

DIALOGUE

**REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN
ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE
IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN, FOR ONE STATE SOLUTION
END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, HEBREW AND FRENCH**



Arabic and hebrew : Stop War Crimes

Press Release. Stop the assault! Ceasefire Now! ■
Gaza Massacres, by Salah Salah ■ An Open Letter
From Anti-Zionist Jewish Youth in Canada ■
Thoughts on Gaza, by Miko Peled ■ Where peace is
a problem, by Haim Bresheeth ■ The Gaza Ghetto
uprising, by Mazin Qumsiyeh ■ The Political Failure
of the Euromed Civic Forum, by Ameer Makhoul ■
The Texas Solution, by Ben Adam ■ The pogrom at
Acre, who should apologise? By Nizar Abu Ahmed –
Nazareth ■

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Contents

Introduction	page 3
Press Release. Stop the assault! Ceasefire Now!	page 6
Gaza Massacres. By Salah Salah	page 7
An Open Letter From Anti-Zionist Jewish Youth in Canada	page 11
Thoughts on Gaza. By Miko Peled	page 13
Where peace is a problem. By Haim Bresheeth	page 16
The Gaza Ghetto uprising. By Mazin Qumsiyeh	page 19
The Political Failure of the Euromed Civic Forum By Ameer Makhoul	page 21
The Texas Solution By Ben Adam	page 24
The pogrom at Acre, who should apologise? By Nizar Abu Ahmed – Nazareth	page 26



Introduction

Today a 60-year old Palestinian can only have lived in exile or in an occupied land. The heavy shelling of Gaza, where 70% of the people are refugees or descendants of refugees, most of them from the cities and villages of the Mediterranean coast, shows that the Nakba (the Arabic for "catastrophe"), which started with the massive and violent expulsion of 800 000 Palestinians in 1948, is not over. For the Zionist leaders, it should be erased from history. At the time of the ceremonies celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, Tzipi Livni, who knows very well that the Palestinians will never relinquish their rights, said that "as long as the Palestinians have not struck the word Nakba from their lexicon, no territory will be transferred." The Nakba is not a memory, it is a permanent threat that began to hang over the Palestinians sixty years ago, and is inextricably connected with the demand for the right of return.

Is it not the case that the present chaos has its origins in 1947, when the UN voted for the partition of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel, on the basis of massive plunder? The present situation was there right from the beginning and it will go on as long as the gross injustice caused by the Nakba has not been put right.

"Not in our name!" Confronted with the barbarism that for 22 days (at the time of writing) has been unleashed on the Gaza Strip, with the appalling pictures of bodies torn to pieces by US bombs dropped by the Israeli air force, political leaders and activists, academics, intellectuals and politicians, all of Jewish extraction, have in an unheard-of situation, given full vent to their indignation. In Israel itself, on several occasions, thousands of Jews who do not want the killings to be done in their name have taken part in demonstrations and chanted "Stop the massacre! Cease fire, Lift the blockade now! At the same time, in the villages of Galilee, in their homeland, thousands of Palestinians, despite unprecedented repression, have shown their solidarity with their brothers of Gaza, thereby expressing the unity of the Palestinian people.

Let us quote what Sir Gerald Kaufman, a British Member of Parliament had to say:

"My parents came to Britain as refugees from Poland. Most of their families were subsequently murdered by the Nazis in the holocaust. My grandmother was ill in bed when the Nazis came to her home town of Staszow. A German soldier shot her dead in her bed.

My grandmother did not die to provide cover for Israeli soldiers murdering Palestinian grandmothers in Gaza. The current Israeli Government ruthlessly and cynically exploits the continuing guilt among gentiles over the slaughter of Jews in the holocaust as justification for their murder of Palestinians.

On Sky News a few days ago, the spokeswoman for the Israeli army, Major Leibovich, was asked about the Israeli killing of, at that time, 800 Palestinians -- the total is now 1,000. She replied instantly that "500 of them were militants."

That was the reply of a Nazi. I suppose that the Jews fighting for their lives in the Warsaw ghetto could have been dismissed as militants.

However many Palestinians the Israelis murder in Gaza, they cannot solve this existential problem by military means. Whenever and however the fighting ends, there will still be 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza and 2.5 million more on the West Bank. They are treated like dirt by the Israelis, with hundreds of road blocks and with the ghastly denizens of the illegal Jewish settlements harassing them as well. The time will come, not so long from now, when they will outnumber the Jewish population in Israel.

It is time for our Government to make clear to the Israeli Government that their conduct and policies are unacceptable, and to impose a total arms ban on Israel. It is time for peace, but real peace, not the solution by conquest which is the Israelis' real goal but which it is impossible for them to achieve. They are not simply war criminals; they are fools."

Gerald Kaufman deserves praise for this statement, regardless of what one may think of his political viewpoints. We once more ask the question: which democratic solution is able to put an end to all those destructions?

Is it not once again proved that the two-state "solution", implemented by the partition of Palestine, can on no account provide a key to the problems posed to the peoples of the region?

In this issue we publish some of the hundred or so statements made by Jewish groups, activists, writers, intellectuals who, through the very existence of their protest, show that the totalitarian and bloody policies carried out by the leaders of the State of Israel run counter to the interests of all the peoples of the region, including the Jewish people.

"Courage to Refuse", an organization of young Israelis who refuse to serve in the occupied territories, has just issued an appeal calling soldiers to refuse to participate in the Gaza campaign. "The brutal, unprecedented violence in Gaza is shocking. The false hope that this kind of violence will bring security to Israelis is all the more dangerous. We cannot stand aside while hundreds of civilians are being butchered by the IDF."

Men and women working for various United Nations bodies like OCHA or UNRAWA have reacted with a similar scream of horror. In complete contradiction with the line developed by the UN, whose function has for 60 years consisted in mustering worldwide support for US policy, those officials, doctors, voluntary workers, being direct witnesses to

the physical destruction of hundreds of children, men and women, for the only reason that they are Palestinians, have themselves become the target of the Israeli "State barbarism".

The latest military Israeli operation, called "Cast Lead" is very clearly the most barbaric of all, due to the number of casualties, 80% of whom are civilians, the large-scale devastation and the cold cynicism of those who justify it.

Two states? A two-state solution involves providing answers to several questions: what will become of the "Arab citizens" whose political parties have just been banned from running in next month's parliamentary elections to the Knesset? What about the thousands of refugees? What should be thought of proposals that dispose of the democratic settling of the question of refugees?

Facts speak for themselves. The Israeli State's policy, which by all possible means aims at forcing Palestinians to give up their rights, shows that this State is only the instrument of a policy that defends very specific interests, certainly not the interests of the huge majority of the Jewish people.

