

The Colonisation of Palestine

SDPCW-9, Class notes by Dr. Tim Anderson

Overview

1. Palestine
2. The Israeli Colony
3. Apartheid
4. Palestinian Resistance
5. The Future of Palestine

In 1948, towards the end of the colonial era, European (including Russian and American) Zionists established a colony in Palestine. But it was resisted, and after seven decades of ethnic cleansing, Palestinian resistance to the racialised Israeli colony has not diminished.



Q: What are the elements of an 'apartheid state'? and why is the Israeli colony in Palestine now considered to be an 'apartheid state'?

Set readings:

Bergen, Doris (2009) 'The Legacies of Atrocity', *The Holocaust*, Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 233-243

Pappe, Ilan (2006) 'Preface', *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, OneWorld, Oxford, xi-xvii

Falk, Richard and Virginia Tilley (2017) Executive Summary', in 'Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid', Palestine and the Israeli Occupation, Issue No. 1, E/ESCWA/ECRI/2017/1, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), pp.10-16, online: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/pal-apartheid-ft/>

Anderson, Tim (2018) 'The Future of Palestine', Centre for Counter Hegemonic Studies, online: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/future-palestine-1/> [many references in these class notes are from this article]

1. Palestine

- An ancient history, with pluralist populations
- Indigeneity = ancestral (not just religious) connections and continuous occupation
- Demographic change: Jewish settlers aimed at 80% domination; they are now less than 50%



Palestine has an ancient history, with the city of Jericho, founded perhaps 10,000 years ago, and with the capture of the holy city of Jerusalem by a variety of empires over the centuries. After the British and French captured the Levant and other Arab lands from the Ottoman Empire, in the early 20th century, they began a series of partitions. Most of that division was to weaken any Arab state that would emerge, and another part was to allocate lands to the Zionist movement of European Jews.

Palestinian heritage

- Ancient humans lived and settled in the Levant region, of which Palestine is a part; and various empires and kingdoms vied for control in the BC era;
- Yet the thousands of archaeological sites in historic Palestine are often linked to the three monotheistic faiths which consider as holy the city of Jerusalem (al Quds);
- In the 4th century the Eastern Roman Empire brought churches; in the Umayyad period (661-750) Islamic architecture appeared; during the European crusades religious pretexts were used for warfare and control of Jerusalem;
- The Mamluk period (1250-1517) and Ottoman rule (1517-1917) left their mark;
- After WW1 French and British 'empires' divided the region, for their own purposes;
- Yet thousands of years of indigenous cultural tradition remain;
- By the turn of the 20th century, indigenous Palestinians were about 80% Muslim.



Jewish Palestinians

There has long been Jewish (and Christian) minorities in Palestine. By 1882 they were about 8%; in 1931 about 17%; yet by 1947 the Jewish population had risen to 32% (JVL 2021).

Despite the ambitions of Zionist immigration, from Europe and the USA, Jewish people today comprise only about 50% the population of historic Palestine.

Indigeneity, self-determination and stolen land

Who are indigenous people? And what about their rights to land?

28(1) - "Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution ... for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent."

In law this typically refers to the return of "indigenous lands, territories and resources continuously (until the present or very recently) occupied, used or enjoyed by an indigenous community that have been encroached upon by third parties"

All 13 of Israel's Prime Ministers since 1948 have come from European families. Not one came from a family which had lived in Palestine more than one generation. Yet they all claimed a 'right of return' to a mythical ancestral land.

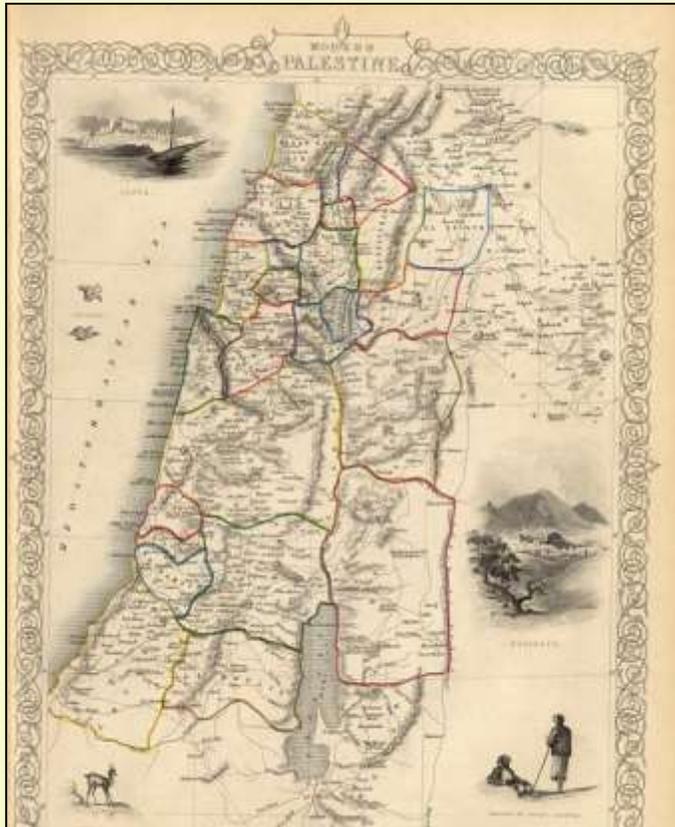
UNGA (2007) 61/295. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, online: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/61/295>

Yogeswaran Subramaniam and Colin Nicholas () The Courts and the Restitution of Indigenous Territories in Malaysia, online: <https://www.elevenjournals.com/tijdschrift/ELR/2018/1/ELR-D-17-00014/fullscreen>

Attempts to deny the existence of Palestine face a stubborn history

Sorry You're Offended, But
'Palestine' Does Not Exist

New York City punishes a councilman for stating a historical fact.



Palestine under the Ottomans, 1851



As land controlled by Palestinians shrinks, today's Zionists claim that Palestine 'never existed' - but Zionists did not always say this.



Golda Meir's 1930 postcard shows her address in Palestine.
VIDEO (43"): Ukraine born, US-raised Golda Meir (Israeli PM 1969-1974) "I am Palestinian"

2. The Israeli colony



Zionism and the European Jews

Zionism was a mostly secular, colonial project which drew on religious myth and came after centuries of anti-Jewish discrimination within Europe. The religious myths were from Biblical texts (Genesis 15:18, 'promised lands') and the cult of Second Temple Revivalism, which suggests that the Jewish people will not have their social and spiritual vindication until their Second Temple, destroyed in the Roman era, is reconstructed in Jerusalem (Isaacs 2005).

European Zionists managed to extract a promise (the '**Balfour Declaration**' **1917**) of land in the Levant from the British Government, as it took possession of the region from the Ottomans.

The **British objective** was 'to establish in a strategic corner in the Near East a body of people in close coalition with the British' (Jefferies 2014). The French, for their part, created an artificial Christian majority in the Lebanon, imagining that the little country would maintain loyal to Europe and France. That artificial majority in Lebanon has long gone.

Europe's anti-Jewish history and Zionism

The official European Christian Churches, starting with that of the Roman Empire in the 4th century AD, played a key role in embedding anti-Judaism (in Europe = 'anti-semitism') in European history (Carroll 2002).

