <i>Mohammad Makram Balawi</i>	201
19	Normalization and the Legalization of the Occupation <i>Berdal Aral</i>	205
20	Building Transnational Networks for Palestinian Solidarity <i>Na'eem Jeenah</i>	224
21	Towards a Global Vision for A Free Palestine <i>Sami A. Al-Arian</i>	237
	Links to Presentations	259
	Short Biographies of Contributors	266

Preface & Acknowledgements

This volume is the collection of many of the papers presented and submitted in the Second CIGA international conference on Palestine in June 2021. The conference was organized with the sponsorship and active support of several academic institutions and organizations. I'd like to express my sincere gratitude and offer my profound appreciation to the partners and sponsors of the conference, namely, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver in the United States, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Kudüs Platformu of the Istanbul Association for Wisdom and Civilization in Türkiye, the Global Coalition for Palestine in Lebanon, and the Afro-Middle East Center in South Africa. I'd also like to thank the speakers and participants in the conference, whose papers and presentations are included in this volume,¹ as well as to acknowledge the other speakers who participated in the conference but whose contributions could not be included here. It must be noted that the names and affiliations of all speakers and moderators are also included at the end of this book.² Their participation is duly appreciated and highly regarded.

Moreover, it's my pleasure to acknowledge the efforts and hard work of CIGA's research and administrative staff in the organization and administration of the conference, Yunus Akdeniz, Cemile Cengiz, Üveys Han, Fadi Zatari, Übeyd Ruff, Djallel Khechib, Abdalrahman Migdad, Yomna Suleyman, Razia Wadood, Jamal Muhamed Adem, Imad Atoui, Saima Rashid, Taimoor Bin Tanveer, Taqwa Abukmeil, Maryam Khan,

¹ The affiliations and biographies of all the contributors to this volume are included at the end of this book.

² All links to the presentations of the conference could be found at CIGA's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/CIGAISTANBUL/videos>, as well as at the end of this book.

and Omar Fili, as well as the transcriptions of the presentations done by several CIGA interns. This conference could not have been successful without their spirited dedication and professionalism.

Above all, I'm indebted to Ali Al-Arian and Riad Alarian for their help in making this volume a more enjoyable and useful book to read. They have read the manuscript in full and offered meaningful and important editorial suggestions for which I'm deeply grateful. In addition, I would also like to thank the publisher of this book, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Press.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my wife Nahla for her continuous love, sacrifice, and support.

Finally, it should be noted that this volume is published after Toufan Al-Aqsa or Al-Aqsa Flood. However, the papers in this volume will still be as relevant and important as ever. In fact, one could argue that this book could be very useful in understanding not only the reasons and motivations behind the October 7 operation, but also the possible scenarios for the end of this tragic conflict.

Dr. Sami A. Al-Arian
CIGA Director

Conference Welcoming Addresses

Mehmet Bulut¹

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

It gives me a great honor and pleasure to welcome you all to the second international conference on Palestine here at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. It is known IZU organized several conferences on this issue before on Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). Under CIGA, this is our second international conference on Palestine.

I want to begin by thanking our co-sponsors for supporting this important event among whom is the Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism, the Kudüs Platformu, the Global Coalition for Palestine, the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver and the Afro-Middle East Center in South Africa. I also want to express my gratitude to all organizers, which among whom is Dr. Sami Al-Arian, the Director of CIGA and his dedicated efforts and his ongoing contributions at the Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. We have a remarkable set of speakers in this conference who I'm sure everyone is eager to hear.

The theme and title of this year's conference are *Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming a Narrative, Formulating a Vision*. The subject could not steadily be more relevant. It was only last month that the world witnessed in horror the devastating consequences of Israeli Apartheid from Jerusalem to Gaza. In the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, Palestinians faced and indeed continue to face forced expulsion from their ancestral homes in Jerusalem and continuing assaults against Al-Aqsa Mosque. Even during the Holy Month of Ramadan, they were met with many attacks against Palestinians and holy sites. In Gaza, there are 1.7 million people who daily struggle for basic survival in the face of

¹ Rector, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (IZU),

unrelenting Israeli bombardments. And despite ceasefires, Gazans are no safer as they have also been living under siege for 14 years. Their infrastructure is destroyed or crumbling. Their water is unfit for consumption, as they are unable to access it. Basic services such as electricity and internet services are scarce, and in the most dystopian sense they continue to depend on their destroyer for their most basic needs to sustain survival. Multiple reports from the United Nations dating back as early as 2012, stated that by 2020 Gaza will become completely inhabitable due to the Israeli siege. We are now midway through 2021 and Gaza is no longer on the brink, it is beyond it. The material difficulties faced by the Palestinian people on the ground are in many ways constitute big component of the ongoing obstacles for peace that continue to arise in the diplomatic and political arenas in which the Palestinians have been regular subjects but rarely direct participants. Despite the increasing support for the cause internationally, the Palestinians are no more closer to freedom today than they were many decades ago. From the Madrid conference, the Oslo agreements, and the many failed or meaningless “peace negotiations,” which had been taken place over decades. Indeed, the most recent accords taking place now are not even between Israelis and Palestinians, but rather between some Arab states and Israel while completely excluding the Palestinians. This is not a course to lessen or deal with the devastation of the Israeli occupation or siege, but will further entrench it, and help authoritarian regimes in the region in the face of growing discontent from their own populations. Former U.S. President Donald Trump presented his plan for greater Israel as a peace plan, which he called “the Deal of the Century,” but it was without the involvement of any major Palestinian figure, coalition or representative, even though it ironically received the support of several Arab countries. These Arab governments that formalize and normalize ties with Israel act as if they were replacing the Palestinians. Yet, the world watched as these states did little to nothing for the Palestinians when Israel massacred last month entire families in Gaza, bombarding children and women, and destroying

buildings and press offices. They acted with near or total impunity to deepen their collective punishment policy against a captive civilian population. None of this should be surprising due to the devastating events of last month. There has been an overwhelming inaction from so many so-called supporters of peace and Palestinian self-determination as there was much done to further punish the Palestinians without much response. When the Trump administration took sweeping measures to abandon any pretense of being even-handed, they further punished the Palestinians by cutting much needed aid programs to the UNRWA, or by USAID, and to close the PLO diplomatic mission in Washington D.C. Most recently it gave its stamp of approval to the long-standing exclusive Israeli claim to all of Jerusalem by moving the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv. There was little to nothing done to address these flagrant provocations and violations of international law. And while the current Biden administration has taken steps to lessen some of these acts, it must be noted that the United States Embassy still sits in Jerusalem and appears that the policy will stand. The United States government continues to fund the longest and most brutal military occupation in modern times. Yet, there is still hope. There is so much wide support for Palestinian liberation as the voices of opposition to the Israeli apartheid regime, occupation, discrimination and racism roar across the world. Our role as academics is to elevate these voices and to provide Palestinians the space to communicate their vision and hopes for the future. This is especially important given the opposition to free speech by many Palestinians and their supporters, which they continue to face in the west. They have been made to fear speaking about their own suffering, or made to lose their jobs and livelihood if they dared to do so anyway, as they suffer betrayal and abuse for speaking truth to power.

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University will not be such a place of hostility and repression. We are proud to host this conference and we are proud to have such an important institution at our university, IZU, as CIGA has continued its outstanding record of convening international conferences

that include some of the most renown scholars around the world on Palestine.

Among us, there will be an incredible list of Palestinian, as well as many non-Palestinian speakers who have spent much of their careers studying, analyzing, discussing and writing about the Palestinian cause and its many manifestations, as well as upholding the moral imperatives of supporting the cause of freedom and justice in Palestine. Thank you all very much for being here with us, I look forward to very fruitful presentations and discussions in the conference.

Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan²

Dear distinguished guests,

I would like to thank you for attending such a significant event on this really important occasion about the issue of Apartheid in Palestine. *Ilim Yayma* Foundation was established in 1973 by another organization called *Ilim Yayma Jam'eya* (or Society for the Spread of Knowledge), which was established in 1951. So, our roots go back over seventy years. Today, *Ilim Yayma Jam'eya* has over 170 branches all around Türkiye with 160 dormitories serving thousands of students in high school and universities. It is probably the oldest and the most deeply rooted educational charity in Türkiye. In addition, the *Ilim Yayma Vakfı or Foundation* was founded in 1973. We provide scholarships to over 1700 students annually of which, over 400 are distinguished graduate students in universities across Türkiye, while the rest are mostly from our university, Sabahattin Zaim University. Our dormitory headquarters is in the Fatih neighborhood in the Center of Istanbul catering to one percentile of the students going to universities in Istanbul. In 2019, we have started giving *Ilim Yayma* awards, which are today the most prestigious academic

² Chair of Board of Trustees of Ilim Yayma Foundation, Parent of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye.

awards in Türkiye that are given to scholarly work done at Turkish universities in three fields of scholarship. The biggest award is in the tune of \$60,000. We give out these awards every two years to support distinguished scholarly work in our country at any universities across Türkiye, and in the future, we hope that this award would become an international award as well.

The issue at hand in this conference is very important, and it is a very critical event because now we are talking about an apartheid regime in Israel, which has been acknowledged at the widest extent globally. It is well understood and appreciated now that the regime in Israel has been a regime of ethnic cleansing and of apartheid. This was very obvious in the video that many of us have seen of the American settler Jacob in the Shiekh Jarrah neighborhood. It is very clear now that the differentiation between the occupation of pre-1967 and after 1967 does not matter much anymore for the people who live in the occupied territories and even in Israel. So pretty much anyone who has been living under the Israeli regime after 1948 has gone out to the streets in protest of the apartheid system. And it is also really important to acknowledge that the Muslim world and the Arab world are still giving their full support to the Palestinians and that their freedom is globally recognized, despite the Abraham Accords and whatnot. Such wide support demonstrate that the legitimacy of these accords is questionable and they were not embraced by Muslim states around the world.

So, what could now be done for a better future for the Palestinians is to look for innovative ways to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Jerusalem and beyond, economically, politically and culturally, so that they can be strong in safeguarding their identity. Furthermore, I believe this conference is an important event, so I would like to thank CIGA for organizing it. I would also like to thank our university for organizing such a significant event. The *Ilim Yayma* Foundation is going to support any and all initiatives that support our Palestinian brothers and sisters as the cause of Palestine is close to our hearts. So, the least I think we could do

and have been doing in the last couple of years before the Covid era came about, is to organize trips for our students to go and see Al-Quds. I think that the best message we can give to our younger generation is to see and experience Al-Quds in order to really understand the injustice that is going on over there. And we will continue to send our students and provide scholarships to those who stay in our dormitories to visit al Al-Quds. I also think that it's very important for Turkish Jews to also be supporting this and continue to do that. Finally, I thank all the academics and contributors to this conference and I hope we continue to give out this message about the Apartheid regime in Israel and raise awareness about it worldwide.

Fr. Manuel Musallam³

Mr. Bilal Erdogan, Chairman of Ilim Yayma Foundation; Dr. Mehmet Bulut, Rector of Sabahattin Zaim University; Ms. Belkıs Ibrahimhakkıoğlu, President of Al-Quds Platform; Dr. Sami Al-Arian, the Director of CIGA; Ladies and gentlemen, Peace be upon all of you.

I salute you from the Quds, Al-Aqsa and the Church of the Sepulcher. I'm Father Manuel Musallam. I've deeply looked in the eyes of my beloved Jerusalem, I've looked profoundly into her eyes and I told her: Dear Jerusalem; Resistant steadfast Jerusalem; the heavens are almost looking at you to see Al-Aqsa and the Church; I once saw you ascending to the heavens holding the Qur'an in your right arm and a Bible in the left; I then embraced the heavens and saw how beautiful hat embrace was when Jerusalem told me that the heavens have been coming down to help me stay steadfast for the Al-Aqsa and the Church of the Sepulcher; we are Arabs, and I'm a city unlike any other; I'm a city of God, where those

³ Former Religious Figure in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Palestine. Fr. Musallam's presentation was in Arabic

who desecrate me are those who want to shed blood; the Zionists who try to defile me with their atheist and unjust culture; in my streets they shed innocent lives as the voices of those who call for revenge try to overcome and surpass the voice of prayers asking for peace and mercy for the people; and because I'm the city of the Sepulcher and Al-Aqsa, that's why infidelity, atheism and Zionism, and all evil are trying very hard to rip me off my sanctity and to wipe away the footprints of all the prophets that passed through me; and I Jerusalem will ascend to the heavens and ask God using the Qur'an and the Bible to have mercy on my children and bring back those who are in the diaspora and to grant all my people peace. When I've asked the heavens about peace in my lands, Jerusalem told me that I answered the heavens with tears in my eyes; my people are not fighting for peace they are fighting and struggling for the Arab and Islamic-Christian civilization, which is one, and which is my identity. My people and my national path shall be that there is no peace in my lands when my people are crushed in my territory; when their homes are being crushed like spider nets; when my people are being shot; or when they are murdered so people wouldn't listen to the Arab tongue reciting the Quran and the Bible; as homes are being burned and roads becoming the routes of the passion of Crucifixion in my neighborhoods, in Silwan, Ras Al-Amud and Sheikh Jarrah, and those who are suffering. And whoever is trying to help save Jerusalem and snatch it from the jaws of those predators are being accused of terrorism. I'm the Jerusalem of Arabs and Muslims, and whoever calls me the Jerusalem of Israel shall be made ashamed. They only provide us with injustice, hatred, suppression, prison and death. The city of Jerusalem has become the city of weeping, sorrow, and tears. And this is my daughter Gaza that has been drowning in the blood of its own children. But it shall stay steadfast, and it shall prevail because God, righteousness, the truth, and me, Jerusalem, stand with you, O' Gaza. Jerusalem is the rock on which your throne shall rise or fall, and if you do not respect the bells and the minarets of Jerusalem, you shall be doomed to wars and death. And God shall deprive you from the blessing

of Jerusalem and its Al-Aqsa. Arabs, my dear Arabs, and my dear Muslims: Those who have no Jerusalem shall have no dignified free Capital. And those who have no Palestine, shall have no free homeland. And those who don't support the Palestinians are not free. Those who do not recognize the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher shall have no Islam and no Christianity. We believe that salvation shall come first from God. Then all of us must also resist. We shall resist we shall fight with rocks, with the book and the pen, with the axe and the hammer, with the tongue and the knife, with the rocket and the missile, and with the bread loaf and the prayer. We shall fight for the freedom of Arabs and Muslims. And we shall resist and fight not because we want war, humiliation, and intimidation. But we shall resist so that Israel would not continue its war of humiliation and intimidation against us. O' Arabs and Muslims come to Jerusalem come as conquerors like prophet Mohammad conquered Jerusalem on the night of Al-Isra'aa, and like Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab conquered Jerusalem, and like Salah Al-Din entered Jerusalem with his sword giving it victory and triumph. Peace be upon them all.

Sheikh Ekrima Sabri⁴

I pray to God to protect us from all evil, in the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Al praise is. to Allah, and Peace and Blessing be upon the Prophet Mohammad and all the prophets and messengers of Allah.

Dear attendees and guests, Dear brothers and sisters: peace be upon you all.

From the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, I salute you and extend greetings of your sisters and brothers here, who are praying and are

⁴ Former Imam of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, Palestine. Sheikh Sabri's presentation was in Arabic.

standing fast in Al-Aqsa. I thank CIGA and indeed most of research centers that research the past as the present, as well as research what shall come in the future. We used to lack such documentation in the past, but now we are in need of such documentation through video, filming and print. We have to document all the events taking place right now. So this is a very important project and undertaking. Another issue I'd like to point out is the Islamic narrative and the Palestinian narrative that is based on the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and a civilization history of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, Abu Ubaida Ibn Al-Jarrah, Khaled Ibn Al-Waleed Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyuby (Saladin), Sultan Abd Al-Hamid, Mohammad Al-Fatih, Suleyman Al-Qanuni, and all those for whom we should document their history, and whose narrative we should give light in order to refute the forged narrative of Israel in many languages, and not only in Arabic, because we don't want to just talk to each another using Arabic as a medium of communication. Rather we want our narrative and point of review to reach and be heard around the world in different languages. I also want to thank Dr. Sami Al-Arian, who paid attention to the issue of the translations in this conference. We'd like this translation to extend to multiple languages so as our voice would be heard around the world because we are on the right path. We shall not remain voiceless. As Jerusalem was the gate to heavens when prophet Mohammad ascended it. It's also the gate to the heaven and the earth. Why? Because many prophets and messengers had come to Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray behind prophet Muhammad, who was the seal of all prophets and whose message was comprehensive and eternal to all the world. Prayers were actually made a duty; an Islamic duty and a pillar of Islam that night in Jerusalem. Our right is very clear that Jerusalem belongs to its people and generations of Palestinians and of Jerusalemites have shown that they still persist in their steadfastness, in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, responding to the hatred and onslaught of the occupation. We deeply condemn those people who broke into the sacred areas and defiled the place where the Prophet Muhammad prayed, and who talked badly about the Prophet

because he is beyond any insults. God has made his reputation sublime, and God said that he shall defend him against all those who mock or insult him. I will tell those who have no respect to religions that he will always be dignified. It's the hypocrites who don't recognize that. On this occasion, we thank all of those who are contributing to this academic and civilized conference, which gives a shining image to our cause, the cause of Palestine, the cause of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa. And from the religious perspective, when we say Jerusalem, we mean Palestine and Al-Aqsa. And when we say Palestine, we mean Al-Aqsa and Jerusalem. And when we say Al-Aqsa we mean Palestine and Jerusalem as well. All the holy texts do not recognize any difference between Palestine, Jerusalem, and Al-Aqsa. Once again, I would like to thank you all, brothers and sisters, and to thank all the speakers, panelists and translators. May God be with all those who strive. God said strive and He shall reward you. Peace be upon you all.

Belkıs İbrahimhakkıoğlu⁵

I greet all participants. Today, we are discussing an issue, which should have been resolved a long time ago, which I am sorry to say. On the other hand, I am happy that we are discussing a just cause and that we do not take the easy way out or say we don't care. I'm happy for that and grateful to you. We could not say we don't care what happens, but thank God that we did not say so. Such meetings are an indication that despite everything, war, occupation, intimidation, the pandemic, or even the risk of giving up our time or personal interest, we are still here. When we examine history, humans have had the experience of creating new and beautiful things. Since the world was created, we've gone through rings of fire, which should have given us this experience already. Things that I believe had

⁵ President of Kudüs Platformu, İstanbul, Türkiye. Ms. İbrahimhakkıoğlu's presentation was in Turkish.

been left behind a long time ago to experience. Socialism and nationalism are things that we should have left behind. The world was not able to recover from that wound yet. But despite that, as we have heard the eloquent words of Fr. Musallam. Palestine is a holy place and an important land. But the land that kissed the feet of prophets is today experiencing so such violence. But should this have been the case? Should we have witnessed this much violence in the holy land where there have been many civilizations throughout history that learned from and influenced each other? In fact, this violence does not suit this sacred place. We've even been unable to name things that are being experienced today in Palestine. We cannot call it war because war requires two armies. But in this case, there is no two armies in the terms of equipment or training. We do not have two armies. On one hand we have an army. And on the other, children, elderly, women, a small amount of young men if they haven't been killed already. Sometimes people call it occupation. But that is only an illusion on the map like playing a game. Walls are being erected everywhere. The entrance of Al-Aqsa is open one moment but closed the next. It's impossible for many to leave their homes. All of this is an unjust occupation and unlawful war. In a world of 8 billion, it puts a shame on our consciousness. But there are still a lot people in the world, who keep their hearts with the innocent there. But those people are being disrespected. In this case, there are so many arbitrary bans or other unjust practices that we don't even know what to name them. It seems that Israelis are looking to have new slaves as they forgot their own slavery. Perhaps, we should remind them that Moses was sent to address the hearts and minds of those selves. But he also told the truth and facing up against Pharaoh. Israel has already forgotten all of this. They claim that their land has been promised to them, but they are trying to take pieces out of it just like a Pharaoh would do. The Israelites were asked not to worship anyone but God, and to act kindly to the poor, to be kind to parents and the elderly, to speak the truth and pray piously, and to give alms. But except for very few, they do not follow such instructions. To

command good, do not forget when you read the book, to learn the lessons. All such examples we learn in Surat Al-Baqara from the Quran (*Chapter 2: The Cow*). When it comes to human dignity, they should actually be shared by everyone. Israel is pretending to be a civilization and with such evil acts. It has always been disregarding the warnings that it receives. As Turkish people, we have an important poet called Karacaoğlu, where we have memorized important parts from his poems. He says that existence requires things to exist. We have an international organization, called the U.N. When we hear about it, we know it exists. We have read about it since our childhood. But we do not see any influence of its existence. Does it really exist? Is it really fulfilling the requirements of its existence or is it losing track of reality? If it does exist, why does it have no influence? And why is it just acting like the issue will be resolved soon, yet it's still very far from being resolved? None of the resolutions passed were enforced by the U.N. It has passed hundreds of resolutions but so far none of them implemented. Across the Muslim world and beyond, people see the suffering of the Palestinians because of the U.N failure. Does it perhaps see Israel as being actually innocent and not fighting civilians but armed terrorists? Such lies are claimed in order to deceive the world. The truth is being distorted as people are not given the opportunity to speak the truth. People live on earth under the sky in order for humans to be dignified creatures. But only when we care for the other, for the problems of others, we'll be human. Our existence cannot only be limited to ourselves. Human beings were created on such social solidarity. We become greener when we give water to others. This is not only a favor for the people of Palestine. But as we take up the cause of Palestine, we are also doing a favor to ourselves because when we have people living in peace around us, then we are living in peace. How many years will we talk about peace in this place? For example, unfortunately Art, sports, trade, travelling are not experienced in the land because of fear. They are experiencing the lack of peace in their own homeland, in the land of their ancestors. Palestinian children today do not have proper

education. Elderly Palestinians cannot safely leave their homes or watch their children play in the streets. Old women who enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque to pray, have to endure instead the noise of the bombs. Women, who try to pick fruits from their fields, see settlers threatening with guns. Fathers coming back home from work are not sure whether they would reach their homes safely. All of these things are experienced by the people in Palestine. And they continue on a daily basis. All of the things mentioned here, had they been in our dreams, we would call it a nightmare. Yet, these are things that are experienced everyday by ordinary Palestinians. They are denied their present. And they do not have the opportunity to hope for the future. Let's think a little bit about what we are having to discuss here. It's an embarrassment that this taking place in the world before our own eyes. We need real peace. But I'm not talking about peace as utopia. We know that world history is full of many deplorable examples. But still, we have not yet arrived at the end of our story in Palestine. Our nation has not given up the struggle in Palestine, even if everyone does. And when it comes to not giving up, we have an important saying in Turkish, *we can't lose hope as long as We live*. So, let's stand up together and heal all those wounds and let's do this together. Being human requires dignity. And we should show this to the whole world. And if we do so, the world would know that we are human and it will salute us. We would then be the most dignified of all creation. Thank you very much.

Zeinat Adam⁶

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, The Merciful

I'd like first to thank Dr. Sami Al-Arian, the Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center (CIGA), and to the co sponsors and partners to this important

⁶ Afro-Middle East Center (AMEC), South Africa.

conference. We have an impressive lineup of speakers on an issue that is critical at this time. The Afro-Middle East Center is the only specialized think tank that is based in South Africa that focuses on the MENA region. And we're honored to be a cosponsor to this conference. The previous speakers have eloquently contextualized the geopolitical situation that Palestinians find themselves in at the present. We've also been enlightened to the religious significance of the holy land as well as our collective responsibilities towards our brethren in Palestine. Emerging from our own legacy of apartheid, we are acutely aware of the institutionalization and legalization of a system of deep discrimination and dehumanization of one group of people over another. In fact, one of the architects of apartheid in South Africa General Jan Smuts played an integral role in the Balfour declaration. Ever since 1948, the concurrent and parallel moves towards settler colonialism was inextricable. What we experienced in South Africa has been replicated in more brutal forms in Palestine. While we navigate a post-apartheid era, we remain in solidarity with the Palestinians, and with other marginalized communities around the world, who are subjected to ongoing forms of apartheid. This year the Palestinian quest for an end to apartheid has gained momentum, and the world has been forced to set up and recognize the atrocities committed in the name of defense of an occupying settler-colonial racist state. The deception employed by the Zionist entity is no longer a smokescreen behind which they are able to hide. Instead of thorough social media and through the consistent acts of resistance by brave Palestinians, a turning point has come. We are looking forward to the critical and thought-provoking discussions ahead of us in this conference. The diverse line of presenters from academics to practitioners and media experts are sure to encourage fresh insight in understanding the prevailing situation, and how we may support the Palestinians in dismantling the apartheid system and crafting a new path forward. As we navigate this, we must also apply our minds to the role of the solidarity movements, and to the holding of a state infrastructure that is rights-based with good governance and

transparency. We must also consider risks and threats caused not only by the settler colonial system, but also by the collaborators and enablers of the occupation who are willing to forsake the Palestinians and forfeit rights to Al-Quds and the inalienable right of return. Understating the international instruments of law at our disposal to combat the racist system including the UN resolutions and the international criminal court as well as local and regional legal repositories is imperative despite our disillusionment with international systems that have thus far failed the Palestinians. As our access to the media allow citizen journalists to actively document the atrocities, broadcasting, live-tweeting, and TikTok-ing their personal stories, the outrage of the general public and key decisions makers around the world has been notable. We must ensure that we utilize these tools innovatively and craftily. For me personally, I'm quite excited to hear from the creative artists, award-winning writers and filmmakers in this conference, who will skillfully be telling their stories that need to be heard and would be getting out to a global audience. I'm looking forward to the discussions on behalf of the Afro-Middle East Center and wish all the presenters and attendees a successful conference.

Nader Hashemi⁷

Thank you very much for the hard work that everyone has put into organizing this conference. This conference on Palestine could not be happening at a more appropriate time. Forty days ago, roughly, everyone thought the question of Palestine was over. It was a broad view that Israel had effectively won, that the Abraham accords between Israel and various Arab authoritarian regimes were the way forward, and that the plight and suffering of the Palestinian people no longer mattered. Well, everything changed in those ten days between May 11th and May 20th, 2021. I think

⁷ Center for Middle East Studies, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, USA.

when the history of the Palestine national liberation struggle is written, those ten days are going to be remembered as an important turning point that elevated the question of Palestine once again to the top of the international agenda. And so, I think the challenge now for everyone who deeply cares about peace, justice, reconciliation, or equality, or for everyone who has an attachment to Palestine regardless of their ethnic background, the key challenge is how do we seize this moment, and maximize this opportunity to push forward the struggle for a just and lasting resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. That's the big challenge so what I'm hoping for is that in the course of this conference that the conversation and the discussion will move beyond simple criticism of Israeli policy, the policies of the morally bankrupt Palestinian Authority, criticism of the Arab authoritarian regimes and western policies. I mean those things are easy to criticize, it requires no courage and no effort, particularly among the participants of this conference and people who are tuning in. But I think what is much more required is coming up with strategies with ideas solutions that can translate this moment of heightened awareness over the question of Palestine into political victories that can advance a just resolution of this conflict. The biggest challenge here, is how do we engage in strategies of mass mobilization that can capitalize on this moment. Here in the United States, as all of you know, there has been a significant shift in public opinion. I think public opinion now across the board is solidly in support of Palestinian rights and solidly in support of the radical shift of American foreign policy. Thankfully, we are starting to see this for the first time in the democratic party. So the challenge is how do we keep this momentum going and how do we pursue concrete and realistic strategies rooted in universal ethics, rooted in international law and a broad conception of human rights to seize this moment. so I'm particularly thrilled and eager to hear from our South African participants because I have long argued that there are huge lessons for the struggle for the Palestinian national liberation; lessons that can be learned and should be learned from the struggle for equality and

justice in South Africa. I think this is a moment of learning. I think we actually do need a separate conference focused exclusively on this issue. How the ANC was able to accomplish victory, when the PLO and the Palestinian leadership has not been able to do so. What are the similarities and differences? But more broadly beyond the question of South Africa, I think there is a lot to be learned from other national liberation struggles in the modern world that have produced positive results but that unfortunately have evaded the Palestinian people. I think that's where the conversation needs to go, and I'm hoping that we can hear ideas. I have my own thoughts and I'm hoping to share them with you when I make my contribution. So, thank you again for the hard work that everyone has put in this conference, particularly those people whose names we don't know as anybody who has organized a conference before knows that there's a lot of people who put in a lot of hard work, but get no recognition because they are working behind the scenes, so I want to salute those people and I'm hoping something very positive can come out of this conference that can advance the just resolution of this conflict. Thank you very much, and wishing everyone a very good conference full of discussion, debate and deliberation.

Introduction

Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative, Formulating a Vision

Sami A. Al-Arian

While the Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip in May 2021 understandably received considerable coverage due to the devastation callously wrought on the millions of Palestinians besieged in the enclave, the events surrounding yet another Israeli war on the Palestinian people provided many outside observers with a more hopeful picture. Unlike the wars on the Gaza Strip in previous years, for the first time Palestinians across all historic Palestine were together resisting the Israeli settler-colonial regime. Demonstrations in al-Aqsa Mosque and Sheikh Jarrah, the protests stretching from Lidda (the town in the territory captured by Zionist militias in 1948) to the West Bank, were aided by resistance efforts from Gaza, unifying a Palestinian movement that has been intentionally kept divided geographically and politically. These events were only a matter of weeks after both Israeli and Western human rights groups had issued scathing reports determining that the treatment of the Palestinians by the Israeli settler-colonialist government fell under the crime of apartheid. It was with these historic moments serving as a backdrop that the Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center (CIGA) at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University organized its Second International Conference on Palestine.¹ Its theme was “*Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative, Formulating a Vision.*”

¹ It was also co-sponsored by several non-profit academic, educational, and charitable organizations from inside and outside Türkiye, including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Türkiye, the Kudüs Platformu of the Istanbul Association for Wisdom and Civilization, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter in the UK, Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver in the US, the Global Coalition for Quds and Palestine (GCQP) in Beirut, Lebanon, and the Afro-Middle East Center (AMEC) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Ever since the advent of the Zionist movement towards the end of the 19th century, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become one of the most intractable struggles in modern times. The Zionist movement has been successful in establishing a settler-colonialist state in the historical land of Palestine by implementing several strategies and employing varying tactics to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, starting over a century ago and culminating in the 1948 Nakba. Today, they maintain a system of military control in the West Bank and a complete siege over Gaza to deny the Palestinians basic political and human rights. Some of their tactics have included the forced expulsion of millions of Palestinians and the denial of their return, as well as their descendants; the confiscation and annexation of territories and holy shrines; the establishment of a security state, where over half of the population in the historical land of Palestine are subject to military rule and discriminatory practices protected by unjust laws; the institutionalization of an ID system based on ethnicity; the establishment of Jewish-only colonies/settlements; the construction of separate roads for Israeli citizens around many of these colonies; the use of hundreds of military checkpoints; erecting the separation wall around the majority of the Palestinian communities, thus creating Palestinian West Bank enclaves; the use of Palestinians as cheap labor; sanctioning inequities in infrastructure, legal rights, and access to land and resources; instituting a discriminatory legal structure, including a marriage law, and the passing of a citizenship and Jewish nationality law; the continuous Judaization of Jerusalem and denial of religious rights for Muslims and Christians; the use of assassinations as a tool to eliminate thousands of Palestinians and other supporters around the world for resisting the brutal occupation; as well as countless other tactics to usurp Palestinian territories and exclude as many of the Palestinians from their historical land as possible. Such strategies and tactics used by Israel over decades have resembled, even surpassed many aspects of the South African Apartheid regime of a bygone era, and constitute blatant forms of

neocolonialism and a new form of an Israeli Apartheid system, contrary to international and humanitarian laws.

The five-day CIGA conference, held from June 18 to 23 in 2021, examined many aspects of the Palestinian issue with emphasis on how to challenge and dismantle the racist system of structural colonization and control in the historical land of Palestine. The conference also attempted to present a comprehensive analysis of the many dimensions of the Israeli Apartheid regime implemented in Palestine. It also discussed some of the most pertinent issues related to the Palestinian issue, including the status of Jerusalem, the Right of Return, the illegal construction and expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the suffocating siege on Gaza, the denial of the Palestinians' political and human rights, and the future of the Palestinian national project and their struggle against Zionist settler-colonialism. The presentations, provided by some of the most renowned academics, speakers, and voices of conscience from around the world, also examined the geopolitics of the conflict and the essence of the struggle, namely the land and the people. In addition, strategies and actions needed to confront repressive and exclusionary policies, dismantling the repressive and racist system, and empowering the oppressed and occupied, were explored and discussed.

This book collects twenty of the most significant presentations from CIGA's conference, though edited for publication, with the hope that they will help foster more discussion on these important issues. The volume begins with a chapter by *Richard Falk* - Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University and former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine (2008-2014)—that powerfully examines the ways in which racism and apartheid policies have been embedded in and are inherent to Israel's behavior from the very beginning. Renowned researcher and historian *Salman Abu Sitta's* essay details how the Zionist colonization of Palestinian lands went so far as to seize Palestinian public and private records. Palestinian anti-colonial resistance, in turn, has managed to exist in nearly every sphere, including

reclaiming and rebuilding a stolen historical narrative, what Abu Sitta calls “translating memory into documentation of Palestine’s history and geography.” The best-selling author and renowned University of Exeter historian *Ilan Pappé*’s essay then provides a necessary framework through which those who seek to dismantle a colonial enterprise must begin to conceive what ‘decolonization’ should look like. Next, *John Quigley*, Professor Emeritus at the Moritz College of Law of The Ohio State University, draws on precedent in international law to demonstrate all the ways in which Israel as an apartheid state can and should be legally challenged in the international arena.

Ahlam Muhtaseb, Professor of Media Studies and the Director of the Center for the Study of Muslim & Arab Worlds at California State University at San Bernardino, then shifts the discussion to the sphere of media. In her important piece, Muhtaseb discusses the ways in which colonial narratives are being deconstructed and challenged in a space where power and control do not rest as easily in the hands of the colonizer state, namely, social media. On the other hand, *Omar Zahzah*, an activist for Palestine with a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), writes on the interrelatedness of converging spheres in challenging Zionist hegemony and advancing Palestinian liberation, particularly in the spheres of academia, grassroots mobilization, and non-profits. He also examines the relationship between academia, grassroots and the non-profit spheres as he argues that the role of the non-profit work is to provide grassroots with resources needed to fulfill their mission as well as to help educate and mobilize the public.

Helga Baumgarten, who has taught Political Science at Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank, then takes the conversation from the realm of ideas and narratives to the efforts on the ground in Palestine, providing a survey of both colonization efforts on the part of the Zionist regime and its collaborators, as well as what she refers to as “bottom-up” Palestinian anti-colonial resistance efforts on the ground. *Phillis Bennis*, a fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington, D.C, writes on the U.S. role

and continuing support for Israeli ruthless actions against the Palestinians, including human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity, without criticism, condemnation, or accountability. In fact, her argument is that the US has been an enabler and a partner in Israel's crimes, a role that needs to be universally exposed, condemned and confronted for any real change to take place. *Josh Ruebner*, Adjunct Lecturer in Justice and Peace Studies at Georgetown University, provides a critical look into shifting opinions in American politics on the question of Palestine. His essay reveals that, whereas unquestionable, bipartisan support for Israel in US government was the norm for years, a growing trend among lawmakers questioning the unconditional aid the apartheid regime receives from the U.S. puts its future in doubt. Ruebner provides analysis from historic U.S. government reports that could provide a way forward. *Estee Chandler*, an activist and board member of Jewish Voice for Peace in the U.S., writes about the unholy alliance that has existed for decades between the Zionist movement and most U.S. right wing groups and organizations. She details the support of these extremist and racist movements and argues for the need to confront their dangerous policies and actions.

Next, the Executive Director of the US-based American Muslims for Palestine, *Osama Abuirshaid*, analyzes the challenges facing activists, academics, and justice-oriented people seeking to end US support for the Zionist regime. As the largest and most noteworthy sponsor of Israeli apartheid, the US is perhaps the main battleground for the Zionist narrative. Accordingly, Abuirshaid provides a discussion on the work being done there and the opportunities available in the US to challenge its support for settler-colonialism in Palestine.

Of course, settler-colonialism is a crime that robs a people of their land, their livelihood, and their rights and dignity. However, *Rawan Damen*, an award-winning filmmaker and media consultant, adds to this with a discussion on the theft of culture, history, and heritage. Her essay focuses on primarily on the great cities of Palestine, like Jaffa, Haifa, Akka, and

others, all of which made tremendous cultural and historical contributions to what shaped Palestinian life and civilization. The theft of this history through various means is the subject of her important piece.

Rabab Abdulhadi discusses in her essay the Israel lobby groups and their relentless campaign in Academia. In particular, she chronicles such attempts within her own institution, San Francisco State University, and shows how they tried to dismantle the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) studies program, that she has headed for over a decade, in order to delegitimize the historical narrative of Palestinians and the decolonization of knowledge as a legitimate and necessary part of the academic curriculum within and outside the United States.

Loubna Qutami, Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, shares an intimate account of the ways in which nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and grassroots movements can all play complementary roles in challenging Zionist apartheid propaganda. Her personal, moving account provides space with which we can discuss tactics to effectively challenge colonial narratives in these fields.

Maha Nassar, Associate Professor in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Arizona, then provides a brilliant overview of the efforts of Palestinian women mobilizing against Zionist settler-colonialism. Her brief survey effortlessly examines both efforts historically and today, giving us a glimpse into the ever-important role Palestinian women's mobilization has played in anti-colonial efforts.

Taher Labadi, a fellow at Aix-Marseille University in France, writes about the development of a "resistance economy" in Palestine. He presents two novel approaches that could revive the Palestinian economic autonomy. The first is to break with the Israeli colonial economy, while the second calls for an agricultural policy that aims at reducing food insecurity that would help in resisting the continuing blockade in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian writer and academic *Mohammad Makram Balawi's*

important chapter examines growing efforts among Arab and Muslim-majority governments to normalize diplomatic relations with the Zionist settler-colonial state. His essay showcases the disconnect these governments seem to have with their own citizens, who categorically oppose recognizing the apartheid state. *Berdal Aral's* essay adds to this important discussion. The politics professor from Istanbul Medeniyet University examines the apparent reasons behind these normalization efforts and challenges their logic. *Na'eem Jeenah*, executive director of the Afro-Middle East Center in South Africa, challenges NGOs, academics, anti-colonial and antiwar activists, as well as advocates of freedom and liberation for Palestinians to build a serious international movement and transnational networks for Palestinian solidarity across the globe. He gave many examples of the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa, that could also readily be applied in the struggle against the Israeli-Apartheid.

Finally, my own essay seeks to provide a framework for the understanding of the Zionist movement's aims and evolution in Palestine, beginning historically and into the present day. This context is necessary as I outline what I believe to be the essential characteristics, or imperatives, that define, or give foundation to, the survival and continuation of the settler-colonialist state. Should these imperatives be effectively challenged, I argue, the apartheid system and its political manifestation would eventually collapse.

Hopefully, these essays will provide a profound basis for continuing the conversation on how to effectively challenge the Apartheid-like state in historical Palestine. The ultimate objective must be not only to restore fully all Palestinian rights, but also to save Judaism and Jews from the destructive path the Zionist movement has been ruthlessly pursuing for over a century in its attempt to ethnically cleanse and uproot the Palestinian people from their historical land in order to establish a settler-colonial, exclusivist, and supremacist state.

Racism as Inherent, Apartheid as Expedient

Richard Falk

From its inception in the 19th century, the Zionist Project was racist at its core, privileging the Jewish people in its vision of a sanctuary that would result in a Jewish homeland to be safeguarded by a Jewish state. This racist dimension became manifest as soon as Zionist energies focused on Palestine, the biblical national home of the Jewish people. Even at the time of the Balfour Declaration, pledging British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel, the project ran up against a strong demographic barrier in view of the reality that the Jewish population of Palestine in 1917 is estimated to have been under 10 percent. In the ensuing period, the Zionist Project focused on encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine with the undisguised goal of changing the demographic balance, which at first encountered little opposition from the non-Jewish resident majority, but gradually over time as Zionist hegemonic goals became more transparent, during the period of the British Mandate, the resentment and resistance of the residential population increased, climaxing in the Arab Revolt of 1936-39, which was aimed at the British as much as at Zionism.

Eventually, both Arabs and Jews turned against the British Mandate, making its administration costly to maintain. The Arabs were motivated by anti-colonial nationalism against both the British presence, especially its tolerance of Zionist demographic engineering, and against the Zionist Project. Jews in Palestine were also motivated in their way by anti-colonial nationalism but of an ethnically exclusivist character, which is what brought the racist element to the fore. This anti-British Zionist sentiment produced terrorist responses when London belatedly sought to manage the growing tension in Palestine by clamping down on Jewish

immigration by imposing annual limits. As both peoples wanted the British out, persisting in its mandatory role after having been weakened as a global power by World War II, the UK turned to the UN to find a solution, having recommended previously their preferred outcome of partition, but concerned that it might not work given the overlapping claims of antagonistic nationalisms. The UN proceeded to form a commission of high-profile individuals who came up with their own recommendations of partition, with Jerusalem set apart as a special internationalized regime. These recommendations were approved in UNGA 181, A/RES/181, Nov 29, 1947 by a vote of 33-13, with 10 abstentions. It should be noted that the UN proposals violated the principle of self-determination by endorsing partition without consulting the resident population by referendum or through consultation with Palestinian community leaders, even granting the absence of a formal structure of indigenous Palestinian governance during the mandate period. Furthermore, no concerted UN subsequent effort was made to secure Israel's compliance with international law in response to Palestinian grievances, aside from resolutions and the rhetoric of diplomats at annual presentations by Member governments at the opening sessions of the General Assembly, defiantly ignored by the Israeli government anyway. The frustrations of those supportive of Palestinian rights were intensified by geopolitical nullification taking the form of unconditional US shielding of Israel from all efforts by the UN to hold Israel accountable for violations of international criminal law, including those seeking the elimination of racial discrimination in all its forms, such as the denial of a right of return imposed on Palestinian refugees. (See GA Res. 194, A/RES/194, Dec 11, 1948 adopted by a vote of 35-15 with 8 abstentions.)

The separate areas in Palestine earmarked for the two peoples left a majority Arab population in the proposed Jewish state, making the 1948 War not only against the invading Arab armies but also the occasion for a forcible redressing of this demographic challenge to the Zionist vision

of Israel. To sustain this hierarchal structure in Israel would require reliance on many racist instruments of control, discrimination, and exclusion over the decades. The 1917 text of the Balfour Declaration also contained language to the effect that the pledged support of the World Zionist Movement would not be fulfilled at the expense of non-Jewish population groups living in Palestine, but this provision seemed to have had no operative effect on the British administration of the Mandate, nor on the subsequent UN role. British motives were always mixed. Their behavior could be regarded as falling into a classical pattern of imperial self-interest in establishing a strong military presence in Palestine that could provide security for its vital trade routes to Asia, above all India, which elevated the protection of the overland routes and the Suez Canal to a high status of strategic interest. The steady influx of Jews to Palestine was, for some years, consistent with Britain's worldwide preferred policy of divide-and-rule by which it sought to divert the attention of native populations from the injustices of colonial rule by agitating intra-state ethnic conflict. It is also apparent that, even in 1917, European anti-Semitism seemed comfortable with the prospect of a Jewish homeland outside of Europe, which incidentally would mean less Jews in Europe. This contextual element became much stronger with the rise of Nazism, and the acute European persecution of Jews culminating in the Holocaust. The humanitarian tragedy befalling the Jewish people overshadowed all other considerations when it came to the early Western responses to moves to establish Israel as Jewish state.

Liberal democracies in Europe and North America, confronted by the Great Depression and then World War II, were aware that their governments, by and large, had done very little by way of according emergency humanitarian relief to the desperation of Jews during the 1930s, generally denying or severely limiting the admission of Jewish refugees to their countries. Even less was done by these liberal governments to interfere with the overtly racist policies and practices of Hitler's Germany and other fascist and anti-Semitic governments and

movements active in Europe. Against this background, with an Orientalist mentality influencing the principal Zionist and general European perceptions of the Arab population of Palestine, the path was cleared of obstacles to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that the displacement and dispossession of a large number of Arab inhabitants of Palestine in ‘the fog of war’ was hardly noticed at the international level in 1948, much less lamented, outside of the Middle East. Despite the racist character of this expulsion, as exhibited not only by forcing many non-Jewish Palestinians to flee their homeland, but supplemented in a racist manner by permanently denying Palestinians any right of a postwar return to their homes and homeland.

Such racist policies and practices were complicated and, to some extent, obscured by being coupled with the foundational commitment of the Zionist movement to establish a functioning democracy in their new state, including an affirmation of the human dignity of all persons to be upheld by international law and human rights standards. This combination of requirements—Jewish dominance but implemented by laws and procedures that extended the rights of citizenship to all inhabitants, including non-Jews, territorially present within the new Jewish state—obscured the racist character resulting from imposing Jewish supremacy in a predominantly non-Jewish society. Pressures to square this circle explain the overtly racist orientation of Zionism at the time Israel was established. It explains both the ethnic cleansing of as many as 700,000 non-Jewish residents of what became Israel, and it justified in most Zionist eyes the denial of repatriation and immigration rights for non-Jews. The security, and indeed the continuing security, of the Zionist Project depended on maintaining a substantial Jewish majority through time in Israel. These features of the evolving Israeli state deeply embedded racism in the process of state-building, accentuated by the security challenges resulting from the refusal of the Arab neighbors of Israel to accept the legitimacy of the Israeli state viewing it as having been

imposed by Euro-American colonial forces, an encroachment on and threat to the autonomy of the entire region.

A further relevant consideration was the historical context. As Zionism was pushing Palestinians out of their own homeland to satisfy the political aspirations of a settler colonial undertaking, European colonialism was collapsing around the world, including in the Middle East. And so, at the very moment when the right of every people to territorial self-determination was being proclaimed as the legitimate foundation of statehood, it was being denied to the Palestinian people, ironically with the ambiguous blessings of the United Nations via their proffered solution of partition. This paradoxical reality had some ironic side-effects, the most obvious of which was that it generated a feeling of legal, moral, and political entitlement on the part of the Palestinians, and throughout the Arab world and with sympathetic resonances among all non-Western peoples who had experience colonial rule. It also tainted the UN with a role in legitimating Israel, not only in defiance of Palestinian rights of self-determination and over the objection of a growing majority of UN members. The inability of this majority to uphold Palestinian rights was somewhat disguised by General Assembly resolutions supportive of Palestinian claims, but unenforceable, which was bad for the new organization, making the UN seem more of 'a talk shop' than a political actor with the capacity and will to uphold international law as embodied in its own Charter.

These global attitudes of opposition to the Zionist Project should not be considered expressions of anti-Semitism, but reflecting the overriding belief throughout the non-West that the unjust suffering of Jews in Europe should not serve as an acceptable pretext for reproducing such evils by imposing racist policies on another people, who were in no way responsible for the events culminating in the Holocaust. Anti-colonialism fueled Palestinian resistance and this in turn induced security obsessions in Israel, whose leaders dedicated great energy and ingenuity to a demonstration that the Israeli government could reliably safeguard the

Zionist Project from both external adversaries and internal resistance, as well as any combination of the two. Israeli apartheid arose, at least in part, as the almost inevitable response to these concerns, reinforced by an ongoing expansionist Zionist policy agenda, which has been revealed to the growing critical gaze of once unified public support in the liberal democracies, which had long affirmed the realization of the Zionist Project in Israel despite its rights-denying character.

In the period of Israel's existence, the struggle against racism became encoded in authoritative instruments of international law, which expressed the priority accorded to this dimension of the human rights agenda by the non-Western world. This anti-racist attitude displayed its strength by promoting a global anti-apartheid campaign directed against the racist regimes that governed in South Africa and South West Africa (now Namibia). The campaign was given added legal authority by the persuasive reasoning of several Advisory Opinions of the International Court of Justice and a stream of resolutions in the General Assembly. The most important legal milestone was reached in 1963 by the successful negotiation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was treated as a lawmaking treaty establishing universal norms that did not depend on its applicability upon normal treaty processes of ratification. The UNGA singled Israel out for condemnation in the controversial resolution declaring Zionism as a form of racism (A/RES/3379, adopted Nov 10, 1975 by a vote of 72 to 35, with 32 abstentions.) In succeeding years, this resolution was used by governmental and NGO supporters of Israel to engage in UN-bashing, which was effective enough to eventually have the resolution revoked, but significantly without a word of explanation. This left an impression that it was immense pressure rather than behavioral modification on Israel's part that accounted for the about-face by the GA, as formalized by Res. 46/96 in 1991.

The reach and comprehension of racism, as well as the action needed to combat it were comprehensively and authoritatively formulated in 2001

by the Durban Declaration of World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance. The Declaration was to be implemented by an accompanying Program of Action, and periodic meetings, including Durban IV in 2021. The Durban process, symbolically situated in post-apartheid South Africa, and featuring the wrongs of slavery victimizing the African continent, has been viciously attacked and even boycotted by more than ten states claiming its anti-Semitic character. True, many of the statements in the open debate singled out Israel, as did the parallel non-governmental forum, but the Durban Declaration condemned the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, and only called attention to the ‘plight of the Palestinian people.’ It even included an affirmation of a “right of security for all states in the region, including Israel,” further undercutting any responsible claim of anti-Semitism, and yet the denunciations continued in efforts to discredit the Durban process.

It is fair to ask whether there was a non-racist road not taken by the dominant strands of the Zionist Project. Was it possible to share the land as envisioned by the UN in its recommendation of partition after the end of the British Mandate? Would Palestinians, as properly represented, have accepted such an outcome? Would the Zionist Movement have relinquished its guiding dream of recovering the whole of ‘the promised land’? Could the two peoples have lived together in a bi-national state based on racial equality, and would not such a political solution have required the substantial abandonment of Zionism as a political organizing ideology? It is not very productive to dwell on such historical counterfactuals beyond taking note of how difficult to implement these non-racist alternatives now seem.

Israeli Apartheid: A Continuing Crime Against Humanity

The language of apartheid was used by the South African government in the 1960s to explain their policies and practices of racial segregation. The Afrikaner leadership denied its racist character, despite its gross

discriminatory and repressive features, claiming that ‘separate development’ was beneficial for all races. Yet the approach was widely challenged from the perspective of human rights and international law, and eventuated in a global campaign that combined intergovernmental sanctions and civil society BDS initiatives that excluded South African participation in many global sporting events and led leading entertainers to refuse invitations to perform in South Africa.

Because the white population of South Africa was never more than 25 percent, the option of a multi-racial democracy and citizenship were never seriously considered, besides being opposed to the idea of a rigid separation of races. The apartheid structure was rigidly enforced by a series of repressive laws and regulations: widespread criminalization resulting from the African pass laws, denial of access to white areas, discriminatory employment and property laws, separate and unequal facilities for black, colored, and white persons, and a variety of laws criminalizing opposition to apartheid as subversion or treason. To soften international criticism the South African government established a series of *Bantustans* that pretended to provide tribal sovereignty to distinct African ethnicities, but never achieved international legitimacy or existential independence in relation to the Pretoria government.

The experience of racial discrimination and hierarchy led to the criminalization of apartheid by way of an international treaty. Although the word apartheid and the South African experience was instrumental in the formulation of the crime, the elements of the crime as it evolved were generalized as pertaining to policies and practices of racism with the overwhelming goal of maintaining supremacy of one race by subjugating another race. This led to the negotiation of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973). Article II has supplied the definition of the crime of apartheid most widely relied upon: “The term ‘crime of apartheid’ which shall include similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination as practiced in southern Africa, shall apply to inhuman acts committed for

the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one social group of persons over other racial groups of persons and systematically oppressing them.” The Rome Statute governing the operations of the International Criminal Court lists apartheid in Article 7 as one of several enumerated crimes against humanity, without any reference to South Africa.

Although Israel was accused of racism in many settings, the language of apartheid was not frequently employed by international critics until recently. An exception were the two well conceptualized books by the Israeli/Palestinian scholar Uri Davis who published *Israel: An Apartheid State* (1987) and *Apartheid Israel: The Possibilities for the Struggle Within* (2003). Somewhat revealingly, a series of Israeli politicians going back to David Ben-Gurion warned that Israel risked becoming an apartheid state if it did not find a political solution for its relations with the Palestinian people. These statements were always in Hebrew, and if anyone dared accuse Israel of apartheid in English or in an international venue they were branded by Zionists and Israeli leaders and diplomats as guilty of flagrant anti-Semitism. Even former American president, Jimmy Carter, did not escape such a response when he had the temerity to entitle his book *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid* (2006). It became increasingly common for Palestinian activists to refer to Israel’s occupation policy as exemplifying apartheid, but without any great deal of effort to specify the particulars in terms of policies and practices that satisfied international law requirements of intentionality and official policy.

The Originality of Israeli Apartheid

It is striking that the charismatic South African personalities, including Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, saw the core resemblance between their struggle against apartheid and the Palestinian struggle, despite notably different demographic, cultural, political, and security conditions in the two national settings. Up to the present time, of

all governments, including those in the Arab World, that of South Africa stands most strongly in solidarity with Palestinian aspirations, having taken the lead in the wider undertaking of the Durban process to combat all forms of racism. This expression of a politics of recognition lends powerful support to the allegations of apartheid directed at Israel, resting on a firm empirical foundation. Further confirmation came from the expert reports of UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories during the last two decades. Focusing on conditions of dual legal, discriminatory administration of Palestinians and Jewish settlers within the territorial confines of the West Bank, Israel was increasingly perceived as relying on an apartheid structure, at least in relation to its post-1967 occupation policies. The rights of the settlers were fully protected as being subject to Israeli civil and criminal law, whereas the Palestinian were essentially without rights, being subject to military administration for more than 50 years. In effect, the occupation of the West Bank, and by different pragmatic policies that took account of the situation, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, involved the subjugation of the Palestinians to enable and sustain Jewish dominance over the whole of the territory comprising the British Mandate, which itself was co-terminus with the former Ottoman province of Palestine. As the occupation gradually assumed the character of partial de facto annexation, it represented the outreach of the Zionist Project beyond the 1967 Green Line territorial limits of Israel.