Is it not the case that the statements and stances mentioned above add strength to the democratic struggle for the unconditional right of return for the Palestinian people, turned out of their land and suffering martyrdom in continuous wars and never-ending repression?

By entering into dialogue in this review, do Arab and Jewish activists of Palestine not show that there exists a way out? Do such facts not prove that the positive solution is, let us repeat it, a Palestine freed from Zionist and imperialist oppression, with equal rights for Arab and Jewish people, as is demanded by those young Jewish Canadians, anxious to secure a future, in the open letter published in this issue?

And, if for all peoples, the first priority is to stop the Israeli bombings at once and lift the blockade, is it not time, precisely to put a lasting end to this human tragedy, to initiate a debate between democrats, activists and workers as to seek together, in mutual respect, the solution that could stop all discrimination, enshrine equality and thereby lay the foundations of real peace and democracy?

Press Release

Stop the assault! Ceasefire Now!

Appeal for a demonstration,
Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, Sat., Jan.17

While talk of a cease-fire fills the newspaper headlines, in Gaza the killing continues and intensifies. More than a thousand people were already killed in Gaza, nearly a third of them children. Thousands are wounded, Tens of thousands of newly displaced refugees desperately seek shelter from the bombings and the tanks. The health, electricity and water systems are collapsing. On the other side of the border, the inhabitants of Israel's southern periphery are suffering, held hostage by the government. Their safety and well-being will certainly not be served by sowing death and destruction in Gaza, which only feed the cycle of violence. The government of Israel and the commanders of its armed forces threaten to perpetrate even more death and destruction, rather than decalring a ceasefire. Thousands of the demonstrators, including Knesset members as well as Jewish and Arab public figures, will take part in the march in order to cry out:

Stop the killing!

Cease the fire, lift the Gaza siege – now!

Despite the blackout by the communications media, which mobilized themselves for the war effort, despite the unprecedented political persecution and detention of more than 600 activists already, despite the verbal and sometimes physical violence directed at those who dare to subvert the national madness, on these dark days we will go out together on the streets to reiterate: Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies!

The Coalition of organizations opposed to the war and the siege of Gaza.

Jointly with the Monitoring Committee of the Arab Citizens in Israel:

Ahoti, Alternative Information Center (AIC), Anarchists against the Fence, Balad, Banki, Bat Shalom, Coalition of Women for Peace, Combatants for Peace, Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH), Da'am – Workers' Party, Gush Shalom, Hadash, Hithabrut – Tarabut, Indymedia, Israeli Communist Party (Maki), New Profile, Public Committee Against Torture (PCATI), Ra'am – Ta'al, Sadaka-Re'ut, Social TV, Student Coalition – Tel Aviv University, Ta'ayush, Tandit (Democratic Women), The Campus is Not Silent, The Shministim (Highschool Seniors') Letter, Women in Black, Yesh Gvul, Zochrot.

Gaza Massacres

by Salah Salah
(Beirut- Lebanon, January 7th, 2009)

The Israeli enemy has moved to the second stage of the barbaric attack on Gaza after finishing the first stage of air bombardment which continued for 9 days, and resulted in killing of hundreds of martyrs and caused a large number of casualties.

Throughout the first stage the Israeli occupation forces executed the following:

- Destroyed the infrastructure of the government, and organizations related to Hamas including mosques, schools and universities.
- Bombarded the leadership headquarters as well as houses of civilians which resulted in the death of complete families that were buried under the rubble.
- Fired rockets at a lorry that was carrying gas bottles as well as a civilian car which resulted in the death of a woman along with her four children, this led movement restrictions.
- The Israeli forces targeted the ambulances and medical staff, and hence they were not able to rescue the casualties which remained under the rubble.
- The markets were closed as a result of the continuous bombardment or due to lack of food storage and accordingly bakeries closed due to the insufficiency and flour.
- Schools and universities were closed and some were even bombarded.
- There was an electric disruption from some areas in the Gaza Strip.

I have managed to make phone calls and contact the wives of some of my friends and comrades and was told a very painful stories about their suffering and pain, some of which stories are:

1. Children's fear of continuous bombardment, lack of sleep and psychological effects of the shelling.
2. The continuous stress from mothers on their children and husband who are hiding because they are fighting with the resistance.
3. Families which stored food for emergency situations, since they were under the siege for the last six months were forced to use their storage.
4. The disruption of electricity makes people in Gaza spend their night in the dark and prevents them from watching the news and communicating with the outside world.

The second stage:

The situation is going to escalate and become more dangerous due to the participation of tanks from the ground and ships from the sea in order to invade three main areas in the Gaza strip :

- The northern part which is located parallel to the Zionist settlements, this part was subjected to bombardment throughout the first nine days which proceeded the incursion.
- The southern part which is parallel to the Egyptian borders (Rafah) in order to locate the tunnels and destroy them.
- The centre of the strip aiming at isolating the city of Gaza and carry on with the destruction as well as monitoring the movement of the fighters.

The majority of the areas which was invaded by the tanks and military jeeps are not inhabited and consists of flat plains which make it difficult for the resistance to penetrate.

The main aim of the second stage (the ground incursion into the strip) as declared by the Israeli army leadership is the destruction of Hamas's infrastructure at the areas targeted by the operation as well as control over the areas where the rockets are being fired from.

The Israeli leaders feeling no shame from these massacres and inhuman attacks stated that they are going to carry on with the military operation until further notice to accomplish their aims.

Some of the Israeli media tools are leaking information that Tsipi Livni is attempting to achieve an agreement which includes the following:

- Smuggling prevention through Sinai (Egypt) through a mutual Israeli- Egyptian plan where the United States of America plays a central role through providing consultants and engineers.
- Issue a resolution by the Security Council regarding a ceasefire which includes the states (meaning Israel) right in defending itself when attacked.
- Arrive to a regional agreement with Egypt regarding the closure of Rafah crossing unless according to the 2005 agreement, meaning with the PNA and under European supervision.

In any case Arab and international mediators started to move in order to stop the massacres committed by the Israeli forces and the most important of these countries are:

- A Palestinian delegation headed by the Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas which was formed by the Arab Ministers in order to urge the Security Council to take a stand towards forcing Israel to stop its aggression on Gaza, if the delegation's attempt is not successful an Arab Summit is to be held.

There is no credibility for the Arab regimes as some of them are unable to take firm decisions, others are involved with Israel and USA, while others only condemns the massacres.

- France through its president Sarkozy who failed to accomplish his aim from the beginning which he identified it as obtaining promises and guarantees by Arab countries that Hamas would stop firing the rockets at the Israeli settlements. And accordingly he is not a mediator but he holds the Israeli point of view that was presented by Tsipi Livni in Paris.
- Ardogan- the Turkish president- who seeks a particular aim, which is the formation of an agreement within the Arab Countries.
- Egypt which insists to consider itself as a main side in the solution, and-accordingly proposes an initiative that includes: Immediate ceasefire, Opening of borders and crossing points, The presence of observers from the European Union and other countries to guarantee the application of the commitments of both sides.

