
DIALOGUE

REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN ARAB AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS OF PALESTINE

IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN, FOR THE ONE STATE SOLUTION

END OF TERM REPORT PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, ARABIC, HEBREW AND FRENCH

The IMF's plan for the West Bank: A carved up state with no right of return.— A Shared State in a Shared Homeland. It is time to discard the two-state premise. By Miko Peled — Israel has Crossed the Rubicon. By Lynda Brayer. — "The Palestinian Arabs who live within the 1948 borders are an integral part of the Palestinian people." By Nizar Abou Ahmed. — Would the creation of a Palestinian State next to Israel as a "Jewish State" really be the only possible alternative? By François Lazar. — Press Statement by the Family of Ameer Makhoul. We Accuse! By Janan Abdu and Issam Makhoul. — Letter from Gilboa Prison. By Ameer Makhoul. — A Single Palestinian State, Secular and Democratic. By Salah Salah. — «A one way trip with no return. The story of an Egyptian Communist Jew » by Victor Segré. Book presented by Samy Hayon. — An interview of Husam Abed, in charge of the Dafa theatre in the refugee camp of Baqa'a (Jordan). Interview by Claudine Dauphin.

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Contents

Page 3 — Presentation

Page 4 — The IMF's plan for the West Bank: A carved up state with no right of return. Written in Ramallah.

Page 7 — A Shared State in a Shared Homeland. It is time to discard the two-state premise. By Miko Peled

Page 9 — Israel has Crossed the Rubicon. By Lynda Brayer.

Page 12 — "The Palestinian Arabs who live within the 1948 borders are an integral part of the Palestinian people." By Nizar Abou Ahmed.

Page 13 — Would the creation of a Palestinian State next to Israel as a "Jewish State" really be the only possible alternative? By François Lazar.

Page 17 — Press Statement by the Family of Ameer Makhoul We Accuse! By Janan Abdu and Issam Makhoul.

Page 19 — Letter from Gilboa Prison. By Ameer Makhoul.

Page 20 — A Single Palestinian State, Secular and Democratic. By Salah Salah.

Page 41 — « A one way trip with no return. The story of an Egyptian Communist Jew » by Victor Segré. Book presented by Samy Hayon.

Page 48 — An interview of Husam Abed, in charge of the Dafa theatre in the refugee camp of Baqa'a (Jordan). Interview by Claudine Dauphin.

Presentation

As the present issue of *Dialogue* is published, it is quite obvious, with a few days' hindsight, that the resumption of the "peace talks" resembles the multiple talks resumptions that regularly give the illusion that the efforts made by the ones are met by the stubbornness of the others. But can things be otherwise? Some contributions try to answer this question.

The present issue of *Dialogue* publishes an important article by Salah Salah, a Palestinian politician, who, as early as the fifties, engaged in the combat for the liberation of Palestine. Among other things, this article shows that, from 1948 to 1978, no less than 56 "peace initiatives" were taken, to which one should add the dozens that followed. For what result? More misery and sufferings for the Palestinian people, with less and less land; a widening social rift inside the State of Israel; the permanent threat of fresh wars and Israeli brutality. A whole population is jailed, under the constant threat of new massacres, new expulsions. As for the Jewish populations who were the victims (for those who came from Europe) of attempted genocide, they are now being conditioned into insensitive oppressors.

Also, what happened off the Gaza Strip shores last May, just like all the actions of the Hebrew State, is just the culmination of a ruthless rationale, originating in the expulsion of the Palestinians from their lands when the Zionist State was created in 1947-48 and in the various "plans" that, since then, have, one and all, validated that framework.

The very same rationale is used to justify the arrest and imprisonment of Palestinian activist Ameer Makhoul, who is the leader of a democratic association inside the State of Israel and whose major crime is to be Palestinian and to demand equal rights. The Editorial board of *Dialogue* review which published an article by Ameer Makhoul in November 2008, joins those who demand the immediate release of political prisoner Ameer Makhoul.

The question of the solutions to the conflict between Zionism and the Palestinian people is more than ever a front of the stage issue. It concerns all the labour and democratic activists the world over. But, we cannot make agreeing with our positions for a single State a prerequisite to the need to immediately engage the widest combat to defend the Palestinian people's democratic liberties. That is why *Dialogue* has decided to relay and to circulate the call "To all the vivid consciences, to all those who hold human rights dear" which we publish at the end of this issue. We call on all the readers to endorse it and to circulate it in their circle of friends, relatives and colleagues.

The editorial board.

The IMF's plan for the West Bank: A carved up state with no right of return

Written in Ramallah – September 15, 2010.

If the economic plan devised by Salam Fayyad, the current Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority enjoys strong support from the US administration, the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank, the reason is that they sponsored it. Never had a Palestinian plan generated so much interest.

But at the same time, Palestinians are highly suspicious of it. All Palestinian political forces consider that this plan represents a great danger and poses a major threat to the most vital Palestinian rights such as the right of return, the status of Jerusalem or self-determination. Neither is the plan backed by Fatah (of which Fayyad is not a member), but for different reasons.

Quite logically such an orientation gets the support of the United States or the European Union, or of institutions like the World Bank, which reduces people to poverty in Africa, in Asia as well as in Europe, as has been recently shown in Greece. This plan is at the centre of the agendas drawn up for the Middle East, or for what was not long ago called the New Middle east.

On the one hand the Americans are still fighting their wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, plunging those countries into civil wars and bloodbath, killing thousands of people who live there, destroying their infrastructures under the pretext that they are bringing them democracy and freedom. A similar orientation is implemented in Palestine, occupied in then name of a policy that entails murder, blockade and destruction. Tactics and slogans are the same: long live democracy!

Not surprisingly the Fayyad plan has sparked off an intense debate and sent a tremor through the Palestinian political landscape. The Palestinian people has had a long experience of fighting imperialism and has learnt a lot through the years of conflict, while at the same time paying a high price, particularly in the case of the Oslo Accords between the PLO leadership and the government of Israel, and also with regard to the long series of conferences, meetings, successive negotiations, from the 1991 Madrid Conference to the 2010 Annapolis Conference. What Palestinians have achieved with all this has only meant more losses, more destruction and what is generally regarded as the worst ever situation since 1948.

American imperialism has not succeeded in bringing the people of Palestine to their knees, or in forcing them to renounce their basic demands, although the vilest methods have been used: wars, embargo, famine and exodus.

As the American administration, with the European Union following suit, was unable to weaken the Palestinians, today it is seeking –through the plan embraced by Salam Fayyad – to impose on Palestinians a new set-up, meant once again to force them to accept new agreements with the regional American agent in the region, Israel. This time they are trying a

new approach, with a distinct change of language, dealing with the economy, thereby complying with a long-standing demand put forward by Israel.

In this context, it was important to choose Salam Fayyad, an IMF crony, who has been committed to such a political scheme for many years. Salam Fayyad, who has American nationality, was appointed to the job to manage American funds and make feasible an entity which it will be possible to call a "Palestinian State". Such an entity will need no government, but administrators, shareholders and a strong police force whose function is to maintain order. In that respect this orientation is part of the USA's overall policy aimed at reshaping the Middle East. The man they thrust on Arafat in 2002 as finance minister was assigned to the job at the very moment when the present president, Mahmoud Abbas, was imposed as Prime Minister. Fayyad has embarked on the implementation of the plan but can it possibly be carried out when Palestinians show no confidence? Not to mention the fact that they are suspicious of anything resembling the agreements they have known over the past twenty years. Can they be persuaded that this project is different: a plan that could guarantee the creation of a Palestinian State, while respecting Palestinian demands (which seems totally contradictory)? And can the Palestinian economy flourish under occupation?

The American administration has provided the answer to all those questions. According to the American plan, the Palestinian people's confidence should be restored so that they can be prepared to accept negotiations with the Zionist state. To achieve that goal, they have taken the following measures:

- 1 To lure Palestinians with the prospect of an improved economic situation in the West Bank. Dozens of local and international reports promote the Fayyad plan by referring to the unprecedented rosy future of the economy in the West Bank. And yet the situation is far from matching this idyllic vision: many economic analysts reckon that the average income of Palestinians in 2009-2010 went down 30% on 2000. For the overwhelming majority daily living conditions remain precarious, while a tiny minority of top civil servants and businessmen who have trade relations with the occupier live in affluence.

- 2 Under the pretext of "safeguarding the Palestinian citizen's security and consolidating the rule of law", the American administration is having the security apparatuses rebuilt under the command of General Dayton, an American. And it is Fayyad, their key henchman, who is really in charge. They have been trying to get the population to understand that the main cause of insecurity is the resistance movement not the occupier! Hundreds of activists, from all political forces, have been imprisoned and tortured, some of them dying under torture. Recently, a rally called by the leading left-wing forces with the intention of opposing the resumption of talks was attacked by Fatah thugs. In the context of that same pro-security policy, "intended to impose law and order", the weapons of armed groups have been seized, hundreds of associations that are par of – or close to – political forces opposing the Fayyad plan, have been broken up. In addition, all civil servants suspected of objecting to the plan have been dismissed from their duties.

3. Their purpose is to reinforce international aid to the Palestinian

Authority in the West Bank because it protects Israel's security and also to choke the people of Gaza on the grounds that their government is not willing to cooperate with the Hebrew state. This alleged international aid has become a weapon used by the international community to threaten the Palestinians and violate their right to self-determination.

We have to observe today that this absurd episode whereby the Israeli government and Mahmoud Abbas resume direct negotiations represents another stage in the American plan aimed at crushing the demands of the Palestinian people. More precisely it is meant to force them to give up the right of return for refugees, forget about Jerusalem, accept the settlements in the West Bank, and thereby recognize that the Israeli state has a "Jewish character." The purpose of the enterprise would consist in telling the Palestinian people that they are not wanted on their own land, as they would not fit in with the definition.

Salam Fayyad, the agent of the American administration, has spoken very clearly in his statements on the question:

- "No problems with those who believe Israel is the land of the Torah."

- "Violence is no longer part of the Palestinian struggle."

- "We are preparing the infrastructure to integrate refugees. Palestinians will have the right to reside within the State of Palestine." (He is referring to the integration of refugees in the West Bank, not in Israel).

- "I am sure a compromise is possible, on the question of Jerusalem."

Fayyad's previous statements throw light on the dangers of what can be called a plot being planned against the Palestinian people. Direct negotiations are aimed at suppressing the demands of the Palestinian struggle. How is it possible to believe that the Palestinian people after so many years of revolution will be able to accept all this? To believe so is an illusion. Despite the betrayal of a fraction of the political leadership, the Palestinian people will defend its right to bring together all its scattered components into a nation and create its State on the land of the whole historic Palestine. In accordance with what the historic PLO demanded, only such a state will be able to guarantee equality between all its citizens. Over 60 years of struggle against annihilation many dozens of plans and plots have been foiled, in spite of the huge backing they had received because of their convergence with imperialist interests. The present plan will come to a similar end. The Palestinian people will become increasingly determined to claim its rights. The dislocation of Fatah brings out the emergence of groups of activists seeking to continue on the path of resistance. In no way does the break-up of the PLO by Abbas undermine our past achievements. And the day will come when traitors will be thrown into the scrap heap of history, when – in accordance with the demands of historic PLO – we shall see the foundation of a State for all its citizens, a State of peace and equality on the whole of historic Palestine.

A Shared State in a Shared Homeland

It is time to discard the two-state premise.

By Miko Peled

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently argued, 'What is required is creative, novel thinking in order to resolve these complex [peacemaking] issues.' Netanyahu has never been so right.

The current Mideast peace talks will fail, as befell predecessors, because they are based on a flawed premise blocking the conflict's resolution. The proposed solution is based on an uneven partition of the land. Israeli Jews, who make up roughly 50 percent of the population, would receive at least 78 percent of the land – and probably more – while the Palestinians who comprise the other half of the population would receive what remains.

Over the last 100 years countless attempts have been made to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict via partition. All have failed. Today, with Israelis living comfortably in all parts of the country, including major parts of the West Bank, there is no reason to expect the current attempt will fare any better. On the contrary, one can count on further attempts at partition to fail.

This solution, a two-state outcome wrongly regarded as the only game in town, is based on the Zionist narrative claiming that Jewish Israelis have a greater right to the land than do the Palestinians. The current state of affairs in Israel/Palestine is that 10 million people are ruled by the State of Israel but live under different laws. Israeli Jews enjoy a free democratic society, Palestinians who are Israeli citizens make do with limited rights within Israel, Palestinians within the West Bank suffer from a dual system of law, while those in Gaza are confined to an open-air prison over which Israel maintains ultimate control.

Israeli forces may detain or kill Palestinians at will and without due process. Furthermore, Israel can easily confiscate land and other property from Palestinians. Recourse by Palestinians stripped of property or fundamental rights is confined to a kangaroo court that largely rubber stamps military and government actions. International law is toothless.

Israel has made its stance on the main issues of the conflict abundantly clear: no, no, no, and no. Israel will never stop building settlements, Israel will never share Jerusalem, Israel will never allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, and Israel will never return to the pre-1967 borders. In other words, Israel rejects Palestinian requirements – and the obligations of international law -- needed to establish a free and independent state.

The Arab leaders who support the current talks and traveled to Washington last week are all recipients of billions of dollars in U.S. foreign aid. They certainly cannot afford to say no to the President of the United States. Likewise, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who saw firsthand how his predecessor was vilified and then placed under siege while Israeli tanks took over the Palestinian government headquarters in Ramallah, cannot say no to ham-fisted demands by

Israel and the U.S.

