2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

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States Of Despair: History, Politics, And The Struggle For Palestine

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Echoes of the Past

Hope is said to have a bitter taste. Nowhere is that more the case than in the Middle East where the possibilities for peace have been squandered and the longings for justice have grown ever more burdensome over the last half-century. Worry over the treatment of Arabs by Jews stretches back to the last century over a host of modern Jewish intellectuals including Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem among others. But their cautionary warnings were ignored, if not derided, by the Jewish mainstream. It is ironic since just these thinkers implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, anticipated that the Palestinians would shoulder the compensatory costs of the European holocaust. This historical trick of fate would serve as the source of an ideological competition concerning who is the real victim that still poisons the possibility of reasoned debate between Jews and Palestinians.

Jews had, understandably, made a moral demand for a national haven of safety following World War II and Europe, guilt-ridden by its recent past, was willing to sanction one so long as it was somewhere else: like in "the holy land." Just as legitimately, however, its Arab inhabitants insisted that they had no part in the holocaust and that they should not be forced to pay such a terrible price for the blood spilled by others. There was one way for Israelis to square the moral circle: understand the creation of the new "Jewish" state as based on the provision of "a land without a people for a people without a land." This slogan coined in 1901 by Israel Zangwill, who ironically never believed it applied to Palestine in the first place, became perhaps *the* founding myth of Israel. It projected the creation of life in an empty desert by a "chosen people," a cultivated people wronged by history, at last able to build its destiny through intelligence, bravery, and perseverance. Unfortunately, however, the land was not empty or bereft of civilization: it had to be made so.

Herein lies the contribution of the various "revisionist" historians like Benny Morris and Ilan Pappe as well as independent-minded sociologists like Baruch Kimmerling. Their political opinions differ radically but their research illustrates with scholarly objectivity that the "people without a land" had actually created "the land without a people" through what today would be termed "ethnic cleansing." Creating Israel involved forcibly expelling 750,000 Arab inhabitants, eliminating over 400 villages, employing rape and torture, and turning those Arabs living in the new state into second-class citizens to ensure its "Jewish" character. But the old myth refuses to die. The image still exists of a heroic battle waged by a small community of peaceful Jews against a vast army of savage Arabs, the assault on the Israeli David by the anti-Semitic Goliath, which led to the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.

War followed war. An attempted seizure of the Suez Canal by Israel with the backing of France and England took place in 1956 until, fearful of increased European influence in the Middle East, the United States demanded that the invaders withdraw. And they did. Then, in 1967, Israel attacked an allied force of Arab armies-from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan- massing on its borders. The “six day” war culminated in a humiliating defeat for the Arab world and the capture of the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the Sinai, and the West Bank. It was in response to these events that the Security Council of the United Nations passed the famous resolution #242, which demanded Israeli withdrawal from the conquered territories. Here began the shift in American policy: Israel now appeared as the dominant force in the region and a bulkhead against the Soviet Union with whose interests the Arab world became identified in the eyes of the United States. Also, in 1968, the Palestinian Liberation Organization formed and, a year later, Yasser Arafat was elected its chairman. Incarnating the demand for a Palestinian state, the PLO was born under the long shadow of the “catastrophe” (*nakba*) of 1948, the expulsion resulting from the creation of Israel, and the disastrous military defeat of 1967.

Cycles of Violence

Terror and denial expressed the desperate reality of defeat and colonial oppression. There followed the hijacking of airplanes, the assassination of eleven Israeli athletes in 1972 at the Munich Olympics, and the refusal of the PLO to accept the existence of Israel. The opprobrium heaped by the western press upon the Arab world in general, and the PLO in particular, intensified following the surprise attack by Egypt and Syria in 1973 on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. This culminated in yet another defeat of the Arabs by the Israelis. The money began pouring in from the United States and the Jewish diaspora. A nation under siege faced a nest of terrorists with whom negotiation was impossible. It didn’t matter that in 1987, following the Israeli military incursion into Lebanon, an *intifada* -or “resistance” – spontaneously took shape in Palestine that placed primary emphasis upon civil disobedience, a refusal to cooperate with the Israeli authorities, and the emergence of a network of non-governmental organizations to build communal solidarity and resistance. But the imbalance of economic, political, and military power grew in favor of Israel. Settlements were expanded, constrictions on the populace increased, repression intensified. Indeed, by the time the “second intifada” began in September of 2000, Palestinians were facing an Israeli nation that had become the seventh largest military machine in the world, a major arms dealer to previously colonized countries, and the beneficiary of $4 billion per year in foreign aid from the United States.

Fifteen thousand people were arrested, or sent into exile, or had their houses destroyed, or were hurt or killed during and after the first *intifada*. Committed activists were replaced by inexperienced youths, armed gangs arose, the lure of fundamentalism grew, Palestinian civil society was virtually destroyed, and conditions in the community degenerated. Such was the basis for the new reliance on suicide bombings and organized violence generated during the second *intifada*, which a militant Palestinian friend told me “did not deserve the name of an *intifada*,” made it different from the earlier uprising.

This most recent action was provoked by Ariel Sharon who, surrounded by 10,000 troops, walked up the Temple Mount – known to Arabs as the "noble sanctuary" or *Hareem al-Shareef* – as a publicity stunt. A hero to the right-wing religious settlers of the West Bank, and despised by the Palestinians for his role in the slaughter of refugees in the Lebanese towns of Shabron and Shitilla in 1982, Sharon symbolized by his actions that Israel still exerted sovereignty not merely over one of the holiest Islamic shrines, but over Jerusalem itself. Rioting took place in response to this provocation. The Palestinians attacked with stones, Molotov cocktails, and a few automatic weapons while the Israelis retaliated with live ammunition, anti-tank rockets, helicopters, and missiles. The Israeli military systematically destroyed the houses of terrorist "sympathizers" and family members; thousands were arrested or tortured; citizens of the occupied territories were denied the most elementary medical and social services; and, finally, construction for "security" purposes was begun on more than seven hundred and fifty roadblocks and a huge "wall of separation." Jenin has been reduced to rubble; nearly half of the 35,000 inhabitants of Hebron have left the city, and Qualquilya was literally closed off from the world for 22 days. Since the beginning of the second *intifada* more than 2600 Palestinians, mostly young people, have lost their lives and more than 24,000 have been wounded as against roughly 800 deaths and 6000 wounded among Israelis.

Israel has used the eruption of the second *intifada* to again expand the number of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, further curtail civil liberties, seize Palestinian bank accounts, build a wall, and ward off what Binjamin Netanyahu has called "the demographic threat." All this was undertaken by Israel in the name of "security" as elements of the Palestinian resistance, such as *Hamas* and *Hezbollah*, seized upon the idea of suicide bombing. This decision has resulted in a moral and a political disaster for the Palestinians. Any possibility of capturing the moral high ground has been squandered. Innocent lives have been destroyed and the dramatic pictures of terrorist attacks-young Israelis torn limb from limb in a bombed out discotheque-have tended to eradicate the real if less dramatic oppression that Palestinians suffer every day. A culture of violence is fostered by the suicide bombings that will undoubtedly leave its marks on the post-independence society. While *Hamas* has roots in the Palestinian community, since its members provide a host of social services, other paramilitary groups are little more than gangs of armed thugs that also fight amongst each other. Sectarian organizations such as these would suffer from *any* peace, or the erection of *any* democratic state, and they are placing their own narrow interests over those of the Palestinian people. Their tactics have brought increased repression by the imperialist enemy and, perhaps even worse, they have provided a plausible justification for the use of such repression. Terror has blocked progress in resolving the crisis and Edward Said was surely correct in stating the need for a "Palestinian Mandela."

Not to speak out against terrorist tactics and suicide bombings because of some misplaced sense of "solidarity" with the Palestinian people is both self-defeating and an abdication of political responsibility. Such criticism is legitimate, however, only if the systematic institutional exercise of violence by Israel on the Palestinians as a whole is taken into account. Simply indulging in moral outrage over suicide bombings, especially when Jewish organizations like the *Irgun* and the "Stern Gang" also employed terrorist tactics in the struggle for

independence, also smacks of hypocrisy. A sense of reciprocity, a mixture of political sobriety and moral sensitivity, is required for dealing with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians: apologies need formulation; some form of compensation must be provided for crimes committed; and "truth and reconciliation" commissions must be assembled to begin the process of psychological healing.

There is, however, no substitute for a "political" resolution of the conflict. A negotiated settlement-rather than any unilateral withdrawal by Israel-is necessary if only because the actual territorial claims of both Jews and Palestinians still retain a certain arbitrary character. Israel is the product of exiles from a host of other countries that found themselves together in what can only be considered an arbitrary homeland while Palestine, first institutionally organized by British colonizers who brought the European state model to the Middle East, can justify its borders with recourse to little more than historical exigency and a set of resolutions voted upon by the United Nations. The arbitrary character of *any* particular territorial solution to the problem has only intensified the appeal of blind nationalism and the ability to manipulate it by elites-especially those who benefit from the existing imbalance of power. Thus, today, it is less a matter of proposing one fixed solution or another than crystallizing the concrete demands around which resistance can be mobilized.

The Path from Geneva

Only one serious proposal for peace is on the table, the Geneva Accord: it was ultimately signed by twenty Israelis and twenty Palestinians, representing a broad spectrum of civil society in the two camps, after more than a year of negotiation. The document lacks any official status and it is formally recognized neither by the Israeli State nor the Palestinian Authority. But this "treaty," or initiative for peace has created an enormous controversy among those committed to justice for the Palestinians. It can be seen as the heir of the Oslo talks of 1993 between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, or the Camp David talks of 2000 sponsored by President Bill Clinton, or even the "road map" proposed by President George W. Bush and the "quartet" of great powers: France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia. Nevertheless, viewing the new initiative as a dull imitation of the past would be a mistake.

The Geneva Accord provides a detailed model of a two-state solution to the current conflict, a precise map for the permanent agreement, and the framers explicitly chose to move from the large issues to the smaller ones in contrast to the logic of the "road map." There is also a sense in which each party to the conflict acknowledges the rights of the other: meaning neither state should infringe on the rights of any of its citizens and, in contrast to previous agreements, each should exist as a contiguous state. Security will be predicated on turning Palestine into a de-militarized state and subjecting the Israeli military presence to a multinational force. Israel would withdraw to the 1967 border, surrender parts of the Negev adjacent to its border with the Gaza Strip, and keep control of the "Wailing Wall." Palestine, for its part, would take control of East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. The Holy City would be divided in two while the Old City will become an "open" city.

A two state solution amenable to Palestinians and Jews has roots in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that promised Jews a homeland without disrupting any existing Arab communities and the British "White Paper" of 1922 that divided Palestine into two administrative districts. The two-state solution was explicitly proposed in November of 1947 when the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to partition the existing state of Palestine. Jews accepted while the Arab leadership, which lacked both foresight and unity, rejected any deal. The offer of 1947 was probably the best offer the Palestinians ever received precisely because Israel was still a dream rather than a superpower. In the following years, however, Israel grew more powerful and, as that occurred, its offers grew more meager while the concessions it demanded from the Palestinian side grew more stark. At the talks in Camp David of 2000, in fact, what remained on the table was a truncated non-contiguous state in which control over roads, water, and electricity-and always "security"-would remain in the hands of the Israelis. Some felt the deal was a starting point and that it should be accepted: others that it didn't go far enough and that, essentially, it was a sell-out. The arguments are not very different from those surrounding the Geneva Accords.

But history is a harsh teacher: it becomes apparent simply from the maps of the two-state solution, or what should count as two states, that the longed for state of Palestine has diminished in both its size and its potential for the exercise of sovereignty. Should the "unilateral withdrawal" recently threatened by Ariel Sharon actually take place, the result will be a Palestinian "state" essentially composed of part of the West Bank plus Gaza with the another part of the West Bank and Israel in the middle. That is not a product of circumstance but of geo-political developments whereby Israel has become the seventh largest military power on the planet and *the* favored recipient of foreign aid form the United States, which amounts to over $4 billion per year, while Palestine has grown irrevocably weaker with an economy near collapse and unemployment reaching over 90% in some of the occupied territories. What held in the past holds will also, undoubtedly, hold for the present and the immediate future: the terms of any deal will reflect the imbalance of power existing between the two adversaries and that imbalance is increasingly tilting in favor of Israel.

Source: The Palestine Monitor

Urgency seemingly speaks in favor of those committed to the Geneva Accords. Israel is becoming more not less recalcitrant, which alone explains the unofficial endorsement-if not the official lack of endorsement-of this peace initiative by Yasser Arafat. As things stand, moreover, the existing paralysis in negotiations is producing a pent-up frustration that will inevitably explode into new violence among the Palestinians. Many critics of the Geneva Accord, however, feel that they have been burned once too often. They maintain that the negotiators actually represent nothing other than themselves, that the Accord favors Israel, and that the only way to deal with a new situation is by posing the need for a bi-national state. Palestinians and Israelis are seen as inextricably bound together by the infrastructure that has been created. To deny this is to deny reality. That is why, in their view, every past initiative for peace has produced what Tocqueville termed "a crisis of rising expectations" resulting only in increased frustration, mistrust, and a new cycle of violence. Neither the sense of urgency created by the

crisis in the Middle East nor the fact that the Geneva Accord is the only game in town should, in their view, blind citizens to the huge obstacles facing its implementation.

Obstacles and Alternatives

What would be the contours of Palestine? The ideal situation would be for Israel to withdraw to the "green line" or the borders of 1967. It would surrender 22% of what was left for the Palestinians in 1948 and then annexed in 1967. But there is first the question of negotiating land that, from the standpoint of the Palestinians, was already theirs to begin with. The "occupied territories" have also already been repopulated with over 200,000 settlers and 160 settlements of which, according to the Geneva Accord, 110,000 settlers and 140 settlements will be relocated. But these figures don't include another 200,000 settlers living in parts of the West Bank that were annexed as Jerusalem. Population transfers of this sort are also difficult under the best of circumstances and, in this instance, the possibility of violence-and perhaps even civil war-must be taken seriously given that many of the inhabitants are Zionist and religious fanatics. These settlements are, moreover, growing at a rapid pace. It is not simply that new ones are being built, a matter on which the Israeli government constantly equivocates in public, but that existing settlements are expanding over more and more territory.

Then, too, there is the infrastructure. Land has been seized, water placed under control, segregated roads connecting Jewish settlements and disconnecting Palestinian towns have been constructed, and a system of permits and checkpoints have been introduced to immobilize Palestinian citizens. Above all, however, there is the "wall of separation." Still unfinished, 150 kilometers of the wall have already been built at a cost of $2.5 million per kilometer. Cutting through the West Bank, rigidly dividing towns like Abu Dis, and completely encircling others like Qualquilya, the wall is protecting Jewish settlements by creating isolated cantons, ghettos, or "Bantustans" within the occupied territories that should comprise the sovereign state of Palestine. Constructing the wall has enabled Israel to annex fertile Arab lands, destroy arable soil in what remains of the occupied territories, and uproot more than two hundred thousand trees once and olive groves owned by Palestinians. The wall is ruining Arab farmers, hindering Arab workers, and systematically strangling the economy of Arab towns: it has, according to the International Red Cross, enabled Israel to go "far beyond what is permissible for an occupying power under international humanitarian law."

But the Geneva Accord says nothing about any of this. It remains content with noting the need for an unspecified "physical barrier" to preserve the security of Israel even though the wall undermines the prospect of a contiguous and sovereign Palestine. Critics of the Geneva Accord suggest that only an over-riding effort from within a bi-national state has the possibility of bringing down the wall. It is the same when dealing with the "right of return." Atrocities committed throughout history is seen by Israel as legitimating a "right of return" for all Jews. But the Geneva Accord expects a waiver of this right by descendents of the dispossessed inhabitants of Palestine who, now numbering roughly 3.5 million people, are living in refugee camps under unspeakable conditions. The return of Palestinians to Israel would, after all, change the demographic composition of the "Jewish" state and, even while fighting goes on in

the present, compromise the “right of return” for those Jews confronted with anti-Semitism in the future.

Advocates of the Geneva Accord essentially claim that allowing for the “right of return” would torpedo any peace agreement. Abandonment of a “Jewish” state is something Israelis will not accept and most Palestinians, it is argued, prefer their own state rather than the unrealizable dream of a bi-national state. It is unlikely that 3.5 million Palestinians will exercise the right of return and, with an eye on what German Jews received from the postwar German government, monetary compensation might be offered as an alternative.” Without some explicit policy, however, the “right of return” will weigh upon every attempt at reconciliation. Marketing the Geneva Accord becomes difficult when it appears that peace is being exchanged for justice.

But there are other problems with the two-state solution that deserve consideration. The assumption made by those who framed the Geneva Accord is that two democracies will emerge from an officially signed treaty. That assumption, however, is highly questionable. Within Israel, even without considering the occupied territories, Arabs already comprise over 20% of the population and the “demographic threat” is growing. Excluded from the political mainstream in a variety of ways, victims of discrimination and a radically unequal distribution of services, integrating these Israeli Arabs and providing them with equality will increasingly threaten the “Jewish” character of the state: it is not difficult to see a growing tension between preserving the traditional identity of Israel and maintaining its “democratic” commitments.

As for Palestine, it lacks liberal political traditions, a bureaucratic infrastructure, an indigenous bourgeoisie, and a sovereign authority capable of securing what Max Weber considered decisive: a monopoly over the means of coercion. Palestine, too, will face the conflict between satisfying its orthodox religious groups and building a secular republic. Even with the creation of two democracies, moreover, there is no guarantee that Israel will find peace either with its fanatical enemies or its other neighbors. Not simply a Palestinian state but a democratic state with a centralized bureaucracy and a security force will be required to crack down on the various organized groups of religious fanatics and secular thugs and render them anachronistic. Ensuring peace will also depend upon Israel culturally fitting into the Middle East rather than looking back with longing to Europe. The Geneva Accord does not deal with the question of a democratic Palestine and as a narrowly political treaty, by definition, cannot deal with the cultural relation between Israel and its neighbors.

The vision of a bi-national state seemingly solves many of the deficiencies associated with the two-state solution proposed by the Geneva Accords. Border problems and security arrangements would obviously be settled. The “wall of separation,” the privileges currently accorded Jewish citizens and settlers would be abolished along with attempts to identify the state with either Islam or Judaism. The bi-national state would also offer an elegant solution to the problem of return by guaranteeing it to both Palestinians and Jews. The new bi-national state could also make use of the bureaucracy and institutional political arrangements that are already in place. It would be in the interest of Palestinians to embrace liberal democracy, since they would constitute the majority, while it would be in the interest of Israelis to embrace

liberal democracy in order to protect their civil liberties as a minority. With a bi-national state, moreover, it might finally be possible to speak about a lasting peace and a state that would come to terms with its neighbors and fit into the over-riding culture of the Middle East.

A bi-national solution, however, presupposes a great deal. It calls for a suspension of mistrust inherited from the past and forms of solidarity based on religion and ethnicity. Ignoring the emotional power of "identity," and how a deficit of rationality has helped bring about the current crisis, the bi-national solution depends upon both Israelis and Palestinians extending their loyalty to a secular state whose appeal is precisely its rationality. Integrating an advanced bureaucratic state with a still occupied territory, wherein warring paramilitary organizations factions and socio-economic degeneration express the lack of a single recognized institutional authority, should not be underestimated. There is also not much of a fit between the political traditions of Israel and Palestine: whether they can be made to fit remains an open question. Proponents of the Geneva Accord are surely correct in noting that the vision of a bi-national state is unacceptable to the majority in both countries and, more important, that there is no mechanism for translating it into reality. They claim that the two-state solution is the only realistic alternative. Nevertheless, even if it offers an important framework for the future, its acceptance in the present is only marginally less unrealistic and utopian than belief in the possibility of erecting a bi-national state.

For all these reasons, then, it might be useful to consider a third option that combines the best of both the two-state solution and the bi-national state. The historical precedent is, interestingly enough, the English proposals of 1947 that essentially envisioned a *confederation* based on two relatively autonomous political states connected by an economic union. Under such a scenario, ethnic and religious identifications would remain in place. Conflict between two distinct political bureaucracies with differing political traditions might have a chance of diminishing through the incentives attendant upon an economic union. Prospects of investment in Palestine, along with wages and benefits equal with those existing in Israel, can be seen as providing a material foundation for "security" and the elimination of old territorial ambitions. But there is also little doubt that proponents of such a confederation would have to deal with many of the obstacles facing supporters of the two-state solution and a bi-national state. These include, in the first instance, the intransigence of the current regime ruling Israel. Indeed, especially under present circumstances, it might be best to begin thinking in terms other than those of an over-riding institutional solution.

Concluding Remarks

There is no possibility of an enduring peace so long as Israel is ruled by a coalition unified by imperialist ambitions and military suppression of the Palestinians. The situation is growing grim within Israel. According to recent polls 65% believe that Israel is crumbling economically and 73% believe that it is crumbling socially. A sense of despair is taking hold that is only intensified by the ever-present danger of terrorist attacks and the growing belief that Israel is turning into a pariah nation. Instead of thinking about the impact of Israeli policy, however, secular Zionists and religious zealots are content instead to view these developments as

products of a “new anti-Semitism.”

“New” about the “new anti-Semitism” is only that Jews are no longer fragmented among themselves or powerless victims of a Christian world. Jews now have a powerful homeland, powerful lobbying organizations in all the western democratic states, and powerful allies like the United States. No longer are there fascist organizations fueled by anti-Semitic ideology, no longer is anti-Semitism taught in the universities and acceptable in polite society, and no longer is there an anti-Semitic movement in any of the democracies with any serious possibility at attaining power. New is only the way in which old-fashioned prejudices are interwoven with the barbarous treatment of the Palestinians, the attempts of Ariel Sharon and his supporters to create a “greater Israel,” and the policies of the United States in the Middle East. These policies are seen as vindicating the old beliefs in Jewish power and the Jewish world conspiracy associated with the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Jewish advocacy organizations are meanwhile busy identifying every criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism and thus fanning their own version of “blowback.” A synagogue is defaced; a cemetery is desecrated; a Jewish individual is molested in the street. These are terrible acts and inexcusable. Highlighting them without taking into account the impact of Israeli policy on the Palestinians, however, is simply obscene. The starting point is clear enough for *any* serious engagement with the politics of the Middle East. It involves *insisting that the holocaust should not be used to justify current Israeli policies and that criticism of such policies should not be identified with anti-Semitism.*

Enough Jews are tired of a gang of radical Zionists and religious zealots whose politics associates what is best about their tradition with militarism, imperialism, religious obscurantism, and the most blatant racism. Above 60% of the Israeli citizenry favor some kind of two-state solution to the current crisis. Various non-governmental organizations like “Peace Now,” groups like “Women in Black,” and the “refuseniks”-soldiers unwilling to serve in the occupied territories-are building blocks of a very different civil society than what currently exists. Such groups deserve support along with, especially, those engaged in organizing Israeli Arabs into a political force. Still, it would be a mistake simply to ignore institutional politics in favor of building opposition in civil society.

Politicians of imperialism and discrimination exist not merely in the Likud party of Ariel Sharon. The Labor Party has shown itself almost as untrustworthy as its rival”: the idea for erecting a “wall of separation,” in fact, originally came from the Labor party. But when confronted by one enemy carrying a stick and by another wielding a gun, using an old quip employed by Leon Trotsky during the rise of Nazism, it is better to first disarm the one with the gun. The same applies here: any possibility for peace initially rests on *ending the regime of Sharon.*

Indictment on bribery charges may loom in the future, but Sharon’s proposal for a “unilateral withdrawal” from the Gaza and part of the West Bank is evidencing a measure of political success in the present. It has received the backing of the United States and it has undercut any incentive for Israel to engage in serious negotiations with the Palestinians. As orthodox rabbis associated with the settlers compare the proposed evacuation of Gaza with the “appeasement”

of Hitler in 1938 Jibril Rajub, the Security adviser to Yasser Arafat, has vowed that the Palestinian Authority will "fight" *Hamas* should its leaders attempt to "take over" the Gaza Strip. Sharon thus winds up in the best of all possible worlds. His proposal to withdraw from "some" of the occupied lands evokes an aura of moderation even while Israeli dominance is strengthened by the looming prospect of civil war in Palestine.

Calling for a negotiated settlement is the alternative to unilateral withdrawal from sparsely populated areas in the occupied territories that would leave Israel in control of land separating the Gaza from Egypt. Such an effort for peace, however, requires a political point of departure. The Geneva Accord should not be billed as a cure for the ills that plague the region: it ignores too many points of substance and new "facts on the ground" may ultimately render it anachronistic. Still, it makes no sense simply to dismiss this peace initiative in the name of a bi-national state whose structure remains to be defined, but whose creation will also require negotiations. Creating institutions capable of providing for the democratic self-determination should be the principle aim of those interested in the future of Palestine. Debate over the future state is, indeed, probably less important than clarity over the *preconditions* for *any* solution.

This makes confronting the existence of "the wall" a matter of crucial importance. Palestine has already sought its condemnation by the International Court of Justice at The Hague, whose jurisdiction on this matter is denied by both Israel and the United States, while Israeli civil rights groups have brought the legality of the "wall of separation" before the Israeli Supreme Court. Security may call for a physical barrier but it does not demand a combination of ditches, barricades, barbed wire, and an indefinite number of checkpoints created to humiliate the populace, devastate the environment, strangle the economy in the occupied territories, and fragment the community. Even while claims are being made that a few kilometers will be destroyed in the encircled town of Baka al Sharkyeh, which complements the strategy of unilateral withdrawal, construction of the wall in Beit Seira, Beit Surik, the north-western region of Jerusalem, and elsewhere is continuing at a rapid pace. That "the wall must fall," as the new slogan demands, is a precondition both for creating a functional Palestinian state, a confederation, or a bi-national arrangement.

It is the same with ending the occupation. This can only mean calling for Israel's withdrawal to the "green line" or the 1967 borders, and either abandoning the Jewish settlements *tout court* with an eye toward creating a functional Palestinian state or integrating them into a bi-national solution to the crisis. Leaving settlements within Palestine, especially those that "canton-ize" the nation, will obviously undercut the substantive exercise of sovereignty and also create an irredentist minority within the new state. It is hard to imagine withdrawal to the "green line," however, without pressure being placed on Israel. In spite of his promises, President Bush did not "ride herd" on the most powerful party to the conflict in the Middle East. His "road map," which sought to begin with small points of agreement and then work up to a Palestinian state, lacked any enforcement mechanism or serious incentives for Israel to restrain its imperialist appetite. Only the threat of disinvestments and curbing the $4 billion per year in aid it receives from the United States can help bring about an *end to the occupation.*

Any other more piecemeal approach to securing peace will be predicated on what Palestine-not Israel-will concede. That is because *all* the land being discussed was taken from the Palestinians in the first place. Recognizing this reality, if for no other reason, makes it necessary to *end the silence over the right of return*. The issue can conceivably be resolved in terms of Palestinians being allowed to exercise this right, being provided monetary compensation for relinquishing it, or being given a choice between the two. In any event, however, a secure peace-a peace with legitimacy-cannot be achieved by sacrificing justice.

Treaties are unnecessary between friends and compromises are irrelevant when opponents share the same interest. The compromises required for any settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine can always be understood as a betrayal of ethnic, national, or religious ambitions. No treaty can compensate for past injustices or sacrifices undertaken in the name of the "cause." Any genuine possibility for dealing with the deeper problems and the more acute feelings of injury requires a new public attitude that will show less concern for the passions than for the interests. The Bible and the Koran won't help in solving the conflict: the language of national security no less than national self-determination has been corrupted. Public intellectuals have a role to play in mitigating the sense of hopeless frustration no less than squashing hopes of a utopian solution. They can indeed help foster the requisite combination of liberalism and realism necessary both for suspending the prospect of protracted violence and perhaps, ultimately, developing a culture of reconciliation.

Stephen Eric Bronner *is Professor (II) of Political Science at Rutgers University and the Senior Editor of Logos. The paperback edition of his* A Rumor about the Jews: Antisemitism, Conspiracy, and the Protocols of Zion *was just released by Oxford University Press.*

Orwell And Kafka In Israel-palestine

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

In the last two years I have made three trips to Israel and Occupied Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza Strip). Each trip represents a journey into an approximation of the literary nightmares of George Orwell and Franz Kafka. To a certain extent we are all subject to the Orwellian version of these nightmares. It was Orwell's conviction that "political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectful." Here in the United States we ought to recognize the truth of this maxim for we have once again been drawn into deadly foreign adventures based on lies and exaggeration. However, in Israel the influence of "political language" has reached a unique level of intensity. Increasingly, many Israelis live in a "closed information environment" wherein an insidious Orwellian "newspeak" (a language of propaganda aimed at creating ideologically determined boundaries for thought), shapes thinking and perception relative to the Palestinians. This is just not true of your average citizen manipulated by mendacious politicians and a censured press. In Israel, as in Orwell's novel *1984,* society's leaders are as shaped by the prevailing "political language" as those they rule. Thus, descriptions of Palestinians by Israeli leaders range from "there are no such things as Palestinians" (Prime Minister Golda Maier, June 15, 1969), to "beasts walking on two legs" (Prime Minister Menahim Begin, June 25, 1982), to "drugged cockroaches in a bottle" (Raphael Eitan, Chief of Staff, April 14, 1983), to "people who do not belong to our continent, to our world, but actually belong to a different galaxy (Israeli President Moshe Katsav, May 10, 2001). For a man like Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, "peace" for Israel comes through dominating and controlling "the enemies of humanity" (January 5, 2004). *Oppression and war-making becomes peace-making* in the land of Zion.

With the Palestinians, on the other hand, the use of language is much more descriptive of their reality. Just about every Palestinian has been negatively impacted by the Israeli occupation, and thus no propaganda can hide the truth from them. Any politician, of whatever nationality, who tries to tell the Palestinians that the Israelis have their best interests at heart and are in "Judea and Samaria" to raise Arab standards of living, introduce progress, and otherwise help the Palestinians into the modern world (all claims made by Zionists in the last 50 years) would be laughed at and thoroughly despised. Thus, deceptive language that substitutes for reality, *is not* what defines the world of those in Occupied Palestine. Instead, the particular nightmare of the Palestinians is best described in the pages of Franz Kafka. In Kafka's world the prevailing theme is uncertainty and unpredictability. There are no set rules for behavior and the orders given by authorities seem arbitrary and even contradictory. You do not know what the laws are. The "authorities" in Kafka's work sit in their fortresses and periodically intrude upon the lives of the confused and apparently helpless protagonists.

This Kafkaesque situation describes life in Occupied Palestine. Israeli authorities suddenly intrude themselves into the lives of the Palestinian population, and do so in an unpredictable

and arbitrary manner. They also destroy in an arbitrary manner. Israel's message to the Palestinians reflects one of Kafka's more depressing maxim's, "why build knowing destruction is inevitable?" A Palestinian might be safe one moment and in danger the next. You cannot predict if you will make it to work, the grocer, or school, or for that matter back again. As a result many Palestinians could identify with Kafka's character Joseph K in the novel *The Trial* who, "without having done anything wrong was arrested one fine morning."

Israel

Israel has entered into an Orwellian world of inbred perceptions and unanalyzed assumptions. These appear to make sense from inside Israeli society (and the Zionist community worldwide as well), but from the outside seem to be out of touch with reality. The inside "reality" is dominated by the obsessive concept of *fortress Israel*that is Israel against the world. This mental paradigm, which ascribes all criticism of Israeli behavior to eternal anti-Semitism, is assimilated from childhood, taught to you by your family and your teachers at school. It is a belief commonly shared, and thus reinforced, by your neighbors, your coworkers, the newspapers, television and radio, and those with whom you do your military service (some of the army induction ceremonies are held at site of the 73 BCE mass suicide of Jewish Zealots at Masada). It is a constant part of your consciousness and defines patriotic thought.

Nonetheless, the belief in fortress Israel is fraught with Orwellian contradictions. Here are some of the things this paradigm teaches (*as against what reality looks like from outside of Israel and the Zionist perspective*): the Palestinian Arabs are eternal enemies and want to push the Jews into the sea (*even though it is the Palestinians who are being slowly but surely pushed into bantustans behind a ghetto like "separation" wall*). Given half a chance the Palestinians can accomplish this new holocaust with the help of allied Arab hordes (*even though Israel is among the strongest military powers on the globe, is allied to the world's only superpower, and has never lost a war*). The Palestinians, both inside and outside Israel proper, are ersatz Nazis (*even though, for hundreds of years before the rise of Zionism, they lived peacefully with their Jewish neighbors and only turned hostile when the Zionists started appropriating Palestine under the protection of British imperialism*). Arafat is the devil incarnate and also as Prime Minister Sharon likes to put it, "the greatest obstacle to peace" (*even though, since 1988, he has tried repeatedly to make peace with the Jewish state. All these efforts have been replaced in the Israeli collective memory by Arafat's refusal to accept the treaty offered at Camp David II. Israeli rejection of all previous Palestinian efforts at peace have been forgotten*). Israel is just a little place with "fragile" borders (*which since 1947 have repeatedly expanded just as David Ben Gurion, speaking at the time of the founding of Israel, predicted they would*). Only war can bring Israel peace (*Which characterizes the thinking and policies of the present Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, a man who is generally recognized outside of Israel and the U.S. to be a war criminal.)*

These beliefs approach the strength of a religious doctrine in Israel. They also restrict the range of thought, and narrow the possibilities for action for many Israelis and other Zionists.

Most have also shown an inability to critically examine Israel's behavior and how it has evolved from this siege mentality. They have held fast to a selective use of history in order to support the fortress Israel paradigm and its corollaries. As a consequence of this closed mindedness, those who, for a variety of reasons, do break free of the nationally sanctified blinkers and publicly contradict accepted doctrine are seen as heretics or traitors and risk social isolation and the ruination of their careers, and sometimes worse. One can see this clearly in the case of tenured Israeli professors who publicly oppose the occupation. Academics like Ilan Pappe of Haifa University, are periodically harassed by their university administration by being brought up on disciplinary charges for alleged seditious activity. They are denied promotion. Their graduate students have found it hard to get jobs, so now few will work with such professors. Untenured professors are reluctant to take a public stand against government policies because they are more vulnerable and could lose their positions. And finally, Jews outside of Israel who publicly criticize the Israeli government and the Zionist ideology are accused of being "self-hating Jews." Nonetheless, so horrid is Israeli behavior toward the Palestinians that the number of such Jews, best exemplified by the "refuseniks" is slowly increasing both in Israel and abroad.

Behind the wall of fortress Israel, most Israeli Jews are scared and depressed. Popular feelings are affected by a constant concern for personal and family safety. Israelis tend to look over their your shoulders and worry about riding the bus or going to a restaurant. Britain's *Daily Telegraph* (September 30, 2003) has reported on the poll conducted by the Israeli Hebrew daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*. The report concludes that "Israelis are in a state of open despair about their country's future." 73 percent of Israelis do not think that their children will have a better future Under these conditions one can ask why the Israelis simply do not negotiate a just peace with the Palestinians? Give them their state on the 22 percent of Palestine on the other side of the 1967 border (the Green Line). This is an offer the vast majority of Palestinians will readily accept. Also, such a move would very likely make an ally of a Palestinian government which, predictably, would go to great lengths to control anyone whose actions would threaten to bring the IDF back across the border. Just such a scenario was described to this author as the basis for peace by Yasir Arafat in June of 2003. This is also the arrangement Israel has with the Jordanians who control their border with Israel quite effectively. And, in a quiet way, the same arrangement prevails with the Syrians and the Egyptians.

Yet the Israelis insist that allowing the Palestinians a state of their own on the West Bank and Gaza Strip is impossible and mortally dangerous as well. How do they know? The Orwellian political language that dominates their **"**closed information environment**"** tells them so. Remember, such an environment binds one to internal references only. These references become inbred and self-serving so that one's major sources of information function like sycophants telling one only what supports and rationalizes one's actions. Information that undermines or contradicts *a priori* points of view remain unseen, unheard, or are magically reinterpreted to fit the set parameters in one's mind.

This closed information environment has led most Israeli (and diaspora) Jews to believe that :

1. It is the Palestinians do not want peace

The Israelis make two claims for this assertion. First they point out that the Palestinians have a long history of attacks against Israelis. The second point is that Arafat rejected Ehud Barak's supposed "generous offer" at Camp David II in 2000.

The Israelis reject the Palestinian claim that the intifadas (the word means to "shake off") are episodes of resistance against Israel's aggression and occupation. They point out that Palestinian attacks pre-date 1967 and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This was the position taken in December of 2002 by Major General Isaac Ben-Israel at a Tel Aviv University discussion in which the author participated. Because there was violence prior to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, there must be violence if Israel withdraws from the territories It should be noted, however, most of the cross border incidents, particularly in the ten years following 1948, involved Palestinians who were simply seeking to return to their homes. According to the Israeli historian Avi Shlaim hundreds of these unarmed Palestinians were shot down by the Israelis. Statistically the number of Palestinian armed attacks on Israel before 1967 was low and relatively infrequent, and reflected the slow Palestinian recovery from the shock of the Nakba (or 1948 catastrophe). The Jewish Virtual Library (a Zionist source) lists only 27 Israeli fatalities as a result of Palestinian attacks between 1958 and 1966. In the same period Israeli retaliatory raids into Jordanian and Egyptian territory killed many hundreds of people. Nonetheless, from the Israeli point of view, these pre-1967 attacks were not a response to anything the Zionists did, but rather the expression of an undying a priori desire to destroy the Jewish state. Unfortunately, this line of thinking requires a negation of the history of Zionist goals and behavior, and an assumption that past Palestinian behavior will continue indefinitely into the future.

Israelis and other Zionists simply take it for granted that, from 1917 onward, the history of the occupation of Israel proper (that is the 78 percent of Palestine that is Israel behind the Green Line) was benign and any Zionist military action associated with it was purely defensive. In reality, as any number of Israeli historians (Benny Morris, Ilan Pappe, Avi Shlaim, etc.) have shown, large Jewish immigration under the protection of British imperialism initiated the displacement of Palestinians. Palestinian resentment of and reaction to this process was natural and led to resistance that began as early in the 1920s. In truth all Zionist history in Palestine is the history of occupation which has been and is offensive rather than defensive in nature.

However, today the situation is not the same as it was in the 1920s or in 1948. In 1988 the PLO recognized the state of Israel within its 1967 borders. This constituted a supreme compromise in that by this recognition they voluntarily forfeited 78 percent of their historic homeland and restricted their claims to the remaining 22 percent that make up the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip. It is the refusal of Israel to seriously respond to this recognition and the sacrifice it represents, and cease its occupation of Palestine beyond the Green Line, that has led to a new level of violent resistance on the part of the Palestinians.

Of course the Israelis do not believe they have failed to respond. They believe that in the year 2000, at Camp David II, Ehud Barak put forth a **"**generous offer." This belief has taken on mythic proportions not only in Israel but throughout the world's Jewish communities and in the United States as well. It now stands as an excellent example of political language restricting the range of thought and thus resulting in mass self-deception within a closed information environment. According to the Zionist story, this "generous" offer gave the Palestinians the Gaza Strip and almost the entire West Bank. Instead of accepting this deal the Palestinians, under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, rejected it and launched the on going and deadly Second Intifada (2000 to the present).

2. Arafat is the one who is responsible for this rejection and the subsequent violence.

While Israelis believe they are willing to make peace through "historic compromises," there is, in their view, no "partner" on the Palestinian side to negotiate with. Yasir Arafat, a man who is shut up in two buildings in Ramallah, amidst acres of rubble, his communications monitored and his travel restricted, is responsible for on-going terror and, according to the Israeli novelist and political pundit Eyal Megged, "employs tactics that remind us of Hitler."