The demands of the resistance in Gaza, which is legitimate and modest :

- Stop this inhuman war and massacres in Gaza,
- Lift the siege,
- Open all the borders and crossings especially (Rafah)

Israel however is lobbying towards imposing its own conditions based upon the following factors:

- Its military superiority, the Israeli forces throughout ten days bombarded 1000 targets, 700 tons of explosives were destroyed as well as a massive number of houses, this resulted in the killing of 500 martyrs and 2500 casualties most of which are women and children, the forces also occupied certain locations in Gaza in order to use them for negotiations to achieve its aims.

The international official stand:

- The Security Council held two sessions and it is expected that a third one would be held in the presence of Arab ministers, on the other hand it has failed to take a firm decision regarding the war on Gaza.
- The United States of America justifies the inhuman invasion and massacres .
- The European countries stand varied but in all cases it did not and would not impose any pressure on Israel; on the contrary some of them think that these massacres are justifiable.
- Arab countries weak stand as Israeli leaders declared that some Arab countries encouraged them to launch the invasion and they are still urging Israel to carry on with its war on Gaza.
- What is happening in Gaza targets all of its inhabitants and not only Hamas

The Palestinian side depends on the following :

- The resistance's ability to confront and tolerance in causing casualties within the Israeli military forces as well as the Zionist settlements inside the green line.
- The tolerance of the Palestinian people inside the Gaza strip and their ability to accept the huge loss and suffering. We can confidently say, that based on previous experiences, Palestinians become united when they are exposed to external danger and they always overcome all the differences in opinions and arguments, in the battle field all of the factions are united in forming an operational room to defend the strip. And accordingly tanks and aircrafts can kill and bombard but they can't defeat the fighter's will and determination.

In spite of the intensity of the ground, sea and air attacks, the resistance are still capable to firing the rockets against Israel. During the first day of the attack the resistance has managed to fire 32 rockets, and according to an Israeli military spokesman 50 soldiers were injured amongst of which two were killed, one of them is a commandant, while the fighters in Gaza estimated the casualties to be higher than this as 84 settlers were taken to hospitals as result of a nervous breakdown from the fired rockets.

- The international and Arab mass movement and demonstrations, such as the 2 million big demo that took place at the city of Rabat in Morocco and the 1 million demo in Istanbul- Turkey, as well as the 150 thousand huge demo that took place at the 1948 Palestine / Sakhnin, these mass movements as well as others are a live indicator that the Palestinian case is a just and fair case and all people who believe in human rights and freedoms are keen to defend it, it is also an indicator that the public opinion has realized that Israel is state of terror and is not concerned to make peace with the Palestinians.

These kinds of movement are necessary and important and shall sooner or later impose a pressure on the decision makers to support the resistance of the Palestinian people to achieve liberation, independence and right of return.

Speculations:

- The Israeli forces will carry on with its aggressive attacks and will not stop committing massacres unless they arrive to an agreement where they believe can impose their own conditions.
- In return the Palestinian resistance and tolerance will carry on until they accomplish the least extent of their demands: lifting the siege and opening the crossing points.
- An agreement is going to be formulated, that addressed the demands of both sides but not within a short period of time, maybe after a long suffering for both sides, and this is when Israel will realize that it can't defeat the resistance and the Palestinian people in Gaza.

An Open Letter From Anti-Zionist Jewish Youth in Canada

(If you would like to sign on to this letter, please send an email with your name and city to antizionistjews@gmail.com)

January 5th, 2009

Like much of the world, we have spent the last week watching in shock and disgust as Israel continues its assault on the Gaza Strip. With the body count rising and a new tragedy in full bloom, we feel that it is important to speak out as Jewish youth in Canada and to denounce what Israel is doing in our name. The Jewish diaspora is diverse and divided on its positions on the state of Israel's policies. At this juncture in history, as Israel has committed its worst massacre in Gaza since it began its illegal occupation in 1967, we feel that it is crucial that Jews speak out and denounce Israel's actions that amount to no less than war crimes committed by an apartheid state.

As Jewish youth, we are diverse, but we are unified in our solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Gaza.

Some of us are students. We are outraged by the bombing of the Islamic University in Gaza city, as well as other civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and mosques.

Some of us are Arab-Jews and people of colour. We stand against Israel's racism, which has been enshrined in Israeli law, and privileges its Jewish citizens over its non-Jewish ones. This apartheid state views Palestinians as an expendable people, no more than collateral damage.

Some of us are queer. We reject Israel's branding of itself as the only safe place for queer people in the Middle-East while it targets gay and lesbian Palestinians and renders life unsafe for millions of others.

Some of us are Israelis living in Canada. We are calling for a solidarity that stretches beyond borders and nationalities. Israel's violent actions will only serve to further isolate the state and its citizens from the rest of the world. By calling itself a Jewish state and committing war crimes in the name of Jews everywhere, Israel makes the world even less safe for Jews, leading to an increase in animus towards Jewish people around the world.

Even though there have been approximately 100 Palestinian deaths for every Israeli killed by rocket fire, we recognize that Israeli Apartheid also leads to Israeli casualties. The blame for these deaths lies with Israel – if there were no occupation and no apartheid policies, there would be no rocket fire. If Israel, the world's fourth largest military power, is concerned about its citizens, it would abandon its apartheid policies and seek out justice for the Palestinian people.

In 2005, Palestinian civil society put out a clear call for international support through a non-violent campaign of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) similar to that carried out against the apartheid regime of South Africa. Now, with the people of Gaza being crushed by Israeli bombs, manufactured in the USA and launched with Canada's blessing, it is more important than ever for Jewish communities throughout the world to take up this BDS campaign in order to end Israel's apartheid system, which makes life unsafe for millions of Jews and Palestinians alike.

Let us not be silent bystanders while humanity suffers. Let us raise our voices, as Jewish youth, and demand a single, democratic state, with equal rights for everyone in Israel/Palestine.

Ours is a generation that is committed to ending Middle-East violence by opposing all forms of discrimination, calling for a just peace within the entire region, and condemning Zionism to the dustbin of history.