The Palestinian Authority is often likened to a government – it has a Prime Minister, a parliament, and a President – but in reality its authority merely rivals that of a city council. The Palestinian Authority has very little control and is permitted to do very little governing. Israel essentially exercises veto control.

Netanyahu was right to propose it is time for “creative, novel thinking,” but his caveats on a Palestinian state doom it from the start. It is time to discard the two-state premise.

Since both people share the land they call home, their futures are tied together. They must chart their future together as equals. As Israelis and Palestinians are already largely governed by one government and one state, it is time that they have an equal voice in that government and an equal voice in determining their shared future. A shared state providing equal rights and protection under the law to all those who live in this shared homeland is the only way for the two peoples to enjoy peace and prosperity.

The two-state solution is finished, done in by decades of settlement activity entrenching unmovable colonies. A pluralistic, secular democracy in all of Israel/Palestine, with no partition and no segregation, will be a powerhouse of creativity and cooperation and will enable Israelis and Palestinians to move ahead towards a bright future. What worked in South Africa and a de-segregated American South can work in Israel/Palestine as well.

- Miko Peled is an Israeli writer and peace activist living in San Diego. Peled's upcoming book, "The General's Son," tells about his father, the late general and peace activist, Matti Peled, and his involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. He contributed this article to PalestineChronicle.com. Visit: tomikopeled.wordpress.com.

Israel has Crossed the Rubicon

By Lynda Brayer – May 31, 2010

The full extent of the murder on the Gaza-bound flotilla of boats by the Israeli Navy is not yet known. Israeli forces attacked the boats in the open seas this morning in an attempt to halt their efforts to break the blockade on the beleaguered population. The latest figures indicate that fifteen people have been murdered with more than thirty wounded, including Internationals, Palestinian Arabs and Jews.

It is quite clear that unarmed civilians, carrying food, medicine, and building supplies intended for civilian use, were attacked by Israeli forces without any provocation whatsoever. The boats were in the open seas sailing to Gaza to deliver these goods, a perfectly normal venture in normal times. The Israeli land and sea blockade of Gaza is illegal in international law and therefore, despite Israeli protests to the contrary – as always and as expected – any attribution of illegality or “provocation” to the flotilla belongs to the realm of agit-prop! The criminal actors guilty of illegality in this affair are the Israeli forces who have violated international public law and the humanitarian laws or laws of war. The PLO hijacking of the Achille Lauro in 1986 in an attempt to free Palestinian political prisoners held illegally in Israeli prisons is held up as an act of terrorism. However, it can be argued, and correctly in my legal opinion, that the actual and continuing occupation and colonization of Palestine itself is the original and continuing crime. Resistance to conquest is not, and cannot be defined, as criminal. However, if the West considered that it was an act of terrorism, how should we now describe this latest Israeli attack? It can, and should, be defined as the very epitome of a double terrorism: the first act of terror is the use of military force on the high seas, while the second act of terror is the use of this illegitimate force against hors de combat (unarmed civilians) (*)! Will this put the Israel Defense Forces on a list of illegal terrorist organizations?

The cold-blooded murder of unarmed civilians by government forces is the most damning of government actions. It is not only a crime, or an atrocity, or a massacre – which is bad enough in itself – but carries with it the irremovable mark of Cain, the mark of murder! Government murder, of necessity, contaminates a political system that practices it, and inextricably and inevitably causes political delegitimization of such a government. The reason for this is that it is the equivalent of an act of war against parties who, by definition, are not and cannot be parties to a war, and in many cases are members of the same body politic as the offending government!

This is why when governments act this way they attempt to do so covertly, although this is becoming increasingly difficult. Amongst the most glaring examples of such actions, are the massacres carried out by police during protests against the racist apartheid government of South Africa in Sharpeville in 1960 and Soweto in 1976. Unarmed civilians were mowed down for protesting against the continuing actions of the white-only government intended to weaken and fracture the Black community. Both events were strongly condemned by the politically unrepresented

Black majority and the local white opposition, as well as the international community, thus contributing to the increased tarnishing of the apartheid regime and its inherent illegitimacy. It was precisely just such government actions that ultimately led to the suspension by the United Nations of South Africa, and the worldwide boycott and sanctions against it.

These actions might not have collapsed the regime in and of themselves, but they weakened that most precious yet amorphous, but vitally necessary component of any government: the assent of the governed and their uncoerced cooperation. The Black community of South Africa withdrew its cooperation with the government from that point forward. The response of the government was further and widening repression, which people knew was an expression of its growing weakness in the face of this non-cooperation and resistance. In the end, the South African racist regime could not hold out and lost the battles and the war!

In the present instance, it is obvious that the Israeli regime found itself between the Scylla of having the blockade broken and the Charybdis of negative world public opinion following an attack on the flotilla. They did not want to set an unacceptable precedent because of the ramifications concerning the unqualified rights of maritime traffic into and out of Gaza, the rights of Gazans to have and develop their fishing industry, and the rights of Palestine to all the natural gas and oil in its territorial waters, etc. I have no doubt that they did not want to kill anyone, if only because of the bad publicity such killing generates, and not necessarily out of any moral considerations, but the situation was such that there was no other way to offset the resistance of peoples' bodies. Given what they have just done at this time of this writing, I have no doubt that the situation will worsen over the next few hours, days, and weeks. No amount of artificial Islamophobia and "security" propaganda will be able to erase the blame for bloodshed that now attaches to the Israeli government. Furthermore, what exacerbates the image problem for the Israeli government is that it is no longer Arab blood that has been spilt, but nice "white" or "European" blood that, in the West, is different from Arab or Muslim blood. The international reverberations and the trial against Israeli officials in the case of Rachel Corrie, who was deliberately murdered by an Israeli bulldozer driver for attempting to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home, should have provided sufficient warning to the Israeli regime of what is now about to unfold. Having chosen to confront the flotilla, it has now fallen into the proverbial biblical pit of its own making!

It is my assessment that this latest attack, with its future political reverberations, is the equivalent of Israel's crossing the Rubicon. It is not "just" the use of force against hors de combat (civilians) (*)—something which it has been doing for decades — but the murder and use of force against non-Arab and non-Palestinian internationals, people who are completely external to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. In addition, the attack took place on the high seas and not within Israeli territorial waters, thereby violating international norms in the international arena, beyond the boundaries of Occupied Palestine.

This event therefore marks not merely a quantitative increase in the number of non-Palestinians killed by Israel within the framework of the

Palestinian struggle, but it also marks a qualitative change in the nature of the resistance, a change that I predict will and should become much more pronounced in the very near future. Since today, we have a growing list of foreign martyrs murdered by the Israelis in the non-violent struggle for the Palestinian cause. We are also witnessing an increased number of people from Israel taking part in this particular struggle. An Israeli member of Knesset, Hanin Zoobi, and the universally respected leader of the Northern Islamic movement, Sheikh Raad Salah, were on board. The latest news is that the Sheikh has been seriously wounded, and if this is the case, then I predict that this will lead to non-cooperation and resistance on the part of the Palestinian Arab community of Israel and their Jewish allies, paralleling the situation in the last stages of apartheid Africa.

This latest action carries within it the seeds of future joint International, Palestinian and Jewish cooperation in the Palestinian struggle. Future attempts to break the illegal blockade by the sailing of unarmed vessels will provide a unique opportunity to engage in non-violent resistance to tyranny. It is my hope that what is happening today is only the beginning of a groundswell of cooperative resistance in which we will find more and more Jewish Israelis who are prepared to confront their own government in such actions.

Lynda Brayer is a human rights lawyer living in Haifa, Palestine, who is an active participant in the One State in Palestine movement and supports the Return of Palestinian Refugees to Palestine.

"The Palestinian Arabs who live within the 1948 borders are an integral part of the Palestinian people."

By Nizar Abou Ahmed – Nazareth, June 24, 2010.

The Palestinian people who live within the 1948 borders regard themselves as an integral part of the Palestinian people. They do not feel "solidarity" for them, they are very simply an integral part of the people of Palestine and have a major role to play in the future of the people.

The Palestinians who live within the 1948 borders have since the Nakba constantly put up resistance and expressed their identity very clearly. They have always shown their commitment to this identity since 1948.

And for the first time in the history of the resistance of the Palestinian people, a powerful revolt broke out on March 30th 1976 against the confiscation of land in the region of Nazareth. The demonstration was violently put down: six people died, hundreds of people were wounded, arrested, sent to jail. For the first time, the Palestinian masses living within the 1948 borders were proving they were an integral part of the Arab people of Palestine, in contradiction with the term "Israeli Arabs" that was used to refer to them. That term is a big lie!

Another major event occurred in 2002 when the Palestinian masses took part in the second Intifada. For a month there were strikes and demonstrations in all Arab villages in sympathy with the Palestinian brothers of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. 13 people were killed during those demonstrations and the clashes with the police. Hundreds of demonstrators were injured.

On several occasions, the Palestinians who live within the 1948 borders proved they were an integral part of the Palestinian people.

During the latest aggression of the Israeli army against Gaza, in December and January 2009, the Palestinian masses in the 1948 borders demonstrated to express their support for Gazan resistance. There were even, for the first time in our history, demonstrations in small villages in which there had never been any marches or protests so far. The largest demonstrations took place in the city of Sakhnin, in Nazareth and in Baka el-Garbia, in the Lower Galilee: 200 000 Palestinian Arabs took part. Following those protests dozens of young people were arrested and imprisoned.

More recently, as a result of the attack on the humanitarian flotilla off the Gaza coast in early June, the 1948 Palestinian Arabs voiced their anger. They went on a two-day general strike in every village. Shops, schools, universities, were all affected by the strike. Anger was all the more fierce since four Palestinians from the 1948 borders were on board the flotilla.

Since the blockade of Gaza began and over the past few years, the 1948 Palestinian Arabs and their organizations have continuously given their support to their brothers in Gaza and in particular sent food supplies and medical aid.

We are only one people and want to live in freedom on our land, with the same rights in one and the same State.

Would the creation of a Palestinian State next to Israel as a "Jewish State" really be the only possible alternative?

By François Lazar - September 25, 2010

Is the official orientation that demands the creation of a Palestinian State within the 1967 boundaries realistic? What is it based on? On the occasion of the new "peace talks", opened under the Barack Obama presidency, but taken up by Hillary Clinton, the prospect of the two States is once again being presented as the ultimate goal. During the recent United Nations Assembly (September 23rd), Obama, bombastically declared: "(...) we can come back here next year, as we have for the last 60 years, and make long speeches about it (...) Or, we can say that this time will be different -- that this time we will not let terror, (...) stand in the way. This time, we will think not of ourselves, but of the young girl in Gaza who wants to have no ceiling on her dreams, or the young boy in Sderot who wants to sleep without the nightmare of rocket fire"

Making use of the children's sufferings, drawing a parallel between two entirely disproportionate situations barely conceals the American president's contempt for the children he mentions, especially the Palestinian children of Gaza who are regularly assailed by fright, hunger and bombings. But Obama considers that terrorism is the hallmark of the Palestinians, that the "problem" is Palestinian.

The two-state solution would therefore be the lesser evil, the only realistic one, the only one in conformity with the partition of Palestine ordered by the United Nations in 1947. The two-state solution is advocated by the proponents of the "road map" (the Quartet) as well as by do-gooders. It essentially and desperately aims at enabling the State of Israel to survive and, above all to be incorporated into the region.

What are the problems?

The Palestinian State will never be created on the whole extent of the West Bank. Everyone knows that Israel will never forsake the West Bank where 500 000 Israelis now live (including East Jerusalem) and where, also, 25% of the fresh water resources are located. Can we imagine that the withdrawal of any Israeli presence from the territories is possible? Colonisation is part and parcel of the Zionist project. It even is the prerequisite. What would be the cost of such separation? What Israeli government, what American government wishes to have a civil war in Israel? And if, with much imagination, such a move could take place, what would be the fate of the hundreds of thousand Arab Palestinians who are living inside Israel? Would this make it possible to realise the right to return of Palestinians to their lands, the villages they originated from? If however, an agreement, an international force, or even a popular movement bringing about a political upheaval could possibly make the disengagement of Israel from the West Bank possible, it would also have the capacity to implement equal rights and political democracy for all the components living on the historic territory of Palestine.

Separation or equal right: they are indeed two different political orientations.

The "State of Palestine" — which will be a State in name only —, will be created where the State of Israel and the United States decide for it to be created. It is for this reason that we are told about the involvement of the United States and of the European Union, of the Israeli accommodating spirit and of the Palestinian intractability. The State of Israel, founded on Zionist ideology, will not give up its objectives of conquering the totality of historic Palestine. Who can say the opposite? What can only be called American imperialism will never give up its objective of controlling the region's oil reserves, which implies that all the peoples be enslaved, all the national and democratic demands be quelled. The Palestinian people as a whole, whether living inside the Hebrew State, in the territories that have been occupied since 1967, in the refugee camps or elsewhere, in the diaspora, will never give up the rights that institute their identity, with the right to return for a start.

So, to quote, Netanyahu's profoundly cynical declaration, each party should make "painful concessions" and everything will turn out right. We will have two protagonists sitting at the negotiation table, capable of making concessions.

