Zionism and the Nationalization of Jerusalem

Khaldoun Samman

> We should practice so that we can see Muslims as Hindus and Hindus as Muslims. We should practice so that we can see Israelis as Palestinians and Palestinians as Israelis. We should practice until we can see that each person is us, that we are not separate from others. This will greatly reduce our suffering. We are what we perceive. This is the teaching…of interbeing.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh

Over the years, I have given many public talks on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. After discussing the formation of apartheid in Israel and its unethical nature, I have at times received responses implying that I hate the "Jewish people." I have all too often witnessed occasions in which some pro-Israeli supporters quickly label you as an anti-Semite at the slightest hint of language that speaks critically of Israel, as if such language is a condemnation of all Jews. Similarly, this equating of Zionism with the "Jewish people" has lately seeped into Palestinian and Arab discourse, which is surprising given the fact that traditionally activists have consciously attempted to disentangle the two concepts. Some Palestinians may even think that you are a traitor if you show up in Arab East Jerusalem with a Jewish friend wearing a yarmulka, as I noticed on one occasion during my last visit to the region. Indeed, this defensive "knee-jerk" reaction of identifying criticism of state policy as an attack on your own identity has become the rule rather than the exception when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When I protest this form of what we could call a "culturalized" or an identitarian politics, the response is usually a blank stare, as though my criticism is impractical and naïve. "Isn't it self-evident," many ask me, "that the issue is between two peoples?" My response is an unequivocal, "No, it is not so!"

My claim throughout this article is that what appears self-evident and commonsensical is only so because our language has been handed over to the least politically creative class of nationalists who think

and act upon the world in a strictly Manichaean or binary manner. Of course, this is not limited only to the Israeli-Palestinian issue, as the same can be said for people in many different contexts. In the United States, for instance, a destructive cell of right-wing political elites have taken over our language to such an extent that it is not unusual now for a left-leaning person to see American politics strictly through the lens of blue versus red states, defining all Evangelical Christians as hopelessly lost to right-wing politics. Such a person is thus unable to understand why, for reasons not so self-evident as they may appear, a particular sector of poor and middle class whites may be attracted to a George Wallace, Ronald Reagan or, God forbid, Jerry Falwell.[1] Similarly, in today's Turkey, the problematic binary between secularists and Islamists has created a political climate in which a Turkish Che-Guevara-tee-shirt-wearing leftist could never see himself in alliance with a Turk who attends Mosque prayers on a regular basis. It is as though our choice to carry the Qur'an or Bible, refuse a glass of wine on behalf of religious observance, or wear the yarmulka or the veil naturally anchors us to a certain politics. What many on the left tend to forget is that if they look just a few decades back at their own history, many of those Bible and Qur'an carrying folks were actually central players in redistributive politics, and only recently have they been articulated into a neo-liberal project. By fixing our political maneuvers into a simplified representation of these groups as being naturally reactionary, many of us are now unable to understand the complexity of these people and the infinite possibilities they possess for articulating all kinds of political identities, for good or for bad ends. By not understanding this complexity, we have forfeited the public sphere to right-wing nationalists who know all too well how to articulate populist rhetoric for a destructive politics that produces ultra-chauvinistic forms of nationalism.

When did words and labels become so fixed in politics? It happened when we allowed the powerful—those who hold government positions, run our media, write our novels, run our progressive politics, set-up our museums and our theme parks, or write our histories—to gain free reign to represent the world as though it were a museum and a collection of artifacts with easily recognizable labels: Eskimo, Aborigine, Neolithic, Chinese, Arab, Jew. In other words, it has occurred whenever we have handed over our language to those who define politics as a field of self-evident representations.

This has especially been the case when it comes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in which Zionists, Arab Nationalists, and Islamists have attempted to completely "culturalize" political identities. It is so deeply rooted that even many of our distinguished sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, novelists, historians, film producers—in short, all those who are credited with possessing the most open-minded orientations in the world—now also frame the issue as though it were simply between two collectives, Jews on one side and Arabs/Palestinians on the other. Take, for instance, Benny Morris, one of the most highly acclaimed Israeli historians, who is credited with beginning a new school of thought concerning the Israeli-Palestinian issue and is considered one of the founders of what has come to be known as Postzionism. In an interview with a *Haaretz* reporter, Morris makes the following markedly racist assumption that demonstrates clearly the political impulses and leanings of one historian frequently cited about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

> There is a deep problem in Islam. It's a world whose values are different. A world in which human life doesn't have the same value as it does in the West, in which freedom, democracy, openness and creativity are alien. A world that makes those who are not part of the camp of Islam fair game. Revenge is also important here. Revenge plays a central part in the Arab tribal culture. Therefore, the people we are fighting and the society that sends them have no moral inhibitions. If it obtains chemical or biological or atomic weapons, it will use them. If it is able, it will also commit genocide…Something like a cage has to be built for them. I know that sounds terrible. It is really cruel. But there is no choice. There is a wild animal there that has to be locked up in one way or another.[2]

Benny Morris is utilizing the very same language colonizers have been using against the colonized since the inception of Social Darwinism and the view that the "savages" of the Global South, being close to beast-like in nature, need to be tamed by a superior race (hence, "a cage has to be built"). Notice here how Benny Morris is using the language of "us" and "them," with "it" (Islam and Palestinians) as a group of barbarians who are culturally and religiously dysfunctional, somehow genetically prone to violence, and out to get "us" democracy-loving folks, as though issues such as occupation, the violent destruction of Palestinian villages by the Israeli regime, and the constant political and economic squeeze Palestinians face daily have nothing to do with "revenge." Also, if we are to accept Morris's insistence that religion is

the cause of violence, which I do not, then one has to be fair and claim that Judaism is therefore much more violent, given that "Jews" have killed 1,050 Palestinian children as compared with the 123 Israeli children killed by Palestinians since September of 2000—nearly eight and a half times more deaths![3] If it sounds pathetic to claim that Judaism or Jewish culture is to blame for these numbers, which clearly is absurd, then Benny Morris's racist understanding of the conflict should likewise be considered problematic. At times it seems as though education affords some of us the luxury of using the same binary language, except in a more convincing, sophisticated, and polite way. It just takes a little jab by a reporter to show the political nature of some of our highly prized writers.

In any case, if we turn back the clock to look at history from a vantage point prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, we will notice that many Jews and Arabs did not view each other as diametrically opposed groups that are culturally distinct and in need of separate homelands. Then Zionism entered into Palestine with its highly racialized nationalist project. In other words, there had to be a political intervention by Manichaean-type nationalists in order to create this view of the world. Indeed, American Jewry itself was highly resistant to Zionism until 1967, when the Zionists started to push American Jews to equate their identities with the state of Israel.

It is this form of identitarian politics that we must challenge collectively. Accepting a culturalized and binary understanding of the conflict is an irresponsible act that hands over our language to right-wing movements whose aim is to create fear and destruction between Jews and Arabs. These movements can only survive with our own complicity in using their language of "Jew" and "Arab."