A major step was taken in 2017 when the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) released an independent academic report entitled 'Israel's Practices Toward the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid' that had been contracted to explore the growing perception throughout international society that Israel had established an apartheid regime to safeguard the Zionist Project of racial dominance. The study was a comprehensive assessment of the apartheid argument according attention to the particularities of Israeli control over the Palestinian in various contexts, although commissioned by the UN, a

prominent disclaimer made it clear that report was not a statement by the UN, but represented the views of its two authors. The distinctive approach of the ESCWA report was to analyze the evidence of Israel's distinctive ways of achieving and maintaining discriminatory dominance over the Palestinian people.

It should be recalled that the Zionist Project was insistent on Jewish statehood within a legal framework that included most of the elements of institutionalized democracy—elections, citizenship available independent of race, rule of law, independent judiciary, parliamentary legislature, and a Basic Law category that seemed somewhat equivalent to a constitution. To reconcile these twin goals Israel had early recourse to a politics of fragmentation, dividing the Palestinian people so as to weaken the Palestinian capacity and will to resist. The main divisions among the Palestinians were first between those living within territorial Israel and controlled by discriminatory laws that imposed a variety of restrictions and those outside direct control. And then, the conditions imposed on the three occupied domains of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza were designed to create separation and rivalry; as well, practices of multiple checkpoints in the West Bank, insecurities surrounding Palestinian residency in East Jerusalem, and harsh repressive controls over Gaza, including restricting travel to other parts of Occupied Palestine. Beyond this type of fragmentation, there were others, including the denial of rights of repatriation to Palestinian refugees living under Israel control or in neighboring countries, and refusal of immigration to Palestinian exiles. A further pernicious form of fragmentation was caused by the Oslo Framework of Principles, which divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C making interaction and residency outside of Area A burdensome and rigidly regulated. By covert means, Israel tried to keep the Palestinian political representation as disunified and fractious as possible, obstructing all efforts to achieve Palestinian unity so far as the exercise of the right of self-determination is concerned.

The ESCWA report conceptualized the allegations of apartheid around the impact of Israeli control of the Palestinian *people*, rather than confining the notion of apartheid to specific territory. This is a central difference from the character apartheid assumed in South Africa. This focus on people rather than land exhibited Zionist preoccupations with the Palestinian demographic threat, which largely accounts for the expulsions, exclusions, and fragmentation. It also differs from the way other influential reports characterize Israeli apartheid. When the ESCWA Report was released in March 2017 it prompted a series of inflammatory responses from Israeli leaders and diplomats, and a stormy session at the UN Security Council at which the ambassador representing the United States demanded with threatening rhetoric that the UN Secretary General repudiate the report. The SG did not comment directly on the report, but dutifully ordered its removal from the ESCWA website. The ESCWA Director resigned rather than carry out such a directive, although her successor complied. Actually, the UN firestorm that resulted from the attack never challenged the substance of the conclusions or supporting analysis, but gave the report attention it would not have normally received, leading to widespread confirmations in a variety of academic and journalistic settings of the central allegation of Israeli apartheid, helping set the stage for what was to come.

A major development in the direction of focusing Palestinian grievances on apartheid was inadvertently taken by the Israeli Knesset when it enacted a Basic Law in 2018. This law affirms the central Zionist tenets that Israel is the state of the Jewish people, Hebrew is its official language, and only the Jewish people enjoy the right of self-determination. The latter claim contradicted the 14-1 majority in the International Court of Justice 2004 Advisory Opinion in the ‘Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall on Occupied Palestinian Territory,’ which confirmed that the Palestinian people are entitled to exercise a right of self-determination, although its scope was not specified. Yet more authoritative confirmations of the allegation of the crime of apartheid,

which implicated the manner of governance exercised by Israel, were published in 2021. The Israeli human rights NGO, B'Tselem on January 12 of that year published its devastating assessment of the apartheid allegation under the telling title “This is Apartheid: A Regime of Apartheid from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.” Aside from summarizing Israeli practices that justified the main inference of the report, it reached the significant conclusion that Israeli occupation policies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were annexationist in character and intent, and coupled with the assertion in the 2018 Basic Law that the Israeli settlements were integral to Israeli statehood, created a one-state reality. This led B'Tselem to identify the territorial scope of Israeli apartheid as incorporating the ‘occupied’ West Bank.

An even more consequential report accepting the allegations of apartheid was issued by Human Rights Watch on April 27, 2021 under the title ‘A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution.’ This report contains an exhaustive overview of the policies and practices that led HRW to break ranks with the liberal mainstream in the US, and add its considerable weight to the momentum behind the apartheid allegation. Both of these breakthrough reports place stress on the centrality of Israeli efforts to ensure the maintenance and extension of Jewish supremacy entailing harsh practices of Palestinian subjugation, which in the wording of the Apartheid Convention constitute ‘inhuman acts,’ integral to the crime. These include discriminatory immigration laws, Jewish land appropriation practices, restrictions on Palestinian mobility, and strict limitations on Palestinian participation including treating criticism of the Zionist Project in any of its past or present policies as ‘incitement,’ a punishable crime.

Concluding Observations

Although as yet there is no legally authoritative international assessment of Israeli apartheid, the reliable evidence so far assembled and analyzed

overwhelmingly supports the allegation, and is increasingly accepted by world public opinion as descriptive of the victimization of the Palestinian people. It is yet to be accepted by the liberal democracies in the West or in the formal annals of the United Nations. It remains unresolved as to whether apartheid should be conceived in relation to the Palestinian people as a whole, hence inclusive of refugees and exiles, or confined to territory under Israeli sovereign or de facto control. The reality of Israeli apartheid subjects the Palestinian people to a flagrant continuing crime, thus deserving of a full investigation by the International Criminal Court. International law imposes a distinct legal authority upon governments, international institutions, and civil society to take steps to suppress and punish the perpetration and persistence of apartheid, thereby vindicating nonviolent opposition, including the international BDS Campaign, an outgrowth of Palestinian civil society resistance. The worldwide anti-apartheid movement against South Africa is a useful precedent illustrating the effectiveness of well-organized nonviolent resistance to apartheid. It is also instructive in establishing that racial peace and fundamental human rights for political communities cannot be achieved without the *prior* unconditional elimination of apartheid structures, policies, and practices. In effect, without the substantial abandonment of the Zionist Project, it is unrealistic to think that a sustainable and just peace between Jews and non-Jews in former Palestine is attainable.

The Palestinian Nakba: Decolonizing History, Reclaiming Memory

Salman Abu Sitta

One sad trend in Palestine's recent history is to see a young man or woman carry a faded picture of their grandparents in their house in Palestine; a photo of their passport or driving license marked "issued" or "born" in Palestine; or even a mail stamp or railways timetable marked Palestine. These small, seemingly insignificant items are carried to prove that there was, that there *is* a Palestine. We are not talking about ancient Roman history. This is a real history in the life of many people who are still alive today.

Obliterating memory is one of the many wars Zionists have waged against the Palestinian people. These wars include erasing Palestine's history, geography, and replacing them with a false invented or exaggerated mythology. These wars also include political wars rendering international law redundant by vetoing UN resolutions. They include economic wars by blockade and starvation. They include defamation. Misinformation, and witch hunts for those who dare to tell the truth. This is unprecedented in any colonial project, old or new. The last hundred years saw the longest war against a people, defenseless people, unaware, unprepared, unsuspecting. Such war is waged against them by the tripartite force of the biggest powers of the modern world, namely, the British Empire, the US superpower, and the multipolar power of European Zionism.

That the Palestinians survive until today is a miracle. True, they are wounded, dispersed, coerced, vilified, relentlessly attacked without a moment of relief. But, like the phoenix, they rise from the rubble of Gaza to say: We are still alive, we resist. Their children, fourteen years of age, have suffered the vagaries of five wars and constant siege, reducing their

food, water, medicine, and movement—keeping them “on a diet” as the Eastern European settler on their land decrees it.

Take the recent case of Gaza, still vividly remembered. What happened in Gaza is genocide. There is no other name for it. To bombard two million people in the world’s largest concentration camp—a 30 km by 12 km strip—by air, land, and sea, is genocide. Those two million people are the victims of the original Israeli war crime: the ethnic cleansing of 1948. They were the inhabitants of 247 villages who lived in the southern half—50% of the original territory—of Palestine. In 1948, they were attacked by the Israeli Haganah. The Haganah depopulated them and pushed into the Gaza Strip, that is, the remaining 1.3% of Palestine. Dozens of massacres of civilians were committed after the occupation of the villages, such as in Bureir, Beit Daras, and Simsim to name only a few. That happened before Israel declared itself as a state. The massacres of the refugees have not stopped since. For seventy years, those Palestinians were attacked in refugee camps: in 1953, 1956, 1967, 1971, and constantly from 2006 until today. How could this come about? This is the history of a 100-year war against a people.

The Nakbas of Palestine

In 1917, Arthur James Balfour was Britain’s foreign minister. He was the anti-Semite who formulated the Aliens Act in 1905 to prevent European Jews from coming to England. He planned to ship them out to Palestine where they could serve as a base for Western interests. Thus, the infamous Balfour Declaration, which referred to the 95% Arab Palestinian population as the “non-Jewish population,” was issued. The creed of settlers’ colonialism is that “Natives” do not count, even if they were the absolute majority. In 1936, the Palestinians revolted against the flood of settlers to Palestine. The revolt was met with utmost British brutality. The RAF bombed villages indiscriminately, the British killed farmers, destroyed their homes, wounded and imprisoned tens of thousands,

disbanded political parties and deported their leaders. By 1939, Palestinian society was dismembered, defenseless, and leaderless. The year 1939 can be identified as the British-inflicted Nakba. A decade later, Ben Gurion carried out the Zionist-inflicted Nakba of 1948.

It started with the Zionist invasion of Palestine in the spring of 1948. The settlers from Poland and Russia invaded Palestine with an army of 120,000 soldiers in nine brigades, many veterans of WWII. They carried out 31 well-planned military operations. They attacked and depopulated 560 towns and villages. This made refugees out of two-thirds of the Palestinian people. Such massive depopulation could not have happened without much spilt blood. In 1948, Israel committed 156 massacres and atrocities. In a published study, we found *a direct correlation* between massacres in each village and the expulsion of its survivors. Refugees did not leave voluntarily. Massacres were a weapon of ethnic cleansing.

In another published study, we found, from ICRC documents and testimonies of survivors, that Israel created 17 concentration camps and forced labor camps for the captured farmers from occupied villages. They put them through hard labor, digging trenches, burying the dead, carrying the loot from Arab homes. These concentration camps were opened in Israel a mere three years after they were closed in Germany. How could these crimes go unnoticed in the West? This all took place in the mid-twentieth century, under the watchful eyes of the UN, in the age of the telephone, telegraph, TV, and even the *New York Times*, which neither saw nor heard evil to report. This legacy goes on. Today's evidence of war crimes in Gaza, Jerusalem, and the West Bank opens the door for ICC trials for almost all members of the Israeli army.

Colonial Lies

Here is another feature of the Israeli legacy: No colonial project in the world, save the Zionist Israeli one, has been riddled with more lies,

deception, and misinformation.

One Lie: Palestine is a land without people. This lie, which had been persistent for a century, turned out not to be a lie, but a cover for a plan to *make* Palestine a land without people. It was the blueprint for the Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.

Another Lie: Israel's legitimacy is based on the Partition Plan. The Partition Plan was a mere recommendation, if accepted. It was not. In mid-March 1948, the UN and the US dropped it in favor of UN trusteeship. Ben Gurion reacted and started the invasion of Palestine, known as Plan Dalet.

Another Lie: Israel was in a state of self-defense. As explained, the Zionist invasion took place in April 1948 before any Arab regular soldier entered to save the Palestinians from massacres and expulsion. Israel was the aggressor. Israel was not in self-defense.

Another Lie: The Israeli army is the most moral army in the world. The record of war crimes and massacres speaks for itself.

Another Lie: Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. Israel is the only self-described Apartheid country in the world; it says so in the "Nation State Law" of 2018. This is confirmed in reports by HRW, B'Tselem, ESCWA, Goldstone, and Treaty-based Conventions.

The list goes on.

Recording Their History

The Palestinians responded to the erasure of their history and geography by recording it. After Gaza's mass destruction, those young people, who carried mementos of faded photographs, waged a campaign of telling the truth on social media. This is a weapon denied to them for seven decades. In 1948, the Israeli seizure of Palestine was complete. Zionists seized the land and all private and official documents: Land title deeds, records of

health, education, banks, agriculture, transport. Refugees carried with them only their memories. Not too long after, Palestinians started to record their history. Apart from formal history books, mostly in Arabic, 250 village books were written by the villagers themselves. Over 500 books of Palestinian memoirs were published.

In the formal scientific sphere, compendiums of Atlases of Palestine were published, such as:

- The Atlas of Palestine in the year 1945, during the British Mandate, in 700 large pages listing 55,000 names
- The Atlas of Palestine in the year 1871 of Arab Palestine before the Zionist colonization, listing 13,000 names
- Maps of Palestine in the year 1596 of the first Ottoman Tax Register, listing all localities
- Map of Palestine in the year 313 AD listing localities in Christian Palestine

Such a record of Palestine—spanning 2000 years—is unmatched by any European city.

This data, now computerized, opens the door for implementing the Right of Return for Palestinian refugees, affirmed by every article in international law. A detailed study we made—of refugee village lands, refugee populations, where they were and are now, and who the settlers living on their lands are—revealed astonishing results, long concealed by Israel: that the refugees' rural land is essentially empty, save for a small minority, and that 87% of Israeli Jews live in 12% of Israel, or less. Young Palestinian architects enter an annual competition to reconstruct their villages. Reconstruction costs for all destroyed villages is less than the annual aid granted by the US for Israel's wars. Palestinians can and must return to live in their homes, in freedom, free from Apartheid, Racism, Discrimination, Occupation and Zionism. All these evils must be abolished.

The Future

What about the future? Could this colonial project continue? Can we venture a vision? This vision is anchored in the principle that justice must prevail, however long it takes. Today, the Palestinians are 14 million people. Half of them is still on Palestine soil. Who is occupying their land? 6,750,000 Jews as of 2019. This is excluding 600,000 settlers in the West Bank. This is to be compared with about 500,000 foreign workers in Israel.

Looking at Jews in Israel, they are divided into the following four categories:

1. 3 million Ashkenazi Jews, the founders. The old still occupy kibbutz and Moshav with little replacement. The young are educated, have foreign passports, live or travel frequently abroad. Within their society, they constitute the Military-Industrial-Economic Complex, which is very difficult to break. This complex represents the Jewish power alliance with the US, the UK, and Germany.
2. 1,250,000 Arab Jews. Jews from Arab countries who lost their wealth in Baghdad and Cairo in order to be Zionists. It is difficult for most of them to return, with the exception of Moroccan Jews.
3. 1,500,000 Russian economic immigrants who have no roots in Palestine, except those who reverted to their Eastern Orthodox church, which has deep roots in Palestine.
4. 1,000,000 miscellaneous Jews who came after the 1967 war to benefit from Israeli victories.

When Israel is de-Zionized, there is no logistical problem of accommodating those Jews who wish to live in a free, democratic Palestine: free from Zionism and Apartheid. But there will be two difficult problems: The first is those diehard fundamentalists, the Haredim, who consider themselves agents of God. Those must be

disarmed and must convert themselves into a society like the Amish, or the Templars before them. They can practice their religion in their colonies freely. The second is the Military-Industrial-Economic Complex as mentioned above. This complex must be stripped of its hostile and warmongering mission. If peaceful, it could be housed in a Palestinian Silicon Valley. It does not need an army to occupy a territory, kill, and commit war crimes. That is what happened to German industry after the Nazis were defeated. These may be farfetched ideas or may be immersed in a strong dose of optimism. But they have to be considered. There are indisputable facts: the Palestinians will survive and multiply, they will not continue to live under Israeli Apartheid and they will implement their Right of Return. One hundred years of Palestinian suffering and struggling to survive are enough. Now it is time for justice to prevail.

Decolonization: The Only Way Forward for Palestine

Ilan Pappé

Decolonization is associated, and quite rightly so, with a specific historical period when the huge empires collapsed and were dismantled. However, with the appearance of critical works on the post-colonial period and with the realization that colonialization can take different forms long after empires collapsed and their physical occupation came to an end, it seems that quite a few scholars appreciate that decolonization was not a closed chapter but a current reality. Decolonization has thus become a popular and profound topic in the academic world, informing the production of knowledge, engaging with the colonialist and post-colonialist periods. Decolonization also re-emerged as a clear political program for social movements in places where the former empires were still controlling crucial aspects of life, and it was in particular a potent idea in settler colonial realities (this was and still is the discourse that accompanies the struggle of native people in Mexico, the First Nations in Canada, the Aborigines in Australia and the Native Americans).

Decolonization, as an actual physical process on the ground, occurred recently in only two places: Algeria and South Africa. These two historical developments energized the studies on decolonization and highlighted the dialectical relationship between actual decolonization of the settler colonial projects and the production of knowledge about it. Recently, quite a few scholars have framed the Zionist movement as a settler colonial movement and Israel as a settler state.¹ From this perspective, Israel as a settler colonial state is a project that can be

¹ Probably the most known among them is Lorenzo Veracini see his book: *Israel and Settler Society*, London: Pluto 2006.

decolonized. There is still a wide gap between this emerging and growing literature that decolonizes the reality by offering alternative visions for the future and the hegemonic academic and public discourse on Israel and Palestine that frames the conflict as one fought between two legitimate national movements, or put differently, as an issue confined to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967. Therefore, until now mainstream academia, and for that matter mainstream media and the politicians involved in the so-called peace process, regarded decolonization as a political position towards the future and not as a possible scholarly framing of the conflict.

Until the 1980s, decolonization as a concept was absent from the academic discourse on Israel and Palestine, and in a way the balance of power on the ground was reflected also in the production of knowledge on the place.² The discourse of decolonization, and later the depiction of the situation of post-mandatory Palestine as a settler colonial reality, have only recently moved from the scholarly margins of the academia into a more central place in the knowledge production sites such as universities and research centers. As so often happens in the case of Palestine: ideological positions and scholarly stances intermix and fertilize each other. The decolonization of scholarly knowledge about Palestine's history was done first by interpreting the Palestinian struggle as anti-colonial and recently by analyzing Zionism and Israel as a settler colonial phenomenon. Today, outside of Israel, there is a large number of PhD students who have employed the settler colonial paradigm for analyzing the modern history of Israel and Palestine.³ Many of these post graduates

² On this pendulum see Ilan Pappé, "Introduction: New Historiographical Orientation in the Research on the Palestine Question" in Ilan Pappé (ed.) *The Israel/Palestine Question: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge 2007) pp. 1-9.

³ Some of their works appear in the journal *Settler Colonial Studies*, in particular the issues (two of them so far) devoted to Palestine. The first was "Past is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine", Volume 2, Issue 1 (2012) and "Collaborative Struggle in Australia and Israel/Palestine", Volume 4, Issue 4 (2015). Others appears a special issue

are also activists, and, therefore, their work engages with decolonization as much as it does with the analysis of the reality on the ground.

Political sociologists find it difficult to assess the influence and significance of young Palestinian intellectuals, or pro-Palestinian intellectuals, within Palestinian society as a whole (needless to say, it has no impact on the Israeli Jewish society), but recent developments are noteworthy. What can tentatively be concluded hitherto is that even if this scholarly effort, as yet, does not impact national Palestinian politics and positions, it certainly has a potential to do so in the future. There are two reasons for such a future projection. The dialogue among Palestinian scholars, and between them and interested scholars worldwide, is much more feasible now in this age of accessible, and ever expanding, cyberspace. Where once there were physical barriers that prevented such connections, now a cyberspace dialogues allow Palestinians to spread new ideas, interact with them, and attempt wider influence like never before. In a society which is very young (as is Palestinian society between the river and the sea and in the refugee camps), these ideas are spreading with an amazing speed, disabling us to fully assess their significance.⁴ The second possible trigger for such a development in the future is the resurfacing of the old-new discourse of a one state solution, that at least in part perceives Zionism as a settler colonial movement, Israel as an apartheid settler state, and, ergo, decolonization as the precondition for peace and reconciliation. Cherine Hussein in her excellent survey on the one state conversation insists it is only a discourse (although her book did not cover the last five years)⁵. In Gramscian terms, Hussein describes a counter-hegemonic discourse that follows the Fanonian trajectory on the

in the journal *Interventions: International Journal of Post-Colonial Studies*, see "Special Issue on Settler Colonialism in Palestine", Volume 21, Issue 4 (2019).

⁴ See note 11 for the demographics of young Palestinians.

⁵ Cherine Hussein, *The Re-emergence of Single State Solution in Palestine/Israel*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

way to liberation: decolonize the colonized mind before you can decolonize the colony.

We argued, thus, that decolonization is a common activist and an appropriate academic term for describing the way forward toward peace in Israel and Palestine. But some questions are still hard to answer: what are the chances that such a discourse would inform both the future political elites and the powers that be and their policies? Does this discourse have a realistic chance of changing the reality on the ground? Will this conflation of activism and scholarship be able to impact the Palestinian political discourse (all the official bodies representing Palestinian communities—the Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset, the Palestinian National Authority, the PLO and even Hamas —endorse the two-state solution)? Moreover, decolonization as an appropriate term is also absent from the vocabulary employed by those in the international community engaging with the efforts to find a solution to the Palestine issue. And there are only a handful of anti-Zionist activists in Israel who converse in this language.

However, there is a Palestinian consensus about the nature of the struggle, be it for one or two states, when there is no peace process or no prospect for it in the near future. The struggle, unlike the desired solution, is framed as a resilient and steadfast journey that, since the arrival of Zionism in Palestine, became a way of life. The interplay between a hope for any settlement and the level of the struggle is an important factor affecting not only the reality on the ground but also the conversation over alternative solutions. The absence of that hope pushed forward this conversation and also produced a new dictionary. This dictionary replaces the concept of peace with decolonization; reconciliation with regime change; occupation with colonization and the Nakba with ethnic cleansing among other entries.⁶

⁶ See discussion about this dictionary and further examples of possible entries in Noam Chomsky and Ilan Pappé, *On Palestine* (London: Penguin 2010), pp. 1-10.

A New Dictionary

This new dictionary is now employed extensively by young scholars writing on settler colonialism in Palestine, but not only by them. It is becoming an acceptable prism through which Palestinians all over the world and their supporters view the future. Recently, some of its entries, so to speak, were inserted into the discourse employed by journalists, pundits, and politicians engaged with the question of Israel and Palestine. The spill over of the new dictionary and the discourse of decolonization into more mainstream venues is caused by five discrete processes that, should they continue and intensify, will cause this new dictionary to become more acceptable and maybe even predominant. This scenario depends on the developments in five different areas.

The first development is the incremental delegitimization of the current Palestinian representative bodies. Similarly, Palestinian politicians in Israel were losing their electorate's support, since they were embroiled in internal divisions at the end of a brief period of unity, as manifested in the Joint List that ran for the 2015 elections (and thus quite a few, especially young Palestinians, boycotted the April 2019 elections). These were just a few illustrations of the confidence and representation crisis in Palestinian politics dating back probably to the destruction of the PLO base in Lebanon in 1982. This traumatic event disempowered the already fragmented Palestinian nation. The PLO survived until 1988 as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, but the emergence of political Islamic groups and, above all, the Oslo accord eroded its legitimacy in many quarters of the Palestinian societies, wherever they were. This void in Palestinian politics is a ripe terrain for the growth of new ideas and the evolvment of a new discourse. In the case of Palestine, quite often, this is a revival of old ideas adapting themselves to the present realities.

More and more voices are now heard that are calling for a one state solution even among PA leaders and Palestinian politicians in Israel.⁷ In the case of official representatives, it is articulated as a threat to the liberals in Israel and the West that if the two-state solution fails, Israel would have to become a non-democratic, Apartheid state, all over historical Palestine. For others, it becomes the preferred model. In either case, if it unfolds as a reality the new dictionary might become more relevant. If indeed a consensus develops that the two-state solution is dead, then the very notion of decolonization will not seem so alien even to the pragmatic politicians of the West and various Palestinian groups.

This observation is accentuated by a second recent development: the shift to the right in Israeli politics. Such a shift is accompanied by intensive Judaization of the West Bank and by other discriminatory policies towards the Palestinian communities on both sides of the Green Line that create de facto a one state solution. Political activism in Israel on the Palestine question hitherto was about the question of whether to withdraw from the 1967 occupation or not; it could alter as a result of this new development and generate a public debate on the nature of this one state that, at present, solidifies Israel and the new Apartheid state.

The third process is the other side of the political developments in Israel and this is the disappearance of the Zionist Left (a process that began twenty years ago)⁸. Seen from within the paradigm of decolonization, and for that matter that of settler colonialism, the Zionist left is what Albert Memmi called “the leftist colonizer.” These are settlers who remain within the ideological framework of colonialism (or in our case settler colonialism) and either willingly or reluctantly, in the words of Memmi, are still “part of the oppressing group and will be forced to share

⁷ See for instance David Halbfinger, "As the 2 States Solution Loses Steam; the 1 State Solution Gains", *The New York Times*, 5 January 2018.

⁸ Ilan Pappé, "The Making and Unmaking of HADASH" in A. Grabsky (ed.), *Rebels Against Zion: Studies on the Jewish Left*, Warsaw: The Żydowski Historical Institutions, 2011, pp. 254-258.

its destiny.” Accordingly, “even if he [the leftist colonialist] is in no way guilty as an individual... he shares a collective responsibility by the fact of membership in a national oppressor group.”⁹ The ‘leftist colonizers’, namely the liberal Zionists, are more susceptible to believe that international law is not challenging their ideology. More specifically, it does not challenge the privileges granted to them by the settler colonial state; moreover, the belief that an improved settler state, in conjunction with international law, would lead to the necessary changes on the ground.

In the April 2019 elections, the number of anti-Zionists parties (the Arab parties) was the same as that of the left Zionist party (the Labor party and MERETZ). It seems that a left settler or colonizer, or a liberal occupier, is not an attractive option to the Israeli electorate. This was the constituency that was most loyal to the two-state solution and the basic principles informing the “peace process.” Without them, there is a very weak Jewish electorate behind the idea, and this might open the way to a different framing at least in some left Zionist politicians who might follow Avraham Burg in his journey from a two state to a one state solution.¹⁰

The fourth process is also intertwined with the previous three. This was the decline of the peace process, the Pax Americana, that had been attempted since 1967. The peace accord that commenced in 1993 was never announced officially dead, although it is very clear that it has petered out and disappeared. The final nail in its coffin was the election of President Donald Trump in 2016. As can be seen from the present vantage point, his administration was both eager to withdraw from any potential role in the peace process, on the one hand, and endorse more openly and officially, unconditionally, Israeli unilateral actions on the ground, on the other hand. Trump’s decision to recognize the Israeli annexation of Eastern Jerusalem and the Golan Heights further

⁹ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, (London: Earthscan, 2003), p. 83.

¹⁰ Ibid.

diminished any hope for a two-state solution as the American position (also incurred into his “deal of the century”—his proposal for peace). This new American stance disqualified international law as the legal infrastructure for any future solution. Without such an infrastructure, the two-state solution has nothing to offer to both sides. The subsequent Biden administration reverted to the old discourse of two states, but tellingly not to the language of international law. In practice, it continues the former administration’s policies and contributes to the irrelevance of the Americans as a mediator. The humiliating withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan, and the wide support in the Muslim world to the Palestinian cause, may indicate a different international dimension to the Palestine issue, focusing on southeast Asia, Africa, and possibly South America. The West is not going to be trusted and seems only to provide Israel with a shield of immunity (although its civil society in great numbers opposes this attitude and may play a positive role in offering a different international impact on the reality on the ground).

Finally, the demographics of the Palestinian people are noteworthy in this context. This is one of the youngest societies in the world. The UNFPA already noted that in 2015, when it stated: “Palestine is facing a period of rapid population growth and large youthful population with 69% below the age of 29.”¹¹ This young generation’s mode of action is different in many ways from the previous ones. This can be seen at various levels and through discrete actions and projects that so far have not been translated into a meaningful transformative movement but may do so in the future. One mode of action are the return marches, known as the Great March, on the Gaza Strip’s border that began in March 2018. This is an initiative of a group of young Palestinians led by Ahmad Abu Arthima, who represents well this new generation of young Palestinian activists.¹²

¹¹ Yusuf Courbag et al, *Palestine 2030: Demographic Change, Opportunities for Development*, UNFPA, 5 December 2016.

¹² See Oliver Holms and Hazem Balousha, “Time for Peaceful Resistance”, *The Guardian*, 6 April 2018.

Educated and highly committed, he and others organized weekly demonstrations of thousands and at times tens of thousands alongside the Gaza border. The aim is twofold. First, to attract world attention, through the courageous protest—resulting quite often with a high number of casualties—to the long Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip; a siege that, according to a report by the UN, would render life in the Gaza Strip unsustainable by 2020.¹³ Their second demand is to return to the villages and lands from which they had been expelled from in 1948 and are located on the other side of the fence.

From this perspective, the Right of Return is not an imaginary vision, especially not for refugees in the Gaza Strip, if the solution would be a one democratic state. This is the reason the internal Palestinian refugees in Israel—namely, the Palestinians who were expelled in 1948 but remained within the Jewish State and are organized in an NGO called ADRID—are supporting the one state solution (there are about 350,000 of them today in Israel).¹⁴ In other words, although the Palestinian refugee community, estimated at 5.5. million, are spread all over the world, those in geographical proximity and dwelling in refugee camps deem such a scenario as an end game for their struggle.

Palestinians of a similar age, and quite a few young progressive Israeli Jews, demonstrate quite regularly in solidarity with the demonstrators in Gaza. They are part of a bigger conversation carried out by a certain age group. They communicate easily and without borders and are networking the various Palestinian communities around the globe. Their intra communication, as I have tried to show in a recent article in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, can be seen as a new stage in the Palestinian cultural resistance to Zionism. They share projects of oral histories of the Nakba, the building of models—reconstructing the destroyed villages of 1948 or

¹³ World Food Program, "Gaza: A Livable Place?" <https://www.wfp.org/content/gaza-2020-%E2%80%93liveable-place>

¹⁴ Nur Masalha (ed.), *Catastrophe Remembered: Palestine, Israel and the Internal Refugees*, (London: Zed Books, 2015).

future post-return models. Whereas the fragmentation of the previous generation was sustained by hard borders, fences, and regional conflicts, this generation does not need, at this stage, to meet physically to form a joint agenda and vision.¹⁵

This discourse has not, as yet, contributed to the emergence of an effective social movement. The efforts to do so have lacked any significant institutional infrastructure, a deficiency that also defeated the more hopeful moments of the Arab Spring. This young generation is very skeptical about institutions as they have been deemed corrupt and ineffective. However, transformations of this magnitude will be impossible if the youth will ignore existing institutions and will not build new ones.

The One Democratic State Campaign¹⁶

In March 2018, I was part of the One State Democratic Campaign, aimed at creating a joint space for the individuals and movements already acting on behalf of this idea. The wish here is to enhance a dialogue on the one state solution and to locate the disagreements and the challenges ahead. It differs somewhat from similar attempts in the past, as it taps into a rich academic work that has been done on the topic in the last decade and thus focuses more clearly on translating what could be rightly described as a utopia into a more practical program (through for instance social movement theories).

The preamble of the plan, which I helped to write, states the following:

In recent years, the idea of a one democratic state as the best political solution for Palestine has re-emerged and gained support in the public

¹⁵ Ilan Pappé, "Indigeneity as Cultural Resistance: Notes on the Palestinian Struggle Within Twenty First Century Israel", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 117/1 (January 2018), pp. 157-17.

¹⁶ See <https://www.facebook.com/odsc.org/>

domain. It is not a new idea. The Palestinian liberation movement, before the Nakba of 1948 and after, had promoted this vision in the PLO's National Charter, abandoning it for the two-state solution only in 1988. It was on this basis that, in September 1993, the Palestinians entered into the Oslo negotiations. The two-state solution was also endorsed by all the Palestinian parties represented in the Israeli Knesset. But on the ground Israel strengthened its colonial control, fragmenting the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza into tiny, isolated, and impoverished cantons, separated from one another by settlements, massive Israeli highways, hundreds of checkpoints, the Apartheid Wall, military bases, and fences. After a half-century of relentless "judaization," the two-state solution must be pronounced dead, buried under the colonial enterprise on the territory that would have become the Palestinian state. In its place Israel has imposed a single regime of repression from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

The main point in this opening paragraph is to accentuate the need for a Palestinian-led initiative that is based on the recognition of the Palestinian movement as a legitimate anti-colonialist movement. In other words, this preamble uses explicitly the decolonization discourse. The program appeared in Arabic, English, and Hebrew. It has sections which would be very difficult for an Israeli Jewish constituency to swallow and some which Palestinians would find hard to accept. I do realize how alien the following section in the program would sound to Israeli Jews:

The only way forward to a genuine and viable political settlement is to dismantle the colonial apartheid regime that has been imposed over historic Palestine, replacing it with a new political system based on full civil equality, implementation of the Palestinian refugees' Right of Return, and the building of systems that address the historic wrongs committed on the Palestinian people by the Zionist movement.

The main bone of contention here is indeed the promise to guarantee the Right of Return. However, the whole premise of this new approach is

based on transforming the hegemonic discourse and re-educate, as far as possible, the privileged section of this unjust system by re-framing the past and present realities. This transformation as a significant process, even in the case of South Africa, occurred only after decolonization and not as pre-condition to it. But it seems in that case, and hopefully in the case of Israel, there is a need for only a small group to subscribe to the new framing that, in addition to other discrete processes, will cause the transformation on the ground (in the case of South Africa it was the fall of the Berlin wall that convinced the US to join the sanctions' regime, and the steadfastness of the ANC leaders in jail as well as a violent campaign that motivated a small number of Whites to join the ANC, and the more pragmatic members of the Apartheid regime to agree to its dismantlement). Retrospectively, in South Africa, quite large sections of the White society acclimatized to the new reality.

How to turn insistence into an implementation of the Palestinian Right of Return is one of the many projects that can benefit enormously from collaboration between scholars and activists. It is possible that a more detailed picture would soften resistance. In a recent book, Eitan Bronstein and Eleanor Merza Bronstein include several surveys among the Jewish population inquiring about their positions toward the Right of Return. It shows a clear increase in the consent among Jewish citizens in Israel to the Right of Return—almost around 30 per cent of those sampled.¹⁷ Salman Abu Sitta's work, on the other hand, shows the possibilities incurred in an implementation of the Right of Return without causing further transfer of population.¹⁸ Palestinians will find it difficult to accept any section in the program that refers to the collective rights, and even more so national rights, of the Jews in a joint state:

¹⁷ Eitan Bronstein and Eleanor Merza Bronstein, *Nakba in Hebrew* (Hebrew), (Tel-Aviv: Pardes 2018).

¹⁸ Salman Abu Sitta, "The Feasibility of the Right of Return, ICJ and CIMEL Paper, June 1997 <https://prn.mcgill.ca/research/papers/abusitta.htm>

We, Palestinians and Israeli Jews alike, have therefore revived the one-state idea. Although differing models of such a state range from bi-national to a liberal, secular democracy, we are united in our commitment to the establishment of a single democratic state in all of historic [sic] Palestine.

Those involved in authoring the program hoped that the following way of phrasing this right will help to allay Palestinian apprehensions and aspirations:

Constitution will also protect collective rights and the freedom of association, whether national, ethnic, religious, class or gender. Constitutional guarantees will ensure that all languages, arts, and culture can flourish and develop freely. No group or collectivity will have any privileges, nor will any group, party or collectivity have the ability to leverage any control or domination over others. Parliament will not have the authority to enact any laws that discriminate against any community under the Constitution.

Thus, the collective national or ethnic identity of the originally settler community can be maintained but not on a basis of a privileged structure. This is closely connected with the question of future Jewish immigration, which is privileged and exclusive in the present regime of Israel. The program calls for a neutral policy of immigration, exempting the Right of Return. In the program, it is stated that “[n]ormal procedures of obtaining citizenship will be extended to those willing to immigrate to the country.” I suspect this balance between Jewish immigration and Palestinian return will undergo several rounds of articulation, if ever this program, or one similar to it, will be seriously considered politically. The future of such an initiative depends much on its ability to be sold as a practical, and not a utopian, political program. The emergence today of rich postgraduate studies on Palestine—a large number of dissertations in recent years have been written in Center for Palestine Studies at Brown and Columbia universities in the US, and Cambridge, Exeter, and SOAS in the UK—is

one such example. Although some of these dissertations already cover practical aspects of statehood they could be directed into relevant aspects of the program: the future constitution, educational curricula, the mechanisms of restitutive justice, the issue of compensation and return, etc.

Conclusions

In December 2018, the Israeli Knesset passed the Nationality Law that recognizes only one nation within the inconclusive borders of the state of Israel. It is also committed to expanding the “state of Israel” (*Medinat Israel*) into “the land of Israel” (Eretz Israel) through further “colonization” (*Hityashvut*).¹⁹ The law coupled with the commitment of then-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the eve of the April 2019 elections to officially annex parts of the West Bank are indicators of the institutionalization of the one, non-democratic, state, over the whole of historic Palestine. These developments continued what Oren Yiftachel termed recently as “incremental apartheid.” This is a valid analysis which describes the institutionalization of an Apartheid state which can only be challenged through decolonization and not partition (as Bantustans did not serve as an alternative to Apartheid South Africa).²⁰ In the near future, we will probably continue to witness processes imitated from above turning the incremental apartheid into a far more solid one, with some but quite possibly ineffective global condemnation.

Parallel to this, we will quite surely see the further application of the settler colonial paradigm to the Palestine case study and more active, and

¹⁹ See *The Book of Laws*, Volume 2743, 26 July 2018, Israeli Knesset, p.898.

²⁰ Oren Yiftachel, “The dark side of modernism: Planning as control of an ethnic minority” in, S. Watson and K. Gibson (eds.), *Postmodern Cities and Spaces?* Oxford: Blackwell 1994, pp. 216–234.

young, scholarship on Palestine taking the form of cultural resistance. Antonio Gramsci remarked once that cultural resistance is either the substitute for political action of the feeble ones or the grand rehearsal for the political resistance. Time will tell which of the two definitions are relevant to this case study.

Finally, two notes about the future. First, it is noteworthy that decolonization cannot be a project of the colonizer, but that of the colonized. For decades, the so-called “peace process” was made of exclusive Israeli initiatives. Decolonization is first and foremost a Palestinian initiative which has not been attempted for a while. Secondly, decolonization can also be built from below—the settler colonial main hallmark on the ground is segregation and the antithesis to this is de-segregation, which on a small scale happened recently in towns built exclusively for Jews that are now bi-national. This was done by joining schools in a segregated educational system, joint work places and shopping malls. The imbalance of power is still evident in these locations, but it enhances a de-segregated culture that can be transformed into a decolonized one in the future.

Epilogue

Much of this essay was prepared before the May 2021 Jerusalem Intifada. The resilience of the Palestinians on Haram al-Sharif, in Sheikh Jarrah, inside Israel, in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, was matched by a show of unity that for quite a while was missing from Palestinian activism and politics. The eventful 11 days of May 2021 vindicates much of what is written here. The unity, the courage, the wide international support in the civil society and the brutal Israeli reaction in fact shows us that decolonization is not just a scholarly discourse or an activists’ vision, it is a process that is already taking place; time will tell at what human cost and how long it will take.

Denial of Repatriation: A Crime of Apartheid and Persecution

John Quigley

Recent developments have opened the way to the designation as an international crime the act of denial of repatriation to Palestinians displaced in 1948. On May 27, 2021, a commission of inquiry was created to examine the May 2021 Gaza-Israel hostilities. By resolution, the United Nations Human Rights Council ordered an inquiry into violations of law related to those hostilities. Resolution S-30/1, titled “Ensuring respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel,” envisages an investigation of crimes committed, plus an inquiry into “all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial, or religious identity.” The commission will not have to look far to find identity-based repression. That repression consists of expulsion and a denial of repatriation. Most Gaza families come from other parts of Palestine. Summarily forced out of their home areas in 1948, they sought refuge in Gaza, which was under the control of the Egyptian army. The United Nations told Israel that it must repatriate these families, beginning in 1948 with the General Assembly’s Resolution 194. Instead, Israel’s Knesset adopted a Prevention of Infiltration Law, criminalizing return. Israeli officialdom has refused demands for repatriation. In 2018, Palestinians from Gaza stormed the fence that separates Gaza from Israel, in what they called the Great March of Return. Protest has continued since then in Gaza, raising the demand to be repatriated.

The 1948 expulsions from home areas and the denial of repatriation to those Palestinians and their progeny stand in clear violation of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees both a right to remain in one's country and a right, if abroad, to be re-admitted. That right exists even if a person does not hold the nationality of the country of displacement. So the fact that Israel does not recognize the displaced Palestinians as Israeli nationals does not negate the right of repatriation. The right exists even for Palestinians who have taken the citizenship of another country. A right to return to one's country is also guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—OHCHR. The illegality of refusing repatriation is not only an illegal act on the part of the State of Israel. It is a crime on the part of any officials of Israel who perpetrate Israel's policy of refusing repatriation. This point—that denial of repatriation is a crime—was recently made by *Human Rights Watch* in a report it issued in April 2021, titled *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*. Under the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment on the Crime of Apartheid, one act that constitutes apartheid is the taking of measures “designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group.” Forcing a group out of a country and denying repatriation separates it in an even more decisive manner. A second category of criminality is the crime of persecution. It is defined as a denial of fundamental human rights based on the racial or ethnic identity of the victims in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Prosecuting Israeli officials in the ICC

Another recent development opens the way to actual prosecution of such officials of Israel. This development comes from the International Criminal Court. That court has jurisdiction over acts committed in the territory of a state that is party to the Rome Statute, which is the treaty establishing the court. Israel is not a party. However, the 1948 expulsions resulted in Palestinians being displaced into two states that are party to

the Rome Statute. One is Jordan, to which many Palestinians were displaced, and where many of them still reside. A second is Palestine, of which the Gaza Strip and the West Bank form a part. Earlier this year, a panel of judges of the International Criminal Court ruled that acts committed in Gaza or the West Bank qualify as acts in the territory of Palestine. Although other states of refuge— Syria and Lebanon in particular— are not party to the Rome Statute, both Jordan and Palestine are. In 2019, a panel of judges of the International Criminal Court ruled that in the situation of expulsion of population, the crime is considered to be committed not only in the state of displacement, but in the state of refuge as well. The judges said that expulsion by definition involves the territory of both states. So a person can be guilty of expelling a population even if the state in whose territory that person acts is not a party to the Rome Statute. That ruling means that officials of Israel could be found guilty. The act of expulsion has as a consequence: the inability of the displaced population to return. The denial of repatriation is considered, therefore, a continuation of the act of expulsion. The judges who considered the Myanmar situation said that expulsion is a crime against humanity, specifically the crime of persecution (see the Decision Pursuant to Article 15 of the Rome Statute on the Authorization of an Investigation into the Situation in the People’s Republic of Bangladesh/Republic of the Union of Myanmar). The denial of repatriation is a crime that the International Criminal Court could take up as part of its ongoing State of Palestine investigation.

Ongoing Ethnic Cleansing

Ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem, particularly in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, is a more immediate root cause, as was the repression in May 2021 at Jerusalem’s holy sites. The commission will readily find repression on the Israeli side in regard to Jerusalem. The occupation of East Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Force in 1967 was unlawful as an

act of aggression (see my 2013 work, *The Six-Day War and Israeli Self-Defense: Questioning the Basis for Preventive War*). The annexation of East Jerusalem by the Knesset that followed in 1980 was unlawful because territory taken in hostilities may not be annexed, regardless of whether the taking was lawful. The annexation was condemned by the UN Security Council in its Resolution 478. Annexation of territory taken militarily is also a crime for the officials behind it. It is defined as an act of aggression under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The blockade instituted by Israel in 2007 around Gaza is another root cause. It has devastated the already fragile economy of Gaza. The blockade has been called an unlawful act in violation of international law by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The commission is tasked not simply with ascertaining violations of law, but with preparing dossiers on specific officials. Under Resolution S-30/1, the commission is to “identify, where possible, those responsible, with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations are held accountable.” The commission is to “collect, consolidate, and analyze evidence of such violations and abuses and of crimes perpetrated,” with a view to “its admissibility in legal proceedings.” Resolution S-30/1 envisages the work of the commission as a long-range task. It calls the commission an “ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry.” The commission could take testimony from Palestinian families who formerly lived, say, in Jaffa, who can explain the circumstances of their departure.

Passage of Time

The passage of over seventy years since 1948 may seem an obstacle to a judicial ruling of a right to return. However, in a 2019 case, the International Court of Justice said that time was not a factor to correcting a separation of a population from its homes. It ruled to this effect in a case

involving the forced eviction of the Chagos Islands population, which took place in the 1960s, as seen in Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. Repatriation of the displaced Palestinians was identified as an issue to be negotiated between Palestine and Israel in the 1993 Declaration of Principles of Interim Self-Government (Oslo Accords). As a result, repatriation came to be regarded in the public mind as a political issue. Denial of repatriation, however, is a crime. Governments and non-governmental organizations must take up this issue on the understanding that the displaced Palestinians are victims of a crime.

The new commission may or may not be ready to identify denial of repatriation as a root cause of the Gaza-Israel conflicts. The commission will be open to receiving information from all parties. Governments and non-governmental organizations must make clear to the commission that the current situation cannot be separated from the displacement of 1948 and its consequences. Denial of repatriation *is* a root cause of ongoing conflict. The commission should be encouraged to prepare dossiers on specific officials of Israel who are guilty of denial of repatriation. Information should be sent about the consequences of this crime. If the commission carries out this task effectively, dossiers can be forwarded to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for action leading to indictments.

Decolonizing Knowledge on Palestine Through Media

Ahlam Muhtaseb

To read Edward Said's "Permission to Narrate" today is to read about the latest Israeli assaults on Gaza; the pattern and the silencing techniques are almost the same as they were when Said wrote his piece three decades ago. If we were to simply substitute the dates and places (Lebanon to Gaza, 1982 to 2008/09, 2012, or 2014, the PLO to Hamas, for example), one would think that Said is still alive and writing. If we replace "the MacBride Commission report" with the "Goldstone report," the parallels cannot be dismissed as just coincidental. It has been part of the typical Israeli genocidal war against Palestinians that is dependent to a great extent on actual devastating wars with their technological superiority, land and resources theft, and many other mechanisms; but most importantly, these mechanisms of erasure are enabled by a hegemonic narrative perpetuated through media dominance. Re-reading Said provides us with a unique framework of analysis, with a few valuable lessons to learn.

Said talked about the enormous asymmetry not only in military power, but also in terms of the death, destruction, and injuries (deaths alone were 20,000 in Lebanon in July and August of 1982 compared to 290 Israelis over 15 years prior to then). In terms of asymmetry, he also talks about the few poorly armed Palestinians holding off the entire Israeli military from entering Beirut for 80 days; the Israeli conclusions about their wars as "humane" in both contexts; the Kahan report in 1983; raising US aid levels to Israel during the siege of Beirut to a point where Israel received roughly half of the entire American foreign aid budget; Golda Meir's essentializing of Palestinians as either non-existent or as haters of their own children (a claim that was used against me recently in an email

addressed to the entire campus at the university I teach); and the employment of the “terrorism” label that enabled the shelling of refugee camps in 1982, which essentially enabled labeling every Palestinian everywhere a terrorist.

At that time, Said explained:

“The basic line is that the media have taken liberties with language, that analogies between Warsaw and Beirut are wrong, that any images showing Israeli troops engaged in bombing plainly civilian targets are anti-Semitic, that the millions of feet of newsreel are less trustworthy than the impressions of a supporter of Israel who spent a day in Lebanon touring the place as a guest of the Israeli Army. Underlying all attacks on the media is the allegation that the PLO has intimidated or seduced journalists into partisan, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western attacks on Israel.”

Said also explained how John Chancellor, a leading American television commentator at the time, who arrived in Beirut during the siege and witnessed the destruction brought about by the indiscriminate bombing that was taking place all around him reported in full view of a vast national audience references to “savage Israel ... an imperialist state that we never knew existed before.” Similar to the retraction of actor Mark Ruffalo’s tweets accusing Israel of genocide among other things, Said reported on Chancellor’s retraction of his report: “Far from just changing his mind from one week to the next, Chancellor unwittingly exposed the degree to which the structure of the evening news depends on ideas of reality determined by the political and social discourse already empowered outside the newsroom.”

Digital Decolonization

So, compared to 1982, what is different now? In addition to Israel’s failure to end the resistance, in all its forms, the Palestinian narrative, as a site of resistance, has been able to penetrate the dominance of the Israeli

one. It might not have killed it yet, but it has been causing it too many injuries that make it harder and harder to heal. In the rest of this essay, I would like to share an analysis of the media landscape covering Palestine during the latest few weeks and give a few examples of the digital decolonization of knowledge on Palestine, including drawing from my own experience.

Said states, “Facts do not at all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain, and circulate them. Such a narrative has to have a beginning and end: in the Palestinian case, a homeland for the resolution of its exile since 1948.” He then goes on to explain that narratives also have to have authority. So, how can we engage in narrative production and give those narratives authority when we lack access to the mainstream channels of dissemination of knowledge in the US?

I will start with my own humble experience, still evolving, which started by asking the question: How can someone teach Palestine through film? Considering this, and other questions in teaching about Palestine, has made me reflect on knowledge production in general, and media production in particular. As an activist scholar, these ontological and epistemological questions have also made me think about teaching beyond the classroom, outside of institutional constraints. In her 2012 edition of *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research & Indigenous People*, Smith argues: “Institutions, such as the academy and major funding agencies, maintain and reinforce the idea that research is a highly specialized skill that by definition is developed and supported at a distance from the community.” Reflecting on a critical pedagogical approach to teaching the multitude, and not only the educated, about Palestine has made me reconsider my whole approach to education, shifting it from media and knowledge critique to media and knowledge production. This is not a novel idea, of course; in an interview that I conducted with legendary film maker Kassem Hawal, he explained to me how he documented the Palestinian revolution in Lebanon daily, for

years, and how he trained an army of assistants to make sure they capture the resilience of the Palestinian resistance and the institution building that was going on in Lebanon at that time. He told me that they produced hundreds of reels that they managed to save until the Israelis eventually looted them.

Recognizing this important aspect of knowledge production, I started, with my co-producer Andy Trimlett, my 14-year journey to make a documentary on the Palestinian struggle, a film aimed at the average American audience, used to escapism and happiness in cinema and accustomed to watching films with stereotypical Palestinian characters. It was a journey for me that started in 2003, with the conceptualization of a critical ethnography/documentary project in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and which culminated in 2017 with the premiere of our documentary *1948: Creation & Catastrophe* at the Arizona International Film Festival. The journey continued after that with screenings around the world, with a special focus on an academic domain of distribution since we, activist scholars, do not have access to mainstream media. So, the decision to move into that mode of knowledge production, while still humble and limited, made the difference between educating 20 students in class and educating thousands outside of it. Upon the free release of the film on the Kanopy platform, during the first two months of the COVID-19 pandemic, our distributor reported that we received up to 1,250 views a day during peak times, in spite of the fact that the Zionist lobby viciously attacked the film. I believe the film's success, in spite of the hate campaign against it, stemmed from the fact that it followed a scholarly approach to film. It was void of the typical emotional rhetoric in similar films and followed a famous Paulo Freire quote: "Narratives of liberation must not ignore the cultural particularism of their roots, yet at the same time they must not abandon the opportunity to coordinate on a global basis." We therefore let the historical facts in the film build the emotional repertoire among our audience without our

own intervention. The film has been adopted in classes of history, geography, anthropology, and Arabic studies, to name a few.

However, more recent events me rethink my approach once again. A surge in screenings of the film globally — from the US to Rome, to Lisbon and Porto in Portugal, to Australia, to a synagogue in the Bay Area — all resulted in probably hundreds of new people watching it. However, one post by Palestinian blogger/influencer Taha Subhi of a short clip edited out of our film — of Othman Akel's recounting witnessing members of the Jewish militias of the ITZEL throwing a Palestinian child into a burning oven in the main bakery of Deir Yassin during the massacre in front of his father, then throwing the father after him — generated close to half a million views in just two days, in addition to the thousands of comments, shares, and other engagements, including by one of the Hadid siblings. Contrary to the myriad ways of decolonial methodologies that Smith lists in her book, many of us, Palestinian scholars in the US, still ascribe to a positivist colonial epistemic approach to knowledge production, that we need to liberate ourselves from. One of the important sites of decolonizing knowledge on Palestine now is digital, especially the social media space, because it is a site that the Israelis are still trying to reclaim, so far unsuccessfully.

People, sometimes even scholars, hold polarized perceptions about social media; some believe in what we, media scholars, call technological determinism, which essentializes social media as bad and dangerous. Others believe in a utopian vision of social media and how great it is for democratizing knowledge production and information sharing. However, the reality is more complicated and more dynamic than this dichotomy. Social media is a new frontier of the battle between hegemonic and counter hegemonic forces. While social media allowed activists new avenues and spheres of speech and expression that bypass traditional media gatekeepers, including user-generated content and sharing of vital organizing and planning efforts, giant social media corporations like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and to a lesser extent TikTok, have

reproduced similar power dynamics online to those that old traditional media have developed to keep control over journalistic content. A major obstacle for bloggers and online activists is, of course, social media algorithms and AI (artificial intelligence), which were originally created for a different utility, that is, organizing content on these platforms when they exploded with users (close to three billion Facebook users currently, which is close to half of the world's population).