Mahmoud Abbas, who speaks on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, is the one who negotiates in the name of the Palestinian people. The leading team of the Palestinian Authority, a genuinely servile guard for the American sponsor, who commands the wages of its 160 000 civil servants, took control of the PLO in a move that smacked more of a putsch than of democratic debate. The move was a necessary phase in the resumption of the "peace process". The Palestinian Authority, set up by the Oslo Accords in 1993 in order to sow discord within the Palestinian national movement and to corrupt any independent expression, is today headed by Mahmoud Abbas, whose presidential mandate expired more than a year and a half ago. His Prime Minister, Salam Fayad, a former top administrator of the IMF, who never was a member of a PLO organisation, counts only on repression for reaching his objectives (as the United States of America does in all the countries they wish to control). The Israeli government was able to push its policy of appropriation and of repression against any form of resistance only with the active participation of the PA police forces, under the leadership of American general Dayton who retains in his jails more Palestinian prisoners than in the Israeli jails. As for Hamas, whose major purpose is to head the Palestinian Authority in the place of Fatah, it pays the cost of its closeness with Iran and essentially serves as official icon of "Palestinian intractability".

On the Israeli side, Binyamin Netanyahu accepted to take part in the so-called direct negotiation game only to get the PA-PLO to recognise the Hebrew state as a "Jewish State". This need to affirm the "Jewish" character of the Hebrew State expresses the uncertainties of the Jewish populations on the one hand and of their leaders on the other hand for their future fate as they are integrated into the region by force and through land theft. More serious still, this demand announces renewed sufferings, renewed expulsions for the Palestinians, especially those who live inside the 1948 borders which would not match the ethnic or

religious criteria of a State defined and especially recognised as "Jewish". Like every State, Israel is first and foremost the state of the ruling class. It is the State of those who invest in it, whether they are Jews, Christians or Muslims – or more simply weapon-mongers. Will the fact that the PA-PLO recognizes a "Jewish" character improve the living conditions of the (Jewish) quarter of the population of Israel living below poverty level? It's dubious. Such acknowledgement would give legitimacy to the Israeli oppressors in their ethnic cleansing project.

Therefore, the formation of an entity which will mockingly go under the name of "Palestinian State" is central to the mechanism aiming at the preservation of the Zionist State. That is why leaders such as Shimon Peres or Ehud Barak are the major proponents of this scheme. But the Zionist State collides head-on with the resistance of an entire people and, beyond, more or less consciously, of all the peoples who fight to have their rights respected. Once again, how can one think just for one moment that the Palestinian people will give up their land and their right to return?

The fate of the Palestinian people — just as the fate of the Iraqi or Afghan people to mention only those —, is unimportant for the United States. Its main goal is to advance the normalisation of the relations between Israel and the so-called moderate Arab States (i.e. those whose autocratic rulers are pro-American, like Egypt or Jordan) in order to embed their influence in this oil-producing region crucial for their economy and to counter the influence of Iran.

The partition of Palestine, the organised, planned, structured division of the populations is an essential element of control and order-maintaining: the colonialist order whose basic goal is looting and swindling.

The two-state prospect is an absolute impasse. It is the impasse of the US agenda in the region banning the right of the peoples to self-determination and which maintains hated regimes by force. The State of Israel is a penal colony for the Palestinians while it plunges the Jewish populations into uncertainty. It is a regional expression of the American policies. Their fates are inextricably linked.

If there are several solutions, one only is democratic.

We are more and more frequently told that if the peace process fails, a single State — which in fact already does exist — will control the entire territory, which will plunge the Palestinian populations into apartheid — which also does exist, in fact. Just one word on the problem of apartheid in Palestine, where many democratic activists refer to the disappearance of that regime in South Africa as the model: today, in South Africa, over 40% of the population (mostly Black people) continue living in slums, with no access to clean tap water. Some 50% of the people survive on less than one dollar a day, i.e. below the official poverty level. 40% of the working age people are jobless. In their overwhelming majority (about 90%), the homeless and jobless are Blacks. Since the collapse of apartheid, they have the right to vote, to vote for Black leaders that implement the whites' economic agenda. Is that the desirable model for a Palestine released from the colonial yoke? In South Africa, social apartheid is still with us and has even worsened and it is its dismantling

which is on the agenda for the masses of disenfranchised Black peoples.

Demanding the two-state solution is either sheer indecency or outright deceit, the more so when the right to return is associated to the demand. If the outcome of the longest "peace process" in history is not the tiniest prospect of peace, it is because peace requires that political democracy and equal rights become reality, starting with the rights of the oppressed populations. These are demands that will only be able to be made in a democratic and secular State. These are demands that are not compatible with American imperialism's policy of pillage and domination.



Press Statement by the Family of Ameer Makhoul We Accuse!

By Janan Abdu and Issam Makhoul – May 26, 2010

Today is the 21st day since the arrest of Ameer Makhoul at his home in Haifa, Israel, under the cover of darkness, by the International Crimes Investigation Unit and General Security Service (GSS or Shabak) officers. The arrest was conducted in a brutal and terrifying manner. Our house was raided, its contents ransacked, and various pieces of equipment and objects of special value to us were confiscated. Violations of our fundamental rights to human dignity and privacy were committed, and physical, verbal and psychological violence were employed against us and in front of our two daughters. On this day we, Ameer's family, announce that we are extremely worried about what is happening to him and about the conditions of his detention.

We know that Ameer has suffered and continues to suffer from acute pains in his head, his back and in both of his legs as a result of the severe torture he was subjected to, in breach of his most basic human rights. These include the rights to sleep, drink and eat, and the rights to dignity and not to be exposed to humiliating and degrading treatment. His complete isolation from the outside world, the control exercised over him by the GSS interrogators, and his interrogation for hours and days on end without sleep, while in shackles and bound by his hands and feet to a low chair in a way that did not allow him to move, causing him severe pain, from which he still continues to suffer now, all resulted in his losing his sense of time and ability to think and concentrate, and in his mental disorientation. These methods are illegal under Israeli and international law.

Until today, 26 May, the court refused to allow Ameer's attorneys to read the medical report written by a doctor who visited him twice during the interrogation. It also refused to allow an independent doctor sent from Physicians for Human Rights – Israel to examine him, as demanded by Adalah, Physicians for Human Rights – Israel and the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel. These refusals raise concerns and questions about the information that the GSS, with the backing of the court, wants to conceal regarding his conditions of detention and their methods of interrogation. What, we wonder, is the GSS hiding and why is it stalling? Is it in order to hide signs of the physical and psychological violence it has inflicted on him? And why has the court given its consent to these procedures?

What particularly worries us is that Ameer continues to complain of acute pains, and his eyesight has deteriorated, which has compelled him to ask for a stronger pair of glasses. The question is how and why this severely diminished eyesight was caused during his detention, and what the methods of interrogation were that led to this deterioration and to the pains he is complaining of.

The bigger questions are: What is the Israeli security establishment trying to cover up? Why is the court colluding with the GSS and concealing the conditions of detention and methods of

interrogation/torture that have been used against Ameer?

Why did the court block the publication of the details of Ameer's affidavit as it relates to the illegal methods of interrogation used against him, and which he spoke of before his lawyers in his initial meeting with them, held after around two weeks of being banned from access to legal counsel?

We appeal to the local and international communities and to individuals to continue to act quickly to put pressure on the Israeli government and legal system to open an independent investigation into the methods used by the GSS interrogators against Ameer, and to demand the indictment of those responsible for the use of torture against him. We also call on the local and international communities to consider any indictment by the GSS to have been fabricated and extorted under torture and gained solely by obstructing democratic freedoms and human rights. These acts are invalid and illegitimate, and in flagrant violation of international law.

We call for demands on the Israeli authorities to immediately call off this trial, which is based on an investigation in which Ameer was prevented from defending himself in any genuine manner. Ameer was denied the basic human rights to which he is entitled under Israeli and international law. The independence of the judiciary and democratic freedoms were dangerously subjected to the dictates of the GSS in this case.

We greatly appreciate the community, institutional and individual solidarity with Ameer, local and international, and all efforts to defend his freedom. We are aware of the importance of the role played by all political movements and political parties in challenging the circumstances of Ameer's arrest, and this attack against the Arab public and its leadership, and on democratic freedom and human rights. We are also aware that the clear strategic choice of the Arab public in Israel has been and continues to be the that of unyielding and legitimate political struggle.

The fact is that Ameer Makhoul does not belong to any specific political party. Rather, he reserves for himself an independent position, which is a clear indication that the main target of this attack is the Arab Palestinian public and their leadership, their rights and freedoms. Defending the freedom of Ameer and his rights as a detainee, and rejecting incitement against Arab citizens in light of his detention, are not an individual or class issue, but a national, democratic mission.

The real indictment is against the GSS and the Israeli establishment, which are trampling on democratic freedoms and human rights and resorting to illegal methods of interrogation and torture.

Letter from Gilboa Prison

By Ameer Makhoul – May 30, 2010

After being allowed to get a pen and a piece of paper, which has been banned for the last three weeks, and after being allowed to get out of my total isolation, it's a moment to write a short letter from my jail (Gilboa).

It's a great opportunity for me to express my sincere thanks, greetings & appreciation to all the colleagues, friends and solidarity groups, organizations & persons, internationals, Arabs in the region, Israelis & Palestinians in the homeland & in the Diaspora. A very special salute to all those who visited my family and supported them after the trauma they passed in May 6 & since that late night.

It's a moment to express my great appreciation to all the international & local human rights organizations which raised their voices loudly.

Also to Ittijah partner organizations all around the world which supported my/our struggle for justice and for a fair trial in order to get to prove my innocence.

Physically I am still suffering very much but morally it's a great feeling to know what solidarity means.

My story is that the Israeli intelligence, "the shabak", assumed something without knowing & without any evidence. I was requested and forced to explain to them in a very detailed way how exactly I did what I didn't do, ever. In case of any logical problem for them to complete the puzzle, they have the legal tools to fill it in by so-called secret evidence, which my lawyers and I have no legal right to know about.

According to the media in Israel, I'm already guilty, a terrorist & a supporter terror. The rule of the game here is that I'm guilty whether or not I prove that I'm not. This collective assumption is prior to court & trial procedures.

The abuse of evidence & fair legal procedures are crucial. The Shabak can tell lies to the court by so called "secret evidence", "banning meetings with lawyers", "banning the publication of information," "imposing total isolation" & other very sophisticated ways of torture, which leave no direct evidence although it is very harsh. (See Adalah: www.adalah.org). I believe that my case is an opportunity to examine these tools as tools for the criminalization of human rights defenders.

I would like to highlight again your support & solidarity. I look to it as a very essential & crucial message of support the victim and to stop the oppressor. Thank you. Let us continue with the way for justice, human dignity, human rights and ensuring an opportunity for a fair trial.

Sincerely.

A Single Palestinian State, Secular and Democratic

By Salah Salah

(Member of the Palestinian National Council,
Representative of the Refugees Commission)

The re-opening of the debate on the Palestinian State is a result of the failure of the Oslo Accords, which were supposed to help bring an end to the conflict arising from Israel's Zionist project, and to allow the Palestinians to find a political solution, leading, via negotiations, to the foundation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State within five years of the signing of the Accords.

In 2010, seventeen years after the signing of these accords, the creation of a Palestinian state has not happened. Quite the contrary: the facts and the reality prove that Israel will only allow the Palestinians a simple autonomy within various separate regions completely controlled by Israel's security forces. This is because, for Israel, the Palestinian homeland, with all of its borders, including those of the West Bank (Judea and the Samaria Area) and Gaza, constitute the historical lands of Israel.

The failure of the peace efforts has been recognised by several declarations from the Palestinian parties participating in the negotiations. The Arab parties have also blamed the Israelis, accusing them of not replying favourably to the peace initiatives of the Arab League. This blockage due to the obstinacy of Israel poses several questions: Will the Palestinians and their allies bow down to the Israeli project? Will they accept "autonomy" with all that this implies, such as the confiscation of lands, the construction of new colonies, and expulsions, so that Israel can finally impose the recognition of an Israeli Jewish Zionist State?

Everyone knows that the Palestinians and their friends will never accept the Zionist State, nor abdicate before the accomplished fact which Israel seeks to impose. The Palestinians who fought against Zionist immigration and the British protectorate at the dawn of the 20th century will never renounce their country, freedom and independence.

The fact that Israel today has the ability to take advantage of its local and international powers, as well as the differences and heated discussions among Palestinian and Arab ranks, does not imply a final destiny. History has shown us that many empires have disappeared despite the absolute power which they seemed to hold, and that powerless peoples have been able to triumph as a result of unshakable will, and belief in justice and rights. Further, the exposure of Israel's racist and expansionist role, partner and ally with world imperialism in its attempt to dominate, deprives it of one of the elements of its power - international support.

Further, the corruption that poisons this State, at all levels and within all of the institutions of Israeli society, coupled with the ever-increasing Palestinian, Lebanese and Arab resistance, has destroyed the image of an "invincible" Israeli army. All of these factors, and more, have provoked severe doubts among certain representatives as to the

capacity of survival of the State of Israel.

Faced with this situation, many voices (Palestinian, Arab and international) have expressed a desire to find an exit, a fair and impartial solution, recognising the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination on their own lands, while allowing those Jews who desire to live in peace and equality, equal rights with their fellow citizens within the Palestinian State.