In this essay, I will be unable to demonstrate all of the issues presented above. Instead, I will choose a more selective path and show how Zionism, as a Jewish nationalist movement, has squeezed our language to the point that all we can see now are "Jews" and "Arabs." I could, of course, do the same for Palestinian nationalists and Islamists as well, but my intuition tells me that most of the readers of this essay need a serious treatise on how to deconstruct the language of the most powerful narrators of the original "Jew versus Arab" myth, which suggests that Arab and Jew are inherently of two radically different material compounds that can never be combined. Indeed, this reductionist, culturalized form of political identities is, in my view, the single greatest obstacle to the creation of a more pluralistic and sustainable

One-State solution. The idea of a "Jewish state" or a "Palestinian state" is actually a product of our modern racist way of thinking about our world, in which the actual multitudinous nature of social life is negated by a closed and intolerant mind. With each visit to Israel/Palestine, I am saddened by Israel's destructive policy of bulldozing over a history of deep diversity. Whatever you may call it—ethnic cleansing, apartheid, Bantustans—it is a sad testimony to a land that could have been a light to all nations but instead has become darkness.

The focus of this essay will be a narration of how this darkness overtook the area and transformed its diverse and rich past into its present shallow state of identity politics, ruled by men who know only the language of vulgarity. I will do this through the suggestive case study of Jerusalem, particularly demonstrating the way in which Zionist discourse and policy has fundamentally transformed facts on the ground so as to erase all *Others*. Time calls upon us to step back and see how "Jews" and "Arabs," all in one sweeping century, were transformed from a symbiotic world of unfixed identities into one completely swallowed-up by the Manichaean Zionist movement's efforts to turn Israel into a "Jewish homeland," while placing all others as "impurities" in its midst.

*****

> They're going to build the wall through my neighborhood.
> My family and I, we are going to be on the wrong side of the wall.
> I am in shock. I don't know what to do.[4]

The Palestinian author, Sami Hadawi, in his book *Bitter Harvest: A Modern History of Palestine*, tells of his childhood in Jerusalem before the coming of World War I, and the Balfour Declaration's proposal for a Jewish "home" in Palestine. His recollections reveal much about how radically Arab-Jewish relations have changed in such a short period of time. He remembers, for example, how children eagerly anticipated the springtime festivities in which "Moslem, Christian and Jew alike took part in the Moslem pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Moses." During the summer, he recalls, they all "flocked to the Valley to take part in the Jewish celebrations at the tomb of Sadik Shameon." During other parts of the year, members of the three faiths "picnicked in the gardens around the tomb of the Holy Virgin Mary, near Gethsemane, where the Christian community spent a day and a night rejoicing."

Savoring such memories, Hadawi concludes: "Ours was indeed a Holy City, a city of peace, love and brotherhood, where the stranger could find shelter, the pilgrim loving care and the faithful salvation."[5]

Yet, by the time Hadawi had entered his youth, a change was already brewing in Palestine. At the turn of the 20th century, a young movement on the nationalist scene, Zionism, had begun to focus upon Palestine as a place ripe for the creation of a Jewish state. Recognizing that the land was predominantly populated by Arabs, the Zionists began to articulate an objective of replacing its indigenous non-Jewish population with a Jewish one, specifically showing preference for European Jewry. Relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine began to erode. Indeed, in Jaffa, for example, despite the fact that local elites from each community formed close personal bonds in many instances, Jewish sources reported a fear in the Arab population that "the Jews came to impose a foreign Government upon [them]."[6] In 1905, Negib Azouri, an Arab journalist writing in Paris, had already predicted in a pamphlet the coming of a conflict between Jews and Arabs. Azouri called attention to an emerging effort by Jews "to reconstitute [themselves] on a very large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel," and he forecasted that such a movement would trigger the "awakening of the Arab nation." Further, he concluded that the confrontation between the two movements was a continuous function of destiny that could have implications for the entire world.[7]

Such reports would transform notions of "Arab" and "Jew" as separate peoples, posing the two "in a kind of permanent, irreconcilable opposition to each other, representing two entirely different cultures, ways of life, temperaments, mentalities, sets of values, and aspirations."[8] As Zionists proposed and generated exclusively Jewish settlements throughout Palestine, a nationalized mentality began to take clear form, in which "Jews would no longer want to live among Arabs, even in 'nice' neighborhoods."[9] Today such nationalist views have crystallized to the point that some Israelis even assert the impossibility of a loyal citizenry of Arabs residing in Israel. This view extends to essentialist notions that Arabs form a separate nationality that would be better served if they were "somehow able to find their way out of the country and settle in neighboring Arab states 'among their own people and in the midst of their Arab brethren.'"[10] In fact, such a position is not novel to the current state of affairs. Many of Israel's founding fathers, including the nation's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, went so far as to argue that since Arab Palestinians "did not constitute

a distinct, separate nation, and were not an integral part of the country," they should be expelled from Israel and "transferred to other Arab countries."[11]

Many critics of Israel blame this change in social relations on the demographic transformation of Palestine. They emphasize, for instance, that at the time of Hadawi's childhood years, immediately preceding the very large expansion of Jewish immigration into Palestine under British control, the population of Jews was fewer than 10% of the total Palestinian population, comprising 56,000 Jews as compared to 600,000 Arabs.[12] These numbers would be radically altered with the Zionist movement, verging upon the realization of a Jewish state. It would provoke some 750,000 to 1 million Arab Palestinians, in fear of Jewish attacks on their villages, to abandon their homes in 1948, only to be denied the right of return by the new Israeli government. Many such families remain scattered even today in refugee camps throughout the occupied territories and other regions of the Middle East.[13]

While such numerical details obviously contribute to an understanding of the eventual conflict that would emerge, a deeper explanation lies in the manner by which Zionists distinguished Jews from Arabs, not only in nationalist terms, but along racial lines as well. Leading Zionists rejected the idea of sharing Palestine for the long term with its native population, embracing instead notions of transforming it into a "mono-religious" Jewish state. "Its success," as Edward Said argues, "required it to be as intent on the destruction of the indigenous Arab society as it was on the construction of a Jewish life in Palestine."[14] Consequently, from its inception the Zionist movement followed an agenda of complete segregation, created a "dual society," with an economic development policy devised to construct territorial partition and an employment program designed to refuse Palestinians jobs and create exclusively Jewish kibbutzim.[15] As Theodor Herzl, the founding father of Zionism, proclaimed:

> We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries while denying it employment in our own country… . Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.[16]

The combination of demographic change with novel racialized and nationalized representations of peoplehood served to provide quite

sufficient fuel for an inevitable and dramatic shift in social relations between Jews and Arabs. Zionist terminology would further fan the flames as the movement enacted a "Judaization" project, while simultaneously "de-Arabizing" the land. Such language would concretize Arab *otherness* in the popular Jewish imagination, posing the Jews as a superior, more developed race that performed its duty by conquering, developing, and modernizing a Palestine that Arabs had neglected. In creating such a discourse, Zionism introduced a new notion of peoplehood into traditional Palestine, through which a border could be seen as a natural result of difference, hiding intentions to "negate the identity of those on the other side."[17] As John Rose has recently argued, this is how Zionism introduced a divide between Arabs and Jews that was contrary to the imperial Islamic Arab legacy.[18]