Jews were blamed for various things, including the killing of Jesus of Nazareth (Adams and Heß 2018). They were often barred from holding land and public office, and were expelled from various European countries (Nirenberg 2013; Trachtenberg 2014).

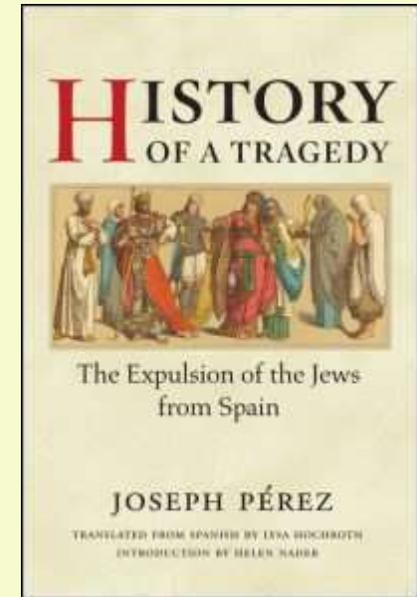
Purges of Jews occurred sporadically, at critical times of history and in many European countries. The same did not happen in the Arab and Muslim countries, before 'Israel'.

The Zionist movement was created in Russia in the late 19th century, as a means to escape purges and inspired by the new colonialism of that era. Religious significance was given to a 'return' to Palestine, but the movement remained mostly secular.

In Germany as late as the 1930s Zionism was unpopular amongst German Jews, whose Central Association organised a boycott against the Nazi government. By contrast, the German Zionists opposed this boycott and collaborated with the Nazis (in *the 1933 Haavara Agreement*) to evacuate capital and people to Palestine. This 'evacuation' of German Jews and some of their capital suited the Nazis, at that time.

Carroll, James (2002) *Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews*, Mariner Books

Black, Edwin (1984) *The Transfer Agreement*



European Zionist leaders extracted a British promise of land to colonise:

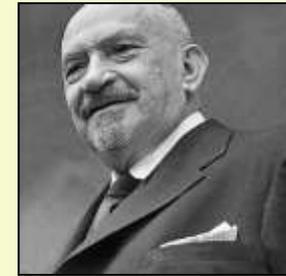
Theodor Herzl, (1860, Hungary - 1904)

First president of the World Zionist Organization, published *The Jewish State* (1896). Herzl looked at Britain's Sinai and Uganda proposals, strongly opposed by the Russians.

Chaim Weizman (1874 Russia - 1952)

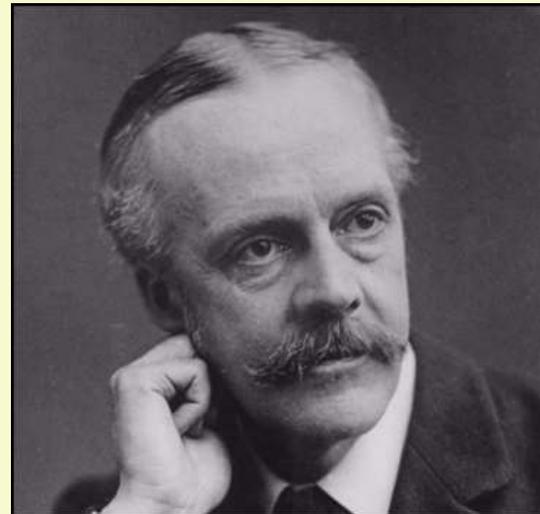
Moved to England in 1904. Took an important part in negotiations leading to the government's Balfour Declaration (November 1917) for a Jewish national home in Palestine.

As British Foreign Secretary, **Balfour** wrote to Baron Lionel **Rothschild** in November 1917 a letter of British support for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". North American Zionists were said to have been influential in pushing for this promise by the April 1917 entry of the USA into WW1.



Bernard Regan (2017) *The Balfour Declaration: Empire, the Mandate and Resistance in Palestine*

JMN Jeffries (2015) *The Palestine Deception 1915-1923:: The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, the Balfour Declaration, and the Jewish National Home*



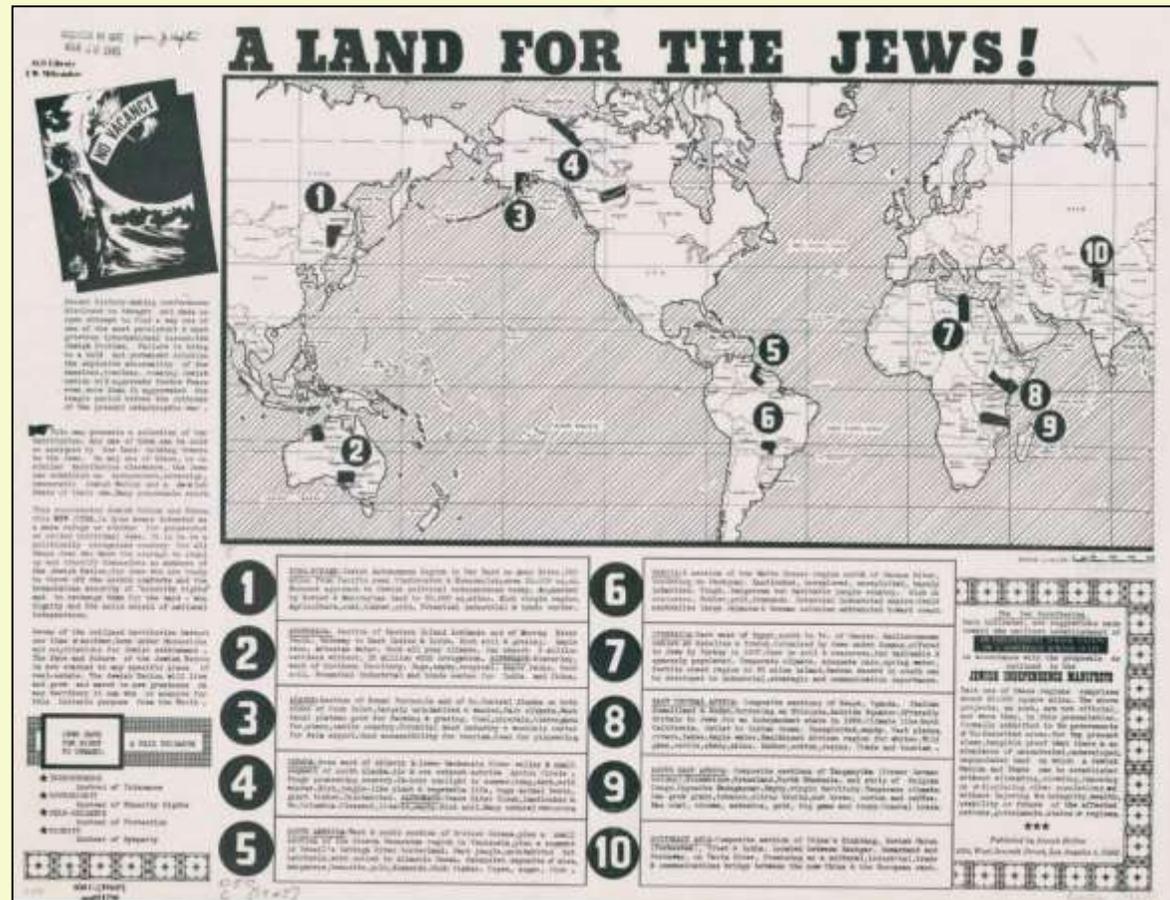
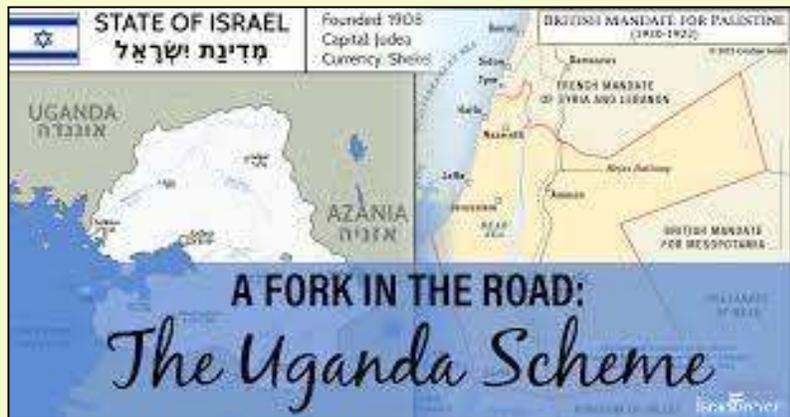
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