A single Palestinian State, secular and democratic, aims to guarantee equal rights and responsibilities to citizens, regardless of race, colour, sex or religion (Muslim, Christian, Jew). This state would apply the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the return of refugees (1948), expatriates (1967) and deportees (relative to the 1950 laws concerning disappeared persons) to their lands and properties, as well as compensation. These same rights would be accorded to Jews who refused citizenship of the single Palestinian state, and who wished to return to their country of origin. The citizens of this single State would exercise their right to self-determination on all of the historical Palestinian territory from the time of the British protectorate, and unified as one with its Arab neighbour states.

A commission representing all of the components and minorities would be formed to elaborate a Constitution for this State and to define its political and economic system, with of course the Jewish citizens being able to determine their status within this State: will they constitute a group of citizens or a religion? It will be necessary to take into consideration the status of Jews around the world to determine whether they constitute a minority or if they should be defined according to their religion.

The notion of a single secular and democratic Palestinian State would be based upon the following considerations:

The creation of Israel by war, and through an alliance between the global colonial system and the Zionist movement - due to a common interest to impose their domination on the Arab regimes - was a result of its important strategic position (importance of the Suez Canal, oil investments and their exploitation as commercial markets). This is a violation of international resolutions and laws, which reject the occupation by force of foreign territories, distorting in addition their historical characteristics.

Israel was created on lands stolen from the Palestinian people, who were subjected to the anguish of liquidation to the point of fleeing their homelands and becoming a people of refugees. In 1948, the year of the Nakba (catastrophe), the Jews represented only 33% of the population, with just 6% of Palestinian territory. The real owners of these lands, 67% of the Palestinian people, should therefore have the right to return to the 94% of the land that has been stolen from them.

The existence of the State of Israel is illegal because its adherence to the United Nations Organisation in 1949 was dependent upon its engagement to respect and conform to the UN Charter and resolutions, notably the resolutions 194 (concerning the return of refugees) and 181 (concerning the creation of a Palestinian State on a surface of 46% of the totality of the Palestinian territory). The existence of the State of Israel is even more illegal given its refusal to respect hundreds of

relative UNO resolutions, not counting those resolutions condemned by Israel and blocked by the American veto.

Israel is a racist State, incarnation of the Zionist movement, which has been condemned by the UN due to the extortions perpetrated against the Palestinian people in 1948, and in the stolen regions of the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel is an expansionist state: Supported by the British protectorate, Israel occupied the Palestinian territories in 1948, exceeding the limits fixed by Resolution 181. After the 1967 war, it extended its domination to Gaza and the West Bank. Further, Israel occupies illegally the Golan Heights of Syria, and the plains of Chebaa and Telal Kachub in Lebanon. This signifies that Israel exploits all occasions to start a war with the possibility to appropriate new lands to concretise the Zionist plan, which fixes the borders of Israel from the Euphrates to the Nile. In the modern world, peoples battle to win their rights to freedom, independence and sovereignty. It is a world of human rights, the right of self-determination, a world where racism, intolerance and terrorism are banned. In this world, there is no place for a terrorist, racist and expansionist state, running contrary to international will and laws, and to human rights.

The Zionist movement was created to save the Jews from the oppression perpetrated against them in Eastern and Western Europe, promising to create "a state for a people without land in a land without people", which would bring together all of the Jews of the world, in order to restore the glory of their 2000 year-old civilization. But the people of the world have exposed the hoax of these claims, because Israel is not a democratic state carrying a message of civilization to "an Arab desert". It is rather a military force which exasperates conflicts and causes wars capable even of menacing world peace (an opinion poll taken two years ago showed that 53% of the people questioned around the world considered that Israel represented the primary threat to world peace).

Israel has not solved the problem for Jews. To the contrary, this entity has created other problems, such as the internal contradictions of Israeli society, the corruption within all of the state institutions, the human and material losses caused by wars, as well as the fear and constant worries concerning the future of an illegal state.

Many Jewish circles, both within and outside of Israel, have started to recognise these realities and the dangers which could result. Many of these circles support the creation of a single, secular and democratic State, because it is capable of representing the salvation of Jews, while assuring the preservation of their interests, and the ending of wars which have never ceased to break out since the formation of the State of Israel.

The solution of a single State would help to bring an end to this State which has none, and respects none, of the characteristics of a real State, just as in the case of South Africa under apartheid or Algeria under French colonial occupation. This solution gives protection to the Jews against Zionism, and compensation to the Palestinians for historical injustices.

Would Israel accept this solution? Obviously not. Other Palestinian groups would also not accept this solution.

The importance of this solution shows itself in the strategic vision to bring a permanent end to the conflicts and to create the ideal conditions to live in peace. It is a vision favouring dialogue and debate among the elite, reaching out to the masses, to become an influential force for Palestinians, Jews, Arabs and the international community. This option is less harmful and more realistic than other formulas presented for discussion among various circles, such as:

- return to the nationalist slogan "liberation of all of the Palestinian territories, from sea to river". In my opinion, this is a judicious slogan, but the fact to broach the subject in such a direct manner risks to lead to its rejection, and it could be conceived by some as a racist option which denies the rights of others;

- To the slogan "Jewish State of Israel" there has been the counterposition of the slogan "Islamic State of Palestine". The adepts of the first slogan, invoke support from "the land promised to the Jews by God," while those of the second option promote the sacred nature of the Palestinian land, which has at heart a rich Islamic heritage. It is obvious that each of these two circles deny the existence of the other by referring to religious considerations.

- Another opinion is based upon the demographic changes that would arise from the right to return of refugees based on Resolution 194 with the retrieval of possessions stolen during the Nakba (catastrophe) in 1948. This would mean a return to the thesis of the State of Israel, while at the same time insisting upon the return of those expatriated in 1967. The authors of this thesis do not consider a single state, two states or anything else.

- The thesis of a 'bi-national' state is anchored on the fact that there are two nationalities, each with its own identity but recognisable within a single state. Although this is a proposition originally made by Israelis, there are nevertheless many Palestinian personalities who share this view. But the basis of this thesis is not sufficiently clear, because it raises many questions concerning the nature of each entity, their borders, as well as the need to avoid the opening of conflicts between them.

A single, secular and democratic State does not recognise, as a foundation, the legal existence of the State of Israel, nor the "Jewish nationality" established on the basis of religious considerations. The Jews in Palestine (Israel) represent just 5 million of the world-wide population of 13 million Jews. Do they form therefore a single people, in the sense of a people with a common history, a language, a civilization and common interests? The supporters of this thesis firmly believe in a single nationality with equal rights regardless of race, religion, colour, etc.

Many conferences and seminars have been held, locally and internationally. All of these meetings have shown the failure of the option of two states through negotiations, and have sought other alternatives, of which the most plausible is that of a single State, democratic and secular. This initiative was born in France and Switzerland in 1994, to be taken up in Cairo, in Vienna, in the United

States, Britain and finally in Damascus in 2009.

The importance of this idea is revealed by the favourable reactions which it has received. And this article could form a project document to serve as a platform for discussions, leading to a text to open the way to a conference involving the various groups and circles which support this option (Palestinians, Arabs, Jews and other internationalist friends).

Peace initiatives

The writer and political analyst Shaker Nabulsi has recorded more than 56 initiatives between the time of the Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948 and the Camp David Agreement of 1978, to arrive at the solution represented by the entity created by Zionism in Palestine (Israel).

The majority of these initiatives, aborted and very incomplete, have been organised under the watchful eye of the USA and Israel. Under various formulas, all of these initiatives have aimed at confirming the existence of Israel, its recognition by neighbouring Arab states, and more especially the establishment of normal relations with Israel (economic and political). All of these initiatives had the final goal to resolve the refugee problem, either by permanent residence in the country where they are now found with a corresponding nationality, or by their installation in countries willing to accept them. But the rejection of this approach by the Palestinians, the nationalist parties and certain Arab countries resulted in the failure of these initiatives, all of which refuse to implement (and are hence in total contradiction with) UN resolutions, especially Resolutions 181 and 194. The catastrophic Camp David initiative crowned the twelve previous attempts during which the Arab regime each time made concessions. In continuation of this, followed the "Arab Peace Initiative", decided in 2002 by the Arab Summit, in which all of Israel's demands were accepted.

The Camp David Agreements

The main reason for the initiative by former Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat, leading to the Camp David Agreements, was that 99% of the winning hand cards were in the possession of the Americans, and to gain access to these it was necessary to proceed via Israel. Driven by this conviction, Sadat undertook the surprising voyage to Israel, with all of the dangerous consequences for the Middle East region that ensued: the Wadi Araba treaty between Jordan and Israel, the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, the expulsion of the PLO, of its leaders and its fighters in 1982, the signing of the 7th February agreement, the establishing of secret and public relations between Israel and Arab nations, and the final turn-about by the Arab League and their renouncing of all of their resolutions made after the war of 1967 (which had stipulated no settlement, recognition or negotiation with Israel), terminating in the launch of the so-called "Arab Peace Initiative" (outrageously rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon as "not worth the value of its ink"). And this, despite the fact that the initiative prepared an agreement with the Arab States, and their engagement to include Islamic States.

The Camp David Agreements did not just concern Egypt and Israel.

They traced a general framework for what became known as "the principles of the Oslo Accords between Palestinians and Israelis". A close comparison of the main principles of these two accords shows a complete conformity. The two agreements aimed:

- To divide the Palestinian people into separate and isolated groups: the populations of Gaza and the West Bank (Region of Authority), the refugees resulting from the Nakba of 1948, those expatriated following the 1967 war, and the continued denial of rights for those Palestinians of the 1948 regions.
- Not to recognise the UN resolutions as references for these agreements, while at the same time inserting new references, by various manoeuvres, benefiting the most powerful party. The American president, Jimmy Carter, commenting upon the "action framework for peace" declared that the "action framework" had treated the principles and certain details relating to the way in which a global, pacific settlement could be achieved. The American Secretary of State for foreign affairs, Cyrus Vance, announced explicitly in front of the General Assembly of the UN that the framework of the Camp David Agreements offered the Palestinians the possibility to have a vital role in determining their destiny through negotiations, so as to install their own Authorities, benefiting from their own autonomy.
- Consecrate the presence of Israeli forces in the West Bank and Gaza, arguing that this is for a transition period, but remaining in effect until 2010. The Camp David Agreements between the United States, Egypt and Israel had, first of all, consecrated the permanent presence of Israeli forces in the West Bank and Gaza during all of the 5-year transition period.
- The Camp David Agreements excluded the town of El Qods (Jerusalem) from administration and control by the Palestinian Authorities. On this subject, the Israeli Prime Minister, Begin, declared during his counsel's speech before the Knesset that the town of El Qods "will be the eternal unified capital of Israel".

After the signing of the Camp David Agreement, an article in the New York Times quoted a declaration by Begin in which he stated that while the Arabs governed their respective countries, the Israelis would continue, with finances from the government and protection from the army, to buy and install new colonies in the West Bank, with the goal of totally changing the physiognomy of the region in case the question of sovereignty of the region should arise at a later date. During the same period of the year 1978, the Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Moshe Dayan, declared before the General Assembly of the United Nations that "the Israeli colonies in Judea and Samaria (West Bank), as well as Gaza, belong to us. It is inconceivable that Israelis should be banned from residing and living in Judea and Samaria, which form the very heart of our country".

Concerning the Palestinian refugees, the Camp David Agreement stipulated that "Egypt, Israel and other parties would ensure to take common actions to introduce a fair and lasting solution to the refugee problem". This constitutes a denial of UN Resolution 194, which foresees the right to return of the refugees.

As for the "State" which the Palestinian negotiators imagined to be able

to build, Begin declared before the Knesset, that during his discussions with Carter and Sadat, there had never been any question of allowing a Palestinian State.

Security is a crucial question for Israel. This is why the Camp David Agreements bring up the mission of a "Palestinian Police Force" in a context determining that all of the measures and dispositions necessary will be taken to ensure the security of Israel and its neighbours, during and after the period of transition.

To ensure this security, the autonomous authorities would have to create a powerful local police force.

But Israel could not be content with just this, because it has confidence only in its own forces to ensure security. On his subject, Begin declared "to those who would say that our forces will stay in Judea, Samaria and Gaza for a period of 5 years, I reply that our forces will stay in these regions long after 5 years". From these statements, it is evident that the Camp David Agreements, and the other positions presented by Israel, have prepared the way for the "main principles of the Oslo Accords" -- the measures of which are still in application today.

The Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords, with all of their precedents and results, along with the many complementary agreements, have never managed to reflect a consensus among Palestinians. To the contrary, these agreements have been confronted with a vigorous opposition from the majority of Palestinian factions and large sectors of Palestinian society.

Indeed, these agreements reflect the position of the leaders holding power within the organs of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, at the head of which is the Fatah movement. They also represent a reply to Arab and international pressure upon these organs after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the American stranglehold on world politics. These agreements also reflect the sentiments of defeat, and the loss of will at the heart of this leadership and within the Arab regimes, which had always imagined, from the time of the "international peace alternative" in Madrid in 1991 to today, that they could achieve a "fair and global peace" with Israel by recognising its existence and by establishing relations. This shows the deficiencies and the failure to recognise the reality of the Zionist project which produced the creation of the State of Israel.

Did the Oslo Accords achieve their desired objectives, as well as those of certain Palestinian leaders? No analysis, deduction or statements are required to be able to reply to this question. It is sufficient to look at the concrete realities.

The Palestinian leadership, which accepted the Oslo Accords, had abandoned the armed resistance against the occupation and had stopped the "stone-throwing" Intifada. It had also formed forces trained by British and American officers, not to ensure internal security, but rather to guarantee the security of Israel, by banning all military operations from territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority.