Essentially what one has here is an alternate history which, is accepted by the majority in Israel and also by the present U.S. government. In the summer of 2002 National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice stated on national television that "Arafat is somebody who…failed to lead when he had a chance.…Ehud Barak, the former prime minister of Israel, gave him a terrific opportunity to lead. And what did he get in return? Arafat started the second Intifada instead and rejected that offered hand of friendship." Unfortunately, both the Israelis and Ms Rice are wrong about their facts. The "generous offer" has been disproved by both American and Israeli experts. For instance, among others, Robert Malley, President Clinton's advisor on Israeli-Arab affairs who was at Camp David II; Ron Pundak, Director of the Peres Center for Peace; Professor Jeff Halper (Ben Gurion University); Uri Avnery, head of Gush Shalom, Israel's foremost peace organization; and finally Ehud Barak himself has twice (in the *New York Times* of May 24, 2001 and in the Israeli Hebrew newspaper *Yediot Ahronoth* of August 29, 2003) denied that his offer was anywhere near "generous."

What did Barak really offer? According to the above reports his offer gave the Palestinians a little over 80 percent of the West Bank carved into nearly discontinuous cantons. The Israeli government would have controlled all the Palestinian borders (none of which would touch on another Arab state), it would have controlled the air space above the Palestinian territory, most of the major aquifers, retained sovereignty over East Jerusalem, maintained almost all Israeli settlements and access roads, controlled immigration into the Palestinian "state," and retained the Jordan Valley through an indefinite "long term lease." This is an offer that no Israeli would ever accept. However, most Israelis and Americans do not know these details and believe instead in the myth of generosity.

Unfortunately, *what is true is not as important as what one thinks is true.* Believing that the Palestinians rejected a generous peace at Camp David II, and opted instead for the violence of

the Second Intifada, the Israelis now look to other ways to achieve security. How this is to be done is dictated by their Orwellian *Weltanschauung*. Thus:

1. You insist on Palestinian elimination of militancy *while systematically destroying the Palestinian Authority's police capabilities*. The Israeli army attacks Palestinian police in uniform on sight and most police facilities have been destroyed. Simultaneously the Israeli government demands that what is left of the Palestinian Authority direct whatever security forces they still have to the job of "fighting terrorism" which are code words for defending Israeli borders and settlers. Given the position of the Palestinians as an oppressed people facing illegal colonization, this is amounts to a demand for the Palestinian authority to take it upon itself to eliminate Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. *Within this scenario Palestinian resistance to land confiscations, home demolitions, and settlement activities become offensive actions, and the invasion of towns and villages by Israeli tanks and helicopter gunships becomes defensive action.*

2. You build a "Security Wall" to separate yourself from the bulk of the Palestinians. However, you do not do this along the 1967 Green Line which most of the world recognizes as the *de facto* border between Israel and Palestine. Rather you build this barrier deep inside of the Palestinian West Bank. Its construction thus facilitates ongoing land confiscations. You build it so as to confine the Palestinians into a series of walled off areas of concentration. *De facto*, this transforms the "security wall" into a "ghetto wall." Those West Bank Palestinians who find themselves on the Israeli side of the wall are to eventually be transferred into the Palestinian ghettos. *This will produce future peace and security for Israelis in the same way that prisons prevent crime*.

3. And you enforce a harsh collective punishment on the Palestinians, entailing draconian curfews, roadblocks and checkpoints, "security" sweeps leading to mass arrests, house demolitions, denial of access to medical facilities, mass shut down of education, and the "legal" use of torture, etc. until they "come to their senses" and negotiate peace on "acceptable terms." This tactic at once brutalizes the Palestinians and Israelis as well. As the Israelis visit violence and destruction on their Palestinian victims, there own levels of domestic violence-spousal and child abuse, violence in schools, road rage, and violent crime-have gone up.

Maya Rosenfeld, a sociologist at Hebrew University and a member of Checkpoint Watch, attributes this downward spiral of Israeli society and culture to the fact that "a military discourse has taken over in Israel." Within the context of this militarized society who can best achieve peace and security? It continues to be the case that a majority of Israelis believe it is Ariel Sharon (a general who made his reputation based upon his personal brutality) and his right-wing coalition. This seems to be so *not despite* the fact that these politicians are ideologically committed to retaining the West Bank and Gaza Strip (and also the Golan Heights), *but because* they are determined to continue the occupation.

This would seem, from an outside perspective, to be yet another Orwellian proposition– that is, the road to peace lay through demanding the right of permanent occupation. Yet this notion

does not appear to be contradictory to most Israelis. Among the reasons for this is that Zionist perceptions of reality deny the true nature and consequences for the Palestinians of 37 years of colonial occupation in Gaza and the West Bank. Indeed, for a long time the Israelis refused to even entertain the word occupation for what they were doing. As the Israeli writer David Grossman explained in an interview with Bill Moyers in March of 2002, "there was a whole machinery of fabricating names to the situation, there was a whole narrative that in a way used words not to describe reality but rather to camouflage it, to protect us the Israelis from the harshness of what we are doing." This is what the Israel Lawyer Leah Tsemel calls the "laundering of language." In Hebrew "occupation" became "release" or "salvation," while "colonizing" became "peaceful settlement" and "killing" became "targeting." Orwell would have recognize this use of "political language" without much trouble.

Another Zionist trick of the mind is to assign the blame for any negative consequences arising out the occupation to the Palestinians themselves. For instance in an August 2002 editorial in the Israeli newspaper, the *Jerusalem Post*, the common assertion was made that "…the Palestinians' current malaise is no one's fault but their own, considering that they started and are continuing the war that is exacting from them such a hefty price." That the "war" is actually resistance against colonial occupation is lost on the Jerusalem Post editors.

In Israeli eyes the occupation is a warranted defensive action driven by a pervasive national fear and suspicion of Palestinians as terrorists. It should be noted that to most Israelis, and Americans too, the terrorist is the essential Palestinian. Each Palestinian whether man, woman, or child is just a body potentially encased in dynamite. The Israelis point to Occupied Palestine as the place from which suicide bombers come and thus they feel they must "control" these lands. *That the occupation and its accompanying colonizing policy are in fact the sources of suicide bombings and overall Palestinian violence is simply not accepted by most Israelis.* Instead, they ascribe these actions to Muslim religious fanaticism**.** This came out clearly in a January 2002 interview by the author and others with Ben El Eliazar**,** the former Israeli Defense Minister. Ben El Eliazar described how he would go and interrogate prisoners suspected of being failed suicide bombers. "If you interrogate them long enough you can see the religious fanaticism surface." His interrogations may well result in self-deception. Push long enough and hard enough and you can get a prisoner to tell you anything, particularly what they soon realize you want to hear

There are other ways in which the Israelis manage to promote the occupation, arguably the source of their insecurity, as a source of security. Here is how the Likud leader and member of the Knesset, Yuval Steinwitz conceptualized the situation to the author in December 2002: the occupation is necessary because it alone can give Israel, "this little land with impossible borders" defensive depth. According to Steinwitz Israel is a "great regional power" that is at the same time "fragile" enough to be destroyed by the Palestinian terrorists allied to the Egyptians. This is a variation on the notion that the Israel is in perpetual danger of being "kicked into the sea." One can locate the origins of this fear in the Holocaust and understand how deep rooted it is, but it nonetheless defies reality. There is no military intelligence service outside of Israel who believes this myth. No military engagement (including those in

1947-1948) has ever come close to suggesting this scenario was or is possible. Yet the myth is pervasive in Israel and among the Jewish diaspora community as well. So, acting on what you believe is real (not, in this case, what is in fact real) you justify colonial occupation, the brutal destruction of Palestinian society, and the slow by sure ethnic cleansing of Occupied Palestine of its non-Jewish population (all of which is *overtly offensive* and brutally aggressive in nature) in the name of needing "*defensive depth*."

The Israelis and their supporters have other rationalizations for occupation. There is the biblically based claim that "Judea and Samaria" are "covenant lands," that is lands given to the Jews by God. This, of course, is a matter of faith and not provable fact. Many people take the bible, where this covenant is to be found, as the word of God. However, this too is faith and not provable fact. Nonetheless, such faith put forth as fact allows some Israelis to see the indigenous population as "strangers in the land" and Jewish folks from Brooklyn as rightful inhabitants. This leads to more tricks of the mind. For instance, Carolyn Glick, the Associate Editor of the Jerusalem Post told this author and others that the removal of the West Bank colonies would constitute the "ethnic cleansing of Judea and Samaria."

Whether it is for imagined military reasons (which entails a denial that occupation is the source of their insecurity), or faith based religious reasons (which entails exoneration from responsibility for brutal actions because they are doing the work of God), the majority of Israelis have come to the conclusion that there is no alternative to a hard line, right wing government which can only conceptualize a peace treaty that ghettoizes, economically emasculates, and subordinates any eventual Palestinian political entity. And even then most Israelis do not believe such a treaty will lead to real peace, not because it fails to satisfy Palestinian needs, but because the Palestinians are all anti-Semites who will forever want to destroy all of Israel.

Palestine

Palestine is a land of deep despair, growing poverty, and pervasive insecurity. In a slow but sure fashion the Israelis are reducing the Palestinians to an impoverished cheap labor pool within ghetto-like areas of concentration. Here is how they are doing it.

1. The ancestral lands of the Palestinians are being confiscated: 78 percent of Palestine was taken in 1948. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics the over 1 million Israeli Palestinians who now live in Israel proper (behind the Green Line) make up 20 percent of the country's population (and 40 percent of Israel's population growth rate) are confined to 3 percent of the land. And, this 3 percent is subject to continuing periodic and unpredictable confiscations. Israel's Palestinian communities are not allowed to geographically expand. In 1967 the Israelis took over the remaining 22 percent of Palestine (now designated the Occupied Territories) and immediately began a colonization program that is illegal under international law. To date they have confiscated some 40 percent of this remaining 22 percent of Palestine and now operate over 200 colonies which hold nearly 400,000 illegal residents. They are continuing to expand these "settlements" through the continuous confiscation of land

in Occupied Palestine (that is beyond the Green Line). This means that the Palestinians, both within and without of Israel proper, are being relentlessly ghettoized into smaller and smaller areas.

2. Besides the land, the people in Occupied Palestine are experiencing the destruction of their property on a daily basis. According to B'Tselem, Israel's own civil rights organization, hundreds of thousands of olive and other fruit trees have been and continue to be destroyed; hundreds of water wells have been sealed (90 percent of all the water resources of Occupied Palestine is now reserved for exclusive use by the occupier); according to the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions about 11,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished since 1967; the population is subjected to periodic indiscriminate artillery shelling and automatic weapons fire; American made jet planes and helicopters discharge high explosive missiles and bombs in crowded civilian areas. Some of these bombs and missiles are made of depleted uranium infused metals. All of this is illegal under international law as promulgated in the Hague Conventions of 1907 and 1987, and the 4th Geneva Convention.

3. Palestinians have seen their rights of free movement, free association, access to education, access to medical care, ability to transport and market goods (most of which rights are guaranteed by the Declaration of Universal Human Rights adopted by the United Nations after World War II) severely restricted by the creation of some 480 checkpoints and roadblocks. Most of these are not placed between Israel and Palestinian towns and villages, but rather between Palestinian locales. These checkpoints, the purpose of which seems to be harassment rather than security, attack the most basic personal rights. The most tragic example of this is the resulting collapse of the Palestinian medical system. According to Human Rights Watch, Israeli soldiers purposely harass and sometimes target for injury or death Palestinian doctors and medical personnel. Checkpoints prevent ambulances from getting to hospitals or the residences of ill people and they prevent pregnant women about to give birth from going to hospitals. The soldiers at the checkpoints do not prevent these things all the time, but rather they do so in an unpredictable, random fashion that heightens the sense of uncertainty and vulnerability of the Palestinian population. I asked Benjamin Ben Eliazer, the former Defense Minister, about this practice in the January of 2002 interview mentioned above. He asserted that the Palestinians use ambulances to transport weapons and "wanted criminals." When I pointed out to him that there was a qualitative difference between stopping an ambulance and searching it for weapons or wanted individuals and stopping an ambulance until the patient inside it died, he became sullen and said that he did not need any help from me when it came to security. Since their tactics have left the Israelis continuously insecure, this is a questionable claim. At the very least the Israelis need help in maintaining a basic level of humanity. As a result of the policies just described the rate of death from curable diseases is on the rise among West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians, and vaccination and preventive medicine is almost non-existent.

In addition to the checkpoints, draconian curfews which keep the entire populations of cities and towns under forced house arrest for weeks on end contribute to the breakdown of medical care, education, and employment. (According to United Nations Relief and Works Agency

reports unemployment in the Occupied Territories now stands over 65 percent and more than half the population lives in poverty.)

It bears repeating that much of this harassment and destruction occurs in a random and arbitrary fashion. One does not know if one can get through a checkpoint to go to school or work. If one gets through, one does not know if one can return home again through the same checkpoint. One does not know when the curfews will come. One can be arrested anytime for any reason. It is a *Kafkaesque world* wherein one cannot predict the consequences of one's daily behavior.

Under these circumstances, 90 percent of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories see no hope in their future without international intervention. Yet intervention is consistently blocked by the United States which vetoes any UN resolution that seeks the creation of such a policy. It is because they are not "balanced" says the U.S. State Department, but this is ridiculous in the face of Israel's brutal behavior. The U.S. uses its veto to protect Israel because Zionist interest groups have such powerful influence with the American government and political parties. In any case, the Israeli government is adamantly against such intervention and would resist it by force. As a consequence there is no choice for the Palestinians but to continue their resistance to Israeli occupation, for to concede defeat would mean to acquiesce in the death of Palestinian society and culture.

When it comes to resistance, it is historically the case that the violence of the oppressed usually rises to the level of the violence of the oppressor. That is what has happened in Palestine. The Israeli occupation constitutes 37 years of institutionalized terror which has just about destroyed the economic, social, and political lives of all Palestinians under Israeli rule. Civil society and its infrastructure are nearly gone. Civilian deaths due to direct military action and indirect consequences of Israeli colonial policies now (November 2003) stands at just over 2700 people (compared to about 800 Israelis). Palestinian civilian injuries due to Israeli action stand at over 47,000. Resistance is all that remains.

This brings us to the issue of suicide bombings. The context for understanding this tactic is the occupation itself. The consequences of the occupation do not discriminate between men and women, adults and children. Confiscations impact them all, home demolitions displace them all, curfews confine them all, Israeli violence targets them all. This is the truth. The author has seem much of this with his own eyes. Americans and many Israelis may not believe it, but their disbelief does not change the Palestinian reality. That reality produces deep despair, feelings of humiliation and unavoidable hatred. It is from this context that the bombers come. Their tactic is the reverse coin of Israel's own practices and not the product of some innate religious fanaticism.

It is this despair and rage, and not religious fanaticism, that also leads to popular support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad. They are supported so widely not because they are Islamic fundamentalists, but because, in an atmosphere of despair, they serve the needs of the rapidly growing numbers of poor and they resist the Israelis. Give the Palestinians back their hope of a

just settlement by moving concretely toward the satisfaction of their basic demands, and the support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad will diminish. This is not mere conjecture. Right after the Oslo Accords were signed, and despite their serious flaws, there was much hope for peace among the Palestinians. As a consequence support for groups like Hamas fell to under 10 percent of the population in the West Bank and Gaza. By the middle of 2003, in an atmosphere of near hopelessness that still prevails, polls taken by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research indicated that support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad stood at 58 percent.

Any Hope?

It is important to realize that most ordinary people on both sides say they want many of the same things: normal lives, security for themselves and their families, acceptance by the other side. And while the majority of Israelis, and a number of Palestinians cannot get past perceptual barriers dominated by fear, suspicion, and anxiety there are factors that can, at least in theory, result in movement toward real peace if given a chance to come to the fore.

1. The vast majority of Palestinians know (even if the Israelis do not) that they cannot destroy the Israeli state.

2. Most Palestinians in the Occupied Palestine are willing to negotiate compromise solutions to all issues (including the controversial issue of the "right of return") except their right to a viable state occupying roughly the 22 percent of Palestine beyond Israel's 1967 borders. For the Palestinians, this is the sine qua non of a just peace. This is not a new stance on the part of the Palestinians or their leaders. Here is a list of peace initiatives that the Palestinians have welcomed (and various Israeli governments have rejected): The Rogers Plan (1969); The Scranton Mission on behalf of President Nixon (1970); Sadat's land for peace mutual recognition proposal (1971); Carter's call for a Geneva international conference (1977); Saudi King Fahd's peace offer (1981); The Reagan Plan (1982); The Shultz Plan (1988); The Baker Plan (1989); A continuation of the Taba negotiations (2001); The Saudi Peace proposal on behalf of the Arab League (2002); The unofficial Geneva peace initiative of November/December 2003. And, of course, in 1993 Arafat signed the Oslo Accords which unraveled after Yitzhak Rabin's assassination (November 1995) and the subsequent return to power of the Likud party

To the extent that the Israelis block the possibility of a viable Palestinian state, Palestinian leaders and intellectuals put forth the idea of a one state solution. That is, the acceptance of one state from "the sea to the river" with the struggle then directed toward bringing about equal rights for all citizens. This would of necessity negate the idea of a "Jewish state." I do not believe this is the preference of most Palestinians but it may be made inevitable by the short sighted policies of the Zionist movement.

3. The recent Geneva Initiative (November/December 2003) is at least a sign that Israelis and Palestinians can work together to come to a settlement. It certainly is not the end game for it fails to give adequate attention to the fate of millions of Palestinian refugees who have rights

under international law. If this initiative is to be seriously pursued negotiators need, at the very least, to improve the water rights package, and add onto the initiative an Israeli acceptance of responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem plus a pledge of compensation. It is to be noted that the Geneva initiative has been endorsed by Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. It has, however, been attacked by the Sharon government as a traitorous act.

4. On the Israeli side there are a growing number of influential military men (such as Amram Mitzna and Ami Aylon), who have credibility with the Israeli public, and understand that continuing the occupation will not bring security and normality, but rather a continuing brutalization of Israeli society. There is also a very small, but growing, number of resisters both within and without the army who refuse to cooperate with the Israeli government's occupation policies.

The problem is that while those who are ready to take risks for peace appear to be a majority on the Palestinian side, they are as yet a minority on the Israeli side. In the end what we have is a horrible process of physical and emotional destruction that can only be overcome by a psychological leapand that mostly among Israelis. They must come to a realization that the occupation is the source of Israeli insecurity and only by giving it up can there be security and normality. If you will, only through peace with the Palestinians, can Israel be a safe haven for Jews. Whether the Israelis can achieve this level of awareness while in the grips of an historically rooted, paralyzing fear and anxiety (played upon by a Likud government and right-wing factions which are determined to stay in "Judea and Samaria" forever) remains to be seen. Nonetheless, *it is their occupation*. It is they who have brought to life the nightmare worlds of Orwell and Kafka. If things are to change, it is they who must wake up.

Notes

1. Here are some additional Orwellian notions and behaviors described to this author by the individuals noted:

1. Oren Yiftachael of Ben Gurion University explains that Israel has a "Green Patrol," a special police to keep the Bedouins from developing their land. When Bedouin crops turn green the Israeli Green Patrol sprays them from the air with herbicides.

2. According to Victoria Buch of Hebrew University, refusal by some soldiers to serve in the Occupied Territories (which results in the destruction of Palestinian civil society) is regularly described by Israeli politicians as "a knife in the heart of democracy."

3. Michael Warschawski, former Director of the Alternative information Center in Jerusalem, told this author that the Israeli government acts to empty Jerusalem of Arabs by creating "green lands" (expropriated Arab lands which cannot be built on without a permit). All the lands between Arab neighborhoods have been declared "green lands" which are then commuted into Jewish settlements. Thus the concept of something that preserves and grows is used to destroy and displace.

4. Most of the built up areas around East Jerusalem, as well as most of the "Jewish only roads," were created *after* Oslo which was supposedly a "road to peace."

5. The Tel-Aviv artist Ami Nof was arrested and then committed to a mental institution for publicly suggesting that Israel open peace negotiations with pre-war Iraq.

6. According to the Israeli writer and poet, Yitzhak Laor, reports of Israeli casualties in the Occupied Territories are referred to as "the result of attacks within Israel," while lethal attacks on West Bank and Gaza Palestinians are referred to as defense of the homeland from foreign attack beyond the borders.

Lawrence Davidson *is Professor of Middle East History at West Chester University in West Chester Pennsylvania. He is author of* America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood *(University Press of Florida, 2001) and* Islamic Fundamentalism *(Greenwood Press, 2003). He has traveled extensively in the Middle East and is particularly familiar with Israel and the Occupied Territories. For many years he has been speaking out, both in academic and non-academic settings, on subjects pertaining to the Middle East, especially American foreign policy in the region, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.*

The Power Of Myths In Israeli Society: Historical Realities And Political Dogmatizing

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Practically all peoples, nations and societies have recourse to a treasury of legends, tales or poetic fictions stemming from their more or less remote antiquity. These are mostly enacted by supernatural beings or by human heroes, expressing in terms of fable or story, interpretations of the world and idealized conceptions of life, and sometimes serve, as well, as models and examples. Such myth formations have their roots, often, in animism, survive through the various pre-rational stages of cultures, and become, in modern societies, metaphors and other meta-rational forms for expressing ideas which are conceptually hard to formulate. Sometimes, actual historical events as well, because of their traumatic effect, solidify into formative concepts with mythical characteristics.

The Overstated Myth of Jerusalem

Also in Switzerland: the figure of William Tell, for example, would stand as the unyielding will-to-freedom-and-independence personified. The crossbow as mark of virtue; Gessler's hat as emblem of an unendurable oppression; the Tell Chapel as a site of strength and courage; the Rütli meadow as tableau of ideally like-minded and resolute men: symbols of a specifically Swiss identity. And it simply does not matter if the historian denies the authenticity of these legends. We are dealing with ideal-concepts of a predominantly rational-acting society. In Israel, the dominating influence of myth on politics, on the sense of identity, on historical consciousness, on culture as expressed in behavior, and on other aspects of society, is particularly strong and obvious. At the same time, it is less the timelessly valid messages of tradition that occupy the foreground than the verbal formulas, in which they are bound up, and which are taken literally. Thus are their meanings so alienated, that myths often serve to justify and to support unproductive attitudes and measures. The historical, psycho-social, religio-historical and cultural origins of this phenomenon cannot be properly dealt with here. We must content ourselves here with two examples.

The Myth of Jerusalem has established itself deeply in the consciousness of a broad section of Israeli society as the "holy" city of the glorious days of King David and King Solomon, as the fountainhead of a continuous Jewish existence in that land, as God's locus, as the focal point of religious practice, where the first and second Temples stood, and where ultra-orthodox and nationalist groups hope a third will be established soon. In the cultic poetry of the Psalms and in the writings of the prophets, is Jerusalem sung over and again. The city appears innumerable times in prayers, finding entrance as the "golden" or the "eternal" in songs and sayings, and it

is the object of theurgic yearnings and oaths.

Impediments to a Compromise

Official circles unrelentingly pump up this myth to justify their demand that Jerusalem remain the “eternal” and “undivided” capital of Israel and of the Jewish people. The right wing nationalists successfully fought against Shimon Peres’ candidacy for the post of Prime Minister in 1996 with the assertion that he wished to divide Jerusalem. In the summer of 2000, when former Prime Minister Ehud Barak flew to Camp David for negotiations with the Palestinian leader Arafat, the cry went up that he wanted to divide and bargain away Jerusalem. Through just this compound of religious, ideological and nationalistic charges has Jerusalem grown into what it remains: a chief impediment to compromise with the Palestinians that stands in the way of the pacification of the Near East, which the whole civilized world is longing for. Thus has a myth intervened fatefully in contemporary history; it does not serve, rationally, a productive ideal, but, rather, it has degenerated into the dogma of an irrational policy.

Already was Theodore Herzl shaken, on his visit to Jerusalem in 1898, by the discrepancy between fiction and the reality of the city. Thus, he confided to his diary: “The dull precipitation of two millennia full of barbarity, intolerance and uncleanliness lie in the evil-smelling alleys.” But when a myth, in this case Jerusalem, hardens into the official dictum and doctrine of the country’s leadership, historical truth, frequently misrepresented by leading Israeli politicians, must face the challenge. Thus in 1998, a “Three Thousand Year Celebration” made it seem that the city had been founded as the religious center of the Israelites in 998 B.C. Then-mayor Olmert erroneously invoked King David in a speech as star witness to the continuous Jewish history of the city. Prime Minister Sharon, as well, in an interview with the French newspaper “Le Figaro,” advanced the counterfactual proposition that Jerusalem has been “the capital of the Jewish people for precisely 3004 years.” In reality, the spot which David conquered from the Jebusites (Judges, e.g., 19:10),was south of present-day Jerusalem, and it had been itself already inhabited for at least 2,000 years. On this, all archeologists, historians and other scientists are agreed (for example, see the compilation of research findings in the “Biblical Archeology Review” Washington, August 1998). The original, agrarian, inhabitants called it “Urusalim”; the cuneiform writing on a Babylonian clay tablet of the early Bronze Age, unearthed in 1975 in Ebla (in northern Syria) unambiguously shows this. The Hebrew “ir” (“city”) derives from “uru,” and the Hebrew word “shalem” (“whole,” “perfect”), deriving from “salim” has the same root as “shalom” (“peace.”)

“Jerushalayim,” the spiritualized Hebrew designation for Jerusalem as “Holy City” or “City of Peace,” is as little the creation of the Jews as the place itself, which, after its conquest by the Hebrews, was inhabited by Jebusites, Phoenicians, Philistines, Cretans, Canaanites, and others.

As the Book of Samuel (7:12,13) shows, only when David’s son Solomon built the Temple on Mount Moriah, was this extremely tiny portion of present-day Jerusalem incorporated within the city. After his death, however, the political and religious independence of the Jews disintegrated, in the Temple, the old gods were worshiped again, and those of the oriental

powers, Assyria, Egypt and Babylon, were allowed to be honored there. In 587 B.C., the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar II, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and abducted the elite of the Jews to his Mesopotamian country. And after the rebuilding of the Temple some 50 years later, the Persians, the Greeks, the Seleucids, the Romans (who destroyed the Second Temple), the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Turkish Seldshuks, the Crusaders, the Kurds, the Mamelukes, the Osmanian Turks, and finally, the English displaced one another as rulers.

Jerusalem was under Jewish sovereignty only during the relatively obscure era of the Maccabees, as the ruling dynasty of the Hasmoneans is called. The latter liberated the country in 142 B.C. from the Seleucid Antiochus Epiphanes IV, and established a fundamentalist regime, which, already by 63 B.C., the Romans brought to an end.

What “Holiness”?

With the exception, perhaps, of the 300 years following the beginning of the rule of Omayeden-Calif Abd al-Malik, who built the Dome of the Rock, i.e., from roughly 700 to 1000 A.D., Jerusalem was for most of its history, a place of intolerance, inhumanity and bloodiness. Untold times, it was conquered, re-conquered, destroyed, depopulated. Instead of celebrating a city with such a tragic history, one would much better ask what sort of “holiness” is it that would permit such barbarities, or provoke them. And yet “Jerusalem” has become a verbal incitement that immediately conjures up the holy sites in the Old City. Together with the Palestinian-inhabited East Jerusalem, these sections together comprise an area of only 6 square kilometers. The Jewish western section, before the Six Day War of June 1967, encompassed 38 square kilometers. Since that passage of arms, however, Israel has annexed an additional 70 square kilometers of land in the West Bank, declared it to be urban area, and applied to this thus- augmented Greater Jerusalem, the dogma of mystical and religious Indivisibility and Holiness. By far, the greater part of the city today has simply no relation, therefore, to the history and culture of the Jews.

Jerusalem is, in point of fact, and also in the consciousness of the Israelis and the Palestinians, a divided city, in which the two populations live separated, each holding onto its own national and religious identity. Nearly a third of the roughly 680,000 inhabitants are Palestinians. They have the status of permanent residents with no Israeli citizenship, and live crowded into the officially- neglected eastern section of the city, which Israeli Jews have no difficulty in avoiding.

The prayers and mystical longings scarcely have reference to the brutalities in Jerusalem’s history, nor to the unedifying conditions of today, but, rather, to a thus-far unfulfilled image of a “holy” place, and a messianic condition of peace and human dignity. Many Israeli politicians and representatives of the religious elites, however, have affixed this image onto a specific place and have bound it up in the asserted claim to the “eternal” possession of a greater Jerusalem. Thus do they alienate a productive model, which they claim to live by; for the “idea” of the “Jerusalem” of their devotions is not bounded to these or those city limits, and unites not parcels of property, but human beings.

The Temple Mount: More Important Than Peace?

And the Temple Myth, also, has grown into a dominant element of policy. Israel wants sovereignty over the hill upon which stood the First and Second Temples, even at the cost of having peace with the entire Islamic world, although the golden Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque have risen there for many hundreds of years. Natan Sharansky, Minister for Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs in the Israeli government, just recently wrote an article in the newspaper *Ha'aretz* with the title: "The Temple Mount is More Important than Peace."

This kind of dogmatizing and exploitation of myth raises up a further obstacle in the way of a reconciliation with the Palestinians, so vitally essential for the country. Thus we see, after the January 28, 2003 elections, on placards, in advertisements, and over the radio, the declaration that the Temple Mount is "the heart of the nation" and the "identity of the Jewish people." The office of the Chief Rabbi has it announced that a relinquishment of sovereignty would be, "according to Jewish law," forbidden. Groups of fanatics are already wanting to lay the cornerstone for the Third Temple to replace the Muslim sanctuaries.

The Temple Myth finds no support in historical truth. In the much-sung "glory days of King David," there was actually no Temple. When strange gods were not being worshiped in the First and Second Temples-and that by the Jews, as well-their worship consisted, in the main, of a sacrificial cult, described in the Old Testament, but scarcely to be desired today. It was a hotbed of corruption, intrigues, commercialism and religious power politics. Various passages in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 21:12,13 and John 2:14,17), contemporary witnesses, and even certain passages in the Talmud, describe these conditions in explicit terms.

Only after the destruction of the Second Temple and the expulsion of the Jews nearly two millennia ago, could the Jewish religion develop those universal values, grounded in the ancient scriptures, which themselves, significantly, came into being, essentially, during the Babylonian exile, unencumbered by a Temple cult, and not tied to a specific place or center of power. This Judaism had no connection to the Temple Mount. Affixing "holiness" to a specific location through the building of the Temple was of a piece with the *Zeitgeist* of idolatry, and served as an inducement for the Crusades of the Middle Ages, which was a Christian variant of the same syndrome. More modern religious thinking holds that "holy" places are merely symbols or models for a transcendence that can be lived and practiced anyplace. In this sense, the role assigned to the Temple Myth in Israel is not only politically dubious, it represents, from the standpoint of philosophy of religion, a grave relapse. Thus, tragically, a mythological, site-bound "holiness" stands in the way of the universal holiness of peace.
This article originally appeared in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung *and was translated from the German by Jeff Miller.*

Ernest Goldberger *grew up in Switzerland, where he was active as an entrepreneur. He has lived in Israel for twelve years. His book, entitled* Die Seele Israels *(*The Soul of Israel*), will appear early this year from NZZ-Verlag.*

Jews And The Bi-national Vision: Logos Winter 2004

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

It is an honor for me to be here today. We have gathered to talk about what is called a just peace, and we have gathered for the most part as a community of academics and activists, so there are already several questions before us, ones that are posed by the title of this conference, ones that are already here laying in wait for us. The one has to do with peace or, what is not always the same, non-violence. Another has to do with justice. And a third surely has to do with what role academics may play in articulating what a just peace might be. I gather we are here because this is what we want: a just peace, and that this common desire is already alive here, already at work here, already motivating us to come and to speak and, perhaps most importantly, to listen. Of course, what we might want or expect from a just peace will be different, and the question will be for us to find a way to negotiate that difference without effacing it. So since I have, in a rather utopian vein, spoken of a "we," a "we" who have gathered here, let me qualify what I have to say.

Since I am a U.S. citizen, and a diasporic Jew, Ashkenazi in origin, or at least as far as I know, since like many Jews, I lost a good part of my family and my history in the Nazi genocide, I am already in a quandary. It would be a dishonor to all who live in Israel and Palestine for a U.S. citizen to arrive and say what is to be done. You have surely all heard enough of that. What is to be done is best decided through radically democratic means by all the inhabitants of these lands. And I am no such inhabitant, regardless of what my investments in the outcome might be. Precisely, though, because the U.S. continues to exercise powerful influence on Israeli policy towards the Palestinians, it has become necessary to organize in the United States in ways that try to influence what has been a catastrophic support for the exploitation and continued displacement and impoverishment of the Palestinian peoples and the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. There is also upon us as American Jews-but here I think European Jews are also implicated-a demand to rethink and rewrite the history of the founding of the Israeli state, the forcible displacement of 700,000 Palestinians, the present occupation of 3.2 million, and the military aggression against Palestinians that has been part of the founding and continuation of the Israeli state. In my remarks today, I would like to try and say something about what I take the responsibility of a first world Jew to be during these times, both in terms of national policy and cultural interventions. I hope toward the end of my remarks to suggest what role a cooperative alliance of intellectuals might do to struggle against the brutality of the occupation, and to seek an end to the occupation itself.

I will tell you from the outset that I am not a Zionist, although I was brought up in a strong Zionist community in the United States. I am trained as a philosopher, and I confess that my first readings in philosophy were from the tradition of existential theology. My path toward the

relinquishing of my Zionism began over twenty years ago, and has recently become a controversial public stance. So although I will not say whether there ought to be a two-state solution, as proposed by the Geneva Accord, or a bi-national one-state solution, I do not believe that any state should restrict citizenship, or establish gradations of citizenship, on the basis of religious status. Whether what is now called Israel remains one state within a two-state solution, or whether it becomes part of a greater Israel-Palestine, my firm belief is that any claim to political sovereignty based on religious status is misguided, undemocratic, and discriminatory, in principle and in practice. I have read with great interest recently the correspondence and public editorials of the late Martin Buber, and what I found there, to my surprise, was his insistence that Zionism is a position that is committed to international and inter-ethnic cooperation, the universalization of rights. His version of Zionism, as we know, was rather resolutely defeated by the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state, an act which he understood to be a definitive undermining of Zionism itself. At the time, he and others in the Ichud organization disputed the legitimacy of Ben-Gurion's 1948 declaration of the political sovereignty of Israel as a Jewish state.

Buber was idealistic, but he was no saint. He understood the settlement of the lands to be a realization of Zionism, but resisted the claim to political sovereignty. He described in neutral terms the Jewish settlements as "colonization," and refused the critique of colonialism. He sought, paradoxically, humane forms of colonization, arguing for what he called "concentrative colonialism" rather than "expansionist colonialism." These views are clearly problematic, and even the use of the word "concentrative" in the early 40s is no less than terrifying, given its association with the German concentration camps, and with the devastating realization of this goal in the Gaza Strip. His idealism did not include a robust critique of colonialism, but he did, to his credit, hold out for a federated state in which Jewish and Palestinian cultural autonomy could be maintained, and where the majority would never be in a position to tyrannize the minority. He also called for cooperative economic ventures, the return of Arab lands seized in 1948, and illegally redistributed in 1950, and he asked the Israeli public to try and understand why there might be Palestinian violence against Jews, chastising Israelis for having violated Arab trust and not undertaken cooperative self-government, the fair distribution of arable land, a just adjudication of property rights, and recognition of the humanity of its neighbors. Buber imagined, and I confess to imagining with him, that modes of civil and economic cooperation would lead organically to a form of government that would be based on a shared way of life between Arabs and Jews. He called for the process of peace and cooperation to begin at the cultural level, with the organization of life itself, with the task of living together, and thought that a state form, an internally complex federal form of government for the region, would emerge from this common life wrought together.

This was clearly also the position of Judah Magnes who also claimed at the time that the main policy goal of Jews in Palestine should be to establish institutional structures for Arab-Jewish cooperation. This history is for the most part unknown to American Judaism, since the story we are told, again and again, is that the necessity for the Israeli state emerged as a direct consequence of the Nazi genocide of the Jews. There was, of course, even then, throughout the 1940s, still an open and debated question: what form of government might be needed in these

lands, and what would be the most democratic means of deciding the question.

It would later turn out that Primo Levi, whose memoirs on Auschwitz have achieved enormous influence among U.S. intellectuals, would make clear his break with Zionism in 1982, after the assault on Beirut. It was on the eve of Primo Levi's departure to return to Auschwitz to commemorate the dead that he signed the petition, with other survivors, to demand the recognition of the rights of all peoples of the region, published in La Repubblica. In his views, the Israeli bombers in 1982 were not fighting for freedom, but had become the new oppressors, fighting to deprive another minority of their freedoms. He wrote, "Everybody is somebody's Jew. And today the Palestinians are the Jews of the Israelis." claiming that the Israeli state had become morally unacceptable to anyone who survived the Nazi genocide; after Sabra and Shatilla, he publicly asked Sharon and Begin to resign. And though he was told that he needed to remain silent, that in times of war, his open and public criticism could only hearten the enemies of Israel, he stood firm, and deepened his public criticism in 1984, three years before his death, calling upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.

I cite the example of Levi to you because it shows that precisely from within the moral framework derived from the Holocaust, an opposition to the Israeli state is not only possible, but necessary. This thought is nearly unthinkable within American Judaism or, indeed, from within the progressive Jewish movements who call for the end of the occupation. And until we can unlink the way in which the Nazi genocide continues to act as a permanent justification for this state and its policies, there will be a silencing of dissent, a muting of public criticism. Levi himself claimed that we must not let the sufferings of the Jews under Nazism "justify everything." And the reporter who received this statement responded, "You can reason very coldly." But this was not coldness on his part; it was feeling, it was horror in the face of atrocities committed by Israelis. It was staying alive to the possibility of knowing and opposing the suffering of others.

Interestingly, it was Buber who blamed the Nazi atrocities for ruining the left-wing Zionist plans for Arab-Jewish alliance. He understood that historical circumstances – the mass extermination of more than six million Jews and the subsequent needs for immediate refuge for hundreds of thousands – as derailing the destiny of Zionism itself. In his view, Zionism was not the necessary outcome of the history of Jewish wandering and suffering; in fact, historical circumstances, violent and arbitrary, defeated Zionism. He opposed any view of Zionism that led to a Jewish state or a permanent Jewish majority. Over and against this view, Ben Gurion could make use of the Holocaust to forge the view that anti-Semitism was everywhere, and that the only defense against it was the establishment of a Jewish state that would permit limitless immigration. He took Palestinian acts of violence against the settler colonialists to be nothing other than proof of the persistence of global anti-Semitism. As a result, he called for a politically sovereign Jewish state not only to erect a permanent bulwark against anti-Semitism but to secure a political instrument by which to guarantee unlimited immigration. In May of 1944, when the brutal facts of the Nazi genocide were becoming publicly known, Buber understood the demand for accommodating as many Jews from Europe in Palestine. In the journal Be'ayot, Buber argued that Ben-Gurion seized upon this need for refuge to confound

the moral imperative to rescue as many Jews as possible with the political goal, spurious and dangerous, of creating a Jewish majority in Palestine in order to shore up the claims for Jewish sovereignty on a land inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians.

We can see the linkage here, in Ben-Gurion's refutation of Ichud and in his subsequent denunciation of the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee's call for a bi-national state in May of 1946. Ben-Gurion and Yishuv not only won a political battle, but an ideological one as well, since what became exported as the truth and canonized in the Ashkenazi Jewish diaspora, and then hammered into an ideological condition of life after the six-day war, was the abiding causal link between the appalling extermination of the Jews in Europe and the necessity of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state. This necessity appeared, and still appears to most Zionists, as imperative, even though, with the assistance of the superpowers, it forced the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and the appropriation of their homes and lands, and the near certainty of violent conflict for decades to come.