Palestine was the preferred but not the only 'option' for a Jewish homeland. In 1903 the Zionist Congress considered and rejected an offer of British colonial land in East Africa.



Joseph Hefter (1938) 'A land for the Jews!', online: <https://forums.sufficientvelocity.com/threads/a-land-for-the-jews-1938.53196/>
 JVL (2021) 'Zionist Congress: The Uganda Proposal (1903)', online: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-uganda-proposal-1903>
 Adam L. Rovner (2014) In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel

WW2 and the Nazi Holocaust

"At least 27 million Soviet citizens were dead, as well as millions of Poles, over a million Yugoslavs and scores of other people ... Close to 6 million Jews were murdered and Jewish civilisation was almost eradicated from Europe" (Bergen 2009: 232)

It is commonly recorded that about half of the killings of European Jews (5.4 to 5.8 million) were in the Nazi death camps, the others in ghettos and mobile executions, or as part of the slaughter in Russia (Pohl 2004).

Post WW2 Europe did not seem to offer hope of vindication: "for those who survived, the end of WW2 ... without family or friends ... many survivors, particularly Jews, had nowhere to go ... could they now simply go back as if nothing had happened? In Poland, Ukraine, Hungary and elsewhere, Jewish survivors ... were often met with violent hostility from the new 'owners'" (Bergen 2009: 236)

Pohl, D. (2004) War, Occupation and the Holocaust in Poland, in The Historiography of the Holocaust, D. Stone (Ed) Palgrave Macmillan

Gerlach, C. (2016) The Extermination of the European Jews, in New Approaches to European History, T. C. W. Blanning, B. Simms (Eds) CUP



Location	Jews killed
Auschwitz	c. 1 million
Treblinka 2	925,000
Belzec, Sobibor, Chelmno	768,000
Russia	1.3 million (5% of 26m)
Ghettos	800,000
Mass executions	965,000

Do European & American Jews have a right to 'self-determination' in occupied Palestine?

The claim for a Jewish homeland in Palestine is no indigenous movement, claiming the return of ancestral lands. It does not meet the criteria for (1) displacement or removal of people from traditionally and continuously occupied lands, and pays little regard to (2) the rights of others who occupy the land they have claimed (UN 2007; OUNHCHR 2013: 11-16).

The Israeli claim is rather based on two rather contradictory elements:

BUILD the JEWISH HOMELAND NOW

- The 'return' to a mythical state, whose 'second temple' was said to be destroyed by Romans in 70AD;
- As a shelter for European Jews, fleeing the Nazi Holocaust (a European responsibility).

Palestinian people, on the other hand, do meet the indigenous criteria, especially as they do not pretend to discriminate against others on the basis of religion. Levant Jews and Christians are Palestinians.

The UN General Assembly "strongly condemns all Governments which do not recognize the right to self-determination and independence of peoples under colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation, notably the peoples of Africa and the Palestinian people" (UNGA 1974).

UNGA (1974) 'Importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights', A/RES/3246 (XXIX), 29 November

UN (2007) 'UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', online:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2013) 'The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples', online: <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/ipeoples/undripmanualforhris.pdf>

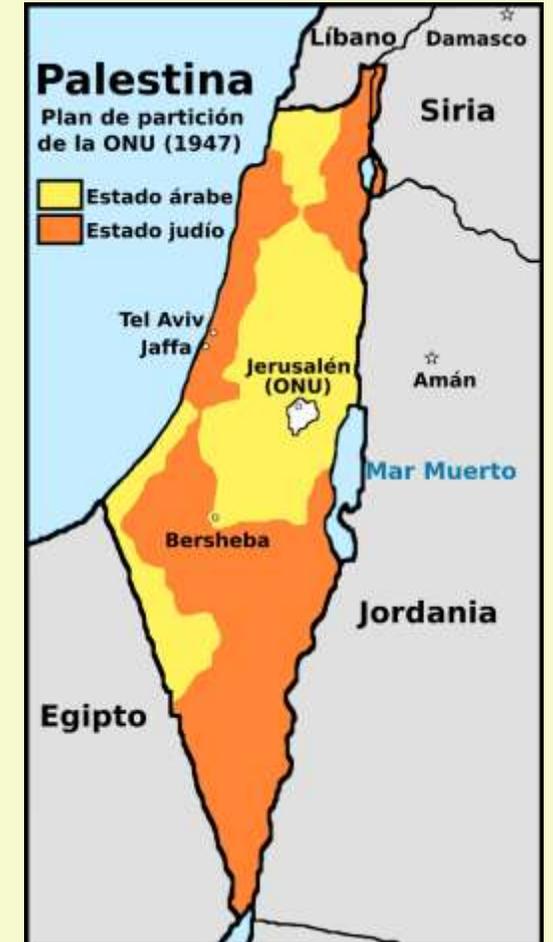
Creating 'Israel' aka '1948 Palestine'

Contrary to popular myth, the United Nations did not 'create' the state of Israel.

In the late 1940s the British passed their League of Nations 'mandate' on Palestine to the newly formed United Nations. The UN formed a committee which reported on the 'Future Government of Palestine'. The majority report from this committee (which did not even consult the Palestinian population) formed the basis of UNGA resolution 181, which recommended the creation of an Arab state, a Jewish state and a 'Special Regime' of international status for Jerusalem (UNGA 1947).

Even though the population of Palestine in 1946 was 65% Arab and 33% Jewish, with 'no clear territorial separation of Jews and Arabs, the committee recommended that the area for the Jewish state be 55.5% of the total area of Palestine. There was substantial dissent. Resolution 181 passed on 29 November 1947 with 33 votes in favour, 13 against and 10 abstentions (Hammond 2010; UNGA 1947).