Free Gaza, Free Palestine,

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Jenny Peto, Toronto, ON | 38 David Hill, Vancouver |
| 2 Aaron Lakoff, Montreal, QC | 39 Corey Balsam, Ottawa |
| 3 Max Silverman, Montreal | 40 Lee Skinner, Vancouver |
| 4 Rachel Gurofsky, Peterborough, ON | 41 Britt Lehmann-Bender, Toronto |
| 5 Simon Gurofsky, Ottawa, ON | 42 Alexis Mitchell, Toronto |
| 6 Zohar Melinek, Montreal | 43 Jesse Rosenfeld, Montreal |
| 7 Claire Hurtig, Montreal | 44 Peter Driftmier, Calgary, AB |
| 8 Ben Saifer, Ottawa | 45 Joshua Schwebel, London, ON |
| 9 Brook Thorndycraft, Toronto | 46 Gideon Boxall, Vancouver |
| 10 Joel Balsam, Montreal | 47 Diana Jewell, Mission, BC |
| 11 David Mandelzys, Toronto | 48 Judith Mintz, Peterborough |
| 12 Reena Katz, Toronto | 49 Omri Haiven, Halifax, NS |
| 13 Mia Amir, Vancouver, BC | 50 Anne Bosch, North Vancouver |
| 14 Matthew Shuster, Kingston, ON | 51 Emily Bitting, Moncton, NB |
| 15 Avi Grenadier, Kingston | 52 Vivian Belik, Winnipeg |
| 16 Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, Waterloo, ON | 53 Sasha Lofquist, Oakville, ON |
| 17 Melissa Harendorf, Montreal | 54 Maya Shapiro, Toronto |
| 18 Jeff Hiemstra, Toronto | 55 Lisa Frances Greenspoon, Montreal |
| 19 Sacha Moiseiwitsch, Vancouver | 56 Aviva Cipilinski, Winnipeg |
| 20 Jake Javanshir, Toronto | 57 Daniel Tetrault, Vancouver |
| 21 Noam Lapid, Montreal | 58 Yaacov Iland, Kitchener, ON |
| 22 Stephen Kamnitzer, Toronto | 59 Jonah Gindin, Toronto |
| 23 Naava Smolash, Vancouver | 60 Rachel Huot, Toronto |
| 24 Tamara Herman, Victoria, BC | 61 Michelle Ohnona, Montreal |
| 25 Ryan Katz-Rosene, Ottawa | 62 Myka Tucker-Abramson, Vancouver |
| 26 Sarah Fuchs, Montreal | 63 Smadar Carmon, Toronto |
| 27 Daniel Thau-Eleff, Winnipeg, MB | 64 Eytan Holtzer, Kingston |
| 28 Deborah Rachlis, Ottawa | 65 Irene Germain, Montreal |
| 29 Marie L. Belliveau, St. Catharines, ON | 66 Emma Beltran-Kulikovsky, Toronto |
| 30 Sarah Kardash, Sackville, NB | 67 Jordan Topp, Montreal |
| 31 David Taub Bancroft, Vancouver | 68 Adam Balsam, Ottawa |
| 32 Kinneret Sheetre, Montreal | 69 Natalie Kouri-Towe, Toronto |
| 33 Rachel Marcuse, Vancouver | 70 Simone Arsenault-May, Toronto |
| 34 Lisa Barrett, Bowen Island, BC | 71 Louisa Worrell, Ottawa |
| 35 Rosanne Iland, Echo Bay ON | 72 Rachel Deutsch, Toronto |
| 36 Max Tennant, Vancouver | 73 Bee Sack, Toronto |
| 37 Noah Fine, Vancouver | |

Thoughts on Gaza

by Miko Peled
(December 30, 2008)

As I sit and view the reports, photos and live videos streaming in from Gaza I find it impossible to make sense of it all. As a boy growing up in Israel and attending a regular public school, I remember being taught the story of Abraham, the patriarch arguing with God over the decision to destroy the city of Sodom. And Abraham stood before the lord. And Abraham drew near, and said: wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked, perhaps there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the righteous that are therein? ..and the Lord said, if I find in Sodom fifty just men within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes Genesis, 18, 23-26. One has to admire Abraham for his tenacity, arguing with God almighty for the sake of fifty men! Today I heard the argument made that only 50 innocent people were killed in this attack and I thought: God would have spared Gaza for those 50, but not Ehud Barak.

One has to admire the idea that no matter what, the life of innocent civilians is sacred and must never be compromised. There can be no doubt that among the 1.4 million people residing in Gaza there are more than 50 righteous men and women, but more importantly, there are 800,000 children in Gaza. According to reports in the Israeli newspapers hundreds of thousands of children were on their way to and from school at the time that 50 Israeli war-planes began a nine hour attack during which they dropped more than 100 tons of bombs.

With Israeli elections scheduled for February, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who is hoping to once again become Prime Minister, has once again unleashed the Israeli military on the civilian population of Gaza. Barak who has earned the dubious distinction of being Israel's most decorated soldier, is guaranteeing that Israelis and Palestinians will see more violence and more loss of innocent lives. With columns of tanks, and brigades of infantry ready to attack the already destroyed Gaza, Barak hopes to prove that he is a candidate that can deliver. But unlike the biblical story, there is no one willing to stand up to General Barak and argue for the lives of fifty righteous men, not to mention, eight hundred thousand children.

The 800,000 thousand children of Gaza were the reason that Nader Elbanna and I in our capacity as co chairs of the Elbanna-Peled Foundation, decided to travel to Gaza to deliver essential medical equipment to Ahli hospital in Gaza city. We flew from SD in mid November, passing through Europe, Israel and Jordan to Cairo; then traveling overland we crossed the Suez Canal, stopping at endless Egyptian security checkpoints along the way to reach the gates of Gaza at Rafah. It was there that we were told t hat the border to Gaza is closed. We spent three days trying to get in, with Nader arguing,

negotiating passionately setting aside the excruciating pain from his ear and throat infection. In the end, standing merely 50 yards from our destination the truth came out of the mouth of one intelligence officer at the Rafah crossing who exclaimed: but we can't let you cross, the Israelis are watching.

We knew that an Israeli-Egyptian-American agreement was keeping the people of Gaza imprisoned, impoverished and malnourished but we hoped that with support and assistance we secured from Rotary in Egypt and other connections we could outsmart the system. The help we received was tremendous, but we had underestimated the system. Interestingly, the toughest part for us was not being denied entry, but rather it was calling Dr. Suheila Tarazi, of the Ahli hospital in Gaza and telling her that we would not be able to enter and deliver the equipment to the hospital. Dr. Tarazi thanked us for our efforts, described the intolerable conditions in Gaza and told us that with God's help we will all have peace one day. But the optimism and good wishes could not mask the grim reality evident in her voice. If the problems a doctor or a hospital administrator in Gaza had to face were insurmountable until a few days ago, now they are pure hell. As Israel shut off the electricity and shut down the supply of fuel, there is no refrigeration and medicines go bad and have to be discarded. Machines that need power to help people breathe; dialysis and other life support machines stop working. Now with hundreds of casualties and little equipment or medicine one cannot imagine what it must be like for Dr. Tarazi and others who are entrusted with the lives of the sick and the injured.