The prevalent view that the genocide led to the necessity of the present Israeli state, the state as a Jewish state, is so deeply entrenched, that any effort to question the structure or status of the current state is regarded by many diasporic Zionists as a sign of a grave and unforgivable insensitivity to the Shoah itself. Indeed, to raise questions about the Jewish presumption of this state is considered not only a sign that one has "forgotten" the Holocaust, but that one is leaving the Jews open to assault and, in that sense, collaborating with the assault itself. And yet, even as this view holds ideologically, there seems to be little sense that the Israeli state in its current form is fostering anti-Semitism, confounding what is official Israeli policy with who Jews are or what they believe. The difference is potentially great, greater than the media might think, but the tactical question is, how might we make this difference more emphatic, fostering a voice of dissent and criticism with the power and possibility to forge ties that will lead to non-violent solutions?

In the U.S., most of the organizations who support Israeli policy and the current basis of the Israeli state, argue that a Jewish state was established as a realization of Zionism, that one can draw a continuous line from the first Zionist World Congress in the 1890s to the realization of the Israeli state in Ben-Gurion's unilateral declaration in 1948. Buber argued, and in the name of Zionism, that the state of Israel destroyed the possibility of Zionism, and that Zionism stood for a spiritual reality radically undermined by nationalism and by state sovereignty. For him, the bi-national state was a logical extension of Zionism itself, and political sovereignty was a "perversion of Zionism." This thought is virtually unthinkable within the current political map, but we must ask, why and how has it become unthinkable? And how might it begin to be thought again?

Buber and others realized that the demand for limitless immigration of Jews to Palestine was intensified in the late 30s and in the 1940s, as Jews escaping Nazi Germany were turned away from Britain and, indeed, the U.S. (which, of course, kept its secret quotas under FDR). And it is important to remember that there were, in the 1940s, and precisely in the aftermath of the Nazi genocide, Jewish groups here in Palestine and elsewhere who concluded that Hitler's

racism only added further support for the claim that no state can legitimately make itself into the sovereign domain of a people based on religious affiliation or inheritance. Buber's view was shared by Judah Magnes, by the early Brith Shalom movement that worked toward a Jewish-Arab collaboration, focusing on commonly occupied farmlands, by Ichud, which won a temporary victory in 1946 with its call for a bi-national state. These views were openly debated in the U.S. in Commentary magazine, before its turn to the Right, in The Menorah Journal and in Ba'ayot, which folded after the events of 1948, and continued, in dwindling form in the journal, Ner, which claimed only 800 subscriptions at the time of its closure in the mid-60s. So who are the inheritors of this position within Israel today? We could probably find some members of Peace Now who would trace their intellectual and political inheritance to this early movement toward a cooperative solution, but for the most part we find those inheritors in the cultural movements of cooperation and collaboration: in Ta-ayush, in the village of Neve ShalomWahat al-Salam and in the important human rights work of B'tselem, and the important debates hosted by The Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information. Perhaps there are others that you can tell me about, and I can pass that on.

In the U.S., progressive Jews are in a radical minority, but they are organizing. They include Zionists who call for Palestinian self-determination, post-Zionists who call for Palestinian self-determination and statehood, and all those who would, regardless of the one-state or two-state solution, call for the radical restructuring of Israeli citizenship to overcome its racist hierarchies, demand the just reallocation of arable land, and a practical and just policy toward the problem of Palestinian refugees, a problem that, since 1948 at least, has refused to go away, and which has not as yet found its just and practical solution. And though some of us may well be pleased with the Geneva Accord, with the step it takes toward a collaboratively wrought peace, we would probably be unwise to stay content with any peace proposal that takes off the agenda U.N. resolution 242, and the need to address the right of return for Palestinians in a way that can work.

In the U.S., as you know, the political lobby called AIPAC maintains that it represents the views of American Jewry on the state of Israel, and every U.S. president and congress has honored this claim in the last decades. AIPAC represents a strong conservative trend among U.S. Jews, focusing not only on the "defense" of Israel, but garnering political support for the Israeli military and the occupation. The struggle to establish an alternative to AIPAC has been enormously difficult. In the last few years, the organization Brit Tzedek has emerged as an alternative, in many ways mirroring the Labor Party in Israel, with some members more closely allied with Peace NOW. Whereas AIPAC in its Likud and right-wing labor politics boasts approximately 60,000 members, garnering support from the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee, Brit Tzedek has achieved 16,000 members in the last two years alone. Brit Tzedek aims to rival AIPAC as the political representative of American Jewry, and it may well achieve its aim to show that American Jewry is strongly divided on the question of the occupation. Brit Tzedek clearly opposes the occupation, supports the Geneva Accord, opposes the separation wall, and has undertaken to raise money to induce illegal Israeli settlers to leave Palestinian lands. Brit Tzedek, although claiming to be neutral with respect to Zionism, leans heavily in that direction, and it has not addressed the question of Palestinian refugees and

entitlements to land and property. Nor has it been known for seeking out collaborative venues with Palestinian and Arab organizations. To the left of Brit Tzedek is probably Tikkun, an organization run by Rabbi Michael Lerner, whose personal views establish the official view of the organization. It is not known as an internally democratic organization, although its magazine has hosted important commentary on the occupation, making it possible for American Jews to openly oppose the occupation without being accused of anti-Semitism. *Tikkun* is openly Zionist, and has consistently refused to publish post-Zionist inquiries. It has, however, hosted important essays by Cornel West and Jessica Benjamin on the quest for peace in the Middle East, and it has done an extremely important service by establishing discussion groups on campuses throughout the U.S. where Jewish opposition to Israeli state practices can be articulated and discussed. It is regularly dismissed by Hillel organizations and members of AIPAC for lacking *Realpolitik*, and always recurring to the views of its semi-charismatic leader.

Most recently, it seems to me, an organization called Jewish Voice for Peace has become important, vigorously opposing the occupation and the separation wall, exploring the possibility of a binational state, and organizing an important boycott against Caterpillar to stop the export of their bull dozers to the Israeli government for use to crush homes and lives in the occupied territories. Jewish Voice for Peace maintains that "there is no magic spell that will bring peace. It will take time and perseverance form all parties involved. But that process cannot even begin until Israel ends its 36-year old occupation. There needs then to be a process of reconciliation, rebuilding Palestinian society and work toward just resolutions of the outstanding issues, such as the Palestinian refugees, permanent and precise borders, Jerusalem and conditions for Arab citizens of Israel. But until the Occupation ends, matters will continue to be complicated by violence and the disparity of power between the two sides."

These groups are small, but they have become a thorn in the side of the mainstream Zionist organizations who can no longer so easily claim to represent all Jews in the U.S. The strategic aim, as far as I am concerned, is to break apart that hegemony, and for there to be a strong Jewish voice against the occupation, so that when politicians run for offices, they will not be able to assume that the so-called Jewish vote is monolithic, so that they will not be able to assume that Jews favor Sharon or the occupation, or the separation wall, the continuing subjugation, and the radical devaluation of Palestinian lives.

Today we are here under the rubric of stopping the occupation. Yes, the occupation surely has to be stopped, but that is not the end of the story. The subjugation of the Palestinians did not begin in 1967. It is not really possible to fight for the Geneva Accord without stopping and dismantling the separation wall, for that wall is redrawing the borders as we speak, and its success will adversely affect the lives of 210,000 Palestinians, and annex approximately 22% of the West Bank as Israeli territory, decimating the economic life of that area, forcibly separating Palestinian villages from wells and hospitals, making it exceedingly difficult for Palestinians to work or to maintain contact with family and community. Given that nearly 90% of Palestinians in those territories make less than 2 dollars a day, this further decimation of the economic base of these territories will produce permanent and demoralized poverty. This wall has no place in the quest for a just peace. Indeed, precisely because the separation wall seems to be drawing

new and radically unacceptable boundaries, it has inadvertently breathed life into the one-state solution.
Of course, the Geneva Accord is to be commended as a coalitional peace effort; it represents an impressive effort on the part of non-state actors from both the Israeli and the Palestinian communities to try and make a peace independent of state governments. But even the Geneva Accord cannot be implemented if the wall is not first dismantled. And the Geneva Accord will not be sufficient to maintain the peace until the issue of Palestinian refugees is addressed. The institution of a Palestinian state will not by itself nullify the claims to the land or the petition for restoration. Nor will it address the internal racism and hierarchy that afflicts the institution of Israeli citizenship, where Arab Israelis, including Arab Jews, Christians, and Muslims, suffer second class status, and where the income levels between Ashkenazi and Mizrahim continue to be stark and unjust, and where the founding narratives and the dominant culture are derived from the Aliyah from Europe.

Indeed, if there are now 1.2 million Palestinians living within Israel, they will be asked, even within a two-state solution, to live within a state that not only defines its polity and the prerogatives of citizenship as Jewish, but which insists on maintaining majority control over all non-Jewish occupants. I don't believe that the Israeli state in its current form should be ratified, and worry that the Geneva Accord provides cover precisely for such a ratification. This has implications not only for how Palestinians are treated, but for a series of ethnic and racial divisions within the Israeli polity that must be fought and reversed.

On the other hand, the resistance to the prospect of peace is heightened by those Zionists who believe that only through maintaining its military dominance and brutality will Israel survive. This is clearly circular reasoning, which does not see that the militarization of the state can only and always lead to further militarization. Nonetheless, I am shocked when I come across the military sentiment in its raw form as I was recently, when I received the following email from a Zionist list in the U.S. In a recent missive from an organization called Israel Live!, one of its organizers responded to the question of whether the Presidential candidate, Howard Dean, was good for the Jews. She wrote to her constituency that they should not fear voting for Dean, since he was clearly in favor of "extra-judicial killings." I stared at the phrase. "Extra-judicial killings." This was an appeal to the U.S. Jewish community to feel relieved, to celebrate, to resolve on a positive vote because this man is said to approve of the daily killings of Palestinian peoples outside the scope of any recognizable law. These are views that can never lead to peace, and yet, those who hold them, understand themselves as righteous, as fighting anti-semitism, as defending the Jewish people, as acting in the name of survival. But are they doing any of these things?

There are other messages I receive, however, and they are problematic for other reasons. I am part of a listserve, academics for justice, which is the strongest internet community of academics I know of that opposes the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. This listserve has done a very good job in mobilizing an academic boycott against Israeli universities, in undermining support for Campus Watch, a neo-McCarthyite anti-Arab group that has sought to restrict how Middle East politics is taught in U.S. universities. This group has also rightly come

to the defense of various academics of Arab descent who have become targets of censorship or subject to immigration harassment. It has also, very effectively, come to the defense of Hanan Ashrawi to speak on U.S. college campuses against those who would villify her for her extraordinary work on Palestinian human rights. Nevertheless, on that same listserve, and in defense of the academic boycott, I read the spurious claim that there are no Israeli academics, except perhaps two, listed there, who have openly voiced opposition to the Israeli occupation. This claim is clearly false, and yet there it is, circulating, part of the rationale for the boycott. One has to bear the wrath of some if one speaks out against the falsity of this claim, and yet it must be done. How can it be that there is, among these very important political organizers, no understanding of the culture and politics of dissent within Israel?

There is, in my mind, here work to be done to try and make clear what the Israeli opposition is, as well as what the Palestinian alliances are who seek a non-violent resolution to the conflict. To have strong media representation of both, and to establish links between them, will constitute one of the most effective coalitional means I can imagine for the purposes of ending the occupation and pursuing all the related questions of social justice. I am hoping that this is one of the tasks that we can undertake here. It will strengthen the U.S. opposition to current Israeli policy, since so many U.S. progressives believe that it would put them in a bind to oppose Israel, not knowing that there is an internal criticism, a host of dissenters, those whose views and whose activism are not, and will not be, adequately represented in the mainstream media. Similarly, the brave and important statement that Palestinian intellectuals published last year opposing the suicide bombings, this was treated with skepticism by The New York Times, and not given the kind of attention it clearly deserved. Why is it that time and again one must fight the conception that all Palestinians support violent measures? It is an indignity to have to defend Palestinians, who suffer violence disproportionately, from this charge. And yet, it must be done to counter the public perception, the media construction, that all Palestinian aspirations are reducible to violence. But what can be heard, and what can be registered? Does the mainstream media foreground the articulate and fair and reflective voice of Hanan Ashrawi, or circulate the important editorials of Moustapha Barghouti, who describes in detail the daily plight of the Palestinians? The cynical obituary of Edward Said in The New York Times was yet another example of this effort to demean one of the most important voices for social justice of our time.

Coalitions are not easy or happy places. They are places one stays when one has the impulse to leave. They are forms of work that are, by definition, difficult, since one has to have one’s position and allow it to be decentered by what one hears. One must persist in what one knows to be right, and yet know also when to yield, when to do something for the sake of continuing to work together, to preserve the relations at hand. I think that Buber had a point in believing that one had to work at living together, working together in de-institutionalized ways, and that such alliances could provide the foundation and the model for collaborative associations seeking non-violent and just solutions to conflicts that appear intractable. This would mean living to the side of one’s nationalism, of one’s identification, allowing for a decentering of a nationalist ethos. The question of establishing and tending to relations will be more important than grounding oneself in an identity. Something other than nationalism has doubtless

emerged already through these associations and collaborations, something inadvertent, even beautiful.

What would it mean to begin the practice of undoing nationalism, of countering its claims, of beginning to think and feel outside of its reach? Oddly, I think that we have to have a debate about what it is that one can finally love in order to move outside the claims of nationalism. I found two quotations, quite by accident, in the course of my teaching this last semester, one from Hannah Arendt, the other from Mahmoud Darwish. They seemed to be in conversation with one another, and I offer them to you today as examples of a possible conversation. Arendt was, as you know, criticized by Gershom Sholem and others after she published her Eichmann in Jerusalem. Like the reporter who accused Primo Levi of "cold reasoning" for criticizing Israel, Sholem calls Arendt "heartless" for concentrating on what she takes to be the inadequate visions of Jewish politics at the time. Sholem wrote to her in 1963 from Jerusalem: "In the Jewish tradition there is a concept, hard to define and yet concrete enough, which we know as Ahabath Israel: "Love of the Jewish people…" In you, dear Hannah, as in so many intellectuals who came from the German Left, I find little trace of this. Arendt replies, disputing first that she comes from the German Left (and, indeed, she was no Marxist), but then says something quite interesting when accused of failing to love the Jewish people well enough. She writes, "You are quite right – I am not moved by 'love' of this sort, and for two reasons: I have never in my life 'loved' any people or collective – neither the German people, nor the French, nor the American, nor the working class or anything of that sort. I indeed love 'only' my friends and the only kind of love I know of and believe in is the love of persons. Secondly, this 'love of the Jews' would appear to me, since I am myself Jewish, as something rather suspect. I cannot love myself or anything which I know is part and parcel of my own person. To clarify this, let me tell you of a conversation I had in Israel with a prominent political personality who was defending the – in my opinion disastrous – non-separation of religion and state in Israel. What he said -I am not sure of the exact words any more – ran something like this: 'You will understand that, as a Socialist, I, of course, do not believe in God; I believe in the Jewish people.' I found this a shocking statement and, being too shocked, I did not reply at the time. But I could have answered: the greatness of this people was once that it believed in God, and believed in Him in such a way that its trust and love towards Him was greater than its fear. And now this people believes only in itself? What good can come out of that? -Well, in this sense I do not 'love' the Jews, nor do I 'believe' in them; I merely belong to them as a matter of course, beyond dispute or argument." (Jew as Pariah, 247)

In Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness*, his literary account of the bombings of Beirut in 1982, he describes a scene with his Jewish lover. They have been making love, and he becomes sleepy. He is aware that he has to report to the Israeli police in order to avoid being jailed or permanently expelled. His is the first-person voice in the quotation that follows:

He asks, "Do the police know the address of this house?"

She answered, "I don't think so, but the military police do. Do you hate Jews?"

I said, “I love you now.”

She said, “That’s not a clear answer.”

I said, “And the question itself wasn’t clear. As if I were to ask you, ‘Do you love Arabs?”

She said, “That’s not a question.”

I asked, “And why is your question a question?”

She said, “Because we have a complex. We have more need of answers than you do.”

I said, “Are you crazy?”

She said, “A little. But you haven’t told me if you love Jews or hate them.”

I said, “I don’t know, and I don’t want to know. But I do know I like the plays of Euripides and Shakespeare. I like fried fish, boiled potatoes, the music of Mozart, and the city of Haifa. I like grapes, intelligent conversation, autumn, Picasso’s blue period. And I like wine, and the ambiguity of mature poetry. As for Jews, they’re not a question of love or hate.”

She said, “Are you crazy?”

I said, “a little.”

She asked, “do you like coffee?’

I said, “I love coffee and the aroma of coffee.”

She rose, naked, even of me, and I felt the pain of those from whom a limb has been severed.

Later, he changes tone, only to change it again: she asks, “and you, what do you dream about?” And he replies, “That I stop loving you.” She asks, “Do you love me?” He replies, “No. I don’t love you. Did you know that your mother, Sarah, drove my mother, Hagar, into the desert?” She asks, “Am I to blame then? Is it for that that you do not love me?” And he replies,

“No, You’re not to blame; and because of that I don’t love you. Or, I love you.”

This last line carries with it a paradox. I don’t love you. Or, I love you. This is both proximity and aversion; it is unsettled; it is not of one mind. It might be said to be the affect, the emotional tenor of coalition itself, the effort to stay in even as one wishes to go, the desire to stay in the midst of what is unresolved, in the disquiet of ambivalence, in order to continue to stay near and to work together until something new emerges.

This article was initially given as a talk at The 2nd International Conference on An End to Occupation, A Just Peace in Israel-Palestine: Towards an Active International Network in East Jerusalem January 4th-5th, 2004.

Judith Butler *is Professor of Comparative Literature and Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, and is well known as a theorist of power, gender, sexuality.*

A Place For Our Dream?

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

As the wrangling over the roadmap continues and the Palestinian people are subjected to unprecedented new forms of horror, we may find it helpful to put details of the horrors to one side for a moment, and sketch a general overview of the situation.

Since the Oslo process, the Israelis have engaged in a deliberate and programmed attempt to change the status quo to an extent unprecedented during the previous 27 years of occupation, destroying any prospects for peace. The building of settlements has continued unabated-over 100 new settlements have been created, and the number of Israeli settlers has doubled. Not only are the settlements themselves often on a large scale, but they need an intricate network of roads to link them to each other and to Israel. The aim has not been to create houses for an expanding Israeli population, but to change the economic and political geography of the Occupied Territories. Through its settlement activities, Israel has sought to transform the West Bank into ethnically Israeli territory, in which Palestinian villages and towns are nothing more than isolated outposts.

In line with Israel's attempts to change the facts on the ground, it has increased its demands, whilst the Palestinians have progressively been forced to lower theirs. The Palestinians were prepared to accept a mere 22 percent of historic Palestine, instead of the 45 percent granted to them under the UN partition plan of 1947. However, following the Oslo accords, the illusion that there might be a two state solution based on the 1967 borders, quickly evaporated. The subsequent negotiations essentially centered on how the West Bank itself should be divided between the two sides. These negotiations culminated in the Camp David Peace Proposals in July 2000 where the Palestinians were asked to accept an offer of a so called state to be located on four separate cantons, with borders, airspace and water being controlled by Israel.

Following the Palestinians rejection of the Camp David offer, Israel launched further attack on the Palestinians, this time using the World's media. Intensifying their engagement with public relations exercises, Israel presented the situation as a military conflict between two equal sides; the Occupied Territories became "Disputed" Territories and the Palestinian's legitimate demand of the right of return for refugees, was presented as their demand to destroy the Israeli State.

When engaged in peace negotiations following Oslo, Israel has remained firmly committed to three basic rules:

1. No Palestinian entity should be allowed to control its borders with any other state. Any future Palestinian entity must be, in effect, "borderless"-forever surrounded, whether through temporary or permanent measures, by Israeli populations and the Israeli army.

2. Any authority the Palestinian entity or self-rule government may have should remain functional, not sovereign.

3. No arrangements or agreements concluded with the Palestinians or Arabs (and here, Oslo is a case in point) should be allowed to hinder Israel's ability to change the status quo and create new facts on the ground in the occupied territories.

Why bother with the Roadmap?

So why is anyone bothering with the roadmap? Why has Sharon himself apparently now accepted the idea of a Palestinian state? And why doesn't Israel annex all the occupied territories, just as it has annexed Jerusalem and the Golan? Despite all its efforts, Israel has still not found a solution to the demographic problem posed by the Palestinians. Having learned the hard lesson of 1948, Palestinians who are still living on their land have refused to leave, their numbers have continued to increase, and they have committed themselves to a life of struggle, to strengthening their institutional structures, to enhancing their nation's awareness of its rights, and to rallying international support.

Israel has found no military way of ending the Intifada and the Palestinian struggle despite trying this more than once. It has been practically impossible to get the inhabitants of the occupied territories to leave their homes-the infamous "transfer" about which Sharon has long fantasized. The last chance for Israel to carry out such a "transfer" came during the recent war on Iraq, but even then, no attempt could be made. There are limits to what the Israeli force can achieve, even when that force is overwhelming.

The collapse of the Israeli economy under the pressures generated by the Intifada is clear for all to see. Today, Israel is suffering the worst recession in its history, accompanied by the highest levels of unemployment and capital flight the country has ever known. Israel's losses since the beginning of the Intifada have been estimated at $23 billion. Per capita income has dropped by 12 percent. This, together with the other human loses, is why Israel sought so hard to sustain the conflict.

Despite all their continued efforts to preserve International support, the actions of the Israeli occupying army, have not escaped the World's attention and Israel is suffering a dramatic loss of credibility. Even in the United States where the pro-Israel lobby is strong, President George W. Bush has been unable to brush aside the two basic conditions for any viable settlement: the establishment of an independent and democratic Palestinian state, and the termination of the 1967 occupation. Public support for Israel in many European countries has virtually collapsed. Even some European parliaments are openly critical of the state. Arab normalization with Israel has ground to a halt.

At the same time, support at grassroots level for the Palestinians is increasing at a tremendous pace. Israel's intensified invasions into the West Bank, which began in March 2002, increased the rate at which support is growing. Solidarity movements are springing up across the globe, some of which are providing the Palestinians with direct protection. Despite Israel's protests,

the Palestinian solidarity movement has joined forces with the worldwide anti-globalization campaign, and the two are mutually strengthening one another. Today, Palestinian liberation has become the foremost national liberation cause in the world.

So, what does the government of Israel want? To put it simply, it wants a new truce-a second Oslo, which will give it the time to carve off what remains of the occupied territories and break what remains of the resolve of the Palestinian national movement.

Enter the Roadmap. Sharon's aim is and always has been, the Judaization and annexation of most of the West Bank and Gaza. Having fiercely condemned the Roadmap, mainly because of its call to end settlement building, he has nevertheless agreed to it (with of course 100 alterations to the text). This is because his aim may still be carried out, under the disguise of a call for an interim state. An interim state will allow the Israelis to once again postpone indefinitely all discussion of such essential matters as borders, the refugees, the settlements, and Jerusalem.

Their hope, of course, is that in time these matters will become impossible to resolve, and so the search for a solution can simply be abandoned.

Israel is proposing a Palestinian state on 42 percent of the land occupied in 1967. This would effectively reduce an "independent" Palestinian state to a collection of geographically disconnected enclaves, a "state" with no sovereignty or borders. The Palestinians may be allowed to carry on living in ghettos but there will be no prospect of transforming their ghettos into a feasible state. Whilst this solution may be sold to the Palestinians as "temporary," as we have seen with Oslo, the temporary will soon become permanent. We are being asked to give up our rights so that we may live in permanent slavery under the worst system of racist apartheid in history.

The Road Ahead

In the face of Sharon's plans for ghettoization and apartheid, the Palestinian National Initiative, a democratic opposition movement launched in June 2002, calls for the need to deploy all four of the fundamental methods that we have at our disposal.

1 – Free elections

Free and democratic elections should be held as soon as possible. Part of the Israeli and to some extent International attack, has been that while the Israelis are democratic, the Palestinians are not. Elections will put a stop to this accusation. A democratic Palestinian government may lead the Palestinians in the struggle to build an independent, viable state, with internal reform, accountability and transparency. Peace negotiations will also be more effective, and less vulnerable to high jacking by extremists, as the Palestinian government will be representing the needs of the people.

2 – Rejection of partial solutions

As Palestinians, we must insist on the establishment of an independent state with full sovereignty. We should therefore regard with caution any stage defined as an “interim state.” We should insist that all issues relating to the final peace settlement be addressed and resolved: settlements, borders, Jerusalem, and the refugees. Truly temporary measures should only be used to alleviate pressure for a solution and return the crisis to square one, as happened under Oslo.

3 – Support for the disenfranchised

The Palestinian National Initiative has called for the energizing of the potentials of the Palestinian people and for the deployment of this potential in the struggle for liberation and independence. To do this, we must provide sufficient support for the working and disenfranchised sections of the population in the Occupied Territories.

On the political level, we need to free our political system from outdated restrictions, open the system to full participation, particularly by women and the young, redistribute resources in a manner that supports the steadfastness of the poor and underprivileged and their ability to stay in their homeland, and energize our human resources-the main source of our vigor-to the greatest possible extent.

4 – Rallying International solidarity

We need to rally the support of the growing international solidarity movement. One day, history will perhaps record that the foremost achievement of the Intifada was to revive the support of the international solidarity movement for the Palestinian people, which had dwindled due to our failure to defend our own rights effectively, and the false impression produced by Oslo that peace had been achieved, when actually the claws of occupation and settlement had never ceased tearing Palestinian land apart.

The creation of the grass-roots international campaign to protect the Palestinians (GIPP) was a brilliant step towards reshaping the international solidarity movement. And that solidarity movement can expand yet further. If we can combine the international solidarity movement and our own national resistance, we will generate a force comparable to that, which fought apartheid in South Africa, a force capable of exposing the ills of occupation and settlements and bringing to an end the occupation, and racism from which our people have long suffered.

If all of the above were to be achieved, it would provide at last a partial vindication for our people after a century, if not centuries, of suffering. For generations, we have known nothing but oppressive foreign rule, and have had to put up with persecution and injustice. For centuries, we never had a chance to rule ourselves, determine our own future, plan our lives, and live in freedom and pride. Yet despite this, we have been able to transcend our suffering, banish our sense of victimization, and focus on self-improvement and education. Scientific, professional, and national struggle has become, for each one of us, a way of paying. homage to our beloved Palestine.

The Palestinian National Initiative can open up new horizons for the Palestinian people and enable us to revive our potential, consolidate our resolve, energize our struggle, and attain our goal of a free, peaceful, independent, and democratic state. As difficult as it looks, I'm fully confident that there is a place for our dream; there is a place for peace and for Palestine.

Mustapha Barghouti *is internationally recognized as physician, human rights advocate and Secretary General of the Palestinian National Initiative. A long time resident of Ramallah, he has, as Director of the Palestinian Medical Relief Committee, been dedicated to expanding health care for Palestinians under conditions of extreme duress, conditions that he has tirelessly sought to publicize in an effort to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.*

The Building Of A Wall

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

In June 16, 2002, the Israeli Defense Ministry began building a wall along the so-called “joint areas” between core Israel and the occupied territories in the West Bank. This fact is by no means trivial. The implications of this wall depend entirely on what function one would like to attribute to it. Should it vouchsafe security? Should it effectuate a “separation” from the Palestinians? Indicate a “solution”? Alone the concept of “wall” is debatable. Because while in fact a partial meter high, cement block constructed kilometer-long obstruction is what should be erected, it is euphemistically referred to as a “fence” (gader). It is not for nothing that the Israeli journalist Lilli Galili in the daily Ha’aretz of June 17, 2002 maintained “months after the concept of separation began to dominate Israeli political discourse, every politician and every political orientation, sought to impart their own content upon it. Those who speak of a fence distinguish themselves from those who call separation a word, a position, and also consider the evacuation of the settlements as a necessary component of the erection of a fence.”

Photo by Horit Herman Peled

From “Checkpoint Images” by Horit Herman Peled.

But the concept of the “fence’” itself presents numerous meanings: sure enough, while the Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer speaks of the military necessity of a “security fence” and holds himself therefore to be politically safeguarded, the Council of Settlers in the West Bank speaks of a state-political fence, to which it is most expressly opposed, because it functions as an inaccessible border between Israel and a future Palestine. The notion of a “party-political fence” was coined by the former labor party minister, Yossi Beilin. He holds the wall to be a scandalous waste of money, which serves no other purpose other than spurting out inner party capital. This project was largely championed by his fellow party member Haim Ramon, who has profiled himself with this “separation” plan, and has now rendered his aspirations to political party leadership debatable. Yossi Sarid, the opposition leader at the head of the Meretz party, speaks sarcastically of a “Ben Eliezer against Ramon fence.” Beilin, a central figure in the Oslo process of the nineties, holds for his part, only the fence, which extends along the 1967 border as desirable for political peace—a position that corresponds with that of the authorities for Palestinian autonomy.

For the Palestinians on the other hand, the fence represents a factual annulment of all of the agreements made with the Israelis including the Oslo Agreements. According to the Palestinian minister Saeb Erekat, Israel is trying, through the construction of the fence, to take the over 42 percent of the Palestinian soil “intermediate solution, of which Sharon spoke during his takeover. The wall is devised above all to constrict entire Palestinian villages in which viable

Palestinian agricultural land has been seized in order to render the construction of the wall possible. The PLO leader Yassir Arafat speaks of a “policy of apartheid.”

The discussion of the wall is paradigmatically excluded, because for one, it in fact distinguishes itself through a definite heterogeneity of positions with regard to the politically determined security problem—a problem to which some have conceived the construction of a stone barrier to be a solution. On the other hand, it is striking how much the conception of the building of the wall between old core Israel and that territory which designated for partitioning, without seeking to abolish the occupation, of course—dominates public discussion and is accepted as self-evident. Naturally, there is also a clear-cut rejection of this seemingly archaic separation measure by declarations by diverse extra-parliamentary opposition groups. Gush Shalom, for example, polemicizes against the “evil fence.” Opposition to the wall is also heard from the parliamentary Meretz Party. Nonetheless, it seems as if the discussion of the wall dominates with all the more urgency among these otherwise faint minorities.

How is one to explain this latent public consensus in spite of seeming political heterogeneity? How is one to understand the stagnation in the so-called “peace process” when there is still many voices on the issue on the Israeli side? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to revisit the peace efforts of the nineties and there multiple failures.

Without a doubt, the Oslo Agreements represented a political event which offered new possibilities for a peace-oriented management of the Middle East conflict. Whether these real possibilities were already achievable should not be questioned after the fact. Rightly so, one spoke unswervingly of peace in Israel as well as Palestine. Yet, along the way, neither side seems to have really taken into account, at what price this peace must undeniably come. As long as the future negotiations are allowed to persist in uncertainty, it will be more or less possible to defer these terms to the “future”. Rabin’s murder already indicated that the future peace prospects for many Israelis were in no way bound up with positive visions but instead with an ideologically under-fed trauma of a downright “betrayal of Zionism” or at the very least with (as always undetermined) fears for the future. On the Palestinian side, the acknowledgement of the state of Israel on November 15, 1988, signaled a definitive abandonment of a serious heritage of national myths that had been upheld for decades and awaited a tangible compensation for those who have remained. As one turned to the central points of contention of the conflict with Camp David as a point of culmination, it became clear that a definitive resolution of the conflict circled around a sore point on both sides, which had been avoided for years. This fact is partially to blame for driving Israelis to regression and numerous Palestinians in desperate acts of violence.

The nineties were distinguished by recognizable structures of rapprochement in different areas of current and future coexistence. Anyhow, the question remains to what extent a political policy was created that was set up to solve concrete problems and adjust historical distortions. In this context, one need only allude to how much the Jewish settlement of the West Bank especially in the years of the Oslo Agreements (and in all Israeli governments) expanded, in order to understand that the resulting trust was, objectively speaking, abused and down right

betrayed. Not without reason, there were voices both in Israel and Palestine who spoke of a "perpetuation of the occupation with peaceful means." The power relation between Israel and the Palestinian authorities is asymmetrical. For many Palestinians, the said abuse of the gradually-developing trust was not only a robust breach of trust but a cynical continuation of an Israeli hegemony, in need of being fought. Whether the expectations were too great or too inadequate can be measured by the intentions and the applied practices of the negotiating parties.

Whatever internal social function the continuation of the conflict might fulfill on the Palestinian side, on the Israeli side, a causal relationship between the domestic condition, with its society deeply torn and the (even if it had been practiced premeditatively) conflict situation against its enemy is at least feasible. One almost seeks to dismiss the "security problem" by ideologizing about the military challenges (sure enough, real) posed by the interior conflicts. The escalation of the military cannot save anything. At best it can temporarily postpone the discussion with the potential internal conflict. This is because as soon as the "external pressure" is applied, these subliminally free-floating conflicts will come to the surface again to dominate the political-social Israel agenda with vehemence. Therefore, it's not just about confrontation with the now decades-long practice of discrimination against Arabic citizens, land and the "integration" of newly migrated citizens from the former Soviet Union. It's also largely about the long due confrontation with the immense social tensions and consequently with Israeli "class problems, with its sharpening ethnic conflicts, which are not limited to cultural questions raised tensions between Ashkenazi and Eastern Jews. This is also attributed to the sharpening conflict between religious and secular Jews and its subsequent basic clarification of the relationship between state and religion. All of this has not become obsolete with the bellicose confrontation with the Palestinians; rather has only shifted to the background temporarily. It's only waiting for the opportunity in which it can fully erupt again.

For the time being things are looking grim in the Middle East. The peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians as it unfolded in the beginning of the nineties as a result of the Oslo Agreements has now definitively fallen by the wayside. After the failure of Camp David and the Taba Negotiations and the ensuing escalation of violence in the second Palestinian Intifada, peace faces more than ever a dead-end, one which one can at best surmise as to what lies behind it, and most importantly, how to come out of it. An Israeli society shaken from the horrors of Palestinian suicide bombings has experienced a considerable (and socio-psychological) tendency to the right. Many, very many of them "want the war" and demand a rigorous and systematic defeat of "the Palestinians." They also want the brutal recapture of Palestinian cities in the West Bank under the pretext of "shattering terror" which has almost completely de facto eliminated, or at least debilitated, the power apparatus of the Palestinian authorities and consequently Arafat's ability to act.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon emerges from this predicament as a one- time "victor." For one, he has brutally modeled himself against his rival Benjamin Netanyahu, who is trying to dispute his political and party leadership. On the other hand, he is able at last to do something he has wanted to do for decades (and the last time of course under completely different

circumstances in the catastrophe that led to the Lebanon war in 1982) and that is to suppress the Palestinians, to crush their leadership and to guarantee the continuation of the occupied regimes; and this by means of executing a massive population transfer of the Palestinians if need be. Seen under this light, “shattering terror” is nothing other than a perfidious ideology as long as the actual causes of terror, and the now decade-old Israeli occupation and systematic oppression of the Palestinian people, are not abolished. But it is precisely this which Sharon is not inclined to do. In the logic of his politics of violence, terror will be accepted only if the West Bank settlements remain untouched because Sharon would otherwise immediately lose his power. Sharon’s most loyal political hinterland is located in the settlement movements.

If Sharon and large parts of his coalition government have a big interest in the perpetuation of violence, what moves the greater part of the Jewish-Israeli population to support him? Surely, it must be clear to most Israelis that there can be no military solution to eradicate terror. And that shattering the Palestinian infrastructure will only nourish greater despair and massive terror on the side of the Palestinians. How does one explain that the acceptance of Sharon’s politics of violence—and in many places support it enthusiastically? The answers to these questions vary. There is talk about a greater coherence in view of outside threats and from a deformed consciousness as a result of unhealed historical traumas as well as from a rising Israeli military mentality and increasing regressive de-politicization of the public sphere and the like. Undoubtedly, all of these factors have a certain effect on the said phenomenon. This article will address an aspect of this, which has up until now remained under-examined, even though its essence is a matter of foreknowledge.

Israel (that is the Jewish-Israeli population and Zionism) has come to an historical crossroads which places it in a dilemma and presents itself as a choice between Scylla and Charybdis.

Israel can decide to definitively evacuate the occupied territories within the parameters of the peace regulations and to abolish the settlements. One can also assume that the greatest part of the settlers would comply with the evacuation decision prescribed by the government. It would, however, already suffice if a minority of several hundred or even thousand hardliners would consistently oppose the evacuation, to which the state would be expected to execute its monopoly on violence vis-á-vis these radical settlers; if this action came to a bloody conflict in which “Jews shoot against Jews” (a thought that can barely be endured for many in Israel), it could come to a possible Civil War.

Israel, on the other hand, can decide to not want to evacuate the territories under any circumstances—be it because a settlement infrastructure has already been set and is viewed as a seemingly irreversible condition, as the leftist liberal critical observer, Meron Benvenisti has already been asserting for years, or be it because the demands on the territories have taken on military, security-political or religious-theological connotations—which combined can be declared as an axiomatic postulate. This situation that the left has diagnosed, namely the demand of keeping the conditions of occupation on the part of the right and Israel’s continued presence in the West Bank ultimately implies the objective creation of a bi-national structure. It could be rejected as such by the Palestinians, which would probably lead to an escalation of the

continued conflict in the norms of coexistence (as well as the ensuing risk for the Israeli civil society). This bi-national state could be accepted by the Palestinians, who have held long term hopes of seeing a shift in the population majority in the foreseeable future that would appear in their favor, but may also require a readiness on their part to accept Israeli citizenship.

If one excludes the most extreme possibility of a massive population transfer, a scenario that thanks to its inner logic will inevitably lead to a regional war with parties involved. In the final analysis, both diametrically-opposed plans of action here imply either an interior or "from the outside" produced dissolution of the Zionist project. It is doubtful as to whether many Israelis see this clearly; as it is also doubtful whether the greater part of the Israeli population has ever taken into account what price it is ready to pay for real peace. Without being clear about this historic turnaround and the possibilities of decision, one persists in a paralysis of what was a foreknown warning—which sets off an inability to act in a politically responsible fashion and to be therefore psychically even more susceptible to the empty promises of a "strong man." There is a striking resemblance to lemmings.

The building of the wall is paradigmatically excluded from this point of view. This is essentially, because the wall doesn't only promise "security," without also seriously indicating that with it, one could not only achieve security in the fight against Palestinian terror but also because it allows for the perpetuation of an illusion: to be rid of the Palestinians without having ceded the occupation of their territories. With "having their cake and eating it too" as the Americans tend to name such a disposition, megalomania and manifest inability to decide only increase. Even if attitudes and positions with regard to this structure may vary, there is no question that the majority of the Israeli people involved in the wall debate really yearn for a "separation" from the Palestinians. This may be characterized as an apparently infantile wish, in which the responsibility for a real and possible solution of this bloody and tragic conflict and a practical creation of structures for future coexistence are projected onto a conviction that is hopelessly fatalist ("The world is against us," and "We must carry the sword into perpetuity") and delegated on the material reification of hope in the form of a wall.

Journalist Lilli Galili write that "the Peace Now movement has not committed to any position up until now. A part of its members interpret the construction of the fence in the vicinity of the green line as an act that de-facto marks the 1967 border and that also contributes to security. Others see in the unilateral separation a continuation of the disregard of the Palestinian partners and their needs. And yet many in the peace camps interpret the construction of the fence as victory in the fight for the recognition of the 1967 borders; precisely that victory that is feared in the national religious party and the West Bank Settlers Council." There are arguments that speak for this description. Significant is Galili's casual thematization of the inability of the most powerful Israeli peace movements to decide. Of course, there is much room for numerous and heterogeneous interpretations but the construction of the wall is accepted as a reality, without the extra-parliamentary opposition taking any effective political action. There were times in which the opposition wished for a government totally different from that of Sharon. It remains to be seen if these times, as with those of the peace process are gone for good.