On the other hand, activists seem to be more informed on how social media algorithms, used in silencing and censoring Palestinian voices, work. These activists have been very creative in gaining access using genius techniques. One way of digital resistance for some Palestinian bloggers/influencers, like Muna Hawwa, was to group their followers using Instagram Live. Hawwa, who has over 800K followers, has been reporting live from Sheikh Jarrah, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Gaza, and other parts of Palestine through an intricate network of citizen journalists on the ground, some of them bloggers themselves with their own followers. In addition, she has been livestreaming in coordination with other famous Arab bloggers, and even American ones like one of the Hadid sisters, to combine her followers with theirs, forcing Instagram to trend their livestreams (although she reported that some of her livestreams had been interrupted and taken down more than once). One of her livestreams in the third week of May 2021 had over 140k live views, which could be compared to the viewership of some mainstream media outlets. On May 24, her Instagram livestream with Muna Al-Kurd (who has over 1.6 million followers herself on Instagram alone) and other influencers generated 246k views. Another important example is that of the Hadid celebrity children or influencers (children of Mohammed Hadid); Gigi Hadid has 66 million followers, while Bella Hadid has about 42 million followers. If combined with their brother's followers, and Dua Lipa's (a singer and the Hadid brother's girlfriend who has 68 million followers herself), we are talking about media power that surpasses that of any major media institution (e.g., CNN averaged 412 thousand total day

viewers, aged between 25 and 54 years in 2020). In addition, it is important to note that we are talking about the energy of the youth, who constitute the majority of social media users. Therefore, the president of the organization Al-Awda (The Palestine Right to Return Coalition in the US) Amani Barakat reported that as a result of Anwar Hadid's sharing of the announcement call for the May 15 2021 demonstration and march in Los Angeles, they received 13k requests to join the Al-Awda listserv in one day, and 6,000 responded to the call to action items, including a letter to Congress about Sheikh Jarrah, which might partially explain the historical attendance of that demonstration and march — estimated to be at least 20,000 by the LA Times and the organizers (in comparison to a mere one or two hundred that usually attend).

Pushback

Israel has been repeatedly attempting to control the social media sphere, mainly through its cyber unit and the infamous Unit 8200, in charge of cyber spying. Israel has tremendous influence in the decision-making process of the giant social media platforms, especially Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Israel reached an agreement with Facebook's parent company Meta in 2016 to censor any comment that "incites violence" against Israel and the Israelis. Of course, the rules are very loose when it comes to defining what constitutes inciting violence. Would a comment about Israeli violations or war crimes in Gaza, for example, constitute incitement? They might actually consider that. What is more serious than this agreement and the constant collaboration with the Israeli government since then is the newest developments in such a relationship. For example, Politico reported on May 14, 2021 that a meeting had taken place one day prior between executives from Facebook, Instagram, and even TikTok, and Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz. Disappointingly, Facebook announced that it would only meet with the Palestinian side a full week later. By then, the May 2021 Israeli attacks

on Gaza were expected to stop after an expected ceasefire, thereby ending the amount of outrage being expressed on social media and making such a meeting practically worthless. The executives did end up meeting — virtually — with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh and apologizing to him for deleting posts that used hashtags “Aqsa,” “martyr,” and “resistance,” promising to fix the algorithmic error.

Sometimes the devil is in the details. First, Facebook's meeting with Gantz also included the company's public policy director for Israel and the Jewish diaspora, Jordana Cutler, a former adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a former Likud staffer. In that meeting, Israel had planted a very critical insider who would have so much control over content related to the whole region and beyond. Second, Facebook spokesperson Andy Stone said, “In response to the violence, we are working to make sure our services are a safe place for our community ... We will continue to remove content that violates our Community Standards, which do not allow hate speech or incitement to violence, and will proactively explain and promote dialogue on these policies to policymakers.” He does not elaborate on what constitutes hate speech or incitement. But if we dig deeper, we find a very troubling trend in some of their definitions. *The Intercept*, on May 14, 2021, reported on Facebook's secret policy on the use of the words “Zionism” and “Zionist,” which is alarming. While *The Intercept* did a good job at tracking the history of this censorship, how it operates, and the potential ramifications of this policy, it failed to focus on a very dangerous adoption by Facebook of equating “Zionist” with “Jewish” and “Israeli.” In fact, the policy actually states frankly that they equate criticism of Israelis with criticism of Jews, thereby deeming that criticism as anti-Semitic. For example, spokesperson Claire Lerner said, “We allow critical discussion of Zionists, but remove attacks against them when context suggests the word is being used as a proxy for Jews or Israelis, both of which are protected characteristics under our hate speech policy.” *The Intercept* did not challenge this admission of removing posts that

attack Israelis, which serves as the clearest evidence that Facebook—and Instagram—actively silences criticism of the state of Israel.

How is someone to criticize the Israeli ethnic expulsion of Palestinians from their homes to be freely handed to Jewish settlers? How can we avoid use of the word “Jewish” in this case, when that is exactly what Israel is doing? Palestinian activists have been educating the masses, especially their supporters, on how algorithms work, and giving them advice on how to beat or outsmart the algorithms, such as coding key words that might be picked by the algorithms, avoiding commenting on Israeli trolls’ posts so those posts will not trend, and so on. However, not all posts get deleted by algorithms; there is also a human element in the decision-making process. For example, Facebook still uses low-paid contractors around the world, left to delete or preserve posts through a mix of personal judgment calls, some loose rules, flowcharts, and hypothetical examples (elaborated upon in *The Intercept* article). In addition, Israel employs hundreds, if not thousands, of digital trolls whose mission is to locate posts sympathetic to Palestinians and report on them using the application Act.IL, en masse, so those posts get flagged by social media platforms immediately. There is the war on the ground and there is the war in cyberspace. In spite of all of this suppression and censorship, the pockets of digital resistance are too many to count, and their manifestations are too varied to cover.

Conclusion

Money and influence tilt the power dynamics in favor of Israel in general, but the dedication of Palestinian cyber activists and their supporters, motivated by their strong belief in the justice of their cause, manages to break through, not only in digital spaces, but in mainstream media ones as well. Someone like Mohammed Al-Kurd can no longer be ignored, nor can the stories documented by Palestinian citizen journalists on the ground like Muna Al-Kurd exposing the colonial logic of her neighbor,

the thief, when he simplifies the issue in one sentence: “If I don’t steal it, someone else will.” A look at mainstream media coverage following the May 2021 ceasefire in particular shows the dent that has been made. Change is happening incrementally, but steadily. Palestinians are reclaiming the narrative and they are practicing digital decolonization by outsmarting the colonial, imperial, and capitalist powers behind social media.

Narrative Unravelings: A Tripartite Personal Assessment of the Nonprofit, Academic and Grassroots Role in Challenging Israeli Apartheid Propaganda

Omar Zahzah

The academic; the grassroots; and non-profit spheres can and should play an important role in advancing the Palestinian liberation struggle and challenging what we might think of as the epistemological preeminence of Zionism in the cultural sphere. Epistemology, as we know, denotes the origins and the limitations of knowledge, as well as what establishes the basis for knowledge criteria. The Zionist project, as many scholars have pointed out, is not merely one of physical colonization, but also one of cultural domination. It's paramount that the Zionist narrative becomes the default in the cultural arena, the ultimate 'ur-text' against which various other narratological threads and perspectives are measured and challenged. And when I say "culture" and even "narrative," I'm not excluding what is oftentimes referred to as mainstream media (or rather, corporate media.) And I don't think that distinction, or lack thereof, is particularly novel, or even remarkable to make—after all, several decades of structuralist and post-structuralist scholarship have been dedicated to exploring how "textual" character is by no means the exclusive province of so-called "official" literary forms, and that it *is* possible to probe the narrative conventions of supposedly non-literary pronouncements, regardless of specialization.

So, the Zionist narrative is not confined to a single text; it is also a series of codes and tropes that have come to inform establishment cultural messaging. An important way to understand how this operates is through the concept of "hegemony," which Edward Said used as one of his touchstones in exploring the pervasiveness of Orientalist logics in academic and media discourse. Originally formulated by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, "hegemony" refers to how ruling class

sensibilities can become dominant in the civil society through non-coercive means. The way, according to Gramsci, to counter hegemony is through a “war of position” that will challenge the domination within culture of the terms that reinforce political subordination. Zionism, especially following 1967 is an important component of US hegemonic cultural sensibilities. It’s for this reason that the theme of my reflections today is “narrative unravelings.” When we understand Zionism as a constitutive element in the manufacturing of white supremacist, capitalist and imperial “common sense” among the differentially subordinated populace, we see why it is erroneous to think that such an entrenched political-cultural grammar will simply be undone with one decisive blow—or even a series of blows. Rather, we need to see our work as cumulative, as gradual, as meticulously taking apart what has been so intentionally and strategically sewn in place.

Here we already have a good demonstration of the type of phenomenon I wanted to explore in this brief discussion—the interrelatedness of converging spheres in challenging Zionist hegemony and advancing Palestinian liberation—through the aforementioned example of Edward Said. Said obviously wrote the groundbreaking text *Orientalism*, which analyzed how seemingly impartial scholarship and media messaging service the projects of colonial and imperial domination and subjugation. So, on the one hand, Said authored a text that took to task the epistemological presumptions of academic impartiality regarding the study and analysis of the Near East. But that’s only one side of the story—for, as examined by scholars such as Sarah Gualtieri, Andrew Rubin, and Keith Feldman, Said was also a member of the Association of Arab American University Graduates, or AAUG, alongside his friend and mentor, Ibrahim Abu Lughood, who had previously been involved with the Organization of Arab Students (OAS.)

The AAUG was an organization dedicated to challenging the rampant demonization of Arabs (particularly Palestinians) and Muslims following the aftermath of 1967, during which the Israeli state launched a

preemptive strike against Egypt, Jordan and Syria and seized the Gaza strip, West Bank and the Syrian Golan Heights. Through its various publications, which included the journal, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, the AAUG sought to act as an academic counterweight to the racist and dehumanizing representations of the media. Two essays authored by Said (who acted as the Vice President of the organization for a time) would include the seeds of the arguments he would later explore in his field-defining text, *Orientalism*: “The Arab Portrayed” (1969) and “Shattered Myths” (1975.) In “Shattered Myths,” Said is already referring to Orientalism, which he categorizes as a “myth” that includes presumptions such as the essential singularity and bloodthirsty nature of something called “the Arab mind” that can be the specialization of US intelligence. What Said examined in this essay was how the widely reiterated trope of an “intelligence failure” was used to explain how “the Arabs” could even be expected to have fought of their own accord—not, that is, that they fought well, but that they fought “at all.” Thus, the 1973 War, sometimes referred to as the October War, represented a kind of “shattering” of some the prime conventions of the Orientalist myth, including the essential simplicity of the so-called “Arab mind,” which was so unfathomable that the facts on the ground had to be contorted by the US and Israeli political establishments as having resulted from an “intelligence failure.”

Said’s essay is an important touchstone in conceptualizing the narrative unravelings to which we need to subject the Zionist-laden presumptions of US hegemony. Essential to this undertaking is understanding that academia is in no way isolated from the political-media establishment, and *acting* on this understanding by straddling multiple spheres as scholars, intellectuals, and organizers. And on the final point: Said’s example and legacy are not reducible to him as an individual. It grows out of a wider context of organizing and activism that involves the aforementioned OAS and AAUG, as well as the General Union of Palestinian Students, and others. Similarly, those of us who come to the academic context from grassroots organizing and activist spaces don’t simply leave those sensibilities at the door when we enter the classroom.

We *need* to hold onto them *especially* when we're engaged in the intellectual act of challenging dominant logics and rhetoric of supremacy. We also need to reject the tendency to dismiss "intellectual" work as interchangeable with anything "academic." Academia as an institution in the US, which was fortified through various racist and genocidal projects such as settler-colonialism and slavery, and today remains invested in weapons companies and helping police forces develop technologies to better surveil oppressed and working class communities of color, is certainly an oppressive space—internally as well as externally, when we also recall the vast repression to which academics who dare to speak out in support of Palestine have been subjected.

But academia today actually *relies* on the assumption that knowledge production is exclusive to it to continue to perform this oppressive work invisibly. By contrast, I think simply reflecting back on liberation luminaries such as Ghassan Kanafani, who wrote myriad studies of Zionism and imperialism, as well as the countless Palestinians organizing in the camps who considered political education to be just as crucial as armed struggle, will remind us that it is actually the *duty* of individuals involved in liberation struggles to document and archive their condition. That is, there is an aspect of the liberation struggle that is indisputably intellectual—it's incumbent upon all of us to own that rather than taking academia at the word of its false branding.

It's not only in the broader socio-political culture of the US that Zionism acts as a hegemonic force—universities have become a space in which Zionism is particularly entrenched. I say "particularly" because it's been my experience that Zionism over the past few years has relied on particular narrative strategies to ensure that university spaces themselves embrace a hegemonic culture that sees Zionism as the basis for ethical conduct and intellectual integrity. Two of these strategies I have identified are those of "exceptionalization" and "co-optation." By exceptionalization I mean, quite simply, the attempt to force people to second-guess the nature of Israeli oppression and violence against

Palestinians by making it seem as though there is more than meets the eye. So, for example, accusing Israel of “apartheid” would for years be met with responses like, “It’s not what it looks like.” And because South Africa became the basis for the legally actionable crime of apartheid, Zionists would often try to delegitimize the charge by saying how Israel was “nothing like” apartheid South Africa (conveniently overlooking the fact that the charge simply requires proving systematic intent, not total equivalence.)

Co-optation, as you might imagine, refers to the appropriation of various strategies and frameworks from liberation, anti-racist and civil rights struggle in order to normalize “Zionist” as an oppressed identity and, conversely, Palestine organizing and activism as inherently oppressive. Zionist co-optation has, as documented by the legal organization Palestine Legal, relied on tactics such as suing universities for violating Zionist students’ civil rights by allowing for Palestine activism and scholarship to take place within university settings. These tactics have also played out at the state government level, with several states passing anti-BDS bills that attempt to ban businesses from participating in BDS work, relying on the false narrative of victimization of Zionists to sanction the legal codification of *actual* discrimination against Palestinians and our allies. And of course, there was the Trump administration’s Executive Order, which completely equated Judaism and Zionism and reinforced the logics of the Title VI complaints often filed by Zionist organizations against universities. In 2016, the Regents at the University of California attempted to pass a “Statement of Principles Against Intolerance” that directly equated anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Many of us organized against that, and instead the Regents passed an altered form that condemned “*antisemitic* forms of anti-Zionism.”

This of course has a wider history: Keith Feldman notes that the aftermath of 1967 in many ways began the linking of anti-Semitism with Palestine work that is so rampant today, and that this process evolved in line with a related convention of Zionist organizations beginning to frame anti-Semitism as something that needed to be explained and analyzed by

experts, because it could erupt at any moment—it had, that is, a “viral” characteristic, as Feldman explains, and because of this virality, it was important to defer to so-called Civil Rights organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (which is, in fact, a Zionist organization dedicated to surveilling and smearing pro-Palestine and racial justice activists) to stamp it out. Not so surprisingly, these recommendations usually entailed investigating and questioning activists for Palestine and other racial justice struggles. The FBI’s COINTELPRO operation, which surveilled scores of activists, mirrored the exact rhetoric that would be pushed by Zionist organizations such as the ADL in labeling Black nationalism, Palestine activism (and of course, the intersections between the two) as rooted in “hatred,” “extremism,” or “terrorism,” and thereby necessitating further government scrutiny.

So, what do we need to keep in mind when it comes to challenging not only Israeli apartheid, but also the various ways in which Zionism seeks to normalize itself within various establishment spaces? For one thing, it is crucial to keep spreading the message, *and* pushing the envelope as much as possible. Charing Israel with “apartheid” in the US was seen as somehow radical or controversial for years. Now, *B’Tselem*, *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch* have released reports attesting to the veracity of the “apartheid” designation, while Palestinians had been making the charge for decades. A lesser known but vital component of being part of a liberation is the imperative to keep saying the same things, repeating the same arguments, and never compromising one’s principles, in the hopes that what seems impossible today can be taken for granted tomorrow.

Secondly, we have to keep seizing upon breaks in the larger Zionist narrative. Said wrote of the “Shattered Myths” of Orientalism, and later, in his arguably more famous media essay, “Permission to Narrate,” talked about the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. At that time, there was a hitherto unprecedented media situation: there were more reporters

at the ground able to report directly what they were seeing and experiencing, which led to the first immediate transmission of images and accounts of brutal Israeli violence. Regina Sharif would conclude the 1983 seminal study *Non-Jewish Zionism* by reflecting that the revelations of Israel's brutality would have to force a frank reckoning with the structural nature of the Zionist project. Today, such a pronouncement may seem overstated—and yet we can discern a continuing pattern: as communications technologies enhance and expand, the Israeli state in some ways loses its narrative monopoly. I think it's worth noting that operations like 2008's "Cast Lead" and 2014's "Protective Edge" always bring more and more activists to the Palestinian cause, while types of defenses for Israeli violence that could have worked at one period in time become insufficient at another. Today, social media has played a huge role in bringing even more widespread awareness to the Palestinian cause as activists like Muhammed and Muna El-Kurd have taken to Twitter and Instagram to document, in real time, Israeli settler violence and attempts to displace the Palestinian families of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. Of course, social media is a double-edged sword, given that these same platforms have been systematically censoring and silencing Palestinians (even erasing or shadow-banning the very content mentioned.) Facebook has also been actively deleting Palestinian accounts, including those of entire academic programs that center Palestine, such as San Francisco State's Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas program, and Zoom and YouTube also took part in censoring an open classroom by this aforementioned program, led by Palestinian activist-scholar Dr. Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi. Israel, perhaps realizing the efficacy of digital technologies in displacing the premium of corporate imperial capitalist "reporting," has over the past few years been partnering with Silicon Valley tech companies to ensure that Palestinian content is censored as violations of so-called "community standards," including the promotion of "terrorism."

However, we definitely seem to be in a “moment,” and I think the uprisings that followed the police murder of George Floyd, including the subsequent reckonings with white supremacy, helped create an atmosphere of dissension whereby what was previously taken for granted is no longer fully tolerable even within the most stratified hegemonic spheres and contexts. This broader epistemological reverberation has certainly percolated into the current discourse, as evidenced by the numerous academic departments that have signed various solidarity statements with the Palestinian struggle, and a growing, explicit pledge on the part of academics to teach Palestine in a politically unfiltered way. By way of closing, I would like to reflect briefly on what I think should be the relationship between the grassroots and the non-profit spheres. As I see it, grassroots and non-profit spaces can sometimes feel antagonistic to one another, and this feeling can be healthy to the degree that it ensures an awareness that the two are *not* interchangeable. However, I do think the two can work operate relationally. Ultimately, I think it should be the role of the non-profit sphere to prop up the grassroots spaces with resources and take directives from them. The non-profits will mediate the public sphere in a way that the grassroots will not always have the capacity to do (though their efforts can certainly blur,) and in these moments it’s important to ensure that the messaging is not watered down. The non-profits are *not* the grassroots, and vice-versa—and that’s exactly how it should be.

We need to keep challenging the narrative conventions that make seemingly unchallengeable projects like Israel’s ongoing colonization of Palestine or the US’s subsidization of this colonization possible. The current status quo, with its de-centering of the role of the so-called colonial “expert,” poses new opportunities to do so even as it is also certainly fraught with unique challenges of its own.

Examining the Realities on the Ground: A Hard Look at the Facts

Helga Baumgarten

Introduction

Let me start with the view I have from my window in Beit Hanina, a village north of Jerusalem, along the historical Gaza-Jerusalem-Nablus Road. It was annexed to Jerusalem after the June 1967 War and is now a big suburb of the City. Straight ahead, in the southern direction, I see the settlement of Ramot Shlomo. Building there started in the early 1990s on land confiscated after 1967 from the village of Shufat, north of Jerusalem. The proclaimed goal at the time was to build a Green Belt, the so-called Teddy Kollek Forest, around Jerusalem. Suddenly, in the early 1990s, trucks started moving into the forest. One after another of the trees planted only a few years earlier was cut down. The Green Belt of Teddy Kollek had to make place for a new settlement. Since building started in 1995, the settlement has been continuously expanded. At present, there are approximately 20,000 settlers living in Ramat Shlomo, their numbers increasing incessantly. Further to my right, southwest from me, I see the green hill with the ruins of the village of Lifta. Lifta was destroyed in January 1948 and its inhabitants, nearly 3,000, were mercilessly driven out. Fifty-five of the 450 stone houses that made up the village in 1948, remain, partly destroyed. Lifta was attacked by the Haganah, the militia that was transformed into the Israeli army after the establishment of Israel as a state. Their goal was clear: they wanted all Palestinians in the whole area at the western entrance to Jerusalem driven out. A large part of Lifta's land—Lifta was a rich village with large holdings of land—further to the east has been built over since 1967, right after the war, by the settlement of French Hill.

Above the hill of Lifta, I can see a huge built-up area, part of West Jerusalem, now called Givat Sha'ul. Givat Sha'ul takes up the space of

the destroyed village of Deir Yassin. In Deir Yassin, one of the worst massacres was committed in 1948. Still further to my right, in the western direction, I see a huge settlement, Ramot. The first houses there were built in the 1970s, starting in 1974. Until the early 1980s, hardly anybody expected it to last, not to speak of expansion. Today, it is one of the biggest suburbs of Jerusalem with 47,000 inhabitants, again, like Ramot Shlomo, expanding day by day. In between all these settlements, there are huge highways, one going from north to south, the so-called Begin highway, and another one going south to west, the main highway from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. All these highways are being enlarged and expanded continuously.

Jerusalem, Settler Colonialism, and Ethnic Cleansing

Jerusalem is without doubt one of the major centers of Israel's settler colonial project and of its efforts in ethnic cleansing.¹ The goal is clear and put down in writing again and again and in ever new planning projects: Jerusalem is to be converted into a Jewish city with as big a Jewish majority as possible. Israel's planners do not want more than 20 percent Palestinians in Jerusalem. However, presently, and over several decades already, Palestinians have made up approximately 40 percent of Jerusalem population. At the end of 2017, there were 900,000 inhabitants in Jerusalem, 560,000 Jews, and 360,000 Palestinians. All 360,000 Palestinians reside in East Jerusalem, the only part of Jerusalem where Palestinians live, compared to 225,000 Jews. All attempts to change this

¹ See the work of Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, in particular 2009. *Militarization and Violence against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East. A Palestinian Case-Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society). 2015. *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press (Cambridge Studies in Law and Society). See also Amir S. Cheshin et alii. 1999. *Separate and Unequal. The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem*, and Menachem Klein. 2001. *Jerusalem. The Contested City*. London: C.Hurst.

have so far failed.

Since the mid-1990s, Israel implemented its “center-of-life policy” very strictly with the goal to get rid of as many Palestinians as possible. Because of the difficulties in getting building permits in East Jerusalem and because of the high prices for rented apartments, many Jerusalemites had moved to areas outside the city-boundaries of Jerusalem: ar-Ram and Ramallah in the North, Bethlehem in the South. But practically all Jerusalemites moved back into the city. Well-off people moved to Shufat, Beit Hanina, or even Sheikh Jarrah. Others returned to crowded family homes in the Old City, but also to family houses in Ras al-Amud and Silwan. People with limited financial resources or very little income moved to Shufat refugee camp and its surroundings. There, an interesting development took place beginning in 1995 and after. Refugees of 1948, in particular from the village of Beit Thu’l, 15km west of Jerusalem (destroyed in April 1948, 300 inhabitants were driven out and arrived in the Old City of Jerusalem, from where they were moved by the Jordanian Authorities and by UNRWA to the newly established camp in Shufat—today, Beit Thu’l’s descendants amount to 2,000 people), started to build high-rise buildings for returning Jerusalemites. They had made some money previously from working in Israel. They invested their savings into buying land, took money from people who wanted to buy apartments, and started to build. Within years, they became wealthy real estate agents.² In sum, in a display of the cunning of history, all Israeli measures to restrict the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem were counterproductive. Palestinians make up and continue to make up 40 percent of Jerusalemites. Still, Israel has not given up. Developments in Sheikh Jarrah and in Silwan, above all in Batn al-Hawa, have to be seen in this overall context: Israel tries with whatever means possible to drive Palestinians out of Jerusalem.

² See the PhD thesis of my former student Halima Abu Haneya. 2021. *Thwarting Settler Colonial Policies through Urban Self-Development: The Case of Shu’fat Refugee Camp in Jerusalem*. Birzeit University: PhD thesis.

Settler Colonialism, Ethnic Cleansing, and Brutal Violence 1948-2021

There is a long historical continuity of settler colonialism and ethnic cleansing in Palestine, a historical process which has taken place all over Palestine, certainly not a singular event limited to 1948. Let me just recall some of the worst instances of settler colonialism implemented through ethnic cleansing and done with the most brutal use of violence.

Deir Yassin certainly stands out as the central massacre of 1948. But it is just one instance in the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians made into refugees in 1948. For 1967, this centrality is definitely taken by the three villages of Imwas, Yalu, and Beit Nuba. The villages were completely destroyed and 8,000 inhabitants driven out on the orders of Yitzhak Rabin (later both the breaker of bones in the First Intifada and the Nobel Peace Prize recipient for the Oslo Process). On the land of the destroyed villages, a park was established, named Canada Park, after the major donors for this park. Anyone driving from the airport to Jerusalem on the northern road passes it. The distance to Ramallah is 32km. And it was also Rabin back in 1948 who drove Palestinians out of Lydda, on the direct orders of David Ben-Gurion. The refugees tried to flee to Ramallah in the burning summer heat of June, like the refugees from Imwas, Yalu, and Beit Nuba in 1967. George Habash gave testimony to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from Lydda and to the trek of refugees to Ramallah.³ In between these events, in 1956, Israel occupied Gaza for several months. There, it committed one of the worst massacres ever committed against Palestinians, the massacre of Khan Yunis, where 256 human beings were murdered in cold blood. They have been immortalized by Joe Sacco's "Footnotes in Gaza."⁴

³ See Baumgarten 1991. *Befreiung in den Staat* (Liberation turned into state-making). Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

⁴ Joe Sacco. 2009. *Footnotes in Gaza*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

1967 until 1971/72 in Gaza: Sharon's war against the Guevara from Gaza, Mohammad al-Aswad

Che Guevara actually visited Gaza in 1959 and Salman Abu Sitta remembers this visit in an in-depth article in Middle East Monitor.⁵ His message to Palestinians in Gaza was clear: They should focus on resistance and forget their complaints about poverty or their appeals to pity and compassion. After 1967, in particular in 1971, thousands of Palestinians were driven out from the camps they had taken refuge in after being driven out from their homes by the Haganah and later by the newly established Israeli army in 1948. Some were resettled in other places in Gaza, while most were driven over the border to Egypt, to Rafah (on the Egyptian side) and to El-Arish. The Israeli army set up prisoner-camps on the Sinai-peninsula for hundreds of relatives of suspected Fedayeen. At the same time, thousands of houses in the refugee camps in Gaza were destroyed in order to make place for wide roads to be used for army raids by Israel.⁶ The few examples I chose demonstrate the massive amount of violence, which was used, had to be used, to drive out Palestinians, in a process which was started in 1948 and is being continued until this date.

The Oslo Process, or the “Oslo System,” and the Palestinian “Sulta”

As if a regime of settler colonialism, the ongoing violence of ethnic cleansing, the whole system of apartheid was not enough, the “Oslo process” led to an additional layer of oppression, the oppression by the PA (Palestinian Authority, as it is called in the successive Oslo treaties) or the *sulta*, as it is called by Palestinians. This oppression was based not least on security cooperation, enforced on the Palestinian negotiators and

⁵ Salman Abu Sitta. 2016 (August). Che Guevara in Gaza: Palestine becomes a global cause. Middle East Monitor.

⁶ Norma Hazboun. 1994. The Resettlement of the Palestinian Refugees of the Gaza Strip. PhD Leeds University, as well as Ofer Aderet. 2021. Israel secretly detained innocent Palestinians in remote desert camps in Sinai. An investigative report reveals that hundreds of Gazans, including families of suspected Fatah terrorists, and young men not suspected of anything were jailed in detention camps in 1971 for almost a year Haaretz, July 29.

accepted by them right from the beginning in the highly celebrated Declaration of Principles (September 1993). This security cooperation is ongoing until today, even after several wars on Gaza. It was only very briefly stopped after former President Trump's Deal of the Century. Until today, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas considers security cooperation with the Israelis as something "holy."

Resistance Against Settler Colonialism and the Oslo System

Here, I want to start with the case of Basel al-Araj. Basel was a young leftist intellectual who tried to mobilize young people by making them aware of the situation they live in under both a system of settler colonialism and under authoritarian Palestinian rule. He was active in the Palestinian leftist Popular University, in particular in the Suleiman al-Halabi Department of Colonial Studies. Suleiman al-Halabi was an Egyptian resistance fighter who fought in the 18th century against French colonialism. With his teaching, he wanted to get his students to participate in resistance to settler colonialism in Palestine. In 2016, he was jailed by the sulta who accused him of preparing armed attacks against the Israeli occupation. During his arrest, he was tortured. He began a hunger strike and gained tremendous popular support. The sulta decided to release him. Then, or so it would seem, his "case" was handed over to the Israeli security services. Together with Palestinian security forces they searched for him—he had gone underground—all over Ramallah. Finally, he was located in Qaddurah Refugee Camp in el-Bireh, the twin city of Ramallah. There, he was shot dead in an armed attack by the Israeli army.⁷

According to the testimony of Mustafa Barghouti, no fight actually took place in the refugee camp. Rather, or so Barghouti states, this was a cold-blooded assassination. No doubt, Basel al-Araj was an outstanding example for resistance against oppression and the struggle for freedom.

⁷ See Baumgarten 2021. The Struggle for democratic space under violent settler colonialism and authoritarian rule, in: Juerger Mackert et alii (eds.). *The Condition of Democracy*. Vol. 3. London: Routledge.

There is an endless list of cases of resistance inside Palestinian society over the many years of Israeli occupation, and not least since the establishment of the sulta in Ramallah. In this short essay, I can only present a few examples. I will name a few cases and then delve into one case in more detail.⁸

One of the most outstanding cases was the strike by Palestinian teachers in the West Bank in 2016. The strike was called for and organized not by the official union, which was closely controlled by the sulta; rather, it was a spontaneous strike involving practically all teachers in West Bank and it was continued for a lengthy period. Additionally, local elections in 2018 show a number of extraordinary cases of struggle for change. In the first place, there is the Nablus municipality with the election victory by a joint list of Hamas, Fatah, and independent candidates, led by the remarkable Adli Yaish from Hamas. There is also the case of Yasuf village council, where a list of young independent people led by Nashaat Abdel Fattah (my former student in Birzeit, I should add very proudly) won the elections. They were close to local society, they tried to represent the particular interests of society, while side-stepping attempts by the sulta to impose their candidates.

My favorite case of bottom-up resistance is the remarkable women of Jubbet al-Thi'b, a small Bedouin village southeast of Bethlehem. Their struggle starts in 2014, and it was a struggle against unbearable living conditions: No running water, no electricity, no primary school, only a dirt road leading to the village in the twenty-first century, after 20 years of governance by the sulta in Ramallah. However, the village is located in Area C, an area that according to the Oslo treaties is under full Israeli control and considered by Israel first and foremost as land for settlements and for settlement expansion. The immediate cause for action by the women was the illness of their children. They got sick and developed lung problems because of the use of petroleum heaters. Also, the children were

⁸ Detailed analysis on the previous and all the following cases in Helga Baumgarten. 2021, see footnote 7.

humiliated by children in the neighboring villages when they arrived there dirty and disheveled every morning at school. The women decided to go to the head of the neighboring village of Beit Ta'amir in a unique women's demonstration, where they demanded full access to electricity and running water. When this demonstration did not bring about the hoped-for results, they continued their demonstration with the governor in Bethlehem. In particular, despite initial failures, the women did not give up. Rather, they started to mobilize solidarity and ask for help wherever and from whomever they could. They approached both local Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, like the Medical Relief Committees led by Mustafa Barghouti, as well as Israeli NGOs, like Bimkom and CometMe. Also, they informed the local and the international press, both newspapers and TV. They even contacted the diplomatic community. In the end, the first successes were achieved, when CometMe at the end of 2016 installed solar panels in the village. Not before long, in June 2017, the Israeli army raided the village and removed the solar panels. However, the army had not expected the reaction of Holland. The Dutch Prime Minister Marc Rutte intervened and contacted Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu directly asking for immediate re-installment of the solar panels. The Dutch parliament also took up the issue, and the solar panels were brought back to the village. And until the time of writing, the panels are still there. I saw them during my field research. This is a rather unique case and, according to my knowledge, it never happened either before or after.

Let me summarize all the successes achieved by the women. They established the "Women's Association of Jubbet al-Thi'b," a primary school was built, the dirt road to the village was paved, and the village got connected to the Palestinian water grid. However, the Solar panels do not generate enough electricity for the village and the village still has to be connected to the Palestinian electrical grid. Unfortunately, until today, the sulta stalls for unknown reasons. The struggle of the women continues. These women succeeded in an effort of exceptional mobilization, like the examples given above by Basel al-Araj, the teacher strikers, or the cases of municipalities. Above all, they were able to

maintain their mobilization for many years, probably their most important success. They understood the crucial role of the press and of international solidarity. At the same time, they successfully avoided corruption. As a matter of principle, they do not accept money, only practical help.

Last but not least, they were successful in bringing about social change in the role of women in the village, reducing in-family violence. Instead, they generated respect and appreciation between men, women, and children.

After these two case studies of individuals (like Basel al-Araj) and village-based resistance, I should at least briefly mention Palestinian resistance all through the period of direct occupation after 1967. There are the two Intifadas, that is, the uprisings against the Israeli occupation, ethnic cleansing, settler colonialism, and the whole system of apartheid. The first Intifada took place between 1987 and 1990, the second Intifada started in 2000 and lasted until 2003. But apart from these direct and active uprisings, another aspect of Palestinian resistance needs to be stressed. It is *sumud*, as the PLO called it, or perhaps more precisely *baqa* or ‘staying put,’ as Adel Manna put it, referring in particular to the resistance of Palestinians inside Israel in the borders of 1948.

As for the Gaza Strip, I want to call your attention to the Great March of Return, which started in 2018 and was continued until 2020, with intermediate demonstrations until today. Last but not least, there is the ongoing Palestinian resistance against the wars Israel has been waging against the Gaza Strip, in particular the wars after 2006. All these wars were asymmetrical wars and as a matter of fact we should not talk about several wars (2006, 2008/9, 2012, 2014, 2021), but rather one long war against Gaza and its people.⁹ The Palestinian resistance inside Gaza is

⁹ See my latest book: Kein Frieden fuer Palaestina. Der lange Krieg gegen Gaza. Besatzung und Widerstand. (in German. „No peace for Palestine. The long war against Gaza. Occupation and Resistance.) Wien: Promedia Verlag, September 2021. . An Arabic translation is forthcoming by the end of 2022 with Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS), Doha.

apparently trying to follow the example of Hizbullah in Lebanon in its attempt to achieve something of a “balance of fear,” trying to convince Israel that any attack against Gaza will become more costly for Israel and Israeli society in the long run. However, and this needs to be stated clearly, this strategy of resistance comes at an extremely high cost for Palestinian society in Gaza.

Conclusion

Settler-colonialism and the violence associated with it has tremendously increased since our conference in Istanbul. The Israeli settler-colonial state, the army and the settlers are oppressing Palestinians and using unrestricted force against them on a level not seen before.

As a reaction, Palestinian resistance has also increased. So far, this resistance has not been translated into a nationwide uprising. But it would seem, that Palestinian society is fast approaching the turning point. People obviously cannot take Israeli oppression much longer. Also, dissatisfaction with the Palestinian authority in Ramallah is growing.

While we cannot predict the future, a violent explosion is approaching. The form it will take, however, is open.

US Foreign Policy and its Impact on Palestine and Palestinians

Phyllis Bennis

While the United States has supported Israel and the pre-state Zionist movement for more than three-quarters of a century, the so-called “special relationship” between the two countries emerged powerfully in 1967, following the Six-Day War in June of that year. That war resulted in the Israeli military’s capture and occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the 22% of the land that was all that remained of historic Palestine.

Prior to the ’67 war, US support for the pre-state Zionist movement and for Israel during its first 19 years was strong, but would have to be considered “normal.” For most of that time Israel purchased the majority of its weapons from France and Czechoslovakia, not from the United States. It was the US Department of Defense, the Pentagon, that initiated the deepened ties that would become the special relationship – and set the stage for the levels of virtually unlimited economic, military, diplomatic and political support and protection that Washington provides to Tel Aviv. And it was that special relationship – most of all the military aid (in 2022 amounting to 20% of Israel’s military budget) and the diplomatic protection at the International Criminal Court, the United Nations and elsewhere, that helped create the wealth, military power, and nuclear arsenal of today’s Israel.

And in doing so, the continuing legacy of US backing for Israeli actions, including human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity – without criticism, without condemnation, and certainly without accountability – remains today. The US continues to enable those Israeli crimes, by funding the military (in violation of US domestic laws prohibiting military support to violators of human rights), by vetoing UN Security Council resolutions and undermining other UN actions aiming

at accountability or even general criticism of Israeli practices, by limiting the reach of the ICC to keep it away from Israel. As we have seen most recently in the US refusal to hold Israel accountable (or even establish its own credible investigation) for the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May 2022, this protection of and support for Israel even takes precedence when US citizens are the victims of Tel Aviv's actions.

There was widespread media, political, congressional as well as public debate, and indeed widespread outrage, in response to the extremist pro-Israel positions of former President Donald Trump. Trump rhetorically rejected the "two-state solution," [already long made impossible by Israeli theft of Palestinian land], and outsourced to his son-in-law Jared Kushner creation of a plan for an "economic peace" for the Palestinians as a substitute for the achievement of political rights.

When those actions failed to win Trump the acclaim he apparently hoped for, he turned to the more theatrical moves, all aimed at demonstrating his close ties with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and with the other far-right elements of the Israeli government. In 2018 he moved the US embassy to Jerusalem, in defiance of international law, a host of UN resolutions, and decades of US diplomatic practice. He announced official recognition of Israel's annexation of Syria's Golan Heights, despite its clear illegality and full rejection by the United Nations. He stated that US policy would now accept Israel's Jews-only colonial settlements in the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem as legal, again in defiance of international law, the UN, etc., and that future annexation of whatever scraps of land might be left in the West Bank would be fine too. He made clear that Israel's recently passed and particularly influential "Nation-State" law that codifies the right of self-determination belonging only to Jews and not to other (Palestinian) citizens of Israel, is perfectly acceptable to the US. And he issued an Executive Order imposing assets freezes and visa restriction on prosecutors and other staff of the International Criminal Court because they had the temerity to considering launching investigations of potential Israeli (or US) war crimes.

At the same time Trump announced a series of policy changes designed to explicitly undermine Palestinian lives and rights through collective punishments. He closed the PLO diplomatic office in Washington DC, and shuttered the US consulate in Jerusalem that had long served as an almost-embassy to Palestinians. He demanded a new definition of Palestinian refugee status, cut the entire US funding stream to the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, and cut almost all of the direct US assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Trump even cut the small grant supporting Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem, leaving in place only some funds supporting Palestinian security forces whose job is to protect Israelis. \

The widespread public and media outrage that greeted Trump's extremist policies seemed to apply to the in-coming Biden administration as well. As a candidate Biden told a group of Jewish donors¹ that he would reverse Trump's policies that Biden believed would reduce chances for peace. He said explicitly that he did not support annexation, and that he would return to diplomatic engagement with the PLO – presumably by re-opening the PLO office in Washington. He also promised to reopen the US consulate in Jerusalem.

Once the Biden administration came into office, things looked rather different. On the Trump actions that specifically dealt with Palestinians, there were a couple of changes. Biden restored US funding of UNRWA, along with a token payment to the Palestinian hospitals, and he revoked the sanctions against the ICC staff. He announced several times he intended to reopen the Jerusalem consulate – but Israel resisted, and after a few US requests the White House apparently let the matter drop. The consulate is still closed, and the PLO office in Washington remains shuttered.

On the policies that impacted Israel directly– moving the embassy to Jerusalem, recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli, settlements

¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-tells-jewish-donors-hell-reverse-trumps-policies-that-hurt-peace/>

declared legal – Biden made no changes. For several months it was assumed there was simply too much pressure on the new administration, a challenging time of pandemic, climate crises, threats to US democratic institutions, a congress with a barely-there Democratic majority that made every decision difficult. But Trump’s most extreme pro-Israel actions were decisions taken by the president alone, not requiring congressional agreement. Biden could have similarly issued his own positions. But he did not. Almost two years into his administration, the embassy is still in Jerusalem, the US position is that the Golan Heights still belong to Israel and settlements are somehow legal. This is no longer about not having enough time.

Perhaps because there was another promise Biden-the-candidate made when he spoke to Jewish supporters before the election. He promised not to touch US aid to Israel. “I’m not going to place conditions on security assistance,” he said. That was the promise he kept.

As a result, the most extreme actions now must be identified not as Trump policies but as Biden’s policies – and therefore official US policies. Whether Biden agrees with Israel’s moves and threats towards annexation matters not at all – since he has done nothing official to reverse that position. Whether he thinks the settlements are in fact legal or not, they are currently legal as a US position since Biden has never reversed his predecessor’s position.

The Politics behind it

It is a longstanding reality in US politics that pro-Israel forces are powerful, that challenging Israel can amount to political suicide. But the last twenty years or so, and especially the last six or eight years, have seen extraordinary changes in the political landscape. Certainly, pro-Israel lobbies and organizations, from AIPAC and the Anti-Defamation League to Churches United for Israel and other right-wing Christian Zionist organizations still raise and distribute millions of dollars to candidates

challenging congress-members and other candidates who support Palestinian rights. (Increasingly they are funding opponents of other progressive candidates too, including those who have never said a word about Palestine or Israel). Certainly, pro-Israel organizations still mobilize to undermine organizing campaigns for Palestinian rights, on college campuses and beyond, and certainly the weaponization of false claims of antisemitism has risen to dangerous levels.

But it is also true that these campaigns no longer have the broad public support they once claimed. Public opinion has shifted dramatically – with astonishing changes in public discourse, significant shifts in media coverage, and the beginning, finally, of a shift in policy and political/congressional discourse. It’s a whole different world out there.

Support for Palestinian rights is becoming a mainstream proposition. It’s not there yet, but change is happening. The procession of mainstream Israeli and international human rights organizations, from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to B’Tselem and Yesh Din, to UN officials and agencies and US-based faith leaders and even some members of congress all

recognizing Israel as an apartheid state is a reflection of that shift. The July 2021 poll² showing that 25% of American Jews believe that Israel is an apartheid state and 22% believe Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians is another.

Yet another is the ubiquitous presence of Palestinian voices, and references to the Nakba in mainstream US media. Just a few months into the Biden presidency, a new Washington Post opinion writer³ launched his inaugural column calling on the Democratic Party to match their significant strides in dealing with issues of systemic racism and the need for a populist agenda, with “a third big shift: accepting that the party’s

² <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2021-07-13/ty-article/a-quarter-of-u-s-jews-agree-that-israel-is-an-apartheid-state-in-new-survey/0000017f-dbaa-db5a-a57f-dbea1c830000>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/05/25/progressives-are-right-about-foreign-policy-too/>

progressives are right on foreign policy, too.” And he used Israel’s assault on Gaza as having “validated the Democratic left’s views of that conflict.”

The 2018 election of four new members of Congress, all young, all women of color, including two Muslims, a Somali refugee and a Palestinian, who supported various iterations of Palestinian rights and criticism of Israeli human rights violations, was still another major signpost of this shift being underway – with several more similar voices elected two years later. The fact that 500 former staff members of Biden’s victorious 2020 presidential campaign signed off on an open letter⁴ demanding that the president call for an immediate ceasefire during Israel’s 2021 assault on Gaza is another example. “To ensure a lasting ceasefire and a future of peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians,” they wrote, “we ask that you work to end the underlying conditions of occupation, blockade, and settlement expansion that led to this exceptionally destructive period in a 73-year history of dispossession and ethnic cleansing. The resulting status quo is one that international and Israeli human rights organizations agree meets the definition of the crime of apartheid under international law.” Members of Congress have recently challenged US military arms transfers to Israel, including \$735 million in Boeing’s new JDAMS⁵, which “improve” 500-, 1,000- and 2,000-pound bombs. Longstanding Congresswoman Betty McCollum continues to introduce bills every year that aim to protect Palestinian children’s human rights⁶.

But despite those changes going on in their immediate orbit, so far neither the Biden White House nor most members of Congress appear to have recognized those new realities.

⁴ <https://matan-aradneeman.medium.com/dear-president-biden-b19600918a67>

⁵ <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/104572/joint-direct-attack-munition-gbu-313238/>

⁶ <https://www.afsc.org/resource/no-way-to-treat-child-resources-action>

Will a New Government in Israel make a Difference to the US?

Israeli elections are set for November 2022. Netanyahu is in the running again, and again polls indicate a close vote. There are some significant differences between Netanyahu's far-right coalition and the center-right coalition currently in the majority with a shared prime minister position regarding some economic and social questions most relevant for Israeli Jews. But there is little difference between them regarding treatment of Palestinians, either those under occupation in the West Bank/East Jerusalem, those besieged in Gaza or those living as second or third class citizens inside the Green Line.

When it comes to relations with the United States, the differences may show up in Netanyahu's propensity for cozying up to the Republican Party, and the far-right Trump wing at that. Bennett and Lapid, the co-prime ministers of the other coalition, are likely to get a more bipartisan welcome in Washington, but the reality is that the continuation of billions in military aid, complete protection of Israel at the UN and the ICC, political and diplomatic privileging, all are likely to remain features of the US embrace of Israel.

Netanyahu's overt racism, his crude Islamophobia, rampant nationalism and tendencies towards authoritarianism make him a more likely partner of right-wing Republicans, and indeed polls show support for Israel has become an extraordinarily partisan issue, with Republicans backing Israel more than twice as much as Democrats. But that partisan distinction in public opinion doesn't yet have sufficient influence on policymakers to change the still bipartisan level of military and strategic support.

On international issues central to the US-Israeli alliance, both Israeli Knesset coalitions oppose any return to the Iran nuclear deal. Both are eager to maintain and expand the so-called "Abraham Accords" in which repressive monarchies of the Arab Gulf create acknowledged or temporarily-quiet but strong economic and military relations with Israel under US sponsorship, all aimed at building a powerful anti-Iran alliance. Both oppose any effort to hold Israel accountable for human rights

violations or war crimes, whether for collective punishment assaults on Gaza or the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and whether domestic Israeli or US-based or ICC accountability.

In the meantime, conditions of Palestinian life – bombing raids on Gaza with a continuing siege, house demolitions and forced evictions across the West Bank, ethnic cleansing continuing in Jerusalem legalized through the “nation-state” law – continue to deteriorate.

New campaigns are rising inside Palestine, in the US, and globally across civil society. Campaigns for a new movement against Israeli apartheid will be part of a UN effort to re-open the now-closed Special Committee Against Apartheid, which played a hugely important role in building the global movement against South African apartheid. The BDS movement continues to engage activists, faith communities, universities, cities and more across the globe.

There may or may not be some new Israeli faces coming to Washington after the elections. It won't matter yet whether it's Netanyahu, well known for war crimes as well as for blatant racism in his interactions with President Obama, or whether it's one of the Not-Netanyahu guys, like sometimes-Prime Minister Neftali Bennett, the one who bragged “I've killed a lot of Arabs in my life – there's no problem with that.” Hopefully when Bennett or whoever it is gets to the United States for a visit, there will be enough pressure being exerted on those in Washington eager to welcome them, that they'll realize that a lot more of us DO have a problem with that.

Growing US Support for Palestinian Rights in the Context of Historical US Opposition to Zionism

Josh Ruebner

Ever since the first Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland in 1897, the Zionist movement has always sought a great power benefactor to colonize Palestine. Until his death in 1904, Theodor Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist movement, attempted to negotiate a land grant of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. During World War I, the Zionist movement extracted a pledge, the Balfour Declaration, from Great Britain to allow for the development of a “national home” in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was written into the terms of the Palestine mandate awarded to Great Britain in 1920 and confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922. Until the 1939 White Paper limited Jewish immigration to and land purchases in Palestine, Great Britain tailored its mandate of Palestine to suit the development of a Jewish national home in Palestine to the detriment of the indigenous Palestinian people. During World War II, as it was becoming clearer to the Zionist movement that the locus of post-war power would shift towards the United States, the Zionist movement placed more of its diplomatic focus on grooming and later maintaining the support of the United States for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and its imposition of a settler-colonial regime of rule over the Palestinian people.¹ Maintaining US support for this settler-colonial

¹ For an excellent recent treatment of Israeli settler-colonialism fitting well into the model of other settler-colonial regimes, see Jeff Halper, *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine: Zionism, Settler Colonialism, and the Case for One Democratic State*, Pluto Press, London, 2021, pp. 17-50.

project remains, until today, the single most important Israeli foreign policy objective.

As a settler-colonial movement that seeks to displace and eliminate the indigenous population, great power backing is the *sine qua non* of success for the Zionist movement, as it has been for other settler-colonial movements throughout the world: Great Britain sponsored settler-colonialism in North America, Spain in North and South America, Portugal in South America, the Dutch in South Africa, Great Britain in Australia, France in Algeria, etc. To the extent that settler-colonial movements are successful in displacing the indigenous and implanting a new society, they are generally reliant upon continued great power protection until they are powerful enough to stand on their own. Despite 140 years of Zionist settlement, and 73 years since the establishment of Israel and the ongoing Nakba (“catastrophe”) that has ensued for the Palestinian people as a result, the Zionist movement and Israel have not succeeded in their plans to subdue or eliminate the Palestinian people to the extent that their settler-colonial project can stand on its own. Therefore, maintaining the steadfast backing of the United States remains a paramount concern for the continuation of this project.

After the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas of May 21, 2021, at first glance, US support for Israel appears to be as “unshakable and unbreakable” as the oft-repeated mantra of politicians would have you believe. The entirety of the Republican caucus in Congress continues to give Israel carte blanche to commit war crimes against the Palestinian people, who are routinely demonized as subhuman and undeserving of human rights. This ethos fits well with the increasingly brazen white supremacist nature of the party’s base of support and the jeremiads of its elected officials. Meanwhile, the Biden administration and the majority of the Democratic members of Congress, while eschewing this more blatantly racist discourse, nevertheless absolve Israel of any wrongdoing by claiming that its acts always constitute “self-defense” against

“terrorism.”² Furthermore, the Biden administration severely undermined its claim, introduced in its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, to “defend and protect human rights and address discrimination, inequity, and marginalization in all its forms,”³ when it repeatedly blocked the Security Council from issuing a statement calling for a ceasefire to stop Israel’s indiscriminate and disproportionate bombing campaign against the besieged Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip.⁴ The Biden administration also rushed through a \$735 million weapons deal, most likely to be paid for by US taxpayers, to resupply Israel with Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs),⁵ the same type of munitions found in the rubble of the Rimal massacre in Gaza City, which killed 43 Palestinians, including 22 members of the al-Kawlak family who ranged in age from the 89-year-old family head Amin to his 6-month-old great-grandson Qusai.⁶ Meanwhile, Members of Congress are pledging to secure \$1 billion in supplementary appropriations for Iron Dome batteries for Israel.⁷ These batteries are over 90 percent effective in shooting down

² For an important evaluation of the ways in which Israel and the United States are attempting to mold international law to justify attacks against civilians under the rubric of self-defense against terrorism, see Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2019, pp. 175-210.

³ *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, March 2021, White House, p. 20, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>

⁴ “Israel-Palestine: US blocks UN statement for third time in a week,” *Al Jazeera*, May 17, 2021, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/17/no-us-action-after-third-unscc-meeting-on-israel-palestine>

⁵ Alex Kane, “Days Before Approving Humanitarian Aid to Gaza, State Department Agreed to Contentious Bomb Sale to Israel,” *Jewish Currents*, May 25, 2021, available at: <https://jewishcurrents.org/breaking-news-days-before-approving-humanitarian-aid-to-gaza-state-department-agreed-to-contentious-bomb-sale-to-israel/>

⁶ Karen Laub and Fares Akram, “Gaza’s bereaved civilians fear justice will never come,” *Associated Press*, June 2, 2021, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-middle-east-israel-palestinian-conflict-fd2b4ee45e5cde322c8ea6fa23e90a5e>

⁷ “U.S. senator expects U.S. to send more funds for Israel’s ‘Iron Dome,’” *Reuters*, June 1, 2021, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-senator-expects-us-send-more-funds-israels-iron-dome-2021-06-01/>

incoming rockets and missiles fired by armed Palestinian groups, considerably tilting the Israeli calculus further towards the use of force.⁸

Major Shifts in US Support for Israel

If you are the Israeli government or an advocate on its behalf in the United States, then you must feel good about this overall dynamic. But just as the shifting of tectonic plates is not felt above ground until there is an earthquake, major shifts in US public opinion and US politics are underway and already producing sizable tremors. There have been several important legislative and policy initiatives in support of Palestinian rights in Congress. On April 15, 2021, Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) introduced a bill to prohibit US funding to Israel to demolish Palestinian houses; detain and ill-treat Palestinian children; and annex Palestinian land. This bill, which for the first time would impose specific “end-use restrictions” on US weapons to Israel, currently has 27 cosponsors.⁹ And just a few weeks later, on May 12, Rep. Marie Newman (D-IL) led a letter, signed by 24 of her colleagues, calling on the State Department to prevent Israel from committing the “war crime” of expelling nearly 2,000 Palestinians from their homes in Jerusalem.¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, on May 20, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) introduced an unprecedented joint resolution disapproving of the Biden administration’s proposed sale of JDAMs to Israel. This resolution was cosponsored by 14 Representatives.¹¹ Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced a Senate

⁸ Josh Ruebner, “House support for Israel damages prospects for peace,” *Mondoweiss*, May 12, 2012, available at: <https://mondoweiss.net/2012/05/house-support-for-israel-damages-prospects-for-peace/>

⁹ H.R.2590 - Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act, 117th Congress (2021-2022), available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/2590>

¹⁰ Available at:

<https://twitter.com/RepMarieNewman/status/1392558132954603524/photo/1>

¹¹ H.J.Res.49 - Providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed direct commercial sale to Israel of certain weaponry and munitions, 117th Congress (2021-2022), available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-joint-resolution/49>

version of the resolution.¹² This joint resolution marked the first time that Members of Congress attempted to stop a weapons deal to Israel. A few years ago, any one of these initiatives would have signaled a breakthrough on Palestinian rights in Congress. Taken together and coming in such quick succession, these developments herald a vast potential shift in a congressional landscape hitherto almost exclusively devoted to supporting Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. Undergirding this mounting progressive Democratic support for Palestinian rights in Congress is an equally important shift underway in public opinion. A poll conducted by Data for Progress in May 2021 found that 72 percent of Democrats supported restricting US weapons to Israel as proposed in the McCollum bill referenced above; only 15 percent of Democrats opposed the bill. (48 percent of Republicans opposed the bill; only 36 percent supported it.)¹³ A February 2021 poll conducted by Gallup found that self-identified liberals sympathize more with Palestinians than with Israelis by a margin of 44 to 36 percent. (Conservatives sympathize more with Israelis than with Palestinians by a margin of 76 to 14 percent.)¹⁴ A September 2019 University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll found that 48 percent of Democrats strongly or somewhat support the Palestinian civil society-led movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) for Palestinian rights, and only 15 percent oppose it strongly or somewhat. (76 percent of Republicans somewhat or strongly oppose BDS, and only 8 percent somewhat or strongly support it.) The same poll also found that 66 percent of Democrats support sanctioning Israel or taking stronger measures if it continues to colonize Palestinian land, while only 31 percent of Democrats think the US should do nothing or limit opposition to words only. (76 percent of Republicans think the

¹² S.J.Res.19 - A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed transfer to Israel of certain defense articles, including defense services and technical data, 117th Congress (2021-2022), available at:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/19>

¹³ Available at: <https://www.filesforprogress.org/datasets/2021/6/dfp-conditional-aid-israel-toplines.pdf>

¹⁴ Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/file/poll/340463/210319MiddleEast.pdf>

US should do nothing or limit opposition to words only, while only 23 percent support sanctions or stronger measures.)¹⁵ A September-October 2018 poll also conducted by the University of Maryland Critical Issues poll found bipartisan support for a one-state secular, democratic resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue if a two-state resolution is not feasible: 78 percent of Democrats favored a one-state resolution based on equal rights with only 12 percent favoring a one-state resolution based on the apartheid status quo of Jewish supremacy. (48 percent of Republicans favored a one-state equality resolution with 42 percent supporting a one-state apartheid resolution.)¹⁶

The demographic tide in the United States is shifting to make it difficult for the GOP to win national elections based on its current platform of white grievance and culture wars. This explains why the Republican Party is so vigorously trying to enact voter suppression laws, especially targeting people of color, at the national, state, and local levels. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's warm embrace of the GOP may have provided Israel with some short-term political dividends. However, it also alienated Democrats, helped to drive a perhaps irreversible partisan wedge, and grew support for Palestinian rights among the Democratic base. With Democratic public opinion polling showing support for BDS, growing sympathy with Palestinians, and a future resolution based on equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians in a one-state framework, the long-term picture looks much more bleak for Israel's ability to maintain bipartisan support in the United States for its ongoing settler-colonial rule over the Palestinian people.