The Elbanna-Peled Foundation, was founded in memory of two little girls who were victims of the Palestinian-Israeli war: Smadar Elhanan, killed 1997 at the age of 13 when two Palestinians blew themselves up in Jerusalem, and Abir Aramin, killed at the age of 10 by an Israeli sniper in January 2007. The Gaza project was a third of its kind initiated by Nader Elbanna and I. Having met in a living room dialogue group in San Diego in the year 2001, our work together is done in an effort to demonstrate two points: Palestinians and Israelis are bound together by their ties to a mutual homeland and this bond can bring them together as allies; the second point is that an Israeli-Palestinian alliance is a powerful tool that can transform the region and stop the bloodshed.

The question has been raised of whether or not the Israeli attack on Gaza is disproportionate to the threat that Gaza presents to Israel. The answer to that lies not in numbers, not in comparing how many rockets were fired or how many of the dead are actually Hamas people and how many were bystanders. The answer lies in the biblical Abrahams admonition towards God in Genesis 18: Far be it from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked.

Looking beyond the grim reality of today, I remember something that was written by another doctor from Gaza, Dr. Mona El Farra. In a piece published in the US about a year ago she wrote: This may seem an unlikely time to discuss the prospect of one state with equal rights for all, but the fighting in Gaza makes clear that a cordoned-off Gaza

Bantustan is no solution. In response to this is wrote the following:
The question that Dr. El Farra raises it monumental: Why is it right to speak of equal rights everywhere except for Israel and Palestine? Indeed, it may be an unlikely time but it is never the less the right time to discuss the establishment of a secular, democratic state in Israel/Palestine in which human and civil rights are guaranteed to all its citizens.

Miko Peled is an Israeli peace activist and writer living in SanDiego. For comments or contact please go to mikopeled.wordpress.com



Where peace is a problem

by Haim Bresheeth.

(First publication in *The Electronic Intifada*,
December 31, 2008)

As the death toll in Gaza rises by the hour, and the few civic buildings still left are collapsing under the combined firepower of the Israeli air force, with its up-to-the-minute bombers and destructive armaments, we are again facing an incredible political phenomenon -- the foretold disaster which surprises all political leaders as if they, unlike the rest of us, never see a newspaper or watch the television news channels.

In Summer 2006, after months of Israeli hints that it was going to move into Lebanon and finish off Hizballah, world leaders were also too busy and quite shocked; to be precise, they were "shocked" for a whole month, a month of wanton destruction and killing, exactly until Israel needed a ceasefire urgently, as things were not going according to plan.

Then, all of a sudden, western nations moved overnight to impose a cease-fire. Even so, they failed to help Israel in its mission of destroying Hizballah. So, while only people with no easy access to their moral fiber can go on claiming that Israel is right in its murderous, barbaric and illogical revenge mission to hell, the real question is, how are they allowed to do it, and always get away with it?

After 40 years of brutal occupation, with every item of countless UN resolutions and the Geneva Conventions violated, with tens of thousands dead in countries surrounding Palestine, not to mention in Palestine itself, after numerous peace agreements, initiatives, drives, road maps and Nobel Prizes, we are still where we were 40 years ago, but in a much worse scenario.

Surely this could not be happening, yet it is, and it will continue to happen, dragging more and more of world politics into the quagmire of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has now turned into the World vs. Palestine conflict, it seems. Now this could never happen, unless world leaders were closing their eyes to it -- staunchly, continuously, devotedly and methodically, and for decades.

So what are they doing now, when Israel moves, again, against one and a half million Palestinians, after having starved them for almost two months? After having denied them any chance of work, food, medicine, fuel, electricity or water? What are the leaders of the democratic world, Bush, Brown, Berlusconi or Sarkozy -- all sworn supporters of Israel -- doing now? What have they learned from the last hundred or so Israeli incursions into Gaza? From the continued

cyclical destruction of Lebanon, every time an Israeli prime minister feels he needs to boost his standing?

One might well ask, when thinking about those leaders of the Free World, what they have learnt from Vietnam, or Nicaragua, or Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan conflicts, in which they were involved, ever-so-carefully? The truth is that the west has never managed to learn from either its colonial and imperial past, or from its ongoing blunders and war crimes in the present. The only variable seems to be the amount of force -- one always can resolve the conflict, it is just a matter of applying enough force, isn't it?

The Soviets also believed that given enough force, they could defeat Afghanistan, and so do some western politicians, though it seems that many are now wise to the fact that it is not going very well recently. Israel has been using this retarded policy for six decades -- if you fight everyone around, and make sure you are the strongest military force in the Middle East, then you can do what you wish; this was supposed to lead somehow to peace and quiet, yet it always fails. Yes, Israel can destroy the whole Middle East and much more, but, and this is curious, it cannot have peace of any kind with the Palestinians. How are we to understand this contradiction?

Well, to begin with, Israel has never looked for peace with the Palestinians; it only looked for means to depopulate and empty the country, ever since its founding in May 1948. It exiled 750,000 Palestinians from their land, made them refugees, and then systematically refused them and their descendants entry despite UN resolutions, while destroying their villages and towns, or building Israeli Jewish towns on top of them. Since 1967 it has done all any country could do, to make a political solution impossible, by illegally settling in the occupied territories, and by refusing to go back to the pre-1967 ceasefire lines, by building the Apartheid wall, and by generally making life impossible for most Palestinians. This is not an effort for peace -- more likely, this is an effort for continuous and systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

So, if peace is a problem, as it will by definition mean losing the mini-empire built by Israel, then one does what one can to avoid it, even it is offered on a plate, like in the Saudi Peace Initiative, which Israel's leaders, supposedly in waiting for exactly such an offer, scorned and refused. This denial of the potential for peace has been going on for so long, most Israelis have failed to notice it as it turned into second nature.

But the more terrifying reason why no peace initiative has ever had the slightest chance has indeed to do with us in the west. Israel has been supported by the western democracies as their bulwark in the Arab East, more dependable than client regimes such as the Saudis or Iraq's Saddam until 1990. As a strong proponent of the Huntingtonian thesis of the Clash of Civilizations, Israel is still, on a covert if not an overt level, the bastion of the Judeo-Christian world against the Arabs and Islam. This was true some decades ago, but has never been truer than in the last decade, with the New World Order of continued crisis,

of the Shock Doctrine, of Shock and Awe, of repeated storms in the deserts of Asia, always Islamic.

Israel, not Iran, possesses nuclear weapons, and is also capable of using them, and threatens to do so, yet it is Iran who is the culprit. The proponents of attacking that country are the same merchants of doom who have sold us the war in Iraq. Imagine for a moment what a Muslim in Britain might feel, if he stopped to think about a world in which the main culprits, "terrorists," extremists and insurgents are always said to be Muslims, and are everywhere being hunted by the great forces of international "law and order," mainly led by the so-called Free World? Is it so surprising that a tiny number of British born and bred Muslims found it acceptable to explode bombs in the capital? Is the solution to this loaded and explosive situation to kill more Muslims, to alienate more Muslims?