This article originally appeared as “Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,” in the weekly newspaper, Das Parlament, September 2, 2002 issue. It was translated by Elena Mancini.

Moshe Zuckermann is the author of eight books in Hebrew and German, and teaches at the Cohn Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Idea, and also serves as the Director of the Institute for German History at Tel Aviv University.

The Logic Of The Geneva Accord

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Introduction

There are three ways in which the Geneva Accord differs from previous documents dealing with an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. First, this is a model for a permanent status agreement that puts an end to the conflict and to all mutual claims. Prior to the signing of the Geneva Accord in Jordan on 13 October 2003, no such model existed, given that the talks held by Israel and the PLO in 1999-2001 on a permanent status settlement came to naught. Second, this is a detailed model. Prior to the publication of the Geneva Accord, several joint Israeli-Palestinian declarations on the principles of a permanent agreement were prepared. Some of these documents were prepared in the official negotiations track, and others were prepared by academic experts and civil society activists through unofficial (Track 2) talks. Before the Geneva Accord, however, there was no detailed model that included a precise map of the proposed permanent arrangement. Third, as opposed to earlier documents, the Geneva Accord is a signed agreement. The very fact of the signatures creates a personal commitment that differs from a document published by a host institution. Furthermore, the accord was not signed by a few individuals but by more than 20 persons on each side.

The composition of the signatories is also extraordinary. Among the signatories on the Palestinian side are ministers and deputy ministers, Fatah representatives to the Palestinian Legislative Council, senior officials, and academics. Those Palestinians who hold official office declared that they are signing the accord as private individuals. The public, however, understands that without the approval of the Palestinian leadership, these individuals would not have been able to take such a dramatic step or even to have engaged in the Geneva negotiations. On the Israeli side, the signatories include Knesset members from the opposition parties, peace activists, writers, security personnel serving in the reserves, economists, and academics. Appended to the Geneva Accord is a cover letter which emphasizes that the reference is to a model for an arrangement, not a binding document; to a document that complements the road map, not one meant to replace it; to a private initiative, not one that is representative-even in the case of those individuals who hold public office; to an appeal to public opinion on both sides in order to show that a permanent arrangement is attainable, not a pretense meant to create the impression of an accord between governments.

The Geneva Accord is formulated like a legal agreement between two states. In this way, it gives tangible expression to the idea of a permanent arrangement. The text is complex, lengthy, and, as a legal text, is not friendly to the average reader. In the following pages, I will outline the principles behind the formulation of the main articles in the agreement.

Acceptance of “the Other” as Legitimate

For many years, Israel and the PLO denied each other’s right to statehood. Israel denied the very existence of a Palestinian people and its right to a state, while the PLO saw Judaism as a religion and not a national identity. The sides have moved closer to one another since the late 1980’s and now recognize the existence the other’ as a fact. In the Geneva Accord, the sides take an additional step forward by granting legitimacy to the other’ based on how the other’ defines itself. The accord includes the right of the Jewish people to a state and the right of the Palestinian people to a state. In addition, the sides recognize that these states constitute a national homeland for their peoples. They also emphasize that the fact that the states are founded on an ethnic-historical basis shall not infringe on the rights of the citizens. In other words, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state (i.e., a state with a Jewish majority) does not legitimize discrimination against Palestinian Israelis.

Security Arrangements

The guiding principle in this chapter is security for Israel without occupation of the Palestinians. The negotiations on the security arrangement were the relatively easy part of the Geneva talks. This is because the parameters of the security arrangements have not changed significantly since the official talks at Camp David and in Taba. What has changed is the context in which the security arrangements are to be applied. The deeper the withdrawal Israel is prepared to execute and the broader the Palestinian sovereignty it is prepared to accept, the greater the Palestinian readiness to accommodate Israel on security matters.

The Palestinians have come to terms with Israel’s pursuit of almost 100 percent security, although in the course of the talks they could not understand how it is that this regional superpower perceives such a deep threat to its security. After all, the Palestinians are the weak side in the conflict and have suffered at the strong arm of Israel over the years. As the side that has incurred the heaviest losses, they were amazed by Israel’s deep-rooted sense of an existential threat to its security. They did not try to convince Israel that it is making a mountain out of a molehill but rather met Israel halfway on this issue.

Palestine will be a non-militarized state, and no armed force that is not mentioned in the accord will be deployed on its territory. The two sides are committed to an ongoing struggle against terrorism (including acts of terrorism against property, land, and institutions). Neither side may desist from this struggle on the pretext of a disagreement with the other side. Given the strong opposition expected from the enemies of a permanent arrangement and on the basis of the experience garnered during the Oslo years, during which extremists on both sides succeeded in torpedoing the interim agreements, it was determined that the very existence of illegal, armed organizations contravenes the accord and that such organizations must be disarmed. The Palestinians agreed to far-reaching security arrangements that include high-altitude Israel Air Force training flights in the airspace of the West Bank, the maintenance of two early warning stations, and an Israeli military presence in the Jordan Rift Valley. This Israeli military presence, however, shall be subject to the authority of a multinational force.

This force will defend Palestine against invasion by external forces and oversee the security arrangements. The external supervision of the security articles will ensure the end of the occupation and of the humiliation of the Palestinians at the hands of Israel. The security arrangements will be open to reassessment after a number of years. In the end, the Palestinians understood that they must show consideration for Israel's psychological needs in the security sphere. By responding to this need, the Palestinians both won full territorial sovereignty and put an end to Israel's use of the security issue as a pretext for continuing the occupation.

Territory

The starting point for the territorial discussions was the 1967 borders as the lines that enjoy international legitimacy and beyond which lie land and people under Israeli occupation. The 1967 lines represent a historic compromise in which Mandatory Palestine will be divided between the two national movements.

From the territorial aspect, it was clear to both sides that neither the State of Israel nor Palestine-each for its own reasons-can live with the settlements. The 160 settlements and approximately 100 additional outposts that are spread out over the West Bank prevent the Palestinians from establishing a viable state on the 1967 lands. As far as Israel is concerned, the national settlement enterprise is no longer tenable. There is a huge demographic disparity between the two populations: 200,000 settlers as opposed to more than 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This tough demographic reality caused Israel to tighten the control of the settlements over the Palestinian population through domination of the roads, land, water, and main arteries and by means of Israel's military strength and technological superiority. This, of course, led the Arab majority to launch an uprising.

By mid-January 2004, 2,648 Palestinians had been killed and 24,407 wounded in the intifadah, and Israel had set up 608 roadblocks and 56 manned barriers on Palestinian land, totally disrupting the daily lives of the Palestinians. All of these measures failed to suppress the Palestinian uprising; rather, they drove the Palestinians to seek revenge and liberation from the Israeli stranglehold by means of low-tech but highly motivated combat and vile acts of terrorism. In 2003, the ratio of settlers to soldiers defending them was 4:1, not counting the Israeli General Security Service personnel and soldiers within the Green Line held hostage to the defense of the settlements. In economic terms, the maintenance of the settlements comes at the expense of the citizens of Israel. In 2001, each settler received approximately NIS 8,600 (about $2000) more than each Israeli living within the Green Line. It is worth noting that most settlers cannot be classified as low income and that the preceding calculation does not include benefits received from the Education and Defense Ministries and government support for settler associations.

While the settlers (excluding those in East Jerusalem) comprise only 3 percent of the Israeli population, more than half of the country's citizens support them. After close to 40 years of occupation, it is impossible to evacuate all of the settlements, despite the fact they are all

illegal under international law. In the Geneva Accord, the sides agreed that no settler will remain within the boundaries of Palestine and that Israel will not annex even one Palestinian. The Geneva map proposed a border that annexes only some 2 percent of the West Bank on which 110,000 Israelis live in 21 settlements (excluding Jerusalem.) In other words, approximately 50 percent of the settlers living in some 140 settlements will be evacuated. Their homes and the existing infrastructure will be handed over to Palestine. Israel will compensate Palestine for the territory it will annex in the West Bank with lands from its sovereign territory that are quantitatively equal and qualitatively similar. The Gaza Strip will expand eastward by 25 percent, and cultivated Israeli lands will be annexed to it. This will allow the population of the Strip to export agricultural produce and increase its income. The remaining territorial compensation will be made from lands to the southwest of the West Bank. Palestine will receive lands on which lie the remnants of about ten Palestinian villages destroyed in the 1948 war, and it will be able to turn these areas into sites of commemoration and return.

Refugees

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not revolve around the 1967 lands alone but also the 1948 lands. Israel's War of Independence in 1948 was a catastrophe for the Palestinians. Approximately half the Palestinian population became refugees, and the State of Israel took over their homes, lands, and property. The attempt of the Palestinian nationalist movement to create a state under the control of the Arab majority ended in disaster. The war turned the demographic ratio of Jews and Arabs on its head and left a solid Jewish majority in Israel.

The two national entities viewed 1948 as a defining event whose overturn would lead to the collapse of the Zionist structure. In order to preclude any subversion of 1948, Israel denied its role in the creation of the refugee problem and denied the existence of a Palestinian national identity, while in order to negate 1948, the Palestinians rejected Israel's existence and denied the Jewish people's right to self-determination. They turned their traumatic defeat into the sweet dream of return. This ideal Palestinian dream became the Israeli nightmare of the end of a state with a Jewish majority.

The two sides learned the lesson of the failure of the official negotiations to reach agreement on a joint narrative regarding the events of the 1948 war. The Geneva understandings leave this task to the two civil societies, with the two governments showing them the way. After all, a diplomatic accord cannot heal national traumas, suddenly change deep-rooted memories, and destroy national and historical myths. A diplomatic accord can outline and map them, defuse them, and ensure that they will not destroy the operational mechanisms. Reconciliation and openness toward the narrative of one's fellowman are the result of long-term processes that take place within civil society. Diplomatic mechanisms can promote reconciliation processes but not dictate them. Therefore, the Israeli partners to the Geneva Accord did not present their Palestinian counterparts with an unequivocal demand that they renounce the right of return to areas within the State of Israel. In effect, the accord leaves this to the consciousness of each individual.

The classic understanding of the Palestinian right of return is that each individual refugee and the Palestinian national collective have the right to return to their homeland and to a specific place of residence. This right is unassailable. Israel must accept it and comply with it. The Geneva Accord is not based on this approach but rather on UN General Assembly Resolutions 194 [December 1948], UN Security Council Resolution 242 [November 1967], and the Arab League peace initiative [April 2002].

UN General Assembly Resolution 194 calls upon Israel to allow refugees who are willing to live in peace with it to return to Israel at the earliest practicable date. For years, the PLO claimed that this resolution grants every refugee the right of return. Israel, on the other hand, claimed that there is no such term in the language of the resolution; moreover, General Assembly resolutions are not binding. Pursuant to this, the Geneva Accord also refers to Article 2B of the Arab League peace initiative, which speaks of a solution to the refugee problem "to be agreed upon in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194." As opposed to the PLO's classical concept of the right of return and Resolution 194, the Arab states accept the principle of the need for Israel's consent

The Geneva Accord illustrates how this will be implemented. The choice of the State of Palestine as one's permanent place of residence is a right granted to every Palestinian refugee by virtue of being Palestinian, while the possibility of taking up permanent residence in the State of Israel may be granted by Israel. Thus, the refugee is free to believe that he is returning to his homeland, but this has no legal or institutional expression or backing in the accord. According to the Geneva Accord, the State of Israel is a country to which the Palestinian refugee may immigrate. This will prevent the realization of the Israeli nightmare: the return of a mass of refugees as a means of reversing the outcome of the 1948 war. All of the mechanisms for dealing with the refugee problem in existence since 1948 will cease to exist, and the legal status of refugeehood will be terminated. The refugee who seeks to deviate from the accord and demand the right of return in the classical sense will find no institution that supports his claim and will have no legal standing.

The determination of the refugee's permanent place of residence will not be made by him alone but by a Technical Committee to be established by the International Commission appointed to oversee the implementation of the accord. The Commission will include an Israeli representative who will submit to the Committee the number of refugees Israel is willing to accept. In determining this number, Israel will take into consideration the average number of refugees who will immigrate to countries outside the region. Any Israeli administration that seeks to act in a manner contrary to the spirit of the accord may formally rest its case on this article and fix a low number based on the claim that this article does not commit Israel to a high number. The article was formulated in this way not to deceive the Palestinians but rather to show that, contrary to the classic right of return, the reference is to willingness on Israel's part. The parties to the Geneva Accord hope that the administration that will be in power in Israel when the time comes will wish to resolve the refugee issue and that there will be no need for international pressure to this end.

There is a legitimate argument under way in Israel with regard to the country's identity as a Jewish state, the nature of its citizenship, and its characterization as a liberal democracy. The Geneva Accord does not settle this argument. It contains recognition of the right of the Jewish people and the right of the Palestinian people to their own state and rejects any infringement on civil rights. Anyone who seeks to tip the scales through the return of huge numbers of Palestinian refugees would in effect be destroying any chance of a permanent settlement. Anyone who seeks to punish Israel for the establishment of a state on the land of another nation by changing Israel's ethnic character would in effect be destroying the chance of a different kind of future for the sake of the past. The same holds true for anyone who claims that Israel must recognize the right of return as a basic principle and must leave it to each individual refugee to choose whether or not to exercise this right. In the absence of mechanisms that would limit the implementation to a model similar to that outlined in the Geneva Accord, the Israeli nightmare of the end of the Jewish state would become real. This actualization of the Israeli nightmare is the surest way to prevent an agreement.

The Geneva Accord does not contain an Israeli apology for its role in the creation of the 1948 refugee problem. In the past, Israel denied having played any role whatsoever in the creation of this problem, placing full responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the leaders of the Arab states and the heads of the Palestinian national movement. Today, given the findings of research into the subject, it is difficult to deny the fact that the Israeli establishment played a part in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. Historical research into the period in question has been conducted largely by Israeli researchers and is based primarily on Israeli archives. The academic debate is no longer over the question of whether Israel engaged in acts that created refugeehood in 1948 but over the scope of such activities, the motives behind them, and the level of central planning and control over them. Yet in Israel it is only the academics and intellectuals who are grappling with the conclusions of this historical research. The findings have not been absorbed by all levels of society and have not been accepted by the main bodies in the Israeli political system. The dominant narrative of the latter has been that Israel was founded in 1948 by the strength and will of the people and that Israel's War of Independence was pure and untainted. In their eyes, any admission that the Israeli forces committed war crimes in 1948 or that central state mechanisms took part in turning many Palestinians into refugees would mean that the State of Israel was founded on the perpetration of a great injustice, and this would divest Israel of the legitimate and moral basis for its establishment and existence. In the dominant Israeli narrative, this then lays the ground for invalidating Israel's right to exist. In order for the popular Israeli narrative to change and conform with the findings of academic research, Israel needs reassurances with regard to its fear that the outcome of the 1948 war will be overturned. Only when Israel is confident that its darkest nightmare will not come true will the time come for it to apologize for its role in creating the refugee problem. In this way, Israel will be able to compensate the Palestinian refugees morally and symbolically for what its forces did to them in 1948.

Furthermore, as long as Israel feels a real or imagined threat to its very existence, it will be difficult for Israeli society to shift from the concept that Israel was founded on the basis of its might and victory in 1948 to the concept that its foundation rests on the Jewish people's right

to self-determination in its historical homeland. In other words, it is difficult for the majority of Israelis to make the change from the narrative of power and the concept of an existence based on the use of might against outside forces to a concept based on every nation's right to self-determination.

The PLO faces a similar difficulty. The majority of the Palestinian public finds it difficult to admit to the war crimes perpetrated by its forces in the course of their struggle for national liberation and to apologize for the terror its organizations used and are continuing to use against Israelis and foreigners. Only the educated elite among them is ready to recognize the immorality of Palestinian terror and war crimes. The common people are focused on securing the establishment of a viable Palestinian state through the struggle against the Israeli occupation. In addition, they fear that an admission that the national movement engaged in war crimes and terrorism during the national liberation struggle will cancel the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. The time for a Palestinian apology will come when Palestinian sovereignty over the 1967 lands is guaranteed and they will no longer fear that Israel will exploit this apology to undermine the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Jerusalem

Israel has controlled Jerusalem longer than the British and twice as long as Jordan. The Jewish-Israeli city in the west rules over approximately 200,000 Arab Palestinians (approximately 10 percent of the inhabitants of the West Bank) living in the eastern side. The Palestinian city developed because of and in spite of the development of Israeli Jerusalem. From a historical perspective, Israel has scored quite a few accomplishments in Jerusalem, the most prominent being the fact that it is impossible to revert to the reality that existed in the city prior to the Six-Day War.

The fact that some 50 percent of the Jewish residents of Jerusalem live on former Jordanian territory makes it impossible to evacuate the Jewish neighborhoods there. The option of leaving them in place under Palestinian sovereignty is no less problematic. What would be the nature of the Palestinian capital if approximately half of its population were to be made up of Israelis?

While it is impossible to return to the reality of 4 June 1967, it is also impossible to turn the annexation lines of 27 June 1967 into the permanent border. Palestinian construction has turned these lines into a virtual border. In many locations, the annexation line crosses neighborhoods, streets, and homes. Palestinian villages that were not included in the annexed territory for demographic reasons have become suburbs of the city. East Jerusalem operates as a metropolitan, religious, and political center and provides services and a source of income to a large population that resides beyond the municipal boundaries. In a nutshell, both of the June 1967 lines have been eroded, and the borders of the city must be redrawn.

Demographic considerations have shaped Israeli policy toward East Jerusalem since 1967. The Israeli establishment invested vast resources in an effort to maintain the demographic balance which, it believes, will cement the annexation: 75 percent Jews to 25 percent Arabs.

Paradoxically, the annexation momentum increased the Palestinian presence in East Jerusalem. The demographic balance stands today at 68 percent Jews to 32 percent Arabs. Israel's attempts to change this by confiscating identity cards, revoking residency rights, and demolishing illegally built structures in the eastern part of the city and the metropolitan area have failed. As of 1999, Israel had confiscated from the Palestinians only some 4,000 identity cards out of a possible 50,000-80,000, and demolition orders were actually executed in the case of only some 4 to 8 percent of the building violations identified by Israel.

The Arabs of East Jerusalem are not citizens of Israel but rather residents. In other words, approximately one-third of the population of the capital of Israel does not recognize it and rejects Israeli citizenship. In the absence of a permanent agreement, the East Jerusalemites are perceived as a threat to Israeli sovereignty and, as a result, have been the victims of organized and ongoing deprivation at the hands of Israeli Governments in terms of allocation of resources, laying of infrastructures, and provision of services. Only a small amount of the meager Israeli investments in East Jerusalem met the needs of the Palestinian population. Most of them were allocated to tourism and to strengthening Israeli control and annexation.

Today, Jerusalem consists of two cities positioned back to back. Jewish-Israeli Jerusalem faces westward, to the State of Israel's natural home front, while Palestinian Jerusalem faces the West Bank. The divide between the two cities runs deep, and only a small number of Palestinian workers cross the ethnic lines for a few hours a day. It is in the interest of both the Israelis and the Palestinians to partition the city in order to allow both cities to develop in their natural space.

The Geneva Accord proposes the division of Israeli Jerusalem and Palestinian Jerusalem into two separate entities with controlled crossing points to the other side. The division provides for the maximum preservation of the current municipal functions and protects the interests of both sides. Coordination on matters of common interest will be handled by a committee made up of an equal number of representatives from each side. A multinational force will oversee the implementation of the agreement and will intervene in any dispute between citizens or agencies of the two countries. The division of Jerusalem is not virtual. A fence will run between the two cities, but it will be both user and environmentally friendly, as opposed to the chain of brutal fences and walls being erected today as part of an enterprise that will lead to nothing short of the destruction of both the western and the eastern parts of Jerusalem. The Arab neighborhoods will be connected by a series of roads, just as all the Jewish neighborhoods will be connected by roads, and every citizen of Israel or Palestine will be able to move freely within the territory of his sovereign country. The Geneva negotiating team is working on appendices that deal with a number of issues such as the gradual separation of infrastructures, planning of border crossings, and administration of the border areas, but has not yet completed this task. It is clear that the transition from the current reality to that which we are proposing must take place gradually, and the negotiating team has begun to address this issue as well.

The Old City shall be a free and open city. Sovereignty will be divided, with the Jewish Quarter under Israeli sovereignty and the Christian, Armenian, and Muslim Quarters under Palestinian

sovereignty. The border will be clearly marked, but there will be no physical barriers between the two sovereign areas of the Old City except out of security concerns and for a limited time only. Lion's Gate, Herod's Gate, Damascus Gate, and New Gate, which face the Palestinian city, will be under Palestinian sovereignty. Zion Gate and Dung Gate, which serve the Israelis, will be under Israeli sovereignty. Citizens of each side will enter and exit freely via the gates under their sovereignty. An Israeli who wishes to exit the Old City via a Palestinian gate will have to present an entry permit to Palestine, and the same applies to a Palestinian wishing to exit via an Israeli gate. Jaffa Gate will operate as an Israeli gate and will continue to be used by Israelis as the main gate of entry from the west, although it will be under Palestinian sovereignty. As there are no Israeli residences or commercial facilities around Jaffa Gate or along the road that leads from it to Zion Gate, this area will be under Palestinian sovereignty, but Israel will be responsible for the security of those entering or exiting Israel along this route. The same applies to the Jewish Cemetery on the Mount of Olives, which will be under Palestinian sovereignty but under Israeli administration and security. In return, the understandings guarantee the Palestinians the continued use of the Christian cemeteries in Israeli Jerusalem.

David's Tower is no less an Israeli and Zionist symbol than Rachel's Tomb or the Wailing Wall, despite the historical truth that the actual ruins of David's Citadel are located somewhere else. Furthermore, David's Tower overlooks western Jerusalem and serves Israel as a municipal museum, an archaeological garden, and a reception hall. The Geneva understandings preserve the existing Israeli administration of the compound under Palestinian sovereignty.

The Geneva Accord does not ignore the place of the Temple Mount as a holy site and a national symbol. In this regard, it is important to note that the sanctity of the Temple Mount is not derived from state sovereignty. The Temple Mount was a Jewish holy site even when it was under the control of the Crusaders or the Persians, and it remains a Muslim holy site even under Israeli sovereignty. The state and the political regime need the Temple Mount as a rallying symbol that grants them legitimacy. The Geneva Accord divides the Temple Mount Compound in accordance with each side's national and symbolic usage and its religious role as a site of active ritual observance: the Temple Mount under Palestinian sovereignty and the Wailing Wall under Israeli sovereignty. The Palestinian side to the Geneva Accord recognizes the sanctity and religious and cultural importance of the Temple Mount for world Jewry. Accordingly, the Palestinians agreed not to excavate under or build on the Mount without Israeli authorization. In other words, the agreement replaces symbolic Israeli sovereignty with recognition of the symbolism the site holds for Judaism. Israel's approval of excavation or construction is solely residual, while Palestinian sovereignty over Al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock will grant Palestine a status in the Arab and Muslim world that is second only to that of Saudi Arabia. One cannot exaggerate the importance of this symbolic resource for Palestine, which is short of territory, natural resources, and infrastructure but has a vast population and is rife with social and economic distress.

Both sides are committed to respecting the existing division of administrative functions and traditional practices at the holy sites. In order to assist them in this and to promote interfaith

dialogue, the sides will establish a body comprising representatives of the three monotheistic faiths.

Conclusion

The goal of the Geneva Accord is to show public opinion on each side that there is a partner for peace and a way to reach the end of the historical conflict. The Geneva Accord constitutes an alternative to the policies of the central regime in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to the ongoing deterioration resulting from the violent conflict, and to Israel's plan for unilateral disengagement from the occupied territories. The Geneva Accord was widely publicized immediately after it was signed and has become a focal point in the public debate on the diplomatic process both in the Middle East and beyond.

The formulation of a detailed accord such as Geneva necessitates tough decision-making. We cannot shirk this responsibility and leave it to the leaders and to the hope of future negotiations that are nowhere in sight. At the same time, we cannot avoid decisions by taking refuge in some theoretical or ideal model that will be impossible to implement. To the same extent, we cannot reach an agreement that will fail to pass the political and public test. Political and marketing considerations are part of the package deal and the compromises each side must make in order to help the other side. In the past, channels of communication between Israeli and Palestinian experts limited their talks to professional matters and avoided political issues. They opted for expert solutions that were impossible to implement from the political point of view. The political, the public, and the professional aspects must meet, however, when two countries are negotiating a peace accord. In this respect, of all the academic and political "Track 2" channels, it is the Geneva Accord that is closest to "the real thing."

In order to reach an agreement, each side must see the interests, sensitivities, and point of view of the other. This proved to be Israel's Achilles' heel in the official talks between Israel and the PLO. Israel saw only its own interest. Even when considering the Palestinians' desires, Israel did so from the point of view of its perception of what those desires are. Israel repeatedly argued that only its interests and its bottom line will determine what the other side will receive. Unfortunately, the official talks on the permanent arrangement failed to produce a win-win situation. On the other hand, from its inception the Geneva channel was based on the win-win concept and the text, formulated from the point of view of both sides, is equal and balanced.

By its very nature as a compromise, the Geneva Accord cannot constitute the embodiment of absolute justice, especially in a situation where each side feels that it is totally in the right and that every concession is a blow to the justness of its cause. Yet neither does the Geneva Accord constitute a dictate on the part of powerful Israel, as it incorporates Palestinian achievements as well and rests on the international legitimacy of a state on the 1967 lines. It is an agreement that will enable the two peoples to live in honorable and fair coexistence.

In the short time that has elapsed since it was signed on 13 October 2003, the Geneva Accord has become the term of reference in every political and expert debate on the parameters of a permanent status agreement. Furthermore, the Geneva Accord has become an alternative to the current policies of the Israeli and Palestinian Governments. The incumbent Israeli Government is vehemently opposed to it and, in reaction to the support the accord has won in Israel and abroad, the government is planning to take unilateral steps in an attempt to ease its plight. The Palestinian Authority, on the other hand, has refrained from formally endorsing the Geneva Accord because of the Israeli Government's failure to do so and because such a step means grappling with internal political struggles and making decisions which the Palestinian Government feels are premature. Apparently, the road to the adoption of the Geneva Accord must pass through the failure of the alternatives, including Israel's plan for "unilateral disengagement" by means of a wall and fences. Once Israel comes to realize that there is no way to avoid concessions and that an agreement, with its advantages and disadvantages, is preferable to the ongoing conflict that does only harm, the Geneva model will cease to be an alternative plan and will become policy.

Beyond the question of what chances the Geneva Accord has of being implemented lies the question of whether the model it proposes is durable. Will the accord stand the test of time? After all, the Geneva model does not create equality between Israel and Palestine. In terms of territory, Palestine will extend over only 23 percent of the lands of Mandatory Palestine which the national movement sees as the homeland of the Palestinian people. Palestine will be a young state, laden with social and economic problems and home to strong currents of Islamic fundamentalism. What, therefore, will prevent it from striving in the future to correct the "historical injustice" and cancel the agreement it was forced to accept out of a position of weakness?

In fact, the Geneva Accord is not an agreement between two sides that are equal militarily. Israel's military might is far superior to that of the Palestinian national movement and, according to the accord, will remain superior to that of the State of Palestine. The Geneva Accord, like the historic compromise the PLO has proposed to the State of Israel since 1988, is based on the recognition that the Palestinians and the Arab states do not have the military capability to wipe Israel off the map and will not have such a capability in the future. Nontheless, the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular have the international legitimacy to demand the end of the Israeli occupation that has existed since 1967. Every Arab peace initiative has rested on these foundations and on the decision to transfer resources from the confrontation with Israel to domestic needs. The Palestinians who signed the Geneva Accord have adopted this approach. They opted for the establishment of a state on the 1967 borders and the realization of its human and touristic potential instead of dreaming of the destruction of Israel and paying the heavy price this entails. The situation in the economic sphere is similar to that in the security sphere. The economic articles of the Geneva Accord have not yet been written, but they are not expected to create economic equality between Israel and Palestine. Any Israeli-Palestinian agreement will regulate the economic relations between the two states but will not put them on an equal footing. Equality between Israel and Palestine will be anchored in the legal status of the two states. In brief, the large economic and

military gap between Israel and Palestine will remain. Even if the radical Islamic forces come to power in Palestine, they will be unable to realize their dream.

The Geneva Accord does not outline the path to realization of the Israeli or Palestinian dreams of national expansion and exclusive control over what is the shared homeland of two nations. The Geneva Accord rests on the recognition of the need for a historic compromise. The Palestininian dream about the 1948 lands is unrealistic and has taken a heavy toll on the Palestinians. The perpetuation of the occupation of the 1967 lands is beyond Israel's capability and is destroying it. Instead of a lose-lose situation, the Geneva Accord offers a win-win alternative.

Dr. Menachem Klein *is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, and a Senior Research fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and is a board member of B'etselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. In 2000 Dr. Klein was an external expert adviser for Jerusalem Affairs and Israel-PLO Final Status Talks to the Minister of Interior Security and Minister of Foreign Affairs. His books include* Jerusalem: The Contested City, *C. Hurst (London: 2001) and NYU Press; and* The Jerusalem Problem: The Struggle for Permanent Status *which is forthcoming by the University Press of Florida.*

A French View Of Israel

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

The publication in France in 1966 of Georges Friedmann's *The End of the Jewish People?,* almost coinciding as it did both with a special issue of *Les Temps Modernes* on the Arab-Israeli conflict and with the latest round in that seemingly unending struggle for possession of the Promised Land, seems to have had a calming effect on at least some of the Parisian literary bystanders. The reason is easily-discoverable from the preface to the very welcome English translation (by Eric Mosbacher) which has now made its appearance.1

Drew Martin, 2004

Professor Friedmann, a distinguished French sociologist, is also a veteran of the wartime Resistance movement, into which (as he candidly explains) he was precipitated by the anti-Jewish decrees issued in October 194o by the Vichy regime: a regime, by the way, which enjoyed the enthusiastic support of almost the entire French Catholic hierarchy (though not of the lower clergy, many of whom joined the Resistance and did all they could to help Jewish victims of persecution). Himself an intellectual of the Left, Professor Friedmann recovered his shaken humanist faith in the company of the men and women whom he encountered in the underground movement. Nonetheless he had suffered a shock, though, as he puts it, "the French resistance demonstrated the soundness of my motto *civic gallicus sum*." It was thus in a mood of critical expectancy, not unmixed with hope, that he visited Israel in 1963 and 1964, to see what its citizens had made of their unique opportunity.

The result is a book that is unlikely to satisfy anyone save the minority of non-combatants who share the author's own sympathetic and discerning assessments of Israel and its inhabitants. Coming at the present time, it is liable to be read primarily for chatting about the light it throws on the Arab-Israeli imbroglio; but these pages, through no fault of the author's, are precisely those that gave been rendered out of date. It is no longer relevant to argue the pros and cons of Israel taking back the Arab refugees who, for one reason or another, fled in 1948. Most of them are now located in territory administered by the Israeli authorities, and the real issue is whether Israel can become what some of its founders, and most left-wing socialists,

intended it to be: a binational state rather than a purely Jewish one. It is a tribute to he author's perspicacity that, writing in 1965-66, he deals with his thorny subject. Indeed, he has very definite views about it: views which will not make him popular either with Arab nationalists who still dream of destroying the state, or with the bulk of Zionist opinion.

Broadly speaking, he favors a solution that will enable Israel to integrate itself into the Middle East and by the same token cease to emphasize the Jewish connection. This, of course, is heresy to the older generation brought up on the Zionist myth of "ingathering," or on some variant of the religious faith. It may, however, for reasons which he sets out at some length, shortly become acceptable to the young. For the fundamental fact about Israel-a fact rarely stated with the candor Professor Friedmann brings to the topic-is the radical incompatibility of its daily life with the aspirations of the Zionist movement from which it was born. Like communism in Russia, Zionism in Israel has become a hollow shell, the ideological remnant of a buried East European past. The author puts it with commendable clarity:

> There is no Jewish nation. There is an Israeli nation. The state that came into existence as a result of Herzl's prophecies is not a "Jewish state." The Israeli state is creating an imperious national community that is conscious of itself, but does not include in that consciousness belonging to a "Jewish people." There seems to be a widening gap (among the, extremist zealots it is an impassable abyss) between that part of the population that sees itself as essentially Israeli and that other part, consisting of the orthodox, that regards itself as essentially Jewish.

He has a good deal to say on the subject of the "Jewish personality," both in its historical aspect and in relation to contemporary western culture, which will displease the more ardent Zionists, and yet he does not dispute that there was once an entity (albeit not a biological one) which could be described as "the Jewish people." He merely happens to believe that it is about to vanish from the stage of history, and that the establishment of Israel, so far from perpetuating it and ensuring its survival, will speed its disappearance. As he puts it, in a challenging statement the truth of which must be apparent to every observer who keeps his eyes and ears open when visiting that fascinating country: "In the land of Palestine, in a sum-total of geographic, climatic, social, cultural, political conditions profoundly different from those that formed it, the Jewish personality is disintegrating. The Jewish people' is disappearing and giving place to the Israeli nation."

This being the last thing in the world that the old generation of Zionists wants to hear, one may expect their criticism to take the form-of an airy dismissal of Professor Friedmann's work on the grounds that he is a shallow liberal with no sense of religious or national values. But in fact he is invulnerable on this score, for he accepts both the reality of Israeli nationhood and the enduring strength of Jewish religious consciousness. He merely holds that they are incompatible. Israel is going to become a secular state (and probably a binational one) as a matter of survival and because the majority of the young are bored with religion. As for the orthodox minority, it will increasingly, he thinks, retreat into a mystical realm of its own.

If I have a reservation about this learned and stimulating book, it is that the author seems unduly impressed with Sartre's perverse definition of the Jew as someone whom "the Others" regard as a Jew. The matter is not quite so simple; and anyhow Professor Friedmann undercuts this bizarre notion by dwelling at length on the record of medieval Christianity in fashioning "the Jew" in its own image. He also has some polite but implacable remarks on "the silences of Pius XII": remarks which will, one hopes, give acute pain to the Vatican's apologists. Altogether a splendid book, readable, authoritative, and totally unbeholden to any organized body of opinion.

Notes

1. London and New York, 1967.

Solidarity And Worldliness: For Edward Said

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

In one of my last conversations with Edward Said, I told him I had arranged to speak at the upcoming Modern Language Association meeting (December 2003) on Dreaming of Palestine, the notorious novel about the Intifada by a 15-year-old Egyptian-Italian girl named Randa Ghazy.[1] He said, with his usual bluntness: "It's a terrible novel, isn't it?" I could not disagree—in general I had trouble disagreeing with him even when I wanted to. But I said I thought that whatever its aesthetic value, the novel was nevertheless interesting for the scandal it had caused. Taking the Palestinian side, to some European readers, seemed identical with teaching hatred and violence to children. And it was interesting for the "authenticity" issue raised by Ghazy not being Palestinian, not having lived in Palestine/Israel, and having found out what was going on in the Intifada largely from television. To invoke the vocabulary of high school, which there is extra reason to invoke here, this is the irritatingly persistent issue of the wannabe: wanting to be a Palestinian, wanting to join someone else's revolution, and the sorts of gut-level resistance that any such desire seems to confront even from those who do not consider themselves champions of authenticity. Thinking back to the LeCarré novel about another Palestinian sympathizer, one might call this the "Little Drummer Girl syndrome": the universal contempt on all sides for the one who is free to choose sides, but is not rooted in either, and thereby threatens to display the radical contingency of even the most rooted identity and commitment.[2]

One of Edward Said's many achievements as a thinker is that he helped create intellectual conditions in which commitments like Ghazy's would have a better chance of seeming normal and proper. His impatience with biologically-based metaphors like rootedness was of course programmatic. In exhorting Western-located intellectuals to transcend the unthinking chauvinism hidden away in disciplinary comfort zones and innocent-seeming habits of interpretation, he asked us in effect to submit ourselves to a practice of modernist estrangement, a worldly version of asceticism. That is why he quoted over and over the words of the twelfth-century monk Hugo of St. Victor: "The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land."[3] These words help us credit Randa Ghazy with a strength: her ability to treat another soil as her native one. (This is something she also does, in a more difficult sense, by writing into Israel/Palestine the somewhat different complications of her own ethnically-hyphenated Italianness.)

And yet the political valence of this gesture is anything but clear. There is an obvious tension between Said's credo of intellectual detachment and the political struggle to retrieve a homeland. Was exile a desirable condition, necessary to the most rigorous intellectual

endeavor, or was it the result of a particular dispossession that could and should be made right by a return to a literal or metaphorical homeland–that should and would disappear with, say, the creation of a viable Palestinian state? I would argue that this question was never resolved in Said's work. Part of the secret of Said's charismatic presence is that he seemed to solve in his own being a paradox or contradiction for which there is perhaps no purely intellectual resolution. But it was in this zone of tension or contradiction that Said was most productive, both intellectually and politically. And Randa Ghazy's novel might be considered a characteristic manifestation of it.

Dreaming of Palestine, a politically-engaged novel by a 15-year-old, is something more than a striking anomaly or freak of culture, like a four-year-old skateboarder with a professional contract. Inspired, Ghazy has said, by media coverage of the shooting of the 12-year-old Palestinian Mohammad Al-Dorra, the crouching, terrified boy whose father tried and failed to save him from the bullets in a filmed sequence that no one who saw the images will ever forget, the novel does indeed have much to do with children, and with media, and its associations with children and media help explain its political and aesthetic accomplishment. For one thing, it presents the violence of the Intifada both as a political necessity and as an issue within what has to be called the "family." A surrogate father who has himself been intensely involved in the Intifada at one point finds himself screaming at a child who has lost his family and now wants violent revenge. The Israeli provocations and the inevitable Palestinian responses to them are presented as destroying families, and this destruction of the family is presented in turn with a teenager's characteristic ambivalence: alongside other things, there is a clear and forceful enjoyment of the parents' absence and of the opportunity or necessity of children therefore taking over the parental role. What we see is indeed something of a dream, the familiar Peter-Pan dream of children constructing and sustaining a do-it-yourself home for a family of homeless children. There seems little if any nostalgia for the lost world of the parents. There is some explicit desire for the surrogate attention of the television cameras. One might say that, with hesitation and reluctance, Ghazy makes a virtue out of an unpleasant historical necessity–in something of the same way that Said does with the discourse of homelessness and exile.

I cannot claim to know much about Palestinian literature. I would not have accepted the invitation to speak about it if I had not felt that the interest of getting the Intifada and the plight of the Palestinian people onto the program of the MLA was more important than the potential embarrassment a public display of my ignorance might be to myself. But in the little time I was able to devote to looking around in this interesting field, one thing I was struck by was the frequency of its references to land. And references to land provide a useful backdrop to what I was just saying about homelessness. In "Arabic Prose and Prose Fiction After 1948," one of the essays in the Reflections on Exile volume, Said quotes the opening sentences of Ghassan Kanafani's Men in the Sun, in which a character lays his chest on the ground and immediately feels the earth begin to throb: "a tired heart's beats, flooding through the sand grains, seeping into his very innermost being" (51).[4] Kanafani's novel is also quoted in a fine book by the geographer Barbara McKean Parmenter entitled Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature.[5] Parmenter cites a novel by Jabra ibrahim Jabra which sees Israeli irrigation projects as "unnatural, mechanized intrusions which aid and abet Israel's

usurpation of the land" (81). She also cites various poems in which "the poet becomes the land personified, thirsting for redemption" (82). Palestinian authors, Parmenter concludes, "enlist nature in general, and the land in particular, as their last and strongest ally. Whereas the Israelis establish their place by transforming nature–draining swamps, irrigating arid lands, and building cities– Palestinian writers cling to the indigenous landscape and its relict features for inspiration and support" (79).