On 14 May 1948, David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, unilaterally proclaimed the establishment of a State of Israel. The declaration was immediately recognised by the government of the US, the USSR and many others. However 25 Arab, Muslim and African states have never recognised Israel, while seven countries subsequently revoked their earlier recognition (JVL 2018). Preceding and accompanying the declaration was a terrible wave of violence which Arab Palestinians call 'The Catastrophe' (*al Nakba*), sweeping Palestinian people from hundreds of villages and from the land which they now call '1948 Palestine'.



The liberal Jewish dilemma

Oppose a Jewish state which would displace Palestinians, or support a refuge for the European Jewish victims of the Nazis?

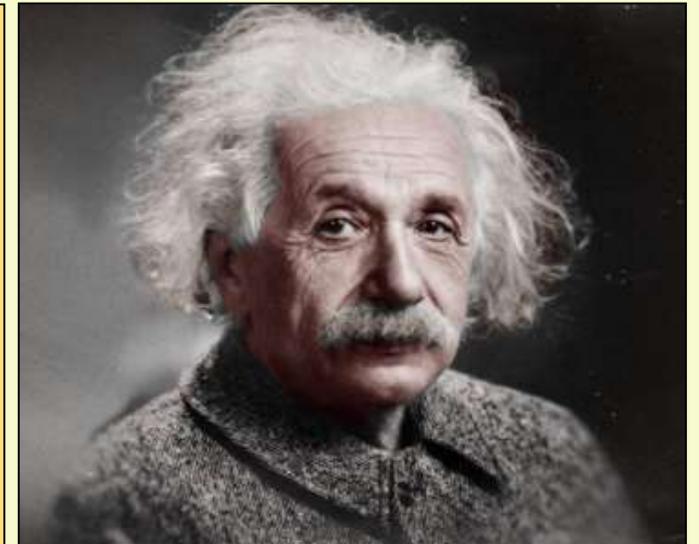
The liberal Jewish dilemma is well represented by Albert Einstein in the late 1940s. Liberal Jews had been convinced by the 'refuge' argument to support an idealistic version of Israel, while hating the 'fascist' factions (e.g. of Menachem Begin), later the Likud.

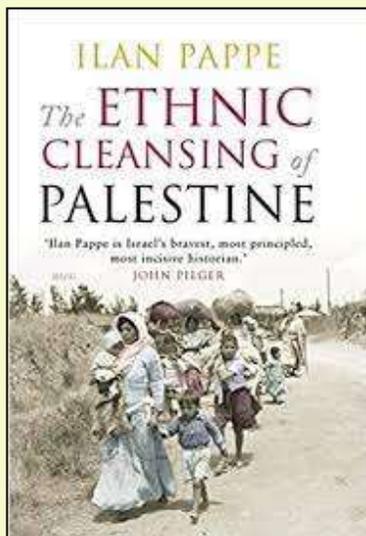
Einstein 1946: "a rigid demand for a 'Jewish State' will have only undesirable results for us ... I see it as impossible that the running of the entire country would be ceded to the Jews, who are but a third of the population" (152, 180)

Einstein 1947: "Can Jewish need, no matter how acute, be met without the infringement of the vital rights of others? My answer is in the affirmative ... the influx of Jewish pioneers has resulted not in the displacement and impoverishment of the local Arab population but in its phenomenal increase and greater prosperity" (Letter to Nehru, in Jerome 2009: 246)

Einstein, Arendt and others 1948: "[Menachem] Begin and his party ... [have] the unmistakable stamp of a fascist party for whom terrorism ... and a 'leader state' is the goal ... it is all the more tragic that the leaders of American Zionism has refused to campaign against Begin's efforts." (216)

Source: Fred Jerome (2009) Einstein on Israel and Zionism, St Martin's Press





Operation Dalet: ethnic cleansing

Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has documented the early ethnic cleansing operations, including the planning. Operation Dalet was a 'fourth and final' plan in March 1948 to 'ethnically cleanse the country as a whole'. Leader Ben Gurion believed 80-90% of the British mandatory territory was needed and 'only a state with at least 80% Jews' would be 'a viable and stable [Jewish] state' (Pappé 2006: xii-xiii, 26, 48). Plan C had called for the killing of Palestinian political leaders, senior officials, inciters and financial supporters and the damaging of transport, water wells, mills, villages, clubs and cafes (Pappé 2006: 28). The fourth and final plan (Plan Dalet, 10 March 1948) added: 'by destroying villages (by setting fire to them, by blowing them up, and by planting mines in their debris), and especially of those population centres ... In case of resistance, the armed force must be wiped out and the population expelled outside the borders of the state.' (Pappé 2006: 39).

In the infamous Deir Yassin massacre of 9 April, 107 villagers were killed. A series of expulsions destroyed 531 villages and eleven urban neighbourhoods, with 800,000 becoming refugees mostly in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (Pappé 2006: xiii; Vidal 1997).

Much later the former President of the World Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldmann, reported his colleague David Ben Gurion as saying: "Why should the Arabs make peace? If I were an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country ... They may perhaps forget in one or two generations' time, but for the moment there is no chance" (Goldmann 1978: 99).



<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/MAGAZINE-testimonies-from-the-censored-massacre-at-deir-yassin-1.5494094>

Deir Yassin (1'16"): The Deir Yassin Massacre
Full video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk4XDntPW_8

Zionist racial 'science'

As with most colonial projects, fictional racial theories and prejudices were created. Conventional Zionist historians maintain that all Jews have a common genetic makeup which comes from the Levant (e.g. Ostrer 2001). They try to link the European (Ashkenazi) and Mediterranean (Sephardic) Jews to those of the Levant. The implication is that European Jews might be said to be 'returning' to their ancestral home (e.g. Entine 2013; Rubin 2013).

Yet this claim has been seriously undermined. Shlomo Sand (2010), in *The Invention of the Jewish People*, found little evidence of European Jews ethnic links to the Levant. Eran Elhaik demonstrated that Ashkenazic DNA comes from mixtures of Jews in Iran, Greece and North East Turkey (Elhaik 2016). Others have concluded that, at the time of the supposed 'destruction of the second temple' in 70AD, more than 90% of Jews were living outside Judea, mainly in southern Europe (Ghose 2013).