One thousand years after the beginning of the Crusades, one is tempted to ask if it is not time to close the book, to call it a day, to bury the hatchet and start talking? And, to be sure, there can be no talking as long as the Free World sticks with the Israeli method of conflict resolution -- bomb them to smithereens, then you don't need to talk to them, and if you need to talk to them, they will talk differently when bombed out of existence.

How long will we support destruction as a platform for dialogue? Has it ever worked anywhere?

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The Gulf War and the New World Order.*

The Gaza Ghetto uprising

by Mazin Qumsiyeh,
PhD* (7, jan. 2009)

In Gaza as in Iraq, the US public is being lied to while US taxpayers and US power is wasted to support aggression. Vanity Fair reported on the scheme to topple Hamas concocted by Eliot Abrams (a Zionist in the Bush administration) that was “part Iran-contra, part Bay of Pigs” that ended up strengthening Hamas. And by contrast to PR strategies, the former head of the Israeli intelligence services admitted in Israeli papers that Israel could have stopped Palestinian retaliatory home-made rockets long ago by lifting its siege of Gaza (a condition of the cease fire between Hamas and Israel agreed to but rarely implemented) but that Israel had a more strategic issue: to try a different way to topple the duly elected Hamas government.

But what else are we not being told about Gaza? Over 70% of the 1.5 million Palestinians in this besieged tiny strip of arid land are refugees. When Obama visited Sderot in the Negev, he should have also visited Gaza where he would have met with the original residents of Najd which was renamed Sderot after its destruction and settlement by European Jews. In Gaza he could have met with refugees from many of the 530 villages and towns ethnically cleansed. To aid the exodus, in the six weeks that preceded declaring Israel a state, 33 massacres were committed by Jewish forces like the Haganah, Irgun, and Stern (forerunners of the Israeli army that is attacking Gaza today). The Palestinian Nakba or catastrophe of destruction and ethnic cleansing marks our history like the genocides of WWII marks European history. The nascent state expanded by force to encompass 78% of Palestine (50% more than it was allocated). The West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied in a second stage of Israeli expansion (1967). A massive colonial settler enterprise brought 450,000 Jews from around the world to live in the West Bank. In an eternal quest for maximum geography (for the Jewish state) with minimum (native Palestinian) demography, a deepening system of apartheid and discrimination ensued funded by US taxpayers. As in other colonial ventures, the natives (e.g. Native Americans, Algerians, Indians etc.) are designated as terrorist, savages, and barbarians especially when they resist.

The Gaza Ghetto uprising was so inconvenient to designs to dominate the Middle East, that it was met with uncommon brutality. This had to be coupled with massive and well-funded media campaigns abroad to hide the realities while preventing media access to Gaza. But independent coverage in Europe and elsewhere show that Israeli forces shelled two universities, three colleges, police stations, several residential neighbourhoods, three UN schools, roads, bridges, and a children playground. 700

Palestinians were killed in two weeks and over 3000 injured. Half of the victims are women and children and half the men are non combatants. Relative to US population, this would be like killing 132,000 US citizens in two weeks. The Red Cross and UN agencies report massive violations of Israeli obligations under International law in many cases amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Ironically, in the past 60 years the US used its veto power twice as often to protect Israel from International law than to protect US interests.

The real reason for the onslaught on Gaza is also not about fundamentalist Islam. The US and Israel are happy to support those when they tow the party line (take Saudi Arabia for example). Like the attack on Lebanon in 2006 Gaza is pummelled to accept the colonization and power structures. In that context we can understand Israeli Deputy "Defence" minister Matali Vilnai who warned once that continuing resistance would bring upon Palestinians a "bigger holocaust". Indeed resistance to colonization and occupation are natural and enshrined in International law and can only be obliterated by genocide.

The timing of Israel's carnage in Gaza is not coincidental to US transitions of power (i.e. terrorize Palestinians in case Obama may not be as sympathetic as Bush to such tactics) nor is it coincidental to upcoming Israeli elections (ie. ruling party candidates want to appear extra tough). What is not understandable is that US taxpayers are supporting this charade. The US role in the world was most admired and its economy was booming when President Eisenhower stood with International law and forced Israel to withdraw from Gaza and the Sinai in 1956. By contrast, US standing in the world and its economy are weakest now that the Israel lobby is at maximum power and dragging us into endless wars. Despite the blackout in many media outlets, hundreds of demonstrations in support of Gaza around the US indicate that people are starting to understand that this injustice cannot go on. When we end US support for Israeli apartheid (and we will), both Israelis and Palestinians will be able to live in dignity and peace and a big weight will be lifted from the US and world economies. The alternatives are continuing bloodshed and economic devastation. The choice is obvious.

**Dr. Qumsiyeh served on the faculty at Duke and Yale before returning to serve at Bethlehem University and as Chair of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People. His website is Qumsiyeh.org*

The Political Failure of the Euromed Civic Forum: Marseille 3-4 November 2008

by Ameer Makhoul
Nov 7th, 2008

As a co-founder of the Euromed NGOs platform since 2002, and as an active figure in the process of building it up and encouraging its foundation, I was very disappointed with the Final Statement and Plan of Action issued by the Forum in Marseille, 3-4 November 2008.

I was shocked by the marginalization of the Forum's political voice on the core issue of Palestine including the case of Palestinian refugees and the right of Return. It was even more shocking to witness the absence of the jointly Israeli-world crime of the siege on Gaza, the Zionist apartheid wall which blocks and tears apart Palestine's lands and people, the 11,500 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails and the Israeli criminalization of any linkage between Palestinian people in the homeland and Diaspora and even within our homeland (Gaza, Jerusalem, Palestine 48 areas and the West Bank). All of these issues were 'forgotten' in the CIVIC forum under the title of: "MOVING and living together in the Euromed space"??

How could civil society representatives adopt such a statement whose language and tone suit more the language of the Israeli political voice and their President Shimon Peres (the initiator of the Israeli nuclear armament and the official responsible for the Qana 1996 massacre in Lebanon) who would consider such a declaration too moderate!!

On which basis would the declaration call for the independency of civil society if the platform adopts the governmental voice? Ironically and in certain cases the civil society's voice is perceived to be more governmental than governments and more diplomatic than diplomats!! However, what is the political need for the platform and the Civic Forum if it doesn't lobby for civil society's agenda? What can Palestinian Refugees seek for from the platform when it doesn't mention their right of return to their home and properties in Historic Palestine?