The Zionists have of course used a rhetoric of indigeneity as well, pretending (in Said's words) that "Palestine had stood still in time and was theirs . . . despite millennia of history and the presence of actual inhabitants" (8). Covering Jerusalem "entirely with symbolic associations," this rhetoric has "totally obscur[ed] the existential reality of what as a city and real place Jerusalem is" (8). But this does not mean it is in the interest of the Palestinians to respond in kind. Robert Stone, in conversation with the Palestinian writer Raja Shehadeh, describes Zionist rhetoric about the land, written from a European distance, as a sort of "pornography" of place-names. And Shehadeh decides that he too is becoming a pornographer:

Sometimes, when I am walking in the hills…unselfconsciously enjoying the touch of the hard land under my feet, the smell of thyme and the hills and trees around me, I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol…of our struggle, of our loss. And at that very moment I am robbed of the tree; instead there is a hollow space into which anger and pain flow (87).

He knows the Israelis are responsible for this anger and pain, but Shehadeh nevertheless laments and resists being forced to have, as he says, "a political pornographer's eye for this land" (88).

In much the same vein, Parmenter argues that, in Palestinian literature, "the creation of this symbolic landscape and its accompanying rhetoric is problematic" (83). She knows that one reason for all these land references was Israeli censorship during the Intifada: "The olive tree is a convenient means of signifying Palestine without using the actual word" (79). Yet "metaphors of sexual union between male authors and the female land are not likely to resonate with Palestinian women" (84). One understands the ambiguity of "stones" in Parmenter's title: on the one hand, stones stand for the land; on the other, they are weapons in a struggle without which it is quite possible that there would not be the flickers of hope for peace we are now seeing. But as weapons against an occupying army, the stones could be any stones. They could even be televised images. For Parmenter, it's the Zionists' own "land rhetoric" (84)–of heroic pioneers making the desert bloom– that has "forced Palestinian writers to move in the opposite direction" (84-85). But her implication is that they have moved too far in this direction: toward land as a figure for that which does not and should not change.

Shifting from literature to politics, what are the consequences of imagining land in this way? The peace process, to the extent that there is one, or at least to the extent that this process is represented by the recent Geneva Accords, depends on a swap between full Palestinian right of return to the land and some sort of compensation. It depends on land being at least partly

exchangeable. To put this crudely and amorally: the more the issue is framed in terms of Palestinian rootedness in the land, the less likely the peace process as presently defined is to succeed.

In political terms, the Intifada in the Occupied Territories can be seen as two quite different things. On the one hand, it is heroic resistance against an occupying army, intended to drive army and settlers out and drive the government of Israel to negotiate in good faith. On the other hand, it is a metaphor for the struggle against the Israeli state itself, intended not merely to drive Israelis back inside their pre-1967 borders but to destroy the Israeli state, at least in its present form as an ethnically-inflected Jewish state in which Palestinians are second-class citizens. Justice in the abstract would seem to favor the second option. To demand an end to the house demolitions and the bulldozing of orchards, the construction of the Wall, the armed settlements in the Occupied Territories that began after 1967 and have never stopped expanding is all well and good, one might say, but it is not to address the primal and perhaps traumatic indignity of colonization. On the contrary, it is to neglect this primal or primary moment and, by emphasizing instead a later and secondary injustice, to point toward a zone of possible resolution– a resolution in which, to put it bluntly, the Israelis would remain, and Israel would remain a Jewish state. Since 1988, this has been the dominant Palestinian position. In effect, Palestinian leaders have declared that the primal injustice done to their people, the theft of their territory, cannot be the sole or decisive basis of a political solution. Too much time has gone by, too many new roots have been put down, too many alternative options that once seemed open have now closed up. There is a politically measurable difference between lands seized in 1948 and lands seized in 1967.

Whatever is eventually decided about the right of return, about one state or two, and if two then about the size and shape of the Palestinian state, the settlement when reached will involve Jews and Arabs sharing the land of the historic mandate. As in the case of other indigenous peoples and their treatment by other colonizers, factoring the passage of time into the political equation means tacitly accepting and legitimating an earlier act of injustice. The general principle here is subversive of all principles claiming to exist outside of time: even an act as politically unambiguous as colonial expropriation cannot retain the right in perpetuity to dictate political rights and wrongs.

Politics in the humanities has too often been a means by which we have anchored ourselves, trauma-like, against the ambiguities and dilemmas generated by life in time. In this sense our politics has tended to be untimely and, to recall Edward Said's ever-pertinent expression, unworldly. This was not Said's own way. He never allows us to think as if "time had stood still"; "actual inhabitants" count, even when they are the wrong actual inhabitants. I have never met anyone who was more ready to face the risks of worldliness in this sense. In his contribution to an anthology called The Landscape of Palestine, Said expresses his trademark refusal to join into what he calls, with studied neutrality, a "nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a desirable loyalty to and insider's knowledge of one's country, tradition, and faith" (4).[6] What is so striking in this essay is his inability to speak of this process with the enthusiasm that will be required, even later in the same essay, when he stops illustrating the

process with examples from the US and Israel and turns instead to the Palestinians who are the subject of the book. Arriving finally at the Palestinians, he speaks of their collective memory in neutral, processual, constructionist terms that might apply equally well to Orientalism: as "a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning" (13). What he calls the "dialectic of memory over territory" (9) seems to work equally well for nationalism and for imperialism. And that is perhaps one more reason why, while lamenting the fact that "Israel's heroic narrative of repatriation and justice obliterated any possibility of a Palestinian narrative" (12), he arrives at the following conclusion: "Israelis and Palestinians are now so intertwined through history, geography, and political actuality that it seems to me absolute folly to try and plan the future of one without that of the other" (19).

For purposes of comparison, consider Thomas Friedman's best-seller about globalization, The Lexus and the Olive Tree. Friedman explains the second half of his title metaphor by saying that in the Middle East, where he used to report the news, people are still "fighting over who [owns] which olive tree" (31). He describes the olive tree with a degree of sentimentality that may sound surprising in such a champion of Lexus-style globalization: "Olive trees are important. They represent everything that roots us, anchors us, identifies us and locates us in this world— whether it be belonging to a family, a community, a tribe, a nation, a religion, or, most of all, a place called home. (…) We fight so intensely at times over our olive trees because, at their best, they provide feelings of self-esteem and belonging that are as essential for human survival as food in the belly. Indeed, one reason that the nation-state will never disappear, even if it does weaken, is because it is the ultimate olive tree–the ultimate expression of whom we belong to—linguistically, geographically and historically" (31). This is a recipe for unending conflict—conflict of a sort that U.S.-style globalization perhaps stands to benefit from.

The downside of olive trees, Friedman concedes, is "the exclusion of others" (32). He does not see, of course, that in many of the world's hot spots, arguably including the Middle East, such exclusions are new rather than old and are sustained if not produced by globalization. He does not see, so to speak, that Lexus factories produce olive trees. To make this point is to open up the possibility of a slightly more hopeful interpretation of globalization's real causal force in that world. It opens up the possibility that if globalization cannot be successfully opposed by olive-tree attachments like religion and the nation-state, it can perhaps be opposed by new principles of solidarity that arise in its very midst, that did not pre-exist it, but that can be used to control and redirect it. Principles of solidarity like Ghazy's.

Mohammed Bamyeh, writing in the most recent issue of South Atlantic Quarterly, quotes the American diplomat John Foster Dulles from 1954: "The Palestinian problem will be solved . . . only when a new generation of Palestinians grow up with no attachment to the land" (830).[7] The most terrible irony of this quotation is that, on a certain level, Bamyeh agrees with it. He credits the effort of the Intifada with putting the Palestinians "on the political map" (831), but he also criticizes the formula "land for peace" and "the fixation on territoriality" more generally (833). Instead of thinking about maps and land, he says, we must all think about "justice" (833). Justice, as he explains it, indicates both more and less than a return to the land. Return

is not literal but metaphorical: of “the majority of diaspora population, who never saw Palestine, one may ask the question: How does one ‘return’ to what one never experienced?” (841). This metaphorical turn is both bravely experimental and profoundly worldly. It entails a willingness to explore “an uncharted landscape of joint sovereignties, half-states, multiple citizenships, mixed identities, and open traffic” (833). It does not mean Bamyeh is satisfied (why should he be?) to translate the right of return into financial “compensation,” which is one of the suggestions of the Geneva Accord. But what he insists on adding is surprisingly inexpensive: “admission of wrongdoing or culpability in causing injustice” (842). The gesture of giving so much worldly weight to a mere act of speech, and thus factoring the rigors of exile into the very moment of homecoming, is worthy of Said. One would like to imagine an Israeli government that could see it has a bargain here and snap it up.

Notes

[1] Randa Ghazy, Dreaming of Palestine, trans. from the Italian by Marguerite Shore (NY: George Braziller, 2003)

[2] See my “American Intellectuals and Middle East Politics: An Interview with Edward W. Said,” Social Text 19/20 (1988), 37-53. Reprinted in Gauri Viswanathan, ed., Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said (NY: Pantheon, 2001), 223-242.

[3] See for example Said’s Reflections on Exile and Other Essays (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 185.

[4] As it turns out, the earth in question is located in Iraq, not Palestine, and the sense of displacement in time as well as space is the Palestinian reality or experience which Said is interested in reflecting on, but the center is a sense of connection to the earth.

[5] Barbara McKean Parmenter, Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

[6] Edward W. Said, “Palestine: Memory, Invention, and Space,” in Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Roger Heacock, and Khaled Nashef, eds. The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry (Birzeit University, 1999).

[7] Mohammed Bamyeh, “Palestine: Listening to the Inaudible,” in Palestine America, a special issue edited by Mohammed Bamyeh, South Atlantic Quarterly 102:4 (Fall 2003), 825-849.

Bruce Robbins is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He has also taught at the universities of Geneva and Lausanne and at Rutgers University, New Brunswick and has held visiting positions at Harvard, Cornell, and New York University. He is the author of Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress (NYU, 1999), The Servant’s Hand: English Fiction from Below (Columbia, 1986; pb Duke 1993), Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture (Verso, 1993) and is co-author of volume 5 (19th century) of the new Longman Anthology of World Literature (2003). He has edited Intellectuals: Aesthetics,

Politics, Academics (Minnesota, 1990) and The Phantom Public Sphere (Minnesota, 1993) and co-edited Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation (Minnesota, 1998). He is a former co-editor of the journal Social Text.

On The Thorny Road Toward A Peaceful Resolution Of The Palestinian-israeli Conflict: A Palestinian Perspective

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

The interplay between Palestinian feelings of alienation as a result of the Nakbeh and the implications of 1948, the feeling of being uprooted and treated as a sub-human in the refugee camps amid world apathy, and Palestinian insistence on the preservation of their identity has led to the reassertion of Palestinian-Arab identity and national consciousness since 1967. Between 1948 and 1967, Israel and others were intent on liquidating and negating "Palestinianism," that is, the attachment of Palestinians to their native land. And it was not surprising in the early 1970s that Golda Meir, then Prime Minister of Israel, articulated the idea that Palestinian identity did not exist at all. Palestinians under occupation or in the Palestinian Diaspora insisted on their collective identity despite arguments against it, including hostile Arab regimes and western powers as well as a powerful mass media in the West which has made the terms "Palestinian identity" and "terrorism" seemingly synonymous.

The June 1967 War was a decisive Israeli victory but a thoroughly humiliating experience for Arab regimes and the Palestinians on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Arab Jerusalem. For Palestinians, however, it was an historical turning point which was given impetus by fierce Palestinian resistance in the Battle of Karameh in March 1968 against Israeli incursions into the East Bank of Jordan.

This was in response to the dire need after the 1967 War for a Palestinian organizational structure that directed the growing sentiment of Palestinianism and a Palestinian quest for self-determination and statehood. From this point on, the PLO became synonymous with Palestinian national identity as well as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people as acknowledged by the Arab Summit Conference and the United Nations in 1974.

The PLO's anti-Israel operations worldwide and the resistance of the 1968 Battle of Karameh led to a renewed sense of Palestinian self-respect and a determined activism, something in sharp contrast with the low state of morale in other Arab countries resulting from the June 1967 defeat. In the words of the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence "And as a result of long years of trial in ever mounting struggle, the Palestinian political identity emerged further consolidated and confirmed. The collective Palestinian national will forged for itself a political embodiment, the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative recognized by the world community as a whole, as well as by related regional and international institutions, even as it suffered massacres and confinement within and without its home."[1]

The massacres at Sabra and Shatilla in 1982 and the resistance in refugee camps in Lebanon in the 1980s further intensified the reassertion of Palestinian national identity. But the 1983 expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon only underlined the importance of the occupied Palestinian territories. And this was the prelude that would form the preparatory groundwork for the outbreak of the popular uprising (al-Intifada) in December 1987 against Israeli occupation in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The PLO's insistence on destroying the Israeli entity in the 1960s and early 1970s gave way gradually to a more pragmatic approach, more in tune with changes in the balance of world powers. This pragmatism became an argument for a two-state solution on the historical soil of Palestine.

From the First to the Madrid Middle East Conference

The Intifada which broke out in December 1987 was a turning point in Palestinian life and in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Young Palestinians in the occupied territories were motivated to change the status quo: the unbearable political and economic realities associated with the Israeli military occupation since 1967. Palestinians from all walks of life, young and old, men and women, participated in this massive, unarmed and for the most part non-violent resistance to Israeli occupation whose major goal was to achieve self-determination and a Palestinian state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital. The resistance led to hundreds of martyrs, mostly young, from all walks of life.

The Intifada was successful in generating world sympathy and in putting the Palestinian dilemma on the agenda of regional and world powers. Various peace initiatives were introduced by Arab, European and American leaders. In addition to the 1991 Gulf War, the Intifada was one of the major catalysts that led to the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference and "The Land for Peace" negotiations in October 1991.

Palestinian national identity was clearly defined in the 1988 Declaration. It states that Palestine "is an Arab state, an integral and indivisible part of the Arab nation … in heritage and civilization. It is the state of Palestinians everywhere where they enjoy their collective national and cultural identity … under a parliamentary democratic political system which guarantees freedom of religious convictions and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, color or sex."[2]

The PLO's 1988 peace initiative for a two-state solution and the PLO's espousal of a secular ideology are not admired by many Palestinians who refuse to accept the reality of the state of Israel. Those espousing political Islam, among such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, reject the secular orientation of this conception of Palestinian national identity. An Islamic identity assumes a greater role among these groups who have been playing a greater role in Palestinian society since the outbreak of the Intifada in 1987. They consider Palestine a Muslim land and the Palestinian problem a Muslim problem of concern to the Muslim world. The priority of Hamas and Islamic Jihad is the transformation of Palestine into an Islamic society as a first step toward the total liberation of the land from the Jewish State. In this group's vision of society,

religion and politics are interdependent paerts with the Qur'an and Sunna serving as a guide to people in every aspect of life.[3]

This trend toward political Islam in Palestinian society is an important part of am Islamic resurgence in the Arab world since the Arab defeat in 1967 and the emergence of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, and it has drawn much if its strength from the pathetic state of the Arabs in their historical confrontation with Israel and from the unmitigated failures of the Arab regimes to build viable societies.

From the Oslo Accords to the Camp David Summit Conference

Secret Palestinian-Israeli talks in Oslo, Norway were held under the mediation of the Norwegian Foreign Minister. They eventually led to a draft of the Oslo Accords (Declarations of Principles) signed secretly on 20 August 1993. On 13 September, PLO Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin exchanged letters of mutual recognition. Shortly after, The Oslo Accords were officially signed at a White House ceremony on 19 September 1993. In the ensuing months several interim agreements were signed between the PLO and Israel[4] including the control of Border Crossings and the Area of, Protocol on Economic Relations Cairo Agreement on Gaza-Jericho Self-Rule Accord, Early Empowerment Agreement on the Transfer of Civilian Authorities, Oslo II / Second Stage of Palestinian Autonomy, Hebron Agreement, Wye River Memorandum for the implementation of Oslo II and the resumption of the final status talks, and Sharm Esh-Sheikh Agreement, 4 September 1999, for the implementation of Wye River Memorandum.[5]

It should be noted that the Oslo Accords stipulated that Palestinian-Israeli negotiations would comprise two phases: an "interim period" (Oslo Accords), not to exceed five years, during which time Israel would gradually withdraw from Palestinian areas; and a second phase in which a "final status" agreement based on U.N. Security Resolutions 242 and 338 would be reached concerning Jerusalem, the refugee problem, settlements, final borders and water resources, the original target of which was set at 4 May 1999.[6]

The more positive aspect of the Oslo Accord was the arrival of Palestinian police forces followed by Chairman Arafat and Diaspora Palestinians to the Palestinian homeland to set up the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Likewise, on 20 January 1996, free Palestinian elections took place to elect 88 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the President of the PNA. Eighty percent of Palestinians in the PNA areas supported the Oslo process by early 1996. And 75 per cent of Palestinian eligible voters participated in the 1996 elections.[7]

Likewise, Palestinian-Israeli people-to-people programs and other similar Palestinian-Israeli NGO activities were established between 1993 and 2000. These people-to-people activities comprised the social, cultural, economic, political, educational and religious spheres. For example, these initiatives by Palestinians and Israelis, which were usually sponsored financially by a third party (European, American or Japanese), saw participants from all ages and at all levels: secondary schools, university students, academicians, politicians, economists, clerics

and lay people. For example, one can point to the *Seeds of Peace* summer camps for young people, *Peace Research Institute Middle East (PRIME)* which was organized by academicians from Palestinian and Israeli universities, and tens of inter-faith dialogue activities which included, among them, joint activities by the *Israeli Interfaith Association, Rabbis for Peace* and the *Palestinian Christian-Muslim Al-Liqa' Center.*

Otherwise, the record of the Oslo process, 1993-2000, was dismal, marred by instability and bloodshed chiefly resulting from the confrontations of September 1996 following the Israeli inauguration of an underground tunnel below Al-Aqsa Mosque. And with the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada of in late September 2000, seventy percent of the above mentioned agreements remained ink on paper mainly due to the inherent pitfalls of the asymmetrical formula of the Oslo Accords which left the Palestinian National Authority area—its air, land, borders, economy, including imports and exports, to mention a few areas—under total Israeli control. Palestinians came under the mercy of Israeli security-oriented policies and measures which were pre-empting as well the "final status" talks through the creation of new facts on the grounds in regard to Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, all of which led to Israeli strangulation of Palestinians psychologically, economically, geographically and politically. For example, Palestinians from the PNA areas have been prevented from entering Jerusalem since March 1993 thus preventing Christians and Muslims from reaching and praying freely in their holiest shrines, The Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Al-Aqsa Mosque and from reaching their work places, receiving medical attention, as well as educational and economic services.

Israeli strategies of minimizing the Arab presence in Jerusalem are also seen in Israeli policies which aim to control the number of Palestinians who legally reside in the city. This includes the confiscation of East Jerusalem identification cards, in the case of those Jerusalemites who live abroad or in the West Bank for more than seven years, or those who travel abroad but do not possess re-entry visas, or those who apply for residency / citizenship elsewhere. If a Jerusalemite marries a non-resident spouse from the West Bank or Gaza or from abroad they must endure a painful family reunification process. A Jerusalemite can register their children as residents only if the father holds a valid Jerusalem identification. As a result of these policies thousands of East Jerusalem identification cards have been revoked since 1967.

Further Israeli measures to hamper Palestinian land developments are seen in the methods used to expropriate Arab land and to control development in East Jerusalem and neighborhoods. These methods include military orders and other measures issued between 1967 and the 1990s, with the following justifications: "closed military area," "absentee property," "public use," "unregistered land as state land," "fallow farm land," and "green areas." In addition, strict licensing and permit requirements are geared toward the same Israeli goals. And while Palestinians in Arab Jerusalem used to control 100 percent of the land before 1967, they now control less than 20 percent of the land due to land confiscation for the purpose of settlement projects, opening of roads and building inside Arab quarters.[8]

As a prelude to a comprehensive and just peace Palestinians insist that the Israelis annul all

measures of annexation of Arab Jerusalem and must remove all settlements established in the 1967 occupied territories which Arab Jerusalem is an integral part. Furthermore, not a single Palestinian, whether at home or abroad in the Palestinian Diaspora, will accept a Palestinian State without Arab Jerusalem as its capital. It is very clear that much creative thinking and good will are needed to defuse the present volatile situation and to solve the thorny problem of Jerusalem.

In July 2000, President Clinton hosted a 15-day three-way summit in Camp David with the aim of reaching an Israeli-Palestinian "final status" agreement. The two thorny issues of Jerusalem and the refugees prevented the two sides from reaching an agreement and proved once more the complexities of the Palestinian-Israeli impasse and the difficulties of reconciling the deeply entrenched differences: Israeli claim of Jerusalem as its eternal and undivided capital under Israeli sovereignty and Palestinian demands for Arab (East) Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian State. Likewise, a one-time "family reunification" of some 100,000 Palestinian refugees proposed by the Israelis at Camp David totally contradicted Palestinian insistence on the "right of return" for all Palestinian refugees (U.N. Resolution 194) including to inside Israeli borders.[9]

The high expectations of the Camp David summit were shattered with the return of Israeli and Palestinian delegations. Thus, a highly volatile situation continued to prevail in Palestinian-Israeli relations on the eve of the outbreak of the Intifada of Al-Aqsa on 29 September 2000.

From the Outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada to the Present

On the morning of Thursday, September 28, 2000 Likud opposition leader Ariel Sharon and members of his Likud party made a provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque under maximum security and protection of thousands of police forces. Clashes with Palestinians ensued which left many injured. After Friday prayers on September 29, Israelis used excessive force against worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque leaving five Palestinians dead and over 160 injured. The Friday bloodshed soon sparked a widespread uprising in the West Bank, Gaza and among Arabs who live in 1948 areas.[10] Thus, the outbreak of the Intifada was not only a direct result of Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa, but was a result of accumulating Palestinian frustrations and grievances since 1967 and the failure of the Oslo process, 1993-2000, to provide them with minimum sense of individual and collective security from Israeli military, economic and political hegemony.

By October 2000, tens of Palestinians and Israelis were killed and hundreds were injured. In Israel alone 13 Arabs were killed in an uprising which broke out in the aftermath of Al-Aqsa Mosque disturbances. By mid-October 2000, a Middle East Peace Summit was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. At the conclusion of the summit, attended by leaders of the PNA, Israel,

Jordan, Egypt, U.S., UN and the E.U., a fact-finding committee was established to examine the outbreak of the Intifada. The committee was headed by former Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, George Mitchell and included among its members E.U.'s Javier Solana, Turkey's Suleyman Demirel, Norway's Thorbjoern Jagland and Warren B. Rudman, former member of the U.S. Senate. The report was published on 20 May 2001 and included an examination of events leading to the outbreak of the Intifada and ways to rebuild confidence and resume negotiations and commitment to existing agreements. Immediate unconditional cessation of violence and resumption of security cooperation were also highlighted. The Mitchell report was accepted by all sides of the conflict.[11]

The Americans put forth a "Bridging Proposal" in November 2000 to overcome the post-Camp David deadlock. These proposals included Israeli withdrawals, settlement blocks, early-warning radar systems, the refugee problem, and Palestinian and Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. Israeli and Palestinian delegations met in January 2001 in Taba (in the last days of the Barak government) to study the American proposals. At the conclusion of the Taba negotiations, both delegations declared "they have never been closer to reaching an agreement."[12] However, the Sharon government completely ignored the Taba peace negotiations and their optimistic tone when it took over from the Barak government.

In the meantime, Palestinian-Israeli confrontations continued unabated and no opportunities for the realization of the Mitchell Report could be glimpsed. In June 2001 CIA Director George Tenet proposed a ceasefire and a security plan to end the violence, both of which were accepted by Israelis and Palestinians. The plan foresaw security cooperation between both sides, measures to enforce ceasefire, etc., followed by Israeli redeployment to positions held before 28 September 2000 as well as lifting of internal closures and border crossings.[13] The plan was intended as a prelude to the realization of the Mitchell Report and the eventual Palestinian-Israeli "final status" political negotiations based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the "land for peace" formula.

October 2001 through March 2002 brought destruction to the Palestinian people, the Palestinian National Authority and its infrastructure, and Palestinian cities, towns, rural areas and refugee camps. Israeli occupation of Palestinian major cities, towns and refugee camps resulted in death and hundreds of casualties, not to mention the severe destruction that was done to the Palestinian economy and other sectors, including educational institutions. Response by young Palestinians to Israeli assassinations of key activists in the Intifada and Israeli incursions into the territories and daily humiliation of Palestinians, likewise, led to Israeli military and civilian casualties.

American reluctance to mediate in the closing months of 2001 and the early months of 2002 only accelerated the bloodshed and eventually led to the bloodbaths of March and April 2002 from the Israeli occupation of PNA areas and refugee camps and from suicide bombings. However, the reactivation of American role in mid-March 2002 saw American sponsorship of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1397 which called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The arrival of Bush's envoy General Zini shortly after to arrange for Israeli-

Palestinian ceasefire in accordance with the George Tenet Plan of 13 June 2001, which would serve as a prelude to the realization of the Mitchell Report and the resumption of the "final status" talk, gave impetus to optimism. Likewise, the introduction of the much-heralded initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah concerning total Arab recognition of Israel and normalization of relations in case of total Israeli withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 boundaries, which was translated into the Pan-Arab resolution in the Beirut Arab Summit on 28 March 2002, was a very positive development.[14]

Unfortunately, this optimism did not last long and once again Israel began reoccupying West Bank PNA areas on March 29 following the suicide bombing at the Park Hotel in Natanya. President Arafat was put under virtual house arrest in his Ramallah headquarters while the whole governmental complex surrounding it was destroyed and completely surrounded by Israeli tanks and troops. The Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian territories was highlighted by the destruction of the Jenin Refugee Camp—dubbed a massacre by Palestinians. The tragic events in Jenin led to the formation of a United Nations fact-finding mission (UN security Council Resolution 1405) which was aborted by Israeli conditions. Other highlights of the reoccupation were the standoff between the Israeli military and Palestinians besieged in the ancient Nativity Church of Bethlehem and the bloody reoccupation of Nablus and the destruction of its ancient quarters. The United Nations Security Council reacted to Israeli reoccupation by sponsoring Resolutions 1402 and 1403 which call for Israeli withdrawal from occupied West Bank PNA areas. For its part, Israel declared its intentions to withdraw as soon as its forces' mission is completed, that is the destruction of the so-called terrorist infrastructure.

Conclusion

Palestinian quest for peace with Israel is not tactical but strategic. In the above mentioned *Palestinian Declaration of Independence* (Algiers, 15 November 1988) it is clearly stated that "despite the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian Arab people resulting in their dispersion and depriving them of the right to self-determination, following UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947), which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, yet it is this resolution that still provide those conditions of international legitimacy that ensure the right of Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty."[15] Thus, since 1988 all factions of the PLO have given their full support to the two-state solution with Jerusalem being the capital of both peoples.

The majority of Palestinians, thus, do not aim to throw the Israelis into the sea. Instead, they want to live in dignity in their Palestinian state within the 4th of June 1967 borders and next to their Israeli neighbors and in less than 22% of the total area of Palestine. This Palestinian position is fully supported by Arab leaders in their Pan-Arab resolution of 28 March 2002.

Hopefully, more and more of the Israeli grassroots will become aware of Palestinian and Arab quest for healing and reconciliation since 1988.

Notes

[1] *Documents on Palestine*, Volume 1, PASSIA, Jerusalem. 1997, pp. 331-332.

[2] Ibid.

[3] On the Charter of Hamas, see *Documents on Palestine*, Vol. 1, PASSIA, Jerusalem, 1997, pp. 314-325, and Ziad Abu Amr, "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 1993, pp. 5-19.

[4] Ibid., pp. 141-142.

[5] Ibid., pp. 141-364.

[6] Ibid., p. 145.

[7] Khalil Shaqaqi, "Victims of the Death of Oslo," *Wajhat Nazar* (Points of View, Cairo, March 2002, p. 16.

[8] See Adnan Musallam, "The Volatile Politics of Jerusalem", *The Jerusalem Times* weekly publication (East Jerusalem), Friday 27 October 2000; and Allison B. Hodgkins, *Israeli Settlement Policy in Jerusalem: Facts on The Ground*, Jerusalem, 1998.

[9] PASSIA Diary 2001, pp. 278-279.

[10] Ibid., p. 299.

[11] PASSIA Diary 2002, pp. 291-292.

[12] Ibid., p. 292.

[13] Ibid., p. 293.

[14] See *Al-Quds* daily (East Jerusalem), p. 22 for the full text of the Pan-Arab Resolution.

[15] Documents on Palestine, Volume 1, PASSIA, Jerusalem, 1997, pp. 331-332.

Adnan A. Musallam received his PhD in Contemporary Arabic Thought from the University of Michigan. The author of several scholarly works on the Middle East, he is currently Associate Professor of History, Politics, and Cultural Studies at Bethlehem University.

Introduction: A Presentation On Israeli Unilateral Action

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory reveals two distinct but complementary public faces. On the one hand, occupation consists of overt military force carried out by Israeli Defense Force personnel. Such military power ranges from the checkpoints for controlling the movement of Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza, to incursions of military units into Palestinian cities where Israeli troops enforce curfews, arrest resisters to occupation, and in numerous instances kill Palestinians assumed to be engaged in anti-occupation activities and deemed security threats. The other face of the occupation, however, has a far different set of attributes. Although deriving from military considerations, this aspect of occupation utilizes the talents of technocrats within the Israeli planning establishment with their benign-sounding aims of land management, infrastructure development, open space preservation, and conversion of territory into "public lands." Their tools of the trade consist of aerial topographical photography, land use planning maps, Geographic information Systems (GIS), and building regulations, backed by the bulldozer and construction crane. The aim of this technocratic institution within the Ministry of the Interior is the remaking of territory, most notably through settlements populated by Israeli citizen-settlers, and the networks of roads, electricity, water, and telecommunications lines that make such settlements viable. While military might and land management together constitute the matrix of control at the foundation of Israeli occupation, it is in the realm of the Israeli system of land use planning that Dr. Jad Issac and the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) have made such an important contribution to our understanding of how the occupation functions, and how it affects the social and economic fabric of Palestinian life.

In profiling the land use dimensions of the occupation, the various units of the Institute undertake research in four principal areas: 1) agriculture and biodiversity, 2) water and the environment, 3) Geographic Information Systems, and 4) Israeli settlement activity. In the context of occupation marked by ongoing land seizures, crop demolitions, and water resource confiscations, these issues and the planning tools used to analyze them have a decidedly political edge. What Issac and the Applied Research Institute reveal through their work in these areas is a concise statistical, cartographic, and pictorial representation of Israeli occupation and its impacts, much of it presented in time series that enable us to map the occupation's steady and seemingly irrepressible historical progress.

This information, however, is not undertaken as an academic exercise. Issac and the ARIJ use GIS and satellite sensing technology to provide early warning systems for Palestinian communities and a variety of different constituencies–farmers, Palestinian government ministries, cities and local governments, and even peace negotiators–in an effort to identify

areas of likely land encroachment and settlement activity. The aim is to develop a proactive set of tools, along with technical assistance for these constituencies so that they are better equipped to confront and even resist the destructive land use impacts of occupation before they become facts on the ground.

Among the most striking findings of the Institute is the environmental degradation caused by Israeli settlement and infrastructure development. Issac himself emphasizes that it is the natural landscape that is most seriously compromised by Israeli occupation. This is not simply an aesthetic concern. Because much of Palestinian society is so largely dependent upon agriculture and the land, environmental destruction has serious social and economic impacts.

The general pattern of Israeli settlement is for new development to confiscate hilltop land above existing Palestinian communities by converting it to so-called state property, level and clear-cut these hilltop sites including trees and orchards tended by Palestinian farmers, seize water resources used for irrigation and general consumption, and build upon the seized land. Issac and ARIJ reveal how, in a typical Israeli colony of this type such as Betar, the settlers site wastewater tanks outside the settlement close to the Palestinian village of Nahalin located on the hill beneath the settlement in a blatant pattern of environmental racism. Such humiliation, however, is only one of the onerous environmental impacts of settlement. The material livelihood of Palestinian communities, which depend upon cultivation in these hilltop environments, is compromised. Research from ARIJ reveals that from September, 2000 to January, 2003, the Israeli Occupation Force has uprooted and destroyed close to 750,000 trees in the West Bank most of which are olive and citrus. http://www.poica.org/casestudies/Agricaltural-losses02-03/index.htm The dollar value of crop losses to Palestinian farmers from Israeli bulldozing of 54,000 dunums of land during this period amounts to $43.3 million. The results are even more startling since the inception of occupation. According to the ARIJ GIS database, a total area of 750,000 dunums of land cultivated with more than 12 million olive trees were uprooted by the Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank since 1967. As Dr. Issac pointed out in a presentation to a conference of academics in East Jerusalem in January, this remaking of territory has been designed over time to make Palestinian life untenable.

Perhaps the most blatant environmental, social, and economic impacts from occupation, however, are being caused by construction of the Israeli separation Wall, Israeli's newest addition to the occupation's matrix of control. Not only is the Wall an oppressive scourge upon the landscape. As the ARIJ reveals in one of its most comprehensive Reports, construction of the Wall has resulted in an enormous amount of agricultural land being confiscated, bulldozed, and taken out of service. http://www.arij.org/paleye/Segregation-Wall/index.htm The first phase of the Wall has resulted in the loss of 64 square kilometers of crop land in the West Bank. When phase two of the Wall is completed, the resulting loss of agricultural land will reach 180 square kilometers while losses of forest land will amount to 45 square kilometers. Destruction of fruit, vegetable, and other agricultural land in the Segregation Zone created by the Wall in the Eastern portion of the West Bank amounts to 16.4% of agricultural land. In the Western portion, the percentage rises to almost 30%. When completed, the Wall will effectively shrink

by 50% Palestinian territory in the West Bank.

Such facts beg for recognition by a World Community that has been hauntingly silent. In this sense, the ARIJ has a special role to play in helping the World recover lost vision.

See Jad Issac's presentation: www.arij.or

Gary Fields *is author of* Territories of Profit *(Stanford University Press) and is a professor in the Department of Communication at the University of California, San Diego.*

Baruch Kimmerling – Benny Morris' Shocking Interview

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

The Israeli historian Benny Morris did it again. Morris is not only a historian with impressive achievements but also an Israeli and international icon. One year after the publication of his book *The Birth of Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*, published in 1987, he proclaimed himself a "new historian." He became the great guru of a small imaginary group appointed by him and including mainly Avi Shlaim, Uri Milstein and Ilan Pappe. Membership in this group varied from time to time according to Morris' sympathy or antipathy.

Morris basically claimed that all the Israeli historiography that preceded his book and several other writings was completely fabricated, a series of untrue myths designed to serve the Zionist need for legitimacy. Morris, with his great arrogance and unique talent for public relations provoked an immense furor among the old Israeli academic and intellectual establishment and became the hero of many Palestinians and a small group of younger Israeli academics who perceived him as a "debunker" of Zionist lies.

On the other hand he was accused by mainstream Israeli academics and intellectuals with "post-Zionism" and subverting the very legitimacy of Israel's existence. This triggered endless nonsense and semi-professional and mainly political debates in Israel and abroad about the meaning and extent of "post-Zionism" (frequently labeled as "anti-Zionism" or even "post-modernism") that included arbitrarily any serious or less serious critical (or supposedly critical) study on Israeli history, society and politics. Most of this debate caused great damage to Israeli historical, social and cultural research. Books and papers were judged not by their intrinsic values or shortcomings, but by their categorizations as Zionist, post-Zionist or anti-Zionist. Instead of being preoccupied with serious research, people devoted a lot of time and energy to polemics on this futile issue. Younger academics were scared and chose their research projects carefully in order to avoid being identified with one of the "camps."

To Morris' credit, it must be said, that he was very little involved in these debates, even if he enjoyed being at the center of the storm. Morris in general loved to leave his moral and ideological attitude toward the events he described ambiguous, and this was a correct position from his positivistic historian's point of view, in which role he claims objectivity, even if a careful reading of almost all of Morris' writings reveals a very simplistic and one-dimensional view on the Jewish-Arab conflict. Despite all his "discoveries" about moral wrongs perpetrated by the Israelis, on the bottom line, he always tended to adopt the official Israeli interpretation of the events (in *The Refugee Problem and Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*, but less in *Israel's Border Wars*). Another interesting issue is Benny Morris' compulsive dealings with the problems related to "transfer" of the Arab population,

which most of his readers wrongly interpreted as anchored in a deep moral indignation.

As with most of Morris' other claims, the pretension to be the first and only Israeli who dealt with the ethnic cleansing of the Arabs reflected a partial reality. His book indeed touched a very central and painful nerve of the Israeli-Jewish current past, the uprooting of about 700,000 Arab Palestinians from the territories that would become the Jewish state, the refusal to allow them back to homes after the war, and the formation of the refugee problem during the period of the 1948 war and after. He also surveyed some atrocities committed by Jews during the inter-communal war that played some role in the "voluntary" flight of the Arabs from their villages and neighborhoods. Weirdly enough, Morris devoted a very salient and extensive discussion to the centrality of idea of "transfer" (i.e., ethnic cleansing) in Zionist thought, but concluded that the Palestinians had not been expelled by the Israelis in compliance with a master plan or following a consequential policy. This was not precise.

Plan D and the Israelification of the Land

At the beginning of the 1970s. I had begun to work on research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which, I hoped, would produce a Ph.D. thesis in sociology. The subject was the Zionist ideology of land and its relationship to other political doctrines. In the earlier stages of my research, I was shocked to discover that a major "purification" of the land (the term "ethnic cleansing" was unknown in that period) from its Arab Palestinian inhabitant was done during the 1948 War by the Jewish military and para-military forces. During this research I found, solely based on Israeli sources, that about 350 Arab villages were "abandoned" and their 3.25 million dunums of rural land, were confiscated and became. in several stages, the property of the Israeli state or the Jewish National Fund. I also found that Moshe Dayan, then Minister of Agriculture, disclosed that about 700,000 Arabs who "left" the territories had owned four million dunums of land.

Another finding was that from 1882 until 1948, all the Jewish companies (including the Jewish National Fund, an organ of World Zionist Organization) and private individuals in Palestine had succeeded in buying only about 7 percent of the total lands in British Palestine. All the rest was taken by sword and nationalized during the 1948 war and after. Today, only about 7 percent of Israel land is privately owned, about half of it by Arabs. Israel is the only "democracy" in the world that nationalized almost all if its land and prohibited even the leasing of most of agricultural lands to non-Jews, a situation made possible by a complex framework of legal arrangements with the Jewish National Fund, including the Basic Law: Israel Lands (1960), the Israel Lands Law and Israel Lands Administration Law (1960), as well as the Covenants between the Government of the State of Israel and the WZO of 1954 and the JNF of 1961.

Now the remaining puzzle was if this depopulation was a "natural" consequence of the war, which led the Arab populations to flee the country, as Israel officially states all the time while simultaneously accusing the Arab leadership of encouraging this flight, or if it was an intentional Jewish policy to acquire the maximum amount of territory with minimum amount of Arab population. Further research showed that the military blueprint for the 1948 war was the

so-called “Plan D” (Tochnit Daleth). General Yigael Yadin, Head of the Operations Branch of the Israeli unified armed forces, launched it on March 10, 1948. The plan expected military clashes between the state- making Jewish community of colonial Palestine with the Arab community and the assumed intervention by military forces of the Arab states. In the plan s preamble, Yadin stated:

> The aim of this plan is the control of the area of the Jewish State and the defense of its borders [as determined by the UN Partition Plan] and the clusters of [Jewish] settlements outside the boundaries, against regular and irregular enemy forces operating from bases outside and inside the Jewish State.