Zionism 'essentialist' racial stereotypes of Arabs bear close resemblance to the German Nazis' stereotypes of Jews

Racial ideologies, the basis for ethnic cleansing	
Julius Streicher (1885-1946). Nazi ideologist, executed for spreading hatred of the Jewish people.	Benzion Netanyahu (1910-2012). Zionist historian and father of Benjamin Netanyahu.
As a child “a first suspicion came into my life that the essence of the Jew was a peculiar one ... Who were the money lenders? They were those who were driven out of the temple by Christ himself ... [they] never worked but live on fraud ... The God of the Jews is ... the God of hatred.” (Streicher 1938, 1945)	“He has no respect for any law ... in the desert he can do as he pleases. The tendency towards conflict is the essence of the Arab . He is an enemy by essence ... It doesn't matter what kind of resistance ... what price he will pay. His existence is one of perpetual war.” (Derfner 2012)

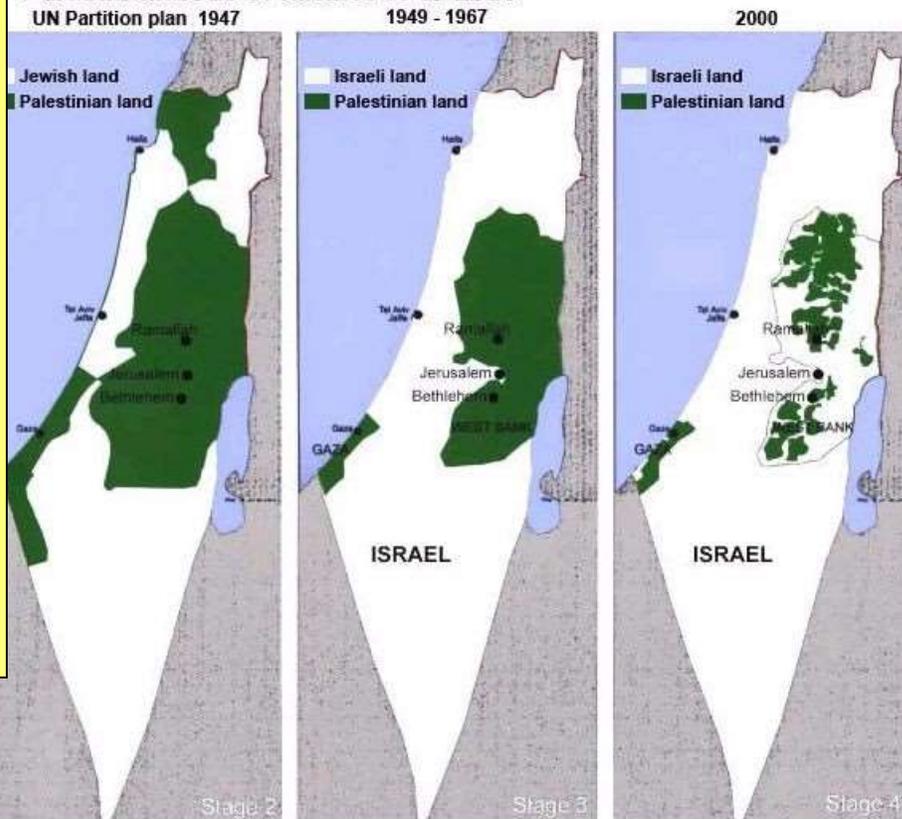
Evolution of ethnic cleansing

The "slow motion ethnic cleansing" of Palestine (Uri Avnery 2003) has changed over time, but its ambitions remain. The 'Yinon Plan' of 1982 was a reiteration of older Zionist ambitions, to create a 'Greater Israel' (Eretz Yisrael), a Jewish State stretching from 'from the Brook of Egypt [the Nile River] to the Euphrates'.

The 'Allon Plan' set out parameters for 40% absorption of the occupied West Bank and was put to an Israeli cabinet in the wake of the Zionist victory in the 1967 war. Labor Minister Yigal Allon said 'the last thing we must do is to return one inch of the West Bank' (Auerbach 1991). This became de facto Labor policy.

Immediately after the 1967 conflict, Israel began to build illegal settlements and demolish Palestinian housing in annexed areas of East Jerusalem. Yet the UN has not shifted from its position that the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are under belligerent occupation and therefore protected by the 4th Geneva Convention (AIC 2011: 5-6). UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) demanded the 'withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territory occupied in the recent conflict', and emphasised 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' (UNISPAL 1967).

Palestinian loss of land 1946 to 2000



The Demographic Challenge - 6.5 million each

Palestinians have refused to go away. The Palestinian population is growing relative to the Jewish population. Many Zionists dismiss this 'demographic threat'. Faitelson (2009) says that there is no such threat because of supposed declining Arab birth-rates and steady emigration. Yoram Ettinger, also claims the figures are exaggerated (Eldar 2018). And Israel constantly seeks immigrant Jews.

Nevertheless, recent estimates do show a pro-Palestinian demographic shift. A report from Jerusalem in 2011 showed that the Palestinian population of that city had risen from 25.5% in 1967 to 38% in 2009. Further, far less is spent on the Palestinian population in roads, sewage, public parks, swimming pools, libraries and sports facilities or children's playgrounds (AIC 2011: 10, 12).

The Jewish Virtual Library shows that the Jews of Israel / 1948 Palestine have declined from a peak of 88.9% in 1960 to 74.7% in 2017 (JVL 2017).

Overall, officials from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics and the military run COGAT say that the Arab population of Gaza, the West Bank and Arab citizens of Israel, along with residents of the annexed East Jerusalem municipality, add up to 6.5 million, about the same number as 'Jews living between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean (Heller 2018).



Expert confirms Jews and Arabs nearing population parity

Aron Heller (2018) Times of Israel, 27 March

3. Apartheid



Identifying and dismantling Apartheid regimes

In several recent reports the Jewish state of Israel is increasingly recognised as a racial, apartheid regime. The consequences are this are dramatic: an apartheid regime is a crime against humanity and the international community has an obligation to dismantle such regimes. There is no question of a "right to exist"; apartheid must be abolished.



Falk and Tilley 2017: 'Israeli Practices ... and the Question of Apartheid'

"The Apartheid Convention [says] that the crime of apartheid consists of discrete inhuman acts, but that such acts acquire the status of crimes against humanity only if they intentionally serve the core purpose of racial domination ... That the Israeli regime is designed for this core purpose was found to be evident in the body of laws ... the oppressed persons [are characterised] as belonging to a specific "racial group" ... [and boundaries are created by] the strategic fragmentation of the Palestinian people ... the four domains constitute one comprehensive regime developed for the purpose of ensuring the enduring domination over non-Jews in all land exclusively under Israeli control in whatever category ... Israel is guilty of imposing an apartheid regime on the Palestinian people, which amounts to the commission of a crime against humanity ... The international community .. [has] a legal obligation to act within the limits of [its] capabilities to prevent and punish instances of apartheid that are responsibly brought to their attention."

Available here: <https://counter-hegemonic-studies.site/pal-apartheid-ft/>

Zionism as racism

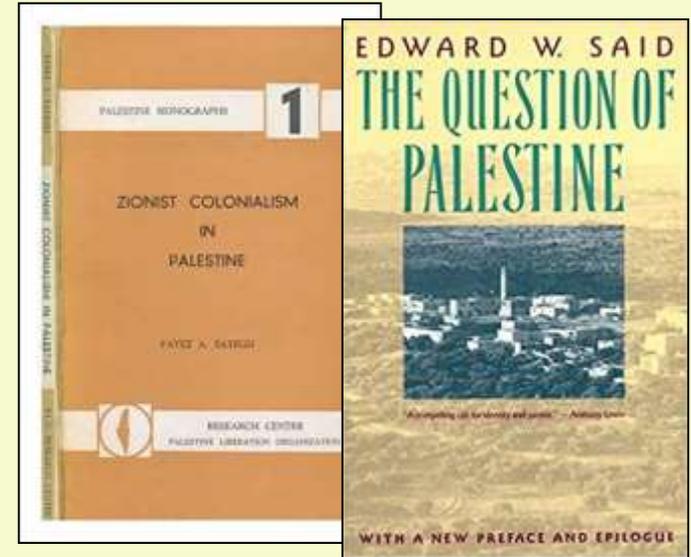
The UN General Assembly equated Zionism with racism in Resolution 3379 (1975). Zionism was "a form of racism and racial discrimination", like the settler-colonial racism of South Africa and Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe). Most of the 35 who opposed this motion were European settler-colonies in the Americas and Oceania and the European colonisers.