Before I deal with the marginalization of Palestine, I think that the language regarding immigration in Europe ignores the historical root causes; I mean the colonial legacy of European countries in the Arab region. The European responsibility is not only based on human rights values, but one of the components of Europe's wealth is the colonization of Africa, the Arab region and the whole world in the past. It is an obligation that Europe deals with its direct historical responsibility on the imposed under-development of the South. The civil society is expected to call for historical justice and for the compensation of the colonial un-justice. Of course the Arab regimes are responsible but this doesn't deny the real historical root causes.

Therefore, does the Civil Forum consider the civil society an actor within the governmental frame or an independent entity?

It was appalling to see the loss of the spirit of civil society's independent voice and so I beseech all civil society organizations to urge the EU presidency and all EU governments to stop collaborating with the Israel-US strategy in the region and to respect the results of the elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council based on the votes of Palestinian community in West Bank and Gaza; The EU must not become a partner in the collective crime against the Palestinian population in Gaza.

What does the declaration mean by the statement: "We call on International Community and particularly on the European Union to implement immediately UN resolutions"? is this the platform and civil society's plan of action? The siege on Gaza is a crime against humanity with international support and there is no UN resolution issued on this subject.

Where is the voice which Arab civil society should be the first to raise to sanction Israel not the Palestinians and to boycott Israel as a colonial racist entity? Where is the voice to share responsibility with the solidarity movements worldwide in support of Palestine, just peace and challenging the siege on Gaza??

The Declaration, in the 2nd paragraph, states the following: "These values (of the universal declaration for human rights) are universal norms that each people, all men and women, have the right to benefit from. Ignoring or weakening these values, in the North and the South Mediterranean alike, will reinforce dictatorships, the worst injustices and indiscriminate violence". Again, the problem is with what's not mentioned. Israel is not considered as a dictatorship but a 'western democracy' and represents more than 60 years of ongoing war and racist crimes and violations of human rights. This aspect which is the most negatively influential in the Euromed process is not mentioned.

In the 4th paragraph, it is mentioned: "This implies that each State be recognized within its borders", how is this applied to Palestine and to the Israeli occupation. This doesn't mean at all self determination; in addition such a position opposes by definition the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their home lands, homes and properties. But more than that is the 'language' of *states borders* representing a governmental voice, while civil society in its nature is expected lobby for rights – and in this context people's rights.

I expect some colleagues to argue against this critic and claim that Gaza and "colonial occupation" are mentioned within the declaration, but in fact both are mentioned within a wider context, while excluding the "Wall" and the Palestinian refugees' right of return. All what is mentioned isn't stated within the framework of the plan of action meaning that they are not issues for focus and follow up.

Based on the above I believe that the declaration reflects political dimensions which are totally unfamiliar to the independency of civil society. As a co-founder of the platform I see that the internal structural changes imposed on the platform through weakening the position, the representation, political impact of national networks (especially the Palestinian representation) and shifting the platform into thematic EU dimensions are highly reflected in the outcomes of Marseille Civic forum 2008. I also believe that this specific declaration urges civil society structures to double-check their need for the platform.

Ameer Makhoul is General Director of Ittijah – Union of Arab Community Based Associations in the Israeli State (Palestine 48)

The Texas Solution

by Ben Adam (January 7th. 2009)

The US evaluates the situation in the Middle East through racist and religious worldviews, and it is these views that form the ideological base of their support of Israel and help perpetuates the war on Palestinians.

It becomes apparent when we make a few simple mental substitutions. If we call the Israelis whites, and Palestinians Blacks, the picture clears up and is outlined in these black in white terms as a racial war. The whites are powerful and supported by other powerful white groups in an effort to assert and maintain dominance. The blacks are struggling against the oppression of the whites. Another substitution simplifies the picture further when we examine it through a religious prism. The Israelis belong to a Judeo-Christian bond and the Palestinians are Muslims who threaten it. The US and other allied power institutions of the western world prefers to define their victims in subhuman terms, as savages, barbaric or terrorists who are acting unreasonably from passion, hatred and revenge. It is easy for then to consider as they have the Native Americans, the Vietnamese and now the Iranians, Pakistanis, Iraqis and Palestinians as lesser beings, and wage an imperialist war on them disguised as a crusade for justice and peace.

The Palestinians defend their land with slingshots, rocks, and outdated weapons, and yet their fight is depicted in the mainstream media as equal in force to the Israeli army with its US supplied F16 warplanes, endless ammunition and cutting edge technology and weapons and a bankroll of billions. One must wonder, what it is that Israel is trying to achieve by its latest offensive on Gaza that leaves over seven hundred dead, half of them civilians, a third children? The Israelis tell the world that the goal of the operation is peaceful in essence and that they are trying to destroy Hamas, which they claim, is the real obstacle of peace. Say they succeeded in reaching their said goal. When they run Gaza to the ground, destroy civilian infrastructure, disable municipalities, starve, imprison, impoverish and kill innocence people, prevent medications and care for the sick, education for the young, when they rob them of human dignity and hope? Can they still talk of peace?

Without a doubt the American wars in Iraq and on the Taliban in Afghanistan have been total failures, as is Israel's war on the Hezbollah in Lebanon and its war on the Palestinians. No matter the media spins the only real plan the US and Israel have in the face of their shortcomings is to use more and more force. The US may play good cop to Israel's bad cop as they work together to break down resistance, but in reality Israel is acting as an imperialist military strong hold that threatens all other nations and people in the Middle East, and maintains the interest of the US as a dominant power in the region. This dichotomy between the propaganda and the true agenda of the US and Israel is no recipe for peace.

But I have a solution. It is the one who will resolve the situation more quickly and effectively than any other. It is an idea that will be easily accepted by all sides and is likely to enjoy enthusiastic worldwide approval. I will try now to outline it in broad strokes. The finer details can be worked out separately.

Israel is a small country, 8,000 sq miles in its present borders. Israel size can fit within the US 3.79 million square miles 444 times, in Texas alone it can fit 32 times. I suggest that the US allocate an area in Texas of about 8,000 sq miles and declare it the new Israeli state open to immigration to any Israeli citizen. The people of Israel will then face a choice of moving to the new Israeli state and become citizens of the US, or stay and become citizens of a new Palestinian state that will replace the outgoing Israeli state. As Palestinian Jews those who stay behind will enjoy all the rights and duties offered by the Palestinians to its citizenship. Those who move to Texas will enjoy all the rights and duties of a Texan. The US who has sang the praise of Israel for so long would benefit from the influx of the new immigrants. Simple.

You may think my idea ludicrous and absurd, but I invite you to walk the streets of Gaza and see for yourself what the ideas currently embraced by The US and Israel have amounted to. In the face of their complete failure my suggestion seems, if somewhat comical, much less sinister and fantastical.