Furthermore, the plan suggested the following actions, amongst others, in order to reach these goals:

> Actions against enemy settlements located in our, or near our, defense systems [i.e., Jewish settlement and localities] with the aim of preventing their use as bases for active armed forces. These actions should be divided into the following types: The destruction of villages (by fire, blowing up and mining) especially of those villages over which we cannot gain [permanent] control. Gaining of control will be accomplished in accordance with the following instructions: The encircling of the village and the search of it. In the event of resistance – the destruction of the resisting forces and the expulsion of the population beyond the boundaries of the State.

The conclusion was that, as in many other cases, what seemed at first glance a pure and limited military doctrine, proved itself in the case of “Plan D” to comprise far-reaching measures that lead to a complete demographic, ethnic, social and political transformation of Palestine. Implementing the spirit of this doctrine, the Jewish military forces conquered about 20,000 square kilometers of territory (compared with the 14,000 square kilometers granted them by the UN Partition Resolution) and purified them almost completely from their Arab inhabitants. About 800,000 Arab inhabitants lived on the territories before they fell under Jewish control following the 1948 war. Fewer than 100,000 Arabs remained there under Jewish control after the cease fire. An additional 50,000 were included within the Israeli state s territory following the Israeli-Jordan’s armistice agreements that transferred several villages to Israeli rule.

The military doctrine, the base of Plan D, clearly reflected the local Zionist ideological aspirations to acquire a maximal Jewish territorial continuum, cleansed from Arab presence, as a necessary condition for establishing an exclusive Jewish nation-state.

The British colonial regime-between 1921 to 1948-provided a political and military umbrella under which the Zionist enterprise was able to develop its basic institutional, economic and social framework, but also secured the essential interests of the Arab collectivity. As the British umbrella was removed, the Arab and the Jewish communities found themselves face-to-face in

a zero-sum-like situation. By rejecting the partition plan the Arab community and leadership were confident not only in their absolute right to control the whole country that then had an Arab majority comprising two-thirds of the population, but also in their ability to do so. The Jewish community and leadership appreciated, on the one hand, that they did not have enough power and population to control the entire territory of Palestine and to expel or to rule its Arab majority. Thus, on the other hand, they officially accepted the partition plan, but invested all their efforts towards improving its terms and maximally expanding their boundaries while reducing the number of Arabs in them.

It was impossible, at that stage, to find hard evidence that, despite its far-reaching political consequences and meaning, "Plan D" was ever adopted by the "political level," or even discussed by it. My intuition said that many political and national leaders knew very well that there were some kind of orders and plans that were better not to discuss or present officially. Later Morris' findings supported the correctness this intuition. In any case, though, the way that the military operations of 1948 were conducted does not leave any room for doubts that Plan D was indeed the doctrine used by the Jewish military forces during this war, or about the "spirit" and perceptions behind it.

In the Winter of 1974, I submitted my Ph. D. thesis and it was approved by the relevant committee of experts in the Spring of 1975. For many years, I tried to publish it, without success. My senior colleagues at the Hebrew University explained to me with a strain of pity, "well everybody who lived in this country in that period knows precisely what happened, but it is not publishable yet. Perhaps it will be after a hundred years or so…." Some others kindly advised me to find more interesting topics for research. However, I insisted and finally I found the Institute of International Studies of the University of California at Berkeley ready to publish it. The book was published in 1983 under the title *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*. Being a "dry" professional text, it did now draw public attention and achieved limited circulation but became well known and widely quoted by a small circle of experts.

The Israeli Demographic Discourse

Morris' latest controversy involves the public position he has taken on the possibility of a second act of ethnic cleansing. It is impossible to understand this controversy without understanding the demographic background to it. The issue is a complex one, but stated briefly, if current demographic trends continue, Jews will cease to be the majority population even within pre-1967 Israel within the next 40 to 50 years. A younger Arab population with a far higher birthrate makes this almost inevitable, even if there is continued immigration from the Diaspora. This fact creates a great deal of anxiety among all segments of the Israeli polity.

The radical solution to this dilemma is "transfer" of the Arab populations. "Moderate" versions of these proposals call for exchanges of territories with their populations. In these scenarios, areas in Israel with large Arab populations like the lower Galilee would be given to a Palestinian state in exchange for Jewish settlements in the territories being incorporated into

Israel. More extreme solutions to this dilemma call for forcible expulsions of Palestinians, not only from the occupied territories, but even from Israel itself. This fringe opinion, in the last years has become somewhat respectable.

Formerly, solutions involving transfer were voiced openly only by followers of Meir Kahane. Yet by 1990, another party endorsing "voluntary transfer," General Rehavam Ze evi's Moledet Party, had become part of the Israeli government coalition. The "voluntarily" was added only to preserve the party from being accused of inciting a crime. Presently, Moledet (as part of a parliamentary bloc headed by Benny Elon, another supporter of "transfer") is again part of the government. In 2002, the National Religious Party chose a new leader, General Effie Eitam, who has called for transfer of hostile Arabs to other countries if a major war presented an opportunity. Indeed, most transfer scenarios, including that newly proposed by Benny Morris, are based on a "War of Armageddon." which would provide the cover for massive ethnic cleansing. The recent American assault on Iraq heightened this atmosphere of "anticipation." No wonder that under those circumstances, in which the Israeli government was the most enthusiastic foreign supporter of the war, that a group of Israeli academics published in the *Guardian* (October 2, 2002) a "hysterical warning" about the possible intention to commit such an act under the cover of a regional war.

As the Palestinian armed resistance and terror continued, public opinion polls consistently indicate a perpetual increase in the number of Israelis wishing to expel Palestinians from the occupied territories and even Israeli Arab citizens. For example, according surveys conducted by Asher Arian for Jaffe Center of Strategic Studies of Tel Aviv University, in 1991, 38 percent of the Jewish population supported the "transferring" of the Palestinians out of the occupied territories through force while 24 percent favored expelling also the Israeli Arabs. In 2002, the percentages rose to 46 and 31 consecutively.

The alternative solution is to use the remaining time to withdrawal from the occupied territories and to achieve a major reconciliation between the Jews and the Arab citizens of Israel and their full integration as individual and ethnic group within the Israeli state on a complete equalitarian basis. Proponents of this solution argue that the vast majority of the Arab citizens of Israel is committed to the Israeli state, its values and culture, and appreciates its potential democracy. Furthermore, this alternative solution is necessary to save Israel from being another pariah-state (like South Africa under Apartheid regime). Benny Morris' recent contribution to this controversy is to adopt a solution on the more radical end of a continuum of possible strategies for dealing with the so-called "demographic problem."

The Outing of Benny Morris

At the beginning of 2004, Benny Morris industriously prepared a "revised" version of his *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* and a Hebrew version of the *Righteous Victims*, and toward their publication he published two articles in the *Guardian* (October 3, 2003 and January 13, 2004) and gave an extensive interview to *Haaretz Magazine* (January 8, 2004). Basically the three pieces reflected the same ideas; however the Hebrew interview is less

subtle and more directed to Morris' internal political audience, therefore it is more interesting and calls for a critical reading.

First and foremost, the historian underlined the new findings that justify the new version of *Refugee Problem*: "What the new material shows [says Morris] is that there were far more Israeli acts of massacre than I had previously thought. To my surprise, there were also many cases of rape." After some detailed description of the rape and murder of Palestinian girls, Morris concluded that "because neither the victims nor the rapists liked to report these events, we have to assume that the dozen cases of rape that were reported, which I found, are not the whole story. They are just the tip of the iceberg." Additionally he found that in twenty-four cases, about 800 Palestinians were massacred under different circumstances. And he added:

> That can t be accidental. It's a pattern. Apparently, various officers who took part in the operation understood that the expulsion order they received permitted them to do these deeds in order to encourage the population to take to the roads. The fact is that no one was punished for these acts of murder. Ben-Gurion silenced the matter. He covered up for the officers who did the massacres.

However, one of the most interesting conclusions of Morris-what brings him closer to my findings-is that

> from April 1948, Ben-Gurion is projecting a message of transfer. There is no explicit order of his in writing, there is no orderly comprehensive policy, but there is an atmosphere of [population] transfer. The transfer idea is in the air. The entire leadership understands that this is the idea. The officer corps understands what is required of them. Under Ben-Gurion, a consensus of transfer is created.

It is not yet ethnic cleansing as a pre-planned part of a military doctrine as I found in the initial research, but just "projected message." However, in another way this is worse then my conclusions because it is openly referred to Ben Gurion himself.

So far it is the "old good" and expected Morris. The restless debunker of Israel's sins. However, suddenly the interview took a sharp turn from historiography to philosophy: "Under some circumstances expulsion is not a war crime. I don t think that the expulsions of 1948 were war crimes. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. You have to dirty your hands." Moreover,

> if he was already engaged in expulsion, maybe he should have done a complete job. I know that this stuns the Arabs and the liberals and the politically correct types. But my feeling is that this place would be quieter and know less suffering if the matter had been resolved once and for all. If Ben-Gurion had carried out a large expulsion and cleaned the whole country- the whole Land of Israel, as far as the Jordan River. It may yet turn out that this was his fatal mistake. If he had carried out a full expulsion – rather than a partial one-he would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations.

Leave apart for a moment the moral implications of this statement and ask about its factual basis. All previous research by Morris shows that the refugee problem was and still is the core issue in the Jewish-Arab conflict. A "full expulsion"-presuming that was possible from a military and international point of view (a very dubious presumption)-would only triple the number of refugees. Morris has no answer about how such a cleansing should reduce the suffering and by whom. He knows very well that the absorption of even the "limited number" of 700,000 refugees caused famine and epidemics in the "host" countries.

Another crucial point that Morris should know very well was that the conquest of the West Bank would have pulled the only well-trained Arab army into the conflict, the Trans-Jordan Legion. Such a conquest would have violated the tacit agreement between Ms. Golda Meirson and King Abdullah about the partition of the land of Palestine between the Jewish state and the Kingdom. In such a case, the balance of power in the 1948 war would have been different and would have resulted in the same outcome of the war. Ben Gurion was very anxious on this point, and the only battles between the Arab Legion and the Jewish forces were local and took places in the Jerusalem area, the only disputed territory between the sides.

But Morris has abandoned his historian's mantle and donned the armor of a Jewish chauvinist who wants the Land of Israel completely cleansed from Arabs. Never has any secular public Jewish figure expressed these feelings so clearly and blatantly as Professor Morris did. And in order to be completely lucid on this point he drew an analogy between Israel and North America: "Even the great American democracy could not have been created without the annihilation of the Indians. There are cases in which the overall, final good justifies harsh and cruel acts that are committed in the course of history." I do not know today any American historian or social scientist that agrees that the annihilation of the indigenous population of the continent was a necessary condition for the American nation or the constitution of American democracy. And these are facts and not "political correctness" as Morris loves to call any arguments he cannot deny.

However the issue is less about what happened in past and more about Morris' wishful thinking and prophecy about the future: To the interviewer's question if Morris advocates a new ethnic cleansing today he replies: "If you are asking me whether I support the transfer and expulsion of the Arabs from the West Bank, Gaza and perhaps even from Galilee and the Triangle [Israel], I say not at this moment. I am not willing to be a partner to that act. In the present circumstances, it is neither moral nor realistic. The world would not allow it, the Arab world would not allow it, it would destroy the Jewish society from within. But I am ready to tell you that under other circumstances, apocalyptic ones, which are liable to be realized in five or ten years, I can see expulsions. If we find ourselves with atomic weapons around us, or if there is a general Arab attack on us and a situation of warfare on the front with Arabs in the rear shooting at convoys on their way to the front, acts of expulsion will be entirely reasonable. They may even be essential."

This doomsday scenario drawn by Morris is so fantastical not only because the Palestinian citizens of Israel proved, despite very harsh conditions and generational discrimination their

“loyalty” to the state, but also because the existence of dense Arab population within the narrow strip of the Holy Land is the best insurance Israel has against being attacked by strategic nuclear or other WMDs. Otherwise, Morris is unable to understand that the moment that nuclear, biological and chemical weapons were used in the context of the Middle East by any side, it is already too late to save anything in the region.

But hatred toward the Arabs, their society and culture crush any logic in Morris’ thought. The Palestinians are “the barbarians who want to take our lives. The people the Palestinian society sends to carry out the terrorist attacks… At the moment, that society is in the state of being a serial killer. It is a very sick society. It should be treated the way we treat individuals who are serial killers.” After thirty five years of oppression, colonization of their land, expropriation of their water, ignoring almost all of their freedoms, administrative detention of tens of thousands of Palestinians, systematic destruction of their social and material infrastructure, it is more than ironic to talk about the Palestinians as barbarians and a sick society. If the Palestinian society is sick, who is responsible for this sickness and which society is sicker and an institutionalized serial killer?

Morris’ mind is full of contradictions: Before he described the Palestinian “barbarism” he described the whole conflict as “in comparison to the massacres that were perpetrated in Bosnia, that’s peanuts. In comparison to the massacres the Russians perpetrated against the Germans at Stalingrad, that’s chicken feed.” To these one may add the American bombardment of Dresden into rubble and other innumerable atrocious acts committed by the “Westerner” and other non-Arabs to conclude who are the “barbarians.” Or after describing the rapes and the massacres committed by the Jews he comments that “it turns out that there was a series of orders issued by the Arab Higher Committee and by the Palestinian intermediate levels to remove children, women, and the elderly from the villages. Morris interprets that as proof that many of those who fled the villages did so with the encouragement of the Palestinian leadership itself, which proves that the Jews were not so much responsible for the cleansing. Morris cannot understand the obvious: what could be more human, in the face of rapes and massacres, than evacuation of women and children from a war zone? So, again the non-human Palestinian victims are responsible for the consequences. To say that he applies a double standard is a serious understatement.

By the same token, Morris fails to ask the right questions about the failed Camp David summit. If the Palestinian strategy is to destroy Israel in phases, why didn’t they accept the “most generous offers” of Ehud Barak Camp David summit, as was described in the famous interview of Morris with Barak in the *New York Review of Books* (June 13, 2002)? But one cannot ask for much logic in an emotional outburst by an archivist, when he tries to compose a generalized and coherent picture from his thousands of details. Then he turns to his own prejudices and stereotypes of the Islamic and Arabic culture that happen to be fashionable and well fit the present moods of the Israeli-Jewish and some parts of Western political culture since the September 11 calamity. But the historian is not just a part of the collective mood and expresses it, he also provide historical and intellectual legitimacy to the most primitive and self-destructive impulse of a very troubled society. Perhaps it is indicative that to the interviewer’s

question-“if Zionism is so dangerous for the Jews and if Zionism makes the Arabs so wretched, maybe it was [from the start] a mistake?”-Morris lacks any meaningful answers.

Baruch Kimmerling *is George S. Wise Professor of Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His latest English book (co-authored with Joel S. Migdal) is* The Palestinian People: A History *(Harvard University Press, 2003).*

Power And History In The Middle East: A Conversation With Ilan Pappe

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Q: What is your background and how do you see your own development as a historian?

Pappe: I was born in 1954 to a German Jewish family in Haifa where I lived in blissful ignorance about the world beyond the comfortable and safe mount Carmel until I reached the age of 18. At that age I began my military service which introduced me to other groups and to the host of social problems facing Israeli society. But it was only in the 1970s, at Hebrew University, that I was exposed to the plight of the Palestinians in Israel as an undergraduate in the department of Middle Eastern History. It was then and there that I found my love for history and developed my belief that the present cannot be understood and the future changed without first trying to decipher its historical dimensions.

It was clear that this could not be done freely inside Israel-especially if its own history was to be my subject matter. This is how I found myself at Oxford in 1984 as a D. Phil student under the supervision of two great supervisors, the late Albert Hourani and Roger Owen. The thesis was on the 1948 war in Palestine, a subject that has engaged me ever since my career as a professional historian began. This is still a subject that haunts me and I regard the events of that year as the key to understanding the present conflict in Palestine as well as the gate through which peace has to pass on the way to a comprehensive and lasting settlement in Palestine and Israel. Intimate and strong friendships with Palestinians and the newly declassified material in the archives produced my new look at the 1948 war. I challenged many of the foundational Israeli myths associated with the war and I described what happened in Palestine in that year essentially as a Jewish ethnic cleansing operation against the indigenous population. This conviction informed not only my work as a historian but also affected significantly my political views and activity.

I also ventured, in between my forays in the1948 story, into the exciting-but always productive for me-world of historiosophy and hermeneutics. I do think, in retrospect, that much of what I had read and discussed influenced my attitude to historiography in general. I treat history from a much more relativist point of view than many of my colleagues and I was also highly impressed by the need-which informs my work in the last few years-to write more a history of the people and less a history of the politicians, and more a history of the society and less of its ideology and elite politics.

Q: You have often been associated with “revisionist history” and the emergence of a “post-zionist” discourse: what do these terms mean and how have they affected the political climate in Israel?

Pappe: Revisionist history means those books written by Israeli historians about the 1948 war that question the essential foundational Israeli myths about that war. First among them is that it was a war between a Jewish David and an Arab Goliath. The new historians described an advantage for the Jewish military side in most stages of the war. They also pointed to the prior agreement between the Jewish state and the strongest Arab army-the Arab Legion of Transjordan-that neutralized the Palestinian force and limited its activity to the Greater Jerusalem area. This prior understanding divided post-Mandatory Palestine between the Jews and the Hashemites of Jordan at the expense of the Palestinians.

As for post-Zionism, this adjective is usually associated with critical research in Israel on various chapters in the history of Zionism and Israel. It includes sociologists who view Zionism as colonialism, historians who doubt the sincerity of the Zionist effort during the Holocaust, and it also criticizes the manipulation of Holocaust memory within Israel. Among them you can find scholars identifying with the fate of the Mizrachi Jews in Israel and who deconstruct the attitude of the state, especially in the 1950s, toward these groups employing paradigms of research offered by Edward Said and others in postcolonial studies. Palestinian Israelis have done the same in looking at the attitude of the Jewish state toward the Palestinian minority and feminists have critically analyzed the status of women and gender relations as they developed through time in the Jewish State.

In the 1990s, when most the works of the revisionist and post-Zionist historians and scholars appeared, there seemed to be some impact on the general public. You could see it in documentary films on television, in op-eds in the printed press and in some textbooks and curricula in the educational system.

But after the outbreak of the second intifada in October 2000, not much was left of the previous readiness of Israeli society to hear critical voices on the past. The electronic media loyally towed the official line; the printed press silenced critique in general; and revisionist textbooks were taken out of the school system.

One could probably say that it never affected the political system, but it seems to have taken root in Israeli civil society and its impact will, I think, be felt in years to come.

Q: Your last book dealt with 1948 and you suggest that Israel is still living with the consequences of choices made then. Could you elaborate on this?

Pappe: This was not my last book. My last book was A History of Modern Palestine, published by Cambridge University Press. My last book on 1948 is The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951 published by I. B. Tauris.

Indeed, I think that the ethnic cleansing in 1948 will never allow Israel to reconcile with the Palestinians and the rest of the Middle East, nor to live in peace with its own Palestinian minority unless Israel boldly faces the past. The ethnic cleansing included the destruction of more than 400 villages, 11 towns and the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians.

The Israeli state, as a political entity, has to acknowledge the ethnic cleansing. Until today it had failed to do so and it should be made accountable for its deeds and offer compensation for the people it wronged. This should be done on the basis of UN Resolution 194 that allowed the refugees to choose between compensation and return.

Q: The plight of the Israeli Arabs and those Arabs living in the occupied territories is often underestimated: they are seen as poor and exploited but, if I can put the matter this way, not particularly more than any number of other peoples. Is there something systematic here that is reminiscent of apartheid or even ethnic cleansing?

Pappe: There are of course differences in the way Israel treats the Palestinians living under occupation and those whom it regards as citizens. But there are also common features of that policy. Let us begin by charting the common ground. It is beyond the scope of this interview to present the emergence of Zionist attitudes and perceptions about the indigenous population of Palestine. What suffices in this context is to point to the final formulations of this process: a dehumanization of the Palestinians, their exclusive depiction as a security problem and the wish to have a pure Jewish state, empty of any Arabs or Arabism.

The wish to retain the façade of a democracy complicated the translation of these attitudes into actual policy toward Palestinians inside Israel, those who are officially regarded as citizens. Until 1966, in the name of security, the rights of these Palestinians were removed and they were subjected to cruel military rule. But when, after 1967, the U.S.-Israeli alliance became the central source for the Jewish State's existence, one of the more democratic features developed among them was the abolition of that military rule. Racism and apartheid-which were official policy under military rule-now became illicit and in a way more dangerous because it was more difficult for human and civil rights organizations to expose them. In the years since 1967, as a Palestinian citizen you could never know where the racism and discrimination would hit you. It meant that at any given minute, without prior knowledge, you were likely to encounter de facto segregation, discrimination, abuse of basic rights and even death. This is still the state of affairs today, and in many ways it has worsened since the outbreak of the second intifada.

On top of all of this, Palestinian citizens in Israel suffer from a de jure discrimination as well. There are three laws in the country that define most of the cultivated land as belonging exclusively to the Jewish people and hence cannot be sold to, or transacted with, non-Jews, namely Arabs. Other qua apartheid laws are the law of citizenship that demands naturalization processes for the indigenous population while the law of return grants it unconditionally to unborn yet Jewish children everywhere in the world.

There are clear policies of discrimination in the welfare system, in the budgeting of public services and in the job opportunities, especially in industry, of which 70 percent is termed "Arab Free" as it is strongly connected to the military and security sector. But I think it is the daily experience-as I described it above-of the license for everyone who represents the state to abuse you at will that is the worst aspect of living as a Palestinian in the Jewish state. To this has lately been added the fear of ethnic cleansing and expulsion.

The situation in the occupied territories is far worse. House demolitions, expulsions, killings, torturing, land confiscation and daily harassment at will of the population has been going on from the first day of occupation in 1967: it did not start because of the suicide bombs which appeared for the first time in 1995 as a very belated Palestinian response for more than 25 years of occupation. The situation has only become worse in the last four years. There are several spheres of brutality that should be mentioned: the collective punishment, the abuse of thousands of detainees and political prisoners, the transfer of people, the economic devastation, the slaying of innocent citizens and the daily harassment at checkpoints. Lately to this was added the fence that is ghettoizing thousands of people, separating them from their land and their kin and/or destroying their source of living and their houses.

Q: This wall is being termed a “wall of separation.” Perhaps you can offer some reflections on this symbol of oppression and its implications.

Pappe: I think the wall fits well into older Zionist notions of how to solve the problem of Palestine while taking into account realpolitik such as the need to maintain Israel’s external image and keep a cordial relationship with the West and the United States in particular. The aim has always been, and it still remains, to have as much of Palestine as possible with as few Palestinians in it as possible. Only very unique historical circumstances, such as those that existed in 1948, allowed for mass expulsions of the Palestinians on the way to realize the vision of a totally de-Arabized Palestine. In the absence of, or while waiting for such circumstances, more gradual means have been employed. The first is an internal Israeli decision on how much of historical Palestine is needed for sustaining the Jewish State. The consensus between Labor and Likkud today is that the Gaza strip is not needed and that half of the West Bank as well can be given up. The half of the West Bank that is left to the Palestinians, however, is not a contiguous territory: it is bisected by areas in the West Bank deemed necessary for Israel’s survival, because they include water resources, historical sites, strategic positions and large post-1967 Jewish settlements. The drawing of this new map can either be done with the consent of a Palestinian leadership or without it.

The second device is a set of operations meant to cleanse the indigenous population of those areas that were annexed to Israel from the West Bank. Today there are about a quarter of a million people inhabiting these regions. As in 1948, the issue is not just expulsion, but also anti-repatriation. So the wall that is being built demarcates the eastern border of Israel (so that the Jewish State will consist of 85 percent of original Palestine) and is meant to draw a clear demographic line between the Jewish and Palestinian populations. People who have already been chased out of their houses while the wall and security zone around it was constructed, and those who are in danger of being evicted in the future, will be blocked from coming back by the wall.

The third step is an Israeli willingness to define the Gaza strip and what would be left of the West Bank as a Palestinian state. Such a state cannot be a viable political entity and would be akin to two huge prison camps-one in the Gaza Strip the other in the West Bank-in which many people would find it difficult to find employment and proper housing. This may lead to

immigration and de-population that may raise the appetite of Israel for more land.

Two final points: the wall would leave the Palestinians citizens of Israel, as a “demographic” problem inside the wall. Zionist policies in the past and present Sharonite plans raise severe concerns for the fate of these people, presently still citizens of Israel who number more the one and a quarter million today. The second point is that the wall will also turn Israel into a prison hall-wardens and inmates are quite often both prisoners-which means that the siege mentality that lies behind some of the most cruel and aggressive Israeli policies inside and outside the country will continue.

Q: The Geneva Accords have raised the hopes of many: critics have attacked their advocates, however, and emphasized the need for a bi-national state rather than a “two-state” solution to the current crisis. Where do you stand?

Pappe: First, I do support a bi-national state and find it a far better solution than the two-states solution offered by the Accords. In fact, I will even go further than that and claim that only a secular democratic single state will, at the end of the day, bring peace and reconciliation to Palestine. It is the only political structure that allies with the demographic composition on the ground-the absence of any clear homogenous territorial communities, the need to repatriate the refugees, and the danger of the politics of identity on both sides if they are to become state identities and the need to cater to crucial and urgent agendas such as poverty and ecological problems that cannot be dealt with by a national structure in either Israel or Palestine alone.

The Geneva initiative is, like so many other peace plans in the past, an Israeli dictate that seeks, and quite often finds, Palestinian partners. This present peace plan, like the previous one, has three assumptions that have to be deconstructed. The first is that the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 is irrelevant to the making of peace. The second is that peace excludes any solution for the refugee question based on the right of return and Israeli accountability for the catastrophe of 1948. The third, is that the Palestinians are not entitled to a state, but a dependency over roughly 15 percent of historical Palestine and for that they should declare the end of the conflict.

My point is that indeed everything possible should be done to end the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip and liberate it from Israeli control and pass it to Palestinian hands. But this can only be a first step, because such a withdrawal does not solve the predicament of most of the Palestinian people, who live in refugee camps or are citizens of Israel. The end of the occupation is not equivalent to the end of the conflict, as is stated in the Geneva document, it is a precondition for peace.

Israel has first to acknowledge the ethnic cleansing of 1948 and make itself accountable by implementing UN resolution 194. In the meantime, given the realities surrounding the return of refugees and the presence of so many Jews in Palestinian areas, there will be a need to look for the appropriate political structure that can carry this reconciliation. For me, the best is the one state structure.

Q: What would you say to those who claim that the current policies of the Sharon regime are in reality necessary in order to assure the security of Israel from terrorist fanatics?

Pappe: There are two answers. The first is that these policies were in tact from 1967, long before the first suicide bomber was even born. The second is that we should say to them what we say to those who claim that the neocons in Washington planned the occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran because of 9/11. I think we all know that 9/11 was a pretext for a strategy born in a certain American school of thought of what America is all about and how it should control the world politically, militarily and economically. The suicide bombers are a pretext for implementing a harsher version of policies of collective punishment meant to enable the territorial enlargement of Israel and the de-population of further parts of Palestine.

Q: Israel is often depicted as the lone outpost of democracy in the Middle East. How legitimate is this claim? Or, further, is a redefinition of democracy taking place in your country?

Pappe: I think that one of the major tests for a democracy is the treatment of minorities. If this is accepted as a principal test case than it is ludicrous to define Israel as a democracy, let alone as an outpost of democracy. There are official and formal characteristics which justify the definition of Israel as a democracy, but it is so flawed in the field of maintaining basic civil and human rights, that notwithstanding these attributes, one can still cast severe doubts about the definition of the state as a democracy.

As I have tried to show in the analysis of the Israeli attitude to Palestinians as citizens or under occupation, the basic Israeli policy is a mixture of apartheid practices and colonialist attitudes. But also the role of religion in the state and the consequent violation of basic rights as a result are additional reasons to look for a different definition for Israel, rather than search a new definition for democracy.

Q: What do you make of what has been termed the “new anti-Semitism”?

Pappe: I do not think there is a new anti-Semitism. There is anti-Semitism, rooted in the extreme right in Europe and the United States. It has been silenced to a great extent since 1945 and it is still a marginal phenomenon. There are strong sentiments against Israel and Zionism both on the Left and among the communities of Muslim immigrants. Some of the actions taken are reminiscent in form and tone of the old anti-Semitism, but for the most part, these actions have been taken against Jews who chose to represent Israel in their own countries and thus became targets for legitimate and illegitimate actions against them. Particularly appalling is the use by the Israeli government and its supporters of the anti-Semitism card in order to silence any criticism on its policies in Palestine.

Q: Do you see any sources of change and hope?

Pappe: Alas, not in the near future, but I am quite hopeful about the long term. I think there are signs that elements of civil society both in Israel and in Palestine are willing to take the issue of resolving the conflict away from the politicians who hijacked it for their own personal

and narrow interests. Such actions on the part of civil society, however, will unfortunately not prove effective or assume a mass character unless there is strong external pressure on, and condemnation of, the Israeli state and its policies. A more hopeful scenario cannot materialize unless that occurs and more blood will be shed in another round or two of violence.

Q: Arab critics have described Zionism as a form of racism: how would you deal with that assessment?

Pappe: Zionism is both a national movement and a colonialist project. Most national movements have an inherent racist element in them. They differ in how significant this element in the national discourse and practice actually is. In Zionism, it is a particularly meaningful signifier of self-identity.

Colonialism is also very closely associated with racism and there are many features of Zionism in the past and the present that are purely colonialist in character. The only thing I would object to in identifying Zionism and racism is the tendency to neglect other vital aspects of Zionism such as its importance for creating a Hebrew culture, a new nation state, and a safe haven for some Jews.

Ilan Pappe is senior lecutrer, department of political science, Haifa University and Chair of the Emil Touma institute for Palestinian studies, Haifa. Pappe’s recent books include, The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (1992), The Israel\Palestine Question (1999) and A History of Modern Palestine (2003).

Ari Shavit – Survival Of The Fittest? An Interview With Benny Morris

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

Ari Shavit

Benny Morris says he was always a Zionist. People were mistaken when they labeled him a post-Zionist, when they thought that his historical study on the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem was intended to undercut the Zionist enterprise. Nonsense, Morris says, that's completely unfounded. Some readers simply misread the book. They didn't read it with the same detachment, the same moral neutrality, with which it was written. So they came to the mistaken conclusion that when Morris describes the cruelest deeds that the Zionist movement perpetrated in 1948 he is actually being condemnatory, that when he describes the large-scale expulsion operations he is being denunciatory. They did not conceive that the great documenter of the sins of Zionism in fact identifies with those sins. That he thinks some of them, at least, were unavoidable.

Two years ago, different voices began to be heard. The historian who was considered a radical leftist suddenly maintained that Israel had no one to talk to. The researcher who was accused of being an Israel hater (and was boycotted by the Israeli academic establishment) began to publish articles in favor of Israel in the British paper The Guardian.

Whereas citizen Morris turned out to be a not completely snow-white dove, historian Morris continued to work on the Hebrew translation of his massive work "Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001," which was written in the old, peace-pursuing style. And at the same time historian Morris completed the new version of his book on the refugee problem, which is going to strengthen the hands of those who abominate Israel. So that in the past two years citizen Morris and historian Morris worked as though there is no connection between them, as though one was trying to save what the other insists on eradicating.

Both books will appear in the coming month. The book on the history of the Zionist-Arab conflict will be published in Hebrew by Am Oved in Tel Aviv, while the Cambridge University Press will publish "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited" (it originally appeared, under the CUP imprint, in 1987). That book describes in chilling detail the atrocities of the Nakba. Isn't Morris ever frightened at the present-day political implications of his historical study? Isn't he fearful that he has contributed to Israel becoming almost a pariah state? After a few moments of evasion, Morris admits that he is. Sometimes he really is frightened. Sometimes he asks himself what he has wrought.

He is short, plump, and very intense. The son of immigrants from England, he was born in Kibbutz Ein Hahoresh and was a member of the left-wing Hashomer Hatza'ir youth movement.

In the past, he was a reporter for the Jerusalem Post and refused to do military service in the territories. He is now a professor of history at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Be'er Sheva. But sitting in his armchair in his Jerusalem apartment, he does not don the mantle of the cautious academic. Far from it: Morris spews out his words, rapidly and energetically, sometimes spilling over into English. He doesn't think twice before firing off the sharpest, most shocking statements, which are anything but politically correct. He describes horrific war crimes offhandedly, paints apocalyptic visions with a smile on his lips. He gives the observer the feeling that this agitated individual, who with his own hands opened the Zionist Pandora's box, is still having difficulty coping with what he found in it, still finding it hard to deal with the internal contradictions that are his lot and the lot of us all.

Rape, massacre, transfer

Q: *Benny Morris, in the month ahead the new version of your book on the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem is due to be published. Who will be less pleased with the book – the Israelis or the Palestinians?*

Morris: The revised book is a double-edged sword. It is based on many documents that were not available to me when I wrote the original book, most of them from the Israel Defense Forces Archives. What the new material shows is that there were far more Israeli acts of massacre than I had previously thought. To my surprise, there were also many cases of rape. In the months of April-May 1948, units of the Haganah [the pre-state defense force that was the precursor of the IDF] were given operational orders that stated explicitly that they were to uproot the villagers, expel them and destroy the villages themselves.

At the same time, it turns out that there was a series of orders issued by the Arab Higher Committee and by the Palestinian intermediate levels to remove children, women and the elderly from the villages. So that on the one hand, the book reinforces the accusation against the Zionist side, but on the other hand it also proves that many of those who left the villages did so with the encouragement of the Palestinian leadership itself.

According to your new findings, how many cases of Israeli rape were there in 1948?

About a dozen. In Acre four soldiers raped a girl and murdered her and her father. In Jaffa, soldiers of the Kiryati Brigade raped one girl and tried to rape several more. At Hunin, which is in the Galilee, two girls were raped and then murdered. There were one or two cases of rape at Tantura, south of Haifa. There was one case of rape at Qula, in the center of the country. At the village of Abu Shusha, near Kibbutz Gezer [in the Ramle area] there were four female prisoners, one of whom was raped a number of times. And there were other cases. Usually more than one soldier was involved. Usually there were one or two Palestinian girls. In a large proportion of the cases the event ended with murder. Because neither the victims nor the rapists liked to report these events, we have to assume that the dozen cases of rape that were reported, which I found, are not the whole story. They are just the tip of the iceberg.

According to your findings, how many acts of Israeli massacre were perpetrated in 1948?

Twenty-four. In some cases four or five people were executed, in others the numbers were 70, 80, 100. There was also a great deal of arbitrary killing. Two old men are spotted walking in a field – they are shot. A woman is found in an abandoned village – she is shot. There are cases such as the village of Dawayima [in the Hebron region], in which a column entered the village with all guns blazing and killed anything that moved.

The worst cases were Saliha (70-80 killed), Deir Yassin (100-110), Lod (250), Dawayima (hundreds) and perhaps Abu Shusha (70). There is no unequivocal proof of a large-scale massacre at Tantura, but war crimes were perpetrated there. At Jaffa there was a massacre about which nothing had been known until now. The same at Arab al Muwassi, in the north. About half of the acts of massacre were part of Operation Hiram [in the north, in October 1948]: at Safsaf, Saliha, Jish, Eilaboun, Arab al Muwasi, Deir al Asad, Majdal Krum, Sasa. In Operation Hiram there was a unusually high concentration of executions of people against a wall or next to a well in an orderly fashion.

That can't be chance. It's a pattern. Apparently, various officers who took part in the operation understood that the expulsion order they received permitted them to do these deeds in order to encourage the population to take to the roads. The fact is that no one was punished for these acts of murder. Ben-Gurion silenced the matter. He covered up for the officers who did the massacres.

What you are telling me here, as though by the way, is that in Operation Hiram there was a comprehensive and explicit expulsion order. Is that right?

Yes. One of the revelations in the book is that on October 31, 1948, the commander of the Northern Front, Moshe Carmel, issued an order in writing to his units to expedite the removal of the Arab population. Carmel took this action immediately after a visit by Ben-Gurion to the Northern Command in Nazareth. There is no doubt in my mind that this order originated with Ben-Gurion. Just as the expulsion order for the city of Lod, which was signed by Yitzhak Rabin, was issued immediately after Ben-Gurion visited the headquarters of Operation Dani [July 1948].

Are you saying that Ben-Gurion was personally responsible for a deliberate and systematic policy of mass expulsion?

From April 1948, Ben-Gurion is projecting a message of transfer. There is no explicit order of his in writing, there is no orderly comprehensive policy, but there is an atmosphere of [population] transfer. The transfer idea is in the air. The entire leadership understands that this is the idea. The officer corps understands what is required of them. Under Ben-Gurion, a consensus of transfer is created.

Ben-Gurion was a "transferist"?

Of course. Ben-Gurion was a transferist. He understood that there could be no Jewish state with a large and hostile Arab minority in its midst. There would be no such state. It would not

be able to exist.

I don't hear you condemning him.

Ben-Gurion was right. If he had not done what he did, a state would not have come into being. That has to be clear. It is impossible to evade it. Without the uprooting of the Palestinians, a Jewish state would not have arisen here.

When ethnic cleansing is justified

Benny Morris, for decades you have been researching the dark side of Zionism. You are an expert on the atrocities of 1948. In the end, do you in effect justify all this? Are you an advocate of the transfer of 1948?

There is no justification for acts of rape. There is no justification for acts of massacre. Those are war crimes. But in certain conditions, expulsion is not a war crime. I don't think that the expulsions of 1948 were war crimes. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. You have to dirty your hands.

We are talking about the killing of thousands of people, the destruction of an entire society.

A society that aims to kill you forces you to destroy it. When the choice is between destroying or being destroyed, it's better to destroy.

There is something chilling about the quiet way in which you say that.

If you expected me to burst into tears, I'm sorry to disappoint you. I will not do that.

So when the commanders of Operation Dani are standing there and observing the long and terrible column of the 50,000 people expelled from Lod walking eastward, you stand there with them? You justify them?

I definitely understand them. I understand their motives. I don't think they felt any pangs of conscience, and in their place I wouldn't have felt pangs of conscience. Without that act, they would not have won the war and the state would not have come into being.

You do not condemn them morally?

No.

They perpetrated ethnic cleansing.

There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing. I know that this term is completely negative in the discourse of the 21st century, but when the choice is between ethnic cleansing and genocide-the annihilation of your people-I prefer ethnic cleansing.

And that was the situation in 1948?

That was the situation. That is what Zionism faced. A Jewish state would not have come into being without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians. Therefore it was necessary to uproot them. There was no choice but to expel that population. It was necessary to cleanse the hinterland and cleanse the border areas and cleanse the main roads. It was necessary to cleanse the villages from which our convoys and our settlements were fired on.

The term "to cleanse" is terrible.

I know it doesn't sound nice but that's the term they used at the time. I adopted it from all the 1948 documents in which I am immersed.

What you are saying is hard to listen to and hard to digest. You sound hard-hearted.

I feel sympathy for the Palestinian people, which truly underwent a hard tragedy. I feel sympathy for the refugees themselves. But if the desire to establish a Jewish state here is legitimate, there was no other choice. It was impossible to leave a large fifth column in the country. From the moment the Yishuv [pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine] was attacked by the Palestinians and afterward by the Arab states, there was no choice but to expel the Palestinian population. To uproot it in the course of war.