¹⁵ Shibley Telhami and Stella Rouse, "American Attitudes toward the Middle East," University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, September 2019, pp. 13-14, available at: <https://criticalissues.umd.edu/sites/criticalissues.umd.edu/files/UMCIP%20Middle%20East%20Questionnaire.pdf>

¹⁶ Shibley Telhami and Stella Rouse, "American Attitudes toward the Middle East," University of Maryland Critical Issues Poll, September-October 2018, p. 4, available at: <https://sadat.umd.edu/sites/sadat.umd.edu/files/UMCIP%20Questionnaire%20Sep%20to%20Oct%202018.pdf>

These developments in public opinion and in Congress are extremely important cracks in the so-called “unshakable, unbreakable” relationship between the United States and Israel. However, it is ahistorical and an example of presentism to project backwards in time today’s supposed “unshakable, unbreakable” relationship to posit an enduring and unchanging US relationship with Zionism and Israel. On the contrary, it is important and necessary to recover and reinterpret historical US objections to Zionism and the establishment of Israel in order to see potentialities for future policy at a present-day juncture in which the two-state resolution has run its course.

A Way Forward

As early as 1919, US policymakers understood that Zionism could only be implemented by force over the unanimous objection of the indigenous Palestinian people. President Woodrow Wilson sent the King-Crane Commission to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of World War I to ascertain the wishes of its inhabitants regarding future political arrangements. Just eight days after landing in Jaffa, the commissioners hurriedly dispatched a telegram to Wilson concluding that “both Moslem and Christian take a united and most hostile attitude toward any extensive Jewish immigration or toward any effort to establish Jewish sovereignty over them. We doubt if any British or American official here believes that it is possible to carry out the Zionist program except through the support of a large army.”¹⁷ In their final report, the commissioners concluded that the Zionist project in Palestine would constitute “a serious injustice” to the indigenous Palestinian population, that the Zionist claim “that they have a ‘right’ to Palestine based on an occupation of two thousand years ago, can hardly be seriously considered,” and that “the project for making Palestine

¹⁷ Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission: An American Inquiry in the Middle East*, Khayats, Beirut, Lebanon, 1963, p. 92.

distinctly a Jewish commonwealth should be given up.”¹⁸ Unfortunately, the commission’s recommendations were shelved, and its perspicacity abandoned as the United States was generally content to defer to British policy during most of the British mandate over Palestine. However, during World War II, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt began to anticipate a greater post-war involvement of the United States in the Middle East, the United States began to articulate the contours of a potential independent policy.

Towards that end, Roosevelt dispatched a trusted adviser, Brigadier General Patrick J. Hurley, as his personal representative to tour the region from Morocco to Iraq and make policy recommendations. In May 1943, he cabled Roosevelt from Cairo about his apprehension of Palestinians being ethnically cleansed if a Jewish state were established: “The Zionist organization in Palestine has indicated its commitment to an enlarged program for (1) a sovereign Jewish State which would embrace Palestine and probably Transjordan, (2) an eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq, and (3) Jewish leadership for the whole Middle East in the fields of economic development and control.” Hurley continued: “Among the Arabs, there is little or no anti-Jewish sentiment as we ordinarily use the term.” However, like the King-Crane Commission before him, Hurley found “deep-seated Arab hostility to any immigration program intended to create a Jewish majority in Palestine and to the establishment of a Jewish sovereign state.”¹⁹ US policymakers’ knowledge that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was naturally and bitterly opposed by the indigenous Palestinian population, which also faced the acknowledged possibility of being dispossessed, prompted a remarkable memo written by Loy Henderson, director of the State Department’s Office on Near Eastern and African

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 351-352.

¹⁹ “Brigadier General Patrick J. Hurley, Personal Representative of President Roosevelt, to the President,” *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1943, The Near East and Africa, Volume IV*, Document 814, available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1943v04/d814>

Affairs, in July 1947. His memo, entitled “A Plan for the Future Government of Palestine,” offered a strikingly forward-looking proposal for a unitary, democratic state premised on equal rights for all the inhabitants of Palestine. In light of recent reports from Human Rights Watch charging Israel with the crimes of apartheid and persecution,²⁰ and B’Tselem calling Israel’s rule over the Palestinian people “a regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea regime,”²¹ Henderson’s memo makes for insightful reading as a potential blueprint for dismantling Israeli apartheid and settler-colonialism.

Just four months before the United States backed the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, Henderson wrote that “Palestine should become neither an Arab State nor a Jewish State but a single independent Palestine State in which all its people, of whatever religion or blood, may dwell together in concord.” Its government “should represent all Palestinian citizens and should protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms.” In a preemptive repudiation of the separate-and-unequal regime that Israel would establish less than one year after this memo was written, Henderson urged that “there should not be set up one system of law for the adherents of one religion and a different system for the adherents of another religion.” Although Henderson’s memo did not anticipate Israel’s large-scale ethnic cleansing of Palestine, it did oppose an immigration system that privileged the rights of Jewish people worldwide to the detriment of the indigenous population: “The immigration laws of Palestine should not discriminate against prospective

²⁰ *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*, Human Rights Watch, April 27, 2021, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

²¹ *A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid*, B’Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, January 12, 2021, available at: https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid

immigrants on grounds of religion or blood,” he wrote.²² As the breakdown of the two-state paradigm is irretrievable, Henderson’s memo could easily be dusted off the shelf today to serve as a model of a decolonized, democratic Palestine. These three examples from US archives, far from demonstrating a continuous narrative of “unshakable, unbreakable” support for Zionism, show that US policymakers knew that Zionism conflicted with self-determination for Palestinians; necessitated the use of force and ethnic cleansing against them; and that justice could only be achieved in Palestine through democracy and equality, not Jewish supremacy. These three reports, written between 75 and 100 years ago, not only rebut and undermine the notion of continuous US support for Zionism, but also point the way towards a just US policy for the future.

²² “Memorandum Prepared in the Department of State,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Near East and Africa, Volume V*, Document 772, available at: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v05/d772>

**Unholy Alliance: Exposing US Right Wing Movements in
Supporting
Israeli Apartheid**

Estee Chandler

The recent ratcheting up of violence by Israeli police, border and military forces, projected Israel's entrenched occupation and siege back onto the world stage in large format and in High Definition. In Hollywood, we often say, timing is everything, so Israel doing so, as the world is still digesting the recent detailed B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch reports explaining how and why Israel is guilty of the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution; produced some different reviews than past Gaza assault episodes.

But the violence was not only meted out by police and military entities. Hundreds, if not thousands of far right-wing Israelis, from both inside the green line and from the hundreds of illegal Israeli West Bank settlements joined the police and military; and were also seen on that stage- looking like the kinds of violent angry mobs the world knows well- and these were waving Israeli flags.

Lastly, Israel's violent responses to peaceful protests around Israel and the West Bank in places like Lod and Sheikh Jarrah in addition to the 2021 version of Israeli bombing of densely populated neighborhoods and civilian targets in Gaza put one entirely new troupe of players and voices on that world stage; as they explained every event leading up to and during the 11-day assault, in real time, and in context, and that troupe featured Palestinians.

As fewer and fewer people consume information from mainstream media outlets, more and more people are understanding what the American and Israeli governments would like the world to believe is a clash between

Israel and Hamas, for what it is actually is; a U.S. supported, highly militarized & nuclear-powered apartheid regime ruling over Palestinians with impunity.

But let's remember how we got here because the rise of the hard right the world watched staring in that Israel movie- is not a new plot line- journalists and political scientists have been documenting the far-right ascent in Israel, at least since, the lead up to Netanyahu's now ended 12 years run as Prime Minister.

As Peter Beinart pointed out on his *Substack* blog, in Netanyahu, one finds the key elements shared by many populist autocrats that currently menace liberal democracy around the world.

The first is resentment. Like many populist autocrats, Netanyahu sees himself as an outsider.

The second is his faith in capitalism. Among his proudest professional accomplishments is helping to turn Israel from a socialist economy to the neo-liberal "startup nation" Israel projects itself as being today. The Third, he wrote, like many hyper-nationalists, Netanyahu portrays himself as uniquely strong enough to prevent his people from being preyed upon by foreign powers. Fourth; like Donald Trump, Indian Prime Minister Modi, Hungarian Prime Minister Orban and others, Netanyahu, defines his country not as comprising everyone who lives within its borders, but instead as representing a particular ethnic, religious, or racial group.

And fifth, like demagogues across the ages, Netanyahu has long been obsessed with propaganda.

Beinart also wrote about, a "shadow debate" that he understands Netanyahu to have conducted with Barack Obama about the course of history that I think is pertinent to this conversation. He wrote, "Throughout his presidency, Obama kept telling Netanyahu that Israel's control over millions of stateless Palestinians was "unsustainable."

Obama believed, it unsustainable, because the world was becoming less tolerant of colonialism and racism. Obviously positive change doesn't move forward in a straight line, but like many, Obama loved to quote Martin Luther King, saying, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

Netanyahu, the son of a revisionist historian, sees the world very differently. During a 2015 discussion at the American Enterprise Institute, Netanyahu told the audience they should read all twelve volumes of Will Durant's *The Story of Civilization*. And in doing so, Beinart surmises that Netanyahu was answering Obama- in essence challenging Obama's theory of progress; and saying the future doesn't belong to liberalism as Obama defined it—including tolerance, equal rights, and the rule of law—but instead the future belongs to authoritarian capitalism; governments, that combined aggressive and often racist nationalism with economic and technological strength. And so, the future, Beinart believes Netanyahu was implying, would produce leaders who resemble him not Obama.

What IS new over this last dozen or so years is all our meta-data, our digital interactions; our likes, posts and purchases are being collected and sold to fuel a \$1 trillion dollar per year industry. Today, data is worth more on the open market than oil.

As the film *The Great Hack* documents, companies like Cambridge Analytica are using our datapoints to help their clients meet their goals; and their client's goals are obtaining political power to make money.

Big Tech's targeting tools are their weapons, and their targets are consumers, who also happen to be voters. Voters whose minds they have good reason to believe they can change- because as the film documents they have done just that- all over the world with great success.

As Prof Shibley Telhami¹ recently wrote about at Brookings, as more and more light is focused on Israel's apartheid rule over Palestinians, and as

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/experts/shibley-telhami/>

Democratic attitudes toward Israel² are shifting, including among younger Jewish Americans³, Israel's focus has also shifted-- to the evangelical right as a cornerstone of U.S. support for Israel.

His polling shows, evangelical attitudes toward Israel account for most of the Republican Party's support; In fact, without evangelicals⁴, Republican attitudes on Israel deviate little from the rest of America.

But interestingly there may not be a future for Zionism there either, as recent surveys⁵, continue to show younger evangelicals are much less supportive of Israel than older evangelicals, and by a widening margin. In fact, support for Israel among young evangelicals has dropped from 75% to 34%.

Where support for Israel is thriving is farther right, on the far & extreme right.

Back in 2017, Naomi Dann, then JVP Media Manager was writing about Israel's embrace of white supremacists like Charlottesville march leader Richard Spencer, who had been invited to speak on Israeli TV⁶.

The Israeli TV host asked Spencer how he, as Jew, should feel about Spencer's platform?

And Spencer responded, that As an Israeli citizen, someone who understands their identity, who has a sense of nationhood, peoplehood, history and the experiences of the Jewish people, they should respect someone like Spencer because he cares about his people, and he wants them to have a secure homeland for themselves, just like the host wants a secure homeland in Israel.

² <https://pomeps.org/changing-american-public-attitudes-on-israel-palestine-does-it-matter-for-politics>

³ <https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2015/12/17/how-to-almost-eliminate-the-u-s-partisan-divide-on-the-middle-east/>

⁵ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/support-for-israel-among-young-us-evangelicals-drops-sharply-survey/>

⁶ <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.807335>

He said he sees himself as “a white Zionist.” And that wasn’t the first time Spencer had compared his disturbing white nationalist vision to the Zionist project.

And this disturbing alliance⁷ between Zionists and white nationalists lived in the White House during the last administration, certainly emboldening both camps.

And just like there are, and have long been fascists marching the streets of America, there have long been fascists marching the streets of Israel beating up Palestinians and leftists⁸. Ex-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak commented that the events in Charlottesville reminded him of fascism in Israel, and cited the example of Lehava, an anti-miscegenation gang that frequently attacks Palestinians.

As another former JVP staff member, Ben Lorber⁹ wrote in January, the U.S. white nationalist movement’s admiration for Israel’s supremacist values fits comfortably with its deep antisemitism, as Right-wing ideologues can easily combine anti-Semitism with a pro-Israeli stance.

In 1895, Theodor Herzl, Zionism’s founding father, predicted that¹⁰ “the anti-Semites will become our most dependable friends, the anti-Semitic countries our allies.”

This is because Antisemitism and Zionism intersect structurally, as both depend on a collective politicization of Jews as the “Other” and current dynamics have made that horrifying alliance impossible to ignore.

Lorber explains, for right-wing groups in the United States, Israel has become a symbol for a set of values, an entire worldview. His research for *Political Research Associates*, finds that different parts of the U.S. Right use Israel as a canvas on which to project their own fantasies of nationalist

⁷ <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/presidential-campaign/306445-anti-semitism-for-the-sake-of-israel-the-strange>

⁸ <https://972mag.com/the-night-it-became-dangerous-to-demonstrate-in-tel-aviv/93524/>

⁹ <https://www.972mag.com/writer/ben-lorber/>

¹⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/12/201212249122912381.html>

chauvinism, Christian redemption, white pride, and antisemitic conspiracy.

And unsurprisingly, none of the fantastical scripts they project on the screen, turn out well for Jews, for Palestinians, or for the prospects of a just peace in the Middle East.

For the ascendant forces of right-wing populism in the United States and around the world, support for Israel takes on a special intensity. In those spaces, Israel is celebrated¹¹ as a front-line defender of Western civilization in its crusade against radical Islam. As Lorber writes, Israel “is viewed¹² as a nation that embodies the strong arm of xenophobic nationalism and militarized masculinity, unapologetically pushing back invading ethno-religious Others, expanding its territory, and protecting its heritage in bold defiance of a chorus of liberal outcry.”

As Palestinian writer Nada Elia put it¹³, “The Israeli and U.S. right share “a desire,” to establish and maintain a homogeneous society that posits itself as superior, more advanced, more civilized than the ‘others’ who are, unfortunately, within its midst, a ‘demographic threat’ to be contained through border walls and stricter immigration law.”

A robust Israeli-American conservative nexus¹⁴, projects Israel as “in revolt¹⁵ against a “globalist” world order of open borders and international homogenization.” And many across the global far-right, use Israel as the example, as they insist that strong nations must retain their sovereignty, police their borders, preserve their identities and reject the “meddling” of international bodies and human rights standards.

¹¹ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-europe-s-most-provocative-far-right-politician-is-looking-to-israel-for-answers-1.9363024>

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/18/opinion/orban-poland-israel-netanyahu.html>

¹³ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/birds-feather-white-supremacy-and-zionism>

¹⁴ <https://www.vox.com/21355993/trump-israel-yoram-hazon-y-nationalism-tikvah>

¹⁵ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/02/24/why-benjamin-netanyahu-loves-the-european-far-right-orban-kaczynski-pis-fidesz-visegrad-likud-antisemitism-hungary-poland-illiberalism/>

Meanwhile, for millions of right-wing Christians, philosemitism, and an almost fanatic love for Israel is infused¹⁶ with what Lorber describes as, “fever dreams of an apocalyptic End Times scenario, where the Jewish state is plunged into cataclysmic war and its ingathered Jews are forced by a resurrected Christ to convert or perish, all while the triumphant Christian faithful are raptured to heaven.”

As Postdoctoral scholar, writer and editor Denijal Jegic wrote last year,¹⁷ “Christian Zionists are not alone in their support and admiration of Israel. Right-wing and far-right movements and political parties across the world also idolize Israel as they view the Zionist colonial project as a successful model of European domination over the indigenous populations of developing countries.”

Seizing on ultraconservative concerns about demographic developments in multicultural societies for the perpetuation of anti-Muslim bigotry, white supremacist and other racist ideologies as well as other far-right movements intersect in their adherence to Zionism.

Israel has been quick to make friends with new right-wing governments, wherever they emerged, and Jegic points out that, Israel has long positioned itself within the global political right and, particularly under Netanyahu, who proudly collaborated with the far-right- even glorifying some prominent far-right figures, like Italian politician Matteo Salvini, Hungary’s Islamophobic and anti-refugee, Victor Orban and the racist, homophobic Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte as “great friends of Israel”.

As many have noted¹⁸ recently, this philosemitic Christian Zionism carries deep undercurrents of anti-Judaism, accentuated by the increasing

¹⁶ <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2020/07/09/end-times-antisemitism>

¹⁷ https://www.aljazeera.com/author/denijal_jegic_180915104610367

¹⁸ <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2010/01/18/the-new-christian-zionism-and-the-jews-a-lovehate-relationship>

tendency¹⁹ of many believers to wrap themselves in Jewish religious garb and iconography. The morning of the Jan. 6th insurrection, for example, a group of Christian right leaders held a Jericho March²⁰ — the name itself evoking the Biblical narrative of a group of warriors laying siege to a walled city — while they were on the streets of Washington, calling on participants to “pray, march, fast and rally for election integrity,”

In other radical corners of the U.S. right, support for Israel is also increasingly mixed with open antisemitism, creating a complex ambivalence. For various groups that make up the U.S. militia movement²¹ — driven by a combination of Second Amendment paranoia²², “New World Order” conspiracies of tyranny, anti-government **libertarianism**, and staunch support for Trump — Israel is often respected as an impressively hyper-militarized society, aligned with the United States on their imagined battleground against a demonic, totalitarian Other.

Lorber also reports a similar ambivalence displayed by the Proud Boys²³, an ultra-misogynist fraternity notorious, in the Trump era, for entrenched street battles against “anti-fascists”.

Perhaps because, that group’s “Western chauvinism²⁴” fits comfortably with Israeli hypermasculinity, a Proud Boys Israel chapter²⁵, formed in 2018, and was quickly tokenized by the U.S. group to bolster its image of diversity.

¹⁹ <https://www.thedailybeast.com/meet-bibis-new-tribulation-courting-jew-converting-demon-exorcising-american-allies>

²⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/01/evangelicals-catholics-jericho-march-capitol/617591/>

²¹ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment>

²² <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/10/31/trumps-second-amendment-people-the-u-s-patriot-movement-today>

²³ <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2019/02/28/proud-boys>

²⁴ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>

²⁵ <https://forward.com/news/455608/theres-a-proud-boys-chapter-in-israel-stand-by-debate-trump/>

Simultaneously, plenty of white nationalists have mingled in Proud Boys circles, and for them, antisemitic anti-Zionism tends to reign supreme.

In one recent example²⁶, a white nationalist named Kyle Chapman claimed to lead a breakaway “Proud Goys” faction of the group, referring to the Hebrew term for non-Jews, and pledging to “confront the Zionist criminals who wish to destroy our civilization.” A popular unofficial Proud Boys channel on the messaging app Telegram, meanwhile, carries multiple posts decrying “wars for Israel in the middle east,” which it claims are supported by “Israel First” politicians who are disloyal to America.

Yet despite all evidence, and despite long aligning itself with the global right, Israel is still supported by most liberal and left leaning politicians in the “West” likely due to entrenched Orientalism. And Israel is, more often than not, comprehended by and projected as a liberal democratic outpost in the Middle East in mainstream media outlets. And the result of their shining descriptions of Israel, the oppression of Palestinians continues to extend nationally in the U.S. as internationally and beyond political ideologies.

As these dynamics reveal, Palestine/Israel has been a central component of regressive governments, political parties and movements around the world.

White supremacists, anti-Semites, neo-Nazis and religious fundamentalists continue to find inspiration in Zionism for many purposes. Whether their goal is to conceal anti-Semitism, further racist policies or to trigger an apocalypse – and as long as they praise the Israeli government, they will likely continue to be accepted by Israel as an ally and continue to find support in right-wing, far-right, extreme right and fascist right corners across America.

²⁶ <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/florida-jewish-journal/fl-jj-proud-boys-rebrand-20201111-kp4cr7l5pbdnxguwyb3xq4m63e-story.html>

Confronting Apartheid: The Role of Academia, Education, Politics, Media, and Culture

Osama Abu Irshaid

Confronting and exposing Israeli apartheid at the political level, mainly in the West, requires us to realize a few facts:

1. The Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine is a Western colonial project, aimed primarily at keeping the Arab region torn, weak, and depleted.
2. Zionism is a racist fascist ideology based on the abolition of the other, i.e., Palestinians, and the erasure of their history and heritage, by denying their existence, uprooting them from their land, and replacing it with foreign settlers based on religious and historical allegations.
3. This, in turn, requires us to differentiate between trying to directly change the official Western strategic adaptation of Israel, and between increasing public awareness in the West about Israel, that will gradually adjust the official position on Israel through democratic channels and means.
4. Also, we must keep in mind that there is a religious dimension to the support that Israel enjoys in the West, and that this dimension is strongly present, especially among Protestants, and specifically among evangelicals.

Israel realizes that the raising of awareness about the Palestinian issue and the revealing of its racist nature in the West is its biggest threat. Moreover, because it cannot use facts to refute this increasing perception, it resorts to accusing everyone who does this work of anti-Semitism, terrorism, or of being a terrorism apologist. Although this poses a challenge to us all who do this work, it also affords us an opportunity. A 2017 study found

that “the more Americans learn about Israel, the less they like it.”¹ This might apply to other Western countries as well.

Challenges

In terms of the challenges, Israel and its supporters use the charge of anti-Semitism as a tactic to deter anyone who dares to hold Israel accountable for its violations of human rights, United Nations’ resolutions, and international treaties. These attempts, despite their ferocity, indicate that the Zionist movement and its supporters realize that Israel is a tarnished brand, and that marketing it internationally, within its current specifications, has become impossible; therefore, it must be marketed with intimidation. Back in February, the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed that it had jurisdiction over territories occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.² The decision could pave the way for investigations into war crimes that may have been committed by Israel there. Rather than argue ICC jurisdiction on its legal merits, Israel resorted to using the anti-Semitism card to stifle any legitimate attempt to criticize its criminal behavior.³

At the same time, the Israeli government, Zionist organizations, and prominent individuals are pressuring Facebook to add criticism of Zionism as a form of anti-Semitism.⁴ The campaign “Facebook, We Need

¹ “The More Americans Learn About Israel, the Less They Like It, Study Suggests,” Haaretz, July 1, 2017, at: <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/the-more-americans-learn-about-israel-the-less-they-like-it-study-suggests-1.5490775>

² “ICC rules it has jurisdiction over West Bank and Gaza ‘abuses,’” BBC, February 5, 2021, at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55956771>

³ Isabel Kershner, “I.C.C. Rules It Has Jurisdiction to Examine Possible Israel War Crimes,” The New York Times, February 13, 2021, at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/05/world/middleeast/icc-israel-war-crimes.html>

⁴ Neve Gordon, “Redefining anti-Semitism on Facebook,” Aljazeera, September 22, 2020, at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/9/22/redefining-anti-semitism-on-facebook>

to Talk,”⁵ spearheaded by a diverse coalition of organizations, has criticized this move as a blatant attempt to conflate Judaism as a religion with Zionism as a political ideology that some Jews subscribe to while others do not. Zionists are also attempting to create deliberate confusion between questioning Israel’s behavior as a state and anti-Semitism. As part of its controversial definition of anti-Semitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)⁶ includes as examples of anti-Semitism the “targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.” Such broad and vague language is meant to deter any criticism of Israel and its crimes as a state, and therefore stigmatize freedom of expression regarding Israeli policies. Another example mentioned by the IHRA is “claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.” This example equates anti-Semitism with legitimate criticism of racist Israeli policies under which Palestinians are subjected to a separate-and-unequal regime. If this standard is adopted in defining anti-Semitism, then people will be condemned as bigoted for criticizing Israel’s racism as evidenced, for example, in its own discriminatory 2018 Jewish Nation-State law, which states that “the right to exercise national self-determination” in Israel is “unique to the Jewish people.”⁷ This conflation of criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism has real world consequences for our ability to advocate for justice for the Palestinian people.

In February 2021, the Biden administration announced that it “embraces and champions” the IHRA’s definition of antisemitism.⁸ This position

⁵ <https://facebookweneedtotalk.org/>

⁶ “About the IHRA non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism,” International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, at:

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

⁷ “The Basic Law: Israel – The Nation-State of the Jewish People,” Adalah, November 2018, at:

https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Final_2_pager_on_the_JNSL_27.11.2018%20.pdf

⁸ “Biden weaponizes anti-Semitism to smother criticism of Israel,” American Muslims for Palestine, February 04, 2021, at:

was also embraced by the Trump administration. Former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tried in the last months of Trump's term to designate prominent human rights and relief NGO's, like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Oxfam, as anti-Semitic on this basis.⁹ And in May 2021, during the Israeli aggression on Gaza, three Jewish House Democrats sent a letter to President Biden complaining about the rise of anti-Semitism in the US and urging him to appoint an ambassador-at-large to combat it. Surely, anti-Semitism as a form of stereotyping, bigotry, discrimination, and targeting of the Jewish people just because they are Jewish, is condemnable. We are all against it. Nevertheless, the examples they cited and applied as anti-Semitic in criticizing their Democratic colleagues in the House who dared to speak out against the Israeli atrocities that were being committed against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip at the time were preposterous.

"We also reject comments from Members of Congress accusing Israel of being an 'apartheid state' and committing 'act[s] of terrorism,'"¹⁰ they wrote, in reference to Representative Ocasio-Cortez and the progressive wing of their party.

So, how do we deal with such a situation? First, we have to reject any conflation of Israel as a state and Judaism as a religion, and of Zionism as an ideology and Judaism as a religion. Israel is not the embodiment of Judaism, nor is it the embodiment of the Jewish people. These tactics should not deter us. They tried this with Ilhan Omar, the Congresswoman from Minnesota, when she accused Israel of war crimes, and equated

<https://www.ampalestine.org/newsroom/biden-weaponizes-anti-semitism-to-smother-criticism-of-israel>

⁹ MICHAEL ARRIA, "Trump administration set to label human rights groups 'antisemitic' for criticizing Israel," *Mondoweiss*, OCTOBER 22, 2020, at:

<https://mondoweiss.net/2020/10/trump-administration-set-to-label-human-rights-groups-antisemitic-for-criticizing-israel/>

¹⁰ JTA and JACOB MAGID, "Jewish Democrats accuse colleagues of antisemitism over Israel criticism," *The Times of Israel*, May 26, 2021, at:

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-democrats-accuse-colleagues-of-antisemitism-over-israel-criticism/>

Israel—according to her—with Hamas as being guilty of war crimes (along with both the United States and the Taliban).¹¹ The irony here is that when she was attacked, she was not attacked for equating the American government’s actions to the Taliban’s actions, but for equating Israel’s behavior to Hamas’ behavior. That is a serious problem, but it also affords us another opportunity. Meaning, when you start infringing on people’s freedom of expression, you will have more opponents who will be pushing back against you because this is an attempt to define a certain state in a certain image and no one has the right to disagree with you. No one will accept this. That means that Israel and its apologists are going overboard here.

Another challenge that we are facing is the religious component, namely, support for Israel within the Protestant community, and specifically within the Evangelical community in the United States. Evangelicals in the US constitute about 25 percent of the population. In 2016, 80% of white Evangelicals voted for Trump. When Trump made the decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel in December of 2017, he was catering in part to this huge and very influential base. For the Evangelicals, the issue of Jerusalem and moving the embassy is not a political issue. It is more of a religious issue that has to do with Armageddon theology,¹² which is in essence an anti-Semitic theology because they see it as a precondition for the return of the Messiah. Jews will be given the option to convert to Christianity or be dealt with in a violent way. The paradox here is that Israel sees Evangelicals as their real base in America. Ron Dermer, Israel’s former ambassador to the United States, advised Israel not to waste its energy on trying to pursue the

¹¹ Ledyard King, “Rep. Ilhan Omar says she wasn’t equating US, Israel to Hamas, Taliban after rebuke from fellow Democrats,” USA TODAY, June 10, 2021, at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/06/10/ilhan-omar-rebuked-lumping-u-s-and-israel-hamas-and-taliban/7633680002/>

¹² Philip Bump, “Half of evangelicals support Israel because they believe it is important for fulfilling end-times prophecy,” The Washington Post, May 14, 2018, at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/05/14/half-of-evangelicals-support-israel-because-they-believe-it-is-important-for-fulfilling-end-times-prophecy/>

American Jewish community, which he refers to as disproportionately critical of Israel. Rather, Israel should focus on Evangelicals.¹³ Zionists understand that the cornerstone of US support for Israel now lies within this community. And we know now that Israel is becoming more of a political issue. It is no longer a matter of consensus. It no longer transcends political affiliation, with more Democrats becoming more critical of Israel and more assertive on Palestinian rights. They know that Republicans are more supportive, but not entirely, if you take the Evangelicals who populated the Republican Party out of the equation. It does not end there. Even younger Evangelicals are slowly moving away from Israel. They are more critical of Israel because of what they see as its ugly policies.¹⁴ Again, this provides us with another opportunity that we need to utilize.

Opportunities

Many people think that the Trump era hurt the Palestinians and their cause. I would say that there is surely truth to that, but it also provided us with another opportunity. Trump created a ‘hate’ camp—a camp of intolerance—and everyone who joined or provided apologetics for it was considered to be a party to it. When former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu joined that camp out of political expediency, many Israeli politicians and experts, and the security and the intelligence apparatus, were warning against this unholy marriage between him and Trump. They argued that this comes at the expense of the strategic relationship between the two countries. Netanyahu defined Israel as an

¹³ Sam Sokol, “Israel Should Focus on Evangelicals, Not U.S. Jews Who Are More Critical, Dermer Says,” Haaretz, May 10, 2021, at: <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-israel-should-focus-outreach-on-evangelicals-not-u-s-jews-former-envoy-says-1.9790303>

¹⁴ Shibley Telhami, “As Israel increasingly relies on US evangelicals for support, younger ones are walking away: What polls show,” Brookings, May 26, 2021, at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/05/26/as-israel-increasingly-relies-on-us-evangelicals-for-support-younger-ones-are-walking-away-what-polls-show/>

apartheid state, a brutal state. That helped the Palestinian solidarity movement in the US, because it came at the midst of the high intensity of the rise of White supremacy. America was and still is dealing with institutionalized racism, with police brutality. And when facts started coming out that US police forces were being trained by Israeli security experts, a new dimension and depth for the Palestine solidarity movement was created. Suddenly, Palestine became a civil rights issue. It became a social justice issue. Israel is now being drawn into the hate camp that Trump created, or helped create.

This is one area that we can work on, namely, Palestine as a civil rights issue, a social justice issue that is relevant for all Americans. Palestine is about institutionalized racism, and according to data in the US, more Americans and more millennials draw parallels between the situations in Palestine and the US—the apartheid regime that is being imposed on the Palestinian people to the Jim Crow era of racial segregation in the southern United States and elsewhere this country in the 20th century.¹⁵ Raising awareness and continuing to advance knowledge about what is going on in Palestine will lead us nowhere unless we leverage this politically—unless we consolidate our efforts to building a safety net for politicians who dare to speak for Palestine and Palestinian rights. We need to build our political power to the point where there will be consequences for those who dare to support Israel’s subjugation of the Palestinian people. This is what we are working on. There are many organizations in the US doing this work, as in Europe and in the Western hemisphere more generally.

For the past ten years, a majority of the American people have pushed for stricter gun laws. However, they have failed so far in affecting gun laws in the country in a significant way. This is because in spite of their numbers, they are less passionate and less enthusiastic than those who are

¹⁵ Sandy Tolan, “There are reasons critics of the Israeli encroachments on the West Bank grab for words like “apartheid” and “Jim Crow.”,” *The Daily Beast*, April 14, 2017, at:

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/israel-and-palestine-not-so-separate-deeply-unequal>

for maintaining current gun laws.¹⁶ If we are not enthusiastic and passionate about our issues, and do not push the different pieces that we have into motion, nothing will change. We have to continue building this pressure campaign until we get to a point where Israel is at least exposed for what it is; to a point where it is no longer prohibited to speak out about Israel for what it represents, and we are no longer deterred by these smear tactics and accused of anti-Semitism, of being self-hating Jews or terrorist apologists. In any case, we are on the right trajectory. The tide is turning, and we have to invest in it to reach the destination that we all aspire and hope for.

¹⁶ RJ REINHART, “Gun Control Remains an Important Factor for U.S. Voters,” Gallup, OCTOBER 23, 2017, at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/220748/gun-control-remains-important-factor-voters.aspx>

How the Israel Lobby Industry Functions in Academia and Education

Rabab Abdulhadi

Abstract

For over 10 years, Israel lobby industry groups have orchestrated a relentless campaign within and outside SFSU, to dismantle the the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) studies program in order to delegitimize Teaching Palestine¹ and the decolonization of knowledge as a legitimate and necessary part of the academic curriculum within and outside California and the United States. These attacks include smear campaigns, wanted-style Islamophobic and racist posters, death threats, and a failed but time and energy consuming federal lawsuit of alleged anti-Semitism. Zionists have also waged an intensive campaign to cancel my lectures at university campuses, such as George Mason, Columbia, Syracuse and Yeshiva Universities and unsuccessfully pressured the AAUP to rescind the Georgina Smith Award². Two open classrooms she co-organized in response to the global pandemic (with her colleagues Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa, Dr. Sean Malloy and Saliem Shehadeh) were censored by private tech companies, Zoom, Facebook, YouTube and Eventbrite. Facebook also deleted the page of AMED Studies that includes years of the program's archives, activities, and open classrooms. Enabling this censorship is an Islamophobic and Orientalist Zionist-friendly university administration whose increased corporatization,

¹ Abdulhadi, Rabab Ibrahim. "Teaching Palestine 2022: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice." Mondoweiss, September 8, 2022. <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/09/teaching-palestine-2022-pedagogical-praxis-and-the-indivisibility-of-justice/>.

² AAUP. "AAUP Announces 2020 Awards for Outstanding Faculty Activists." AAUP, May 20, 2020. <https://www.aaup.org/news/aaup-announces-2020-awards-outstanding-faculty-activists#.YJmz9LVKg2w>.

makes them institutionally more accountable to behind-the-scenes' donor pressures than to public scrutiny.

Introduction

Applying social movement analysis, I will define the Israel lobby Industry; discuss its structure and anatomy, goals and objectives, in general, and with regards to the academy and education, in particular. I will touch upon some of its features and strategies, including its McCarthyist style

tactics of intimidation, bullying, and the creation of a chilling effect to block teaching Palestine as a legitimate and necessary component of scholarship and pedagogy. The censorship of our open classrooms by Zoom and other private tech giants, combined with the complicity of our university, will be highlighted as a concrete case of the Zionist strategy to silence Palestine and illustrate how such silencing is enabled by the corporatization of the public university and its closed-door interaction. In the process, I will discuss some of our defense strategies against the Israel lobby industry. Throughout this chapter, my analysis privileges structural analysis over individual actions (that might be quite devastating but only if linked to organizations and policies). In other words, none of these attacks and tactics are accidental, isolated, or random. In fact, it is anything but random.

Grounded and Situated Knowledge

A critical study of the Israel lobby industry necessitates a commitment to a theoretical framework that defines Israel as a settler colonial racist project. My analysis of Palestine, Turtle Island (North America) and Israel, then reflects a dialectical framework of repression while validating Indigenous resistance. Second, I write with the understanding that Israel is an Apartheid state that shares characteristics similar to those institutionally legalized by the Apartheid racist regime from 1948 to 1994

in South Africa, as Amnesty International³, Human Rights Watch⁴ and B'tselem⁵ concluded, affirming a long archive of Palestinian findings and lived experiences. Approaching Palestine studies from the interwoven structures of settler-colonialism and Apartheid and recognizing that they are distinctly different, provides a critical alternative to the problematic terminology of “conflict” that tends to camouflage the root causes of the Palestinian struggle and other struggles for freedom and justice. I begin with an acknowledgment that my university, San Francisco State University, occupies Indigenous stolen land of the Ohlone peoples and the Coastal Miwok (who, along with the Southern Pomo, are organized as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria)⁶. The land acknowledgment reflects my theoretical framework and political commitments.

To ground my remarks in the intellectual space of the Second CIGA Palestine Conference, I examined the list of 60 participants, counting at least half of the academics as having been targeted and/or censored at one point or another throughout their careers by Zionist forces. If we expand our study to include those who are not formally affiliated with academic institutions, the number of targeted individuals rises dramatically to include a majority of conference participants. As a conceptual and methodological issue of great concern, this is part of my research on the textured experiences of harassment and discrimination that demonstrate

³ Amnesty International. “Israel’s Apartheid Against Palestinians.” Amnesty International, June 23, 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>.

⁴ Shakir, Omar. “A Threshold Crossed.” Edited by Eric Goldstein. Human Rights Watch, March 28, 2023. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>.

⁵ B’tselem. “A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This Is Apartheid- B’tselem Publication.” B’tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, January 12, 2021. https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid.

⁶ American Indian Studies. “Land Acknowledgement.” Land Acknowledgement | American Indian Studies. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://sfsuais.sfsu.edu/land-acknowledgement>.

the systematic and deliberate campaigns by the Israel lobby industry within the academy, educational institutions, as well as in general public life to silence Palestine in all its manifestations. It is my hope that participating colleagues would share some of their not-so-well-publicized experiences even anonymously to allow us to present a more accurate picture of the deliberately detrimental impact of this industry. It is a well-funded multi-million-dollar enterprise crossing borders and continents.

My reference to the Israel Lobby as an industry⁷ is aimed at demystifying the *hasbara*⁸ or Zionist propaganda that it claims presents itself as driven by its conviction in Zionism as the movement “for Jewish self-determination” that fights against anti-Jewish hate. In fact, the Israel lobby functions as an industry with its major national organization, huge budget, large staff, well-experienced and well-paid seasoned leadership and training programs aimed at producing intimidation and a chilling effect against advocates for justice in and for Palestine.

Applying social movement analysis, then, I will define the Israel lobby Industry; discuss its structure and anatomy, goals and objectives, in general, and with regards to the academy and education, in particular. I will touch upon some of its features and strategies, including its McCarthyist style tactics of intimidation, bullying, and the creation of a chilling effect to block

teaching Palestine as a legitimate and necessary component of scholarship and pedagogy. The censorship of our open classrooms by Zoom and other private tech giants, combined with the complicity of our university, will be highlighted as a concrete case of the Zionist strategy to silence Palestine and illustrate how such silencing is enabled by the

⁷ Rabab Abdulhadi. *How and Why the Israel Lobby Is Suppressing Free Speech*. *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, 2018.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti1Wg0_sXK8.

⁸ Sheizaf, Noam. “Hasbara: Why Does the World Fail to Understand Us?” +972 Magazine, November 13, 2011. <https://www.972mag.com/hasbara-why-does-the-world-fail-to-understand-us/>.

corporatization of the public university and its closed-door interaction. In the process, I will discuss some of our defense strategies against the Israel lobby industry. Throughout this chapter, my analysis privileges structural analysis over individual actions (that might be quite devastating but only if linked to organizations and policies). In other words, none of these attacks and tactics are accidental or isolated. In fact, it is anything but random⁹. Needless to say, that this discussion is only part of the attempt to capture the thick archives of the hostility of the Israel lobby industry and the resistance to such racist and bullying campaigns.

Goals and Objectives of The Israel Lobby Industry

The objective of the Israel lobby is to shield Israel from criticism and accountability and perhaps most urgently to block the campaign to impose sanctions by international bodies and world public opinion. A multi-faceted and systematic strategy is pursued by the Israel hasbara¹⁰ machine to accomplish these goals: silence Palestinian narratives; discredit critics of Israel by targeting them and threatening their livelihood; accuse them of antisemitism and terrorism; and tie them up in litigation or constant intimidation and bullying to take them out of commission. In addition to the institutional smearing and bullying, Israel lobby groups deploy discursive and ideological campaigns aimed at reversing the damage to Israel's public image and reviving Zionist claims that recenter Israel's master narrative.

The discursive and ideological strategy is a dual strategy drawn from classical colonial narratives. On one level, it seeks to promote Israel as a safe haven for Jews and present it as the only antidote to antisemitism

⁹ **Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi keynote, Anything but Random: Defeating Zionist & Corporatized Systemic Erasure of Palestine.** University of Toronto, 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/events/d41d8cd9/dr-rabab-abdulhadi-keynote-israeli-apartheid-week-university-of-toronto/385567489199028/>

¹⁰ Murphy, Maureen Clare, Jonathan Cook, Ali Abunimah, Tamara Nassar, and Riri Hylton. "Hasbara." *The Electronic Intifada*, May 14, 2022. <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/hasbara>

while perpetuating the false narrative that Palestinians plan to throw Jews into the sea. On another level, a hegemonic Zionist discourse is deployed to portray Israel as a miracle state that modernized, making "the desert bloom," and bringing "civilization" and "enlightenment" to a "backward" Arab region. Claiming that Israel is a lawful liberal democratic state that liberates women, of the environment, queer people, workers, and Jews, is a central discursive strategy that resonates with and draws upon long-held Orientalist and Islamophobic tropes. The spread of Palestinian social media activism and the ability of its bloggers to transmit evidence of Israel's violation of Palestinian rights expedited the urgency for Israel lobby groups to do damage control to Israel's image given the settler colonial nature of Israel, manufacturing an Israeli-centric narrative to counter the Palestinian indigenous claims to their lands and history.

Anatomy of the Israel Lobby Industry

The Israel lobby has traditionally referred to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)¹¹ which acts as an officially registered agent of Israel¹², with US Government's bodies, in Washington, DC. My use of the Israel lobby industry extends beyond AIPAC to include a network of several national and state organizations that are politically well-connected to the seats of power, including the two dominating major parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. The Israel lobby industry includes as well private financial, military and securitized companies, legal firms, and organizations that are registered as non-profit, non-governmental bodies that enjoy tax-exempt status despite clear violations of international human rights, such as Friends of the IDF¹³, supporters of colonies¹⁴ throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem, such as Hebron, and

¹¹ At AIPAC Protest, Young American Jews Voice Rejection of Israeli Policies. The Real News Network, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTK6bDRGYRE>.

¹² "The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)." The Israel Lobby Archive. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://www.israellobby.org/AIPAC/>.

¹³ Brown, Michael F. "Friends of the IDF (FIDF)." The Electronic Intifada, March 7, 2023. <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/friends-idf-fidf>.

¹⁴ Blau, Uri. "Jewish Federations Donated Millions to Israeli Settlements over Four Years." Haaretz.com, October 30, 2017. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2017-10->

the Judaization of Jerusalem¹⁵, along with several Christian Zionist megachurches, tax exempt organizations and political organizations. The lobby is well funded by multi-billionaires, such as the late Las Vegas Casino Mogul Sheldon Adelson, a major funder of the Republican Party who befriended and threw his weight behind the last US President Donald Trump. Of specific interest to our topic is Adelson's role as owner of the Israeli right-wing and racist daily newspaper, *Israel Hayom*¹⁶, and financial sponsorship of overt and covert campaigns against the movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), especially on college campuses.

Right-wing and White Supremacist Connection

Another feature of the Israel lobby is its tight connection with US right-wing groups, white supremacist and Christian evangelical groups. For example, Christians United for Israel (CUFI) actively campaigned and targeted scholarship, pedagogy and public engagement on Palestine¹⁷. Christian Zionists have been quite instrumental in rallying former US President Donald Trump to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Campus Reform¹⁸ is another group that was founded in the 1950s and is funded by millions of dollars¹⁹ and has been the subject of

30/ty-article-magazine/how-the-jewish-federations-gave-millions-to-settlers-over-4-years/0000017f-e09d-d804-ad7f-flff17fb0000

¹⁵ IMEU. "Elad, the Jewish National Fund & the US Taxpayer-Subsidized 'Judaization' of Silwan." Institute for Middle East Understanding, October 8, 2014.

<https://imeu.org/article/elad-the-jewish-national-fund-the-us-taxpayer-subsidized-judaization-of-sil>.

¹⁶ JNS and ILH Staff. "Zoom Cancels Academic Event with Leila Khaled." *Israel Hayom*, September 23, 2020. <https://www.israelhayom.com/2020/09/23/zoom-cancels-san-francisco-state-ethnicities-department-event-with-leila-khaled/>.

¹⁷ Christians United for Israel. "UCLA Guest Lecturer Compares Zionists to White Supremacists." *Christians United for Israel*, May 22, 2019. <https://cufi.org/issue/ucla-guest-lecturer-compares-zionists-to-white-supremacists/>.

¹⁸ Seeley, Alice. "San Francisco State University-Affiliated Program Hosts Speakers Linked to Terrorist Groups." *Campus Reform*, September 29, 2022.

<https://www.campusreform.org/article?id=20279>.

¹⁹ Speri, Alice. "A Billionaire-Funded Website with Ties to the Far Right Is Trying to 'Cancel' University Professors." *The Intercept*, April 10, 2021.

exposure by the American Association of University Professors²⁰. Republican Congressman Doug Lamborn²¹ (Colorado Springs), contacted the US Department of Education in support of the Zionist campaign launched by the Lawfare project and other Israel lobby industry groups demanding that my colleague Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa and I be investigated on charges of material support for terrorism. It was not an accident, as Ben Lorber argues, that signs supporting Israel along with Israeli flags were raised on January 6, 2021, by the right-wing insurrectionists²².

Liberal Zionists

Funders of the Israel lobby industry, however, are not limited to right-wing Republicans or white supremacist evangelical Christian Zionists²³. A historical base of support for Israel and Zionism has been the Democratic Party whose traditional leadership habitually reiterates its ideological commitment to Zionism, such as current US President Joe Biden²⁴, Vice President Kamala Harris²⁵ and past President Barack

<https://theintercept.com/2021/04/10/campus-reform-koch-young-americans-for-freedom-leadership-institute/>.

²⁰ Tiede, Hans-Joerg, Samantha McCarthy, Isaac Kamola, and Alyson K. Spurgas. "Data Snapshot: Whom Does Campus Reform Target and What Are the Effects?" AAUP, May 5, 2021. <https://www.aaup.org/article/data-snapshot-whom-does-campus-reform-target-and-what-are-effects>.

²¹ Press Release. "Congressman Lamborn Slams San Francisco State University for Hosting Known Terrorist." Congressman Doug Lamborn, September 22, 2020. <https://lamborn.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-lamborn-slams-san-francisco-state-university-hosting-known>.

²² Lorber, Ben. "How the Israeli Flag Became a Symbol for White Nationalists." 972 Magazine, January 22, 2021. <https://www.972mag.com/israeli-flag-white-nationalism-symbol/>.

²³ Radical Discipleship. "Zionism, Christian Zionism and White Supremacy." Radical Discipleship, May 14, 2021. <https://radicaldiscipleship.net/2021/05/14/zionism-christian-zionism-and-white-supremacy/>.

²⁴ "Remarks by President Biden at Arrival Ceremony: Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv, Israel." The White House, July 13, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/07/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-arrival-ceremony/>.

²⁵ Palestine Chronicle Staff. "I Stand with Israel": Kamala Harris in Her Own Words ." Palestine Chronicle, August 12, 2020. <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/i-stand-with-israel-kamala-harris-in-her-own-words-full-speech/>.

Obama²⁶. However, the holdout of Zionism by the dominant powers in the Democratic Party has been slowly slipping as younger and more radical members of congress, or progressive democrats²⁷, especially Black, Arab, Native Americans, Asian, Latinx, white and progressive Jews, challenge the leadership over their authoritarian style of leadership, their white supremacist and xenophobic stands, their commitment to the US settler colonial state, and support for Israel. Democratic strong support for Israel is upheld by big-ticket donors such as Haim Saban²⁸ owner of Univision TV multinational media corporation²⁹, a major financier of Hillary Clinton's presidential bids against Barack Obama in 2012 and Donald Trump in 2016. Saban has repeatedly stated on the record that, where Israel is concerned, he would not hesitate to join hands with the Republican Sheldon Adelson³⁰. While differing with the tactics of Adelson, Saban also financed anti-BDS³¹ Zionist campaigns on and off college campuses.

Some of the Israel lobby industry organizations have existed since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, participating in the building and growth of the Zionist movement and its strong ties to Western colonial

²⁶ Levin, Doron. "Guest Column: Barack Obama and the Legacy of Iron Dome." *thejewishnews.com*, June 2, 2021. https://www.thejewishnews.com/opinion/guest-column-barack-obama-and-the-legacy-of-iron-dome/article_85eade1b-6a96-5737-98de-ad06755b5899.html.

²⁷ Qamar, Zoha. "More Democrats than Ever Support the Palestinian Cause, and That's Dividing the Party." *FiveThirtyEight*, September 22, 2022. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/democrats-israeli-palestinian-conflict-divide/>.

²⁸ Debenedetti, Gabriel. "Team Clinton's Favorite Billionaire." *Politico*, November 4, 2016. <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/11/haim-saban-hillary-clinton-donor-230711>.

²⁹ *Variety* 500. "Haim Saban." *Variety* 500, February 25, 2020. <https://variety.com/exec/haim-saban/>.

³⁰ Avriel, Eytan. "Sheldon Adelson vs. Haim Saban: Two Styles of Big American Money in Israeli Politics." *Haaretz.com*, December 6, 2016. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2016-12-06/ty-article/.premium/two-styles-of-big-american-money-in-israeli-politics/0000017f-f98d-d880-a7ff-ff8d8a5a0000>

³¹ Forward, The, and Nathan Guttman. "Billionaire Haim Saban Quits His Anti-BDS Initiative with Adelson." *Haaretz.com*, October 1, 2015. <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/2015-10-01/ty-article/saban-quits-anti-bds-initiative-with-adelson/0000017f-e5ea-dea7-adff-f5fb50470000>.

powers, such as Britain and the U.S. The Zionist Organization of America³², for example, was founded in 1897, while the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Braith³³ (ADL), was founded in 1913. Both organizations as well as others have been exposed by many groups for their spying on many movements and their right-wing and racist politics³⁴, including Jewish students³⁵. The ADL, which claims to fight against antisemitism and for the protection of Jews against hatred, has in fact been involved in spying, on Palestinian, Arab, and non-Palestinian social movements, organizations and activists across the board in the Japanese, Black, Mexican, anti-Shah Iranian opposition, and other anti-racist and anti-Apartheid groups, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the African National Congress, as well as the Association of Arab American university graduates (AAUG), to name a few. The anti-Zionist Jewish journalist and photographer Jeff Blankfort, along with the editors of the Washington Report on the Middle East³⁶ have pioneered this documentation through FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and an impressive archive. However, ADL has not ceased its anti-Palestinian racist attacks. For example, to undermine the Palestinian Right to Education³⁷, the ADL labeled Palestinian universities

³² “Zionist Organization of America.” Mondoweiss, January 5, 2022.

<https://mondoweiss.net/tag/zionist-organization-of-america/>.

³³ The Mapping Project. “Dismantle the ADL: The Anti-Defamation League’s Record of Racist Counterinsurgency and Espionage.” Mondoweiss, July 27, 2022.

<https://mondoweiss.net/2022/07/dismantle-the-adl-the-anti-defamation-leagues-record-of-racist-counterinsurgency-and-espionage/>.

³⁴ Abdulhadi, Rabab Ibrahim. “The Spirit of ’68 Lives on: Zionism as Racism, and the Network of Lies.” Mondoweiss, July 21, 2017. <https://mondoweiss.net/2017/07/spirit-zionism-network/>.

³⁵ Jerusalem Post Staff. “200 US Jewish Students Leaders Call for Censure of ZOA for Alleged Racism.” The Jerusalem Post, May 22, 2020.

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/200-us-jewish-students-leaders-call-for-censure-of-zoa-for-alleged-racism-628971>.

³⁶ Blankfort, Jeffrey. “The ADL: Covert Action, Censure, and Courting Law Enforcement - WRMEA.” Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, July 2, 2015. <https://www.wrmea.org/the-israel-lobby-is-it-good-for-the-us-is-it-good-for-israel-the-adl-covert-action-censure-and-courting-law-enforcement.html>.