In order to appreciate the gravity of such change, particularly in light of "time-immemorialist" scholarship, which posits the incompatibility of Jewish and Arab culture, it is important to emphasize that before the late 19th century, with few exceptions, the inhabitants of traditional Palestine, especially its Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities, not only intermingled in the streets, but lived, played, and prayed in a neighborly fashion far more closely than can be imagined today.[19] In no place was this more evident than in Jerusalem, where, as S.D. Goiten notes, homes and other residential compounds were often shared to the extent that Muslims and Jews occupied different rooms under the same roof.[20]

Current formations of identity permit such familiarities precious little room. Even contemporary temples of knowledge house library stacks that are shelved in different sections, according to Jewish or Arab affiliation, "studied by different scholars, and are taught by different departments even though in some cases they come from the same place and time."[21] Indeed, in complete contradiction to modern notions of progress that champion tolerance, exchange, and inclusive societies, the nearer to the present the lens is focused, the sharper the view of exclusivity becomes. As if obsessed with a newfound skill, nations are more efficient than ever at policing their borders, always choosing to reinforce them at any sign of tension or breach. In Israel, this has translated into an ever-maturing metaphorical image of Jews and Arabs as two chemical compounds that may combust if mixed together. This insistence upon separateness that has engulfed Jew and Arab alike has served to implicitly suggest a sense of ideological, social, and political volatility.[22]

Thus, turning to the post-WWI period, after three decades of British colonial rule followed by the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, not only has a demographic distortion of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem emerged, but so has a completely new understanding of religion, ethnicity, and nationality. If thirteen centuries of Muslim/Arab rule, with its complex, yet relatively effective system of inter-communal relations, existed prior to modern times, "the present campaign by Israel and the Zionist movement," as Naseer Aruri observes, "is geared towards a Jewish ascendancy and an erosion of Christian and Muslim influence."[23]

These changes are clearly visible when journeying through the region between Jordan, the Occupied Territories, and Israel, where one must travel through many checkpoints, exclusively Jewish settlements, and highways. Lacking proper papers and a correctly colored license plate, crossing from the Jordanian border into Jerusalem may take longer than would a similar journey during the time of the first-century CE Apostle Paul. For a Palestinian, the journey is virtually impossible. G.W. Bowersock, a historian of the Middle East, captures this well:

> I have made the journey from the old Roman city of Philadelphia, which is the modern Jordanian capital of Amman, across the new Allenby Bridge to Jerusalem, but only with my papers in good order. There is no more instructive experience for a student of the Middle East…than this journey… . For an ancient historian each barrier is a constant reminder that there was nothing comparable in former times.[24]

Those who posit an inherent conflict between Jews and Arabs rooted in ancient claims would be well served to compare the recent experience with the Muslim/Arab period, during which indigenous Jews and Christians were, with rare exception, accorded sufficient privileges with which to flourish as an essential element within a large international body, despite having been placed in rank below Muslims.[25] Indeed, as Mark Cohen adds, "the Jewish and Christian *dhimmis* occupied a recognized, fixed, safeguarded niche within the hierarchy of the Islamic social order."[26]

The ghetto-like existence under which most Palestinians live today in both the Occupied Territories and Israel proper reveals just how utterly bankrupt the present circumstances have become. In his analysis of the Islamic period, Cohen further observes that, "the topography of residence in a Muslim town lent the Jew an aura of inclusion, of

normalcy" to the extent that "in most cities of the Islamic Mediterranean…Jewish quarters, in the sense of exclusive Jewish districts, hardly existed."[27] Such a description is in sharp contrast with the present period in which Jewish settlements have created a Swiss-cheese-like topography of Palestine, enclosing Arab inhabitants into Bantustans and ghettos. In the words of S.D. Goiten, most Jews under Muslim/Arab rule "lived in their towns in noncontiguous clusters, such that 'there were many neighborhoods predominantly Jewish, but hardly any that were exclusively so.'"[28] Indeed, moving forward in time, it would appear that at least in Palestine under the nationalist rubric, severe regression has occurred, rather than progress (despite the common modern mythology).

Further examining the comparison, Moses Maimonides, a Jew living in 12th-century Cordoba under Muslim-ruled Spain, exemplifies successful integration, while fully retaining cultural and religious roots. As Leon Roth explains, Maimonides did not entertain "the conception [that]…Judaism for him is…a product of 'race' or an inheritance of 'blood,' nor is it bound up exclusively with any one people or any one soil."[29] Living within an imperial context that allowed for relatively healthy relationships between Jews and Christians and their Arab Muslim neighbors naturally influenced his views.[30] Throughout his life, as he spoke and wrote in Arabic, dressed and behaved in Arabic fashion, and developed styles, patterns of thought, and worldviews that were Arab in flavor, Maimonides appreciated his existence as an Arab, while never once questioning his Jewish identity. The mere notion of friction and discontinuity between these two aspects of his identity seems never to have entered his thinking, to the extent that even the conception of his Arab surroundings as a contaminant would have been inconceivable.

Maimonides does not represent an isolated example, but rather the general state of affairs, at least in the fruitful Middle Ages of Islamic rule, if not throughout its entirety, with few exceptions. The manner, therefore, in which Zionists in the contemporary world would come to identify a notion of "influences" as the source of racial and national contamination requires further inquiry. Many of those who have subscribed to Zionist views have often used such language in fear that allowing Palestinian refugees to return would "undermine the Jewish state," or they would dread the mention of the one-state solution that would invite a radical shift in demography, in which Arabs and Jews would live as equal citizens. The policies pursued as a result of such

language have been, by any standard, racist in flavor, and are only upheld due to the lack of public concern in both Israel and the United States, to which the latter continues to provide a green light.

The Zionist movement developed its objective of transferring a largely Arab-owned land into Jewish possession in the late 19th century. By 1917, under the tutelage of imperial Britain, it began to implement such goals and would work extensively toward revising Arab notions of Jewish status under the Muslim social order.[31] As Charles Smith argues:

> Zionists and Zionist claims changed completely the traditional Muslim conception of Jews as occupying *dhimmi* status, protected by, but subordinate to, Muslims… . Zionism, as a European movement, came to be seen initially as another attempt by Western imperialism to subordinate Muslims to Europeans, and became even more threatening once it was realized that the Zionists wished to take part of what had been Arab lands for centuries and remake it into a Jewish homeland. Arab opposition emerged before World War I in response to Zionist immigration and land purchases…[32]

Such recent political realities—as opposed to claims of ancient and predestined quarrels that are almost genetic in character—provide a clear context for understanding the origins of the current conflict between Jews and Arabs. Even with the final demise of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the sense of "communal solidarity" that had predominantly characterized relations between Jews and Arabs continued to exist under the British Mandate period, albeit subject to French and British manipulation and influence along sectarian lines.[33] Indeed, the status of the *millet* system that had existed in the 19th century under the Ottoman Empire, which protected Christian and Jewish minorities, was quickly being undermined by the early 20th century, under the influence of Britain and the Zionist movement. As Europe had recently risen in power and had incorporated the Middle East into a Eurocentric modern global system, the old confessional structure of the *millet* had given way to a new system of special privileges for Christians. Such privileges would come to extend to Jews as well.