Remember another thing: the Arab people gained a large slice of the planet. Not thanks to its skills or its great virtues, but because it conquered and murdered and forced those it conquered to convert during many generations. But in the end the Arabs have 22 states. The Jewish people did not have even one state. There was no reason in the world why it should not have one state. Therefore, from my point of view, the need to establish this state in this place overcame the injustice that was done to the Palestinians by uprooting them.

And morally speaking, you have no problem with that deed?

That is correct. Even the great American democracy could not have been created without the annihilation of the Indians. There are cases in which the overall, final good justifies harsh and cruel acts that are committed in the course of history.

And in our case it effectively justifies a population transfer.

That's what emerges.

And you take that in stride? War crimes? Massacres? The burning fields and the devastated villages of the Nakba?

You have to put things in proportion. These are small war crimes. All told, if we take all the massacres and all the executions of 1948, we come to about 800 who were killed. In comparison to the massacres that were perpetrated in Bosnia, that's peanuts. In comparison to

the massacres the Russians perpetrated against the Germans at Stalingrad, that's chicken feed. When you take into account that there was a bloody civil war here and that we lost an entire 1 percent of the population, you find that we behaved very well.

The Next Transfer

You went through an interesting process. You went to research Ben-Gurion and the Zionist establishment critically, but in the end you actually identify with them. You are as tough in your words as they were in their deeds.

You may be right. Because I investigated the conflict in depth, I was forced to cope with the in-depth questions that those people coped with. I understood the problematic character of the situation they faced and maybe I adopted part of their universe of concepts. But I do not identify with Ben-Gurion. I think he made a serious historical mistake in 1948. Even though he understood the demographic issue and the need to establish a Jewish state without a large Arab minority, he got cold feet during the war. In the end, he faltered.

I'm not sure I understand. Are you saying that Ben-Gurion erred in expelling too few Arabs?

If he was already engaged in expulsion, maybe he should have done a complete job. I know that this stuns the Arabs and the liberals and the politically correct types. But my feeling is that this place would be quieter and know less suffering if the matter had been resolved once and for all. If Ben-Gurion had carried out a large expulsion and cleansed the whole country – the whole Land of Israel, as far as the Jordan River. It may yet turn out that this was his fatal mistake. If he had carried out a full expulsion – rather than a partial one – he would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations.

I find it hard to believe what I am hearing.

If the end of the story turns out to be a gloomy one for the Jews, it will be because Ben-Gurion did not complete the transfer in 1948. Because he left a large and volatile demographic reserve in the West Bank and Gaza and within Israel itself.

In his place, would you have expelled them all? All the Arabs in the country?

But I am not a statesman. I do not put myself in his place. But as an historian, I assert that a mistake was made here. Yes. The non-completion of the transfer was a mistake.

And today? Do you advocate a transfer today?

If you are asking me whether I support the transfer and expulsion of the Arabs from the West Bank, Gaza and perhaps even from Galilee and the Triangle, I say not at this moment. I am not willing to be a partner to that act. In the present circumstances it is neither moral nor realistic. The world would not allow it, the Arab world would not allow it, it would destroy the Jewish

society from within. But I am ready to tell you that in other circumstances, apocalyptic ones, which are liable to be realized in five or ten years, I can see expulsions. If we find ourselves with atomic weapons around us, or if there is a general Arab attack on us and a situation of warfare on the front with Arabs in the rear shooting at convoys on their way to the front, acts of expulsion will be entirely reasonable. They may even be essential.

Including the expulsion of Israeli Arabs?

The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb. Their slide into complete Palestinization has made them an emissary of the enemy that is among us. They are a potential fifth column. In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state. So that if Israel again finds itself in a situation of existential threat, as in 1948, it may be forced to act as it did then. If we are attacked by Egypt (after an Islamist revolution in Cairo) and by Syria, and chemical and biological missiles slam into our cities, and at the same time Israeli Palestinians attack us from behind, I can see an expulsion situation. It could happen. If the threat to Israel is existential, expulsion will be justified.

Cultural dementia

Besides being tough, you are also very gloomy. You weren't always like that, were you?

My turning point began after 2000. I wasn't a great optimist even before that. True, I always voted Labor or Meretz or Sheli [a dovish party of the late 1970s], and in 1988 I refused to serve in the territories and was jailed for it, but I always doubted the intentions of the Palestinians. The events of Camp David and what followed in their wake turned the doubt into certainty. When the Palestinians rejected the proposal of [prime minister Ehud] Barak in July 2000 and the Clinton proposal in December 2000, I understood that they are unwilling to accept the two-state solution. They want it all. Lod and Acre and Jaffa.

If that's so, then the whole Oslo process was mistaken and there is a basic flaw in the entire worldview of the Israeli peace movement.

Oslo had to be tried. But today it has to be clear that from the Palestinian point of view, Oslo was a deception. [Palestinian leader Yasser] Arafat did not change for the worse, Arafat simply defrauded us. He was never sincere in his readiness for compromise and conciliation.

Do you really believe Arafat wants to throw us into the sea?

He wants to send us back to Europe, to the sea we came from. He truly sees us as a Crusader state and he thinks about the Crusader precedent and wishes us a Crusader end. I'm certain that Israeli intelligence has unequivocal information proving that in internal conversations Arafat talks seriously about the phased plan [which would eliminate Israel in stages]. But the problem is not just Arafat. The entire Palestinian national elite is prone to see us as Crusaders and is driven by the phased plan. That's why the Palestinians are not honestly ready to forgo

the right of return. They are preserving it as an instrument with which they will destroy the Jewish state when the time comes. They can't tolerate the existence of a Jewish state – not in 80 percent of the country and not in 30 percent. From their point of view, the Palestinian state must cover the whole Land of Israel.

If so, the two-state solution is not viable; even if a peace treaty is signed, it will soon collapse.

Ideologically, I support the two-state solution. It's the only alternative to the expulsion of the Jews or the expulsion of the Palestinians or total destruction. But in practice, in this generation, a settlement of that kind will not hold water. At least 30 to 40 percent of the Palestinian public and at least 30 to 40 percent of the heart of every Palestinian will not accept it. After a short break, terrorism will erupt again and the war will resume.

Your prognosis doesn't leave much room for hope, does it?

It's hard for me, too. There is not going to be peace in the present generation. There will not be a solution. We are doomed to live by the sword. I'm already fairly old, but for my children that is especially bleak. I don't know if they will want to go on living in a place where there is no hope. Even if Israel is not destroyed, we won't see a good, normal life here in the decades ahead.

Aren't your harsh words an over-reaction to three hard years of terrorism?

The bombing of the buses and restaurants really shook me. They made me understand the depth of the hatred for us. They made me understand that the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim hostility toward Jewish existence here is taking us to the brink of destruction. I don't see the suicide bombings as isolated acts. They express the deep will of the Palestinian people. That is what the majority of the Palestinians want. They want what happened to the bus to happen to all of us.

Yet we, too, bear responsibility for the violence and the hatred: the occupation, the roadblocks, the closures, maybe even the Nakba itself.

You don't have to tell me that. I have researched Palestinian history. I understand the reasons for the hatred very well. The Palestinians are retaliating now not only for yesterday's closure but for the Nakba as well. But that is not a sufficient explanation. The peoples of Africa were oppressed by the European powers no less than the Palestinians were oppressed by us, but nevertheless I don't see African terrorism in London, Paris or Brussels. The Germans killed far more of us than we killed the Palestinians, but we aren't blowing up buses in Munich and Nuremberg. So there is something else here, something deeper, that has to do with Islam and Arab culture.

Are you trying to argue that Palestinian terrorism derives from some sort of deep cultural problem?

There is a deep problem in Islam. It's a world whose values are different. A world in which human life doesn't have the same value as it does in the West, in which freedom, democracy, openness and creativity are alien. A world that makes those who are not part of the camp of Islam fair game. Revenge is also important here. Revenge plays a central part in the Arab tribal culture. Therefore, the people we are fighting and the society that sends them have no moral inhibitions. If it obtains chemical or biological or atomic weapons, it will use them. If it is able, it will also commit genocide.

I want to insist on my point: A large part of the responsibility for the hatred of the Palestinians rests with us. After all, you yourself showed us that the Palestinians experienced a historical catastrophe.

True. But when one has to deal with a serial killer, it's not so important to discover why he became a serial killer. What's important is to imprison the murderer or to execute him.

Explain the image: Who is the serial killer in the analogy?

The barbarians who want to take our lives. The people the Palestinian society sends to carry out the terrorist attacks, and in some way the Palestinian society itself as well. At the moment, that society is in the state of being a serial killer. It is a very sick society. It should be treated the way we treat individuals who are serial killers.

What does that mean? What should we do tomorrow morning?

We have to try to heal the Palestinians. Maybe over the years the establishment of a Palestinian state will help in the healing process. But in the meantime, until the medicine is found, they have to be contained so that they will not succeed in murdering us.

To fence them in? To place them under closure?

Something like a cage has to be built for them. I know that sounds terrible. It is really cruel. But there is no choice. There is a wild animal there that has to be locked up in one way or another.

War of Barbarians

Benny Morris, have you joined the right wing?

No, no. I still think of myself as left-wing. I still support in principle two states for two peoples.

But you don't believe that this solution will last. You don't believe in peace.

In my opinion, we will not have peace, no.

Then what is your solution?

In this generation there is apparently no solution. To be vigilant, to defend the country as far as is possible.

The iron wall approach?

Yes. An iron wall is a good image. An iron wall is the most reasonable policy for the coming generation. My colleague Avi Shlein described this well: What Jabotinsky proposed is what Ben-Gurion adopted. In the 1950s, there was a dispute between Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett. Ben-Gurion argued that the Arabs understand only force and that ultimate force is the one thing that will persuade them to accept our presence here. He was right. That's not to say that we don't need diplomacy. Both toward the West and for our own conscience, it's important that we strive for a political solution. But in the end, what will decide their readiness to accept us will be force alone. Only the recognition that they are not capable of defeating us.

For a left-winger, you sound very much like a right-winger, wouldn't you say?

I'm trying to be realistic. I know it doesn't always sound politically correct, but I think that political correctness poisons history in any case. It impedes our ability to see the truth. And I also identify with Albert Camus. He was considered a left-winger and a person of high morals, but when he referred to the Algerian problem he placed his mother ahead of morality. Preserving my people is more important than universal moral concepts.

Are you a neo-conservative? Do you read the current historical reality in the terms of Samuel Huntington?

I think there is a clash between civilizations here [as Huntington argues]. I think the West today resembles the Roman Empire of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries: The barbarians are attacking it and they may also destroy it.

The Muslims are barbarians, then?

I think the values I mentioned earlier are values of barbarians-the attitude toward democracy, freedom, openness; the attitude toward human life. In that sense they are barbarians. The Arab world as it is today is barbarian.

And in your view these new barbarians are truly threatening the Rome of our time?

Yes. The West is stronger but it's not clear whether it knows how to repulse this wave of hatred. The phenomenon of the mass Muslim penetration into the West and their settlement there is creating a dangerous internal threat. A similar process took place in Rome. They let the barbarians in and they toppled the empire from within.

Is it really all that dramatic? Is the West truly in danger?

Yes. I think that the war between the civilizations is the main characteristic of the 21st century.

I think President Bush is wrong when he denies the very existence of that war. It's not only a matter of bin Laden. This is a struggle against a whole world that espouses different values. And we are on the front line. Exactly like the Crusaders, we are the vulnerable branch of Europe in this place.

The situation as you describe it is extremely harsh. You are not entirely convinced that we can survive here, are you?

The possibility of annihilation exists.

Would you describe yourself as an apocalyptic person?

The whole Zionist project is apocalyptic. It exists within hostile surroundings and in a certain sense its existence is unreasonable. It wasn't reasonable for it to succeed in 1881 and it wasn't reasonable for it to succeed in 1948 and it's not reasonable that it will succeed now. Nevertheless, it has come this far. In a certain way it is miraculous. I live the events of 1948, and 1948 projects itself on what could happen here. Yes, I think of Armageddon. It's possible. Within the next 20 years there could be an atomic war here.

If Zionism is so dangerous for the Jews and if Zionism makes the Arabs so wretched, maybe it's a mistake?

No, Zionism was not a mistake. The desire to establish a Jewish state here was a legitimate one, a positive one. But given the character of Islam and given the character of the Arab nation, it was a mistake to think that it would be possible to establish a tranquil state here that lives in harmony with its surroundings.

Which leaves us, nevertheless, with two possibilities: either a cruel, tragic Zionism, or the forgoing of Zionism.

Yes. That's so. You have pared it down, but that's correct.

Would you agree that this historical reality is intolerable, that there is something inhuman about it?

Yes. But that's so for the Jewish people, not the Palestinians. A people that suffered for 2,000 years, that went through the Holocaust, arrives at its patrimony but is thrust into a renewed round of bloodshed, that is perhaps the road to annihilation. In terms of cosmic justice, that's terrible. It's far more shocking than what happened in 1948 to a small part of the Arab nation that was then in Palestine.

So what you are telling me is that you live the Palestinian Nakba of the past less than you live the possible Jewish Nakba of the future?

Yes. Destruction could be the end of this process. It could be the end of the Zionist experiment.

And that’s what really depresses and scares me.

The title of the book you are now publishing in Hebrew is “Victims.” In the end, then, your argument is that of the two victims of this conflict, we are the bigger one.

Yes. Exactly. We are the greater victims in the course of history and we are also the greater potential victim. Even though we are oppressing the Palestinians, we are the weaker side here. We are a small minority in a large sea of hostile Arabs who want to eliminate us. So it’s possible than when their desire is realized, everyone will understand what I am saying to you now. Everyone will understand we are the true victims. But by then it will be too late.

This interview first appeared in Haaretz.

Poetry : Logos Winter 2004

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

A Special Section of Israeli and Palestinian Poets
featuring: Rivka Miriam, Mureed Barghouthy, Shaul Knaz, Fadwa Tuqan, Yehuda Amichai, Anton Shammas, Karen Alkalay-Gut, and Mahmoud Darwish

Rivka Miriam

Translated by Daniel Weissbort and Orna Raz, and by Linda Zisquit, from the Hebrew

So by the altar ....

So, by the altar, Isaac wished to remain,
his father's gnarled hands working on him
taking him out from the world
just as he brought him into it
with a roaring desire.

Abraham was tying his son
as with umbilical cords
to return him to his old, brittle loins–
the ones Sarah laughed at.

So, by the altar, Isaac wished to remain
getting smaller
turning again into the hidden sperm of his father
blue as a dream,
many as the stars.

Imprisoned in his robes, sweating,
Abraham's chest rested
on his son's face. His beard in the light wind.
The ram was chewing the grass,
with squinting eyes peering out at the distance–
the angel never came.

Mureed Barghouthy

Translated by Saadi Simawe and Ellen Doré Watson, and by Carol Bardenstein, from the Arabic

An Everyday Scene

It’s a soft winter day
between echoes in the distance
and the sound of drizzling rain
A room
its broken window is transparent
so that nothing separates the clouds above
from the edges of the mat
The child’s hand, with its five dimples
lies gently now
on the down-covered breast
He tries to suckle, between hunger and sleepiness

In the mother’s eyes there is a celebratory pride
and traces of weariness
Outside the window
the everyday scene continued:
Young boys loading their slingshots
The sound of shouting, banners in the air,
Soldiers
opening fire with a reckless thrill
Another boy falls martyred
onto the pavement.

Shaul Knaz

There Are Those

There are those who know exactly
What kind of peace there should be,
And hold demonstrations.
There are those who know exactly
What kind of peace there shouldn’t be
And hold demonstrations.
There are those who know e-x-a-c-t-l-y.
Peace doesn’t exactly know
How many people are ready to accept it.
Peace is looking for people who are ready to accept it
Even if it isn’t exactly…

Fadwa Tuqan

Translated by Saadi Simawe and Ellen Doré Watson from the Arabic

Between Incarnation And Emptiness

Yearning is a gazelle emerging from its hide-out.
It entices me across the dunes.
It takes me to the capital of self.
You follow along riding the horses of wind, rain, night, sun, and colour,
fused with the atoms of the universe.
You travel your road into my eye,
flowing into my veins.
As you step into my textures
your incarnation becomes complete
and I am you.
But when I reach for you
I touch only the crawling, icy pole
enfolded and empty with silence.

Yehuda Amichai

Translated by Chana Bloch and Chana Kronfeld from the Hebrew

And There Are Days

And there are days when everyone says, I was there
I'm ready to testify, I stood a few feet away from the accident,
from the bomb, the crucifixion, I almost got hit, almost got crucified.
I saw the faces of bride and groom under the chuppah and
almost rejoiced.
When David lay with Bathsheba I was the voyeur,
I happened to be there on the roof fixing the pipes, taking down a flag.
With my own eyes I saw the Chanukah miracle in the Temple,
I saw General Allenby entering Jaffa Gate,
I saw God.
And then there are days when everything's an alibi: wasn't there
didn't hear
I heard the explosion only from a distance and I ran away, saw the
smoke but
was reading a newspaper. I was staying in some other place.
I didn't see God, I've got witnesses.
And the God of Jerusalem is the eternal alibi God,
wasn't there didn't see didn't hear
was in some other place. Was some Place, some Other.

Anton Shammas

Translated by Robert Friend with Roger Tavor from the Arabic

“from” Prisoner of Sleeping And Waking

I tell how the days passed over my face
like fragrance from a lemon tree,
and I am afraid that one of these days
words will fall from me
like calendar leaves, and that boys
will pick them up to make
tails for their kites, or stuffing
for holes in dreams.
I am afraid
that before the words pursuing me
catch up with me,
I shall die
and no one remember me.

How else explain this poem.

*

I shall open a map of the world
to look for the village I lost
I shall search my pocket
for the grandfather I never knew,
for crumbs of stories, pleasant smells–
and cling to his neck like a butterfly.
Pendulum.
I shall breathe his love into my lungs
for safe-keeping.
If he has blue eyes,
they will make an amulet.
Pendulum.
I shall caress drowned altars
in my palms
and ask him to tinge my eyes
with the colour of wandering
and restore me to legend
in a mantle of gull-wings.
Pendulum.
I shall ask for a swan
so I can ride it
and visit every island
before I am reborn
in a place of my own choosing.

Dreams, dreams, I know them all.

How else explain this poem.

Karen Alkalay-Gut

Live War

It is like the slapstick where two people are fighting behind the couch
and you see one person jump and dive and then the other pop up
then go down again, both with false-fierce faces and threatening arms.
But this time they are all pummeling something below the window we cannot see
And making V's for victory to the crowd outside the police station.
This could be my brother, my son, my husband down there
being beaten to death because he happened to lose his way.
By the time they throw him out to the street and ignite him
The face is unrecognizable, although he seems to be still alive.
That's the program for this morning. The afternoon
is for retribution–smart bombs threaded into the windows
of the same station in Ramallah, and then the offices of Arafat in Gaza.
I change the station but the war is all there is, the war and the blame.
Run it through the video in reverse, go back far enough and we'll get that line
I remember from nursery: "It all started when he hit me back."
But we're talking about real blood, real agony, and for every person killed
There is a whole hamula that will suffer–the rabbi's eight children
who couldn't even bury their father in peace, the Palestinian father, hiding
from the snipers with his son, mothers who will never forget seeing their children
murdered live. I could go on forever.
Instead, I turn off the television, wish
I could turn off the war with a flick of the switch.

Mahmoud Darwish

Translated by Saadi Simawe and Ellen Doré Watson from the Arabic

I see what I want

1
I see what I want in the farm … right now I see
braids of wheat combed by the wind, and I close my eyes
This mirage leads to Nihawand,

and this calm leads to lapis lazuli

2
I see what I want in the sea … right now I see
a rush of swans at sunset, and I close my eyes
This wandering leads to an Andalusia,
and this sail is a dove's prayer over me

3
I see what I want in the night … right now I see
the endings of this long life at one of the cities' gates
I will toss the pages of my log into the cafes at the dock and find a seat
for my absence aboard one of the ships

4
I see what I want in the soul: the face of a stone
scratched by lightning–green, oh land, green is the land of my soul–
haven't I been a child playing at the edge of a well?
I'm still playing … this space is my playground and the stone is my wind

5
I see what I want in peace … right now I see
a deer and grass and a stream of water … and I close my eyes:
this deer is asleep on my arm
and the hunter asleep, too, near its sons, in a faraway place

6
I see what I want in war … right now I see
the arms of our ancestors squeezing a wellspring into green stone
And our fathers inherited the water, but did not bequeath it, and I close
my eyes:
The land in my hands is the work of my hands

7
I see what I want in prison: days of a flowering
that led from here to two strangers in me
seated in a garden–I close my eyes:
How spacious is the earth! How beautiful the earth from the eye
of a needle

8
I see what I want in lightning … right now I see
farms bursting from their chains with vegetation–bravo!
The song of the walnut floats down, white above the villages' smoke
like doves … doves we feed alongside our children

9
I see what I want in love … right now I see
horses making the plain dance, fifty guitars sighing
and a swarm of bees sucking wild mulberry, and I close my eyes
to see our shadow behind this homeless place

10
I see what I want in death: I fall in love, and my chest opens
and a white unicorn jumps out and gallops over the clouds
soaring on endless gauze, swirling with eternal blue
So please do not stop my death, do not return me to a star of soil

11
I see what I want in blood: right now I see the murdered,
his heart lit by the bullet, say to his murderer: from now on
you remember
no one but me. I killed you without meaning to but from now on
you remember no one but me, nor can you endure spring flowers

12
I see what I want in the theatre of the absurd: fiends in judges' robes,
the emperor's hat, the masks of our time, the colour of old sky,
women who dance for the palace, the chaos of armies
Then I choose to forget everything, remember only the noise behind
the curtain

13
I see what I want in poetry: when poets died, we attended their funerals,
buried them with flowers, returned safely to their poetry …
now in the age of magazines, movies, and droning, we laugh—sprinkle
a handful of soil on their poems, come home to find them at our door

14
I see at dawn what I want in the dawn … right now I see
nations looking for bread in other nations' bread
Bread is what unravels us from the silk of drowsiness, from the cotton
of our dreams
Is it from a grain of wheat that the dawn of life shines … and the
dawn of war?

15
I see what I want in people: their desire
for yearning, their reluctance to go to work,
their urgency to come home …

and their need for greetings in the morning

Logos would like to thank Norma Rinsler and Modern Poetry in Translation (King's College London, www.kcl.ac.uk/mpt) for permission to reprint the poems of Rivka Miriam, Mureed Barghouthy, Fadwa Tuqan, Yehuda Amichai, Anton Shammas, and Mahmoud Darwish, whose poems in English translation originally appeared in Modern Poetry in Translation, No. 14. Shaul Knaz's poem originally appeared in the volume, Peace Talks (published in Givat Haviva). Poems and translations by Karen Alkalay-Gut can found online at: www.karenalkalay-gut.com.

The Case For Israel By Alan Dershowitz

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

At a time of deepening political and moral crisis, not only for the Israeli government but for the entire Zionist project, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz has produced a book purporting to set the record straight by rebutting all the accusations leveled against “the sole outpost of liberty and democracy in the Middle East.” The structure of each chapter is based on a defense lawyer’s submission to a court, a statement of the charge against the accused (Israel) followed by the defense counsel’s repudiation backed up by counter evidence. However, using dubious methods of historical scholarship, the book is shot through with falsification through omission and will convince only the ignorant or the gullible.

One of Dershowitz’s first aims is, in effect, to uphold the old lie about Palestine being “a land without a people for a people without a land.” He puts it slightly more subtly by describing “the Palestine to which the Jews of the First Aliyah immigrated was vastly under populated.” (p. 23) He brazenly claims that “it is beyond reasonable dispute that—based on census figures, authoritative reports, eyewitness accounts, and simple arithmetic—that the myth of displacement by the European Jewish refugees of a large, stable, long-term Muslim population that had lived in that part of Palestine for centuries is demonstrably false.” One of his sources in support of this is King Abdullah of Jordan, the man who negotiated a secret deal with Prime Minister Ben Gurion to annex the West Bank, thus depriving the Palestinians of the main portion of their UN-allotted territory.

It is indeed the case, as Dershowitz says, that before 1948 Zionists purchased land from the big Palestinian landlords—who were, to begin with, absentee landowners—but increasingly from the early thirties from resident owners. In 1947, 73 percent of the land held by Jews had been bought from big landowners, most of the remaining land from small holders. (See Nathan Weinstock, Zionism: False Messiah,1969, p. 143). “And despite these land purchases, in 1944 the British estimated that Jewish-owned land represented no more than 6.6% of Palestine, though this figure… doesn’t include desert areas or public property. (Weinstock, p. 221).”However, Dershowitz omits or wildly underplays the effect of these purchases on the Palestinian fellahin, the share-croppers and smallholders who comprised some 70 percent of the Palestinian population in the twenties and thirties (Weinstock, p.157).

Following Benny Morris’ recent book Righteous Victims, Dershowitz states that “only several thousand families were displaced following land sales to Jews…” (p. 25). (In 1917, the year of the Balfour Declaration, Arabs numbered roughly 600,000 compared to 60,000 Jews). The reality is that the vast majority were simply evicted from the land as a result of coordinated land purchases. “… wretched people who had earned a living, sometimes for many generations, on the land… found themselves forced out of their homes and deprived without compensation of their only means of earning bread… Evicted tenants, the real victims of Jewish immigration,

were the essence of the Palestinian problem." (C. Sykes, Orde Wingate, London 1959, quoted in Weinstock, p. 154). The new owners subsequently practiced a strict economic segregation so that when evicted Palestinian smallholders were forced to migrate to the towns they couldn't find work or sell their products. Zionist policy dictated that Jewish employers must only employ Jewish labor and that Jewish settlers should only buy Jewish goods. Hence, Palestinian fear of and resentment towards Zionist colonization predates the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Indeed it was present from the outset and is surely completely understandable.

A second major falsification is Dershowitz's claim that it was the Arab armies' invasion of the newly-created state of Israel in 1948 that was responsible for the refugee problem. (p. 79) A more truthful account is provided by Avi Shlaim's superb book The Iron Wall. In 1947, the UN Partition Plan allocated 55 percent of Palestine to a Jewish state, whereas the Palestinians, who outnumbered the Jews by two to one, were granted 45 percent. Not content with this gross imbalance, the incomers drove out by force of arms 700,000 Palestinians, taking over their cities, their villages and their land—all in all an additional 23 percent of the territory. As Shlaim documents it—following Benny Morris' earlier, more radical work, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947-1949, (1987)— the first and largest wave of refugees were forcibly expelled between April and May 1948, the State of Israel being declared on 15th of May. It was on that date that five Arab armies invaded Palestine. According to Sharon-style mythology, a Jewish David was pitted against an Arab Goliath whom it defeated in a heroic struggle. The truth is the Arab armies were no match for the more numerous, better-armed and trained Zionist armies. By the end of 1948, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians was complete. And as Shlaim says, "[I]t was the collapse of Palestine resistance that prompted the Arab League to commit the regular armies of the member states to the struggle against partition, thus reversing an earlier decision merely to finance and arm the local Arabs." (p. 32)

Dershowitz' notion that the Arab invasion was somehow intended to complete what the Holocaust had left unfinished is shown to be somewhat paranoid and wholly risible. ("Israel defended itself against a genocidal war of extermination." p. 74). It was a belated and half-hearted attempt to rescue the Palestinians from expulsion, the only post-World War Two case of the majority of a people being ethnically cleansed from their homeland.

This is one, but not the only, reason for the Palestinian refugee problem being quite different from that of other refugees whose acceptance of their lot—Dershowitz describes so approvingly, for example, the minority Sudenten Germans being forced to leave Czechoslovakia after World War Two. Moving on a few years brings one to the subsequent wars, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982. Astonishingly, Dershowitz doesn't even mention the 1956 war against Egypt or the brutal invasion of Lebanon in 1982. In 1956, Israel, in collusion with Britain and France, attacked Egypt in an attempt to topple Nasser, the nationalist leader who aspired to unite the Arab world and liberate it from colonial domination. In 1955, he had attacked British interests by nationalizing the Suez Canal and was supporting the Algerian National Liberation Front in their struggle against French colonial-settler rule. As he was being armed by the Soviet bloc, Israeli leaders conspired to have a showdown before the military balance shifted in Egypt's favor.

Also, in August 1955, fedayeen self-sacrificers recruited from Palestinian refugees in Gaza and trained by Egyptian officers began carrying out a series of attacks inside Israel. Nasser had reversed his previous policy of restraint following the vicious Gaza raid in February 1955 when Israeli forces led by Ariel Sharon killed thirty-seven Egyptian soldiers. At the end of 1955, Israeli forces launched further vicious attacks on Egypt and Syria in an attempt to provoke them into full-scale war. The strategy failed and in October 1956, Israel attacked Egypt though, contrary to the official version, there is no evidence that it faced any serious threat from Nasser at that time. The Palestinians would not accept their fate. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded under Egyptian auspices, its aim that of reclaiming its Palestinian homeland. Dershowitz claims that the 1967 "six-day war" was Egypt's entire responsibility, being inevitable after Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran. Once again, Dershowitz falsifies by omission. In May 1967, Israel threatened Syria with action unless it ceased supporting Palestinian guerrillas operating against Israel. According to Shlaim, "Israel's strategy of escalation on the Syrian front was probably the most important factor in dragging the Middle East to war in June 1967." Several fire fights were provoked by Israel, as attested by Moshe Dayan. "We would send a tractor to plow someplace…in the demilitarized area, and knew in advance that the Syrians would start to shoot… And then we would use artillery and later the air force also…" (Shlaim, p. 235).

In May1967, Yitzhak Rabin, then Chief of Staff, gave an interview to a newspaper in which he threatened to overthrow the Syrian regime. Nasser had somehow to respond in order to preserve his credibility as leader of the Arab world. As Shlaim argues, "there is general agreement among commentators that Nasser neither wanted nor planned to go to war with Israel. What he did was to embark on an exercise in brinkmanship that was to carry him over the edge." (p.237) Thus, it was in response to Israel's threats to Syria that Nasser sent a large number of troops into Sinai and closed the straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, generally thought to be moves intended to impress Arab public opinion rather than provoke war.

But in June, Israel launched a massive, lightning attack on Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Within six days, it had won a spectacular victory, capturing the Palestinian territories under Jordan's control, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. Israel made it unambiguously clear that it would rather go to war than compromise with the Palestinians by granting their rights as demanded under successive United Nations resolutions. Dershowitz's omission of the 1956 and 1982 wars can presumably be explained by the fact that they are the ones that least bear out his concocted image of Israel as the victim state. Dershowitz frequently repeats the claim that Israel is a democratic state, indeed the only example of one in the Middle East. Now, Israel's racism is enshrined in the law of return by which any Jew born anywhere in the world has the right to emigrate to Israel and acquire automatic citizenship, whereas the Palestinians expelled in 1948 are denied the right of return. The Palestinians became a minority, strangers in their own land. Israel is the only post-world war two state that was established on the basis of the exclusion of the majority of its indigenous inhabitants. Secondly, beyond the law of return, the concept of "democracy" surely includes some notion of inclusiveness, of equality before the law and of opportunity regardless of class, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity. However, for over fifty years, the Israeli state has pursued a policy of

systematic discrimination against its Palestinian minority, one rooted in a profound institutionalized racism.

There are huge differences in the amount of state funds allocated to Jewish and Arab development and welfare. Discrimination against Palestinians is also rife in employment, being particularly marked in public administration. Moreover, budgetary discrimination in health, education, housing, culture, and so on, results in Palestinians being relegated to third or fourth class citizens compared to Sephardic (eastern origin) or Russian Jews. As a result of these policies, one out of every two Israeli Palestinian children lives below the poverty line, with half of all the children in poverty being Palestinian, according to figures released by the government in December 2000(Ruth Sinai in Haaretz, December 20th, 2000). Dershowitz tries to justify Israel's discrimination against Palestinians by arguing that "the most primitive apartheid against non-Muslims is still openly practiced in some Arab countries." (P. 157). However, two wrongs don't make a right: the fact that the Arab regimes are corrupt, repressive and discriminatory does not justify Israel's policies towards the Palestinians. Thirdly, if one includes the Occupied Territories as part of the area ruled by Israel since 1967, its total population is now over nine million. Of these, the 3.5 million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have no vote. Hence, one third of the people do not enjoy a series of basic rights which make up the pillars of liberal democracy.

In sum, Israel is a democracy for the Jews but not for the Palestinians. Dershowitz repeats the claim made by Israeli government and Zionist spokespersons, that Prime Minister Barak made a "generous offer" to the Palestinians in the U.S.-sponsored Camp David talks of July 2000, insisting that they offered them over 90 percent of the Occupied Territories. Though this figure is clearly an exaggeration (Edward Said put it at 50-60 percent), there is an additional point: what Israel offered were several non-contiguous areas, surrounded by Israeli settlements and military bases, and split up by the 400 kilometers of settlers-only roads that Israel has constructed on 160,000 dunams of expropriated land to link the settlements with each other and with the bases. The Occupied Territories were thus to be cantonized into disconnected areas without independent borders, creating a series of separate Bantustans under Israel's thumb. No political leader could possibly have accepted such a shoddy deal and survived politically. As one Israeli leftist put it, it is like saying that in a prison the prisoners are in control because they occupy 90 percent of the jail whereas the governor and warders occupy only 10 percent. The question remains: who controls whom? In the subsequent Taba negotiations (January 2001), what Israel offered was not substantially different from Camp David, the main difference being in left Zionist hype. As Tanya Reinhart put it in her excellent book How to End the War of 1948, "what Israel offered in Taba, then, is essentially the same as what it has been offering before and after Oslo: preservation of the Israeli occupation within some form of Palestinian autonomy or self-rule. Everything that regards land, water… control of the borders, and many other aspects will remain under total Israeli control, but the Palestinians will be allowed symbolic tokens of 'sovereignty', including even the right to call their enclaves a 'state,' and Abu-Dis its 'capital.'" (p. 219).

In the subsequent Taba negotiations (January 2001), what Israel offered was not substantially

different from Camp David, the main difference consisting of “left” Zionist hype. An important motive for Israel in embarking on the Oslo negotiations was the containment of the militant Islamic movements, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which grew in influence during the first Intifada. Arafat’s PLO came to be seen as the only force that could effectively suppress or at least contain them. Arafat had perhaps some control over them at the beginning of the “peace process” but as the situation worsened, this became less and less possible. Apart from the physical impossibility of policing the Palestinians while he himself is incarcerated, recent years have seen a great acceleration in the growth of Islamist influence. (Though with Arafat’s house arrest, he has no doubt regained much of his support).

On one occasion, Arafat did imprison several Palestinian activists, only for a militant crowd to attack the jail and force their liberation. There is no evidence that he could control even Al-Aqsa Brigade activists formally linked to his Fatah movement but who have been operating autonomously. Israel wants Arafat to be a colonial policeman, but the more of a puppet he becomes, the more he cedes influence to Hamas and the less use he is to Israel. Israel being the only democracy in the Middle East is a point that Dershowitz never ceases to emphasize. The point, clearly, is that Israel is a democracy for the Jews but not for the Palestinians. Dershowitz may be a good lawyer, pity he’s a lousy historian

The Many Faces Of Terrorism

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 1

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY:

- *No End To War* By Walter Laqueur
- *A Long Short War* By Christopher Hitchens
- *Why We Are At War* By Norman Mailer
- *What Next* By Walter Mosley
- *Why Do People Hate America?* By Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies
- *The War Against the Terror Masters* By Michael Ledeen

Public discourse on terrorism in the United States has been shrouded in a maze of self-serving myths and platitudes, all the more so since the horrors of 9/11 brought jihadic violence to American shores. The threat is so emotionally charged as to seemingly overwhelm the kind of critical, in-depth thinking required for productive journalistic reporting or scholarship. Within the post-9/11 milieu already impoverished political debate has descended to even further depths, surpassing even election campaigns, official government propaganda, and corporate media sound-bites when it comes to commentary on terrorism and war. Such commentary, often little better in the realm of academic work, typically reflects a parochial outlook that depicts a world divided between an unquestionably good (democratic, modern, enlightened) America and its primitive, barbaric challengers who stand for everything that is evil.

We find ourselves immersed in a public sphere deeply influenced by an intensely patriotic civic culture where distinctly American experiences and interests furnish the main, if not only, yardstick for judging global realities. As with all such caricatures, the social and historical becomes obscured, virtually ruling out worthwhile political analysis. An epic development lies behind this phenomenon: U.S. imperial power has now achieved such worldwide hegemony that its very categories of thought and action have been thoroughly assimilated by large sectors of the Western intelligentsia, with alternative views predictably marginalized.

The rise and spread of international terrorism is surely more complex and multifaceted than its mainstream interpreters appear willing to concede. A balanced assessment will reveal the emergence of many terrorisms, indeed several rival definitions of what now seems endemic to a Hobbesian universe filled with chaos and violence. There is no general consensus or single theory-a point convincingly argued by Walter Lacqueur in perhaps the first sober historical exploration of terrorism to date. If terrorism, international and local, state and substate, right and leftwing, is best understood as the violent pursuit of religious, national, or political aims, then the specific (and variable) conditions of its birth and growth must be more solidly grasped. One credible view is to locate specifically anti-U.S. terrorism as a reaction to American global power, as a form of blowback-integral to the deadly cycle of militarism and

terrorism. The mainstream view sidesteps even contemplating this possibility: “terrorism” is reduced to the tormented deeds of madmen, fanatics, primitive usurpers of “modernity”, guided by nothing so much as motives of hatred and revenge. Or: terrorism simply amounts to what U.S. government officials and defenders say it is-violent actions directed against (presumably innocuous) Western targets.

For critics of U.S. foreign and military policy, however, the conventional mythology barely conceals an imperial juggernaut determined to control the world by every method at its disposal. With the ascendancy of President Bush II and a resurgent U.S. militarism, this facade is increasingly transparent at the very moment when an expanding chorus of cheerleaders for Empire grows louder. The neoconservative hawks presently in command make no secret of their global ambitions, ideally liberated from binding international norms, rules, treaties, and laws. Theirs is indeed a Darwinian universe of Realpolitik unfettered by any serious limits to the raw, direct exercise of American power.

In such a real world, of course, the massive deployment of military force by a single unchallenged power is likely to breed resistance and counterforce, including terrorism Critics like Chalmers Johnson and Eqbal Ahmad understood this dialectic well before the events of 9/11. It is to Lacqueur’s credit that he refuses to succumb to the prevailing fashion regarding a peculiarly barbaric Islamic terrorism, turning instead toward a grounded historical account that, as in his earlier book (The New Terrorism) sets forth as balanced and informed a picture as could be expected from a writer with such impeccable establishment credentials. Despite a clear sympathy for U.S. global agendas, Lacqueur’s work is laden with critical insights questioning the received political wisdom. He stresses what by now should be obvious-there is no “general theory” of terrorism, no consensus about how to define it. He investigates the historical and geopolitical panorama, covering a wide spectrum of terrorist groups, identifying contemporary Islamic terrorism as a revolt against broadening U.S. (and Israeli) power in the Middle East. Without addressing the theme of blowback directly, Lacqueur refers to this particular terrorist violence as containing an anti-imperialist logic, tortured and futile as that logic might be. He recognizes that modern warfare as conducted by powerful states obliterates boundaries between military and civilian targets, just as it effectively blurs the lines dividing state and substate violence. He emphasizes that the carnage wrought by local terrorism has been much less deadly than that resulting from conventional state warfare, although this equation could be radically altered once terrorists lay hold of nuclear or biological weapons. Lacqueur goes so far as to judge standard government-organized military action on the same level as terrorism, but never gets around to spelling out its implications for U.S. global behavior.