Authors wrote of Zionist apartheid through the 1960s and 1970s:

Fayez Sayegh, Palestinian scholar, identified Zionist racism as akin to South African apartheid in his book *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine* (1965)

David Hirst, British journalist, wrote of "apartheid Israeli-style" in his book *The Gun and the Olive Branch* (1977)

Edward Said described Israeli Jewish racism and colonialism as "de facto apartheid" in his 1979 classic *The Question of Palestine*.



UNGA (1975) 3379 (XXX). Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, online: <https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/761C1063530766A7052566A2005B74D1>

UNGA (1975): "the racist regime in occupied Palestine and the racist regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa have a common imperialist origin, forming a whole and having the same racist structure and being organically linked in their policy aimed at repression of the dignity and integrity of the human being"

Video (2'18"): Israelis Speak Candidly to Abby Martin About Palestinians
Full video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e_dbvQrk4

Israeli report: B'Tselem 2021 'this is apartheid'

"A regime that uses laws, practices and organized violence to cement the supremacy of one group over another is an apartheid regime. Israeli apartheid, which promotes the supremacy of Jews over Palestinians, was not born in one day or of a single speech. It is a process that has gradually grown more institutionalized and explicit, with mechanisms introduced over time in law and practice to promote Jewish supremacy ...

"Jewish supremacy has now been enshrined in basic law, making it a binding constitutional principle – unlike ordinary law or practices by authorities, which can be challenged. This signals to all state institutions that they not only can, but must, promote Jewish supremacy in the entire area under Israeli control."

B'Tselem (2021) 'A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid', online:
https://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/publications/202101_this_is_apartheid_eng.pdf

בית צלם
BTSELEM
بتسيلم

The Israeli Information Center
for Human Rights in the
Occupied Territories

A regime of Jewish supremacy from the
Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea:

**THIS IS
APARTHEID**





'Human Rights Watch' 2021: 'a threshold crossed'

Normally a firm supporter of the liberal side of US foreign policy, HRW has now admitted that Israel (effectively a US client state) is committing the crimes of 'apartheid' and 'persecution':

"Israeli authorities have deprived millions of people of their basic rights by virtue of their identity as Palestinians ... In the OPT, movement restrictions, land expropriation, forcible transfer, denial of residency and nationality, and the mass suspension of civil rights constitute "inhuman[e] acts" set out under the Apartheid Convention and the Rome Statute ... [acts made] amid systematic oppression and with the intent to maintain domination make up the crime against humanity of apartheid."

"Collectively, these policies and practices in the OPT severely deprive Palestinians of fundamental human rights, including to residency, private property, and access to land, services, and resources, on a widespread and systematic basis. When committed with discriminatory intent, on the basis of the victims' identity as part of a group or collectivity, they amount to the crime against humanity of persecution under the Rome Statute and customary international law ... the Israeli government [also] violates the rights of Palestinians inside Israel on account of their identity."

Human Rights Watch (2021) A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution
https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution#_ftn2

Rescue or Dismantle?



Responses to the HRW report:

Ken Roth (HRW) re article by Muhammad Shehada: "The new HRW report on the Israeli government's crime of apartheid "should be read" not as an effort "to delegitimize Israel" but "as a wake-up call, and one perhaps most pressing for those most invested in Israel's future" (Roth 2021)

Independent Jewish Voices Canada: "This report makes even clearer what Palestinians have known for decades: that Israel constitutes an apartheid state ... The question should no longer be 'is Israel practicing apartheid?', but rather, 'what do we do about it?'"

B'Tselem: "The international community has by and large refused to wake up to the reality of Israel's apartheid regime. Instead, it preferred to keep pretending that the apartheid threshold might be crossed at some unspecified time, always pushed into an ever-distancing future. Thus, "A Threshold Crossed" ... must now serve as an urgent wake-up call for the international community, to finally take concrete action in rejection of apartheid and in support of human rights, democracy and justice."

IJV (2021) IJV Commends Pivotal Human Right Watch Report on Israeli Crimes of Apartheid, Persecution, online:
<https://www.ijvcanada.org/ijv-commends-pivotal-human-right-watch-report-on-israeli-crimes-of-apartheid-persecution/>

B'Tselem (2021) Human Rights Watch report: an urgent wake-up call, online:
https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20210427_hrw_report_is_an_urgent_wake_up_call

Muhammad Shehada (2021) Human Rights Watch Called Israel an Apartheid. It Should Be a Wake-up Call', Newsweek, 29 April, online: <https://www.newsweek.com/human-rights-watch-called-israel-apartheid-it-should-wake-call-opinion-1587299>

4. Palestinian resistance



Key elements of resistance

In the face of relentless Zionist pressure to empty Palestine of its non-Jewish population, it is only Palestinian resistance that has slowed the ethnic cleansing. Resistance is passive, active and underestimated. First there is the simple fact of Palestinians remaining on their land. This is often referred to as **sumud**, steadfastness or resilient resistance. It has been said that too little attention is paid to this autonomous resistance, including 'adaptation' by women and families, in the face of extreme violence, simply 'asserting Palestinian culture and identity' (Ryan 2015).

Then there is active including **armed resistance**. This is legitimate, in context of violent colonisation, and is well recognised by international law. Vicious, at times genocidal incitements are made by Zionist leaders, supporting repeated attacks on Palestinian communities. These attacks are, in large part, to make Palestinian territories 'uninhabitable' and so drive them from the 'promised lands' (Wadi 2018). In that context both remaining and fighting back represent resistance. The Apartheid State controls more Arab land; yet uprisings show that the new 'settlements', their military bases and feeder roads are not safe (Bishara 2001: 24). They can be blocked and they can be sniped; and such incidents do occur, almost every day.

Social identification in Palestine: a national struggle

Who is resisting? In a 2018 survey of those in the Occupied Palestinian Territories 61% said they identified as Palestinian and 12% as Muslim (JMCC 2018). As there are Christian, Druze and Bedouin Palestinians, and as the colonial powers have always played on religious or ethnic divisions, the preferred identity remains 'Palestinian'. While most Palestinians are quite religious, only a tiny minority (2.2%) see that extremist Islamists such as ISIS/DAESH help their cause (JMCC 2016).

Syrian scholar Ghada Hashem Talhami (2001) considers Palestinian nationalism as a special case of Arab nationalism. That helps explain the strong expectation that the neighbouring Arab nationalists of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, even the Gulf monarchies, would assist the Palestinian resistance.