The increase in hostilities that began to emerge between Palestinians and Jews, as between Christians and Muslims in other parts of the Middle East, thus embodied an immediate response to changes that were occurring in the material and ideological realm of *modern*

Palestine, quite in contrast to biased and racialized characterizations that describe Arabs and Muslims as having an inherent cultural and religious incapacity to adjust to modernity. Typifying such a view, many orientalists have long produced studies of the "Orient" from the perspective of *otherness*, presuming that some cultural and religious essence or worldview has been the cause of regional hostilities and of failure to adjust to the tolerant and pluralistic standards of the modern West.

Further examining the collusion between Britain and Zionists, it is worthwhile to note that Zionist Jews were active in the military administration of the British colony in Palestine throughout the entire period of the British Mandate, to the extent that an exclusively Jewish military force existed. Zionist Jewish experts were also important members of the British colonial land authority. Such realities help to portray the precise manner in which European intervention in Palestine strengthened the position of Zionist settlers at the expense of native Palestinians.[34]

Economically, Britain facilitated Jewish land acquisition and provided for Jewish enterprises in a clearly recognizable protectionist policy of preferential tariffs that included the free importation of raw materials already produced in Palestine. Native Palestinians, by contrast, were treated as just another colonized nation and naturally resented such policy as a double standard. As British authority supported Jewish industry while simultaneously weakening the Palestinian economic sector, it created in the process a dual economy with a discriminatory labor policy that introduced separate wage systems. This further alienated the indigenous population and encouraged the emergence of an exclusively Jewish industrial sector fully independent of the Palestinian Arab population and its economy.[35] Furthermore, as the British worked to weaken Palestinian resistance to their occupation, Jewish settlers benefited economically and politically. They continued to form massive and exclusive Jewish settlements on once Palestinian lands, while the British did the dirty work of actively subduing an indigenous Palestinian anti-colonial and anti-Zionist movement.[36]

Michel Warschawski, an Israeli activist, argues in his book, *On the Border*, "it is a great historical irony that Zionism, which wanted to tear down the walls of the ghettoes, has created the biggest ghetto in Jewish history, a super-armed ghetto, capable of continually expanding its confines, but a ghetto nonetheless, turned inward upon itself."[37] In producing these ghettoes, Jewish settlements today are placed stra-

tegically around largely Arab villages with the intent of fragmenting territorial access and blocking physical expansion.[38] The goal has been clearly articulated time and again: to produce a Jewish homeland at the expense of an indigenous population; to keep Arab and Jew completely separate, allowing little—if any—space for mingling. Abba Eban has stated this most clearly: "We do not want Israelis to become Arab. We are duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies."[39]

*****

Although early Zionists are well known for having depicted Palestine as "a land without a people for a people without a land," it is evident that upon their initial visits, Zionists recognized conversely that the land was, in fact, well populated. However, they did not like what they found: significant numbers of Arab and "Oriental" Jews who had lived there for many centuries. Indeed, with the exception of one century during the Crusades, Jerusalem had been fully integrated into the Arab Muslim world since the 7th century. Its Jewish communities illustrated this fact well. During the 1,300 years of Muslim rule over Jerusalem, Muslims had comprised the majority of its population, while Jews had traditionally remained a small but significant minority. In 1800, about a century before Zionism became an active force in Palestine, the Jewish population of Jerusalem was estimated to be about 2,000. Alexander Scholch, a scholar of Middle East studies, indicates that the Jewish presence in the city only began to significantly rise under the heavy pressure of the Zionist movement, which by 1880 had successfully increased the Jewish population to 17,000. By 1922 it had doubled that number to 34,400.[40]

In fact, the highly influential Israeli, Zangwill, who invented the slogan "a land without a people for a people without a land," soon discovered, upon visiting Jerusalem in 1905, "that Palestine proper had already its inhabitants. The province of Jerusalem is already twice as thickly populated as the United States, having fifty-two souls to the square mile, and not 25 per cent of them Jews."[41] Based on such unexpected observations, Zangwill summed up: "[We] must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the [Arab] tribes in possession as our forefathers did or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us."[42]

The situation was further complicated by the fact that many of the Jews—who had long been living in Palestine and had become part of its Arab social fabric—were not initially attracted to Zionism.[43] Despite limited numbers, Jews were well represented in the everyday life of Jerusalem and formed part of the city's mosaic. Many of the old Sephardic quarters, such as Nahlaot, built by Jews from Yemen and Kurdistan, or the Moroccan Jewish Boukhara district, "still resemble the Moroccan Mellahs or the Jewish quarter of Damascus":

> Givat Mordechai was a village of young religious couples who lived in modest homes with red tile roofs surrounded by orchards. In Machane Yehuda, the Pinto, Gabai and Eliashar—those who are called "native Sephardim"—were a true local aristocracy before the seizure of the community by the Zionists. They still spoke Ladino in the cafes where they played backgammon while drinking arak to the sound of songs by Farid el-Astrashe.[44]

Upon witnessing the existence of such Arab Jews, an utterly alien reality to them, Zionists, who had already begun to characterize the Arab world using racial terminology, did not even consider forming strong relationships with the existing Jewish population.[45] They had already begun to envision a modern, European-inspired Jewish state.

In fact, many of the early Zionists, such as Theodor Herzl, Chaim Weizmann, Vladmir Jabotinsky, and David Ben-Gurion, all shared little respect for the Old City as it stood. Herzl, quite secular in his outlook, never having circumcised his only son, looked to Haifa, with its access to Europe and the Mediterranean Sea, rather than Jerusalem, which he felt, "was redolent with fanaticism and superstition, the musty deposit of 'two thousand years of inhumanity and intolerance… . The amiable dreamer of Nazareth has only contributed to increasing the hatred.'"[46] In his futurist novel, *Old New Land*, Herzl carries this theme in a more racist direction: two Germans, a Jew and a Christian, visit Palestine before and after the establishment of the state of Israel, witnessing how the Zionist movement has effectively exchanged the oriental impurities of the past for the more modern and Europeanized society the new Israel has become.[47]

Herzl's racist discourse toward Palestinian Arabs and Oriental-Jews was quite typical of the Zionist movement. Early Zionists were heavily influenced by European anti-Semitic ideas, and they believed themselves to be on a mission to remake the Jew as a modern, European-like

subject. The old Jewish communities of Jerusalem represented what these new Zionist settlers wanted to negate. As a result, Zionists would aggressively denounce these Arab Jews as "parasitical": "He was to be replaced by a 'new Jew' who would achieve the settlement of Palestine by means of productive agricultural work."[48]

Many of the early settlers consciously stayed away from Jerusalem.[49] A good number of them worked and lived in the emerging and completely new Tel Aviv, which quickly became the center of the movement. Tel Aviv was a "modern" and "Western" city, which settlers preferred to other urban centers that many perceived as infested with oriental-like inhabitants. While they loved the modernity of Tel Aviv, they equally despised Jerusalem: "With its synagogues, ghetto-like neighborhoods and its Oriental market, its Jews in kaftans and fur hats, it reminded them too much of the Diaspora they hated."[50] Such imagery represented a world to the European settlers that seemed to belong to earlier times. Further, the city, having been under Arab/Muslim rule for many centuries, was profoundly marked by its centrality to Arab and Muslim civilization. Its more mundane Arab characteristics, such as its cafés and "their nargilah pipes, gramophones and parrots,"[51] seemed to epitomize everything they wanted to negate in creating a new Jewish state. Such sentiments extended to other Arab cities, such as Jaffa, for example, which "was not the right place 'for new people with new thoughts to live in.'"[52]