³⁷ Right to Education Initiative. “Palestine.” Right to Education Initiative. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://www.right-to-education.org/taxonomy/term/106>.

as “terrorist”³⁸ to discredit our collaboration with the Palestinian universities, An-Najah and Birzeit. The Anti-Defamation League has also played a central role in what Jewish Voice for Peace has called the Deadly Exchange³⁹, which brought together US police and military for joint training with the Israeli military. This included the former Police Chief of Ferguson, Missouri⁴⁰, where the Black youth Michael Brown was killed in 2014.

Other Israel lobby industry groups have emerged in the last decade, gaining more traction in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 Israeli war on Gaza in which the Israeli military killed over 1500 Palestinians within the span of two weeks. The attack on the Mavi Marmara⁴¹ by the Israeli navy and the killing of nine activists, including a US citizen of Turkish descent on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, did not help Israel’s public relations image. Making it harder to justify Israel’s brutalities affected a well-orchestrated shift in Zionist strategizing leading to the emergence of *Hasbara*⁴² with targeted campaigns against advocates for Palestinian freedom to silence their voices and minimize their impact on international public opinion. In its 2015 report, *The Business of Backlash: The Attack on the Palestinian Movement and Other Movements for Justice*⁴³, the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN) traced the funding, strategies and actions in detail, using as data the official US government tax returns of several Israel lobby industry organizations. The Reut Institute, a major Israeli

³⁸ AMCHA Initiative. “SFSU Professor Promoting Terrorism.” AMCHA Initiative, March 26, 2014. <https://amchainitiative.org/sfsu-professor-promoting-terrorism/>.

³⁹ JVP. Deadly Exchange. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://deadlyexchange.org/>.

⁴⁰ #TeamEbony. “The Ferguson/Palestine Connection.” Ebony, August 19, 2014. <https://www.ebony.com/the-fergusonpalestine-connection-403/>.

⁴¹ More information on the Mavi Marmara can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MV_Mavi_Marmara

⁴² Pfeffer, Anshel. “Israel Is More Focused on ‘Hasbara’ than It Is on Policy.” Haaretz.com, March 1, 2012. <https://www.haaretz.com/2012-03-02/ty-article/israel-is-more-focused-on-hasbara-than-it-is-on-policy/0000017f-db14-df0f-a17f-df57b16d0000>.

⁴³ IJAN. “Business of Backlash -IJAN.” International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, March 2015. <http://www.ijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IJAN-Business-of-Backlash-full-report-web.pdf>.

think tank, issued a comprehensive report on the intensifying global campaign aimed at delegitimizing Israel⁴⁴ to counter growing US support for Palestine and specifically targeting what it called “catalysts” of the movement.

Several Israel lobby organizations focus on the academy and educational institutions. These include Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC)⁴⁵, the AMCHA Initiative⁴⁶, StandWithUs⁴⁷, the Lawfare Project⁴⁸, David Horowitz Freedom Center⁴⁹, Canary Mission⁵⁰, Campus Watch/Middle East Forum⁵¹, Simon Wiesenthal Center⁵², Scholars for Peace in the

⁴⁴ The Reut Group, formerly the Reut Institute. Building a Political Firewall Against Israel's Delegitimization. 2010. <https://www.reutgroup.org/Publications/Building-a-Political-Firewall--Against-Israel%27s-Delegitimization->.

⁴⁵ “Israel on Campus Coalition.” Israel on Campus Coalition. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://israelcc.org/>.

⁴⁶ Abdulhadi, Rabab Ibrahim. “Amcha Aims to Suppress Scholarship Honestly Discussing Israel's Violation of Palestinian Rights”: Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi Responds to Israel Lobby Smear Campaign.” Mondoweiss, June 23, 2014. <https://mondoweiss.net/2014/06/scholarship-discussing-palestinian/>.

⁴⁷ Alex Kane. “Read the StandWithUs dossiers on pro-Palestine activists for yourself”. Mondoweiss, March 30, 2023. <https://mondoweiss.net/2014/02/standwithus-palestine-activists/>.

⁴⁸ The Electronic Intifada. “The Lawfare Project.” The Electronic Intifada, April 19, 2021. <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/lawfare-project-0>.

⁴⁹ SPLC. “David Horowitz.” Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/david-horowitz>.

⁵⁰ Palestine Legal. “Palestine Legal Submits Report to UN on Canary Mission Discrimination.” Palestine Legal, March 10, 2022. <https://palestinelegal.org/news/2021/3/30/palestine-legal-submits-report-to-un-canary-mission-discrimination>.

⁵¹ Center for American Progress. “Middle East Forum.” The Islamophobia Network. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://islamophobianetwork.com/organization/middle-east-forum/>.

⁵² Mondoweiss. “Simon Wiesenthal Center.” Mondoweiss, May 4, 2021. <https://mondoweiss.net/tag/simon-wiesenthal-center/>.

Middle East⁵³, SF Hillel⁵⁴, Hillel International⁵⁵, Camera⁵⁶, Jewish Community Relations Council⁵⁷, Algemeiner⁵⁸, and the Academic Engagement Network⁵⁹, to name a few. Palestine Legal, a legal advocacy group that supports student and faculty advocates for Palestinian freedom, has documented some of these attacks in its report the Zionist campaign to exceptionalize Palestine advocacy⁶⁰ from the US constitutional protection of freedom of speech.

Smear Campaigns are hallmarks of the Israel lobby industry. The AMCHA Initiative, for example, focusing on the State of California, spies on students and faculty⁶¹, smears them and falsely accuses them of

⁵³ The Electronic Intifada. "Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME)." The Electronic Intifada, January 19, 2018. <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/scholars-peace-middle-east-spme>

⁵⁴ Trent, Paisley. "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Campus." Golden Gate Xpress, December 1, 2020. <https://goldengatexpress.org/95399/campus-original/the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-on-campus/>.

⁵⁵ Mondoweiss. "Hillel." Mondoweiss, June 17, 2021. <https://mondoweiss.net/tag/hillel/>.

⁵⁶ "San Francisco State's Ethnicities Department to Host Documented Palestinian Terrorist." Camera on Campus, September 9, 2020. <https://cameraoncampus.org/blog/san-francisco-states-ethnicities-department-to-host-documented-palestinian-terrorist/>

⁵⁷ "Jewish Community Relations Council." Mondoweiss, June 28, 2022. <https://mondoweiss.net/tag/jewish-community-relations-council/>.

⁵⁸ Kerstein, Benjamin. "Outrage after Leading Academic Association Awards Professor Who Engaged in Hate Speech against 'Zionist' Students." Algemeiner.com, May 24, 2020. <https://www.algemeiner.com/2020/05/24/outrage-after-leading-academic-association-awards-professor-who-engaged-in-hate-speech-against-zionist-students/>.

⁵⁹ Spero, David. "Professors Fight to Defend Palestine and Protect Academic Freedom." Mondoweiss, September 28, 2021. <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/09/professors-fight-to-defend-palestine-and-protect-academic-freedom/>.

⁶⁰ Palestine Legal, and Center for Constitutional Rights. "The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement Under Attack in the US ." Palestine Legal. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://palestinelegal.org/the-palestine-exception>.

⁶¹ Barrows-Friedman, Nora, and Asa Winstanley. "Documents Reveal Zionist Group Spied on US Student Delegation to Palestine." The Electronic Intifada, January 29, 2014. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/documents-reveal-zionist-group-spied-us-student-delegation-palestine/13130>.

antisemitism and terrorism⁶². By creating a chilling effect against scholars through smearing and false accusations, AMCHA seeks to pressure university administrators⁶³ to withhold support from their faculty leaving them to fend for themselves in the face of doxing. AMCHA co-founder and now Executive Director Tammi Benjamin⁶⁴ has filed several complaints against individuals, failing to make any of them hold. My students, AMED Studies and I have been targeted by AMCHA since 2013 at precisely the same time when our efforts to institutionalize AMED studies picked up steam.

The David Horowitz Freedom Center⁶⁵ was founded by David Horowitz, a leading Islamophobe according to the Southern Poverty Law Center⁶⁶. According to the Washington Post⁶⁷, Horowitz has trained leading US government officials, including former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Trump White House Advisor Steve Bannon and Senior Advisor Stephen Miller. Horowitz has also attacked the movement for Black Lives, the sanctuary movement and immigrant support organizations. Horowitz has

⁶² “UCSC Chooses Anti-Zionist Angela Davis as Speaker for MLK Event.” AMCHA Initiative, January 27, 2015. <https://amchainitiative.org/ucsc-chooses-anti-zionist-angela-davis-as-speaker-for-mlk-event/>.

⁶³ “Letter to SFSU President: 80 Organizations Concerned about Unlawful Use of CSU Name to Promulgate Anti-Zionist Propaganda and Promote BDS.” AMCHA Initiative. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SFSU-Letter-7.25.19.pdf>.

⁶⁴ “Tammi Rossman-Benjamin.” The Electronic Intifada, June 16, 2017. <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/tammi-rossman-benjamin>.

⁶⁵ David Horowitz Freedom Center, July 25, 2023. <https://www.horowitzfreedomcenter.org/>.

⁶⁶ SPLC. “David Horowitz.” Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed July 31, 2023. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/david-horowitz>.

⁶⁷ O’Harrow Jr., Robert, and Shawn Boburg. “How a ‘shadow’ Universe of Charities Joined with Political Warriors to Fuel Trump’s Rise.” The Washington Post, June 3, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/how-a-shadow-universe-of-charities-joined-with-political-warriors-to-fuel-trumps-rise/2017/06/03/ff5626ac-3a77-11e7-a058-ddbb23c75d82_story.html.

raised funds for right-wing groups⁶⁸. In collaboration with the Canary Mission⁶⁹, Horowitz has launched several wanted-style poster campaigns on several campuses including SFSU against my students, colleagues and me⁷⁰, along with nine other campuses around the United States⁷¹. He called Angela Davis a “terrorist supporter”⁷² and called my colleagues and me “ Hamas terrorist supporters.”⁷³ He falsely accused Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), of propagating “Jewhatred.”⁷⁴

Campus Watch/Middle East Forum (CW/MEF), founded by Daniel Pipes, another leading Islamophobe who was also discredited⁷⁵ by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Campus Watch and Middle East Forum frame their support for Israel in US “national security” interests.

⁶⁸ Wilson, John K. “The David Horowitz Freedom Hating Center.” Academe Blog, December 28, 2020. <https://academeblog.org/2020/12/28/the-david-horowitz-freedom-hating-center/>.

⁶⁹ “Rabab Abdulhadi Canary Mission Profile.” Canary mission. Accessed August 1, 2023. https://canarymission.org/professor/Rabab_Abdulhadi.

⁷⁰ Silver, Charlotte. “Racist Group Launches National Offensive on US Campuses.” The Electronic Intifada, October 25, 2016. <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/charlotte-silver/racist-group-launches-national-offensive-us-campuses>.

⁷¹ Frankel, Jillian. “Offensive Posters Targeting SJP Resurface on Campus for Third Time.” Daily Bruin, November 12, 2015. <https://dailybruin.com/2015/11/12/offensive-posters-targeting-sjp-resurface-on-campus-for-third-time>.

⁷² JTA. “Anti-BDS Group Distances Itself from Conservative Foundation’s Poster Campaign.” The Times of Israel, August 24, 2016. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/anti-bds-group-distances-itself-from-conservative-foundations-poster-campaign/>.

⁷³ Lyons, Jenna. “SFSU Officials Condemn Posters Targeting Professor.” SFGATE, October 18, 2016. <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SFSU-officials-condemn-posters-targeting-professor-9979326.php>

⁷⁴ Cherney, Max. “Right-Wing Posters Attacking SJP Appear at S.F. State - Again.” Jewish News of Northern California, May 5, 2017. <https://jweekly.com/2017/05/05/right-wing-posters-attacking-sjp-appear-at-s-f-state-again/>.

⁷⁵ Beutel, Alejandro. “Anti-Muslim Figure Daniel Pipes Advocates Partnering with Far-Right Political Parties.” Southern Poverty Law Center, April 18, 2018. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/04/18/anti-muslim-figure-daniel-pipes-advocates-partnering-far-right-political-parties>.

Promoting and deploying the Trump Administration's Executive Order on Antisemitism⁷⁶ (December 2019), CW/MEF launched a major campaign at the height of the global pandemic in which they explicitly threatened US universities with losing government grants, including for such topics as medicine and sciences, unless they disciplined and criminalized scholar and student advocates for Palestinian freedom.

The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) was created by the former Chancellor of the University of California, Mark Yudof, who was known for his hostility to Palestine. AEN has targeted scholars and students at Columbia University at the height of the global pandemic. AEN particularly targeted the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) for selecting me for the Georgina Smith Award⁷⁷, waging a vicious campaign against AAUP, including StandWithUS, Canary Mission, Anti-Defamation League, Zionist Organization of America, AMCHA, and Simon Wiesenthal Center⁷⁸. For example, the Executive Director of the Academic Engagement Network Miriam Elman of Syracuse University, tweeted, "What a terrible selection & poor choice @AAUP! She has a long history of demoralizing #Jewish, #Zionist students!"⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Committee on Academic Freedom. "Letter Criticizing President Trump's Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism." Middle East Studies Association, December 12, 2019. <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2019/12/12/letter-criticizing-president-trumps-executive-order-on-combating-anti-semitism>.

⁷⁷ AAUP. "AAUP Announces 2020 Awards for Outstanding Faculty Activists." AAUP, May 20, 2020. <https://www.aaup.org/news/aaup-announces-2020-awards-outstanding-faculty-activists#.YJmz9LVKg2w>.

⁷⁸ Bandler, Aaron. May 22, 2020. SFSU Professor Who Called Zionists White Supremacists Selected for Academic Award. <https://jewishjournal.com/news/united-states/316239/sfsu-professor-who-called-zionists-white-supremacists-selected-for-academic-award/>.

⁷⁹ Elman, Miriam.

<https://twitter.com/MiriamElman/status/1263897737965244416?s=20>. May 21, 2020.

StandWithUS, also filed a complaint with the Trump administration's Department of Education⁸⁰ against the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), over my lecture on Islamophobia⁸¹, and the national conference of Students for Justice in Palestine⁸² as well as several other universities, taking advantage of their close relationship to the Trump Administration. The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Los Angeles countered these false accusations and exposed them.⁸³ The Executive Director of the Lawfare Project, Brooke Goldstein, was caught in June 2016 on video as threatening to exact a price from critics of Israel and "make them pay". The video was quickly removed from the internet but not before the Electronic Intifada⁸⁴ downloaded a copy.⁸⁵ Sure enough, in June 2017, the Lawfare project sued⁸⁶ San Francisco State University and the Statewide California State University in Federal Court, in which I was the only faculty member who was named.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ StandWithUs. "Department of Education to Investigate Standwithus Complaint against UCLA." StandWithUs Supporting Israel And Fighting Antisemitism, January 13, 2020. <https://www.standwithus.com/amp/departement-of-education-to-investigate-standwithus-complaint-against-ucla>.

⁸¹ *Islamophobia and the Attacks against Palestine Organizing and Scholarship*. Facebook. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.facebook.com/AMEDStudies/videos/631151277356918/>.

⁸² National Students for Justice in Palestine. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.nationalsjp.org/>.

⁸³ "Press Release: CAIR-La Decries Attempt to Silence Guest Speaker on Islamophobia at UCLA." CAIR Los Angeles, June 7, 2019. <https://ca.cair.com/losangeles/news/cair-la-decries-attempt-to-silence-guest-speaker-on-islamophobia-at-ucla/>.

⁸⁴ Silver, Charlotte. "Lawyer Who Says Palestinians Don't Exist Sues San Francisco University." The Electronic Intifada, June 23, 2017. <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/charlotte-silver/lawyer-who-says-palestinians-dont-exist-sues-san-francisco-university>

⁸⁵ Electronic Intifada. "Palestinians Don't Exist, Says Brooke Goldstein, Director of the Lawfare Project." YouTube, June 24, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDqeS157ZJQ&t=7s>.

⁸⁶ Ibid 85.

⁸⁷ Flaherty, Colleen. "Another Broken Promise." Inside Higher Education, March 20, 2022. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/03/21/palestinian-scholar-accuses-sfsu-broken-contract-promise>.

Israel Lobby Industry in Education and the Academy

Within the academy and educational institutions in particular, the Israel lobby industry has focused on smearing scholars and students through false accusations of antisemitism and terrorism and threat of depriving them of their current and/or future livelihood. The harassment and criminalization of Dr. Sami Al-Arian is a case in point.⁸⁸ Steven Salaita stands out as another prime case. He was fired from his position for tweets he posted on his own private account during the 2014 Israeli war on Gaza.⁸⁹ The shadowy group, Canary Mission, is known for its smearing profiles of faculty and students, intimidation, and for twisting facts with the specific goal of scaring employers away from hiring students and junior scholars.⁹⁰

To produce a chilling effect, the Israel lobby industry has applied an updated form of McCarthyist Style tactic.⁹¹ Deployed in the 1950s, McCarthyism was a prime chapter in the history of US repression of dissenters and critics in the 1950s. This shameful history includes the Palmer Raids and the deportation of anarchists and socialists in the 1910s-1930s, the detention and incarceration in “internment” camps of over 110,000 Japanese during World War II, and the CounterIntelligence Program (COINTELPRO) in the 1960s. Racism against Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims has been an ongoing staple of both official US policy positions and white supremacist popular culture channeled through Islamophobic, Orientalist and colonialist epistemologies. Criminalization

⁸⁸ *USA vs Al-Arian*. IMDb. IMDb.com, 2007. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0983241/>.

⁸⁹ Center for Constitutional Rights. “Settlement Reached in Case of Professor Fired for ‘Uncivil’ Tweets.” Center for Constitutional Rights, November 12, 2015.

<https://ccrjustice.org/home/press-center/press-releases/settlement-reached-case-professor-fired-uncivil-tweets>.

⁹⁰ Against Canary Mission. <https://againstcanarymission.org/>.

⁹¹ Against The Current, and Rabab Abdulhadi. “Resisting the New Mccarthyism.” International Viewpoint, July 29, 2014.

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article3485>.

of our communities, however, especially outspoken voices and activists, has correlated with US wars and colonial intervention in our regions, including the exponentially increasing support for Israel. Further, depicting the Palestinian struggle for freedom and liberation as irrational, bloodthirsty and violent, becomes a convenient tool to legitimize Israeli and US violence as a necessary “war on terror” to preserve the West.

The Israel lobby industry has persistently targeted individual scholars, students and activists. At the center of the silencing and erasure of Palestinian narratives is the systematic campaigns to block the institutionalization of Teaching Palestine as a legitimate, necessary and timely part of the academic scholarship and curriculum. Applying a social movement analysis helps to explain the reasons why Israel lobby groups are strategically invested for two main reasons. First, anyone familiar with campus activism is aware that cycles of student organizing rise and dim in different years depending on when student leaders graduate, whether they developed new leadership to follow in their footsteps, and if they are sufficiently seasoned organizers who have the courage to confront Zionists and pro-Israel university administrations. Secondly, blocking Palestine-centered curriculum before it is approved is much easier than trying to undo it after the fact.

It is within this context that the Israel lobby industry campaigns to dismantle AMED Studies can be understood. While the program with its unwavering commitment to the indivisibility of justice and justice-centered knowledge production has already been approved, Zionist and other white supremacist and racist groups within and outside SFSU have not ceased their efforts to dismantle it. On the contrary, they have consistently escalated their attacks every time they failed in their endeavors. While smearing and damaging, the campaigns by the Israel lobby industry are enabled by the SFSU administrators and faculty, including those who claimed to be progressive and radical. This is largely due to the stakes involved in expressing solidarity with Palestine. And the higher the stakes and the more intensive McCarthyism is, the louder the

silence on Palestine and the more creative the maneuvers to justify the creation of a hostile work environment is.

Targeting Teaching Palestine in the Curriculum

The systematic efforts to dismantle the AMED Studies program can only be understood if we place it in the context of this industry's objectives in delegitimizing Teaching Palestine and the decolonization of knowledge—two goals to which AMED Studies is committed as legitimate and necessary parts of the academic curriculum within and outside California and the United States.

Academic policing is a classical strategy of the industry that places limits on what faculty members could or could not do in their own scholarship and classrooms. Israel lobby industry attacks are also designed to distract activist scholars from producing justice-centered knowledge by teaching Palestine. This also serves the Israel lobby's goals of placing the Israeli narrative and Zionist claims at the center of analysis while seeking to erase Palestinian suffering and resistance. By definition, the erasure of Palestinian connections to their land, life and history, is a necessary Zionist framework. The industry advances colonial epistemologies by attempting to block colonialism within the curriculum. They find it more advantageous to cast Palestinians as anemic of civility and democracy rather than the impossible task of defending Israel as a colonial project to a global justice-sympathetic audience. They battle the truth to create a fictitious and rosy image of Israel. Theirs is the business of historical revisionism, and they sell it with gusto to faculty and students, university administrations, and politicians.

A most prominent example is the shutdown of our open classroom that raises questions about narratives and narrativizing Palestinian Indigeneity and the indivisibility of justice. On September 23, 2020, a joint open-classroom I co-hosted with my colleague Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa was censored by Zoom and other private big tech companies, on the pretext that it violated their terms of service that abided by government ban of

“material support for terrorism.” The Lawfare Project instigated the campaign against our September 23rd open classroom webinar⁹² on “Whose narrative? gender justice and resistance in Palestine”, with four worldwide known public intellectuals in conversation with Leila Khaled. Two of them are Jewish scholars including Ronnie Kasrils from South Africa⁹³, who was part of the ANC, Laura Whitehorn⁹⁴, former prisoner, and a very well-known Black liberation activists, Seiko Odinga who spent 33 years in prison⁹⁵, as well as the acting director of the Institute for Women’s Studies at Birzeit University⁹⁶, Rula Abu Dahou.⁹⁷

A majority of legal scholars concluded that there was no merit to Zionist accusations of “material support for terrorism.” Nonetheless, the overtly hostile anti-Palestinian political environment of the Trump era made it possible to censor our classroom. A software application, Act.il⁹⁸, partially funded by the Israeli government, was weaponized against us. Its moderators bragged that they posted 19,000 messages to facebook, Zoom, and YouTube to shut down our class. They utilized the same App to shut down a second open classroom with the same participants that we

⁹² Palestine Legal Cases. “Zoom & Big Tech Censor Online Palestine Classes.” Palestine Legal, April 11, 2022. <https://palestinelegal.org/case-studies/tag/False+Accusations>.

⁹³ Mondoweiss. “Ronnie Kasrils.” Mondoweiss, March 1, 2022. <https://mondoweiss.net/tag/ronnie-kasrils/>.

⁹⁴ Whitehorn, Laura. “When Freedom of Expression Is Protected Only for Zionism the University Is Failing in Its Role.” Mondoweiss, September 18, 2020. <https://mondoweiss.net/2020/09/when-freedom-of-expression-is-protected-only-for-zionism-the-university-is-failing-in-its-role/>.

⁹⁵ “Sekou Odinga Is Free!: Jericho Movement.” Sekou Odinga is Free! | Jericho Movement. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.thejerichomovement.com/news/sekou-odinga-free>.

⁹⁶ “Institute of Women’s Studies - Birzeit University.” Home | Institute of Women’s Studies. Accessed August 1, 2023. <http://iws.birzeit.edu/>.

⁹⁷ Zahzah, Omar. “SFSU and Zoom Undermine Palestinians and Academic Freedom.” The Electronic Intifada, October 6, 2021. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/sfsu-and-zoom-undermine-palestinians-and-academic-freedom/34051>.

⁹⁸ Winstanley, Asa. “Inside Israel’s Million Dollar Troll Army.” The Electronic Intifada, June 12, 2019. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/inside-israels-million-dollar-troll-army/27566>.

co-organized at the initiative of our colleague, Professor Sean Malloy at UC Merced, on April 23, under the title “Whose narratives, what freedom speech for Palestine?” It is important to note that Act.il⁹⁹ is co-sponsored by the Herzliya Center, an important strategic center for Israel, Macabee, and the Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs.

The Israel lobby industry groups, including its right-wing white supremacist sector, seek to prevent the institutionalization of AMED Studies as a legitimate form of academic inquiry whose intellectual outcome is to decolonize knowledge. AMED is inspired by the 1968 strike at SFSU by Black Student Union Third World Liberation Front. As such it’s constructed within an internationalist Third World perspective, rather than a "foreign" issue that should not concern the US public.

The Israel lobby industry has histrionically targeted students on our campus. Their systematic campaigns escalated exponentially as soon as we submitted our curriculum proposals for the AMED Minor Studies for approval in 2013. We could not do so in 2007 when I was first hired because, unbeknown to me, the university had imposed a moratorium on all new academic programs while the new baccalaureate requirements were being revamped. Therefore, we were only able in 2013 to submit our proposal for the AMED’s academic minor, the new courses and their GW requirements. This was exactly the year when Israel lobby groups escalated their attacks against us, falsely accusing the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), the AMED Studies program and me of “glorifying the murder of Jews.” It was also the fall semester following the investiture of then new SFSU President Les Wong and his expressions of sympathies toward Palestine, AMED and admiration for Professor Edward Said. From the Zionist perspective this had to be nipped before

⁹⁹ Arria, Michael. “When Israel’s Military Begins to Attack, so Does Its Army of Online Trolls.” Mondoweiss, November 15, 2019. <https://mondoweiss.net/2019/11/when-israels-military-begins-to-attack-so-does-its-online-army-of-trolls/>.

SFSU official support for AMED turned the tide irreversibly. They whisked President Wong on an all-expense paid trip to Israel and closely lobbied him when the attack started. Neither GUPS nor I and AMED stood a chance in the face of such Zionist pressures that took the form of political campaigns, withholding donations, and SFSU administrative insiders who were committed Zionists.

The more institutional achievements we accomplished; the nastier Zionist attacks became. For example, in September 2016, Campus Watch/Middle East Forum launched an organized campaign demanding that San Francisco State University and its parent institution, the California State University, cancel our collaborative agreement with An-Najah National University, the only agreement SFSU had with any Arab or Muslim site around the world.¹⁰⁰ An-Najah is a major Palestinian of higher education. Not unlike the other systematic Zionist campaigns, this was also quite vicious and time consuming. The timing was also not accidental; it was strategically timed to undermine and divert attention from the achievements AMED was making in spring 2016 as an institutional site whose formal definition is justice-centered knowledge production.

This campaign also failed though Zionist groups spared no resources and despite the lack of unwavering support by SFSU and CSU. It failed precisely because we had crossed every “t” and dotted every “i” thus making it impossible for the agreement to be undone.

The Corporatization and Complicity of the Public University

Enabling this censorship is a Zionist allied University administration that has increasingly become more hospitable to Israel lobby groups with the

¹⁰⁰ Middle East Forum. “End SFSU Cooperation with An-Najah. Universities Should Not Support Glorifying Terrorism.” Campus Watch, September 7, 2016. <https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch/23734/end-sfsu-cooperation-with-an-najah-universities>.

acceleration of its corporatization and thus catering to behind-the-scenes' donor pressures than being accountable to the public.

This too is not accidental. The Israeli strategy to *create facts on the ground* was implemented by SFSU. It is grounded in SFSU's commitment to the privatization of this public university and its dependency on donors instead of relying on the long term and successful lobbying of state and federal legislatures to invest more funds in public education. Needless to say, that such developments are not divorced from the normalized hegemonic Islamophobic, Orientalist, racist, and anti-Palestinian bias mindset of our university administrators.

For example, it was Zionist groups, such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which built the so-called Museum of Tolerance on the land of the Mamilla cemetery in Jerusalem¹⁰¹, that were the first to target my Facebook page and that of AMED Studies. Its executive director wrote to my dean demanding that the university censor me as early as 2013. However, and while "officially" not censoring us, my university administration has sought to silence us to placate their Zionist friends.

SFSU Risk Management Department, headed by a prominent Zionist in SFSU, a leading Zionist and the Dean of Students were apparently monitoring our Facebook page. For example, teach-in on "Palestine at SFSU" in February 2018. It became apparent that our Facebook page was monitored not only by Zionists but by our own university. The Dean of Students, who traveled to Israel in 2016 on an all-expense paid trip, informed our Dean (of the College of Ethnic Studies) of our Facebook page activities. Dean Sueyoshi emailed me that she was going to get a temporary insurance policy on the historic Conference Room of the

¹⁰¹ Center for Constitutional Rights. "Campaign to Protect Mamilla Cemetery in Jerusalem." Center for Constitutional Rights. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/campaign-protect-mamilla-cemetery-jerusalem>.

College where we were holding the Palestine teach-in because the University's Risk Management is concerned. I emailed her arguing that the university should not be ensuring a room where we were having an educational event on Palestine. Doing so would reinforce the dominant stereotyping of Palestine as dangerous to students and invoke the "war on terror" mindset. Nonetheless, Dean Sueyoshi refused to listen to me and insured the College Conference Room anyway. The Facebook page was systematically targeted before and more so since I shared my *Dear Colleague* critique of my university president for welcoming Zionists to campus. I wrote a letter in which I said that this was offensive to Arabs, Muslims, Palestinians and our Jewish sisters and brothers for whom Israel does not speak. I was contacted by the dean three times. The Provost emailed me twice, threatening me with disciplinary measures. It's interesting because I received this while we were in Palestine, on a Teaching Palestine trip, traveling from one place to the other to hear what was going on with Palestine, which is something we've been doing, again and again. I refused to take it down on the basis that this is McCarthyist, this is silencing, and this is a violation of my academic freedom and freedom of speech. The university president, who welcomed Zionists to campus, condemned me, he is another person who also went on an all-expense paid trip to Israel, and switched his position about being open to me, and to my program. After the trip they condemned my speech, I was denied travel authorization to Lebanon and they prosecuted the Palestinian students in collaboration with the FBI, Homeland Security and the Israeli consulate for posting things that they thought were inappropriate.

The global pandemic was also quite convenient for the Zionist-allied university administration to *create facts on the ground*. They cut down Palestine-specific courses, and reduced AMED courses by 50% during the first year of COVID and over 60% shortly thereafter. It is particularly evident not only in the case of AMED, but also in the overt attack against the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. We lost that battle. The

Israel lobby industry succeeded in greatly weakening and almost dismantling the model curriculum and practically removing the teaching of Palestine as an anti-colonial issue. I can't stress enough how intimately related the US white supremacist, Christian Zionist, and right-wing attacks against Critical Race Theory are to Palestine, in particular, and Teaching Palestine, in general. It means that the fight against these assaults must also be united under my argument of the indivisibility of justice.

Conclusion

For over 10 years, Israel lobby industry groups have orchestrated a relentless campaign within and outside SFSU, to dismantle the AMED studies program in order to delegitimize Teaching Palestine and the decolonization of knowledge as a legitimate and necessary part of the academic curriculum within and outside California and the United States. These attacks include smear campaigns, wanted-style Islamophobic and racist posters, death threats, and a failed but time and energy consuming federal lawsuit.

The good news is that we have achieved major victories through our refusal to be silent despite the harassment, retaliation and bullying. For example, Zionists launched an intensive campaign to pressure the AAUP to rescind the Georgina Smith Award but they failed when AAUP not only resisted the Zionist racist campaign and ignored it but also when Reichman, Chair of AAUP Academic Freedom Committee, strongly rebuked and questioned Zionist credibility.¹⁰² Secondly, this past academic year, three faculty hearing panels (FHP) made up of our SFSU colleagues unanimously ruled in favor of the grievances filed by myself and my colleague, Dr. Tomomi Kinukawa, against the University.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Reichman, Hank. "Who Lacks Credibility? A Response to Israel-Academia-Monitor." *Academe Blog*, May 29, 2020. <https://academeblog.org/2020/05/29/who-lacks-credibility-a-response-to-israel-academia-monitor/>.

¹⁰³ Kinukawa, Tomomi. "Grieving against the Neoliberal University's Collusion with Apartheid Israel, Zionist Donors, and Private Tech Companies." *Mondoweiss*, May 20,

Selected randomly, our FHP colleagues unambiguously agreed that our academic freedoms were violated by the Administration, evidenced by the email we received from our Academic Provost that threatened us with imprisonment and refused to provide us with legal protection against Zionist's false accusations of material support for terrorism. Our colleagues also agreed with our complaint that the university administration failed to provide us with an alternative venue after Zoom and other big tech groups shut down our open classroom and ordered the university to do so without delay. Thirdly, we achieved another institutional victory when the third grievance over SFSU's breach of my job offer, creation of a hostile work environment, and attempt to dismantle AMED Studies, was also unanimously upheld by a third, randomly selected, FHP. They explicitly agreed with me, ordering the university to apologize, stop its harassment and retaliation, and hire two tenure track faculty members at least one of which at the Associate or full professor level.

The reinstatement of the AMED Facebook page signaled a fourth major victory that defied the collusion of Israel Lobby industry and the University Administration. Facebook shut down AMED's Facebook page that contains our archives, syllabi, photos and open classroom videos. Facebook shut down the AMED page in April 2021 immediately after Zoom shut down our second collaborative open classroom with our colleague, Dr. Sean Malloy at UC-Merced on "Whose Narrative? Whose Academic freedom?" Zionists have sought to censor our FB page since 2013 while SFSU Administration sought to censor our page in 2018. The 2013 incident was instigated by the Simon Wiesenthal Center that built the so-called Museum of Tolerance on the land of the Mamilla cemetery. Its executive director, Rabbi Marvin Hier, wrote to my Dean demanding that the university censor me over a post I wrote on my page that was

2022. <https://mondoweiss.net/2022/05/grieving-against-the-neoliberal-universitys-collusion-with-apartheid-israel-zionist-donors-and-private-tech-companies/>.

shared by the General Union of Palestinian students. In 2018, the Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies and SFSU Academic Provost sent me 5 emails demanding that I take down a post in which AMED Studies shared my support for my students in Jews Against Zionism (JAZ) contesting Zionism on campus. I was threatened by the Dean who cited a non-existing policy and the Provost who specifically cited “disciplinary measures” if I don’t remove the post. I refused, stood by my position and demanded that the university end its McCarthyist-style harassment. It took us a full year to reinstate our Facebook page but we did with help of 7mleh¹⁰⁴, Sada Social¹⁰⁵, Jewish Voice for Peace¹⁰⁶ and the NoTechforApartheid¹⁰⁷.

In short, discussing the relentless and systematic attacks of the Israel lobby Industry and its allies can be quite demoralizing and immobilizing. However, in the spirit of academics who insist to not divorce their scholarship from speaking truth to power, I have cited but a few examples of successfully resisting Israel lobby groups and defying collaborating university administration. I do so in the spirit of social movement analysis and accountability to the people who are struggling on the grounds.

¹⁰⁴ “7amleh 2019 Annual Report: The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media.” 7amleh - The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://7amleh.org/en2019/>.

¹⁰⁵ Sada Social. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://sada.social/>.

¹⁰⁶ JVP. “Tell Facebook to Restore the Amed Studies’ Page Immediately!” Jewish Voice for Peace. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://act.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/a/tell-facebook-restore-amed-studies-page>.

¹⁰⁷ “No Tech for Apartheid - Home Page.” No Tech For Apartheid. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://www.notechforapartheid.com/>.

Palestine's Lost Cities: Ethnic Cleansing's Devastating Effect on Culture

Rawan Damen

Palestinian history is closely connected with the fate of its cities. Haifa, Akko, and Jaffa once served as the cultural centers of Palestinian life. During the 1948 ethnic cleansing, known as the 'Nakba,' Israel drove most Palestinians out of these cities, and Palestinian culture suffered a devastating blow. The Zionist strategy was to undermine Palestinian urban cultural identity. Zionists saw that Palestinian cities were a danger to their overall aims. That is why they waged a brutal war against the cities and Palestinian culture in general. Historically, Palestine served as the cultural crossroads of the Arab world. In the early 20th century, agriculture and trade prospered. Urban life blossomed with theater, music and literature. Palestinian cities shared close economic and cultural ties with other Arab capitals, like Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus. Jaffa served as Palestine's commercial hub. Its storied port has been used since Biblical times as a gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Jaffa boasted an array of successful businesses. Factories produced everything from orange crates to soap and olive oil. Most of Palestine's newspapers and books were printed and published in Jaffa. The city was vibrant, prosperous, and wealthy.

Palestine's cities were destroyed in 1948. All of them. This was a clear Zionist plan, as Zionist propaganda claims that Palestine had no cultural heritage. The fact that there was cultural activity in Palestinian cities is the strongest proof of the existence of a Palestinian people in Palestine. Palestine's thriving urban centers challenged the Zionist narrative that held that Palestine was a land without a people for a people without a land. On the contrary, Palestinian cities were at the forefront of Arab civilization and culture. That reality directly contradicted the myth that

the establishment of a Jewish state in the heart of the Arab world would be a civilizing force. In the wake of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, Zionists sought to strip cities of their Palestinian identity, erasing Palestine's cultural heritage in the process.

The Nakba was deliberately planned to destroy Palestinian existence. When Zionist forces captured Jaffa and Haifa in April 1948, while the British mandate was still in effect, the vast majority of Palestinians were driven out of the cities. The few Palestinian families that stayed were forced into barbed-wire fenced areas, like a prison. Overnight, Jaffa—the heart of Palestine—stopped beating. An entire way of life was lost. Merchants were denied access to their shops. Families were prevented from returning to their homes, which were subsequently looted by Zionists. Israel portrayed Palestinians to the rest of the world as uncultured peasants. They implied Palestinian refugees would merge into neighboring Arab countries and that Palestinian culture would quietly dissolve. The denial of a culture is connected very strongly to the Palestinians' right of return. It will be difficult, perhaps impossible, to completely reclaim Palestinian culture without its historic cities. Most Palestinians alive today were born after 1948. They have no tangible connection to their heritage, besides stories passed down from their elders. Palestine's major cities are now Israeli ones. Jaffa, Haifa, and Nazareth are not allowed to be real 'cities.' This also applies to Nablus, Hebron, and Ramallah, which all live in a 'countryside' mentality, rather than a city. This also applies to Jerusalem, which is deprived from being a city, let alone a capital to the Palestinians.

When the Nakba is mentioned, when the ethnic cleansing of a people is mentioned, the focus is understandably on expulsion, on not allowing Palestinians to return to their homes, as well as the erasure of their history and culture, and the looting of land and properties. But a lesser-known aspect of the Nakba is that Israel looted Palestinian homes with their cultural treasures, among them books, manuscripts, personal papers, photographs, and works of art. Rarely is the story mentioned of the systematic looting in 1948 of tens of thousands of Palestinian books in a

joint operation by the Haganah—the militia that became the Israeli army—and the Israeli national library. If one were to visit the library of the Hebrew University, one would see books that were taken from the homes of well-known figures—such as Palestinian diarist, educator, and visionary Khalil Sakakini, among others—often with handwritten notes, or dedications by or to their owners. The Israeli library catalogued the books under the code “AP” which stood for “Abandoned Property.”

Although the looting of Palestinian books was an organized operation, and some of those who took part in it gave their testimonies on camera, the Israeli apartheid regime is keen not to talk about this, because such a story might enrich our knowledge about Palestinian culture and its erasure. This still applies to personal and family picture albums. This applies to children’s games that were looted, to embroidered clothes, to jewels and home furniture and art work. All were looted. This is a culture that was meant to be erased, and this story is one that has not yet been told.¹ Although many Palestinian families were aware that their books were taken during the aftermath of 1948, they had no idea that there was a systematic and conscious effort to appropriate these books. Remnants of Palestinian heritage still exist, if you look for them. These small clues to Palestine’s past show that even if a country is erased from the map, its culture can survive. It proves Palestinian heritage is more enduring than the cities where it once thrived. It proves Palestinian culture is stronger than the Israeli apartheid.

¹ Some work has been done with Al Jazeera documentaries like “Lost Cities of Palestine” and “The Great Book Robbery.”

**Narrative Unravelings: A Tripartite Personal Assessment of the
Nonprofit, Academic, and Grassroots Role in Challenging Israeli
Apartheid Propaganda**

Loubna Qutami

It is an honor to be included in a gathering of individuals representing the very best of scholars and activists on Palestine—and of course, all of the positionalities in between those two poles. In fact, it is precisely that sort of interstitial interconnection that I would like to discuss in this essay. For, perhaps not so uncommonly, I am an individual who continues to move back and forth between several interrelated yet slightly distinct spheres by way of personal history and current profession.

From 2012 to 2020, I pursued and successfully graduated with a doctorate in Comparative Literature from UCLA, with the focus of my dissertation eventually becoming how Black and Arab American writers use literary representations to challenge racialized projects of policing, militarism, and surveillance. During this period, I was also heavily involved in campus activism, primarily through UCLA's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine. Since 2015, I have been a member of the Palestinian Youth Movement, a grassroots collective of Palestinian and/or Arab youth that seeks to guide the newer generations to become agents of change in fighting for the total liberation of our homeland and people. And, as of July 2020, I have been the Education and Advocacy Coordinator for the non-profit organization Eyewitness Palestine, which leads political delegations to Palestine and creates educational materials and campaigns related to the Palestinian struggle. There is a lot to say about this latest capacity, but two important things to add for now is that the delegations we design are intended to serve as a conscious alternative to the faux-Biblical colonial tourism propagated by the Israeli state (which we are seeing now with the Zionist attempt to displace Palestinian families of Silwan to create a "Biblically themed park"), and that we

operate from a theory of change that calls on all participants to become advocates and activists for Palestine upon their return—that is, that the opportunity is not simply to be thought of as a “free trip,” but the beginning of a lifelong process of accountability of working for freedom for the Palestinians about whose struggle they will learn more through travel and engagement. Finally, I am also a member of the US Campaign for the Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel (USACBI).

I say all of this just to lay out that I have an intermediate to advanced grounding in at least three different contexts concerning the Palestinian struggle in the US: the academic, the grassroots, and the non-profit. What I would like to do is to share some individual assessments on the role I think each of these spaces can and should play in advancing the Palestinian liberation struggle and challenging what we might think of as the epistemological preeminence of Zionism in the cultural sphere. Here let me pause to give a few disclaimers: first of all, I am speaking primarily from within a US context, as that is where I am based. And secondly, I do not presume to be presenting a definitive treatise on the interconnected role these spaces play in challenging Zionism—I am one person, with a particular perspective and a limited history in navigating them. But what I will do today is share with you all what I *believe* to be the current role of these spaces in meeting these goals *as I have experienced it*. So, this will be a tripartite personal assessment of this topic.

Let me return now to the phrase I used earlier, “challenging the epistemological preeminence of Zionism in the cultural sphere.” What I mean by this is fairly straightforward: epistemology, as we know, denotes the origins and the limitations of knowledge, as well as what establishes the basis for knowledge criteria. The Zionist project, as many scholars have pointed out, is not merely one of physical colonization, but also one of cultural domination. It is paramount that the Zionist narrative becomes the default in the cultural arena, the ultimate urtext against which various other narratological threads and perspectives are measured and challenged. And when I say “culture” and even “narrative,” I am not excluding what is oftentimes referred to as mainstream media (or, as I

prefer given this current point in time, corporate media). And I do not think that distinction, or lack thereof, is particularly novel, or even remarkable to make—after all, several decades of structuralist and post-structuralist scholarship have been dedicated to exploring how “textual” character is by no means the exclusive province of so-called “official” literary forms, and that it *is* possible to probe the narrative conventions of supposedly non-literary pronouncements, regardless of specialization.

So, the Zionist narrative is not confined to a single text; it is also a series of codes and tropes that have come to inform establishment cultural messaging. An important way to understand how this operates is through the concept of “hegemony,” which Edward Said used as one of his touchstones in exploring the pervasiveness of Orientalist logics in academic and media discourse. Originally formulated by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, “hegemony” refers to how ruling class sensibilities can become dominant in the civil society through non-coercive means. The way, according to Gramsci, to counter hegemony is through a “war of position” that will challenge the domination within culture of the terms that reinforce political subordination. Zionism, especially following 1967 (more on this in a moment) is an important component of US hegemonic cultural sensibilities. It is for this reason that the theme of my reflections here is clustered around the notion of “narrative unravelings.” Because when we understand Zionism as a constitutive element in the manufacturing of white supremacist, capitalist, and imperial “common sense” among the differentially subordinated populace, we see why it is erroneous to think that such an entrenched political-cultural grammar will simply be undone with one decisive blow—or even a series of blows. Rather, we need to see our work as cumulative, as gradual, as meticulously taking apart what has been so intentionally and strategically sewn in place.

Here we already have a good demonstration of the type of phenomenon I wanted to explore in this brief discussion—the interrelatedness of converging spheres in challenging Zionist hegemony and advancing Palestinian liberation—through the aforementioned example of Edward

Said. Said obviously wrote the groundbreaking text *Orientalism*, which analyzed how seemingly impartial scholarship and media messaging service the projects of colonial and imperial domination and subjugation. So, on the one hand, Said authored a text that took to task the epistemological presumptions of academic impartiality regarding the study and analysis of the Near East. But that is only one side of the story—for, as examined by scholars such as Sarah Gualtieri, Andrew Rubin, and Keith Feldman, Said was also a member of the Association of Arab American University Graduates, or AAUG, alongside his friend and mentor, Ibrahim Abu Lughood, who had previously been involved with the Organization of Arab Students (OAS).

The AAUG was an organization dedicated to challenging the rampant demonization of Arabs (particularly Palestinians) and Muslims following the aftermath of 1967, during which the Israeli state launched a preemptive strike against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and seized the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and the Syrian Golan Heights. Through its various publications, which included the journal, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, the AAUG sought to act as an academic counter-weight to the racist and dehumanizing representations of the media. Two essays authored by Said (who acted as the Vice President of the organization for a time) would include the seeds of the arguments he would later explore in his field-defining text, *Orientalism*: “The Arab Portrayed” (1969) and “Shattered Myths” (1975). Both are worth reading. “Shattered Myths” in particular is fascinating because here Said is already referring to Orientalism, which he categorizes as a “myth” that includes presumptions such as the essential singularity and bloodthirsty nature of something called “the Arab mind” that can be the specialization of US intelligence. What Said examined in this essay was how the widely reiterated trope of an “intelligence failure” was used to explain how “the Arabs” could even be expected to have fought of their own accord—not, that is, that they fought well, but that they fought “at all.” Thus, the 1973 War, sometimes referred to as the October War, represented a kind of “shattering” of some of the prime conventions of the Orientalist myth, including the essential

simplicity of the so-called “Arab mind,” which was so unfathomable that the facts on the ground had to be contorted by the US and Israeli political establishments as having resulted from an “intelligence failure.”

Why am I spending so much time on this? Well, I think it is an important reflection of the topic I would like to discuss: the narrative unravelings to which we need to subject the Zionist presumptions of US hegemony. Essential to this undertaking is understanding that academia is in no way isolated from the political-media establishment, and *acting* on this understanding by straddling multiple spheres as scholars, intellectuals, and organizers. And on the final point—brilliant as he was, the work that Said did and its legacy is not reducible to him alone as an individual. It grows out of a wider context of organizing and activism that involves the aforementioned OAS and AAUG, as well as the General Union of Palestinian Students, and others. Similarly, those of us who come to the academic context from grassroots organizing and activist spaces do not simply leave those sensibilities at the door when we enter the classroom. We *need* to hold onto them *especially* when we are engaged in the intellectual act of challenging dominant logics and rhetoric of supremacy. At the risk of digressing, I also think we need to carefully scrutinize the tendency to dismiss “intellectual” work as interchangeable with anything “academic.” Academia as an institution in the US (which was fortified through various racist and genocidal projects such as settler-colonialism and slavery, and today remains invested in weapons companies and helping police forces develop technologies to better surveil oppressed and working class communities of color) is certainly an oppressive space—internally as well as externally, when we also recall the vast repression to which academics who dare to speak out in support of Palestine have been subjected.

But academia today actually *relies* on the assumption that knowledge production is exclusive to it to continue to perform this oppressive work invisibly. By contrast, I think simply reflecting back on liberation luminaries such as Ghassan Kanafani, who wrote myriad studies of Zionism and imperialism, as well as the countless Palestinians organizing

in the camps who considered political education to be just as crucial as armed struggle, will remind us that it is actually the *duty* of individuals involved in liberation struggles to document and archive their condition. That is, there is an aspect of the liberation struggle that is indisputably intellectual—it is incumbent upon all of us to own that rather than taking academia at the word of its false branding.

So, to get back to the topic at hand, it is not only in the broader socio-political culture of the US that Zionism acts as a hegemonic force—in my experience, universities have become a space in which Zionism is particularly entrenched. I say “particularly” because it has been my experience that Zionists over the past few years have relied on particular narrative strategies to ensure that university spaces themselves embrace a hegemonic culture that sees Zionism as the basis for ethical conduct and intellectual integrity. Two of these strategies I have identified are those of “exceptionalization” and “co-optation.” Exceptionalization means, quite simply, trying to get people to second-guess the nature of Israeli oppression and violence against Palestinians by making it seem as though there is more than meets the eye. So, for example, accusing Israel of apartheid for years would be met with responses like, “It’s not what it looks like.” And because South Africa became the basis for the legally actionable crime of apartheid, Zionists would often try to delegitimize the charge by saying how Israel was “nothing like” apartheid South Africa (conveniently overlooking the fact that the charge simply requires proving systematic intent, not total equivalence).

Co-optation, as you might imagine, refers to the appropriation of various strategies and frameworks from liberation, anti-racist, and civil rights struggle in order to normalize Zionist as an oppressed identity and, conversely, Palestine organizing and activism as inherently oppressive. It has, as documented by the legal organization Palestine Legal, relied on tactics such as suing universities for violating Zionist students’ civil rights by allowing for Palestine activism and scholarship to take place within university settings. These tactics have also played out at the state government level, with several states passing anti-BDS bills that attempt

to ban businesses from participating in BDS work, relying on the false narrative of victimization of Zionists to sanction the legal codification of *actual* discrimination against Palestinians and our allies. And of course, there was the Trump administration's Executive Order, which completely equated Judaism and Zionism and reinforced the logics of the Title VI complaints often filed by Zionist organizations against universities. In 2016, the Regents at the University of California attempted to pass a "Statement of Principles Against Intolerance" that directly equated anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Many of us organized against that, and instead the Regents passed an altered form that condemned "*antisemitic* forms of anti-Zionism."

This of course has a wider history: Keith Feldman notes that the aftermath of 1967 in many ways began the linking of anti-Semitism with Palestine work that is so rampant today, and that this process evolved in line with a related convention of Zionist organizations beginning to frame anti-Semitism as something that needed to be explained and analyzed by experts, because it could erupt at any moment—it had, that is, a "viral" characteristic, as Feldman explains, and because of this virality, it was important to defer to so-called Civil Rights organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (which is, in fact, a Zionist organization dedicated to surveilling and smearing pro-Palestine and racial justice activists) to stamp it out. Not so surprisingly, these recommendations usually entailed investigating and questioning activists for Palestine and other racial justice struggles. The FBI's COINTELPRO operation, which surveilled scores of activists, mirrored the exact rhetoric that would be pushed by Zionist organizations such as the ADL in labeling Black nationalism, Palestine activism (and of course, the intersections between the two) as rooted in "hatred," "extremism," or "terrorism," and thereby necessitating further government scrutiny.

So, what do we need to keep in mind when it comes to challenging not only Israeli apartheid, but also the various ways in which Zionism seeks to normalize itself within various establishment spaces? I think one thing is certainly to keep spreading the message, *and* to keep pushing the

envelope as much as possible. I remember the days when even saying “apartheid” was seen as somehow radical or controversial, and now, *B’Tselem* and *Human Rights Watch* have both released reports attesting to the veracity of that claim. Meanwhile, Palestinians had been making the charge for decades. So, we have to keep saying the same things, repeating the same arguments, and never compromising our principles, in the hopes that what seems impossible today can be taken for granted tomorrow.

Secondly, we have to keep seizing upon breaks in the larger Zionist narrative. Said wrote of the “Shattered Myths” of Orientalism, and later, in his arguably more famous media essay, “Permission to Narrate,” talked about the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. Some may recall that there was a hitherto unprecedented media situation at that time: there were more reporters at the ground able to report directly what they were seeing and experiencing, which led to the first immediate transmission of images and accounts of brutal Israeli violence. Regina Sharif would conclude the 1983 seminal study *Non-Jewish Zionism* by reflecting that the revelations of Israel’s brutality would have to force a frank reckoning with the structural nature of the Zionist project. Today, such a pronouncement may seem overstated—and yet we can discern a continuing pattern: as communications technologies enhance and expand, the Israeli state in some ways loses its narrative monopoly. It is worth noting that operations like 2008’s “Cast Lead” and 2014’s “Protective Edge” always bring more and more activists to the Palestinian cause, while types of defenses for Israeli violence that could have worked at one period in time become insufficient at another. Today, social media has played a huge role in bringing even more widespread awareness to the Palestinian cause, as activists like Muhammed and Mua El-Kurd have taken to Twitter and Instagram to document, in real time, Israeli settler violence and attempts to displace the Palestinian families of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. Of course, social media is a double-edged sword here, given that these same platforms have been systematically censoring and silencing Palestinians (even erasing or shadow-banning the very content

mentioned). Facebook has also been actively deleting Palestinian accounts, including those of entire academic programs that center Palestine, such as San Francisco State's Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas program, and Zoom and YouTube also took part in censoring an open classroom by this aforementioned program, led by Palestinian activist-scholar Dr. Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi. Israel, perhaps realizing the efficacy of digital technologies in displacing the premium of corporate imperial capitalist "reporting," has over the past few years been partnering with Silicon Valley tech companies to ensure that Palestinian content is censored as violations of so-called "community standards," including the promotion of "terrorism."

However, we definitely seem to be in a "moment," and I think the uprisings that followed the police murder of George Floyd, including the subsequent reckonings with white supremacy, helped create an atmosphere of dissension whereby what was previously taken for granted is no longer fully tolerable, and this has certainly percolated into the current discourse. We have seen academic departments sign various solidarity statements with the Palestinian struggle, and academics pledge to teach Palestine in a politically unfiltered way.