The Texas Solution is not offered in earnest, but the need for a solution is no joke, and so I must endorse another who is the only real and true solution for lasting peace. One state for all Israelis and Palestinians, equal in rights, democratic, just and peaceful.

Ben Adam is an Israeli refuznik living in the US

From October 8th to 14th, riots occurred in the town of Acre which is inside the State of Israel, after Jewish fundamentalists attacked Arab inhabitants. In an article under the title "Separate and unequal development" published in Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz dated October 17th, Haim Jacobi explains that "this status is the outcome of a deliberate policy, most of the time implicit but occasionally explicit that operates on an ethno-national rationale. Its main objective is (...) to keep the number of Jews a dominant majority ruling it over the Arab minority in towns that are home to both populations."

Editor's note

The pogrom at Acre, who should apologise?

By Nizar Abu Ahmed - Nazareth

The attack on an Acre resident, Tawfik al-Jamal and his son by rogue colonists during the Easter night was the spark that media deemed was what caused the theory of co-existence of Arabs and Jews inside Israel to go bust. This theory is essentially grounded in celebrations and film and theatre festivals and also hummus meals, and olive oil festivals that are staged in Acre every year.

Actually things are slightly different. Forums and events that are organised to celebrate the peace through which some Jews and Arabs are trying to reach to each other are in fact a distortion of the reality that the Acre Arabs, rooted in their 1948 land are living. Tawfik al-Jamal told some media - among which Sun Radio in Nazareth - what actually took place. It just gives one the shivers especially when he tells about the racist and barbarous attack he sustained with his son when he was going to fetch his daughter who lives in another part of the town. What was said was reported by al-Jamal; it proves that the man is a responsible person, able to understand the holiness of Easter for Jews, which contradicts the lies accusing him of speeding along the streets with blaring music, which would have provoked the Jewish colonists.

Al-Jamal's answer was straightforward, unambiguous and clear-cut. We have never been able to hear it relayed by local leaders or even by the leaders of the Arab masses living inside Israel. Al-Jamal explains that the Arab inhabitants of Acre are in a situation bordering on chaos. They have been driven to that sort of attitude by the racist policies that the mayor - a member of the Likud party - has been implementing after the pogrom.

Attacks against the Arab population have been going on night and day and this fact shows that they have been carefully and secretly prepared in the offices of the Zionist parties and Israeli institutions to empty Acre of its Arab inhabitants and wipe off anything Palestinian from this historical town.

And that is just a foretaste of what will take place in Jaffa, Ramla, Lod or even Karminil and Natsirit.

Events gathered speed, showing that it was just a question of time for the pogrom to take place. The racist declarations of Zionist party leaders and of the Israeli government were willingly heeded. How could one otherwise explain that 850 colonists from Safad and Tebura were on the spot in Acre? How could one otherwise explain that 200 students from Talmudic schools were on the spot and lent a hand in the pogrom? The facts are substantiated by several dozens of testimonials.

The pogrom at Acre once again raises the issue of the lopsided co-existence between Jews and Arabs in this country. That co-existence is rooted in the confiscation of lands and work and is used as a cover-up by the authorities to continue the racist attitude against the Arabs who were born in this country and who still live in it. Such co-existence turns mixed towns as Acre and Jaffa into ghettos, till the time comes when Arabs are turned out of the land and replaced by colonists who have no connection with the land.

That is the essence and the rationale of co-existence advocated by some: lands are confiscated, our dignity is trodden under foot against a backdrop of art or theatre festivals tinged with hummus and olive oil, all that in the name of co-existence.

As they do their utmost to uphold this false co-existence, some Arabs are trying to patch things up; in this way Tawfik al-Jamal was asked to apologise for the "wrong" he caused the colonists! When he and his son came within a hair's breadth of losing their lives, local Arab leaders in Acre are expected to offer their official apologies and acknowledge to one and all that Tawfik al-Jamal had committed an "irresponsible action". So the Mayor of Acre, Israeli and security institutions will be content, and life will continue as before and even better than before!

The inhabitants of Acre will not apologise, especially to those who have downtrodden the dignity of their country, of their homes, of their own pride. They paid a high price for the love of their land and they will continue resisting just as Acre resisted the armies of Napoleon.

"If the coloniser is savage, foolish and without virtue, we should not trip and try to emulate him in his savagery and his lack of morals; we must show the world that we are civilised and that we hold to ethics." That is how Ghandi, one of the great leaders of the 20th century presented his philosophy to fight British colonisation in India. Instead of armed violence, the best weapon that Ghandi chose to fight the coloniser was boycott.

Ghandi's experience cannot be fully implemented in the case of the Arabs at Acre or the Palestinians of 1948 Palestine in general in their fight against Zionist racism. It could however have been the case in the 1967 territories.

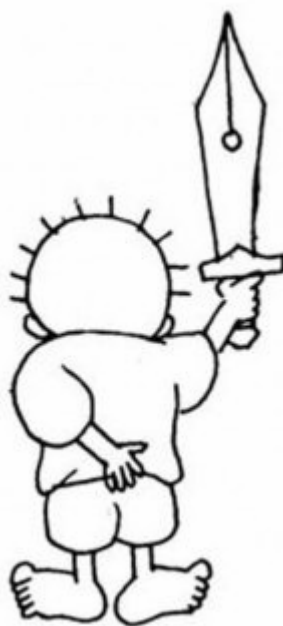
The leaders of the Arab masses who preferred to avoid confrontation, the lack of a political programme and mounting racism against the Arabs of Acre show that, a few days after the attack on the Arab population of Acre, Ghandi's theory is still alive among oppressed peoples, including in Acre.

The Wilaat company and patriot's organisations such as Yater quite rightly organised an alternative festival in response to the Zionist barbarity which was shown in Acre. Those organisations, theatre companies and performers in Haifa, in Acre and in Galilee were able to respond when they took a patriotic decision to organise an alternative and committed festival which the Palestinian populations warmed to. Crowds flocked to those festivals not only to give them financial support but also to highlight the blood connection and shared fate of all the Palestinians in this country. It is also a message that clearly proclaims that we are through with the culture of Hummus and Falafel "Izaa ta'im hakhu ba'ku".

All his life, Ghandi acted against racism. As he boycotted imported textile, he set up a major campaign showing that he wanted to free the nation's economy. He devoted 4 hours a day at his own distaff and that he wove his own garments and he became a symbol for the entire country. The material replaced the production of British mills that had imperilled Indian local industry.

It is true that it not easy to implement the boycott culture articulated by Ghandi in such sectors as banks or post office, but it is relevant in front of Israel's racism and fascism.

In this movement, all the Palestinian Arabs of Acre are called on to respond to the appeal of national organisations and of the Sawt el Amel trade union to defend the inhabitants of the town faced with Zionist racism that is bent on turning us out of our own homeland.





Painting image on Fall's Road, Belfast (Ireland)

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