Conversely, by such measures, Tel Aviv, built by "modern" Jews and completely new to the 20th century, was not tainted by a long history of Arab/Muslim influences. It represented the most recent and modern urban planning ever to enter the Orient, becoming a city where one "might easily imagine himself in some Italian port."[53] Indeed, even the name, Tel Aviv, says much about this desire to overcome the Orient, as it symbolizes the birth of the new out of the old, much in the same way that Herzl envisioned in his *Old New Land*: "'Tel' is an excavated mound, and so signifies the remains of old settlements, while 'aviv' means the first shoot of the new wheat harvest, and also springtime, the sign of a new beginning."[54] In this spirit, the establishment of Tel Aviv provided the newcomers with a space that could represent the new Israel as the first exclusively Jewish city to have been established for countless generations, while containing and articulating their contemporary brand of Jewishness.[55] James Morris, one of Tel Aviv's earliest settlers, expresses this sentiment succinctly: "I do not feel altogether

abroad in Tel Aviv… . If you feel yourself to be a Western man, you will always be half at home in this…city."[56]

*****

The Zionist dichotomy between a modern Jewish Tel Aviv and a hopelessly oriental Jerusalem would soon change form, as the movement, gaining acceptance by colonial powers, found new avenues through which to unleash its nationalist project upon Jerusalem. With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, Zionists would attempt to eradicate Jerusalem's unique Muslim, Jewish, and Christian mosaic. As the new state was accorded international legitimacy, it immediately embarked upon a policy to consolidate settlements throughout West Jerusalem. It pursued aggressive claims upon many of the Palestinian neighborhoods that had been temporarily abandoned by Arabs who hoped to return after the conflict subsided. Taking advantage of the mass evacuation, Israel moved quickly toward a Judaization of Jerusalem, transforming it in such a way as to make it Jewish politically, nationally, and "racially."

Many of West Jerusalem's once Arab villages, such as Deir Yasin, al-Maliha, Lifta, and Ein Kirma, were quickly annexed to the new state. Ninety percent of these village populations had been Arab,[57] but upon their departure after the 1948 war, Israel immediately confiscated their homes, granting the most lavish ones to the generals of the Israeli army, and eventually demolishing those that were less appealing in order to create space to house the incoming Jewish settlers. Today all of these villages have been Judaized and are now occupied by many of Israel's ministries, including the Knesset and the prime minister's office.[58] This territory includes Deir Yasin, a village that was once the home of Palestinian women and children who were gunned down by Menachem Begin's Irgun, and is now used as a Jewish industrial zone.[59] Of the Palestinians that have remained in Jerusalem, many continue to be denied building permits, and if they leave the country for longer than 12 months, they would find themselves branded with the status of refugee and not permitted to return, with "their resident permits arbitrarily canceled."[60]

The Judaization of Jerusalem escalated further with the 1967 war, when Israel expanded to include all of traditional Palestine, including East Jerusalem, which was overwhelmingly Palestinian. Israel's victory further stimulated Jewish nationalism, giving many Israeli Jews an

enhanced sense of triumph.[61] With renewed confidence, Israel used its victory to integrate more Palestinian territory into the state of Israel, even though such action was contrary to international law. This was especially the case in East Jerusalem, where Israel quickly extended its boundaries by annexing numbers of Arab communities and territories into Israel proper.[62] As in its 1948 treatment of West Jerusalem, Israel would follow the same policy in 1967, attempting to make East Jerusalem "Jewish physically, ethnically, and politically."[63] Toward that end, it strategically enlarged the city through land seizures, while minimizing the Palestinian presence in the new zones.[64] Although Israel claimed to guarantee the right of Palestinians to access Jerusalem, to this day many Palestinian Muslim and Christian refugees from 1967 have found that this is not the case. The Israeli occupation authorities imposed a permit-only policy upon Palestinians living within the Occupied Territories, thus criminalizing those who enter the city without permit in hand.[65]

When Israel occupied Jerusalem entirely in 1967, it planted 200,000 Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem with the objective of consolidating its hold over the city and making it very difficult for Palestinians to claim any portion of it in future negotiations.[66] Moreover, it dismantled an entire Muslim quarter near the Wailing Wall, expelling all of its inhabitants without compensation and demolishing their houses in order to build an extensive plaza.[67] Today the plaza has been turned into a nationalist site where Israelis, just below the sacred Muslim site, hold nationalist rallies and swear in army recruits.[68]

*****

After the 1967 occupation of Jerusalem, Israeli policy for its eastern sector aimed explicitly to "create facts on the ground" by enlarging the Jewish population demographically, while restricting Arab resettlement from the West Bank.[69] This dual character of Israeli occupation engendered a "process of dispossession, displacement, dismemberment, disenfranchisement and dispersal" of East Jerusalem's Palestinian population.[70] Further exacerbating tensions, many Orthodox Jewish families were encouraged to move into largely Arab neighborhoods in the congested Muslim Quarter of the Old City. As some social scientists have suggested, these settlements had little interest in creating diverse neighborhoods where Arabs and Jews would live together. On the contrary, the objective behind such strategy was based on "a

religious-nationalist ideology,"[71] consistent with the tenets of Zionist discourse: to Judaize Jerusalem by implanting "ethnically pure" Jewish settlements.

Moreover, the Israeli authorities made it very difficult for the reverse to occur. To this day, very few Arabs have been allowed to move into West Jerusalem, including those who continue to hold the keys to their former homes, hoping to return to the now largely Jewish sector of the city. Similarly, no known cases exist in East Jerusalem of Arabs being permitted to settle within recently established Jewish neighborhoods.[72] In one example, Arab families seeking to reside in a Jewish neighborhood were met with strong opposition and "were forced to leave their homes in order to permit the reestablishment of a totally homogeneous Jewish residential zone."[73]

This policy has aimed to make it as difficult as possible for future generations to propose a shared Jerusalem in which Palestinians and Jews alike can claim the city as their capital. Clearly stated in 1981 by Beni Ricardo, an activist of the Jewish fundamentalist movement Gush Enumim, the intention of Israeli policy in East Jerusalem is "to change the idea of dividing the city into something that is utterly ridiculous, as is the idea of returning the Arabs to Cordoba or Andalusia today—ridiculous."[74] Ricardo understood this strategy as "one way to prevent the separation of Israel from expanded East Jerusalem."[75] Such nationalist assaults on East Jerusalem have created the political context in which Palestinians, nearly 30% of the city's population today, are largely treated as a "demographic" hazard threatening the city's Jewish majority.[76]

In their efforts to create racial segregation, Israeli officials have instituted differential access to public resources and services, favoring Jerusalem's Jewish population far more than its Arab inhabitants.[77] Although activist Jews and Palestinians have repeatedly warned of the implicit dangers surrounding such discrimination, Israel continues to spend dramatically less on the education, health, housing, and other social services of Palestinian Arabs than it does for its Jewish inhabitants.[78] As Amos Elon elucidates:

> It was not a "mosaic," as [the former mayor of Jerusalem] Kollek often called it; mosaics have a certain harmony of design; here the division reflected only discrimination and a deepening chasm. There was an enormous disparity between the public funds allocated respectively to the Israeli and Palestinian quarters.[79]