By way of closing, it is worth mentioning what I think should be the relationship between the grassroots and the non-profit spheres. As I see it, the grassroots and non-profit spaces can sometimes seem antagonistic, and this can be healthy to the degree that it ensures an awareness that the two are *not* interchangeable. However, I do think they can work relationally. Ultimately, I think it should be the role of the non-profit sphere to prop up the grassroots spaces with resources and take directives from them. The non-profits will mediate the public sphere in a way that the grassroots will not always have the capacity to do (though their efforts can certainly blur), and in these moments it is important to ensure that the messaging is not watered down. The non-profits are *not* the grassroots, and vice-versa—and that is exactly how it should be.

We need to keep pushing the envelope and challenging the narrative conventions that make seemingly unchallengeable projects like Israel's

ongoing colonization of Palestine or the US's subsidization of this colonization possible. The current status quo, with its de-centering of the role of the so-called colonial "expert," poses new opportunities to do so even as it is also certainly fraught with unique challenges of its own.

Grassroots Women's Mobilization in Palestine: A Brief History

Maha Nassar

On May 15, 2021, as Palestinians and their allies all over the world commemorated the 73rd anniversary of the Nakba, Palestinians in Nazareth held protests of their own. Nazareth is the largest Palestinian city in what is now the State of Israel, which Palestinians refer to as “the inside” or “48 lands.” Among the protest songs sung in Nazareth that night was a song that is called *Haboobati Kandaka*. ‘Kandaka’ means a strong revolutionary woman, and it refers to a Nubian queen. Two years ago, during Sudan’s revolutionary movement to oust President Omar al-Bashir, Alaa Salah became an internationally recognized protest icon as she led demonstrators in a series of chants in which the response was *thawra*, or revolution, that came to be known as Haboobati Kandaka. At the time, commentators noted that Sudanese women were at the forefront of the protest movement, and that it was built on a much longer history of Sudanese women playing an important role in Sudan’s independence movement of the 20th century. So, it was perhaps not surprising that Palestinian protesters would choose this song as the guiding force of their protests that night.

In part it is not surprising because there is a long history of Palestinian women’s mobilization in nationalist movements, as well as in feminist movements throughout the 20th century. In the 1920s, middle class Palestinian women joined in nascent nationalist and feminist movements that were explicitly geared against British mandatory power. Following the 1948 Nakba, in the 1950s and ‘60s, women undertook charity work, care work, and education, both formally and informally, recognizing that sustaining their societies was key to overcoming their trauma. After 1967, Palestinian women joined revolutionary work and other organizations both locally and in exile. During the first Intifada, we know of Palestinian

feminist mobilization even more now thanks to the recent documentary “Naila and the Uprising,” which shows how women played a key role in the Intifada and that they were often overlooked.

Often overlooked in the telling of the story of Palestinian women’s grassroots mobilization is an important group of Palestinian women: Those Palestinian in the ‘48 lands, like the women in Nazareth. Most of them were granted Israeli citizenship, albeit reluctantly and, albeit, of unequal status. Yet they played an important role in the mobilization of Palestinian women and men in the history in ‘48 lands as well as today. My argument for this paper is that 1948 Palestinian women drew on the long history of Palestinian women’s mobilization to work towards the improvement of their lives as a minority community in Israel. But they faced colonial feminist discourses from Jewish Israeli women who insisted on seeing them as backwards, traditional, and in need of the modernizing hands of the Israeli State. This dynamic continued for many decades, even as Palestinian women organized more formally and independently. Today, younger generations of Palestinian women are positioning themselves and their work in more explicit anti-colonial terms, which we have seen in the most recent mobilizations of May 2021, and in general strike of May 18 in particular.

The History of Palestinian Women’s Mobilization in Israel

In August 1949, a delegation of ten Palestinian women residents of the newly established state of Israel (though they were not yet citizens) met with then-Labor Minister Golda Meir in her Tel Aviv office. According to a report of the meeting published in *al-Yawm*, the local Arabic newspaper which was government sponsored, Meir warmly welcomed the guests and asserted what she claimed was a history of Jewish-Arab sisterhood. Meir then expressed concern over the various societal barriers that prevented “Arab woman” (as she put it) from taking their rightful place in Israeli society, especially their ability to work outside the home. She expressed hope that these impediments could be improved. The

spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation was a writer and community activist named Najwa Qa'war. She thanked Meir for seeing them but pushed back against Meir's framing of the position of Palestinian women in the new state. Qa'war argued, "The issue of women and their employment is tied to a larger and deeper issue, which is the restoration of Arab organizations in Israel." Qa'war insisted that in order for there to be true equality, the communities as a whole needed to be on truly equal footing. This meant that displaced villagers needed to be allowed to return to their homes, that the Histadrut Labor Union needed to give equal employment opportunities to Arab workers, and unemployment compensation needed to be equal as well. After Qa'war, other Palestinian women added their voices to these demands calling for more government investment in childcare and in girls' education. Meir thanked them but said such problems were beyond her control.

The dynamic that we see in this exchange is that, although Palestinian women saw their own improvement as being intimately tied to their communities' improvement at the social, political, and economic levels, such linkages challenged the Israeli Zionist narrative that positioned the state as uplifting benighted Palestinian or Arab women who were suffocating under the yoke of tradition and lack of employment. So these discussions were dominated by what I call Israeli colonial discourses that presented the state as a source of enlightenment and emancipation in the lives of Palestinian women, rather than a source of oppression. These Israeli colonial discourses continued over subsequent decades as feminist movements were gaining traction in the 1970s and '80s. Most women's movements, both Israeli grassroots and otherwise, were joint or Jewish ones where Palestinian women often found themselves silenced by Jewish Israeli feminists, even those that presented themselves as allies. These groups were often geared towards finding "peace" in the region without understanding—or caring to understand—the underlying reasons for there being a so-called lack of peace. There were also comments that showed that they—that is, Jewish Israeli women, and particularly *Ashkenazi* Jewish Israeli women—continued to see themselves as

beneficent leaders of Palestinian Arab women and could show them the way towards maturity and equality on their terms. Therefore, they did not really want to hear from Palestinian women who were expressing different ideas of what needed to be done in order to improve their conditions.

Palestinian scholar Suheir Abu Oksa Daoud has done a lot of important work recovering this history. She relates the experience of one Palestinian woman in the '48 lands, Na'ela 'Awwad, who told her: "When I began participating in the Knesset committee for the advancement of women, I felt happy and proud. But later on, I realized that the committee did not care about meeting our needs. Some of the female Knesset Members in the Committee treated us with a patronizing attitude. They held meetings during our feasts and holidays. We wrote them many letters and notes, but nothing has changed." So, we see the essential bulldozing of Palestinian women claims by Jewish Israeli feminists who claim to be speaking and working on their behalf. But really, they were more interested in having a mixed participation to make it look like it was joint Jewish-Arab group, to make it look like they were working towards peace, to give it a veneer of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but none of it was really to be found. Another feminist activist, Kifah Daghash, told Dr. Daoud, "I and a few female Palestinians worked in feminist Jewish women's groups in Haifa. When we realized that Jewish and Palestinian women can't function under the same roof, we were disappointed. Jewish women never looked at us as equals, and they tended to exploit and undermine us... Their attitude as superiors was the reason, we left the Jewish organization and formed Assiwar, the feminist association." As we hear from both of these testimonials, we understand the dynamic that was happening, particularly in the '70s and '80s and even into the '90s, whereby we rarely saw independent Palestinian women's organizations. Rather, they were folded into Jewish Israeli ones, and as such they were under the domination of Jewish Israeli leaders.

This started to change in the mid-1990s, as part of a larger wave of assertion among Palestinians inside the Green Line, as they began

establishing independent associations that were aimed at pushing for and advocating for the distinctive needs of ‘48 Palestinian women. The establishment of Assiwar in 1997 came as part of this new wave. They did not rely on the goodwill of Jewish Israeli feminists, nor did they see “modernization” coming from the state as the solution to the challenges they face. Assiwar, which is still a leading Palestinian women’s organization, explains it this way on its website: “Assiwar is an independent Palestinian Arab feminist movement that struggles against all forms of oppression and its manifestations at the patriarchal, economic, national, and ethnic levels, and believes that the liberation of society, especially the marginalized and vulnerable groups in it, requires combating all these forms of exploitation, collectively, and separately. Assiwar believes that sexual assault is a social phenomenon in which women and children fall victim to their social vulnerability.” In other words, Assiwar sees all forms of exploitation and victimization of women as being intimately connected at the social, political, familial, as well as economic levels. This attitude is part of a growing shift in Palestinian feminist activity and grassroots women’s organizing in Palestinian society on both sides of the Green Line.

The New Palestinian Generation and Anti-Colonialism

In 2019, we saw a number of campaigns that were launched to focus on gender-based violence—but focusing on gender-based violence as a manifestation of the colonial exploitation of conditions that Palestinians face. For example, the Tal’at movement, which was formed in fall 2019, clearly links Israeli settler colonialism with a lack of women’s rights and the rise of gender-based violence, with the ongoing conditions of Israeli colonialism. These movements operated at both online and in-person levels over the last several years, at least until the COVID-19 pandemic. Afterwards, they continued to operate online. If there is harassment, they have developed mechanisms to overcome that, and now those movements have now been directed towards supporting Palestinian rights overall.

Starting in April 2021, a combination of attempts to expel Palestinians from Sheikh Jarrah and harassing the Masjid al-Aqsa worshippers led to growing mobilization and awareness. These grassroots women's organizations were very much at the forefront of these movements, and they were led by a younger generation of young Palestinians and those in their 20s who were able to more clearly articulate the ways in which both settler colonialism and apartheid were part and parcel of both their oppression and were very much at the forefront of their mobilizations to overcome those conditions. For example, on May 17, 2021, a Palestinian activist from Nazareth, Samar 'Azayzah, said: "We are part of the fourth generation of the Nakba," and that, whereas Palestinians in the '48 lines were described as being part of a democratic society, "We're talking about an occupying army and an occupying state that represses against the Palestinians inside. We are part of the Palestinian people."

So, it was this group of Palestinians inside the Green Line, many of them women, who also organized the Palestinian general strike on May 18, 2021. What was remarkable about it was that Palestinians across historic Palestine took part, as did Palestinians around the world. In doing so, they emphasized that they were breaking the wall that Israel had been upholding against all of them to keep them divided and unable to organize collectively. Many regard that general strike as a success, and also a sign of things to come. Another young activist, Saleen Ismail, in an interview on May 30, said, "The wall has been broken and it has started to become clear that the issue is not just a cause only for the people of Jerusalem or the people of the [West] Bank or the people of Gaza, but rather it is a cause for all the people of Palestine—in exile and inside and outside." During and after the general strike, Israeli police forces launched a massive campaign, arresting over 2,000 Palestinians inside the '48 lines. When Saleen was asked whether the Israeli arrest campaigns and charges against them would deter them, she said:

No, I don't think so. I think it's completely the opposite. The racist laws and all the practices that have been carried out against our people in the occupied interior has

yielded the opposite effect. It's created an angry generation and it doesn't dampen our enthusiasm, but instead does just the opposite. The arrests and detentions and the terrorizing practices inside the country will not intimidate us and will not dampen our enthusiasm, but rather the opposite. It will make us a generation that is more and more angry and more willing to join a youth-driven revolt.

Ultimately, these latest events that we are seeing unfold in front of our eyes is the fruit of a much larger and longer campaign in which Palestinian women on both sides of the Green Line have been active in for decades. We have known, somewhat, about Palestinian women's mobilization and the occupied Palestinian territories in revolutionary movements and in exile. And it is time for us now to have a better sense and a better understanding of the very important roles that grassroots women's political organizing has been doing inside the Green Line.

The Role of Economics in the Struggle Against Colonialism

Taher Labadi

Abstract: The development of a "resistance economy" in Palestine is the subject of a growing literature. Scholars explore the foundations and conditions of an alternative model of economic development, explicitly aimed at supporting Palestinians in their struggle against Israeli colonialism. In this article, I present two organized attempts to revive a certain Palestinian economic autonomy, i.e., to break with the Israeli colonial economy. The first is called "al-mujtama' al-'isami" and takes place in the 1948 occupied territories, starting with the second intifada. The second concerns the agricultural policy aimed at reducing food insecurity and economically resisting the blockade in the Gaza Strip, conducted after 2007. These experiences offer new and valuable empirical material for the study of economic struggle against colonialism.

1. The economy at the heart of the colonial confrontation

The development of an "economy of resistance" is increasingly being addressed in the field of Palestinian studies. Similarly, there have been a number of meetings, conferences and study-days on the development of an "economy of resistance" and "food sovereignty" in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) over the past fifteen years. This is a move away from the dominant writings and discourses of the 1990s-2010s, which had the notable characteristic of bypass the conflict with Israel to focus on Palestinian economic growth and development.

Extending the critique of the "Oslo economy" - referring to the regime established following the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the measures and policies initiated within that framework – those scholars question the foundations and conditions of an alternative model of Palestinian economic development. The realization of a "resistance economy" is then explicitly aimed at supporting Palestinians in their struggle against Israeli settlement colonialism (Al-Botmeh 2013, Dana 2014, Khalidi, 2016, Latte Abdallah 2019, Salamanca and Tabar 2015, Tartir 2016).

These writings stand in contrast to a depoliticized reading enshrined in the neoliberal model of economic growth and promoted by international donors (Khalidi and Samour 2011, Hanieh 2016, Labadi 2020). They thus revive a more political understanding of Palestinian development as it was still widely found in the 1980s, when it was explicitly linked and connected to the goal of national liberation, if not political autonomy¹. These studies most often revisit and draw on the experience of the First Intifada (1987-1993), which presents a local example of mass mobilization and attempted disengagement from the colonial system and its modes of production (Tabar 2015).

What this literature tells us is that economics is at the heart of the ongoing colonial confrontation (Labadi, 2020). Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, but also the establishment of Israeli settlements, the confiscation of land and resources, the control of borders, as well as several decades of economic policies defined by the Israeli administration have greatly contributed to eroding and shaping the economic fabric of these territories. The measures employed there are in many ways comparable to those employed since 1948, in Israel itself, against the so called "inside" Palestinians (Haidar, 1995).

This situation did not fundamentally change with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. The prerogatives granted to the Palestinian side are constantly challenged on the ground and it is the Israeli

¹ See in this regard Abed 1989, Mansour 1983, Samara and Shehadeh 1988 and Sayigh 1991.

administration that ultimately retains control over the commercial, monetary, and financial regimes, as well as over most of the territories (Khalidi and Taghdisi-Rad 2009, Naqib 2000). At the same time, the economy is being put at the service of the so-called "peace process" in the region, which includes the search for greater complementarity between the Palestinian and Israeli economies.

In the field of agriculture, for example, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its donors are primarily concerned with enhancing the competitiveness of Palestinian producers in international markets, and as a result they maintain a policy of agricultural extraversion² (Farsakh 2004). In Gaza, farmers are encouraged to specialize in the production of flowers, strawberries, and cherry tomatoes, which are expected to bring quick returns. However, these crops, which are primarily intended for export, are particularly exposed to the vagaries of Israeli border restrictions.

This vulnerability weighs more heavily if considering that it is the Israeli administration that ultimately controls access to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or even movement within them. The closure of crossing points and the restriction of traffic and exchanges are regularly used as a means of pressure and punishment against Palestinian society, in an openly counter-insurgency logic (Khalili, 2010). Palestinians are then quickly brought to the brink of economic asphyxiation, or even maintained in a state of humanitarian crisis as has been the case in the Gaza Strip since 2007.

In this article, I present two organized attempts to revive a certain Palestinian economic autonomy, i.e., to break with the Israeli colonial economy. The first is carried by the Islamic Movement (northern branch) in the 1948 territories, starting with the second intifada, and is called "al-mujtama' al-'isami". The second is carried out by the Palestinian government in the Gaza Strip after 2007, and in particular by its Ministry

² Policy focused on the intensification of agricultural trade with the outside world.

of Agriculture. These two experiences offer some important lessons for thinking about the role of the economy in a liberation struggle.

2. The "self-made society" in the 1948 territories.

As a result of the 1948 Nakba, the economy of the "inside" Palestinians, those who managed to remain in the country, suffered specifically from the effort undertaken by the Zionist state and institutions to consolidate Jewish monopolization of the country's economy. These Palestinians were subjected to martial law and placed under military curfew, to remain so until 1966 (Labadi, 2015).

During the 1950s, Israeli policy regarding indigenous Arab economy was primarily driven by security considerations, but also by an intense effort to monopolize Arab land and heritage. Thus, the Arab sector was dispossessed in a few years of its most important resource, land, losing in particular the best agricultural areas of the country (Haidar, 1995).

In addition, specific development policies for Arab localities were implemented from the 1960s onwards as a way of not giving in to political demands. These efforts also enabled the Israelis to economically penetrate the "Arab areas" and to integrate them into the Israeli economy. The aim was also to prevent the development of an autonomous Arab economy that could serve as a basis for hostile political activism (Khalidi, 1989).

Thus, not only was the Arab agrarian sector largely destroyed, but the rapid development of Jewish agriculture pushed its transformation to the margins of the Israeli market. Similarly, Arab small-scale industry and the artisanal economy are no match for a stronger and more diversified Jewish industry, which was already in operation during the British Mandate and which now enjoys considerable support from the state and national Zionist institutions. The mutilation of the Palestinians' productive apparatus has made them largely dependent on the Israeli

Jewish economy, and they consume mainly products of the Jewish economy (Haidar, 1995, Khalidi, 1989).

Until the 1980s, the administration of the Israeli economy remained quite highly centralized and the redistribution of resources went through the historical channels of the Zionist movement, from which the Palestinians were generally absent or even excluded. Legal criteria as well, such as place of residence or completion of military service, openly advantage the Jewish population in the distribution of resources (Labadi, 2015).

The liberalization of the Israeli economy during the 1990s-2000s and its integration into globalization has little impact on the nature of inequalities between the Jewish and Arab population. In a speech he gave in 2012, Netanyahu still spoke of the need to distinguish between economic and political aspirations and to promote, and to co-opt, the economy of Arabs by encouraging private initiatives³. These measures are coupled with increased repression of Arab representative bodies.

Today, those “inside Palestinians” exceed one million people and account for 18% of the population in Israel. They suffer from a high unemployment rate of over 20%. The initiative I am interested in here aims precisely at responding to this colonial dispossession by reconstituting a space of economic and social autonomy for the Palestinian society inside. It is named "al-mujtama' al-'isami", which can be translated as "self-made society", launched by the Islamic Movement (northern branch).

This program was promoted more and more formally after the Second Intifada; however, the social activity of the Islamic Movement has a long history, and the idea of a self-sufficient society can be traced back to the same establishment of the movement in the 1970s. The idea was, like in other political movements, to promote volunteering among youth as well as welfare activities to meet the needs of society. This gradually led to the

³ <http://www.arab48.com/?mod=articles&ID=91052>.

creation of educational institutions and medical and social services that have developed from the 1990s to the present.

All these efforts were to be soon brought together under the banner of the development of "al-mujtama' al-'isami", which has the explicit objective of reducing the dependence of inside-Palestinian society on Israeli institutions and economy to promote autonomous Arab institutions and economy. This experience is still overlooked and academic work on it, still at embryonic stage, deserves to be further developed.

According to articles published by the Movement on the internet, the project of "al-mujtama' al-'isami" came to give coherence and unity to the many activities already carried out by the Islamic Movement and in response to the urgent need to "preserve the Arab-Islamic identity" of the Palestinian community in the face of the attacks of the Zionist state. The Movement intends to rely on several assets that the Palestinian society has inside: the possession of some lands, scientific skills and financial resources.

In addition, the Movement has relied on strengthening its connections in Muslim and Arab countries, with the creation of relay institutions and associations. These networks have enabled it to find financial, media and political support, which has been put to good use. The "al-mujtama' al-'isami" project has put its resources and skills at the service of institutions and projects in a variety of fields, including economic, health, educational, cultural and media. The idea was to meet the civil needs of Palestinian society without resorting to Israeli resources and institutions.

In fact, the program has seen the creation of numerous institutions and associations specializing in assistance to the poor and orphans; in health (creation of infirmaries, maternity wards), in education (creation of schools, creation of university scholarships), in reconstruction (Emaar Foundation). The program has also seen the creation of funds and incubators dedicated to the support of family and private businesses⁴.

⁴ http://plsnew.nadsoft.co/?mod=articles&ID=1205803#.YNBqIUw6_IU

This economic and social activity has been accompanied by increased political activism for the protection of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other holy places, the reaffirmation of the right of return of Palestinian refugees, moral, legal and financial support to the families of prisoners and martyrs, or to the inhabitants of the Naqab and unrecognized villages, humanitarian aid in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza.

All of these efforts intensified during the 2000s and 2010s, leading to the emergence of schools, health institutions, media institutions, private companies, civil foundations... free from the influence of the Israeli state and its agendas. The strength of this project lies in the diversity of the fields covered and the complementarity of the objectives. The constitution of "al-mujtama' al-'isami" has been able to present a common horizon and integrated activities in the service of Palestinian autonomy within the country, while reviving the affirmation of independent political, social and cultural positions.

This project is in fact far from trivial and was a real concern for the Israeli colonial state which considered that the Islamic Movement was creating a state within the state with growing influence⁵. In addition to its political activism in defense of Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the "al-mujtama' al-'isami" project largely motivates the Israeli decision to ban the Islamic Movement in November 2015. Thus, more than twenty associations and centers affiliated with the Movement and involved in this project were also banned in 2015.

3. The policy of the Ministry of Agriculture in Gaza

In September 2007, the Israeli administration officially declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile territory", citing the threat posed by the now sole ruling Hamas, and imposed new restrictions on the movement of people and

⁵ <https://www.prc.ps/الدعوة-الإسلامية-عن-القانون-الداخلي/>

goods across its border⁶. This tightening of the blockade is part of a strategic evolution of the Israeli occupation regime specific to this territory of 365 km², marked in particular by the disengagement of the army as well as the dismantling of the settlements in 2005 (Latte Abdallah and Parizot 2011).

The economic fabric of Gaza has been deeply devastated by fifteen years of blockade. This situation is aggravated by the following, cyclical wars and the destruction, under the effect of Israeli bombing, of a large part of the public infrastructure (the power station, official buildings, roads...). In this regard, the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict in 2009 refers to a "deliberate" Israeli policy of bombing water, industrial and agricultural infrastructure in order to "deprive the population of its means of subsistence" (UN 2009).

Farmers are severely affected. The ban on the import of agricultural inputs (fertilizers, seeds, plants, pesticides) or even spare parts for various machines also hinders the functioning of the entire sector, which is also heavily affected by a reduction in the area of cultivated land as well as the destruction and depletion of livestock. Various local initiatives are therefore intended to mitigate the effects of the blockade in terms of food insecurity⁷.

Among the actions undertaken to reduce food insecurity, the one implemented by the Gaza government - and more precisely by its Ministry of Agriculture - is still largely unknown. However, it allows the local agricultural sector to cover an increasing part of the Strip's food needs, so that the government is soon able to control the import of many agricultural products from Israel or even Egypt. This situation - promoted to such a high level of political decision - is unprecedented in Palestinian territory.

⁶ For a more detailed presentation of the economic context of the Gaza Strip and the terms of the blockade at that time, see Labadi 2018.

⁷ Mersiha Gadzo, « Alternative Farming on the Rise in Besieged Gaza », *Al Jazeera* (online), 28/01/2017.

This policy was initiated in 2006 - before the break with the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the tightening of the blockade in 2007. At that time, Ismail Haniyeh formed his first government and appointed Mohammad al-Agha, an academic and agronomist by training, to head the Ministry of Agriculture. The ministry adopted a new development strategy, aimed at reducing food insecurity in the OPT by building on local resources and capacities first. The tone is explicitly political: agriculture will be used to support an economy of "subsistence" (sumud) and "resistance" (muqawama).

In the words of al-Agha, it is a matter of "putting agriculture at the center of the resistance and liberation project" in order to "no longer be dependent on the economy of the Israeli occupier and not remain vulnerable to external pressures", which includes "strengthening the resilience of the population". At the same time, agricultural development must be "sustainable" so as "not to exhaust resources and to participate in their regeneration"⁸. The program obviously takes on an even greater significance with the sustained strengthening of the blockade in September 2007.

As a first step, the Ministry contacts the actors involved in agricultural production in Gaza: farmers, agricultural associations and cooperatives, local and international NGOs, universities and other relevant ministries (health, education, economy). It organizes a series of meetings during which its new orientations are presented and discussed. These meetings also serve to sensitize farmers to change their crops and to invest in production to cover local needs.

At the same time, the ministry is implementing an experimental program to produce certain crops that are defined as "strategic" because they reduce dependence on Israel and make up for the lack of water and arable land. The planting of olive and date palms serves as a model: these trees consume little water and can even cope with salty water, while their fruits

⁸ Interviewed in Gaza in November 2012. By then, Mohammad al-Agha had left his position as minister and resumed his teaching activities at the university.

are used in various food preparations (MoU 2008). They can also provide raw material for many artisanal or industrial productions (MoA 2011).

The implementation of a more adapted - and more ecological - production model is envisaged as a solution to the restriction and depletion of water and soil resources. The development of multi-story agriculture, rainwater harvesting and the use of natural seeds, organic fertilizers and pesticide plants instead of chemical and synthetic products, are all techniques employed to preserve the integrity of resources and reduce dependence on imported Israeli agricultural inputs.

Gradually, the Ministry is able to offer a comprehensive program for restructuring the sector to cover the production of an increasingly wide range of products. Its role is to assist farmers in adopting the new production guidelines, by providing equipment and inputs, subsidizing some production (especially in the "buffer zone"), and prospecting for local outlets. It also provides the various actors with documentation identifying consumption needs and listing prices, production surpluses and deficits (MoA, 2008/2009).

The implementation of this policy relies heavily on the Ministry's involvement. It also has its own incubators and experimental farms - which are located on land "liberated" (al-mokhararat) by the dismantling of Israeli settlements in 2005 - thanks to which it supplies farmers with seeds or plants free of charge. It also installs several fishponds and poultry farms and develops bee pastures that it redistributes to farmers. Finally, it trains agricultural engineers and farmers in partnership with universities.

In January 2010, the ministry published a 10-year plan that sets out the terms of its import substitution strategy (MoU 2010). The strategy aims to achieve the highest possible degree of food self-sufficiency by encouraging the production of fruits and vegetables, eggs, poultry and fish, which humanitarian agencies do not usually provide as part of their assistance. To achieve this, he proposes to shift away from export crops

(flowers, strawberries, cherry tomatoes...) to resource rationing and subsistence agriculture (olives, dates, onions, carrots...).

The plan reflects the ministry's effort to intervene in the entire production chain, from the manufacture of inputs to the marketing of products. The document mentions the large-scale transformation of agricultural and domestic waste into organic fertilizer. The creation of a strategic food reserve, the control of production quality, the production of foodstuffs for medicinal purposes, and the contribution to artisanal and industrial development - beyond the agri-food industry alone - are also presented as critical objectives (ibid.: 28-34). Finally, the plan refers to the Ministry's desire to promote a "new awareness" (*wa'iun jadid*) among the population regarding the highly strategic nature of acts of production, marketing and consumption (ibid.: 21).

In 2009, the agricultural sector accounted for 9% of GDP and employed 60,000 people. It covers 90 percent of the country's needs in vegetables, 50 percent in fruit, 15 percent in red meat, 90 percent in poultry and 40 percent in seafood (ibid.: 21). The government then also curbs and bans the import of an increasing number of these products, which in turn allows it to control and reduce prices and their fluctuation (MoA 2012).

According to my interlocutors at the ministry involved in this project in 2012, this experiment would soon make it possible to produce enough fruit, vegetables, white meat and fish to meet the needs of the population. According to these same interlocutors, however, this self-sufficiency could only be partial, as the area and resources available in the Gaza Strip were in any case insufficient to meet the red meat or grain needs of its population.

During the 2014 Israeli offensive against the Gaza Strip, Ministry of Agriculture facilities were targeted and partially destroyed by bombing. Moreover, in the aftermath of the war, the easing of restrictions encourages some farmers to resume growing crops for export via Israel, which generate a higher yield than those dedicated to the local market. These farmers can also count on the support of international

organizations, always eager to promote the development of an export agriculture, capable of supplying international markets.

4. Some lessons about the role of economics in the struggle against colonialism in Palestine.

These experiences face difficulties linked to the Israeli repression that keeps these initiatives in a very precarious situation. The "al-mujtama' al-'isami" program came to a halt after 2015 and the Israeli decision to ban the Islamic movement and close several institutions involved in the economic and social field. The same is true in Gaza, where farms and factories are destroyed with each new war, as was the case again in 2021. In addition, the Palestinians have no control over their borders and their territory is fragmented. The value of the Gaza Strip, however, is the possibility of conducting autonomous economic policies at a level of centralized political decision-making unseen in the Palestinian context.

Lessons learned regarding the project of an "economic resistance":

1. An economic resistance aims at reducing Palestinian dependence on the Israeli economy and institutions. It is an economy of rupture with the Israeli colonial system, not only in a logic of boycott aiming to harm Israeli interests but above all to create the conditions for economic and therefore political autonomy.
2. An economy of resistance aims to cover the essential needs of Palestinian society in the fields of agriculture, industry, construction, but also services: it must allow the development of autonomous and efficient health, educational and cultural institutions.
3. An economy of resistance offers the possibility of escaping the pressure exerted by Israeli or foreign institutions and aims at reducing their influence on the definition of objectives, orientations, modes of action and societal values.

4. An economy of resistance is at the service of the struggle, supporting the poorest, the families of prisoners and martyrs, the reconstruction of destroyed houses, the education of new generations. It is not only a matter of raising the standard of living or creating jobs, but of encouraging the skills and professions that the resisting society needs.
5. The economy of resistance prepares and lays the foundations for liberation. I would argue that it actually *is* the liberation in progress, achieved daily, through people participating in setting the values, principles, foundations, forms, and contents.

Bibliography

Abed George T., 1989, "The political economy of resistance in the occupied territories". *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2 (1), 55-63.

Al-Botmeh Samia, 2013, "Namuzaj al-Tanmiya al-Filastini wa Istraajiyyat al-Taghyir fi al-Aradi al-Filastiniyya al-Mohtala", in *Al-Tajamoat al-Filastiniyya wa Tamthiluha wa Mostaqbal al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya*, The Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies – Masarat, Ramallah, Vol. 2, 33-54.

Dana Tariq, 2014, *A Resistance Economy: What Is It and Can It Provide an Alternative?* Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, PAL Papers, November.

Farsakh Leila, 2004, *The Political Economy of Agrarian Change in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Working papers n°40, San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute.

Haidar Aziz, 1995, *On the margins: the Arab population in the Israeli economy*, St. Martin's Press, New York.

Hanieh Adam, 2016, "Development as struggle: Confronting the reality of power in Palestine". *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 45 (4), 32-47.

Khalidi Raja, 1989, « Emergence d'une économie arabe en Israël ». In Mansour Camille (dir.), *Les Palestiniens de l'intérieur*, Les livres de la Revue d'études palestiniennes, Institut des études palestiniennes, Washington, pp 249-272.

Khalidi Raja, 2016, "Twenty-First Century Palestinian Development Studies". *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 45 (4), 7-15.

Khalidi Raja et Samour Sobhi, 2011, "Neoliberalism as Liberation: The Statehood Program and the Remaking of the Palestinian National Movement", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40 (2), 6-25.

Khalidi Raja et Taghdisi-Rad Sahar, 2009, *The economic dimensions of prolonged occupation: continuity and change in Israeli policy towards the Palestinian economy*, New York/Geneva, United Nations.

Khalili Laleh, 2010, « The location of Palestine in global counterinsurgencies », *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, n°42 (3), p. 413-433.

Labadi Taher, 2015, *De la dépossession à l'intégration économique : économie politique du colonialisme en Palestine*, thèse de doctorat en science économique, Paris, Université Paris-Dauphine.

Labadi Taher, 2018, « L'expérience économique du gouvernement Hamas sous blocus dans la bande de Gaza », *Critique internationale*, vol. 80, no. 3, p. 23-43.

Labadi Taher, 2020, « Economie palestinienne : de quoi parle-t-on (encore) ? ». *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, à paraître.

Latte Abdallah Stéphanie, 2019, « L'économie de la résistance : un engagement holiste contre l'occupation en Palestine ? », in E. Barozet, R. Cortesero, D. Mélo, I. Sainsaulieu (eds.), *Où est passée la justice sociale ? De l'égalité aux tâtonnements*, Lille, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2019, p. 225-238.

Latte Abdallah Stéphanie et Parizot Cedric, 2011, « A l'ombre du Mur : comprendre le régime d'occupation israélien ». In Latte Abdallah S. et Parizot C. (dir.), *A l'ombre du Mur: Israéliens et Palestiniens entre séparation et occupation*, Actes Sud, pp.15-48.

Mansour Antoine, 1983, *Palestine: une économie de résistance en Cisjordanie et à Gaza*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

Ministère de l'Agriculture, 2008, *La stratégie expérimentale, 2008-2009*, document du ministère de l'Agriculture n°4, Gaza, (en arabe).

Ministère de l'Agriculture, 2008/2009, *Le guide de l'investisseur agricole*, document du ministère de l'Agriculture n°2, Gaza, (en arabe).

Ministère de l'Agriculture, 2010, *Stratégie de développement agricole durable, 2010-2020*, document du ministère de l'Agriculture n°7, Gaza, (en arabe).

Ministère de l'Agriculture, 2011, *Connecter le secteur agricole au secteur industriel*, document du ministère de l'Agriculture n°8, Gaza, (en arabe).

Ministère de l'Agriculture, 2012, *Comparaisons des prix moyens de quelques produits de l'agriculture locale pour les années 2009, 2010, 2011*, document du ministère de l'Agriculture n°11, Gaza, (en arabe).

Naqib Fadle, 2000, « Aspects économiques du processus de paix : politique israélienne et création d'une dépendance de type colonial », *Tiers-Monde*, tome 41 n°163, p. 597-621.

Salamanca Omar J. et Tabar Linda (ed.), 2015, *Critical Readings of Development under Colonialism: Towards a Political Economy for Liberation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, Ramallah: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Center for Development Studies.

Samara Adel et Shehadeh Odeh, 1988, *Al-Tanmiya bil-Himaya al-Shaabiya*. Damas, Dar Kanaan lil dirasat wal nashr.

Sayigh Yusif A., 1991, *Elusive development: From dependence to self-reliance in the Arab region*. London, Routledge.

Tabar Linda, 2015, "People's power: Lessons from the first Intifada", in Jabary Salamanca Omar et Tabar Linda (ed.), *Critical Readings of Development under Colonialism: Towards a Political Economy for Liberation in the Occupied*

Palestinian Territories, Ramallah: Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/Center for Development Studies.

Tartir Alaa, 2016, “Nahwa Ro’ya Tanmawiya Filastiniyya”. *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya*, 105, 61-69.

United Nations, 2009, *Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict*, 12th Human Rights Council session, September.

Normalization and Resistance in the Arab and Muslim Context

Mohammad Makram Balawi

The Arab region has recently witnessed a rush towards normalization with the Israeli occupation. Some describe these efforts as a Palestinian crisis, but in fact it is a crisis related to the system of governance in the Arab and Islamic world in general, and the countries which normalized with the occupation in particular—the essence of which is the dichotomy between the public (society) and the government and the lack of popular support for these governments. According to opinion polls, the majority of Arabs (sometimes 90 percent in a country) were opposed to establishing any kind of relations with the occupation regime, let alone full diplomatic relations. Governments normalizing with the settler colonial entity with 90 percent of its people rejecting it can only mean that these governments are operating without popular legitimacy, which reflects an internal crisis linked to the way Arab and Islamic regimes are built. Those regimes justify normalization under the pretext of pursuing political and economic interests, and we saw in more than one historical turning point—whether in the agreement signed by Egypt in 1979 or Jordan in 1994 to normalize relations with the Israeli occupation—that it was preceded by a huge media campaign that promoted the notion that economic conditions would improve, that citizens would see an economic improvement. Of course, decades after these agreements, we found that these promises clearly lacked any credibility.

These agreements, in general, serve an elite, decision-making class of these Arab countries. This class needs foreign support to remain in power. It is unfortunate, for instance, that the Gulf crisis was sanctioned by Americans, and that no Arab or Islamic mediation succeeded in resolving it—only American mediation did. This similarly applies to the Moroccan case, as Morocco claims sovereignty over Western Sahara, which the

United States recognized to the great satisfaction of the Moroccan regime. The solution to this overwhelming Arab and Muslim internal crisis lies in its people having the freedom to choose their representatives and set an agenda that expresses the will of the people, which will include the Palestinian cause. This is reinforced by the fact that when countries do enjoy some degree of political freedom and democracy, they often are largely opposed to normalization with the Israeli settler colonial entity. These democratic countries that represent the will of the people usually have the ability to withstand American and Israeli pressure to normalize Palestinian dispossession.

From an Arab nationalist's perspective, the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the Israeli occupation state—with Western imperial support—at the beginning of the twentieth century was intended to tear the Arab and Islamic world apart; to prevent it from exercising any leadership role at the international level. In other words, it was not just a scheme targeting the Palestinian territories and people only. One only need to look at the level of trade between Arab countries, which is virtually non-existent and worthless. At the same time, border disputes and conflict between neighbors remain high: the product of the colonial inheritance that wanted to shape this scene in the region.

Our peoples need a profound change, and our main problem is that we have not been able to build a political system that expresses the people's national will. The concern of many Arabs with their personal desires, and considering themselves without a real human value, mission, or role, has resulted in a person who lacks dignity. We, frequently, see restrictions and insults to Arab passport holders everywhere, and this is reinforced by the fact that the ruling elite serves only its own interests, and wants the people to only eat and drink and not interfere in public life or ask questions about how their country is governed. Today, the elites in the Arab and Islamic countries are clearly required to see a way out of this situation, and to use all methods, movement, and sacrifice to excise freedom from public spaces. Without freedom, we will not obtain a project or national or personal dignity or rights in major issues, especially

the Palestinian cause. Although these elites have their religious, ideological, and ethnic differences, they must be pushed to cooperate with each other in pursuit of freedom and an independent national project far from foreign domination.

Following every normalization agreement, some make the argument that normalization agreements have become a *fait accompli* and that we must work within the framework of their existence. The justification today is that normalization is in the interest of the Palestinian people and Jerusalem. While this logic must be undone and the argument challenged, it is noteworthy that a shift has occurred among Arab governments. For example, since its creation in 1945, the Arab League has always been a house divided between different camps, alliances, and loyalties. The Palestinian cause, however, was perhaps the most unifying issue among its members. The unwavering support for the Palestinian people—at least nominally—was always reiterated at the outset of every Arab and Muslim summit until it became almost a routine protocol for League members. However, this may not be the case anymore with increasing normalization efforts across the region.

As for the Palestinian Authority, it is another Arab regime that was not created by chance, but rather for a specific purpose: to break up the Palestinian revolution. Outside the Palestinian Authority, Palestinians in the diaspora play an active role as much as possible in countries where there is space for freedom to organize, but the Arab regimes unfortunately do not allow Palestinians to express their national identity or any kind of resistance. The absence of freedom in these countries is directly related to normalization efforts. If freedom is found, the national, Arab, and Islamic interests, including the Palestinian cause, will become a priority.

Summary

It is worth highlighting these important points:

1. Normalization contributes to the suppression of democracy in the region because democratic movements that express the will of the people reject occupation and normalization.
2. Normalization is a threat to the people of the region because it perpetuates economic underdevelopment by creating external dependence.
3. It is in Israel's interest not to allow a regional competitor to emerge.
4. The absence of democracy and external dependence perpetuates tyranny and corruption that cannot produce development and stability.
5. Normalization will destabilize the region and encourage extremism and terrorism, which becomes the available expression of rejection when the political horizon is blocked.
6. Normalization will not achieve national interests, rather it will serve the personal interests of the elites and decision-makers.
7. Solving Arab problems and Arab interests are related to the rapprochement of Arab countries and not a grant from abroad.
8. Normalization will perpetuate the occupation in the Holy Land, and provide the occupation regime economic power and legitimacy.
9. Normalization weakens the Palestinians' position and morally besieges them.

We must emphasize that the popular, societal level is completely separate from the governmental level in these normalizing countries. Although the governments have reached advanced stages of normalization in some Arab countries, including regular communication between Arab officials and their Israeli counterparts, the popular, societal side remains completely separate from what is happening on the official side—and treats normalization with Israel as a reprehensible thing. This is something that must be built on. Intellectuals have the responsibility to stop the culture of normalization with the occupation regime and not grant legitimacy to these elite, disconnected governmental positions.

Normalization and the Legalization of the Occupation

Berdal Aral

Introduction

‘Normalization’ as a concept used in international politics and diplomacy could be defined as the desire of two states to bring normalcy to their relations through mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations. It may be that the past hostility between them is the result of military occupation/invasion, as in the case of the US invasion of Vietnam (1965). The road to normalcy begins after the invader pulls out from the territories it had previously occupied (the US withdrew from Vietnam in 1973). Similarly, the non-white majority of South Africa and its neighboring states did not opt for normalization with Apartheid South Africa during the Cold War so long as it continued to treat the non-white majority as a pariah and engage in military aggression against some of the surrounding states (Front-line States). This normalcy materialized only in the early 1990s after the Apartheid system began to crumble and South Africa ended its military aggression against its neighboring states. If, however, engagement of an actor with the occupier/oppressor does not involve an end to the occupation or oppression, this could be viewed as an ‘unequal treaty’ which, albeit gradually, perpetuates the relationship of domination between the occupier/oppressor and occupied/oppressed. Such agreements are properly called ‘treaties of capitulation’ or treaties of ‘surrender’. The process of Arab normalization with Israel, which we have been witnessing lately, greatly overlaps with the second pattern.

Indeed, when one looks into the context of the Palestinian engagement with Israel from the 1990s and the growing network of open/secret relations between Arab states and Israel in recent years, the term ‘normalization’ with respect to Israel ought to be defined as turning something abnormal into normal, at least in appearance, as the term *tatbi‘*

in Arabic suggests. When the oppressed comes to recognize oppression as a fact of life and begins to conceive it as ‘normal,’ normalization enters the scene. This process cannot be ‘successful’ unless the oppressed is mentally colonized. Actors that begin to participate in the normalization of the oppressor either disregard the reality of oppression or accept the status quo brought about by the oppressor.¹ The words expressed below appear to be a fair description of the policy of engagement currently adopted by both the Palestinian leadership and by many Arab regimes vis-à-vis Israel. As declared in the context of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel:

in an attempt to whitewash its violations of international law and human rights, Israel attempts to re-brand itself, or present itself as normal—even ‘enlightened’—through an intricate array of relations and activities encompassing hi-tech, cultural, legal, LGBT, and other realms.²

This essay begins with an analysis of Egypt’s ‘cold peace’ with Israel, brought about by the Camp David Treaty of 1979, as the first instance of Arab recognition of Israel. The paper proceeds with the case of Jordan as a state which has long been engaged in deep and complex relations with Israel. Then the study draws on the process which has seen a shift from ‘cold peace’ to rapprochement between Israel and various Arab states from the mid-1990s. After this, the essay discusses the peculiarity of the present situation, which is marked by a gradual normalization between a large number of Arab states and Israel. Then, the study draws on the main Arab justifications for normalization with Israel. This paper proceeds with a disclosure of the ‘true’ motives behind the Arab regimes that have opted for normalization with Israel. It is accordingly argued, then, that this strategy is a ‘bad’ one for Arab regimes and the people in the Arab world on account of its likely disastrous consequences. After that, the essay asserts that the Arab peoples are the main ‘obstacle’ to

¹ Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, “Debating BDS: On Normalization and Partial Boycotts”, January 4, 2012, <https://bdsmovement.net/news/debating-bds-normalization-and-partial-boycotts-1>

² *Ibid.*

normalization with Israel. This paper ends with a discussion of the ‘right’ strategy that ought to be pursued against Israel, and then, with a concluding remark about the need to devise strategies of resistance in order to liberate Palestine and overcome the overall Zionist assault on the Arab world.

Egypt’s ‘Cold Peace’ with Israel

As the first Arab state that recognized Israel, Egypt gives us some clue as to the defining features of Arab normalization with Israel. The Camp David accords (1978-79) appear to be a turning point that instigated a process of normalization between Israel and its Arab neighbors. When conventionally former adversaries come to recognize one another around a treaty, the particular form which their future relations will take and the extent of their rapprochement are not usually mentioned in the treaty. This is a matter better left to posterity. Strangely, however, the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979 dictates that Egypt should normalize its relations with Israel instead of maintaining any discretion as to whether it would wish to further its diplomatic links with the Zionist state in the post-treaty era.³

Nonetheless, to Israel’s disappointment, the accords with Egypt delivered only peace, and not a sense of trust and friendship between them. This is how the matter is put by an Israeli scholar:

The idea of normalization received significant formal expression in the Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt and various ancillary agreements. Even though only a small fraction of these agreements were ever realized and the peace with Egypt has been dubbed a “cold peace,” the agreements provided an important reference point.⁴

³ Marie-Christine Aulas, “The normalization of Egyptian-Israeli Relations”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 1983), 220-236, p. 221.

⁴ Oded Eran, “Normalization between Israel and Arab States: Is the Idea Still Viable?”, *INSS Insight*, No. 302, December 14, 2011, p. 1.

Bringing some degree of ‘normalcy’ to its relations with Egypt thanks to the Camp David accords served the Israeli strategic goals in a number of ways: first, the Zionist state gained a position for itself in the Middle Eastern niche that would facilitate its integration into the states system of the region; second, thanks, in part, to direct support from the West, it would be able to exert its economic control in the Arab world by virtue of neo-colonial forms of relationship that, *inter alia*, would be bent on exploiting the inner contradictions of Arab countries.⁵ Normalization with Israel was also meant to give license to further Israeli aggression against various neighboring states, which was the case when, for instance, soon after normalizing relations with Egypt in 1979, Israel turned its attention to Lebanon and occupied the country in 1982. Indeed, Egypt’s peace policy with Israel was viewed by the latter as a license to engage in repeated aggression against surrounding Arab countries under conditions which saw the pacification of Egypt.⁶ A similar scenario is today played out in the course of the process of normalization between Gulf Arab states and Israel, because Israel is now in a position to engage in all sorts of military aggression against Arab states it deems ‘hostile.’

The Unique Case of Jordan’s Normalization with Israel

It is common knowledge that Jordan is a semi-dependent state to Israel due to the smallness of its population, its fragility as a state, the artificiality of its historical roots, the regime’s monarchical nature, and its close relations with the former mandatory state, Britain. The ‘Jordanian formula’ has come to epitomize the other Arab states by virtue of the very act of normalization in the context of their relations with Israel. Historically, Jordan saw in Zionists a partner with which it could collaborate in order to stifle the aspirations of Palestinians. Jordan has historically conceded the superiority of an Israel it could rely on to protect

⁵ Aulas, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

the fragile monarchy against the people. This disregard for the Palestinian problem was later emulated by Egypt when it recognized Israel in 1979.

For plenty of reasons, Jordan's relations with Israel could be viewed as the epitome of the upcoming relations between Israel and the Arab world: first, in the words of an Israeli scholar, "The political future of Jordan and the existence of the Hashemite dynasty depend on Israel and the help it provides."⁷ The degree of diplomatic links between Jordan and Israel, both in the past and today, is a strategic relationship; second, in recent years, there have been cases when Jordanian security forces have arrested some Jordanians for insulting the Israeli flag and engaging in anti-Israel activities. As another mark of normalization with Israel and the recognition of its legitimacy, in 2014, the government ordered those statements rejecting the existence of Israel be removed from textbooks in Jordan. And again in 2014, against strong opposition inside, Jordan signed two ambitious trade agreements with Israel. Finally, during its temporary membership in the UN Security Council in 2014-2015, Jordan did not vote in favor of resolutions that condemned Israeli violations of international law and human rights.⁸

From 'Cold Peace' to the First Wave of Normalization in the mid-1990s

During the mid-1990s, due in particular to the signing of a number of agreements between Israel and some Arab governments between 1992-1995, the 'cold peace' as the defining character of Arab-Israeli relations began to be replaced by a process whose most likely outcome would be 'normalization' between Israel and the Arab world. This process has enabled Israel to join international conferences alongside Arab countries

⁷ Ronen Yitzhak, "From cooperation to normalization? Jordan-Israel relations since 1967", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 2017, 559-575, p. 575.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 574-575.

to discuss issues related to the Middle East.⁹ The way in which the Saudi perception of Israel changed from the mid-1990s is quite revealing. In the words of an Israeli observer, Saudi Arabia came to see “Egyptian-Israeli peace and stabilization at the core of the Middle East as a positive development that could help contain Iran, Iraq, and the radical Islamist tide in the Gulf. The signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 then legitimized a significant measure of Saudi-Israeli normalization.”¹⁰ Similar perspectives have also undergirded most of the other Gulf States vis-à-vis Israel since the mid-1990s.

The Second Wave of Normalization with Israel

Following in the footsteps of Egypt and Jordan, now the Gulf Arab states have by and large come ever closer to abandoning the Palestinians by failing to challenge Israel’s expansionist and aggressive moves. I would argue that numerous Arab countries are currently going through the process of *Jordanization* by seeking to accommodate themselves with Israel. Ofir Winter argues that this is the right time for Israel to establish ‘peace’ with Arab states on terms imposed by the Zionist state. If, he argues, this historic opportunity is not missed, “under the current regional circumstances this will most probably create an opening to integrate Israel as a legitimate actor in the Middle East arena.”¹¹ A growing number of open and secret contacts and links between Israel and the Arab world allowed former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to boast about his country’s ‘new’ friends during his speech before the UN General Assembly in September 2016:

⁹ Itamar Rabinovich, “Peace, Normalization and Finality”, *The American Interest*, Vol. 7, No. 3, December 1, 2011, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2011/12/01/peace-normalization-and-finality/>

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Ofir Winter, “Arab Approaches to the Political Process and Normalization with Israel”, Anat Kurz and Shlomo Brom (eds.), *Strategic Survey for Israel 2016-2017*, (Tel Aviv, Institute for National Security Studies, 2016), 175-183, p. 176.

Our peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan continue to be anchors of stability in the volatile Middle East. But I have to tell you this: For the first time in my lifetime, many other states in the region recognize that Israel is not their enemy. They recognize that Israel is their ally. Our common enemies are Iran and ISIS. Our common goals are security, prosperity, and peace. I believe that in the years ahead we will work together to achieve these goals, work together openly.¹²

While Türkiye had been the only Muslim-majority country with which Israel had reasonably close relations., for some time since the end of the Cold War, Israel's rapprochement with the Gulf Arab states, in addition to Egypt and Jordan, has diffused the crisis about its isolation. Today, these states see in Israel a partner against their common enemies: Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas.¹³ During his aforementioned speech in the UN General Assembly, Netanyahu, after having complained about the Zionist state's frequent condemnation in various UN bodies, bragged about Israel's ability to co-opt many new governments that chose to become the Zionist state's partners. The defiant tone and rhetoric of his speech reflected his/Israel's unfailing arrogance and aggressive posture towards the Palestinians, the Arab world, and international community. Hence, Netanyahu did not feel shy about uttering the following words during his 2016 speech, which were simultaneously bellicose and provocative:

So, when it comes to Israel at the UN, you'd probably think nothing will ever change, right? Well, think again. You see, everything will change and a lot sooner than you think. The change will happen in this hall, because back home, your governments are rapidly changing their attitudes towards Israel. And sooner or later, that's going to change the

¹² PM Netanyahu addresses the United Nations General Assembly, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 22, 2016, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2016/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-the-United-Nations-General-Assembly-22-September-2016.aspx>

¹³ Shira Efron, "The Future of Israeli-Turkish Relations", RAND Corporation, 2018, p. 39.

way you vote on Israel at the UN. More and more nations in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, more and more nations see Israel as a potent partner—a partner in fighting the terrorism of today, a partner in developing the technology of tomorrow. Today, Israel has diplomatic relations with over 160 countries. That's nearly double the number that we had when I served here as Israel's ambassador some 30 years ago. And those ties are getting broader and deeper every day. World leaders increasingly appreciate that Israel is a powerful country with one of the best intelligence services on earth. Because of our unmatched experience and proven capabilities in fighting terrorism, many of your governments seek our help in keeping your countries safe.¹⁴

Even when in a cheery mood while boasting about Israel's growing international clout and diplomatic reach, Netanyahu is fully immersed in a bellicose rhetoric of threats and intimidations against all those that are hostile to the Zionist state. The whole rationale of his speech could be reformulated as, "You and your governments are bound to cooperate with us even if you don't like us, because we are too powerful and have the means to inflict harm on our enemies." This rationale is particularly relevant to Israeli-Arab relations in the last 25 years or so: Normalization with Israel is, for Arab governments, an endorsement of Israeli superiority and claims of domination.