Even with all of these defence systems, the Israeli army has still not left

the West Bank, and has not lifted the check-points or the control towers within the regions of the P.A. To the contrary, the Israeli forces rigorously control the movements of citizens from one town to another, and undertake abusive searches in Palestinian homes to arrest or assassinate people, without recording the slightest intervention by organs of the Palestinian security forces.

The Oslo Accords should have led to the liberation of Palestinian detainees. To the contrary, their numbers have increased from 4,500 to 11,000 ,including women and children. This agreement also led to further confiscation of lands from their original owners in order to implant new colonies and to construct the Wall of Shame, of which the International High Court of Justice has demanded the demolition with compensation for those people affected.

But Israel has never replied positively to this decision, and has never undertaken to respect the resolutions banning the confiscation of lands and the implanting of new colonies. Even interventions by American presidents have had no effect. Abandoning the promises made to the Palestinians. Israel has also ignored the United Nations resolutions which consider East El Qods (East Jerusalem) as an integral part of the occupied regions, altering and modifying its characteristics, starting to isolate it from the West Bank, imposing boundaries with the implantation of new colonies, and by erecting the Wall of Shame with its control posts. Israel has also ransacked certain quarters, monopolizing them by dislodging the inhabitants, and perpetrating aggressions and attacks on Christian and Muslim religious buildings. Israel has also destroyed the industrial, agricultural and tourist economies of the Authority, reducing the population to just a society of consumers.

The Oslo Accords have legitimised the occupation of the Authority's regions, and have allowed Israel the time they required to impose certain realities on the ground, leaving the Authority finally with little other possibilities than those of an autonomous territory.

The project to create a Palestinian State has thus become a massive lie. It can be affirmed that, since their signature, the Oslo Accords have never been a prelude to peace -- neither in the text, nor in the circumstances leading to their conception, nor in the power relations which they imposed. It has therefore been imperative to seek a new solution, taking anchor on the strategic approach capable of ending conflict with the Zionist project, and correcting the historical errors to which the Palestinian people have been subjected since the Nakba of 1948.

Palestine

With the borders inherited from the British protectorate, Palestine was, until 1948, an integral part of the Arab region. Its first inhabitants were the Canaanites, an Arab tribe which set up in the region some 2500 years before the Christian era.

Due to its geographic position, fertile lands and climate, it saw a flux of migratory waves, either to settle in the region and join the existing population or to conquer and steal its riches. Some crossed the region, to the east or to the west, in order to concretise the expansionist plans

of their leaders.

The various invaders were never able to eliminate the original population, that is, the Canaanites. From the beginning of the Arab conquests in 636, the whole of the region was liberated from the Romans. This liberation accentuated new migratory waves by Arab tribes coming notably from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Arabia. During the Arab-Muslim reign, the region was prey to new aggressions, especially coming from the west via Turkey under the banner of the crusades. This occupation formed part of a European vision, under the leadership of the kings of England and of France, to annex the region.

The occupation of the town of El Qods took place in 1099 after fierce battles and a ferocious and valiant resistance by the population and the surrounding villages. Children and women, Muslim and Christians were savagely killed (around 70,000 dead according to historians). The Latin Kingdom of El Qods, which was then erected, stretched from the coast to the town of Saida, Galilee and the east of Jordan. During the Mameluks era in Egypt in 1250, the leaders, including Baïbars El Daher, decided to stand up to the Francs and liberate Palestine and the Arab regions, which were won back in 1291. There were many battles, including the valiant campaign undertaken by Salah-Eddin El Ayoubi (Saladin), who unified the Arab armies of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq to win an enormous victory at the battle of Hattin in 1187, which liberated El Qods. Did the British and French leaders have the right to claim ownership of the lands which they had occupied, in the name of the Latin Kingdom of El Qods, for 200 years?

After, the Arab region was subjugated by the Ottoman Empire in the name of Islam for nearly 400 years, perpetrating exploitation, domination and arbitrary justice. Do the Turks have a right to claim domination of the Arab region, or to annex it, in the name of the Ottoman Empire, which they governed for hundreds of years?

The Arab liberation movement

The birth of the Arab liberation movement coincided with the start of the First World War. Arab interests converged with those of the Allies against the Ottomans. From this, started the discussions and correspondence between MacMahon, the British representative, and the Arab representative, the mayor Hussein, terminating in 1915 with Great Britain recognizing the independence of the Arab region stretching from Mersina and Adana in the north, the borders of Iran and the Gulf of Arabia in the east, the Indian Ocean to the south, and to the Red Sea, Sinai, and the Mediterranean sea in the west (including Palestine). Based upon this, mayor Hussein declared war on the Ottomans. The majority of the Arab officers and soldiers had left the Ottoman army to join the Allies, and the Arab army progressed from Arabia toward Syria, Jordan and Palestine. This is how a large part of the Arab region was liberated, allowing a decisive victory for the Allies over the Axis forces

Quickly, the betrayal of the Arabs came to light with its load of catastrophes, crimes and suffering (the effects of which last until today), notably through the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916, which allowed Britain and France to share the zones of influence, thus dividing the Arab region into small states. To this must be added the Balfour

declaration in 1917, in which Britain undertook to help the Zionist movement to create a national home for the Jews in Palestine, as well as the Allies' San Remo conference in 1920, placing Palestine under British protection to satisfy Zionist demands.

It was in 1922, with the mandate of protectorate given to Great Britain, that the League of Nations approved the Balfour declaration and its introduction.

Zionism

The Zionist movement was created in 1897 as a Jewish organisation, as a framework to house all energies and potentialities, with a view to creating a home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, based his action on the hypothesis that the Jews lived among peoples who were basically anti-Semitic. He considered that the problem of the Jews could not be resolved by political reforms or changes in society, and that integration would be a solution for only a small minority.

There are four major ideas underlining the creation of Zionism:

The religious dimension has been the anchor-point of Zionism for the creation of a homeland reserved for Jews, with the objective to protect them from aggression and anti-Semitism in the countries where they lived. In the introduction to his work, Herzl wrote: "Two important factors have illustrated the imperative necessity to find a homeland for the Jews, the suffering of the Jews and anti-Semitism. Herzl himself considered that the responsibility for these compartments could be incumbent on the Jews themselves. He wrote, "I understand anti-Semitism. We, the Jews have remained, even if it is not our fault, foreign bodies at the heart of various nations. In the ghetto, we have taken on many unsocial characteristics".

In his book, "The Jewish State", published in 1896, Herzl established the method to follow for the creation of a Zionist movement, just as was fixed during the Bale congress of 1897. This congress assembled delegates representing Jewish associations and institutions around the world, and notably the "Lovers of Zion, an association from Russia created in 1881 by the Jewish doctor Leon Pinker as a reaction to the oppression exercised against the Jewish population. The later preceded Herzl in inviting the Jews "to liberate themselves", because "the world has no respect for the Jews because they do not constitute a nation", considering "that they were foreigners in all of the countries where they lived", and that the only solution would be "the creation of a national homeland for the Jews". Thanks to financial aid from the Jewish capitalist Rothschild, the "Lovers of Zion" established the first Jewish colony in Palestine in 1882.

This is how Zionism saw the light of day in 1897 during its first congress, where the objective of "the creation of a national homeland for Jews" was mapped out, to be achieved by the following actions:

- Encourage the implanting of Jewish workers in Palestine.
- Link together all of the Jews via their local and international

institutions, according to the laws of each State.

- Reinforce Jewish nationalism.
- Take preparatory measures to win agreements from governments.

If Weizmann recognizes the services to Zionism by Herzl, he nevertheless accuses him of have never cited "Palestine" or the Hebrew language. He praises the Jews coming from the West (Russia) for designating Palestine and evoking the Hebrew language. By this link, Weizmann established a correlation between the political and religious dimensions of Zionism. Zionism is a nationalist political movement with a spiritual dimension.

The spiritual dimension is the second factor which helped to attract Jews to the Zionist project, because, for them, Palestine was "the promised land" given to Abraham, stretching from the river of Egypt to the grand River Euphrates, according to verses 18.25 and 18.17 of the Bible.

The adepts of Zionism were able to use this religious catalyst to incite Jews to emigrate to Palestine, under the pretext that the real belief could only be exercised in Jerusalem.

Weizmann wrote a note which he addressed to the Conference for Peace held in Paris in 1911, in which he gave details of the borders of the "promised land" with a view to the setting up of a Jewish State, taking in Palestine, the south of Lebanon as far as Saida, the south of Syria as far as Damascus, the Gulf of Arabia and the sources of the Jordan River. This vision, taken from the Torah, forms the basis of Zionist racism which rests upon the same principles as German racism, which considered the German people as the best and the most gifted of peoples (Aryan race).

This is how the emigration of certain religious groups to Palestine started. Some capitalists, such as Rothschild, started the construction of agricultural colonies to absorb and use the deprived Jews, to be able to welcome later those fleeing oppression in Europe. Herzl gave priority to Palestine, but did not exclude to accept any other location which filled the conditions necessary for the creation of "one nation in one country" to allow Jews to express themselves. He was very receptive with regard to the propositions made by the Allies, especially the British (Uganda, Argentina, Syria, Cyprus, Sinai and El Arish). The final option of the choice of Palestine for the creation of a Jewish State was not taken until after the death of Herzl, during the 7th conference of 1905, which excluded any implantation other than in territory of Palestine.

It was hence that emigration became the third important factor leading to the success of the Zionist project. The Zionist leaders exploited every opportunity to promote immigration to Palestine, religion, the oppression exercised against the Jews especially in Eastern Europe as a result of the growing anti-Semitic tendencies, and the massacre of Jews under Czarism.

The emigration to Palestine increased after the Balfour Declaration. A few months after this proclamation, Weizmann presided over a Zionist Committee at the request of the British Government in order to study

the general situation in Palestine and lay the foundations for the creation of a national homeland for the Jews. This committee supervised the holding of the Jewish immigration conference in Palestine (1918), which promoted "the need to create an association for Jewish colonization, recognized by the League of Nations, with large allocations to organize the emigration of Jews to Palestine".

Given the correlation between emigration and land, the congress also took another decision, that of using to the machinery and property of the State with a view to exploit and promote them. The British delegate Robert Samuel, himself a Zionist Jew, accepted this request, giving to the Jews 58% of the territory under their control in 1948, but which represented just 6% of the total surface of Palestine. It should be noted that despite all of the arrangements, facilities and encouragements provided by capitalist Jews, as well as Jewish influence at an international level, the number of Jews hardly exceeded 33% of the total population of Palestine.

The extraordinary Zionist conference held in London gave birth to a central bureau for immigration. Jabotinsky, the radical reformist Zionist leader, recommended the development of immigration for the introduction of Zionist colonization, so as to form a Jewish majority in Palestine, resorting to the use of arms.

The fourth factor, which considerably helped the success of Zionism and the realization of its project was the junction with the colonial interests in the region. Europe had preceded Zionism with colonization of the region. After the failure of his colonizing campaign before the walls of Acre in 1797, Napoleon implored the Jews of the world to rally to him in order to restore in El Qods "the lost glory and honour of the Jews".

Zionism also benefited from the support of the United States of America to promote the immigration of Jews to Palestine, as well as financial support from the Jewish community living in America. The decisive moment for the transferring of strategic relationships toward the United States came during the Baltimore conference held in New York in 1944, which led to the decision to open wide the doors of Palestine to Jews, in order to accelerate the implantation of colonies, and the occupation and exploitation of "unpopulated areas" so as to increase their worth. Hence, Palestine became part of the Commonwealth, integrating the democratic new world: "It is in this way that justice will be done to repair the suffering endured by the Jewish people".

European colonisation had been essentially motivated by the manna of petrol, and the profits that this generated for the exporting countries, which importing countries injected into their banks and their projects. The second colonial manna was linked to the industrial revolution and to the markets that consumed raw materials. A ferocious competition opposed the two major colonizing countries, Great Britain and France. This was controlled by the sharing-out of influence zones following the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Zionism took advantage of this competition, which deteriorated into armed conflict between colonizing powers (the two World Wars), through the influence of Zionist Jews in the decision centres of several countries around the world.

Zionism was also able to exploit the two World Wars to make considerable advances. During the First World War it was able to benefit

from the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which announced "the recognition of Palestine as the national homeland for the Jewish people".

In 1922, the League of Nations recognized the British protectorate of Palestine, allowing the British to implement their promises, and hence open the possibility for Zionism to increase the number of Jewish immigrants, to seize large areas for colonies, and develop a military power in terms of numbers of men and equipment.

After the Second World War, in 1947, Zionism obtained the decision to carve up and share Palestine with the decisive support of the United States.

Israel

Since its creation, Israel has never ceased to beat about the bush with regard to the United Nations resolutions, especially the resolutions 181, 194, and 3236 of 1974, which specifically give undeniable rights to the Palestinian people, especially the right to self-determination without foreign intervention, the right to independence and national sovereignty, and confirmation of the undeniable rights for Palestinians to return and to recover their stolen properties.

In 1976, the General Assembly of the United Nations created a Commission, representing 37 countries, to ensure that the resolutions previously cited were duly respected. This commission elaborated recommendations which were transmitted to the Security Council, underlining many principles, including the basic principle to ban the occupation by force of the territories, insisting upon their immediate liberation, and at the same time condemning Israel.