Lacqueur ultimately falls back on the problematic concept of “asymmetric warfare,” according to which substate groups have a privileged status relative to legitimate governments that are confined to the straightjacket of universal laws and ethics. Terrorists attacking state power are said to have greater maneuverability owing to lack of moral restraints on their actions; their violence is generally more random and nihilistic. At the same time, Lacqueur himself repeatedly shows how terrorism differs profoundly relative to time and place: violent attacks on

British imperial power during the American revolutionary war and partisan resistance against the Nazis in World War II will be judged quite differently from, say, the Oklahoma City bombing. Methods cannot be judged apart from historical context and political goals. The "asymmetric" premise evaporates the minute one casts more than a cursory glance at twentieth-century history. Nazi barbarism, widespread targeting of civilian populations in aerial warfare beginning with Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki, the Vietnam carnage, indeed the entire legacy of Western colonial subjugation were all the product of systematic governmental planning and operations. The postwar rise of techno-war and diffusion of weapons of mass destruction further demonstrates the concept to be just another comforting, self-serving illusion. One might expect more sophisticated analysis from scholars writing from the vantage-point of one perhaps the most violent state in history, but such is the seductive power of imperial ideology. No expert in the field of international relations, the novelist Walter Mosley has put the matter differently: "We, as a nation, are not innocent. We have killed. We have slaughtered. We have filled mass graves and moved on without a word of apology or sign of lament."(p.126)

Lacqueur points out that radical Islam, for better or worse, entered into an ideological void left when the enduring political traditions (Communist, fascist, liberal, nationalist) had begun to fade away. Of course religion is one belief system that can readily fill this void, but it furnishes no coherent political strategy that could address economic and global problems or inspire social transformation; it is "anti-imperialist" without posing any viable alternative to Empire. As for Islamic militancy, its assaults on U.S. power have probably done more to reinforce than to undermine that power.

Still, radical Islam appeals to tens of millions of people around the world, and here Lacqueur refuses the common impulse to situate terrorist evolution within confined geographical zones like Palestine, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf. A signal contribution of No End to War is the attention it devotes to the worldwide dispersion of jihadism, its serpentine journeys through the European continent, Africa, the Balkans, Central Asia, Russia, the Far East, and the U.S. itself followed closely. In contrast to government and media caricatures, Islamic militancy flourishes in decentralized networks across Germany, England, France, and Spain, where thousands of Muslims pass through radicalized mosques, schools, and cells. Do we need to be reminded that most of the planning behind 9/11 took place in Germany? While nearly all the hijackers were Saudi citizens, they mostly spent their formative years in Europe. All were drawn to militancy by the protracted fighting in Afghanistan, Palestine, Chechnya, and the Balkans, and were driven to further outrage by the U.S. military presence close to the holy lands of Saudi Arabia along with the war and sanctions against Iraq. Lacqueur writes many pages on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, suggesting that the occupation, aggravated by years of Israeli political arrogance and rigidity tied to its own brand of fundamentalism, has contributed to the growth not only of Hamas and Hizbollah but Al Qaeda.

Like many writers across the political spectrum, Lacqueur is fixated on what is commonly said to be the debilitating "intelligence failures" leading up to 9/11. No doubt the FBI and CIA, not to mention a few other government agencies, lacked full awareness of the growing threat of

international terrorism that should have been obvious (at least to them) by the late 1990s. Repeated warnings of imminent large-scale actions were downplayed or ignored. Coordination between agencies was lacking. Rightwing commentators have saddled President Clinton with this by default but, as Lacqueur makes clear, President Bush received abundant warnings of forthcoming Al Qaeda attacks using hijacked planes as late as August 2001. We now know that the audacious maneuvers of 9/11 caught all U.S. leaders totally off guard, in part because the attacks so dramatically upended the familiar pattern of strictly limited, localized terrorist actions.

Explaining this epic failure is yet another matter. Lacqueur refers to several factors: lack of skilled FBI and CIA agents who could penetrate radical Islamic networks, an intelligence obsession with states as the locus of major threats, a tendency to view terrorists as mere thugs, psychopaths, and criminals, and simple incompetence. The deeper problem, as Lacqueur himself appears to recognize but then forgets at the moment of analysis, is far more revealing-and embarrassing. Terrorism as a distinctly Islamic challenge was downplayed by the entire political establishment-not just intelligence agencies-because the U.S. in the early 1980s entered into a fateful partnership with Islamic fundamentalism to aid the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union and Communism. The Afghan wars of the 1980s and early 1990s, largely instigated by the U.S. to bring the Soviets their “own Vietnam”, was a crucial turning point insofar as “radical Islam and the terrorist movement received their main impetus from the war in Afghanistan.” (p.19) Bin Laden and Al Qaeda were largely creatures of America’s own jihad. Not only the FBI and CIA, but more tellingly the NSA (as James Bamford shows in Body of Secrets), were completely unprepared for anything on the scale of 9/11, although the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 should have been warning enough. The elites remained caught up in Cold War thinking, the bulk of resources going to investigate (mostly non-existing) threats from Russia and China. Meanwhile, both the Clinton and Bush administrations were sidetracked by the costly (and counterproductive) war on drugs. So 9/11 not only illuminated a catastrophic flaw in the intelligence apparatus but a more telling political blindness across the entire power structure. It was a disaster borne of outmoded priorities combined with remarkable hubris and ideological rigidity.

The situation in the Balkans deserves special mention here. Paralleling the strong investigative work of Diana Johnstone (in Fool’s Crusade), Lacqueur shows how U.S.-organized and funded Islamic radicalism played a vital role in Bosnia and Kosovo as the U.S. and its NATO allies moved against Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbs. Many Afghan veterans fought in the Balkans throughout the 1990s, fully encouraged by the U.S., and in Chechnya. He shows that mujahideen groups fighting in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechnya had little interest in the ideological rationalizations of Western elites: democracy, multiculturalism, a secular state. Well after the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, it was possible to speak of the “Talibanization” of Bosnia and Kosovo as these regions came under the influence of roughly the same fundamentalist groups that comprise Al Qaeda. Though mostly ignored by Western media and politicians, the Balkans even today remain something of a base for Islamic jihad. As with the mujahideen in Afghanistan, former military partners in the Balkans no longer obediently follow the dictates of U.S. Empire.

If terrorism can hit vulnerable targets and traumatize entire nations as it grabs worldwide media attention, when viewed as a strictly political method it has been an abject failure, according to Lacqueur. Random, secretly-organized violent attacks not only provoke authoritarian state response, but when carried out in isolation from broader popular struggles run counter to the requirements of mass mobilization and social change. Terrorism naturally operates best in underground conditions, insulating its partisans from the everyday rhythms of social and political life. Its modus operandi, geared to a destabilizing "strategy of tension", ultimately favors repression and order, so that ". . . while many of the guerrilla movements emerged victorious, few if any of the terrorist groups did." (p.142) So long as insurgent terrorist groups are understood to be completely localized, self-contained, cut off from national politics, this generalization seems valid enough. It would surely apply to such well-known leftist groups as the Red Brigades, Baader-Meinhoff, and Weather Underground. The problem is that Lacqueur ignores his own caveat-that any useful analysis of terrorism must take into account historical context. Terrorist actions have indeed frequently converged with popular struggles, including a long series of guerrilla insurgencies, mass movements, and nationalist revolutions. The strict contrasting of terrorism with more efficacious modes of political action cannot be sustained by historical evidence-one need only look at the American, Russian, Irish, and Algerian revolutions, for example, or the European-wide partisan resistance against the Nazis. As Lacqueur himself concedes, many established modern states (including Algeria, Israel and South Africa) were forged in a milieu of widespread terrorist operations-scarcely a measure of political failure. The political futility of *Islamic* terrorism may simply be a function of its own *particular* isolation.

Meanwhile, American political culture has been peculiarly inoculated against such debates: after all, if terrorism is nothing but an evil scourge, the work of unspeakable monsters, there is nothing much to discuss. As Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies show in *Why do People Hate America?*, U.S. public opinion is extremely provincial, marked by lack of curiosity regarding how people from other countries live, think, and act. Despite unprecedented affluence, mobility, and access to information, despite huge enrollments at colleges and universities, Americans at the start of the twenty-first century turn out to be remarkably culture-bound. Surveys reveal a frightening ignorance of global issues. Thus it is easy to see how, with the end of the Cold War, the label "terrorist" could be so routinely and unthinkingly affixed to individuals, groups, and states simply deemed hostile to U.S. interests or policies. While Sardar and Davies seem to prefer the top-down propaganda model, in reality such attitudes have deeply resonated across American society-among politicians, on the streets, among literati and academics-throughout much of U.S. history.

The endlessly-asked question "Why do they hate us?" reveals a good deal about the political culture. While "they" now usually refers to Arabs and Muslims, the "us" part of the formulation assumes a wounded innocence, a sense of victimization in a nation surrounded by terrible enemies. If the focus shifts to the concrete policies and actions of an aggressive superpower, then the questions might be phrased differently: why do Americans hate Arabs? Why does the U.S. so frequently intervene, economically, politically, and militarily, in the life of other countries? Why does the U.S. support Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory even as it

proclaims an evenhandedness? Why did the U.S. and its allies impose such brutal sanctions on Iraq? Why has the U.S. so often violated international laws and treaties established to regulate global conflict?

“Hatred” in fact turns out to be the predictable response of people who see themselves as victims of American power. That some might channel their feelings toward violence should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the many faces of global conflict. For people harmed by U.S. military actions, “terrorism” will be understood as a just reaction to what is experienced as an even more devastating kind of violence, state terrorism. For most Americans it is more convenient to frame others’ violent actions as undistilled evil, bereft of human rationality or motive. As with President Bush’s “axis of evil”, such thinking rules out historical reflection and critical thought essential to open debate without which any genuine democratic process is inconceivable. Sardar and Davies observe that the well-worn fixation on evil serves as a cover for willful ignorance, xenophobia, and, in the end, military action against the designated malignancy.

U.S. citizens tend to see their government as an exemplary purveyor of freedom and democracy even as it routinely props up authoritarian regimes around the world. Despite all evidence to the contrary, the majority of Americans remain convinced their leaders are fully committed to peace and human rights. They believe the U.S. is an enforcer of international law and the U.N. Charter, although it is a flagrant violator of those norms. Sardar and Davies rightly call attention to the legitimating functions of “flag patriotism,” an ideology that endows U.S. imperial behavior with a patina of self-righteous exceptionalism. Super-patriotism might be compared to the mindset of fiercely-loyal sports fans who cheer the home team regardless of its past record. Taken to chauvinistic extremes, this is an ideology that readily lends itself to objectification and dehumanization of other cultures, thereby establishing them as perfect targets for military assault.

Venturing into the realm of U.S. foreign policy, Norman Mailer takes up exactly this concern, starting with the events of 9/11 and the “mass identity crisis” they provoked. In loose but emotionally-charged prose, he writes of how the attacks and their aftershocks have brought new levels of anxiety, fear, and paranoia to American public life. Dismissing the purported newfound sense of national unity, Mailer finds instead an “odious self-serving patriotism” (p.15) infecting an American politics already diminished by the cult of violence, fetishism of technology, election frauds, and growing corporate colonization. He sees an ideological emptiness feeding into a renewed crisis of governance for the political class, a development that 9/11 brought to the surface while at the same time providing new opportunities for “resolving” that crisis. One way out of the conundrum has been to extend U.S. global power, to celebrate the virtues of Empire, hoping thereby to refashion something of a domestic consensus. Mailer believes that an ersatz patriotism wedded to a revitalized militarism represents a desperate remedy for a nation that long ago had grown ideologically and culturally dissolute.

Corporate globalization, the war on terrorism, the doctrine of preemptive strikes, aggressive

moves in the Middle East, a bloated military-industrial complex-all this is the product of an imperial agenda having precious little to do with the requirements of national security. If the war on terrorism constitutes the ideal formula for strengthening elite power, a more robust patriotism serves as the cornerstone of its mass legitimating ideology. After 9/11, Mailer writes, “we were plunged into a fever of patriotism. If our long-term comfortable and complacent sense that America was just the greatest country ever had been brought into doubt, the instinctive reflex was to reaffirm ourselves. We had to overcome the identity crisis-hell, overpower it, wave a flag.” (p.12) True enough, though Mailer glosses over the fact that such imperial sentiments were hardly new and had already been given a rather aggressive formulation by neocon “defense intellectuals” anxious to redirect U.S. foreign policy. And these sentiments became increasingly palatable to a public bombarded with the daily rantings of a jingoistic corporate media.

A self-defined “left-conservative,” Mailer argues the system is so ideologically frail that warfare has become a safety-valve for deep contradictions ranging from economic stagnation to resource needs to ongoing electoral worries of politicians. War and preparation for war revive the national psyche, offering sense of empowerment along with the allure of high-tech entertainment. And terrorism, even more than Communism before it, furnishes the perfect target insofar as it conjures images of unspeakably criminal villains carrying out evil designs against innocent civilians, whereas Communism, though Godless and evil, was always a more distinctly political threat that could be fought by more ordinary measures. The obligation of patriotic citizens to stand up, fight back, and help vanquish the evildoers fits the domestic even more than the global needs of the system. Thus: “Flag conservatives truly believe America is not only fit to run the world but that it must. Without a commitment to Empire the country will go down the drain.” (p.53) If Mailer proves to be right, the future implications of such desperate imperial maneuvers might be too horrifying to contemplate.

If U.S. ruling elites are indeed facing a crisis of legitimacy-and if patriotic mobilization rushes to fill the ideological vacuum-the fate of democratic politics will be increasingly tenuous. The Bush-Rumsfeld-Ashcroft attack on civil liberties after 9/11 is but one manifestation of a shriveling public sphere. For many years it was apparent that liberal-capitalism had lost its legitimating force, unable to provide either historical analysis or future vision. Mailer is not altogether lucid about such issues, but he does indulge his “left” sensibilities when arguing what indeed should be commonplace: as corporations accrue more leverage, elites are left with few interests beyond the accumulation of wealth and power. The (militarized) war on terrorism suits their needs perfectly, offering as it does an ideological rationale for authoritarian rule and global expansion. Democracy winds up largely irrelevant to this scheme of things, aside from whatever residual legitimating value it might possess. As he puts it, “In a country where values are collapsing, patriotism becomes the handmaiden of totalitarianism. The country becomes the religion.” (p.108) It is worth noting that the “conservative” Mailer scarcely makes an appearance in this brief but superbly-argued text.

Mosley, author of such best-selling novels as *Devil in a Blue Dress*, writes of terrorism, war, and post-9/11 traumas from the vantage-point of African-American history. After witnessing the

attacks from his New York apartment, he immediately set out to find answers to the question "who are our enemies and why do they hate us so much?" His response, inspired by lengthy conversations with his father, distilled segments of the black experience, crystallizing a range of perspectives "dismissed by public opinion and excluded from serious avenues of public discourse"-despite the presence of influential blacks (Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice) in Bush's foreign-policy establishment. (p.24)

In Mosley's view, the nature of political violence, including terrorism, cannot be grasped without a view of the larger picture that takes into account a world in which war, poverty, disease, and feelings of powerlessness ravage more than half of humanity. Blacks in the U.S. have long endured these same conditions, having been more the victims than benefactors of the American rise to global hegemony. To the degree people's understanding of violence is conditioned by their daily existence, then proclaimed ideals of American democracy and global humanitarianism will fail to resonate where circumstances reveal just the opposite-a power structure that does the bidding of predatory corporate interests, supports corrupt regimes, is obsessed with military force, and pursues world domination. Peaceful, harmonious social relations are incompatible with so much material hardship and authoritarian rule, which guarantees that war and terrorism will be endemic, indeed interwoven, features of international politics. We know, or ought to know, that a world dominated by seemingly boundless American wealth and power will generate intense animosities, which are much less the product of ancient Muslim texts, innate Arab traits, or "clash of civilizations" than of conditions produced by a heartless, violent superpower

Mosley locates mainstream views of terrorism within the "white male corporate" culture (p.57), where the primacy of U.S. economic and geopolitical contradicts the mythology of democratic good deeds. Situating terrorist violence as a reaction to state-organized military violence, Mosley writes: " . . . even if the perpetrators of terrorism against the U.S. are evil and insane, we must ask the question: have we had any part in creating that evil, that insanity?" (p.61) The answer is that U.S. policies and actions have contributed to terrorism in at least four distinct ways-enforcing an exploitative corporate globalization, a long history of military interventions and covert operations, aiding Islamic fundamentalism during the1980s and later, installing and supporting dictatorial regimes wherever it served American interests. Most of this continues into the present, with Democrats and Republicans more or less equally culpable. One obvious question emerges here: in what way can national sentiments of wounded innocence and victimization be justified in the midst of such imperial realities? While the answer is surely complicated, Mosley is convinced that few American blacks will be seduced by illusions of democratic or humanitarian benevolence, the result of their historical consciousness "about being colonized, body and soul." (p.80)

It follows that African-Americans are better positioned to grasp the large chasm separating U.S. hegemonic discourses from what people outside the "white male corporate culture" are prepared to believe. The same power structure that dominates the global scene has historically colonized, in different ways, most of black America, so that African-Americans are psychologically freer to challenge the ideological rationalizations of Empire. Blacks might

therefore be expected to turn this subversive legacy into vocal resistance leading, at opportune moments, to political action: “protest should be our language and our creed.” For all this, however, Mosley finds entirely too much silence today among African-Americans on international problems that, of course, have simultaneous domestic repercussions. The relatively small role played by blacks in both the anti-globalization and (recent) peace movements might seem to call into question this latent capacity for resistance and protest when it comes to global issues.

Hoping for an epic shift in attitudes, Mosley urges revival of the “subtle compassion of Black America,” a rekindling of grassroots movements against corporate and imperial power-though the political or strategic mechanisms of such a revival remain unspecified. The is vast, considering that African-Americans have traditionally embodied the highest ideals of American culture, in contrast to the elites’ penchant for a militarized foreign ventures. Thus: “while the American government was selling arms to the world, we were delivering jazz. While U.S. presidents waged war on foreign ideals, African-Americans spoke of peace.” (p.139)

Distance from the critical, reflective discourses of Mailer and Mosley to the harsh Realpolitik of foreign-policy neocons is probably best measured in light years. Neocons have won extraordinary political influence owing to their affiliation with the American Enterprise Institute and academic havens like the Hoover Institute and Center for Strategic and International Studies and, more recently, the hawkish Project for a New American Century (PNAC), where Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and kindred ideologues laid out plans for a more combative U.S. imperial strategy beginning in 1997. A lesser-known but relatively established fixture in this milieu is Michael Ledeen, onetime specialist in Italian history who worked from time to time at the Pentagon, State Department, and National Security Council as well as the AEI. In the 1980s Ledeen was a behind-the-scenes facilitator of the illegal Iran-Contra conspiracy, for which he remains fully unapologetic. His extreme rightwing views, spelled out in *The War against the Terror Masters* and earlier works, had little currency in policy circles until the ascent of Bush II, when the neocons finally gained a foothold in official foreign policy circles, even before 9/11. Ledeen has been described as a theoretical inspiration behind the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, and remains a vehement partisan of further such interventions elsewhere in the Middle East. He was quoted as saying, in April 2003: “The time for diplomacy is at an end; it is time for a free Iran, free Syria, and free Lebanon.” Ledeen helped set up the Center for Democracy in Iran (CDI), an action group dedicated to “regime change” in Iran.

Reading Ledeen’s pedestrian book takes one into a depressing excursion through the provincial, belligerent, militaristic neocon mindset, long considered too wacky for even the more conservative side of Republican politics. Framed in simple Manicheistic terms, where “we” (U.S. global interests) must confront a frightening universe of evil “thems”, the text construes terrorism as a barbaric assault on Western democratic values waged by scheming, puppeteering “terror masters” in Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Asia. That the U.S. must face such terrible enemies has nothing to do with its behavior as global hegemon-for Ledeen’s America is a nation that has the most exemplary past and present-but instead results from a

generalized “fear” of the great emancipatory ideals it upholds.

In contrast to Lacqueur’s sober historical account, Ledeen follows a more strictly ideological path littered with far-fetched claims-central being that the key task of U.S. foreign policy is to enlighten and democratize a chaotic world populated by ruthless tyrants and other assorted villains. Ledeen’s depiction of U.S. history is akin to the kind of propaganda served up by Fox TV News and Radio Free Europe. Thus: “We tend to our own affairs, and we have done it so successfully that we are the first people in history to believe peace is the normal condition of mankind.” (p.xvi) Or: “We generally have to be dragged into war.” (p.xvi) And: “The other reason we are never ready for war is our radical egalitarianism. .” (p.xvii) America, Ledeen states, is a country dedicated to “live and let live.” The entire text of Terror Masters abounds with such wondrous generalizations. The main question here is whether Ledeen, at one point an academic historian, can be so wistfully ignorant of the past (distant and recent) or is just cynically putting out these romanticized images of U.S. global behavior for particularly gullible audiences. It is easy enough to dismiss such contentions outright, except that the “gullible audiences” reportedly include leading officials in the Bush administration and even Bush himself.

Warming to his main obsession, Ledeen refers to a “bloodthirsty Islam” and a fanatical desire of Muslim terrorists to destroy the West as quickly as possible, with Iran backstage as the “mother of modern Islamic terror” (p.10). He believes Americans are justifiably perplexed over why “they” are so hated, never pausing to consider that resentment might be directed at U.S. *leaders* and their policies rather than at the entire American population. For Ledeen, however, the great superpower is simply minding its own business, adhering to a “live and let-live” ethic. Thus:: ” . . . unsophisticated in the ways of other people and nations, Americans have only believed in the basic goodness of mankind . . . Our radical egalitarianism, enshrined in our most cherished documents, leads us to treat all people the same way, and to grant foreign cultures the same respect and standing as our own.” (p.82) After being urged to read Howard Zinn’s *Peoples’ History of the United States*, Ledeen should be asked to explain the legacy of American “goodness” and “radical egalitarianism” to Native Americans, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese, Panamanians, Iraqis, and a few other targets of American benevolence. Ledeen’s reflective answer as to why “we” in our democratic good will are so widely despised: the world is full of “frustrated, fanatical, and nasty people.” (p.83) As for “radical egalitarianism,” Ledeen prefers to ignore the fact that the U.S. has the deepest gulf between rich and poor of an industrialized country, the average CEO earning at least 210 times the income of the average worker, while U.S.-enforced corporate globalization helps reproduce more poverty, inequality, and misery daily.

A favorite Ledeen Trojan horse is failure of the CIA and intelligence community to supply politicians with crucial information to fight global terrorism, to recognize the deadly threat of Al Qaeda until after 9/11. He shares this concern with Lacqueur, but carries it much further. He cites lack of competent CIA and FBI agents, weak coordination, a paucity of skills needed to infiltrate the networks, and “bureaucratic limits” that stifled aggressive investigative work. Beneath all this was a collapse of political will. The main culprit, not surprisingly, turns out to

be President Clinton: “This dramatic escalation of the terror war was staged on Clinton’s watch. He was responsible for fighting and defeating it, which he failed to do.” (p.85) For Ledeen this was more than a blunder-it was a crime far more serious than what merited impeachment.

This account is preposterous at many levels. Ledeen never explains why international terrorism was on the upswing in the 1990s when the two supposed great “terror masters”-the USSR and Khomeini’s Iran-had passed from the scene. More to the point, Ledeen forgets that Clinton did sponsor far-reaching anti-terrorist legislation in 1995 in response to both the WTC and Oklahoma City bombings, meant in part to crack down on domestic terrorism-a threat Ledeen inexplicably ignores. Clinton also stepped up intelligence efforts, launched military attacks on Al Qaeda in Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998, and initiated a search for bin Laden. Moreover, Bush, as we have seen, was no more prepared for a 9/11-type catastrophe than was Clinton, ignoring FBI warnings of imminent large-scale attacks as late as summer 2001. As for the “intelligence community,” Ledeen overlooks the well-documented U.S./CIA role in organizing and funding Islamic anti-Communist groups during the 1980s and 1990s, as mentioned above. The threat of global terrorism was invisible for so long because its leaders had worked as U.S. partners serving American geopolitical interests-until the Soviets were driven out of Afghanistan, at which point the U.S. abandoned both the country and the mujahideen.

Further, as a Washington insider Ledeen must have known that the CIA was always far more an organization devoted to international covert action and intrigue than to intelligence-gathering as such, as former operatives like Ralph McGeehee (*Deadly Deceits*) have been telling the public for years. Most “intelligence” amassed in the Middle East and elsewhere was regularly tailored to fit existing U.S. agendas and policies-not the other way around. (In actuality the main intelligence-gathering vehicle was always the worldwide electronic surveillance network of the NSA, which Ledeen strangely neglects to mention.) This perverse dynamic surfaced again with Bush’s cynical efforts to shape intelligence “data” leading up to the invasion of Iraq.

In the years before 9/11 Ledeen was already pushing the idea of a “counter-jihad” against Al Qaeda and kindred networks as well as their powerful “terror masters” in Teheran, Baghdad, and Damascus. Baghdad, of course, turned out to be first on the hit list – for reasons having nothing to do with the war on terrorism, as even Bush himself was ultimately forced to concede. In the case of Iraq, Ledeen refers to Saddam Hussein’s routine use of terrorism-unwittingly affirming the concept of *state* terrorism otherwise anathema to the neocons-rooted in the “Stalinist model” of rule. Fair enough, though Ledeen again forgets about the longstanding alliance between this same Hussein and the U.S., which gave the dictator economic and military aid in the service of Washington interests. Ledeen claims that Iraq has “always been an integral part of the terror network, working intimately with Syria and Iran . . .” (p.181), a connection never supported by any evidence furnished by U.S. and British intelligence, and one that defies logic owing to the history of bitter antagonism between the secular Hussein and fundamentalist bin Laden. Not content with this fictitious assertion, he writes that Iraq was probably involved in the 1993 WTC bombing, for which again there is no

evidence-as even Ledeen admits. Finally we run across the delirious statement that if Bush senior had decided to overthrow Hussein in 1991, the problem of international terrorism would likely have vanished (pp.215-16), which contradicts Ledeen's own premise about Iranian culpability and, more significantly, ignores the complex historical origins of Islamic terrorism explored by such writers as Lacqueur, Dilip Hiro, and Tariq Ali.

While the U.S. has a lengthy record of installing and rewarding dictatorial regimes from Central America to Chile, from Saudi Arabia to Indonesia, Ledeen is somehow able to locate a "national tradition of fighting tyranny" (p.232), yet another familiar neocon fairy tale. The reader is told that the struggle for democracy is historically congruent with the "American character." A central undertaking of U.S. foreign policy has been to bring "rules of a free society" to nations where such rules previously did not exist, to help people learn the fundamentals of democracy. Of course such noble rules will have to be imposed by force where they cannot be developed indigenously. No mention here or anywhere in Terror Masters of U.S. economic and geopolitical interests that might be at stake. No mention either of the fraudulent claim that democracy could be built in a milieu permeated by massive corporate power and military violence.

The idea that impoverished political cultures should or could be forcibly transformed by superior military power has always provided the ideological veneer for imperial rule. Ledeen supposedly owes this insight to Machiavelli, famous for his recognition that politics is in great measure about power and coercion. Machiavelli is said to have taught that *virtu* must be imposed on a brutish world by means of state power, including military force. Moreover: "Machiavelli tells us that if we win, everyone will judge our methods to have been appropriate." (p.221) The Bush administration has clearly taken such neocon "Machiavellian" injunctions to heart.

But Ledeen's version of Machiavelli is distorted to justify a neocon-style militarism that, under conditions of increasing blowback, is destined to backfire. Machiavelli did argue that violence and warfare were inevitable components of political power. Yet in *The Prince* and other writings he also addressed the question of how to *minimize* violence and coercion by establishing power on a foundation of laws, social institutions, and habits of civility. He grasped what would later become a truism, that popular consent is necessary for broad-based legitimacy and stable governance which, used wisely by the prince, would ultimately /I>reduce dependency on societal coercion and violence. This explains why Machiavelli preferred a Republican form of government rooted in its own fertile soil, why he opposed the naked imposition of political rule. Ledeen's own militaristic outlook combined with the familiar neocon imperial hubris demands another theoretical source, more akin to the ideologues of the British and French empires in their heyday, or the early architects of Manifest Destiny.

If there is any recent book on war, terrorism, and U.S. foreign policy that can be said to be worse than Ledeen's, Christopher Hitchens' *A Long Short War* would be it. The author of such provocative works as *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, Hitchens has assembled this loosely-connected series of brief essays (initially written for the on-line magazine *Slate*) that amount to

little more than an occasionally witty but standard brief for an aggressive U.S. imperial strategy. For the politically-reborn Hitchens, it seems, any country officially targeted by the U.S. for imminent attack is deserving of its fate-the costs and casualties to be debated another time.

Contemptuous of all dissenters, Hitchens eagerly latches onto every phony argument drummed up by the Bush circles to justify their (long-overdue) invasion and conquest of Iraq. Virtually every page of this book contains expressions of moral outrage directed at some villain who deserves to be quickly and forcibly removed from the world scene. The Hussein regime did naturally fit every criterion of a demonic villain, a mixture of Darth Vader and Joe Stalin that righteous Americans are called upon to vanquish. In this combat drama we are informed that Iraq had become a "patron" of Al Qaeda (p.8), that Hussein was a "bad guy's bad guy" with no business controlling nine percent of the world's oil reserves. It remained for the U.S. military to "liberate" the long-suffering Iraqis while coincidentally freeing the world of Hussein's vast stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons assembled and hidden by its "madman-plus-WMD club." (p.10) Meanwhile, the Kurds had required aid in their heroic struggle for democratic independence. Iraqis leaders regularly and flagrantly violated international law and would have to be taught a lesson, in this case by the world's moral tutor and policeman. Most grievous of all, Hussein represented an imminent threat not only to those incredibly rich oil fields but to his neighbors and the entire world, which everyone knows Bush and Rumsfeld repeated ad nauseum.

The ultimate goal, Hitchens writes, is to bring pluralism, tolerance, and peace to the Middle East, to establish conditions where downtrodden populations can finally govern themselves. This would be dutifully achieved by the Pentagon, along with a few British and other detachments, by means of preemptive warfare. The costs and consequences of such intervention do not much trouble Hitchens, for the main issue is the absolute correctness of policies: "There's nothing like the feeling of being in the right and proclaiming firmness of purpose." (p.31) Regarding prospects for blowback, of heightened rather than reduced global terrorism, we are informed that "warfare is an enterprise where, very noticeably, nice guys finish last." (p.43) The entire military extravaganza is worth the price, since the U.S. is obliged to defend "civil society" against the horrors of "theocratic nihilism"-here forgetting the likelihood that U.S. occupation can only undermine "civil society." As for Bush, he is praised as a moderate, rational, wise leader who exhibited great patience before deciding to invade, extending deadline after deadline. (At the time Bush's "patience" was hardly a function of moderation or wisdom but of the simple U.N. refusal to sanction the invasion.) One cannot find in The Long Short War a single criticism directed at Bush, arguably the most reactionary and dangerous U.S. president in historical memory. Well-known for his fiercely-independent journalism, Hitchens comes across in this volume as the ultimate insider, often prefacing his remarks with statements like "from conversations I have had on this subject in Washington . . ." As for the great warrior Wolfowitz, he gets strong praise for being "right" about regime change in Iraq well before anyone else, as early as 1978 (even before Hussein fully consolidated his power!).

Hitchens' seeming penchant for U.S. military action resonates throughout the book. Moving through Iraq in the company of U.S. and British troops during the invasion, he writes triumphantly of rapid military victories and the strong welcome "liberated" Iraqis gave to advancing soldiers with cries of "Boosh, Boosh!" coming even from young children-hardly, as it turns out, a prelude to the coming nightmare of occupation. Hitchens refers to the warmhearted presence of "big, happy, friendly, gullible Western officers" (p.99), taking another page from Hollywood's World War II propaganda movies. Of course those officers had every reason to be happy: they were on the road to heartening successes, getting rid of all the thieves, rapists, murderers, and other monsters lurking about Iraq on their way to uncovering the vast hidden caches of WMD. (If the U.S. military could then get rid of theft, murder, and rape in the U.S.-not to mention the huge stockpiles of WMD-that would be an even more impressive success.) The sprawling allied military convoys were to link up with the brave Kurds engaged in "fighting a battle for all of us." (p.102) Hitchens observes that the invasion not only liberated Iraq but saved the oil from Hussein's clutches "with scarcely a drop [of blood] spilled." (p.83) Reports of thousands of Iraqi deaths-not counting the long-term costs and consequences of occupation-apparently do not register on Hitchens' otherwise sensitive moral radar screen.

Next to Hussein as modern incarnation of Stalin, Hitchens saves his most venomous prose for the antiwar movement that, to his great dismay, grew during 2002 and early 2003 to mobilize the energies of more people worldwide than any comparable movement in history. Hitchens was not particularly impressed: he says (without any evidence) that the movement was organized by people who do not think Hussein is such a bad guy and supported by "blithering ex-flower children" and "ranting neo-Stalinists in the streets". (p.11) If the "potluck peaceniks" had their way, the world would be overrun by monsters like Milosevic and Hussein because the misguided activists are sadly obsessed with fighting American power. Hitchens writes of "phony" antiwar protests based on "hysterical predictions." Phony? Hysterical? Critics of the war had rejected the official and media claims as propaganda employed to justify an illegal war-claims in every case shown to be outright lies, more boldly so as this horrid saga unfolds. Hitchens mocks the leftist notion of corporate influence on U.S. politics as a "puerile" belief entertained by people who in their silly opposition to companies like Halliburton and Bechtel taking over Iraq would rather have "some windmill power concern run by Naomi Klein or the anti-Starbucks Seattle coalition with their Buddhist mantras." Buddhists? Neo-Stalinists? Flower Children? At least Hitchens cannot be faulted for lack of imagination.

In Hitchens' illusory world, the U.S. stands tall against international gangsterism, terrorism, and ethnic cleansing, ready to punish all transgressors. Since the U.S. has been the leading purveyor of violence in the world-not to mention the most militarized nation ever-this would be startling news to the vast majority of people on the planet. Hitchens envisions a "new imperialism" where U.S. military force lays the groundwork for democracy and human rights in the most inhospitable settings-a claim apparently not made tongue-in-cheek. We have Thomas Paine spreading the word, only this time backed by Tomahawk missiles, attack helicopters, and an endless arsenal of "smart" bombs available to crush the enemies of freedom, and of course the wondrous technologies of Halliburton and Bechtel. Hitchens cites Frederick Douglas to the

effect that liberty is well worth fighting for; after all, anyone with strong doubts need only look at the results in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. We do not know whether the Bush-Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz crowd ever paid much attention to Paine and Douglas as architects of the New World Order, in contrast to, say, the pressing resource needs of an all-consuming industrial-military machine that utilizes 25 percent of global resources. Of course imperialism has for centuries dressed itself in such ideological garb, but Hitchens knows this imperialism is entirely different-benevolent, generous, out to slay all tyrants, true to its official proclamations.

Perhaps not fully convinced of such arguments, Hitchens falls back on yet another platitudinous rationale for preemptive militarism against Iraq: the war on terrorism. On its face this may seem credible enough, but Hitchens never gets around to discussing how the legacy of U.S. military intervention itself leads to blowback, that is, even more terrorism. Like Lacqueur, Hitchens believes that organized state violence belongs to a totally separate category, since, while it is no doubt more systematic and lethal, it is also more "rational" than that practiced by terrorist groups like Al Qaeda. What makes substate terrorism uniquely fearsome, he notes, is its shadowy, random, irrational character. Hitchens cannot deny that the violent pursuit of political aims is and has been more or less universal. But he never explains how terrorist networks are peculiarly irrational, nor why they should be any more reprehensible than more "rationalized" military warfare carried out on behalf of U.S. global domination, where its destructive impact has been many times greater. After all, even the Nazis employed organized military power to achieve "rational" (i.e., state-defined, geopolitical) agendas.

Whether it is the epic struggle for democracy or the militarized war on terrorism, Hitchens is ready to trumpet the great achievements of U.S. intervention in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. He has apparently paid less attention to actual developments on the ground than to White House public relations statements. In Kosovo, 79 days of fierce NATO bombings left a demolished, broken society now ruled by a Taliban-style government, with escalating poverty and joblessness, civic violence, and renewed ethnic conflict the daily fare of a dispirited population. Islamic militants operate out of Kosovo and Bosnia, not too far from the sprawling Bondsteel U.S. army base that blights the Yugoslav landscape. If "democracy" exists there, it is only in the minds of Pentagon shills who gather for conferences at AEI and Hoover. In Afghanistan, lacking any viable central government and overrun by warlords and militias, all armed with the most sophisticated weapons, the situation has steadily deteriorated since U.S. military operations began in late 2001, leaving the country in economic and political ruins not to mention a continuing haven for terrorist actions.

As for Hitchens' favorite project-regime change in Iraq-circumstances have turned even more dire than in the Balkans and Afghanistan. By late 2003 violence and chaos had worsened, as the (fully-anticipated) Iraqi resistance intensified, with mounting casualties on both sides. Guerrilla insurgency had spread, with attacks numbering on average more than 30 daily (as of January 2004). U.S. military authorities governed the country with an iron fist through a hand-picked government run by "terrorism-expert" L. Paul Bremer III, all the while promising a future return to Iraqi sovereignty with full democracy. "Liberation" was taking place, as Hitchens excitedly reports, but the word has never gotten to the Iraqi people for whom the

alien ruling structure understandably has no legitimacy. As with any foreign occupation, there can be no capacity to govern effectively. Meanwhile, 70 percent of Iraqis were unemployed, the country was left with crushing poverty and international debt, and a public infrastructure already decimated by wars and sanctions remained in an advanced state of decay.

And Hitchens' emancipatory Kurds? Far from being a zone of self-governance, Kurdistan had been ruled for 12 years by two military juntas exercising nearly total power-and little changed after the invasion except that the U.S./CIA presence has been solidified. As throughout Iraq, there have been repeated claims of human-rights violations. Independent reports show that local inhabitants see little difference between their own henchmen and Hussein's, who for years had collaborated with Kurdish groups, as Hiro points out in his highly-informative book Iraq. At the same time, most Kurds have formed positive feelings toward Americans owing to a steady stream of economic and military largesse, as U.S. operatives used the Kurds to subvert the Iraqi regime. A few U.S. officials and hawkish reporters have championed the idea of Kurdish democracy for writers like Hitchens. (Interestingly enough, Hitchens' great love for Kurdish democracy stops short of the Turkish border, where millions of Kurds have waged a long, bloody struggle for independence against Turkish repression. Of course Turkey is a close ally of both the U.S. and Israel. The movement? Dismissed by Hitchens as simply the work of a few Pol-Pot-style leaders, presumably worthy of its brutal fate.)

Very little historical investigation is required to prove that U.S. military action has precious little to do with democracy and everything to do with corporate and geopolitical interests, above all in the resource-laden Middle East and Central Asia. Oddly, as imperial ambitions grow more naked and ruthless the myths and deceits shrouding them appear more attractive to Hitchens, Ledeen, and assorted defenders of Empire. Unfortunately, the costs of such ambitions have been horrific: wide areas of death and destruction, economic and political breakdown, ecological disaster, global blowback and insecurity, growing international hatred of the U.S. The barbarism of Al Qaeda is more than equaled by an increasingly arrogant and technologically efficient U.S. military. None of this, however, can be expected to deter writers like Ledeen and Hitchens from eagerly looking forward to the next "regime change" as a new chapter in the history of world democracy.