A growing number of Arab governments justify normalization with Israel by, first, presupposing that the Arabs' next-door neighbor, Iran, is a threat to the integrity and stability of both the Arab world and Israel. This suggests that Iran is their common enemy. They argue that, for quite a while, Iran has been interfering in the affairs of Arab states and seeking to gain a political and military stronghold in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. This, they see, as a wholesale assault to the security and stability of the Arab geography. In their view, by allying itself with various indigenous political and military forces, as well as movements, and providing direct and/or indirect economic and military support to its

¹⁴ PM Netanyahu's UN Speech, 2016, *op. cit.*

proxies, Iran has become a major actor in parts of the Arab world. Combined with historical antagonisms that have too often beset Arab Gulf-Iranian relations, the rise of Iran has elicited a radical rethinking concerning the hierarchy of external threats. Most Sunni ruling elites in the Arab world have today come to consider Iran as an existential threat which, in their view, has dwarfed the Zionist threat on account of the deep repercussions of the new Shia geopolitics in the area. The new balance of forces has given numerous Arab governments an excuse to seek normalization with Israel because of their shared interests in stemming the tide of Iranian geopolitical advances. The Iran-phobia and the corresponding disregard for the Zionist threat have brought many members of the Arab world on the brink of accepting an Israeli-imposed, scandalously unjust ‘solution’ to the Palestinian question.¹⁵

The following quote from a column by Salman al-Ansari, the Founder and President of the Washington DC-based Saudi American Public Relation Affairs Committee (SAPRAC), published in an American daily called *The Hill* in 2016 shows how the Saudis today rationalize their surging relationship with Israel:

[T]he prevailing political discourse might not only indicate that it is in the interest of both countries to form a collaborative alliance, but in the interest of the greater Middle East and their global allies as well. In fact, there are some opinions suggesting that having a common enemy in Iran will help accelerate any sort of rapprochement between two of the Middle East’s most powerful nations. While that could be partially true, a more solid foundation for establishing deep-rooted ties between the two countries could manifest in the context of a mutually beneficial economic partnership.¹⁶

¹⁵ Dana al Kurd, “The Dangers of Arab Normalization with Israel”, Arab Center Washington DC, June 1, 2017, p. 2, http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/the-dangers-of-arab-normalization-with-israel/

¹⁶ Salman al-Ansari, “How Israel can contribute to Saudi’s vision 2030”, *The Hill*, 11 October 2016, <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international-affairs/300447-how-israel-can-contribute-to-saudis-vision-2030>

In the same piece, al-Ansari explains how Saudi-Israeli cooperation will serve as an effective cure against extremism, and, together with Saudi-US entente, will make Riyadh a major player in the Middle East within the contours of *pax-Americana*:

...both countries [Israel and Saudi Arabia] are facing constant threats from extremist groups that are directly supported by the totalitarian government of Iran, which is classified internationally as a global sponsor of terrorism, providing a haven for most of the world's most dangerous and well-known terrorist organizations. Any form of normalization between the two countries is also Arabic and Muslim normalization towards Israel, which will undoubtedly promote security and weaken extremism in the region. In fact, there was a time when the United States relied on Saudi Arabia and a pre-Islamic revolution, pro-Western Iran to be the "twin pillars" of Middle Eastern stability as part of the Nixon Doctrine a few short decades ago.¹⁷

It is known that Saudi Arabia has promised to open its airspace to Israeli war planes if and when the latter launches an aerial military operation against Iran's nuclear installations. Saudi delegations are also known to have contacted with senior Israeli officials on several occasions.¹⁸

Jordan is possibly the most appropriate test case indicating the likely success of normalization between the Arab world and Israel, as well as the limits of this normalization. Israel very much hopes that state-to-state contact with Jordan will eventually gain grassroots support for normalization. Furthermore, Israel is hoping that its normalization in the sight of Arab governments will find positive echoes on the Arab streets. Yet, contrary to Israeli expectations, both Jordanians and Palestinians, for example, are strongly opposed to the process of normalization between Israel on the one hand, and Jordan and the Palestinian administration on the other. Due to public pressure, Jordan's relations with Israel have been confined to military and security issues. Jordan hopes that the next

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Yitzhak, *op.cit.*, p. 571.

generation of Jordanians is likely to have a more favorable view of Israel and the peace treaty with it. In Israel's view, this pattern of a new thinking about the Zionist state is likely to become the dominant view of Israel in the Arab world in the future.¹⁹

The 'True' Motives behind Arab Normalization with Israel

Almost all Arab governments that have liaised themselves with Israel are engaged in intelligence sharing with it against whom they consider 'Islamic terrorists' and against Iran due to its strategic advances in the Middle East and its nuclear program. Saudis and others are interested in the sophisticated security systems that Israel possesses. Besides that, most of the Arab governments seeking normalization with Israel want a palliative solution to get rid of the 'Palestinian problem,' which they presently consider as a 'political nuisance' unnecessarily sapping the energies of the Arab world. Third, most of the Arab countries have come to identify Iran and Türkiye as 'adversaries,' because, *inter alia*, the latter refuse to surrender to the US-Israeli dictates and designs of the Middle East, feature representative political systems conferring their people the right to vote, are militarily strong, and have stood out as powerful regional actors. Fourth, the submissive Arab governments favoring normalization consider US-Israeli support as an essential prerequisite for maintaining the ruling dynasties and/or keeping dictators in power.²⁰ Fifth, they reckon that Israel could serve as a useful intermediary providing a warmer reception for their appeals to the US. Sixth, these Arab regimes are weary of the likelihood of democracy taking root in the Middle East because it will expose the absurdity and anachronism of their political systems as being out of touch with their people. Finally, these Arab regimes have come to internalize Israeli strategies vis-à-vis its immediate neighbors and other states in the surrounding locations. They have indeed become

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

²⁰ The Zionist state is quite skilful about linking itself ever closer with oppressive regimes and/or regimes in the Middle East which have retracted from democracy. The second pattern fits the case of Türkiye during the February 28 (1997) process.

Israelized towards other actors in the way they conduct their affairs towards the outside world, especially in regard to the surrounding Muslim geography, by engaging in intrigues, secret plots, crude militarism, acting as a stooge of US imperialism, assassinating political opponents or devising insidious plans to discredit or pacify them, and plotting against other governments or political actors that challenge their rule.

Why Normalization is Bad Strategy for Arab Governments

Normalization with Israel is undoubtedly a bad strategy for actors in the Arab world for at least six reasons. First, even if one argues that Iran has exerted a destabilizing influence in the Arab world, the claim that Iran stands as the greatest threat to the security of the states in the area is far from convincing. It is Israel, and not Iran, that dislocated Palestinians to establish a state for Jews in Palestine in 1948. The Zionist state has since directly attacked all its neighboring Arab countries and launched military operations in a host of Arab territories, such as Iraq, Sudan, and Tunisia. Israel has been the key factor behind the excessive militarization of the Middle East since it came into existence in 1948. The Zionist state also sought incessantly to debilitate the ability of Arab states to stand on their foot militarily, politically, and economically, through strategies of domination and secret military and intelligence operations in order to create chaos and instability in the region. Israel relies on the doctrine of military superiority over its Arab adversaries and therefore displays no interest in peace with its Arab neighbors.²¹

Second, people in the Arab world still consider Israel as the greatest threat to the security and wellbeing of the Middle East despite the feverish Iran-phobia pumped, for many years, by various Arab governments and media outlets. The latest Arab Opinion Index (2017-2018) amply demonstrates that most ordinary Arabs (90 percent) perceive Israel as the greatest threat to the national security of their country. Iran ranks second in the hierarchy

²¹ Al Kurd, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

of states considered threatening with 66 percent. The survey also indicates that more than three quarters of ordinary Arabs view the Palestinian predicament as an Arab one. Additionally, 87 percent of respondents expressed their opposition to the recognition of Israel by their own state. When asked why they did not favor the recognition of Israel, three-quarters of those interviewed drew on the “colonialist occupation of Palestine” and the “denial of Palestinian rights” and/or described Israel as an “expansionist state” that “wants to occupy other Arab countries,” saying that it was “racist against Arabs,” an “enemy of Arab countries,” “supports terrorism,” and “threatens the security of the region.” Since the overwhelming majority of Arabs are opposed to the existence of Israel, Arab governments’ recognition of, and normalization of relations with, Israel is a clear breach of the preferences of the Arab public.²²

Third, the growing number of Arab states’ rapprochement with Israel is likely to lead to a radicalization of Arab politics and engender domestic unrest. Such a move would give greater credence to the claim by ‘radical’ political movements that, in contrast to existing Arab regimes, they alone can embrace Arab/Muslim causes and deliver viable solutions. The process of recognition would eventually undermine (further) the legitimacy of Arab regimes. Ironically, cooperating with Israel as a countermeasure against Iranian influence will lead to further grievances among people and possibly generate a gaping chasm between the rulers and the ruled in the Arab world, which could easily be exploited by Iran in order to gain greater influence in the Arab Middle East.²³

Fourth, normalization betrays the indescribable sufferings of the Palestinian people—and other victims of Israel’s countless aggressions—who have been tormented by Zionist settler-colonialism, which forced most Palestinians into exile. In other words, normalization is synonymous

²² Arab Opinion Index 2017-2018, Arab Center Washington DC, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, Qatar, <http://arabcenterdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Arab-Opinion-Index-2017-2018-1.pdf>. See also, al Kurd, *ibid.*, p. 2.

²³ Al Kurd, *id.*

with an acceptance of impunity for Israel and its monstrous crimes against the Palestinian people and other victims of Zionist aggression. In effect, normalization, in the current context of improving ties between Arab governments and Israel, means treating “Israel and the Israeli people as a normal part of the Middle East, ignoring the role of the Israeli state and Israeli citizens in the ethnic cleansing and displacement of Palestinians. Normalization would seek to move forward with connections to Israel and Israelis without holding them accountable for ongoing crimes against the Palestinian people.”²⁴

Fifth, normalization with the Arab world is, for Israel, a bonanza if one thinks of the expected headways the Zionist state will certainly make thanks to this. First, normalization is the culmination of the Zionist accomplishments because it is tantamount to “achieving the safety, legitimacy, and stability of Israel in the Arab region.”²⁵ Second, normalization will possibly lead to an end to Israel’s relative economic isolation because this would lead to the burgeoning of economic and cultural ties between Israel and the surrounding Arab countries. Third, normalization serves to seal the stamp of defeat in the Arab and Palestinian consciousness against the Zionist state. This would mean, in turn, that there would be no further resistance against Israel. In short, normalization with Arab countries would dispel the perception of Israel as an ‘alien’ presence at the heart of the Middle East.²⁶

Finally, contrary to the baseless optimism of Arab governments collaborating with Israel, the Zionist state has no intention of being an integral part of the Middle East. Indeed, most Israelis and the political elites view the integration of Israel into the Middle Eastern system of states as an undesirable option. This eventuality is, in their view, a lethal blow to the uniqueness of Israel both as state and people whose destiny is

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁵ Said Yakin, *A Study on the State of Arab-Israeli Normalization* (Ramallah, 2003) (Arabic) quoted in Eli Avidar, *The Abyss: Bridging the Divide between Israel and the Arab World*, (London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), p. 78.

²⁶ *Ibid.* (Avidar)

tied up with the perpetual narrative about ‘enemies,’ its sense of superiority, and its militaristic/aggressive view of the Middle East. The issue centers around the following question posed by an Israeli scholar: “Could Israel become an integral part of the Middle East and still retain its unique character and cohesion?”²⁷ The answer for most Israelis is a resounding ‘No.’ This suggests that, even if Arab normalization with Israel is complete, Israel will never conceive of its Arab ‘partners’ as its equal or cease to perceive them as ‘potential enemies.’ This suggests, again, that normalization with Israel is, for the Arab world, not a sensible option.

It is useless for Arab states to normalize relations with Israel in the absence of a sustainable solution to the Palestinian question. Should Arab governments choose to normalize relations with Israel under the current dispiriting conditions, this would give the distorted impression of the arrival of peace, whereas in reality there is no peace.²⁸ The normalization process will give Israel and the US practically unlimited discretion to engineer a fraudulent ‘solution’ to the Palestinian question in a way that denies Palestinians their right to self-determination and serves to justify Israeli expansionism and policy of aggression. What is more, in the likelihood of Arab governments normalizing relations with Israel, the former would be deprived of the last ‘bargaining chip’ it has at its disposal against Israel. It would also demonstrate the Arab world’s “complete abandonment of the Palestinian issue.”²⁹ This, in turn, would further undermine the existing Palestinian fragility against the Zionist enemy. The whole picture engendered by normalization with Israel is only going to serve the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.³⁰

²⁷ Rabinovich, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Rawia Shawwa, “The Danger of Normalization”, *Palestine Report*, (Jerusalem, Jerusalem Media & Communication Center, 1997), p. 10, quoted in Mahmoud Mi’ari, “Attitudes of Palestinians Toward Normalization with Israel”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1999, 339–348, p. 343.

²⁹ Al Kurd, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The Arab People as the Main ‘Obstacle’ to Normalization with Israel

The main obstacle to normalization between Israel and its Arab neighbors is the Arab people, most of whom have a profound dislike of Israel and its unceasing crimes. Neither Egyptians, nor Jordanians, nor Palestinians have come to show any affection towards Israel in spite of the peace agreements between their governments and Israel that registered the granting of recognition to the Zionist state. Irrespective of ideological cleavages, people in the Arab world are overwhelmingly in favor of resistance against Israel, are opposed to normalization with it, and are not prepared to forget about Israeli crimes against Arabs.³¹ Similarly, most Arab intellectuals are opposed to normalization with Israel. This attitude is not likely to change “as long as Israel occupies Arab land and does not recognize the Palestinian peoples’ right to self-determination.”³² Arab revolutions that began in late 2010 (the ‘Arab Spring’) were a clear threat to the Israeli strategy of attempting to normalize its existence in the midst of the Arab world upon terms reflecting its military and political prowess. This is the context in which an Israeli scholar draws on “the emerging difficulties following the rise in Arab nations of political forces for whom normalization with Israel is anathema.”³³ The Arab revolutions were no doubt an expression of Arab peoples’ thirst for freedom and dignity in opposition to the authoritarian nature and docility of Arab regimes.

Ordinary people in the Arab world have been calling for alternative paths to normalization with Israel like demanding that the Zionist state “must support full and comprehensive rights for all Palestinians in accordance with international law.”³⁴ This is a reflection of the prevalent Palestinian view. Indeed, for most Palestinians, ordinary Israelis could only be considered as partners of the Palestinians if, and only if, they support the Palestinians’ “comprehensive rights under international law and struggle with Palestinians against the wall, checkpoints, and other forms of

³¹ Avidar, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³² Mi’ari, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

³³ Eran, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³⁴ Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, *op. cit.*

apartheid.”³⁵ In the Palestinian view, normalization is synonymous with rewarding Israel, **although the latter has not delivered anything that converges with Palestinian aspirations.**³⁶ Peace can only be achieved between two equal partners in peace negotiations, and not between a state that occupies and a people under its occupation.³⁷ Therefore, Palestinians consider those that seek to normalize relations with Israel as ‘traitors’ simply because this attitude only serves to legalize the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.³⁸ In other words, the bulk of Palestinians believe that normalization between Arab rulers and Israel is simply the normalization of occupation. Thus, the normalizers are viewed as collaborators of the Zionist enemy.³⁹

Another Strategy Towards Israel

The ‘right’ strategy against Israel ought to begin with the key word, ‘resistance.’ Arab governments could well begin with conferring all sorts of support to the Palestinians struggling for independent statehood. The strategy of resistance should include the total boycott of Israel by the Arab and Muslim world which ought, *inter alia*, to be supplemented by the UN. It is known that South Africa was a target of UN sanctions during the Cold War due to its apartheid policies that victimized the non-white majority in the country. Sudan has also been a target of UN sanctions for its alleged crimes against humanity in Darfur. Although Israeli crimes are at least as egregious as the above states that faced UN sanctions for various crimes, “only in Israel’s case do we hear objections to boycotting

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Avidar, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³⁷ Shawwa, in Mi’ari, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

³⁸ It is revealing to note that, over the years, Palestinian peace NGOs have been forced by Western donors to support normalization with Israel. If they objected to normalization, they would be denied any share of financial assistance. (Karin Aggestam, Fabio Cristiano & Lisa Strömbom, “Towards agonistic peacebuilding? Exploring the antagonism–agonism nexus in the Middle East Peace process”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 9, 2015, 1736-1753, p. 1747)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1746.

the state that is responsible for egregious violations of international law.”⁴⁰

Israel should also be held accountable for its countless crimes against the Palestinians and victims of Israeli aggression and brutality. The Zionist state ought to be punished, not rewarded by international society. In a text published as part of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, it is said that the existing boycott against Israel should continue until the Zionist state ends “its three tiered system of oppression, not simply its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.”⁴¹ Israel is indeed guilty of numerous crimes involving occupation and scores of malpractices emanating from it: “colonies, wall, siege, house demolitions,...forcible displacement, denial of refugee rights, and the crime of apartheid.”⁴²

The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion in 2004, established the illegality of the Separation Wall, which was then (and still is) being constructed in the West Bank, an occupied Palestinian territory, by the Zionist state. Accordingly, the Court demanded that it should be demolished.⁴³ The Court also asked Israel to pay compensation to the Palestinians for the harms they suffered due to the building of the Wall. Israel, as ever defiant and condescending of international law, refused to abide by this advisory opinion⁴⁴ and went along with the construction of the Wall. It seems that this case, among many other cases indicating Israel’s lack of respect for international law, vindicates the validity of the strategy of confronting Zionist aggression by any means necessary.

Probably the spread of democratic accountability within the Arab world

⁴⁰ Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, *I. C. J. Reports*, 9 July 2004, 136-203, <http://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/131/131-20040709-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

⁴⁴ Although technically not binding, it echoed the dominant view of international society about the wall’s illegality.

is a prerequisite for the eventual liberation of Palestine and overcoming Zionist aggression. The mushrooming of freely elected and accountable governments in the Arab world will enormously serve the cause of Arab resistance against imperialist hegemony and Zionist aggression. Government by the people and for the people will likely stem the tide of normalization between a flurry of Arab regimes and Israel. That people in Arab countries are almost united in their hatred of Israel and their refusal to see any accommodation between their rulers and Israel, under present conditions, is the point of departure for the formulation and implementation of sustainable strategies against the Zionist state and the US, its main custodian.

Conclusion

The arguments discussed in this paper indicate that normalization with Israel is not a sensible diplomatic strategy as far as the Arabs are concerned. Normalization represents a slippery slope on the way to the further fragmentation of the Arab world and a license to further Israeli assaults against its integrity. Normalization is a manifestation of Arab surrender to Israel and the US, based on the recognition that the Middle Eastern political order will henceforward be spearheaded by these two 'alien' actors in accordance with their imperial and other devious ambitions. This, no doubt, is a betrayal of the aspirations of the peoples of the region. More specifically, normalization will almost certainly have the tragic consequence of sweeping the Palestinian question under the carpet through a 'solution' that will legitimize the covetous territorial claims put by Israel over Palestine. The Arab world should abandon normalization with Israel and instead focus its energy on devising strategies that could liberate Palestine and other Arab territories occupied by Israel. However, the liberation of territories ought to be preceded by the 'liberation of the mind' in so far as the Arab leadership is concerned. The 'new' process of the strategy of resistance cannot be complete unless the Arab regimes accommodate themselves with their own people by means of greater political participation, respect for human dignity, transparency, and the rule of law.

Building Transnational Networks for Palestinian Solidarity

Na'eem Jeenah

Explaining that solidarity is founded on resistance to oppression, Chandra Mohanty says that solidarity must be based on a “common context of struggles against specific exploitative structures and system.”¹

We Africans are more familiar with Samora Machel’s articulation regarding the meaning of solidarity. The late leader of the Mozambiquan national liberation movement Frelimo, and that country’s first post-independence president, said:

[S]olidarity is not an act on charity, but mutual aid between forces fighting for the same objective.²

Solidarity is an assertion that no people is alone, no people is isolated in the struggle for progress. Solidarity is the conscious alliance of the progressive and peace-loving revolutionary forces in the common struggle against colonialism, capitalism and imperialism. In short, against exploitation of [hu]man by [hu]man... Solidarity has no race and no color, and its country has no frontiers. There is no solidarity just among Africans, no exclusively Asian solidarity, since the enemy of the people also has no country or race.³

¹ Chandra Mohanty (2003). *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 49.

² Samora Machel (1974). Speech at the First National Solidarity Conference for the Freedom and Independence of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, at Reggio Emilia, Italy, on 25 March 1973, in *Samora Machel, Mozambique Sowing the Seeds of Revolution*, 7-15.

³ Barry Munslow (ed. 1985). *Samora Machel: An African Revolutionary: Selected Speeches and Writings*, London: Zed Books, 153.

We do not, thus, understand international solidarity as being about humanitarian assistance, pity, and giving; solidarity is a political act; rather, a political process that creates political relationships.

I make this point because, in the era of NGOisation, and Palestinian society is a wonderful example of some of the worst meanings of this term, solidarity has, for many, come to mean less a process of struggling together and more one of privileged people being human rights' defenders or providing humanitarian assistance – whether this is food aid or campaigns for individual political prisoners. Far too many people view solidarity in an individualistic way, to campaign for injustices perpetrated against this or that person, rather than being against the overwhelming structures of oppression that keep entire oppressed populations under their jackboots. The logical extension of that is, of course, what we witness today in many of our countries and societies: solidarity has become “professionalized”, with salaries, career advancement, marketing budgets, claiming of short-term tactical victories that often obscure long-term strategic goals.

Solidarity is not, and should not be, about some people doing for others. It should be a mutual exchange of intellectual, moral, material and other support, where we all aid in each other's struggles. Two recent examples from my country, South Africa, might suffice to illustrate this point. South Africa, of course, has long had a Palestine solidarity movement, with numerous solidarity organizations across the country, many sympathetic media, and a somewhat-sympathetic ruling party and government. The movement would like to think, however, that its solidarity is in the mode of Machel's understanding.

In July 2021, in two South African provinces, there was an (attempted) insurgency that included largescale destruction, killings and so forth. The nation was traumatized, Palestine solidarity activists among them, and in one of those two provinces, Kwazulu Natal, the economy was devastated as a result. Then, the South African BDS Coalition received a letter from the Arab Research and Organizing Centre in the USA, signed by a number

of Palestinian organizations in the US as well as in Palestine and addressed to South Africans, expressing deep concern and support for the South African nation and “lend[ing] our deepest solidarity to the workers, families, communities, and civil society of South Africa – especially those from among the poorest sections of South African society”. It was a sincere act of solidarity, of caring, and an expression of joint struggles – in a counter-intuitive direction: from Palestinians to South Africans.

The second example is of the strike of workers from a large corporation in South Africa called Clover, an iconic South African brand that produces dairy products. The company had been bought out by a consortium led by the Israeli Central Bottling Company in 2019. Within a year, it began retrenching staff and shutting down some operations. Workers went on strike. During the strike, they not only received messages of support from, but were also addressed, via the internet, by Palestinian worker representatives, Palestinian farmers, and so forth. Again, a seeming inversion of solidarity as we expect; this time, from Palestinian workers to South African workers. After the Israeli attack on Gaza in August 2022, families of Clover workers expressed their solidarity with Palestinians, remembering the solidarity they had received in their moments of desperation.

Our understanding of “transnational”, in relation to solidarity and solidarity networks, needs to go beyond the simple idea that this means solidarity across national borders. Indeed, our objective is to develop solidarity in such a way that it disrupts and undermines national boundaries, and disrupts the notions of what is local, what is foreign, and what is global. We see this in various Palestinian activist organizations, building Palestinian communities across countries and continents and attempting to develop and entrench Palestinian identities that are not linked to countries of residence, and developing campaigns and actions that impact the “local”, “foreign” and “international” simultaneously.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink discuss “transnational advocacy networks” by drawing on “the negotiation and malleability of identities

and interests” that disrupt the foreign-domestic political divides and unsettle the notion of inside and outside. These networks, they argue, participate in both “domestic and international politics simultaneously, drawing upon a variety of resources, as if they were part of an international society”.⁴ They are “advocacy networks” because “advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause”.⁵ They are “organized to promote causes, principled ideas, and norms, and they often involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot be easily linked to a rationalist understanding of their ‘interests’.”⁶

One of the ways in which such networks are valuable, they say, is in their facilitation of action in a “boomerang pattern” when interaction between a state and its domestic actors is not possible. Local (particularly civil society) actors then “bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside”.⁷ The reliance for bringing attention to their cause is placed in the international arena and on foreign actors in order for them to gain redress for their grievances.

Keck and Sikkink also mention the kind of tactics that such transnational advocacy networks might use to exert this kind of pressure, including:

- (1) information politics, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information, and move it to where it will have the most impact;
- (2) symbolic politics, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away;
- (3) leverage politics, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and

⁴ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (***). *Activists Beyond Borders*, 4.

⁵ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 8.

⁶ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 8.

⁷ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 12.

- (4) accountability politics, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies or principles.⁸

While this conceptual framework is useful for how we view and examine global Palestinian solidarity, there are a number of cautionary notes that are critical for our understanding of solidarity, and of transnational solidarity in particular. Importantly, Keck and Sikkink think of solidarity networks or “transnational advocacy networks” as having a south-north format: oppressed insiders in the Global South desiring solidarity from empowered outsiders in the Global North. Machel’s notion of international solidarity, which I mentioned earlier, militates against such a model. The networks of solidarity we should be talking about are those where we all contribute, and we all benefit; it is not one of givers and recipients of charity.

Furthermore, we cannot really talk of Palestinians as being on “the inside”, when the majority of Palestinians, who still regard Palestine as their homeland that they will return to, live on “the outside”. They are not “in solidarity” with Palestinians; they are Palestinians, fighting their struggle on multiple geographic terrains. And those Palestinians on “the outside” belong to both the Global North and the Global South.

In a more fundamental disruption of this model, I propose that we accept that solidarity networks for the Palestinian people should be primarily – not only, but primarily – networks of oppressed people/peoples. That is, it should be an example, primarily, of the solidarity of marginalized peoples with each other. Taking this approach, south-south solidarity is, therefore, more important than south-north solidarity. And even when we consider south-north solidarity, the important actor must, of necessity, be the “south” within the “north”. We agree, I am sure, that that even in countries of the Global North, there are, of varying sizes, groups of marginalized and oppressed people. These should be the primary partners within our solidarity networks in the Global North.

⁸ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 16.

In the USA, for example, the greatest effort to build Palestinian solidarity should be made with marginalized communities: African-Americans, especially impoverished African-Americans; native Americans; and working-class peoples who will most easily identify with the suffering of the Palestinian people. Referring to solidarities between Palestinians and African-Americans, Timothy Seidel notes that they “present a quite different dynamic to that observed in the ‘boomerang pattern’, because solidarities become mutual in relationships where both local actors and their external supporters operate from positions of marginality”.⁹

Even in a country such as South Africa, which is clearly part of the Global South, greater effort needs to be made to build solidarity networks that include impoverished and working-class people and their movements. The solidarity of the elites and ruling classes, we know from bitter experience, can be fickle. That of marginalized communities is often more durable and longer-term. Solidarity is not the same as patronage. It is, of course, important that our efforts to build solidarity do focus on governments and political elites, on sympathetic congresspeople in the US, on big business to pressure them to divest. But the genuine support of suffering and oppressed people is what ultimately wins struggles.

This reminds me of the ongoing debate in South Africa about the need to balance our foreign policy between values and interests, and the battle to achieve or maintain such a balance. Struggles for justice ultimately do result in the realization of narrow interests, but, at their core, these struggles must be about values: justice, fairness, equality, fair distribution of wealth and other resources. Of course, we hope that all states would behave in a way that privileges these commonly-accepted values over their self-interests, but we know that that is not going to happen – certainly not in the near future. This is proven to us by the case of South Africa, where, despite this ongoing debate, the government continues, for

⁹ Timothy Seidel (2016). “‘Occupied territory is occupied territory’: James Baldwin, Palestine and the possibilities of transnational solidarity”, *Third World Quarterly* 37(9), 1649.

example, to approve the sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia and the UAE (the two largest purchasers of South African weaponry), despite the murderous actions of these two states in Yemen, and despite the counter-revolutionary, anti-human rights agendas of both states all over the MENA region and beyond.

While we, of course, welcome all forms of solidarity from wherever they come, we must be clear that our task as oppressed people is not to make privileged people feel good that they are “doing something” for us, nor for us to assuage their consciences for what their states, peoples, ancestors, or families have done or are doing to us. Rather, our responsibility as oppressed people is to work towards the liberation of all oppressed people, ourselves and others. I am not suggesting that those in power should be excluded from our lobbying efforts, or that we should not be taking advantage of the good-heartedness of northerners or privileged people. Nor am I suggesting that we should never interact with political elites – whether in states in the Global North or the Global South. That would be foolish. I am suggesting, rather, that these are targets of our work, but not those we are in solidarity with – even if they feel they feel they are in solidarity with us.

This kind of solidarity, between marginalized/oppressed groups themselves, presents us with a double-sided solidarity, where groups or communities are in solidarity *with each* other, and articulate the causes of justice of them both. These are solidarities of mutuality, and the objectives of each party also becomes the objective of the other. My two South African examples are illustrative in this regard. This is very much the form of solidarity that existed during the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia in the past.

Seidel clarifies: “These relationships are not about a Northern partner gaining credibility by establishing their solidarity ‘with’ (and not ‘for’) a disadvantaged other; they are about disadvantaged ‘Northern’ partners also looking to put pressure on the ‘Northern’ state... When a double boomerang effect, or at least a double shaming effect, occurs, the pressure

exerted from North to South rebounds and sends its effects back from South to North.”¹⁰

It is when we understand solidarity in this way that we can understand the Palestinian-Ferguson solidarity in 2014. Within the space of a few weeks, two sets of events had taken place that had captured global attention: the July-August Israeli onslaught on Gaza, and the August 2014 uprising in Ferguson, Missouri, USA, following the murder of an 18-year-old African-American youth by a White police officer. As the Ferguson protest unfolded, while Gaza was still being bombed by Israeli occupation forces, and the American town began looking like it was under military occupation, a commonality of causes seemed to emerge between Palestinians globally and African-Americans.¹¹

Palestinians began tweeting advice to Ferguson protesters on how to deal with police tear gas. At the same time, Ferguson protesters, in the midst of their demands around police brutality and the general marginalization of African-Americans, were also chanting “Free Gaza”.¹² The media showed Palestinian and African-American demonstrations with placards such as: “Gaza stands with Ferguson”, “When I see them, I see us”, “Ferguson, with love from Palestine”, and “From Ferguson to Palestine, Occupation is a crime”. This solidarity was also captured in a video called “Black Palestinian Solidarity”. The need for such two-way transnational solidarity was emphasized when news emerged that a former St Louis County police chief had visited Israel to “study counter-terrorism”. It seemed obvious that while the oppressors of African-Americans and

¹⁰ Seidel, “Occupied territory is occupied territory”, 1649.

¹¹ David Palumbo-Liu (2014). “Ferguson and Gaza: The definitive study of how they are and are not similar”, *Salon*, 22 August, <<https://www.salon.com/2014/08/22/ferguson_and_gaza_the_definitive_study_of_how_they_are_and_are_not_similar/>>.

¹² Taylor Hatmaker (2014). “Palestinians teach Ferguson protesters how to deal with tear gas”, *Daily Dot*, 14 August, <<<https://www.dailydot.com/debug/ferguson-protest-palestinians-gaza-tear-gas/>>>.

Palestinians worked together to strengthen their repressive capacity, the oppressed should collaborate in liberating themselves.

I want, now, to highlight a few problem areas regarding international solidarity with the Palestinian people and struggle.

First, let me point to an obsession that many solidarity activists have with the notion of “non-violence”, as if non-violence is an uncompromisable principle of struggle and of solidarity, and as if violent forms of resistance delegitimize an otherwise-legitimate struggle. This is a phenomenon we are seeing in different parts of the world, and it is being fueled by the positions articulated by the Palestinian Authority, as well as a particular interpretation of the global Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions campaign. This obsession serves to, first, delegitimize armed resistance to Israel’s occupation, colonialism and apartheid, and second, dictate to Palestinians what forms of resistance they should adopt to oppose the oppression meted out to them. Violent resistance to occupation and colonialism is, of course, legal under international law.

One form in which this is couched is a misrepresentation of South African history. This is expressed mostly by Zionists who pretend to feel some pity for Palestinians, but has also been adopted by some “solidarity activists”. It’s the “If only Palestinians were like Mandela” trope. If Palestinians, the argument goes, would follow the example of the leader of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, and struggle for their liberation without spilling blood, the world would listen more sympathetically, and they will achieve their freedom quicker. One wonders which Mandela is being referred to. It certainly is not the Mandela who was sentenced to life imprisonment because of his role in founding Mkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, an organization that undertook a number of armed operations that left numerous soldiers and civilians dead.

It is also not the Mandela who, in 1999, as president of the ANC and president of South Africa, declared, while seated next to PLO Chairperson Yasser Arafat in Gaza:

All men and women with vision choose peace rather than confrontation, except in cases where we cannot proceed, where we cannot move forward. Then if the only alternative is violence, we will use violence.

This “If only Palestinians were like Mandela...” trope is a profound insult to the Mandela we know, a profound insult to all our martyrs (South African and Palestinian) – whether they were killed in prison, assassinated or died with a gun in their hand. And, at the risk of getting too personal, I add that it is a profound insult to my brother who, when he was executed by apartheid police, was bearing an AK47 rifle.¹³

If one of the seemingly-innocuous problems besetting Palestinian solidarity is the obsession with non-violence and renouncing armed struggle, another is the fetishization of the notion of “unity”. We often hear, including from activists who are certainly committed to Palestinian solidarity, and from a number of Palestinians as well, the bemoaning of the fact that there is no “unity” among Palestinians, and presenting that fact as a major hindrance to solidarity efforts.

There are a number of problems with this fetishization, chief among them being, of course, that imposing a requirement or prerequisite of “unity” on any oppressed people is both unjust and unrealistic. Unjust because their oppression is not premised on their disunity, and, therefore, supporting their liberation should not be premised on unity. Unrealistic because in no liberation struggle, certainly since the colonial era, have we found that the people and their leaders are all united in terms of their organizations, ideologies, principles, strategies and tactics. It is unrealistic to expect that because people are fighting injustice, they will set aside their critical faculties and all agree on a common package of ideas.

¹³ Na’eem Jeenah (2008). “Martyrs and Reconciliation”, Mail & Guardian Thought Leader, 31 January, <<<https://thoughtleader.co.za/martyrs-and-reconciliation/>>>.

“Unity” of different role-players, it seems, is not possible, but, also, it is not necessarily desirable. It is, perhaps, more important that Palestinians have a common vision for the future than a common or single organization. A vision that is accepted by all Palestinians should be sufficient for those in solidarity to rally around – without having to complain about the lack of “unity”. It was a similar case in South Africa where, by the 1980s, members of different sections of the liberation movement were literally killing each other, but still standing by a common vision that the international solidarity movement could support, without having to support any particular group.

My third caution for solidarity activities is not to succumb to the temptation of short termism, claiming victories where they don’t exist, and focusing on immediate campaigns and their tactical wins, rather than on the longer-term objectives and strategic gains. “Hide nothing from the masses of our people,” said Amilcar Cabral, the pan-Africanist revolutionary and one of Africa’s foremost anti-colonial fighters. “Tell no lies... Claim no easy victories.”¹⁴

The struggle for Palestine has been and will be a long one. It requires the intellectual and revolutionary stamina to stay the course. While we must acknowledge that no struggle can be sustained on continual defeats, we must be careful of the tendency to reduce the struggle to a list of tactical victories that can be ticked off in a table – especially in cases where they are not really victories, or contribute nothing to broader strategic objectives.

This leads us, of course, to the question of what the broad strategy is that the global Palestine solidarity movement operates under. As someone who is involved in the campaign for boycotts, divestment and sanctions, I would argue that BDS is not a strategy, but, at best, one pillar of a necessary broader strategy. We speak of the South African struggle against apartheid being based on four pillars of struggle: mass

¹⁴ Amilcar Cabral (1969). “Tell no lies, Claim no easy victories...”, Marxists.org, <<https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/cabral/1965/tnlcnev.htm>>.

mobilization, armed struggle, underground organization and international solidarity work.¹⁵ Can we talk of a similar broad strategic framework in the Palestinian case? This is a critical point that needs addressing, primarily by Palestinians and their “leadership” – political and civil society.

But even before talking about broad strategy, we should ask what vision Palestinians have for the future. I am not suggesting there is no vision, obviously.¹⁶ But is there a common vision? How does a global solidarity movement operate, across different countries, including Palestinians and non-Palestinians, when it is unsure what the endgame is or what it is mobilizing for or towards? When different visions are presented by different groups of Palestinians.

Transnational solidarity with Palestine, and networks to give effect to this solidarity, do exist. They exist in Palestine, and they exist in advocacy and activist groups in various places around the world, both in the Global South and the Global North, and across both of those worlds. My attempt here, therefore, was not to discuss how to start up such networks, but to discuss how we might help strengthen those that exist, and develop new ones and enhance coordination between them.

A question, in this regard, that needs to be considered and addressed – by Palestinians, not by non-Palestinian solidarity activists – is: around what Palestinian representatives or leadership can the global solidarity movement rally and from whom can they take direction. Many of us have resorted to taking such direction from Palestinian civil society, particularly the BDS National Council. But a civil society structure is not sufficient in this regard. The BNC is the representative of a particular leg

¹⁵ Na’eem Jeenah (2021). “Non-violence, Armed Struggle and Politics: A Conversation with Ronnie Kasrils”, *Protest*, 186-206.

¹⁶ For a discussion about various Palestinians’ vision for the future, see: Ramzy Baroud and Ilan Pappé (eds) (2022). *Our Vision for Liberation: Engaged Palestinian Leaders & Intellectuals Speak Out*, Atlanta: Clarity Press.

of an overall strategy – except that we are not sure what the overall strategy is.

A careful and critical attempt to address these problem areas will go a long way in enhancing our building of global solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian struggle for justice.

Towards a Global Vision for a Free Palestine

Sami A. Al-Arian

Since the emergence of the Zionist movement at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, its main goal has been the ingathering of the diaspora of the world's Jews in a national home modeled on the modern nation-state system in Europe. The Zionist movement implemented its program by mobilizing Jewish communities, first in Europe and then in the United States and beyond. This process underwent many stages, in which the Zionist movement established multi-faceted institutions, often in consideration of existing geopolitical realities, as its elites were constantly interacting with colonial powers (particularly Britain). In adopting the vision of establishing a settler-state in Palestine, the Zionist movement had effectively served British strategic interests in dividing, weakening, and colonizing the Arab and Islamic region, which was dominated for centuries by the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the Zionist movement marshalled much of its resources to implement its vision. It also utilized all its capabilities to build alliances with foreign powers, especially colonial and great powers, that could directly impact regional conflicts and influence the international system. This would empower the Zionist movement to impose its will on weak, colonized peoples and regimes. Zionism and Western powers also cultivated some local (mostly westernized) elites that helped them in realizing the Zionist project, either due to their ignorance of the nature and danger of the project, or for their narrow and short-term interests at the expense of the rights of their people or the public interest at large.

During the British Mandate, in the aftermath of the WWI and the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate, Zionists started to vigorously implement their project in Palestine, triggering fierce resistance by the indigenous people. Palestinians initiated multiple uprisings demonstrating their complete

rejection of what they perceived to be an aggressive encroachment on their homeland. They mounted a fierce struggle despite their limited resources while under British occupation. Palestinian leaders had limited experience and a poor network of relations in the international sphere, which hindered their ability to seek independence and prevent the occupation of their land. This ultimately led to the 1948 catastrophe known as the Nakba. The Nakba resulted in the displacement of nearly 800,000 Palestinians from their homes, cities, and villages, as well as the occupation of approximately 78 percent of Mandatory Palestine in what many remember as a dreadful, painful, and dark moment in history. At that time, Palestinians numbered around 1.35 million people (the number of Jews was about half of that number, at around 650,000); about 60 percent of Palestinians were displaced, with about 150,000 Palestinians remaining within what is commonly referred to as the Green Line. The remaining 400,000 were in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

While the conflict with the Zionist project in Palestine has been a struggle over land and history, it is also a struggle over the future. Since it targets Palestinians in its attempt to take over their land, this struggle is also for the existence and survival of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the presence of an exclusivist Zionist state in the region has represented a great challenge and threat to the security and stability of Arabs and Muslims. The Arab regimes that faced Zionist militias in 1948 were weak, divided, and mostly under the control or manipulation of foreign powers. But these external powers were working diligently to establish the Israeli state and provide it with the means of survival. The Arab regimes that were defeated in 1948 were mostly monarchic and embraced western-liberal values. They would eventually fall and be replaced by regimes that espoused left-wing or socialist ideologies, claiming to be revolutionary. But in essence, the replacements were mostly military juntas that ruled and controlled their societies in an authoritarian fashion trying to assert their legitimacy by claiming to confront the Zionist state. For many reasons related to the nature of these authoritarian regimes and the geopolitics of the Cold War, they were tolerated, even if their legitimacy

was questionable, until they were exposed before their people after the tumultuous defeat of 1967. In its aftermath, the Palestinian national movement took the lead in directly challenging the Zionist state as it embarked on bold confrontations and military-style campaigns, even though such confrontations did not have a direct strategic impact with regard to the balance of power between the antagonists. Nevertheless, the struggle was kept alive and revived the Palestinian nationalist movement as it directly challenged the occupation after decades of relying on the Arab regimes.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established by the Arab League in 1964 to be the face of the Palestinian struggle and to lift the burden of confrontation with Israel from the Arab regimes, which were otherwise preoccupied with their internal problems and ideological divisions. At the time, the goal of the PLO was to work to achieve the dream of the Palestinian people by liberating the land that was occupied in 1948, and returning the Palestinian refugees to their cities and villages, but under the Arab collective will be represented by the League of Arab States. However, after the 1967 defeat, various Palestinian factions were able to control the PLO and wrest it from the Arab regimes, resulting in the revival of the Palestinian identity. It also reignited the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist project, particularly within refugee camps and among the diaspora, who were absent from the struggle for more than 20 years. The charter of the PLO at that time had called for the liberation of the entire historical land of Palestine, the right of return for all Palestinian refugees in exile, and for the restoration of their rights, freedom, and independence. It was a charter that expressed the aspirations of the Palestinian people to be part of the Arab nation in its quest for unity and revival. With the failure of the Arab regimes to realize any goals regarding the Palestinian cause, they retreated and abandoned the Palestinians. This was particularly evident in the aftermath of the 1973 war, which followed their failure to liberate even non-Palestinian lands occupied in 1967—namely, the Sinai and the Golan Heights. The Arab retreat coupled with the rise of the Palestinian national movement allowed

Israel to launch a relentless war to eradicate the Palestinian resistance outside the occupied territories and adjacent to its borders. This ended with exiling thousands of resistance fighters to faraway countries, first from Jordan in 1970 and then from Lebanon in 1982. With the disappearance of the direct lines of confrontation with its enemy, the resistance to Israeli occupation then moved to within the occupied territories, culminating with the rise of the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1991). The intifada, which was peaceful in nature and utilized many strategies of civil disobedience, had shaken Israeli society to the core after decades of trying to control and pacify the Palestinians under its direct control. It forced Israel to recalculate its tactics.

After the 1973 war and the subsequent, de-facto abandonment by the Arab regimes of the Palestinian liberation project, the PLO showed “flexibility” in accepting a Zionist state, starting with the declaration of the Ten Point Program in 1974, then with the recognition of Israel at the Algiers Conference in 1988 and subsequently the Geneva declaration in the same year, ending with the secretive Oslo agreement in 1993. The events of the first Gulf War and Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait in 1991, followed by the Madrid conference and Washington meetings between 1991-1993, were warning signs of the marginalization of the PLO and its leaders who had badly miscalculated the impact of supporting Iraq in the conflict. As the PLO leadership increasingly believed that it was being left behind, it began secret meetings with the Israeli government that ended with a series of agreements, collectively called the Oslo process, that gave up much of the core goals of the Palestinian quest for liberation, return, self-determination, and independence. It recognized Israel and its right to exist on 78 percent of historical Palestine, while failing to have Israel recognize any Palestinian national or political rights. The only concession Israel gave was the inconsequential recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In the Oslo agreements, Israel insisted on postponing all issues that may have implications related to any legal or political rights of the Palestinian people, even partially. These issues, referred to as final status issues,

included Jerusalem's status, the Palestinian right of return, Jewish settlements on Palestinian lands, borders, and sovereignty. With the return of the PLO leaders to the 1967 occupied territories in 1994, the bulk of Palestinian political action shifted for the first time from the outside to the inside. Still, the Israeli military occupation was able to effectively control the majority of Palestinian decision-making, where the so-called Palestinian Authority (PA) had limited political maneuvering, while it was shackled with economic agreements heavily in favor of the occupier, and humiliating security coordination to keep any meaningful resistance under control. The result of the process of continuous and meaningless negotiations lasting decades between two parties with a massive power imbalance has been a disaster for the Palestinians. In reality, the PLO was marginalized and shifted from being a national liberation movement with international relations and recognition to effectively becoming the PA, which acted as a subsidiary to the occupation. Indeed, it not only bounded itself to a number of crippling agreements that compromised its legitimacy, but it also entrenched the occupation by effectively fulfilling Israel's security tasks, thus reducing the cost of the occupation and "legalizing" Israel's military presence. During the Oslo era, the pace of building settlements/colonies was greatly accelerated and the number of settlers/colonizers increased from about 125,000 in 1994 to over 700,000 in 2020, almost six-fold, distributed among hundreds of settlements and outposts inside the occupied West Bank. The second Palestinian Intifada (2000-2002) and the subsequent uprisings (particularly in Jerusalem and its surrounding areas) have been additional warning signs to the Zionist state that the status quo could blow up at any time. Despite the cruelty of the occupation and the pressure by the PA security forces, the Palestinians have been able to organize themselves time and again, continue their resistance, and shake up the security and efficacy of the occupation through painful and costly acts of popular resistance.

After the Oslo process and the PLO leadership's recognition of the Zionist state, Israel had three strategic options for ending the conflict. If it chose

to keep its Jewish majority and preserve the democratic façade of the state, this option would have meant the acceptance of what was called the two-state solution, which in essence would have given the Palestinians a truncated state on roughly the pre-1967 borders. But if it chose all the Palestinian land, between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, while purportedly allowing democratic structures for all the inhabitants of the land, it would have meant accepting the so-called one-state solution, in which the Palestinian Arab is equal in civil and political rights to the Israeli Jew. Of course, this option would have ended the Zionist dream of having exclusive control over the Holy Land. This option has so far been rejected by all Zionist parties regardless of ideologies or differences, because the core of the Zionist ideology rests on the belief of Jewish supremacy and exceptionalism, and the refusal to equate them with any others who are not Jewish. While the one-state solution was the Palestinian goal that the PLO had called for before it adopted the goal of the Palestinian state alongside an Israeli one in 1974, the idea was vehemently rejected outright by all Zionist parties and their western allies. The two-state solution was the goal of the Oslo process that many believed would end the conflict, which has also gained the support of the so-called international community and great powers. However, with the continued colonization and expansion of the Zionist settlements/colonies through the Oslo years, most international experts recognized the impossibility of establishing a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank. The Israeli choice, as demonstrated by its strategy and policies, has been to maintain the occupation over all the historical land of Palestine and annex it, albeit gradually and by imposing facts on the ground, either for religious, ideological, historical or strategic reasons, or through cost and benefit analysis against an opponent they consider weak, vulnerable, and divided.

On the other hand, the fierce and stubborn resistance against the Israeli occupation forced it to withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza in 2005, after Israeli leaders were convinced at the time that their project in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip had become costly

and futile. They decided to focus their efforts on imposing a *fait accompli* status within the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, through settlement and Judaization. (These territories represent approximately 21 percent of the land of historical Palestine, while the Gaza Strip represents only 1.4 percent, with a population of over two million. Israel wanted to get rid of them and limit the drain on its forces.) With the rise of the Israeli right with its myriad parties and their successive electoral victories for more than a decade, the Oslo illusion was plainly exposed. At the time, the PA realized—though too late—that its historical gamble was a clear loss, and that it no longer had any real prospects for a negotiated settlement towards a two-state solution, particularly as the United States during the Trump administration adopted all the positions of the Israeli right and removed all the final status issues from the negotiating table in a brazen and crude attempt to liquidate the Palestinian cause. The American-Israeli plan had been to totally ignore the rights of the Palestinians and to secure recognition and legitimacy of Israel by building an alliance with the Arab regimes that are America's closest client states in the region, many of which have represented the counterrevolutionary forces that have been hostile to the movement towards change or democratic reform in the region. In turn, Israel was keen to normalize its relations with those regimes and establish a close relationship with them as a way to secure regional hegemony.

With the failure and setback of the Arab Spring revolutions, resulting in the implosion of many Arab societies, the rise of the Israeli right, and the weakening of the Palestinian position (including the exploitation of the deepening rift between Ramallah and Gaza), Israel's decision has been to insist on controlling all the land, maintain its ethnic superiority, prevent the return of refugees, and deny Palestinians their minimum requirements for national self-determination. As long as the US stands by its side, Israel can continue to be indifferent to international law and the universal demands to honor Palestinian rights. The Zionist choice has been evidently clear: the complete rejection of the one-or two-state solutions in favor of an Israeli exclusionary (apartheid) state. In making this choice,

Israel is trying to convince the world that there is a fourth option, by proposing the theory of a metamorphosed and demilitarized entity with limited sovereignty, not unlike the 10 kingdoms of the South African Bantustans. With Israel's decision to kill the prospect of a negotiated settlement with a feeble Palestinian Authority, whose legitimacy is questionable, the latter has reached its tragic end as the decades-old political process has resulted in an abject failure awaiting a slow death.

The logical response of the Palestinian national project now must be to return the Arab-Israeli conflict to its origin and core by realizing the paradox of the Zionist project and its refusal to accept the Palestinian Arab existence in the land, recognize Palestinian rights, or coexist on an equal basis. Therefore, the strategic goal of the Palestinian national project must be to dismantle the Zionist project with all its institutions and manifestations. In short, the goal is to completely de-Zionize Palestine. Some may say that this is unattainable due to the massive imbalance of power between the two sides. But the Zionist project, like any human project, has certain characteristics and features that must be analyzed and synthesized in order to understand its disposition, as well as to identify its strengths and weaknesses, capabilities and shortcomings. For the Palestinian national project to realize this objective, it must seek a complete and comprehensive understanding and deconstruction of the nature and evolution of the conflict with Zionism, which would yield the following points:

1. The full right of return to the historical land of Palestine of the Palestinian people everywhere must be the starting point. Since the Zionist project is based on the denial of the indigenous population, the Other, there is no way to recover these rights except by dismantling it once and for all because it is a danger not only to the Palestinians and the people of the region, but also to Judaism itself. Zionism has defined itself as an ideology that ties Judaism and its adherents to a land rather than to a belief system. This concept is dangerous to Jewish identity and those who identify as Jewish because it makes them complicit in crimes they may oppose or are apathetic towards.

2. This conflict is greater than the capacity of the Palestinian people to resolve on their own with their limited means or capabilities. But were it not for the steadfastness, persistence, and endurance of the Palestinian people to continue their struggle for more than a century, as well as the inability of the Zionist movement and its regional and international supporters to eradicate them or force their surrender, their struggle would have been defeated a long time ago. Were it not for the determination and resolve of the majority of the Palestinian people to not give up their rights to their land or their right to return, and to cling to their identity and history (despite the concessions of some leaders), their cause would have been forgotten years ago. Were it not for the Palestinian people's fidelity to their homeland (after the experience of the Nakba) and their refusal to leave or evacuate despite the occupation, repression and siege, an unjust regime would have emerged entirely victorious. The Palestinian people were and will remain the spearhead in this conflict and will continue to pay the heaviest price for their sacrifices and the sacrifices of future generations. This is their destiny. Either they live under occupation, be subject to the will of their oppressor with humiliation and disgrace, or they remain defiant with their resolve, honor, steadfastness, resilience, and continuous resistance until their goals are achieved. Their goals are to liberate their land, return their people to their towns and villages, and defeat their colonizer's plans to destroy them. However, despite all this, the Palestinian people are only a part (even if an essential one) of the power equation. The equation is simple: Palestinians—on their own—will not be enough to resolve this problem, and the problem cannot not be resolved without them.

3. The Zionist project was a dream of the early fathers of the project who wanted to solve the so-called Jewish question in Europe. Their leaders argued that they could solve this question at the expense of the Palestinians and the Arabs. Therefore, the Zionist movement harnessed all its resources and capabilities, established international alliances, built institutions, and used all tactics and mechanisms to achieve its goals. Similarly, the Palestinian national project must be liberated from being a

project confined to a small people and transformed into a global and human liberation project that mobilizes all energies and capabilities, not only within the Arab and Islamic worlds, but across the whole world. It is a just liberation struggle against a racist, aggressive, and ruthless settler-colonialist movement. Such a struggle requires the establishment of a global solidarity movement with the Palestinian struggle for liberation. It will also transform the Palestinian cause from being a local or regional struggle to a universal one at all levels, including the enlisting of global leaders who assume their role and earn their legitimacy in the struggle through their efforts, commitment, and sacrifices.

4. With the collapse of the Oslo process and the end of the illusion of the two-state solution, sooner or later the center of gravity of the Palestinian cause, with its various manifestations, will move abroad again. This, of course, does not mean the end of the role of the struggle of the people inside the occupied territories, but rather its transformation after the end of the role of the Palestinian Authority as a partner and collaborator of the occupier (by limiting and suppressing the resistance as well as reducing the cost of the occupation). It will also result in the emancipation of the cause from the shackles of being local or regional to (once again) become part of the universal struggle for justice and freedom. In addition, this will allow those inside to take a leadership role to continue its resistance and shake up the occupation. Today, Palestinians in the diaspora represent more than half of the Palestinian people, while the other half is under occupation, siege, or live under racist domination and a discriminatory system. Consequently, the logical result of this transition and transformation in the clash with the Zionist project is the rise of activities and the intensification of direct actions targeting the occupation and its institutions and tools at all levels, in all fields, and across all geographies. The task of the Palestinian national project then will not be limited, as it was in previous decades, to the issue of establishing a demilitarized mini state that would continue to be under military occupation and oppression, as is the case of the vanquished and defeated. Rather, there will be two main missions for this project. The first is to support the Palestinian

people in Palestine and the refugee camps to continue their resistance and existence until they gain their full rights. The second mission is to engage with and expose the global Zionist movement and its powerful backers worldwide, at all levels and in all fields, economically, politically, legally, socially, culturally, academically, artistically, on human rights, in the media, and in the courts. Not a single sphere or geography where myths and lies are propagated should be spared.

5. Like any political entity or social movement, the Zionist state, since its inception, has factors, components, and strategic imperatives that guarantee its survival and continuity. The strategic task to realize the Palestinian national project will be to identify these factors and imperatives and exert all efforts to undermine, weaken, and end them by all means available. And because many of these imperatives may be outside the control of direct Palestinian action, this reinforces the call for an effective global solidarity movement that may include states, governments, institutions, movements, political parties, influential individuals and artists, as well as popular and mass action networks that utilize strategic plans and integrated efforts to undermine these factors and weaken these imperatives. This strategy, in turn, will gradually lead to the dismantling and collapse of the Zionist project, just as other aggressive and racist regimes had fallen in the past, such as the apartheid regime in South Africa.

6. At the heart of this project will be an enormous role for the people to play, not just elites. People everywhere will see that they can play a major role in confronting the Zionist project and in supporting the Palestinian people until apartheid ends. This act of solidarity and engagement will not be limited only to the political, media, or legal spheres, but will include everything that weakens this project. Resistance against the Zionist project and the struggle against its colonization, expansion, and racism will be the major mantra of the global liberation movement.