This commission recommended that the Security Council demand that Israel abstain from creating new colonies, to evacuate those created since 1967, and to establish a calendar for the withdrawal of its military forces from the territories occupied in 1967. But the USA blocked, by imposing their veto, the passing of a resolution to implement the recommendations.

The same scenario was seen with the ad-hoc commission charged to investigate Israeli behaviour on human rights with regard to the population of the occupied territories, especially after the Israeli refusal to implement Resolution 237/1967 with the demand "to ensure the security and the integrity of the populations residing within zones subjected to military intervention, and to give priority to the return of those persons having fled the fighting". The General Assembly created this commission at the end of 1968. It enabled the presentation of proof, documents and information illustrating the flagrant violation of human rights by Israel. In the intermediary report of 1976 rendered by this commission, very illustrative passages revealed the expansionist designs and ambitions of Israel: "The very essence of Israeli politics in the occupied territories rests on the theory of the nation extolled by the Israeli government".

This theory declares that "the territories occupied following the war of June 1967 are an integral part of the natural borders of Israel". They do not constitute therefore occupied territories in the sense of international law. However, permission is given to those Palestinian civilians living in

these territories to remain.

Today, Israel has its own interpretation of the Goldstone report, presented on behalf of the International Committee on Human Rights, and approved by the UN General Assembly, and which, further, condemns Israeli soldiers for war crimes in Gaza demanding that they be brought to justice.

Israel also distinguished itself for the non-respect of resolutions of the International Committee on Human Rights in 1968, which repeated the previous decisions concerning Palestinian rights and demanding "the cancelling of all measures concerning El Qods, to cease without delay all dispositions aiming to denaturise this town, and to stop immediately the destruction of Arab civilian housing in the occupied regions, as well as to ensure the strict respect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention".

These are just a few examples, among hundreds, of resolutions taken by various bodies of the UN, and tens of others blocked by the American veto. It follows that Israel is the only country in the world which escapes international law.

For the Palestinian negotiator, Saëb Erekat, all of the Israeli manoeuvres since the Oslo Accords have led to the unavoidable belief that "the hour of truth has arrived to tell the Palestinian people that we cannot concretise the solution of two States, via negotiations which have lasted eighteen years". In the Israeli paper Maariv, a commentator declared that "the peace process is dead". And the burial of the process was completed during the strange meeting between Netanyahu and Barack Obama. Other Israeli representatives have made similar declarations. This has led the president of the Palestinian Authorities, Abu Mazen, to announce that he will not be a candidate for president during the forthcoming elections, to express his despair concerning the Israeli promises and manoeuvres of the last 18 years.

It is apparent that Israel does not seek peace, but uses various manoeuvres to block all initiatives, including Arab initiatives, with the single goal to gain time to create new realities on the ground. This conforms with Israeli doctrine refusing any return of the Palestinian refugees, any withdrawal from occupied territories to the borders existing before June 1967, and seeking to preserve the unity of the town of El Qods as the "eternal unified capital of the State of Israel", taking steps to preserve its Judeaisation, and to continue the confiscation of lands and the implanting of new colonies. This doctrine is also consecrated to the division and isolation of Gaza with regard to the West Bank, by exasperating conflict between the two powers, and finally the occupation of Syrian and Lebanese territories.

Israel's expansionist policy is based on four main factors:

1/ Zionist ideology, synthesized by slogans promoted in the hall of the Knesset, which indicate that the borders of Israel " stretch from the banks of the Nile to the Euphrates."

2/ The use of force, which allowed the creation of Israel with its spreading borders, projecting further expansions and aggressions. This poses a vital question to the United Nations and the countries of the

world: "What are the recognised borders of Israel? Those of 1947? Those of 1948? or the current borders, including the Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories?"

3/ Herzl had declared, "Force creates Right". This underscores an essential factor: a common interest with world capitalism / imperialism under the leadership of the United States of America, which ensures material support for Israel, political cover, and military supremacy over the unified Arab regions.

4/ The incapacity of the Arab regimes to handle the situation, maintained in a position of dependence and under-development by a colonialism which exasperated internal conflicts (borders, ethnic, religious). This led them to a position where they renounced the decision of the Khartoum conference rejecting any recognition of, or negotiation with Israel, and also adopted the "Arab Peace Initiative" during the Beirut summit in 2002. An initiative to which Israel accorded absolutely no importance.

United Nations Resolution 3379 / 1975 indicated that "Zionism is a form of racism". This is an evaluation, in word and spirit of the Zionist entity that is Israel. It is true that this resolution was rescinded in 1991, following a vast campaign by the Israelis and under the influence of certain forces in the United States.

The OAU summit of 1975 adopted a resolution that compared the racist regimes presiding over the destinies of Zimbabwe and South Africa to that governing Palestine: a common colonialist origin, an identical structure transporting a single and same policy, aiming to destroy human dignity and its integrity. The same year, the policy declaration of the conference of Foreign Affairs ministers of the movement of non-aligned countries strongly condemned Zionism, qualifying it as a menace to peace and international security, and exhorting all countries to combat this racist and imperialist ideology. The existence of the State of Israel was a corollary for a magnitude of racist practices, especially:

The occupation of foreign territory by force, and dispersion of the population;

Ethnic cleansing using all forms of violence, terrorism, exactions and massacres of the civilian population;

The right to return of Jews around the world, allowing them to settle in Israel, while at the same time denying the right to return of Palestinians, the real owners of these lands;

The construction of a racist wall, and refusal to respect the High Court of Justice of The Hague, which ordered its destruction and compensation to people wronged;

The massacres perpetuated in Gaza, revealed by the Goldstone report, described as "war crimes", as well as the organised blockade around Gaza;

Occupation of the West Bank and the implantation of new Jewish colonies, barriers, control points and towers to control and manage the circulation of the population, occupation of water sources, the destruction of local industries, as well as bans on harvesting agricultural products;

Isolation of the town of El Qods with a view to its Judeaisation, and the creation of a tunnel beneath the Al Aqsa mosque threatening it with destruction;

Blatant racism with regard to citizenship between Palestinians and Jews in Israel;

The conception of Israel as a state above the law, scorning international resolutions, without fear and with no consideration of human and moral criteria.

Israel, a state incapable of resolving the Jewish question: Herzl and Weizmann, the two main personalities of Zionism, had different definitions of the reasons favouring the creation of Israel, but agreed on the objective to be achieved, that is, the creation of such a State.

Herzl wrote in his book: "There are two factors which govern the creation of the Jewish State, namely, the suffering of the Jews and anti-Semitism".

As for Weizmann, he did not consider these factors to be important "because Zionism and the claims for a country (national homeland) do not come from Jewish suffering but from the need for a country which can regroup all of the Jews. This country is Palestine, their historical country". The installation of the State of Israel generates two problems for the Jews. The population is confronted with a permanent danger to its existence. Proof of this are the successive and continual wars against the Palestinians and Arabs, the massacres, racist practices, the use of force, the spoiling of Palestinian lands, the occupation of neighbouring Arab territories, the rejection of all peace initiatives, which can in no way guarantee the security and stability for Jews in the State of Israel. To the contrary, these factors can only exasperate the hate with regard to this population.

The Jewish population should always remember that national Palestinian resistance has been recognized as a right by the UN to gain independence, national sovereignty and self-determination. The UN has also recognised the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people with a statute of observer. As for the first Intifada of 1987, the Israeli leaders cannot stop it.

The Palestinian national movement

Throughout its history, the Arab region has never known borders other than its natural borders of seas, rivers and mountains. In this region, there was just a single people, the Arab people with a few minorities having nothing to distinguish them from the others. Palestine was an integral part of the Arab nation. The Arab States only appeared, in the Middle East especially after the First World War, during the carving up of the Arab region among the colonising countries (notably Great Britain and France), as a result of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), followed by the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which allowed Zionism to create a "national homeland for the Jews" in Palestine.

In this way, the League of Nations proclaimed in 1922 the British Protectorate of Palestine to implement the promise made by Balfour. The national Palestinian movement was born to fight against the Zionist-colonialist project, which aimed to steal Palestinian lands and to disperse

its original population to build Jewish colonies.

The first Palestinian conference was held in 1919. Others followed annually. An executive committee was elected by the congresses to make contact with the protectorate and defend the rights of the Palestinian people. These rights were consigned in a national charter defined by the 5th congress:

Independence for Palestine and the end of the British protectorate;

Arab unity, notably with Syria and rejection of the Jewish nation;

Halt of the Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Palestinian activism developed under various forms. The first consisted of organizing delegations to convince the government of the British protectorate not to align itself with Zionist policies, to recognise the rights of the Palestinian people consecrated by their own charter. One of these delegations visited London, in conformity with the decision of the 4th conference. This resulted in a decision by the Cabinet recommending the revision of British policy in Palestine and the cancelling of the Balfour Declaration. But the House of Commons invalidated this decision.

The other form of Palestinian activism was the organizing of strikes and insurrectional movements, of which the most important was in 1936 across all of the Palestinian territory. The government of the Protectorate used every repressive method possible to strangle this strike.

But in vain. To the contrary, an Arab committee was formed, composing all of the groups in favour of the strike, to proclaim civil disobedience and to refuse to pay taxes. Other committees in local areas were formed to lead the strike until its transformation in armed revolt.

Very quickly, the Palestinian resistance developed into local Intifada movements, spreading from villages to towns during the years 1919, 1921, 1929, to take on the character of a military action in 1935. The government of the British protectorate resorted to all forms of repression to try to strangle the resistance of the Palestinian people, without success. The banning of protests, the imprisonment and the execution of activists (with absolute power given to the military as a result of the state of emergency), the exasperation of internal conflicts (Muslim - Christian), conflicts among families (between the el Husseini and el Nachachibi families for example), between partisans (between , "National Defence", "Palestinian Arab", Istiqlal, Islah, the National Group, etc.) Š were just some of the forms of repression and of destabilising manoeuvres used by the British protectorate.

After each failure, the British government sent Commissions of Enquiry, including that of Haycraft in 1929, which concluded the dissatisfaction of the Arabs, and their animosity toward the Jews for political and economic reasons related to Jewish immigration. This commission also developed the fear of the Arabs to see the Jews gaining a dominant position.

One month after this report, and given the increase in the number of acts of resistance, the British delegate (Herbert L Samuel) was forced to

declare: "It is inconceivable that the British government can impose (upon the Arabs) a policy contrary to their religion and their political and economic interests". He suggested putting a stop to immigration. It was the intervention of the Colonies Minister, Winston Churchill, and the publication of his White Paper, which re-established the government's engagement to implement the Balfour Declaration.

Next came the Shaw Commission, which remained in Palestine during 5 months after the riots of El Bourak in 1929. This Commission noted that the main cause of these bloody clashes was the despair of the Arabs (Palestinians) faced with the absence of any national political perspective and the fears concerning their economic future. The resistance increased in 1936, growing further until 1939, despite British reinforcements and the presence of Zionist criminal bands.

The situation of the British army in Palestine became very difficult, especially after the outbreak of the Second World War. It was in this context that was held the conference in London, with the participation of Palestinian and Zionist delegations. Following the failure of this conference, Great Britain was forced to publish its third White Paper, which recognized in many of its sections the aspirations and claims of the Palestinians, including the halting of immigration, and recognition "that the future for Palestine should be its independence". This White Paper also noted that "the British Government would work toward the creation of an independent Palestinian government".

The White Paper was a big victory for the Palestinians because it abridged the Balfour Declaration and prioritised the stopping of projects leading to division and immigration, limiting this to one third of the Palestinian population. It recognized the independence of Palestine with an Arab majority population.

In 1947, the Arab countries' Foreign Affairs ministers underlined that "Great Britain's engagements concerning the halt of Jewish immigration, the preservation of Arab territories and independence for Palestine are an integral part of undeniable Arab rights" and decided that each government would transmit a note to the English government asking it to honour its engagements held in the White Paper.

At the end of the Second World War, the Palestinians and Arabs found themselves confronted with a new betrayal following the British renouncement, in coordination with the Americans, of the engagements written in the White Paper. As a result, Jewish immigration restarted at a new rhythm, with the possibility given to Jews to acquire lands, to construct administrative and institutional buildings, and to reinforce their military capacities.

This policy was initiated by an Anglo-American committee, created in 1946, to undertake an evaluation of the situation and to propose solutions. This committee noted the capacity of Zionism to achieve its project, while noting at the same time the weakening of the Palestinian side, mainly because of the situation of the Arab countries. Given that it was virtually impossible to reconcile the interests of Arabs, real owners of the lands, with those of Jewish immigrants, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs decided that this question should be submitted to the United Nations, in order to find a solution. A commission for international reconciliation was hence formed. It considered that the

British protectorate had run its course, and that the question of independence for Palestine, with the creation of an international administration of religious sites, should be considered. But under American-Zionist pressure, this commission retracted its decision, to adopt another recommendation giving priority to "the division of Palestine into two States, Palestinian and Jewish".

The United Nations approved this recommendation 29-2 in 1947, after enormous pressure and interventions by the USA. Two important factors were responsible for the change in the situation:

1/ The decision adopted by the United Nations for a truce, which was used by Zionism to obtain reinforcements and to benefit from American-British military support;

2/ The intervention by Arab armies in 1948 "to save Palestine", under the control of a British intelligence officer, giving order to the Palestine resistance to withdraw from their positions.

Zionism was hence able to claim the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, thanks to Arab and international complicity.