The policies stemming from the events of 1967 not only represent an administrative occupation of Jerusalem, but a linguistic Judaization as well. As Daphna Golan-Agnon has recently argued, Jerusalem is "a city closed to almost all Palestinians, a city where the municipal parking lot has no signs in Arabic, the language spoken by 30 percent of its inhabitants," producing in effect an apartheid-like situation comparable to that of South Africa, in which "the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem live as foreigners in their own city."[80] Further, the most psychologically damaging aspect of Israeli policy is its attempt to obliterate any traces of Palestinian village life, as Israelis continue to be inundated with a historical revisionism that ignores the Palestinian cultural heritage and demographic presence in recent times, as well as its subsequent deportation upon the establishment of Israel's statehood.[81] This objective has been accomplished so thoroughly that today many Israelis are unaware of the fact that the streets they walk, the kibbutzim they visit, and the art communes they enjoy were quite recently inhabited by Arab Muslim and Arab Christian families. Despite a continued Palestinian presence, all traces of the families that were expelled in 1948 and again in 1967 have been removed or forgotten.[82] Precious little recognition is left of the historical existence of the many men, women, and children who once shared the same land, having anchored their roots and heritage to it.[83]

As Edward Said explains, such Zionist objectives have aimed to deny:

> the existence of the Palestinian people, and by dehumanizing them, Zionists meant to hide from the world the intended victims of their colonization. They paraded before world public opinion as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, but they could not do so if the fact were known that they were destroying an indigenous Asian community struggling to be free.[84]

Said further characterizes popular Israeli sentiment as one in which "the Arabs are a nuisance and their presence is a fly in the ointment."[85] In Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Hertzlia, for example, Israeli Jews are oblivious to the existence of Arabs. Such Israeli cities are segregated, while Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories have their own road system, guarded by checkpoints and armored Israeli troops:

> They're protected from them, just as whites were protected from blacks during apartheid…because the roads went around in such a way as to avoid the sight, in that case, of blacks.[86]

Israeli Jews thus rarely have had contact with Palestinians, who remain distant, visible to them only through ideologically mediated depictions of suicide bombers or of Palestinians chanting "Death to Israel." Consequently, they remain insulated and largely incapable of witnessing the effect that their government has had on Palestinians. As Meron Benvenisti, the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, remarks:

> I recall the first time I felt the tragedy of the Palestinians penetrate my Zionist shield… . I remembered the place from a trip with my father, and the desolation—the empty houses still standing, the ghost of a village once bustling with life—stunned me. I sat with my back against an old water trough and wondered where the villagers were and what they were feeling.[87]

As a young man in 1948, Meron Benvenisti witnessed firsthand how the existence of the new state affected the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. Suddenly, he recalls in his writing, a Muslim family disappeared on Gaza Road; the memory of Palestinians from the village of Deir Yasin was "paraded through the main streets of Jewish Jerusalem by their [Zionist] captors;" abandoned Arab neighborhoods were looted and kibbutzniks, upon seizing the land, "harvest[ed] the ripe barley left by the Arab farmers of Hittin in the lower Galilee."[88] Upon such difficult reflection, he asks himself: "Have we transformed a struggle for survival into an ethnic cleansing operation, sending people into exile because we wanted to plunder their land?"[89]

Such dissonance of personal and cultural memory is the direct result of an Israeli nationalist policy designed to silence the Palestinian experience while simultaneously promoting a Jewish historical narrative. One example of how this has been accomplished is in the development of archaeological excavations following the capture of Jerusalem's Old City in 1967, with the attempt to promote the legitimacy of a Jewish nation's "return" to its original homeland.[90] These digs naturally emphasized the era of the Israelite Temples that represented an ancient Jewish national claim, not the city's many centuries of Muslim history.[91] In this manner, Israel pursued a narrative promoting its revival as an original community that has always been linked with the land of

Palestine.[92] Abu el-Hajj articulates this clearly, asserting that such historical accounts were:

> used to bolster the nationalist mythology of ancient destruction righted by modern rebirth… . These excavators sought and produced what they regarded as evidence of national ascendance and prosperity in antiquity, in relation to which the legitimacy of Israeli control over the Old City in the present would be fashioned.[93]

The significance of this strategy to accentuate a biblical past at the expense of the more recent Islamic period should not be underestimated. As historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues in his *Silencing the Past*, the production of a historical narrative between competing groups is always biased toward the groups that have greater access to the means of such production. The consequences of this power, although not as visible as gunfire or political crusades, are equally as effective.[94] Even today, the overwhelming majority of research digs are those perceived to be of national significance to the state of Israel,[95] despite the fact that such efforts only represent a window into one chapter of the great Palestine saga.[96] Bulldozers are regularly used in Israel to dig through many layers, casting aside or perhaps destroying significant Christian and Islamic archaeological treasures in favor of the Iron Age, as they search particularly for remnants of the First and Second Temples that are recognized as important "national" artifacts.

As I have visited the museum of Jerusalem over these past few years, I am always stunned to discover how small its showcase of the Islamic period is in comparison to the Jewish exhibits. Trouillot succinctly captures the sentiments I felt at the time: "[a]t best, history is a story about power, a story about those who won."[97] While archaeologists continue to gain funding, prestige, and media coverage as they focus "on eras of 'national ascendance' and 'glory' in the ancient or medieval pasts," the historical memory of Islamic and Palestinian history will continue to be marginalized and silenced.[98]

Indeed, nationalist manipulation or production of historical memory is not only intended for the victors, but also functions to remind those on the other side of the fence that they have forever lost. As Mourid Bargouti once remarked, upon reaching a checkpoint in Palestine:

> My eyes stopped at a poster of Massada. Their myth recounts that they had held fast in the fortress of Massada until they were all killed—but they did not surrender. Is this their message to us, they hang it on the

> gate to remind us that they will stay here forever? Was this a deliberate choice, or just a poster?[99]

The persistence of such narratives have yielded an almost commonsensical Israeli discourse regarding Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jews, as evidenced in a remark that Yitzak Rabin made during a speech to the Knessett in 1993: "Jerusalem will not be open to negotiation. It has been and will forever be the capital of the Jewish people, under Israeli sovereignty, a focus of dreams and longings of every Jew."[100] Many other Israeli officials have gone on record negating Palestinian, Muslim, and Christian claims to Jerusalem, while stating that the city was and will eternally continue to be the Jewish capital. Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem for 28 years until 1993, arrogantly distorted history when he commented to former President Clinton that the Jewish claim to Jerusalem is much more authentic than any other: "In another few years we in Jerusalem will celebrate 3,000 years since the construction of the city by King David, whereas the Palestinian claim is less than one generation old."[101] Similarly, Ehud Olmert recently remarked, "that there was no Arab Jerusalem. There was only a 'Jewish Jerusalem,'" only to be outdone by Ariel Sharon who insisted that Jerusalem is "Israel's Capital, united for all eternity."[102] Arthur Hertzberg sums up well the exclusionary nature of Zionist discourse regarding the city: "In the mind of [Zionists], Jerusalem had been fashioned by long history as the Jewish capital. Jerusalem could no more be taken away from the Jews than Rome could be kept from the Italians."[103]

In summation, what was once a symbiotic city, encapsulating many intertwined identities, has been thoroughly shattered with the coming of modern nationalism, specifically as a result of the nature of British rule over Jerusalem and the aggressive nationalist dimension of Jewish Zionism. Responding to intentions of transforming the facts on the ground, Palestinians have been forced into defensive postures, sometimes violent in nature, but always as a result of the dire circumstances in which they have found themselves.