7. When the Palestinian cause becomes the center of the struggle against injustice, occupation, oppression, racism, tyranny, and exploitation, then

the conflict will become global in its destination and humane in its essence. It will transcend other conflicts and empty them of their destructive characteristics (be it sectarian, ethnic, tribal, class, or ideological conflicts) that have preoccupied many parts of the region and the Global South for decades. At that time, Palestine will become the scale, the compass, and the ruler, not because its people are more oppressed or their suffering is greater than others, but because of the nature of the conflict and the Zionist challenge that targets geography, history, the future, and what it means to be a dignified human being.

8. As the Palestinian national project realizes its universal appeal after the colossal failure of Oslo, and after it becomes the symbol for fighting for justice and freedom worldwide, and as it is identified as the leading struggle against oppression and hegemony, it will become an indispensable partner for liberating the weak and poor of the world, like many global liberation and human rights movements that have struggled against exploitation, racism, and enslavement.

9. This project, after adopting its strategic plan, establishing its institutions, and activating its operational plans (many of which already exist but need activation and networking) will represent the core of all direct actions against the Zionist project, its institutions, and its regional and global sources of strength.

10. With the escalation of all forms of resistance that would collectively weaken the strategic imperatives of the Zionist project, a certain historical moment would arise in which a strategic change will occur where the balance of power would shift, and where the aggressive, racist project would disintegrate and collapse after the factors for its survival and the imperatives of its continuity have been eliminated or greatly diminished.

Imperatives for the Survival and Continuation of the Zionist project

Having identified the important objectives above for the Palestinian struggle, this paper will proceed to outline 12 main imperatives that the Zionist project depends on for its existence, expansion, and control within

the global political scene. Some of these imperatives are already beginning to erode. The global project for Palestinian liberation, then, must intensify its efforts and action, and focus on the mechanisms, tools, and tactics necessary to weaken all or most of these imperatives that will eventually lead to the dismantling of the ever-present racist and aggressive Zionist project. But before detailing these twelve imperatives, we must return to our brief discussion at the start of this paper, namely, on the origin of the conflict, how it began, to understand the exact nature of the problem.

Many Arab and Western scholars argue that for most of history, the world has known two types of Jewish societies: the Jews who lived in the Islamic world (the Jews of Islam, as modern scholars often refer to that community), and the Jews who lived in Western Christian societies (the Jews of Christendom). But the status of these two types of Jewish communities was strikingly different. If a brief historical analysis is conducted, one would find that since the Charter of Medina during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the Jewish communities in Medina had lived as part of the Muslim community (the Ummah) and were recognized and honored as a distinct community within the city-state. For centuries, Jewish communities in Muslim lands were recognized and afforded their rights under successive Islamic states and empires in what the Jewish Encyclopedia would refer to as “the Golden Age of the Jews.” These periods, especially in Andalusia, enabled the Jewish communities to flourish with the rise of notable scholars and sages.

On the other hand, the Jews who lived in the Christian world under the Roman umbrella and successive European empires were subjected to all forms of oppression and persecution (when they immensely suffered in these countries, they found Islamic societies open for them to migrate to and settle in, as during the Inquisition in Andalusia, during which many Jews were given the choice between converting to Christianity, being exiled, or killed in the most heinous ways). The Jewish communities that resided in Europe for centuries had to live in ghettos, deprived of their most basic civil and legal rights. But despite their relative liberation after

the Enlightenment and Renaissance era, as well as the French Revolution, racism and discrimination against them continued, examples of which are abundant, including the Russian pogroms at the end of the 19th century. Perhaps the most infamous incident that motivated the early Zionists was the Alfred Dreyfus case in France in 1894. This affair contributed enormously to the founding of the modern Zionist political movement. Because of the raw racism and hatred that the trial displayed, many Jews concluded that it was impossible for them to live among European Christians. This idea was coupled with the notion of the nation-state, by then prevalent in Europe. These Zionists concluded that establishing their own nation-state was crucial to their survival, especially after they were subjected to aforementioned Russian pogroms, or later, the Nazi Holocaust.

Thus, the Zionist movement was born out of a purely European experience. Within a few years the early Zionists allied themselves with the leaders of Western powers, especially Britain and France, and to a lesser extent the United States. With Britain, the Zionist movement found common ground to dismember and colonize parts of the Arab world. The Balfour Declaration, which called for the establishment of a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine, was pronounced in 1917. Moreover, the Sykes-Picot agreement, which called for the partition and fragmentation of the Arab states of the Ottoman Caliphate, was reached in 1916. The British hoped that having a Jewish settlement in the midst of the Arab and Muslim world would serve their strategic interests in the region. Similarly, the Zionists knew that for their project to survive they had to ally themselves with a great power for establishment and protection. Ever since the formation of the Zionist movement at the end of the 19th century, and the establishment of its state half a century later, there have been 12 determinants or strategic imperatives that were and still are the main requisites for the establishment, continuity, and survival of the Zionist state. These imperatives are:

1. **Exclusivism.** Zionism calls for the ingathering of all or most Jews around the world in the land of historical Palestine. This exclusionary

mindset dictates that Jews are the only people who have an inherent birthright to live in the Holy Land. Today, about six and a half million Jews live in Palestine, while the number of Jews in the world exceeds 16 million. In other words, the Zionist movement has failed after more than a century to convince even half of the world's Jews to settle in Palestine. Rather, there is evidence today that reverse migration is increasing, and that the greater the pressure and resistance against the Zionist state—the more its legitimacy is in doubt—the more Jewish immigration into Palestine declines or halts, as even reverse immigration from Palestine increases.

2. Exclusion. All non-Jews are to be excluded and banished from Palestine. To achieve this, the Zionist project, since its infancy, deliberately resorted to terrorism, massacres, and ethnic cleansing as its main tactics through gangs and militias against a defenseless population to cause mass panic and force the indigenous people to flee. It has also employed policies of eradicating villages, destroying homes, and seizing property. For example, between 1948-1951, more than 530 villages that were inhabited by Palestinians were completely destroyed and razed. As hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced under a reign of terror, Jewish settlers arriving from dozens of countries took over their homes. While the total number of Jews in Palestine at the end of the 19th century did not exceed 2.5 percent of the total population, this ratio reached 32.5 percent of the population (due to illegal immigration under the British Mandate) on the eve of the establishment of the state in 1948. In the 1960s, the Jewish population inside the Green Line had reached 90 percent of the total population (though now it is close to 80 percent). By occupying the rest of Palestine in 1967, the demographic question within historical Palestine has become a worrying problem for the Zionist project. Today, the total number of Palestinians living there exceeds the total number of Jews, even though the overwhelming majority of Palestinians have been living under military occupation or siege, and denied their basic human, civil, and political rights for over half a century.

This fact about changing demographics alone demonstrates the failure of this imperative.

3. Colonization and Expansion (Israel's Manifest Destiny). Since its inception, the Zionist entity has relied on a strategy of colonization and expansion. First, the Zionist movement established agricultural settlements for Jewish immigrants and settlers in Palestine. It then moved aggressively to seize and plunder Palestinian lands during the British Mandate. Eventually, it claimed 55 percent of the land of historic Palestine through the unjust 1947 UN partition plan, even though Jews owned less than 6.5 percent of the total land despite decades of theft and colonization. After the 1948 Nakba, Israel continued to conquer and occupy Palestinian land reaching 78 percent of the total area by 1949. During the 1967 invasion, Israel again conquered and seized the remainder of Palestine, the Sinai, and the Golan Heights. In 1982, it invaded Lebanon and occupied the South for 18 years. In all its wars and aggressions, Israel continued the strategy of occupying and settling the land, as happened in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. This expansion and colonization strategy lasted for decades and did not retreat until it was met with fierce resistance, as in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, or when it obtained huge strategic concessions, as in the Camp David accords in 1978 when Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai by limiting Egypt's sovereignty over it and making the Sinai a buffer area, effectively neutralizing Egypt.

4. Creating Facts on the Ground “Fait accompli.” This is a geopolitical term that imposes a situation due to “facts on the ground” that are artificially implanted. The Zionist movement has launched and maintained this conflict for over a century to obtain gradual and full control over all of Palestine, and to have as much territory as they could get away with, such as the Golan Heights in Syria and the Shab’a Farms in Lebanon. There are many examples in this regard. Today, there are over 130 “settlements” and 110 so-called “outposts” in the West Bank alone, not including military bases. All of these colonies (settlements) were imposed by *fait accompli* in a flagrant violation of international law

that entrench the deteriorating living conditions of the Palestinians under occupation, which are far worse than the notorious Bantustans that characterized Apartheid South Africa.

5. Creating a Garrison State. Ever since its founding in 1948, Israel created a military-based society, which it considers a strategic imperative for its “security and survival.” Moreover, it has been aptly demonstrated that the most critical decisions of the state have been based on military and security calculations. For example, the Israeli military budget (per capita) is the highest in the world. The Zionist movement has essentially created a military state, culminating in the militarization of society and that of its citizens’ mindset. Virtually every adult in the state under the age of 50 (excluding Arab citizens) is either in active military duty or in reserve, an unprecedented feat in today’s world. But this imperative has gradually eroded over time, especially among marginalized social groups, the educated, middle and upper classes, and the youth.

6. Developing the Military Doctrine of using Overwhelming Forces to win against any and all Enemies. By maintaining its military and technological superiority over its rivals collectively, Israel has firmly embraced this imperative. From the point of view of its military and security strategists, Israel must win all its wars against all enemies and fight them on their lands. Furthermore, it cannot and does not want to fight long-term wars because of the devastating impact of long wars on its economy, society, and psyche. However, in its five wars against Lebanon and the Gaza Strip in recent years, Israel failed to defeat its opponents or impose its political will, despite the brutality and cruelty of its military machine. Indeed, since the 1967 War, Israel has not been able to conclusively resolve any war it has fought in its favor.

7. Maintaining Monopoly of Nuclear Weapons in the Region. Israel launched its nuclear program in the 1950s with the help of France, despite the low probability of using nuclear weapons due to obvious geographical reasons. However, the Zionist state considers the use of nuclear weapons a viable option for deterrence, or as a last-resort suicidal option if the state

comes under grave danger (known as the “Samson option”). To achieve such a monopoly, Israel has been keen on preventing its neighbors from acquiring nuclear weapons, as it did when it bombed the Iraqi nuclear facilities in 1981 and the Syrian reactor in 2007. Today, Israel has 200-400 nuclear weapons and has stubbornly refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty. Over the years, it has exerted tremendous pressure to stop or roll back Iran’s peaceful nuclear activities. Consequently, the neutralization of this imperative necessitates the acquisition of this technology by any state or force hostile to Israel in the region, or alternatively if another state, such as Pakistan, would agree to provide a nuclear cover against this monopoly. Such action would effectively nullify this imperative as its potential use as a deterrence by Israel would greatly be diminished and become of no significant value.

8. Building the most Efficient, Sophisticated, and Ruthless Security and Intelligence Service. This is needed to control the Palestinian population centers inside and outside the Palestinian territories and eliminate its perceived threats. It employs tactics of assassinations, imprisonment, arrests, intimidation and control, as well as the establishment of an elaborate system of informants and collaborators to infiltrate and disrupt Palestinian communities. Intelligence and security agencies such as the Mossad, Shin Bet, Aman, Shabak, and many others are granted exceptional powers to violate countless human rights laws and circumvent international laws and conventions to carry out this imperative. Moreover, through these agencies, Israel also seeks to manipulate regional politics and leaders, and weaken and destabilize many countries. Today, it is estimated that there are between 120,000-150,000 Israeli agents, operatives, or soldiers in the occupied territories who control every aspect of Palestinian life and make it intolerable to break their will and force them to surrender or leave. However, whenever Israel’s security grip weakens—by means of continuous resistance and the pursuance of legal prosecutions of human rights violations—the Zionist project will no longer be able to rely on a broken security system to dismantle resistance efforts and control Palestinian life.

9. Linking tightly with International Powers and Benefactors even if serving as a client state. There are many historical examples that demonstrate this imperative, including during the British occupation and mandate (1918-1948), as well as after the establishment of the state when it allied itself with international powers and economic benefactors. Today, Israel enjoys the full support and backing of the United States. If more solidarity movements around the world worked to expose Israel as a settler-colonialist state, the relationship between these two countries will eventually be severed or at least weakened. In short, the Zionist state cannot survive or continue today without American military, political, diplomatic, media, economic, commercial, and technological support. In this case, the American arena in this strategic vision (after the Palestinian interior) becomes perhaps the most critical arena of engagement and struggle with the Zionist movement, its institutions, lobbies, allies, and supporters.

10. Ensure that Jews (especially in the United States and Europe) are Zionists. This imperative seeks to ensure that Jews maintain unquestionable support for Israel through the viability and backing of many institutions in politics, media, business, culture, etc., and by creating programs to mobilize Jews around the world, especially the youth. This is a crucial imperative because if the mobilization of Zionists around the world weakens, particularly among Jews, this would limit the ability of the state to survive and function as the representative of all Jews, as well as undermine its capacity to expand its settler-colonial activities. However, there is strong anecdotal evidence today that shows that for the past two decades, support for Israel among many Jewish communities especially among the youth has been seriously eroding worldwide, particularly in the United States, the most important country for Israel's survival.

11. Keep the Enemy Divided and Weak. For this to happen, the Zionist state must strive to fragment the Middle East. For example, they keep the Palestinian people divided between Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, Israel, and the diaspora to diminish perceptions of the Palestinians as one

people. The same phenomenon takes place across the Middle East. The “Oded Yinon Plan,” which was devised in 1982 and advocated by former Israeli leader Ariel Sharon, is a notable example. The plan was designed to fragment the whole region and reshape it as a set of sectarian, tribal, and weak states in order to make Israel a hegemonic power among them.

12. Become Regional Hegemon by Allying itself with minorities, separatists, and autocrats. There are many examples to showcase this imperative, including in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings when Israel was very concerned about the potential of the Arab masses to jeopardize its future in the region by electing democratic governments that reflect the will of the people. Israeli leaders and supporters genuinely believe that if this happens, Israel’s own survival would be at stake. Israel allied itself with autocratic regimes and counter-revolutionary forces across the region and mobilized many great international powers and institutions to overturn this exceptional moment in history. Such action could only alienate the masses more and cause anger and frustration, leading to instability and chaos. In addition, Israel has a long history of supporting separatist movements and minorities in the region, as it did with the Maronites in Lebanon in the 1980s, Kurdish separatists since the 1950s, or in its crucial role in the split of South Sudan from the Sudan more recently.

Conclusion

This essay presented a grand vision about the liberation of Palestine from a racist, colonialist enterprise. There are crucial imperatives that guarantee the existence and survival of the Zionist project. When all or most of the aforementioned strategic imperatives are challenged, weakened, and become inoperable, the Zionist state will become weakened, its existence jeopardized, and its colonialist regime forced to collapse. Those who care about the Palestinian cause or work for its liberation at all levels must examine these 12 imperatives and deal with them accordingly to revitalize the struggle against the Zionist project. In addition, the Zionist project will also be greatly weakened when structural

and strategic changes take place in the not-too-distant future, whether internationally or at the regional level, which are based on many geopolitical considerations related to the gradual transformation of the world into a multipolar system. These changes will force Israel to make massive concessions by eliminating or lessening its deep-rooted racist policies. In addition, there are many internal fault lines within Israeli society that will lead to its destabilization and significant weakening over time (Arab vs. Jew, the Mizrahi vs. the Ashkenazi Jew, secular vs. religious, rich vs. poor, settlers vs. city dwellers, old vs. young, etc.)

Strategic shifts in the balance of power can be achieved when a consensus of vision, of will, and of action are developed wisely, collectively, and simultaneously. This vision allows for such consensus building. In addition, shifts in allies and foes are part of the strategic power equation and gradually shifting in favor of Palestinian rights. Half a century ago, Türkiye and Iran were considered in Israel's camp, with whom the Zionist state would collaborate, ally, and coordinate with against their Arab neighbors. Today, Israel, and behind it the Zionist movement and its allies, consider Türkiye and Iran in the camp of their opponents. This strategic change in the balance of power is the best evidence that strength and weakness are not inevitable constants, but rather variables as long as the struggle continues, carried by believers in the vision, who have a determined will, and strive with all their utmost efforts until their goals are achieved.

Finally, one must emphasize the importance of creating a global solidarity movement that seeks to end the Israeli apartheid regime by activating and employing many tactics, including those laid out by the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The objective of such tactics is to isolate the Israeli apartheid state and force its racist-colonialist system to eventually disintegrate or collapse. This vision will lead to the increasing vital role of people outside Palestine in the political and resistance struggle against the Zionist project, after an absence of more than three decades. But this time, the struggle is not just a Palestinian struggle carried out by Palestinians for a limited objective. It will be a

universal struggle across the world, carried out by every person who cares about justice, freedom, equality, and truth. This, of course, does not mean dwarfing the role of the Palestinian struggle inside, but rather their integration as they complement each other, with the realization that a large part of the struggle will become global, touching everyone and everywhere. Naturally, many Palestinians abroad, as well as activists for the Palestinian cause worldwide, will spearhead this endeavor, implement this vision, and execute its action plans. They will propel it forward by creating or activating all needed institutions to carry it out. This effort might include the restoration of the PLO if need be, but only after liberating it from factional control and corruption, either by democratic mechanisms if available, or revolutionary means if necessary. But this Palestinian act of resistance must also be complemented and shared in action, commitment, and engagement by international solidarity movements working side by side in all places, at all levels and in all fields, to invigorate the struggle, not for the sake of the demarcation of borders or the creation of a truncated state, but for dismantling a racist, colonialist ideology and its manifestations.

While the Zionist settler-racist-exclusivist state targets the land and the human being, the end of injustice and racism in Palestine will not only lead to the restoration of justice and freedom for the Palestinian people. It will also save Judaism and its adherents from the racist doctrines of Zionism. In essence, this vision seeks not only to liberate Palestinians, but also to prevent the desecration of the great prophetic tradition of Judaism. The West, because of its racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism, has been unable to solve its “Jewish question” (as they historically characterized it). But the history of the Arab and Islamic world demonstrates that any Jew oppressed or persecuted in the West or elsewhere is welcome to migrate, and to live safely with dignity, to wherever he/she wants in the vast Islamic world, from Morocco to Indonesia, but without exclusivist and racist ambitions that come at the expense of any of the rights of the Palestinian people.

**Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center
Second International Conference on Palestine
Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative,
Formulating A Vision**

Links to Conference Presentations

Opening Session: Opening/Welcoming Remarks

Session Chair: Dr. Sami Al-Arian, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Prof. Mehmet Bulut, Rector, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye

Mr. Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees

(Mutawalli) İlim Yayma Foundation, Parent Foundation of Istanbul

Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye

Fr. Manuel Musallam, Former Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Palestine

Sh. Ekrima Sabri, Imam, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islamic Supreme Committee,

Jerusalem, Palestine

Ms. Belkıs İbrahimhakkıoğlu, İrfandan Medeniyete Derneği, Association

for Wisdom and Civilization, Kūdüs Platformu, Istanbul, Türkiye

Dr. Muhammad Akram Adlouni, Executive Director, Global Coalition for

Quds and Palestine, Beirut, Lebanon

Prof. Ilan Pappé, Director, European Center for Palestine Studies (ECPS),

University of Exeter, UK

Prof. Nader Hashemi, Director, Center for Middle East Studies (CMES),

University of Denver, USA

Mr. Na'eem Jeenah, Afro-Middle East Center (AMEC), South Africa

Links

English: youtube.com/live/7AQHbHKXNQ0

Arabic: youtube.com/live/OetNTpx7fGY

Turkish: youtube.com/live/DB7KVzZ5JZw

Session I: The Palestinian Struggle and the Case Against Apartheid Israel

Session Chair: Dr. Sami Al-Arian, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta Palestine Land Society, UK

Prof. Richard Falk, Princeton University (Emeritus), USA, Queen Mary University, London, UK

Mr. Omar Shakir, Human Rights Watch, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/7AQHbHKXNQ0

Arabic: youtube.com/live/OetNTpx7fGY

Turkish: youtube.com/live/DB7KVzZ5JZw

Session II: The Reality of Occupation and Meaning of Resistance

Session Chair: Dr. Abdalrahman Migdad, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Prof. As'ad Ghanem, University of Haifa

Ms. Laila El-Haddad, Author, USA

Prof. Maha Nassar, University of Arizona, USA

Dr. Ramzy Baroud, Palestine Chronicle, USA, CIGA, Türkiye

Mr. Amith Gupta, Coalition for Civil Freedoms, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/4dBuptclRVI

youtube.com/live/euDN7CUht7g

Arabic: youtube.com/live/Ol2cax0JUWM

youtube.com/live/Ow4T4CFc00Y

Turkish: youtube.com/live/pZt5H_t2Wmw

youtube.com/live/Ca8VI-DUlrM

Session III: The Dialectics between Zionist Settler-Colonialism, Racism, and Palestinian Decolonization

Session Chair: Mr. Uveys Han, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Prof. Joseph Massad, Columbia University, USA

Prof. Salman Sayyid, University of Leeds, UK

Prof. Ilan Pappé, University of Exeter, UK

Prof. Loubna Qutami, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/YFdqLO9rh3M

Arabic: youtube.com/live/moigoNk3x4I

Turkish: youtube.com/live/moigoNk3x4I

Session IV: Recounting the Palestinian Story

Session Chair: Ms. Lamis Jamal Alayan, Al-Awda Coalition, USA

Speakers:

Prof. Ahlam Muhtaseb, California State University, San Bernardino, USA

Mr. Josh Ruebner, Author and Political Analyst, USA

Mr. Sha'wan Jabarin, Al-Haq, Palestine

Prof. Abdallah Marouf Omar, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Türkiye

Links

English: youtube.com/live/kFQYqzHm1bU

Arabic: youtube.com/live/GfHSuEstBb0

Turkish: youtube.com/live/mtMEIRw0S2E

Session V: Exploring A Framework for Dismantling Israeli Apartheid

Session Chair: Mr. Na'eem Jeenah, Afro-Middle East Center, South Africa

Speakers:

Mr. Ebrahim Rasool, World for All, former Diplomat, South Africa

Dr. Ghada Karmi, Former Research Fellow, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, UK

Dr. Sami Al-Arian, CIGA, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye

Links

English: youtube.com/live/2e9HVvnyFos

Arabic: youtube.com/live/2-_kYWNZiNc

Turkish: youtube.com/live/VrRndx_dznM

Session VI: A Conversation on Palestine after the recent Gaza War/HRW Report

Moderator: Prof. Nader Hashemi, Center for Middle East Studies,
University of Denver, USA

Guest: Prof. Norman Finkelstein, Academic and Author, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/hhsDBUAMsHE

Arabic: youtube.com/live/Y6YWFA15tSw

Turkish: youtube.com/live/kFBB2a_AE5k

Session VII: Examining How the Apartheid Industry Functions

Session Chair: Mr. Ubeyd Ruff, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Prof. Rabab Abdelhadi, San Francisco State University, USA

Ms. Huwaida Arraf, National Lawyers Guild, USA

Mr. Rami Khouri, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Ms. Rawan Damen, Media Consultant and Filmmaker, Jordan

Links

English: youtube.com/live/hRkTWyMa7BE

Arabic: youtube.com/live/syrFrOcYHBE

Turkish: youtube.com/live/jROwYOTvnRI

Session VIII: Israel, the US, and the Apartheid Industry

Session Chair: Ms. Laila Al-Arian, Al Jazeera English, Washington DC, USA

Speakers:

Dr. Phyllis Bennis, Institute of Policy Studies, USA

Mr. Vincent Warren, Center for Constitutional Rights, New York, USA

Ms. Estee Chandler, Jewish Voice for Peace, USA

Mr. Eran Efrati, Researching the American-Israeli Alliance, New York, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/RfJkKIhwMUw

Arabic: youtube.com/live/YpRVQ4jMDWI

Turkish: youtube.com/live/0j-rGJtzET0

Session IX: Reversing Apartheid: The Role of the Law, Politics, Economics, and Popular Mobilization

Session Chair: Ms. Nora Barrows-Friedman, Electronic Intifada, USA

Speakers:

Prof. John Quigley, Ohio State University, USA

Dr. Osama Abuirshaid, American Muslims for Palestine, USA

Prof. Taher Labadi, University of Aix-Marseille, France

Dr. Omar Zahzah, Palestine Youth Movement, USA

Links

English: youtube.com/live/iG8DCp8x6II

youtube.com/live/2xt1GALR51A

Arabic: youtube.com/live/s6QNJ694Yfk

Turkish: youtube.com/live/Ttktyvm8XAA

Session X: The Future of the Palestinian Struggle: Analysis and Prospects

Session Chair: Mr. Fadi Zatari, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye

Speakers:

Prof. Helga Baumgarten, Birzeit University, West Bank, Palestine

Mr. Moin Al-Taher, Arab Center for Studies, Jordan

Mr. Mouin Rabbani, Co-Editor, Jadaliyya, The Hague, The Netherlands

Dr. Mohammad Makram Balawi, Union of Palestinian Academics, Istanbul, Türkiye

Links

English: youtube.com/live/JNa0w-3J2RQ

Arabic: youtube.com/live/sDdHwltROc8

Turkish: youtube.com/live/EdernmhYqcQ

Session XI: Dismantling Apartheid: Requirements and Criteria

Session Chair: Ms. Zeenat Adam, Afro-Middle East Center, South Africa

Speakers:

Ms. Nerdeen Kiswani, CUNY-SPJ, New York, USA

Mr. Miko Peled, Author and Public Intellectual, USA

Prof. Berdal Aral, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

Mr. Na'eem Jeenah, Afro-Middle East Center, South Africa

Links

English: youtube.com/live/gtwry3PfNBV

Arabic: youtube.com/live/aUU1oim5tmQ

Turkish: youtube.com/live/Y_1fm5AyMYV

**Session XII: The Role of Film and the Arts in the Palestinian Struggle:
A Conversation with Palestinian Artists**

Moderators: Mr. Frank Barat, Independent Film Maker, Belgium, and Prof. Abdullah Al-Arian, Georgetown University in Doha, Qatar

Panelists:

Ms. Susan Abulhawa, Novelist, USA

Mr. Saleh Bakri, Actor, Palestine

Ms. Annemarie Jacir, Filmmaker, Palestine

Ms. Farah Nabulsi, Filmmaker & Human Rights Advocate, UK

Links

English: youtube.com/live/y77QAirFNrk

Arabic: youtube.com/live/mm0h-jOtlVo

Turkish: youtube.com/live/MTK6FEdSG3M

Short Biographies of Contributors

Dr. Osama Abuirshaid, American Muslims for Palestine, USA



Osama Abuirshaid is the Executive Director and a board member of American Muslims for Palestine (AMP). He is a board member of the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), an umbrella organization of eight major national American Muslim organizations. He is a non-resident scholar at the Doha-based Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS). He lectures frequently on Middle East and American politics. He is a regular commentator on Palestinian and Middle Eastern affairs as well as on the American domestic and foreign policy on various Arabic satellite T.V. channels such as Aljazeera. He authored or coauthored several books in Arabic, and he published dozens of studies and articles in Arabic and English, on issues relevant to the Middle East and its political climate. He is an American Muslim community leader and speaker. Abuirshaid completed his PhD in Political Science at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, Palestine Land Society, UK



Salman Abu Sitta was born in 1937 in Ma'in Abu Sitta, in the Beersheba district of mandate Palestine. An engineer by profession, he is best known for his cartographic work on Palestine and his work on the Palestinian Right of Return. He is the author of six books and over 300 articles and papers on Palestine, including *The Atlas of Palestine, 1917–1966* (2010). He is the founder and president of the Palestine Land Society.

Ms. Zeenat Adam, Afro-Middle East Center, South Africa



Zeenat Adam is an international relations strategist, entrepreneur, and political opinion writer. She served as a senior diplomat in the South African foreign service, focusing on the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. She led election observer missions to Palestine, Madagascar, and South Sudan. Since her departure from the foreign service, she has contributed to various academic and media publications. Her opinions on the developments in the Middle East and Africa are frequently sought by think tanks, media houses and the private sector. She has facilitated numerous advocacy and human rights campaigns and coordinated humanitarian relief in several war-torn countries. She served as media spokesperson for Women's Boat to Gaza, a Freedom Flotilla initiative. In 2019 she founded Conscience Collective, an organization aimed at creating awareness and solidarity on international issues through collective, shared social realities, art, literature, and critical analysis. She currently serves as the Deputy Executive Director of the Afro Middle East Centre, the only research-based entity in South Africa to focus on the MENA region, analyzing the dynamic interface between that region and the rest of Africa.

Dr. Sami A. Al-Arian, CIGA, IZU, Türkiye



Sami A. Al-Arian is the Director of the Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center and Public Affairs Professor at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. He received his PhD in 1986, and was a tenured academic in the US for two decades receiving best teaching awards at the University of South Florida and several grants, as well as having over forty publications to his credit. During his four decades in the US (1975-2015), Dr. Al-Arian founded numerous institutions and publications in the fields of education, research, religion and interfaith, as well as civil and human rights. He was a prolific speaker across many US campuses, especially on Palestine, Islam and the West, and Civil Rights. In 2001, he was named by *Newsweek* the "premiere civil rights activist" in the US for his efforts to repeal the use of Secret Evidence in

immigration courts. In 2012, he was profiled by historians in the *Encyclopedia of American Dissidents* as one of only three Muslims in the US out of 152 dissidents and prisoners of conscience that were included in the series in the past century (along with Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali). His US story was featured in 2007 in the award-winning documentary “US vs. Al-Arian,” and in 2016 in the book “Being Palestinian.” Dr. Al-Arian has written several studies and dozens of articles focusing on US foreign policy, Palestine, and the Arab Spring phenomena. His book on the later titled *The Arab Awakening Unveiled: Understanding Transformations and Revolutions in the Middle East* was published in 2013 under a pen name. He has also published several edited books. His book of poetry on Spirituality, Palestine, and Human Rights *Conspiring Against Joseph* was also published in 2004.

Prof. Berdal Aral, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye



Berdal Aral is Professor of politics at Istanbul Medeniyet University. He received his PhD on “Turkey and International Society from a Critical Legal Perspective” in 1994 from the University of Glasgow. Prof. Berdal Aral has concentrated on international law and human rights in both his classes as well as his research. He is author of three books: *Self-Defence in International Law*, *Collective Rights as Third-Generation Human Rights*, and *From Global Security to Global Hegemony: UN Security System and the Muslim World*. Additionally, he has numerous articles published in Turkish and English on international law, human rights as well as on Türkiye’s foreign policy.

Dr. Mohammad Makram Balawi, Union of Palestinian Academics, Istanbul, Türkiye



Mohammad Makram Balawi is a Palestinian writer and academic based in Istanbul. Balawi holds a PhD in Postcolonialism from the International Islamic University in Malaysia. He recently wrote a book titled, “Deconstructing Pro-Israeli Discourse: India as a Case Study.” Balawi is the President of Asia Middle East Forum, a public diplomacy platform for

advocating the Palestinian cause in Asia as well as Director of al-Quds Foundation Malaysia, a Malaysian Foundation specialized in advocating for Jerusalem in East Asia. He writes extensively on Asian relations in major Arabic news portals such as Al-Jazeera, Arabi 21 and TRT world, and composes a weekly article in the Middle East Monitor. He also is a founder of Save al-Quds Coalition, a coalition that consists of more than 40 Malaysian organizations. Balawi is also a member of the general secretariat of the Kuala Lumpur Forum for Islamic Political Thought and Civilization, which is spearheaded by Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, the current Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Prof. Helga Baumgarten, Birzeit University, West Bank, Palestine



Helga Baumgarten taught Political Science at Birzeit University, both in the Interdisciplinary PhD Program for the Social Sciences and in the M.A. program of Muwatin Institute for the Study of Democracy and Human Rights (between 1993 and 2020). She has broadly published (in German, English, French and Arabic) on the Middle East conflict, on Palestinian Nationalism, on Political Islam and on the Problem of Transformations in the Arab region. Her last book in German is “Kampf um Palaestina: Was wollen Hamas und Fatah?” (Herder Verlag 2014). She wrote a critical article on “The Oslo System” (published in German in INAMO 79, 2014, available in English on academia.edu). Her last article (“The struggle for democratic space under violent settler colonialism and authoritarian rule”, In: Jürgen Mackert, Hannah Wolf and Bryan S. Turner (Eds.), *The Condition of Democracy. Vol. 3. Postcolonial and Settler Colonial Contexts*. London: Routledge) will be published in July 2021. Born in 1947 in Stuttgart, she studied in Tuebingen, New York, London, Beirut and Goettingen, and did her PhD at the Free University of Berlin. She taught at AUB Beirut, at the University of Goettingen, at FU Berlin, and since 1993 at Birzeit University. In 2004, she was a fellow at the Austrian Institute for International Relations, Vienna. She participated in international conferences in the USA (MESA, Harvard, New School of Social Research), England (SOAS, University of Surrey), in the Middle East, and at different universities in Germany, Switzerland and Austria.

Dr. Phyllis Bennis, Institute of Policy Studies, USA



Phyllis Bennis directs the New Internationalism Project at IPS, focusing on Middle East, U.S. wars and UN issues. She is also a fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. In 2001 she helped found the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, and now serves on the national board of Jewish Voice for Peace. She works with many anti-war and Palestinian rights organizations, writing and speaking widely across the U.S. and around the world. She has served as an informal adviser to several top UN officials on Middle East issues and was twice short-listed to become the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Phyllis has written and edited eleven books. Among her latest is the just-published 7th updated edition of her popular *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. She has also written *Before & After: US Foreign Policy and the War on Terror* and *Challenging Empire: How People, Governments and the UN Defy U.S. Power*.

Prof. Mehmet Bulut, Rector, Istanbul Zaim University, Türkiye



Mehmet Bulut is the President of İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. Dr. Bulut is also a Professor of Economics and Economic History. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands in 2000 and M.A. from Posthumus Institute (1998) in the field of Economic History, and B.S. and M.A. degrees from Dokuz Eylül University in Economics. He taught at Başkent University and served as Chair of the Economics Department. He became Dean of College of Political Sciences and Vice-President at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University in 2011, and served as a member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA) in 2012. He also serves as member of the Board of Directors in several public and private companies. He is currently working on long-term economic changes and development, economic performance comparisons between countries, the economic reasons for the differences, the international political economy, the Ottoman-European-Atlantic Economic Relations, Economic History,

History of Economic Thought, economic and financial Institutions. As a visiting scholar he has been to Dalarna (Sweden), Cambridge (England), Harvard, and Princeton (US) Universities. Dr. Bulut has many publications in refereed and international academic journals including the American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient, Journal of European Economic History, Middle Eastern Studies, and Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies. He serves as the general editor of the Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance and Journal of Adam Academy of Social Sciences.

Ms. Estee Chandler, Jewish Voice for Peace, USA



Estee Chandler is the founding organizer of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) in Los Angeles, which was launched in 2010. She hosts and produces the long running Middle East in Focus Radio show on KPFK along with Nagwa Ibrahim. She was also the executive producer, co-creator and host of The Middle East Minute+, a joint project of KPFK & Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), with a 2-minute daily primer about what's going on in or about the Middle East that listeners will not hear from major corporate news outlets that day. She now serves on JVP's Board of Directors and the Chair of the JVP Action Board of Directors.

Ms. Rawan Damen, Media Consultant and Filmmaker, Jordan



Rawan Damen is a filmmaker, media consultant, and the CEO and founder of Stream Media Consultancy. She specializes in documentaries and online storytelling and has produced and directed more than 30 hours of TV documentaries that have been translated into multiple languages, including the internationally renowned award-winning documentary series Al-Nakba. Rawan worked as a senior commissioning producer at Al Jazeera Media Network for 10 years. She founded and led the innovative project Palestine Remix, the largest visual interactive website on Palestine. She holds a master's in

communications studies from Leeds University, UK. In 2015 she received the Media Creativity Award from the Arab Thought Foundation in Beirut.

Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees (Mutawalli) İlim Yayma Foundation, Parent Foundation of Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye



Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan is the Chairman of Dissemination of Knowledge Foundation, İlim Yayma Vakfı (İYV), which founded Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University (IZU) in 2010. He is also a trustee at Ibn Haldun University. He has a BA degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, with double majors in political science and economics, and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard

University, Kennedy School of Government. He pursued a PhD degree from Johns Hopkins University (SAIS) in European Studies with a focus on economic growth models of Italy and Turkey since the end of the World War II. Erdoğan has worked as an assistant at the Woodrow Wilson Center and at Johns Hopkins University as well as a consultant at the World Bank. Mr. Erdoğan is the founder and president of World Ethnosport Confederation and New Turkey Education Foundation (YETEV). He holds various positions in several organizations including Turkey Youth Foundation (TÜGVA), Turkey Foundation for Youth and Service to Education (TÜRGEV), Turkey Youth NGOs Platform, Ensar Foundation, Archers Foundation, Kartal Education Foundation, Fuat Sezgin Research Foundation on History of Science, and Darülaceze. Erdoğan, who speaks some French, Italian and Arabic in addition to English, is married and has three children.

Prof. Richard Falk, Princeton University (Emeritus), USA, Queen Mary University, London, UK



Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University, currently Chair of Global Law, Faculty of Law, Queen Mary University London, and Research Fellow, Orfalea Center of Global Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara. Falk served as UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Occupied Palestine (2008-2014). He has written several books on Palestine including *Palestine: The Legitimacy of Hope* (2014) and *Palestine's Horizons: Toward the Legitimacy of Hope* (2017). *(Re)Imagining Humane Global Governance* (2014), proposes a value-oriented assessment of world order and future trends. Among his earlier writings are *Legal Order in a Violent World* (1968) and *This Endangered Planet: Prospects and Proposals for Human Survival* (1971.) His most recent publications are *Power Shift* (2017); *Revisiting the Vietnam War* (2017); *On Nuclear Weapons: Denuclearization, Demilitarization and Disarmament* (2019). Since 2009 Falk has been annually nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has published a book of poems, *Waiting for Rainbows* (2017). His political memoir, *Public Intellectual: Life of a Citizen Pilgrim* was published by Clarity Press in February 2021.

Prof. Nader Hashemi, Center for Middle East Studies, University of Denver, USA



Nader Hashemi is the Director of the Center for Middle East Studies and an Associate Professor of Middle East and Islamic Politics at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. He obtained his doctorate from the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto and previously was an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Northwestern University and a Visiting Assistant Professor at the UCLA Global Institute. His intellectual and research interests lie at the intersection of comparative politics and political theory, in particular debates on religion and democracy, secularism and its discontents, Middle East and Islamic politics, democratic and human rights struggle in non-Western societies,

and Islam-West relations. He is the author of *Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and co-editor of *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future* (Melville House, 2011), *The Syria Dilemma* (MIT Press, 2013) and *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2017). He is frequently interviewed by PBS, NPR, CNN, Al Jazeera, Pacifica Radio and the BBC and his writings have appeared in the New York Times, Newsweek, Wall Street Journal, The Globe and Mail (Toronto), CNN.com among other media outlets.

Ms. Belkıs İbrahimhakkioğlu, İrfandan Medeniyete Derneği, Association for Wisdom and Civilization, Kudüs Platformu, Istanbul, Türkiye



Belkıs İbrahimhakkioğlu was born in 1950 in Erzurum, Türkiye. She graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Economics and worked at the Turkish Literature Foundation. She was the editor-in-chief of the Turkish Literature magazine and a board member of the foundation. Her articles were published in many magazines, particularly in the Turkish Literature magazine. She has also been a

columnist for various newspapers in Türkiye and wrote "The Life of the Prophet" for children. Her book "Watching Moments with Love" was published and widely circulated. The book talks about the author of "Marifetname", Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, of whom she is his sixth-generation grandchild. After her visit to Jerusalem in 2015, she chaired the "Kudüs Platformu", which was established by a group of young professional women in Türkiye.



Mr. Na'eem Jeenah, Afro-Middle East Center (AMEC), South Africa

Na'eem Jeenah is a well-known academic and leader in the Muslim community and among anti-capitalist and anti-war movements in South Africa. He is currently the Executive Director of the Afro-Middle East Centre, a research institute dedicated to

studying the Middle East and North Africa and relations between that region and the rest of Africa. Jeenah has also taught political studies courses at the University of the Witwatersrand and holds various Islamic qualifications through international courses completed at different universities in the Muslim world. He has organized and addressed numerous meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, and training programs on various issues related to Islam, South Africa, the Middle East, youth development, journalism, information technology and various other issues – both in South Africa and internationally.

Prof. Taher Labadi, University of Aix-Marseille, France



Taher Labadi is Research Associate at LEST (Aix-Marseille University) and at the French Institute of the Near-East (Ifpo). He received his PhD on “The political economy of colonialism in Palestine” from Paris-Dauphine University in 2015. His research interests lie at the intersection of economic policies and reform, conflict management, resistance to colonialism and knowledge production in the Middle East. Taher Labadi has authored numerous research papers and articles on Middle Eastern economies, including Palestine. His current research focuses on the political economy of export processing zones and of labour migration in Jordan.

Prof. Ahlam Muhtaseb, California State University, San Bernardino, USA



Ahlam Muhtaseb is a professor of media studies and the director of the Center for the Study of Muslim & Arab Worlds at California State University, San Bernardino. She is the recipient of the 2020 CSUSB Outstanding Scholarship, Research and Creative Activities Award and was one of the 2019-20 Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Faculty Mentor Awardees. She has an M.A. in Journalism and a Ph.D. in Digital Communication from the University of Memphis, Tennessee. Her research interests include digital communication, social media, social justice, and diasporic communities. Her most recent project is her award-winning documentary 1948: Creation

& Catastrophe. The film, co-produced and co-directed with Andy Trimlett, focuses on the year 1948 and its catastrophic consequences on the Palestinian nation which has originated from her field work in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. She won the 2019 Rebuilding Alliance “Storyteller” Award. The film also won the Jerusalem International Film Festival’s 2019 Special Jury Award in the Feature Documentary category. Currently, she works on a new documentary on the three young Muslims who were murdered in Chapel Hill in 2015, and the state of racism and Islamophobia in the United States.

Fr. Manuel Musallam, Former Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Palestine



Fr. Manuel Musallam was born in Bir Zeit, Palestine in 1938. He joined the Latin Patriarchate Minor Seminary in 1951 and was ordained Priest at the Latin Patriarchate Co-Cathedral in Jerusalem. He was a Vicar (1963-68), and a Parish Priest in Anjara, Jordan (1968), at Bir Zeit, Palestine (1970), in Jenin (1971), in Zababdeh, Palestine (1975), as well as in Gaza (1995-2009). In 2006 he was conferred the “Monsignor” title by Pope Benedict XVI. Fr. Musallam is the Founder of the Christian-Islamic Forum in Gaza, the Palestinian Folklore Groups (awarded golden medallion of Arab Youth Forum Egypt), Choir and Scouts Groups in Zababdeh, Jenin and Gaza, and a member of “Bayt al Hikma” in Gaza. He served as the head of the Independent Palestinian Committee follow-up of War Criminals in Israel, Director of Latin Schools in Gaza, Christian-Islamic Committee in Bir Zeit. He was the Editor of a set of booklets in Religious Education at elementary schools and kindergarten. Even though he has retired in 2009, he’s considered one moral clarity for the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

Prof. Maha Nassar, University of Arizona, USA



Maha Nassar is an associate professor in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Arizona where she specializes in the cultural and intellectual history of the modern Arab world. She holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago. Her first book, which received a 2018 Palestine Book Award, is titled *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* (Stanford University Press, 2017). In it, she examines how ‘48 Palestinian intellectuals connected to global decolonization movements through literary and journalistic writings. Her scholarly articles have appeared in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *Arab Studies Journal*, and the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. Dr. Nassar’s next book project examines how Palestinians have constructed and maintained a sense of peoplehood across time and space. By approaching Palestinians as a multiethnic, multireligious, and multilingual people who have migrated to, emigrated from, and lived in historic Palestine for centuries, she argues that Palestinians are both a national and transnational people. As such, they draw on pre-modern land-based identities as well as global solidarities across diasporic spaces. Dr. Nassar is also a 2018 Public Voices Fellow with the OpEd Project and a Policy Member of Al-Shabaka – The Palestinian Policy Network. Her analysis and opinion pieces have appeared in numerous U.S.-based publications including, *The Washington Post*, *+972 Magazine*, and *The Hill*.

Prof. Ilan Pappé, University of Exeter, UK



Ilán Pappé is Professor of History at the University of Exeter and the Director of the European Centre for Palestine Studies. Professor Pappé obtained his BA degree from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1979 and his D.Phil from the University of Oxford in 1984. He founded and directed the Academic Institute for Peace in Givat Haviva, Israel between 1992 to 2000 and was the Chair of the Emil Tuma Institute for Palestine Studies in Haifa between 2000 and 2006.

Professor Pappé was a senior lecturer in the department of Middle Eastern History and the Department of Political Science in Haifa University, Israel between 1984 and 2006. He was appointed as chair in the department of History in the Cornwall Campus, 2007-2009 and became a fellow of the IAIS in 2010. His research focuses on the modern Middle East and in particular the history of Israel and Palestine. He has also written on multiculturalism, Critical Discourse Analysis and on Power and Knowledge in general. Professor Pappé is the author of many books including the best seller *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* and *The Forgotten Palestinians*. In 2017, Pappé received a Life Achievement Award at the Palestine Book Award.

Prof. John Quigley, Ohio State University, USA



John Quigley is Professor Emeritus at the Moritz College of Law of The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, USA. He is author of numerous books and other writings on the history of Palestine from the standpoint of the norms of international law. In 2020, he presented a brief as *amicus curiae* to the International Criminal Court to make the point that Palestine is a state.

Prof. Loubna Qutami, University of California, Los Angeles, USA



Loubna Qutami is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Qutami is a former President's Postdoctoral Fellow from the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley (2018-2020) and received her PhD from the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Riverside (2018). Qutami's research examines transnational Palestinian youth movements after the 1993 Oslo Accords through the 2011 Arab Uprisings. Her work is based on scholar-activist ethnographic research methods. Qutami's broader scholarly interests include Palestine, critical refugee studies, the racialization of Arab/Muslim communities in the U.S., settler-

colonialism, youth movements, transnationalism and indigenous and Third World Feminism.

Mr. Josh Ruebner, Author and Political Analyst, USA



Josh Ruebner is Adjunct Lecturer in Justice and Peace Studies at Georgetown University and is beginning his PhD in Palestine Studies at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Shattered Hopes: Obama's Failure to Broker Israeli-Palestinian Peace* and *Israel: Democracy or Apartheid State?* He is a former Analyst in Middle East Affairs at Congressional Research Service and holds a graduate degree in International Affairs from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

Sh. Ekrima Sabri, Imam, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islamic Supreme Committee, Jerusalem, Palestine



Sheikh Ekrima Sabri is the head of the Supreme Islamic Council and former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine (1994-2006). He was born in 1939 in Qalqilya and remains an imam of the Blessed Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. Sheikh Ekrima obtained his high school diploma from the Salahyia School in Nablus, where his father was a judge. He obtained a bachelor's degree in religion and Arabic language from the University of Baghdad in 1963, and received a master's degree in Sharia from An-Najah National University in Nablus. He obtained a doctorate in general jurisprudence from the Faculty of Sharia and Law at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. Sheikh Sabri has held a number of positions, including director of preaching and guidance in the West Bank, director of the College of Islamic Sciences in Abu Dis, and a general mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinian lands. He is the founder and president of the Council of Scholars and Preachers in Palestine in 1992, the head of the Supreme Fatwa Council in Palestine and the preacher of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and he is a founding member of the Association of the International Islamic Conference of Mosques in Makkah, and a member

of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy in Jeddah. He was elected president of the Supreme Islamic Commission in Al-Quds Al-Sharif in 1997. In August 2018, Sabri was awarded the International Islamic Human Rights Award in Iran. He has been arrested several times by the Israeli military for his activities against the occupation.

Dr. Omar Zahzah, Palestine Youth Movement, USA



Omar Zahzah is a writer, activist for Palestine and is currently the Education and Advocacy Coordinator for Eyewitness Palestine and a member of the Palestinian Youth Movement. He received his PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2020. His PhD dissertation was titled *Undercover and Hyper-Visible: Security Poetics and Pacification Prosaics in African American and Arab American Literature*. Omar's dissertation analyzes how racialized subjects subjected to hyper-surveillance and policing use creative expression as a means of capturing and resisting these processes of discriminatory disciplinarity, as well as anticipating new possibilities of social and worldly conviviality. Omar's political articles on Palestine have appeared in outlets spanning from Mondoweiss, the Huffington Post and The New York Times, and Omar's academic publications on Palestine, settler-colonialism, and Zionist repression have appeared in or are forthcoming from publications including *Transmotion* and *Arab Studies Quarterly*.

CIGA Vision

To be a premiere research institution for ideas, analysis, and policy recommendations on global affairs impacting the Muslim World, and to foster future relations with world powers based on shared principles, common interests, and mutual respect.

Mission Statement

Local and Regional Policy Research and Application Center is an independent, nonprofit, research and public policy institution based in Istanbul, Türkiye, and affiliated with Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. Its mission is “To conduct high quality research and analysis, educate the public and policymakers, train experts, and propose novel ideas and policy recommendations regarding global policies and relations impacting the Islamic world, and the development and progress of Muslim societies.”

Conference Co-sponsors

Kudüs Platformu of the Istanbul Association for Wisdom and Civilization (IMD) is dedicated to dialogue among civilizations and support of the cause of Jerusalem through education and charity.

The European Centre for Palestine Studies (ECPS) at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, UK aims to function as a hub for intellectual engagement with the Palestine question, facilitating scholarly research, helping to refine public discussion, and offering programs for postgraduate study.

The Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) at the University of Denver in the U.S. is part of The Institute for Comparative and Regional Studies (ICRS) at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies. It is an academic and policy research center, dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and public understanding of Middle Eastern societies in a global context.

The Global Coalition for Quds and Palestine (GCQP) is based in Beirut, Lebanon. Its purpose is to establish a coalition around the world for joint action towards the mobilization of the Ummah's efforts to perform its role in supporting the cause of Jerusalem and Palestine.

The Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC) is based in Johannesburg, South Africa and aims to foster, produce and disseminate the highest quality of research on the Middle East, to maintain public discussion and to help shape the public discourse on issues related to the Middle East.

Challenging Apartheid in Palestine: Reclaiming the Narrative, Formulating a Vision

Ever since the advent of the Zionist movement towards the end of the 19th century, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become one of the most intractable struggles in modern times. The Zionist movement has been successful in establishing a settler-colonialist state in the historical land of Palestine by implementing several strategies and employing varying tactics to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, starting over a century ago and culminating in the 1948 Nakba. They maintain a system of military control in the West Bank and a complete siege over Gaza to deny the Palestinians basic political and human rights. Some of their tactics have included the forced expulsion of millions of Palestinians and the denial of their return, as well as their descendants'; the confiscation and annexation of territories and holy shrines; the establishment of a security state, where over half of the population in the historical land of Palestine are subject to military rule and discriminatory practices protected by unjust laws; the institutionalization of an ID system based on ethnicity; the establishment of Jewish-only colonies/settlements; the construction of separate roads for Israeli citizens around many of these colonies; the use of hundreds of military checkpoints; erecting the separation wall around the majority of the Palestinian communities, thus creating Palestinian West Bank enclaves; the use of Palestinians as cheap labor; sanctioning inequities in infrastructure, legal rights, and access to land and resources; instituting a discriminatory legal structure, including a marriage law, and the passing of a citizenship and Jewish nationality law; the continuous Judaization of Jerusalem and denial of religious rights for Muslims and Christians; the use of assassinations as a tool to eliminate thousands of Palestinians and other supporters around the world for resisting the brutal occupation; as well as countless other tactics to usurp Palestinian territories and exclude as many of the Palestinians from their historical land as possible. Such strategies and tactics used by Israel over decades have resembled, even surpassed many aspects of the South African Apartheid regime of a bygone era, and constitute blatant forms of neocolonialism and a new form of an Israeli Apartheid system, contrary to international and humanitarian laws. The chapters in this volume examine many aspects of the Palestinian issue with emphasis on how to challenge and dismantle the racist system of structural colonization and control in the historical land of Palestine.

From the Introduction

Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Press

CHALLENGING APARTHEID IN PALESTINE: RECLAIMING THE NARRATIVE, FORMULATING A VISION

EDITED BY
SAMI A. AL-ARIAN

Ever since the advent of the Zionist movement towards the end of the 19th century, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become one of the most intractable struggles in modern times. The Zionist movement has been successful in establishing a settler-colonialist state in the historical land of Palestine by implementing several strategies and employing varying tactics to ethnically cleanse the Palestinians, starting over a century ago and culminating in the 1948 Nakba. They maintain a system of military control in the West Bank and a complete siege over Gaza to deny the Palestinians basic political and human rights. Some of their tactics have included the forced expulsion of millions of Palestinians and the denial of their return, as well as their descendants'; the confiscation and annexation of territories and holy shrines; the establishment of a security state, where over half of the population in the historical land of Palestine are subject to military rule and discriminatory practices protected by unjust laws; the institutionalization of an ID system based on ethnicity; the establishment of Jewish-only colonies/settlements; the construction of separate roads for Israeli citizens around many of these colonies; the use of hundreds of military checkpoints; erecting the separation wall around the majority of the Palestinian communities, thus creating Palestinian West Bank enclaves; the use of Palestinians as cheap labor; sanctioning inequities in infrastructure, legal rights, and access to land and resources; instituting a discriminatory legal structure, including a marriage law, and the passing of a citizenship and Jewish nationality law; the continuous Judaization of Jerusalem and denial of religious rights for Muslims and Christians; the use of assassinations as a tool to eliminate thousands of Palestinians and other supporters around the world for resisting the brutal occupation; as well as countless other tactics to usurp Palestinian territories and exclude as many of the Palestinians from their historical land as possible. Such strategies and tactics used by Israel over decades have resembled, even surpassed many aspects of the South African Apartheid regime of a bygone era, and constitute blatant forms of neocolonialism and a new form of an Israeli Apartheid system, contrary to international and humanitarian laws. The chapters in this volume examine many aspects of the Palestinian issue with emphasis on how to challenge and dismantle the racist system of structural colonization and control in the historical land of Palestine.

From the Introduction