The Nakba (the catastrophe)

One of the expressions of the Nakba of 1948 resides in the expulsion of nearly one million Palestinians from their lands, with the stealing of their property and their homes, reducing them to refugee status. Their numbers increased following the seizure by Israel of so-called military zones, outlined in the truce agreements with neighbouring Arab countries and the expulsion of the populations living there, and then as a consequence of the 1967 war and the occupation by Israel of the remaining territories of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza. Add to these massive expulsions the high birth rate within the camps, leading the Palestinian report of 2008 to calculate the total number of refugees today at 7.4 million.

During the year of the Nakba (1948) the General Assembly of the United Nations decided to create a Committee for international reconciliation to supervise the return of the refugees. The United Nations' text underlined the necessity to allow the return of those refugees desiring to return to their homes and to live in peace with their neighbours; to compensate those who refused to return and those subjected to damages and prejudices, in accordance with the laws on international rights, and in order to respect equality.

Because of Israel's consistent refusal to allow the return of refugees, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted another resolution in 1949 leading to the creation of the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) to oversee the plight of refugees living under inhuman conditions. These were highlighted by the director of the agency in his report presented to the General Assembly in 1954 / 1955, where he underlined that "only 27% of the refugees questioned lived in camps under the control of the agency, while the rest lived with their wives and children in camps of fortune or hovels or unhealthy caves".

Since this date, not one initiative has been made to introduce Resolution 194 with respect to the return of the refugees, or to place pressure on Israel to concretise this objective. To the contrary, the U.S.

administration, in perfect agreement with Great Britain, used the Agency of the United Nations to present projects aimed at integrating Palestinians into those countries where they lived. The head delegate of the Agency, an American by the name of Ford, concluded in his annual report of 1950, on "the difficulty to concretise the return of the refugees in Palestine". As a result, the General Assembly decided to create a fund for the integration of the Palestinians.

This policy is still in place today. The projects devoted to this effort aim to support the integration of the refugees in the country where they find themselves, and their naturalization. But the Palestinian refugees oppose this with force and have succeeded in causing its failure. Despite the catastrophic situations in which the refugees live, the complicity of certain Arab regimes and the pressure applied on the Palestinians, (chased, imprisoned, tortured, unfairly sacked from their work, corruption and other processes), the projects of the Agency have not been achieved. The director of the agency, in his report addressed to the UN in 1957, underlined that the "refugees are determined to return to Palestine and that it will be impossible to concretise any other objective than the return".

This phase of Palestinian political activism and the large mobilisation of the population was the prelude to the creation of the "Palestine Liberation Organization" (PLO) and the start of armed struggle as an option to enable the Palestinians to win their rights, after having been totally ignored by the international community and even by certain Arab countries.

The Palestinian revolution was able to concretise certain important achievements, notably:

- Transformation of the camps, considered as places of suffering and of oppression of the Palestinian people, into cradles of the armed struggle, centres for the training and preparation of fighters to perpetrate heroic military operations against Israel;
- Recognition in 1974 of the PLO in its capacity as legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and as observer member of all of the UN organizations. PLO offices were opened in 104 countries around the world, without modification of its charter.
- Adoption by the UN of numerous resolutions recognizing the right to return of the Palestinian refugees, and even those recognizing the right to use all activist forms to achieve independence, sovereignty and self-determination, notably resolution 3236 which stipulates:

The right to self-determination with no foreign intervention;

The right of the Palestinian people to independence and national sovereignty;

The undeniable right of Palestinians to return to their homes;

The General Assembly recognized that the Palestinian people form an essential group to contribute to the concretisation of a fair and lasting peace in the Middle East;

The recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to recover their rights by all possible means, in conformity with the objectives and principles contained in the United Nations Charter;

An invitation to all countries to increase their assistance to the

Palestinian people to recuperate their legitimate rights.

The Palestinian revolution has become an assembling centre for all revolutionaries and activists against colonialism and dictatorial regimes, giving it a national, international and humanitarian dimension.

The influence of the Palestinian revolution is so strong that ownership of an activist PLO card could allow a Palestinian to cross borders between Lebanon, Syria and Jordan without the need to present a passport or entry visa.

There is no doubt that all of these elements and factors together have led certain Arab regimes to want to dominate the PLO, to control or contain it, by exploiting any error or slip-up to justify measures aiming to silence or strangle it. For this, they received encouragement from the Americans and Europeans in complicity with the acts of aggression perpetrated by Israeli forces against Fedayeen bases and Palestinian civilians.

This explains the carnage created by Jordanian forces in September 1970, just as those committed during the Israeli invasions of Lebanese territories, notably in 1978 and 1982, with the excuse of pursuing Fedayeen Palestinians.

All of these successive wars against the Palestinian revolution (its bases, leaders, fighters and people) have led to the end of its existence in neighbouring Arab countries, and destroyed its capacity to undertake military actions.

Then followed the 1987 Intifada in the regions occupied in 1967 (West Bank and Gaza). Israel used all of its security forces and other processes to create dissensions and contradictions among the Palestinian people, without success. To the contrary, the strength and determination in face of Israeli occupation with just rudimentary means "the Intifada of stones" favoured the emergence of a large reaction from the international community, condemning Israel's criminal acts against the Palestinian people. Israel was then forced to admit something which it had refused for decades, namely the existence of the Palestinian people with the PLO as its leadership. But this leadership did not succeed in protecting the revolution or in gaining benefit from the results of the Intifada, due to the signing of the Oslo Accords.

The national Palestinian movement has returned to the starting point. Only a new period, based upon the construction of a single, democratic and secular State, will be capable of correcting not only the injustices of history against the Palestinian people, but also of saving the Jews from the threats that weigh upon them as a result of the racist Zionist project.

« A one way trip with no return. The story of an Egyptian Communist Jew » by Victor Segré

Book presented by Samy Hayon

Victor Segré is one of those activists who never lay down arms. As a very young man in the 40s he engaged in the struggle against exploitation of the Egyptian people, *“a people I grew up with and with whom I shared the bread and water of the Nile”*, he sums up simply.

On his scale , but with all the force of his convictions, he took part in the combat of this people against British Imperialism, for the sovereignty of the country and against the poverty striking the workers and peasants of Egypt. In the 40s, the situation in the middle East was marked by the rise of Zionism and the dividing up of Palestine decided by the UN on the 29th November 1947, i.e. by American Imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy. Sixty years after being expelled from Egypt, Victor Segré, who has never renounced his convictions, tells his own story as an Egyptian Communist Jew in a book published by *L'harmattan* editors.

We met Victor Segré in Budapest where he lives to-day. He was more than willing to agree to the review *DIALOGUE* publishing excerpts from his book. *L'harmattan* have authorised us to publish these excerpts. For which we heartily thank them.

In accordance with *DIALOGUE* review's objective: opening up free discussion on the vital issues that Palestinian populations are faced with , we have chosen to publish passages of Victor Segré's book which show the impact of the rise of Zionism and the dividing up of Palestine in 1947 on the struggle of Communist, democratic and National Liberation organisations in Egypt in the situation of intense development of the national liberation movement and class struggle that the country experienced at the end of the war.

“How can one accept chasing Arabs off their land to set up the Jewish State ?”

Victor Segré was born in Cairo, in November 1926, into a Jewish family, comprising Ashkanazis on his Mother's side and Sephardic Jews on his Father's. They dwelt in a poor area, where Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together, where children played and grew up side by side with no problem.

In 1943, fear reigned in the Segré family as in all Jewish families in Egypt. The armies of the Axis were in Libya, advancing towards Alexandria. What was going to happen if they occupied the country driving out the British? But 1943 was a turning point. The German army was defeated in Stalingrad, Rommel's units were routed in El Alamein. 1943 was also a turning point in the life of Victor Segré. He was 17 years old.

“Full of rage against the Germans, I in turn decided to enrol in the British

army.[His older brother had also found work there :*editor's note*]. I went to see the head of personnel at the Semiramis Hotel, General head quarters of the British army in the Middle East". This person points out to him he is too young but at the same time proposes the following: "If you are determined on fighting, I advise you to go to Palestine. There you will be able to join the Jewish Brigade". It was a brigade that was part of the British army. But Victor Segré did not want that. He ended up being taken on by General Headquarters for statistical work and following up maps. As he remembered:

"One day, soldiers in tattered uniforms, almost in rags, appear in our Headquarters. They were part of the famous Jewish Brigade. We learnt they were on route for Italy. War was raging at Monte Casino. For weeks Allies and enemies were engaged in very dense shelling and bombing. There were many dead and wounded. A member of the Brigade asks me:

– Are you Jewish?

He was young, a little older than me, skinny and small, darkened from the sun. He spoke bad French with a strange accent. I answer:

– Yes.

The question surprises me. It wasn't usual to ask that question.

– So, why don't you join the Brigade?

– I don't want to go to Palestine. I am not very keen on Palestine.

– Palestine is your country.

His reply surprises me even more. Palestine, my country? I reply:

– No, you're wrong about that. Listen, I was born in this country, Egypt. Egypt is my country, do you understand?

– Traitor !

– Sorry? Are you calling me a traitor ? Why?

– Because Palestine is the land of the Jews. It's our country. Read the Bible. The Torah, it's all there.

– But I'm not religious.

– So what are you?

– I'm Egyptian!

– Egyptian? Idiot, Palestine is our land, our country!

– The Arabs have to leave, where do they go ?

– Anywhere. The Arab world is big. They can go where they want, that is not our business.

– And those who have been born over the centuries in that land of Palestine, isn't it their country?

– That's no concern of ours, that's their business. It's not up to us to solve their problem.

– -Who is us?

– The Zionist movement. The Jewish movement. The movement which will make Palestine our State. The State of Jews. Your State!

It was difficult to pursue the discussion with this member of the Jewish Brigade. How can one accept chasing Arabs off their land to set up the Jewish State? How can one understand this type of argument?"

Later on, Victor Segré was to be confronted with the same question when a childhood friend whom he was still close to, said to him:

"Listen, I have nothing to say against your ideas. I share them entirely. But as far as I am concerned, for you and for all Jews who live in this country, or anywhere else, the solution is to have their own State where they will no longer be discriminated against because of their religion.

But don't you think that the solution would be to fight all forces that propagate racialism, to fight them with all the democratic forces of the countries where Jews live?

We once again get back to the point we started from. But don't forget that I support the left wing Zionist movement. For your information, Shomer Hatsair is also Communist."

Victor Segré did not, does not share this point of view. For him Jews should be involved in the anti Imperialist struggle for the independence and sovereignty of the country where they were born, the country which is theirs.

"I was born here, Egypt is my country, the country of Muslims, Jews, Christians, all united in the same struggle!"

At the end of the war a powerful national liberation movement developed. *"A big student demonstration took place starting from Gizeh University (...) claiming independence and sovereignty for the country,*

Victor Segré remembers. (...) The Egyptian police, under the command of English officers, open fire causing the death of hundreds of demonstrators. (...) The demonstration ends in blood but the result is that the Prime Minister, Nahas Pacha, demands the British government leaves the country. A compromise is finally settled, the English troops leave the towns and station along the Suez Canal. The Egyptian police were to be commanded by Egyptian officers. Apparently Egypt is sovereign and independent.

But we Communists, decide the struggle must continue and take on a clearly Egyptian character. Al Talia'ah Al Mutaheda, the Unified Avant Garde joins up with the Egyptian National Liberation Movement and takes on the name of the Democratic Movement for National Liberation, Hadeto for short." Victor Segré is part of this.

The class struggle also develops. *"Strikes organised by clandestine unions at Choubra El Kheima and Mehala El Kobra take place. At the head of these unions, there were Marxist and Communist workers among others, such as A Mudarek and el Askari, Fathi el Ramli and others. The country's ruling class is very preoccupied by the situation."*

Taken on in *"a rubber factory called Narubin which made soles for shoes, pipes and carpets I at last had a job, Victor Segré tells. I worked as an office employee writing, then afterwards I was given another function controlling the sales price of goods and finally I was in charge of controlling production rate in the factory in the industrial area of Choubra El Kheima (...) And it was in that factory that I became acquainted for the first time with the Egyptian working class, its living*

conditions and struggles. (...)

In order to be present at cell meetings I took all possible care not to be noticed. From time to time I had the impression, but I might have been wrong, that I was being followed. (...) In fact the cell's activity was my sole occupation. I was also in charge of documenting work. (..) The work was divided up into three or four themes, the political situation in the country, the Middle East, the oil cartels in the region and of course first and foremost the anti imperialist struggle in Egypt and the Sudan."

In May 1947 following the explosion of a hand grenade in the *Métra* cinema, Victor Segré was arrested with his brother and several comrades. They were set free the same evening. *"The press relates on the front page he raid , the arrest of Communists, the Zionist plot"*. The secret police asked the factory boss to fire Victor Segré. The latter recalls that interview:

- So I'm fired?

- No I explained to this chap from the police that I needed you here in the office. I had to promise him you would no longer set foot in the factory. He finally accepted this. But you know you have deprived me of the possibility of naming you factory director. I shall have to find some one else. Its' a shame.

- I am sorry for the trouble I cause you, but ...

- Listen Lolly [Victor's nickname. Editor's note] you're talking to some one who has more experience than you. You know nothing about life; we are here as guests in this country. Here to-day, some where else to-morrow. That's our story, the story of Jews. We'll be at home in Palestine to-morrow, after to-morrow who knows? Palestine is our only home and there you will be able to do what you want. You'll be at home. And now go back to work , but not a word to the others.