Leadership failures and social institutions

The Palestinian population, for its part, supports its institutions, but has little faith in the major parties. This disillusionment comes partly from divisions between the Islamists and the secular parties. While almost all (96%) reject a Palestinian state that does not have Jerusalem as its capital; more than half (53%) do not trust any political personality (JMCC 2018). Only 46% regarded the Palestinian National Authority's performance as good, but 66% see the need to maintain it (JMCC 2017). In July 2016 Fatah had the highest support at 33%, followed by Hamas at 14% and the PFLP on 3.4%. More than a third (36%) said they did not support any faction (JMCC 2016). That is, a large majority support their nation and their institutions but, in recent times, there has been a crisis of leadership.



Increasing international recognition of Palestine

1974: the UNGA recognised the **Palestine Liberation Organisation** (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people and invited it to plenary meetings.

1988: the UNGA acknowledged the proclamation of the state of Palestine and began to use 'Palestine' in place of the PLO, for the delegation.

2011: Palestine was admitted to UNESCO and soon after the USA stopped its membership payments to that UN body.

2012: the UNGA accorded '**Non-member observer state**' status, 'marking the first time that the General Assembly considered Palestine to be a state'.

2017: both Israel and the US withdrew as members of **UNESCO**, citing 'anti-Israel bias'. Similar tensions at the Human Rights Council.

2018: 137 UN member states recognised the **State of Palestine**. The Palestinian Authority has referred to the International Criminal Court the slaughter of civilians as 'crimes against humanity'.

Regional 'Axis' allies

The mainly Shia Muslim Islamic Republic of Iran has played the major role in supporting mainly Sunni Muslim Palestine. This is not sectarian support.

Iran has paid money to Palestinian families of fallen resistance fighters, after they had their houses demolished in collective punishment rampages.

Iran has also supported with training and weapons virtually all the Palestinian militia which resist the apartheid state; even those groups linked to the anti-Shia Muslim Brotherhood (IIT 2012; 2016).

A large Palestinian diaspora is housed in Syria, along with all Palestinian factions, some of whom join the Syrian Arab Army as Palestinian brigades.

Iran, Syria and Lebanon's Hezbollah thus remain strategic Palestinian allies.



Ethnic cleansing is portrayed as bilateral 'Israeli Palestinian Conflict', with moral equivalence

Regarding the July 2014 Israeli assault on Gaza

- EU: condemned the "indiscriminate firing of rockets" into Israel from Gaza "directly harming civilians;
- Ban Ki Moon (UN Sec Gen): " Hamas rockets have randomly struck Israel"
- NYT: " Hamas is committing a war crime by firing rockets indiscriminately", yet:
- UN: three fourths of the Palestinians killed ... were civilians"
- Israeli sources: 3 civilians were amongst 51 killed in Israel, 48 were IDF

Conclusion: Palestinian actions here were far more discriminate

Double-speak in Gaza

When NATO-Israeli backed Islamists slaughtered Syrian civilians they blamed the Syrian Army; their own casualties were also 'civilians'. The same lies are now being told about the Palestinian resistance.

Israeli assault on Gaza:
'precision attacks'

Palestinian attacks on Israelis:
'indiscriminate'

Palestinian civilian deaths:

Israeli civilian deaths:



Palestinian casualties: 'three-fourths of the Palestinians killed in more than two weeks of Israel-Hamas fighting were civilians' (UN)

Israeli casualties: 'total number of IDF casualties during Operation Protective Edge to 48' (United with Israel); 'Two Israeli civilians and a Thai agricultural worker have also died' (SMH, 28/7)

The **European Union** condemned 'the *indiscriminate* firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas and militant groups in the Gaza Strip, directly harming civilians'; **Ban Ki Moon:** 'Hamas rockets have randomly struck Israel'; **NYT:** 'Hamas is committing a war crime by firing rockets *indiscriminately*'

Palestinian casualties: 'Gaza Ministry of Health Spokesman said over the last 21 days, a total of 1,088 Palestinians have been killed and 6,470 have been injured. Of the dead, 251 were children and 50 elderly, while 1,980 children and 259 elderly have been wounded.' (+972)

The Israeli assault on Gaza, 2014

	Israeli forces	Palestinian Resistance
Deaths inflicted by	1088	51
Of which civilians	816 'at least'	3
% civilian deaths	75%	6%

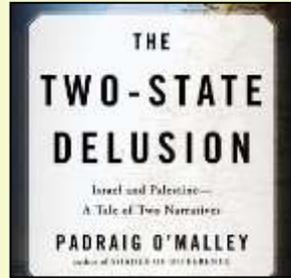
Sources: AP 2014; UWI 2014, Ceren 2014; Ma'an 2014; Barnard and Rudoren 2014

5. The future of Palestine

What are the prospects for an inclusive and democratic Palestine?

Prospects for a Democratic Palestine	
Challenges	Strengths
Zionist military occupation	Ongoing Palestinian resistance
Western allies with military and media assets	Moral and international legitimacy
Fanatical Zionist mission and racial ideology	Strong and united regional allies
Disunity amongst Palestinian factions and their regional allies	Vulnerability of Israel's allies (and Jewish supporters) to exposure of apartheid crimes

How factionalism is killing the Palestinian struggle



The two-state solution is a political fiction liberal Zionists still cling to
Joshua Leifer

Major obstacles: disunity and the two state myth

A serious obstacle to a democratic Palestine is disunity amongst Palestinian groups and parties, and divisions with its regional allies. Little people can never prevail over great powers while they are divided.

Islamic sectarianism, in particular, has been a key divisive force, especially given that the cause is overwhelmingly accepted by Palestinians as a national struggle.

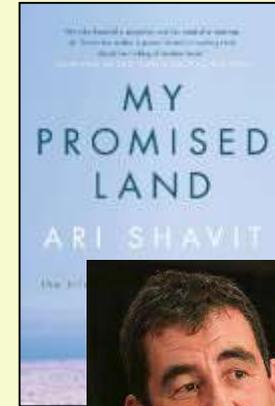
The Palestinian Authority has little moral authority and often acts to bolster the two state myth, which masks the reality of apartheid.

The largest potential Arab ally, Egypt, has done little to help Palestine in recent decades. Resistance has thus relied on Iran, Syria and Hezbollah.

Exposure of the 'two state' myth demoralises liberal zionists

Liberal zionists have the self image of a tolerant and kind people. They are easily offended by association with zionist fascism and apartheid. So expanding colonisation of the West Bank demoralised liberal zionist Ari Shavit:

"the one-state situation is developing into a cancer that will soon be irreversible." If settlers continued to rise then by 2025 "the Zionist project will be over. We will have passed the point of no return" (2016). "If Israeliness and Jewishness are not vital components in our identity, and if we have a foreign passport ... that's it. We must say goodbye ... pack our bags and move to San Francisco or Berlin" (2021).



Similarly, two former Israeli PMs have said that collapse of the 'two state' myth will mean apartheid and an inevitable end to the 'Jewish state'. That demoralisation may drive some of them to the obvious alternative: equal rights for all who live in Palestine.