The limits of time-immemorialist scholarship, with its focus on an inherent religious bias toward violence, are evident. In presenting an alternative to this perspective, my hope is to illuminate that much of what appears on the surface to be religious and ethnic in character is actually a product of very recent developments that are based upon issues of humanitarian concern: the history of Zionist settlements, the mass demolition of Palestinian homes, the massive creation of Pales-

tinian refugee camps, and the production of an apartheid system of Bantustans under Israeli occupation. While Qur'anic passages and the preaching of Jihad have been used to fan flames among sectors of the Arab world, such developments cannot be understood as occurring in a vacuum, as many scholars and media sources try to do. Instead, they must be analyzed within the context of a massive ethnic cleansing campaign that has threatened to extinguish the livelihoods that Palestinians have historically known in the land of Palestine. Such an analysis is rooted in issues of power, land, and resources, as opposed to a religious fanaticism that is designed to demonize Palestinians and Arab Muslims in general. The notion that Muslims and Arabs, owing to their traditional and religious beliefs, are inherently violent toward Jews does not hold weight in light of a historical analysis that takes into account the cataclysmic effect that colonial rule, coupled with Zionist ideology, has had on the Palestinian people. Indeed, as I hope to have illustrated, this lengthy conflict has been far from religious in nature. Instead, it has been the direct product of two nationalist movements seeking the same real estate: one has amassed the power to dislocate an indigenous people, while the other has been formed out of a forced sense of desperation.

*****

The nation-state essentially produces a "purified" notion of a people encapsulated within a territorial space of its own. We must find a new discourse that not only tolerates the Other, but in fact disarms the assumption of power that produces peoplehood in the first place. Nationalism as well as any other concept of "the people"—be it Jewish, Arab, American, French, or any other—will constantly shift its internal borders and find new binaries to reproduce its Self. Nationalism posits that humanity is composed of a number of cultures, with each having a singular essence. It reifies the nation in the most rigid way, by making it into a *thing* and, in the process, naturalizing it. It produces an identity that inspires a sense of naturally belonging to "a territory embedded with cultural meanings, a shared history, and a linguistic community," and it continuously produces an ideological structure that creates and reproduces "the purity of the people" at the expense of those Others on the outside, working like "a machine that produces Others, creates racial difference, and raises boundaries that delimit and support the modern subject of sovereignty."[104] The Arab, the Muslim, and the Pal-

estinian as a unified identity produces its own Other in response to the Israeli Jew, negating the external identity in the perceived need for its very own state. The Jewish state is produced in the same fashion, but its power can render the Arab invisible, at times in a crude and brutal fashion. The identity of the nation rests heavily on the fixity of the constructed border, not only on the negation of the Other. In this sense, the Jewish or Arab Self needs the continuous clash and confrontation with its Other in order for it to maintain its power, a process understood by both Zionist and Jihadist groups, who literally need each other for their own reproduction.

By understanding that nationalism *invents* nations where they do not exist, it is possible to understand that the collective "we" unit is a *product* of the nation-state itself, and not something naturally preceding it.[105] A nationalist identity is a reductionist and one-dimensional reality, in which we "define ourselves solely in relation to a flag, as belonging to a unique identity, and thus divide the world between an ethnic or national 'us' and all others."[106] In the case of the "Israeli" and the "Palestinian," reduced to a simplistic bi-national classification scheme, the quest for security and basic rights has instead created a century of deep trauma. The notion of finding some measure of mutual affirmation through a two-state settlement, although seemingly a reasonable solution to the degree of antagonism and violence that each group experiences, nonetheless remains problematic as it fails to confront the naturalized ontology of Self and Other implicit in the national schema. Such a project connotes a consolidated Self that, while it affirms the existence of the Other, nonetheless accepts those very same binaries present in more chauvinistic nationalist projects. In this sense, affirming the Other, while admittedly better than the present *status quo*, leaves the Jew and the Arab with no common ground and does not address or resolve the deep complexity of the multitude's identity.

An example of this complexity can be found in the figure of Ella Shohat, for whom this either/or reduction is especially problematic, as she is a Mizrahi Jew born in Israel, whose Jewish-Arab parents migrated from Baghdad. As a Jew who identifies as both Jewish and Arab, it becomes literally impossible "to hide our Middle Easterness under one Jewish 'we.'" In her words:

> Our history simply cannot be discussed in European Jewish terminology. As Iraqi Jews, while retaining a communal identity, we were generally

> well integrated and indigenous to the country, forming an inseparable part of its social and cultural life. Thoroughly Arabized, we used Arabic even in hymns and religious ceremonies… . Prominent Jewish writers, poets and scholars played a vital role in Arab culture, distinguishing themselves in Arabic-speaking theater, in music, as singers, composers, and players of traditional instruments.[107]

Shohat's identity is more complicated than nationalist categories permit, yet Shohat herself, even after taking into account her serious charges against present Israeli nationalist classifications, reaffirms and reclaims those very same classifications by positing an "Arab" past, thus continuing to naturalize the notion of peoplehood. The limits of this can best be evaluated in the work of less radical, liberal Jews like Ahad Ha'am and Martin Buber. Ha'am, for example, a highly spiritual and tolerant Jew who, although utterly committed to the Zionist nationalist cause, is nonetheless highly critical of the self-righteous wing of the Zionist movement, engages in an honest and critical assessment of their policies to uproot the Palestinians. In prophetic fashion, he warns that their efforts to restore Israel through the trampling of Palestinian Arabs have not only obscured the humanity of the Other, but may have irretrievably damaged the moral consciousness of the Jewish movement:

> We must surely learn, from both our past and present history, how careful we must be not to provoke the anger of the native people by doing them wrong, how we should be cautious in our dealings with a foreign people among whom we returned to live, to handle these people with love and respect and, needless to say, with justice and good judgment. And what do our brothers do? Exactly the opposite!…This…has planted despotic tendencies in their hearts… . They deal with the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly, beat them shamefully for no sufficient reason, and even boast about their actions. There is no one to stop the flood and put an end to this despicable and dangerous tendency… . Even if [the Arabs] are silent and endlessly reserved, they keep their anger in their hearts. And these people will be revengeful like no other… . [But as long as things continue the way they are,] the society that I envision, if my dream is not just a false notion, this society will have to begin to create itself in the midst of fuss, noisiness and panic, and will have to face the prospects of both internal and external war.[108]

Given the current circumstances, Ha'am's words some seven decades past is reassuring. Similarly, Buber's deep and just desire to teach other

Zionists the skill of putting themselves "in the place of the other individual, the stranger, and to make his soul ours"[109] is highly inspiring. Yet, for both Ha'am and Buber, the Jew and Arab remain two self-contained peoples in search of dignity. While they are able to make the stranger's suffering visible to the Jew, the Arab remains exterior to his Jewish identity.