I return to my work post. The others, curious are looking at me. I am red, a bit shaken and I say nothing.

But I am already thinking of something else.

I am done for, completely done for. I'll have to be careful, not to involve the others, my cell comrades, supporters, the documenting Circle. I had taken my decision, to continue class struggle and to go on reinforcing Communist organisation. I was born here in Egypt, Egypt is my country, the country of Muslims, Jews and Christians, all united in the same fatherland, in the same struggle!

Epidemics, whether cholera, malaria or any other disease, spare no one, make no distinction between race or religion.

Yes I'll continue, because this is the path of truth. It's a shame for work and perspectives for the future, but too bad! It's a shame to no longer be able to be factory director, but unfortunately that is the price to pay for continuing the struggle , a noble struggle it appears to me."

Victor Segré does not lay down arms!

"Against the government, ally of the English and Zionism"

"In Egypt we were suffering the consequences of two major problems,

the domestic problem and the Palestinian problem, Victor Segré explains. In Egypt the social situation was getting worse very day: job crisis, a mounting number of unemployed, housing crisis, sick people with no health care, children with no schools. Corruption within the royal court was escalating to unprecedented proportions. Most of the poor peasants who possessed small strips of land and cultivated cotton were constantly victims of rich speculators. They would wait for cotton prices on the market to get to their lowest level before buying it off the peasants who were impatiently waiting to get their hard won money in order to satisfy the meagre needs of their families. Workers were joining unions, that were frequently illegal, in their struggle against factories being closed down, jobs axed and for wage increases. (..) Students were out demonstrating. (..)

Every Friday, the Muslim Brothers came out of the Al Azhar Mosque to demonstrate against the government an ally of the English and Zionism, the latter fighting against the Palestinian population.

In Palestine, the civil war was becoming more intense. There were many victims among Palestinian villagers at the hands of well organised Jewish terrorist organisations. The Jewish organisations, Lehi and Stern united together and formed the Etzel. We heard that Etzel had launched a surprise attack on the small village of Deir Yassine massacring all its inhabitants, about forty people plus cattle. [That was the 9th April 1948: editor's note]. This attack caused a great wave of revolt in Egypt, the Muslim Brothers accusing the government and Jews of being in league with Zionism. There were anti Semitic demonstrations.

The Ashkanazi Synagogue of Eastern European Jews which was in Darb El Barabra was set fire to. That is the synagogue we said our farewells to Papa Touli and where the prayer for the dead was pronounced. Its' in that same synagogue I wept on the coffin of my dear papa Touli. A photo of the fire was on a whole page of Times magazine.

“Arabs had no hatred and made no show of racialism towards the Jews of Egypt”.

In reprisal, the Muslim Brothers try to organise atrocities aimed at Jews. But this action fails pitifully.

To illustrate this failure I shall tell of my own experience. One day I am coming back on the bus from the office for the mid day break. Reaching the Sakakini station bus stop, the driver advises Jews not to get out as a group of Muslim Brothers are waiting for them. I take no heed of the good driver's advice and get out. I am immediately surrounded by a dozen young “Brothers”, the “Gamaa” as they were usually called.

- Well, well, Yassin and you Sobhi, do you want to beat me up ?*
- Do you know this Jew?*
- Who are you ,*
- Me? I grew up with them. We've played marbles and football together. And you, who are you?*
- I am a leader of the Brothers.*
- Well then, Yassin, Sobhi, hit me. Your leader orders you to.*

- *No Aboud. We can't hit him. He's a friend of all of us.*
- *And you and you, are you all friends of Aboud ?*
- *No, replied Yassin, we have just met him.*

Aboud answers me vehemently:

- *We're all Muslims. There are no Jews here. You all have to go.*
- *Sobhi do you hear that? He wants me to leave here.*

Sobhi and Yassin appear uncomfortable.

- *Aboud, we're telling you he's a childhood friend.*

But I continue:

- *Tell me Aboud , where should I go from here ?*
- *That's your business: do what you like. Go to Palestine.*
- *You see he wants to send me to Palestine, me who was born here. He says he's anti Zionist and he wants to send me to Palestine. He's really bright your Aboud!*

And Aboud even more furious:

- *You are lucky, you can go.*
- *Very well but I want to go with my friends:*
- *We're coming with you Lolly.*
- *(...) And the group finishes by breaking up. The Brothers' attempt at action in the Sakakini area had come to an end.*

I mention this episode to show that Arabs not only held no hatred but showed no form of racialism towards the Jews of Egypt.

But because of events happening in Palestine, Arab villages being attacked, Palestinian land being bought up by Jewish international organisations, fire was spreading through Arab countries. Mass anti Zionist demonstrations took place entailing a great wave of anti Semitism. The head of Talia' ah AL Moutahada brings out a brochure edited in two languages, Arabic and French in the name of the Jewish league against Zionism. We circulate this brochure in the streets, big stores and letter boxes. This action gets no result, but we get a lot of criticism from certain progressive circles."

The 29th November 1947 the dividing up of Palestine is decided by the UN. Victor Segré recalls this:

"This decision causes big demonstrations in Egypt and all the other Arab countries. The masses of people in street demonstrations demand arms to fight the Zionists who want to get their hands on the Palestinians' land and Muslim holy places. Nokrachi Pacha declares that if the Jewish State is proclaimed, Egypt will declare war and stop the setting up of the so-called State of the Jews on the Palestinians' land.

But there is more and more social agitation all over the country. It degenerates and turns into violent riots aimed at the government , at Zionism calling for solidarity with the Palestinian people. The demonstrators accuse the government, an ally of the English, of being responsible for the UN Security Council decision which declared the dividing up of Palestine."

Expelled and Exile!

In 1948 Victor Segré was imprisoned in the Huckstep camp along with many of his comrades. After a year and a half of imprisonment, he learned that he was to be expelled from Egypt. He refused and started on a hunger strike. He wrote a document which came to be published in the AL Kotla newspaper.

"In signing this document, he explains in his book, I was declaring I was a Communist, that I had done nothing other than help the democratic forces of the country fight the shameful exploitation of the Egyptian people, that this help, although modest, was my own contribution to this struggle, to the struggle of the people with whom I had grown up, sharing the bread and water of the Nile with, that my struggle was the expression of my revolt at the poverty and misery of this people, among whom I was born and whom I was part of. That I was revolted to see the rich, the Pashas and Beys becoming richer and richer, while the unfortunate people, not only lived in indescribable misery but suffered from many diseases, without the slightest medical attention, with children not being able to go to school to learn to read and write; that the people for the most part were analphabet and ignorant, that peasants in the country worked land belonging to big landowners and lived in great poverty with their families in shacks made of earth and mud, that they had nothing to eat other than bread, onions and at the best, mesh, a sort of cottage cheese with no nutritive value. I declared being a Communist and considered I was punished by the authorities for that simple reason. Punished by being expelled from the country, meant they were frightened of the truth, that of being Communist. Yes, in their eyes I was a criminal. But one day the people would judge these corrupt and ignominious leaders. They think they can stifle my voice by expelling me, but they will never be able to stifle the voice of the people. And that day will come! In signing this letter, I am starting on a total hunger strike as a sign of protest."

Faced with the inflexibility of the authorities and taking into account his real physical weakness, Victor Segré was forced to put a stop to his hunger strike. He was expelled from Egypt. *"I was all alone, abandoned to my sorry destiny, I had no more relatives or friends in this world, nobody to turn to for advice or help, nothing. Nothing and nobody.*" In the train which took him handcuffed to Alexandria, where he was put on a boat for Italy, he learnt that it was the Jewish Agency that dealt with the transport of Jews leaving Egypt for Israel. Against his will, in spite of his anti Zionist convictions, he was among them.

An interview of Husam Abed, in charge of the *Dafa* theatre in the refugee camp of Baqa'a (Jordan)

Interview by Claudine Dauphin

First of all could you tell us about your theatre, its productions, its objectives?

Dafa is a word which means the opposite of isolation and alienation. [*the literal translation is: warmth, warm – Editor's note*]

It is the opposite of stealing basic human rights, homeland, education, health, water, air ... etc. *Dafa* is an invitation to dream, hope and act, to create a new generation able to give.

And above all we wish to offer the opportunity to organize workshops and presentations in which we introduce our Palestinian culture and folklore to children. We are trying through our projects to emphasize the importance of the dream, which is always linked up to reality.

The project occurred as a reaction to the following facts: the poverty of these places, of camps and poor neighbourhoods, of the yards and gardens where children play; the unhealthy environment and cramped houses; the difficult living conditions; the bad economic situation and the inability of the children's families to buy games for them.

One of the projects, called "I want to play" was devised and implemented by a puppetry artist who is passionate about community work and is interested in building arts appreciation among children in refugee camps, in particular orphans and children with special needs. The project means that each child can create his/her own puppet, then in turn give it to another child in the workshop.

Another project, called "Half a half" is based on a tale of the Palestinian folklore, a typical situation where the forces of good are backed by Fate in their confrontation with the forces of evil. The culture of coexistence with the enemy and acceptance of *the status quo* can rely on huge budgets for the production of cartoon programs which feature characters, like the Ogress, that are shown as good. That could change the nature of aggression and shift it towards a support for coexistence. We chose a story that was passed down orally by grandmothers from generation to generation to explain that, even if the balance of power is different, if we believe in our capacity to fulfil our potential we will be able to overcome this enemy. A character which is represented by one eye, one ear, one hand... has only half of each part. Despite his limited physical abilities, he can kill the Ogress in the end by using his mind and resources ... which is connected with the concept of resistance.

What does it mean to be a ten-year-old child living in a camp?

For a ten-year-old child, living in a refugee camp has many consequences. I remember my childhood in the camp, the banner at the entrance of the camp, on which were written the following words:

"The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Baqa'a Camp – Emergency camp."

The word emergency reminds me of my time in the emergency ward of hospital, I remember my first visit to the hospital, and that room full of beds. The patient is placed under intensive care and makes tireless efforts to improve his ability to resist disease, and in the end is put on on a respirator.

The camp environment is unsuitable for living. There are not enough yards and gardens where children could play. This environment is not a healthy one. There is a shortage of housing. Living conditions are difficult and the economic situation is appalling. Families cannot buy toys and games for their children. No sooner has one nourished a dream than it is shattered by the terrible reality.

What are your views? How do you see the future?

I do not see a gap between on the one hand my vision and point of view as a human being who expresses his understanding and sympathy for other men, and on the other hand my situation as an artist and a teacher who is defined by the context of which he is part.

I absolutely condemn war and am opposed to it as a means to resolve differences between people, but I also believe that wars are inevitable as long as society is divided into classes and man uses man and there are no human rights.

The national bourgeoisie cannot lead the struggle against Zionism and imperialism, because class contradictions are irreconcilable. And no one can confiscate the right of future generations to go back to Palestine (the right to return to their villages and cities, not to the West Bank or Gaza). And yet it is happening, and the Palestinian Authority has entered into a relationship that links its interests to the interests of the enemy, which spreads woes and frustrations among the Palestinian people at home and in the diaspora.

Civil wars strengthen opportunism, and I am against any sort of fight between Palestinians. I support the efforts that encourage unity against the enemy.

I believe in the capacity of art to change things, and to create contexts and lives where we can protect and save beauty and live it. The subject of art is in all cases human: love, hate, death and life ... And the interactions between man and himself and others and nature. That is why I am interested in puppets, for they represent an important and necessary language and a good tool to communicate with children and adults.

It pains me to see the reality in which we live and in which we become a human commodity, whose value is determined, in the global system which the new representatives of American imperialism are trying to impose on the world, by measures and numbers: such as the amount of income and so on. Through this distortion of many concepts and human values, the globalizing perspective of the U.S. would like to swallow and digest what is human and vomit it in the form of goods. In this pragmatic and globalized world, which imposes its authority over groups of mankind, human relationships become distant and distorted, and our sense of our humanity becomes non-existent.

I believe in the importance of science and knowledge, which are

essential conditions for change. We need to reconsider the learning and educational process .

Things appear de-constructed, fragmented, disjointed, which hinders education. I prefer an approach that shows the overall picture and then starts dealing with the parts, to reach the whole picture again eventually. I think it is appropriate to link science, art and literature together so as to revitalize our Arab culture. It is important to open up our heritage to the world and communicate with other cultures, without melting into them, but by preserving our identity, civilization and culture.

I believe in the need to devise new methods in dealing with children within the school environment, and I believe in the role of drama and playing in the learning process in interaction with other children. There are many studies that provide support for this approach.

Do you agree with the two-state solution or one state or any other solutions?

I do not believe in any solution that makes no difference between the victim and the executioner, and gives the enemy the right of occupying my historic land. I believe in the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, to the land and villages they had to abandon. The right of return is related to the complete liberation of the Palestinian national land.

I believe that the Jews who lived in Palestine before 1948 are Palestinians and they have the right to defend their land against the cruel Zionist occupier. Europe should assume its responsibility towards Jews. That is where the Jewish problem originates. It's unfair to solve European problems by exporting them to our homeland.

I believe in a people's war and resistance against an enemy that has superior military power through an armed struggle that is not official. It is a right guaranteed by case law and international laws. Resistance, in my view, is the only way to disrupt the balance of power. This has been tested before in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The revolution begins when a revolutionary nucleus is creating the conditions for its outbreak. There are many examples: Cesar Augusto Sandino fought against the U.S forces of invasion in Nicaragua. And the revolution in Cuba, Vietnam, and elsewhere.



DIALOGUE

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