Ehud Barak Warns: Israel Faces 'Slippery Slope' Toward Apartheid

If Israel keeps controlling Palestinians, 'inevitable' result will be 'either non-Jewish or non-democratic' state, former Israeli PM tells Conflict Zone's Tim Sebastian in Deutsche Welle TV interview



<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/ehud-barak-warns-israel-on-slippery-slope-to-apartheid-1.5486786>

Israel risks apartheid-like struggle if two-state solution fails, says Olmert

- Jewish state is finished without deal, warns PM
- Effort to renew public backing for peace talks



<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/nov/30/israel>

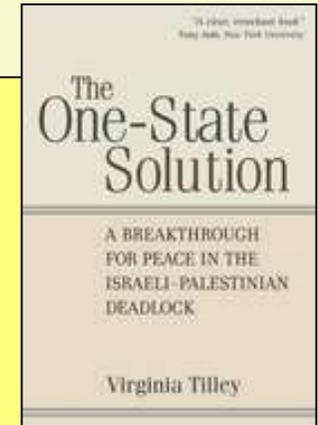


Journalist Gideon Levy is a first generation "Israeli patriot" who once backed the 'two state solution' but now sees it as a trick. VIDEO (1'38"): Gideon Levy (2016) 'Two-State Solution Debate', full video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5zw3Yz-yas>

One Democratic State in Palestine?

A single democratic state seems the best of four options:

1. The status quo - increasingly obvious apartheid
2. Expel all the 'settlers' - unlikely and a potential bloodbath
3. Two states - steady land theft has made this a 'Bantustan' option
4. One democratic state - logical response to apartheid, as in South Africa; there are at least four 'one state' campaign groups, at the moment.



<https://onestatefoundation.org/about-us/>



<https://onestatecampaign.org/en/>



<http://odspi.org>

<https://odspal.net>



Resistance: the key

On the strength side, popular resistance has not gone away, despite 70 years of repression, encirclement and ethnic cleansing. Resistance remains the principal asset, and includes holding ground, building the population and various forms of active resistance.

Resistance also remains the foundation of Palestine's growing moral and international legitimacy, stronger diplomatic relations, increasing rejection of Israel and greater UN recognition of Palestine as a nation.



Yet a key complicating factor remains the sponsors' (mainly the USA) use of Israel as an base by which to control the wider region

Boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) and the spread effects

BDS is a campaign that models itself on the sanctions imposed on Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s - not on Washington's unilateral 'sanctions' against dozens of independent countries.

Even those who do not support BDS shrink from Israel, at times. For example the Israeli-born actress Natalie Portman turned down \$2m and the Israeli 'Genesis' prize because she was too ashamed to be seen with Prime Minister Netanyahu. There is demoralisation amongst the large group of Israelis with dual citizenship.

Richard Falk (2014), former UN Special Rapporteur, rejected the idea of Palestine as a '**lost cause**', because it was winning the legitimacy battle: "Palestine is winning what in the end is the more important war, the struggle for legitimacy, which is most likely to determine the political outcome". He cited Vietnam, Algeria and Iraq: "the side with the greater perseverance and resilience, not the side that controlled the battlefield, won in the end".



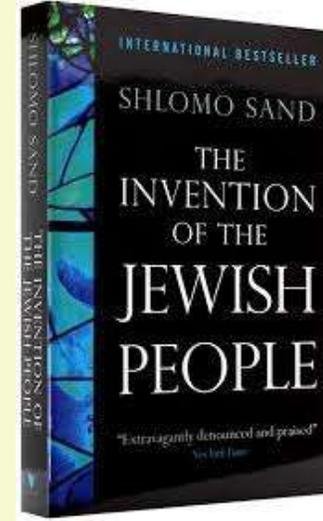
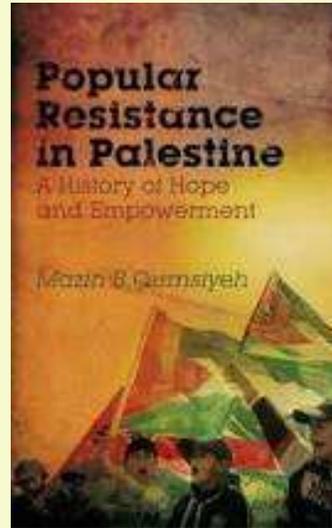
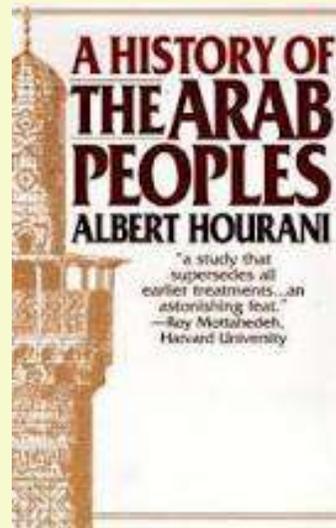
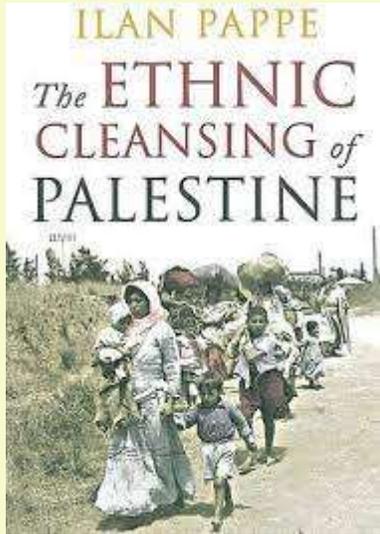
<https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>



Summary: key points

- ❑ Palestine is a land, a people and a culture with a unique and diverse history;
- ❑ The latest attempt to seize control of the Jerusalem-centred region has been by European Zionists, backed by British, French and US sponsors;
- ❑ Rationales for the Israeli colony have been (a) a mythical 'return' of a supposedly dispersed people, and (b) refuge from the massacres of Nazi Germany;
- ❑ Yet 70+ years of Palestinian resistance has prevented the emergence of a legitimate 'Jewish state', instead there is now a well recognised apartheid regime;
- ❑ Failure of the 'two state' idea and wider recognition of Israeli apartheid suggests a likely forced transition to a single democratic state, a transition complicated by the USA and NATO using Israel as a base by which to control the wider region;
- ❑ Weaknesses on the Palestinian side are disunity, leadership failures and persistence of the two state myth, nevertheless, the transition is likely to be finally determined by a combination of Palestinian resistance and failing Israeli legitimacy;
- ❑ Palestine is hardly a 'lost cause', there have been gains in recent years. Resistance has imposed limits on north and south expansion. The key strength remains the 'steadfastness' (sumud) of a battered but brave people.

Further reading



Pappe, Ilan (2006) *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oneworld Publications
Hourani, Albert (1991) *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Faber and Faber
Qumsiyeh, Mazin B. (2011) *Popular Resistance in Palestine: a history of hope and empowerment*, Pluto Press
Sand, Shlomo (2010) *The Invention of the Jewish People*, Verso