The discourse of "two peoples" needing to respect and tolerate each other's existence remains within the nationalist paradigm, in which Israeli and Palestinian continue to be naturalized and thus fundamentally irreconcilable. The Jew and Arab still stand as two separate people, each with its own heritage, traditions, and language, that function in the same way that museums "ornamentalize" difference. Indeed, as Ammiel Alcalay has recently argued:

> The very assumption that Arabic [Muslim and Jewish] cultures are so distant they must somehow be bridged—even by scholars trying to prove connections—is itself an entirely ideological construct that would have made little sense to a twelfth-century Parisian, a seventeenth-century Venetian, or even an early-twentieth-century Syrian.[110]

*****

The particularistic model of national identity, even when interpreted liberally and with good will toward the Other, cannot go beyond a reified construct of reality, in which insider and outsider are each understood as having a singular will to act culturally, politically, creatively, destructively. In this model, certain kinds of behaviors and customs can always be attributed to a group in taxonomical form. Such universalistic projects as Christianity and Islam have attempted to provide an alternative model that idealizes the dissolution of divisions that are based on particularistic structures, but have fallen short in that they have failed to escape a binary understanding of the social world. However, perhaps the monotheistic religions—Judaism included, as it espouses, for example, a notion of welcoming the stranger as one would welcome a cherished guest—have planted the seeds of a pluralistic multiplicity in which Self and Other cease to exist in binary or dialectical fashion, but exist instead in constant dialogue. Perhaps it is possible to envision the formation of open social relations that have historically been so thoroughly constitutive one of the other that to

think of them as two interacting peoples with utterly different sets of identity would be a contradiction in terms.

A good example of this can be found in the writings of the famous Palestinian poet, Mahmud Darwish, who constantly complicates nationalist categories:

> There will be a time when the Jew will not be ashamed to find the Arab part inside of himself, and the Arab will not be ashamed to declare that he is constituted also by Jewish elements. Especially when talking about Eretz Yisrael in Hebrew and Falestin in Arabic. I am a product of all the cultures that have passed through this land—Greek, Roman, Persian, Jewish, and Ottoman. A presence that exists even in my language. Each culture fortified itself, passed on, and left something. I am a son to all those fathers, but I belong to one mother. Does that mean my mother is a whore? My mother is this land that absorbed us all, was a witness and was a victim. I am also born of the Jewish culture that was in Palestine.[111]

What is most inspiring about Darwish's intervention is that he directly and unequivocally challenges the binary logic of nationalism and provides a clear example for those who are struggling to produce a new ontology of Self and Other that undermines the nationalist narrative. The affirmation of the Other inside the Self as a means of contesting the notion of peoplehood is extremely important to such an aim, because it provides the hope of a break with the classic view of the nation.

A more contemporary figure is the Jewish American, Daniel Boyarin, who has written extensively on the question of identity and is himself in search of an alternative to the binaries that nationalism and other institutional forms of power force on us. Although he is not a scholar of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, his scattered comments are highly suggestive. In a forward to his recent book, *Border Lines*, he reflects on this very issue:

> As I write, in occupied Palestine literal physical boundaries of barbed wired and electrified fencing are being raised to separate violently one "people" from another. In the process of maintaining our own identities…can we learn the lessons of the past and prevent ourselves at the eleventh hour from the path of new and even more violent heresiologies? Jews and Christians are called upon at this moment to learn from our own difficult histories, without in any way rendering those histories

> equivalent phenomenologically or morally, and do something different now. The prophet teaches: Zion will be redeemed only though justice.[112]

Darwish and Boyarin, each in his own unique way, share the notion that what appears at first distant and strange becomes very close when understood in terms of dialogue—so close indeed that the Other can be felt inside the Self. Thus, rather than describing cultures capable only of superficial interaction through some externalized scheme of contact, both of these writers attempt to blur the division by positing the Other as intimate to the Self. Their examples not only blur the division between two identities in struggle, but also render those very boundaries, with all their notions of purity, difficult—if not impossible—to police.

How does Jerusalem fit into this project of blurring Self and Other? Where nationalism posits the Self as an enclosed, bound cultural space, premised on maintaining a border to differentiate its Self from an external Other, Jerusalem serves as a powerful symbol for those interested in re-ontologizing notions of both Arab and Jew. It is a symbolic sacred space that provides the ultimate site in which to negate and remove the antinomies themselves. An unbound terrain can integrate its diversity into networks across open space, rendering indecipherable old dualisms, divisions, negations, and borders of the modern state. In such a vision, the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Wailing Wall, and the Holy Sepulcher can stand as symbols not of purified sacred spaces, but of intertwined identities.

Moreover, adopting the usurpation of the Other into the Self makes it difficult for the state not only to police difference, but to actually reproduce and fashion further nationalist projects. As understood from this perspective, Jerusalem's intricate system of sacred space is so intertwined that it becomes impossible for a state to appropriate the city for itself, as the insider/outsider model is torn asunder and replaced by that of hybridism.

Those who occupy privileged positions regarding the construction of meaning (namely, the archaeologists, poets, historians, sociologists, art historians, Middle Eastern and Islamic scholars, etc.) form a powerful social force armed with the skill to denaturalize peoplehood. Rather than operating from the perspective of a national binary system, as has most often been the case until recently, we must offer an alternative that takes seriously the notion of "fuzzy" spaces. Thus, in our efforts to negate a typical modern atlas, with its clear lines dividing up the

nations of the world, we must offer paintings of the world composed as "diverse points of colors such that no clear pattern can be discerned in any detail."[113]

Jerusalem, as a sacred space, must be transformed by the artist, the writer, the priest, the Mufti, the Sheikh, the *Ulama*, and the Rabbi to become a place at once unified and diffused in such a way that it is impossible to distinguish inside from outside. We must all shed as dead skin the model of straight lines and binaries and recognize the fuzzy space of symbioses and complexities. We must not only revise our modern nationalized constructs of the Other, but engage with full and open heart in the production of art and historical and sociological analyses that fracture the Self and Other to the point where the Other can no longer be bound and made to stand distinct from the Self. In this way, Jerusalem is a grand symbol for all who are interested in a new ontology. It can become an authentically global sacred city, a genuinely universalistic symbol that safely allows the multitude to mutate their imagined bodies, their sacred spaces, their nations, their religions, their trade relations, their al-Aqsa Mosque, their Wailing Wall, into true visions of universal unity. ◉

Notes

1. For an interesting analysis of this issue, see the fine book by Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

2. Benny Morris interviewed by *Haaretz*, "Survival of the Fittest," accessed online on 19 July 2008 at http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=380986&contrassID=2.

3. For these staggering numbers and the names of children killed by both sides, see the website http://rememberthesechildren.org/remember2001.html.

4. A female Palestinian resident of Jerusalem, cited in "Jerusalem Wall Will Cut Life in Two," accessed online at http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what€we€do/where€we€work/israel€palterr/jerusalem€wall.htm.

5. Sami Hadawi, cited in Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 77.

6. Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2005), p. 41.

7. Negib Azouri, cited in Kimmerling and Migdal 2003, p. 79.

8. Nissim Rejwan, *Israel's Place in the Middle East: A Pluralist Perspective* (Gainesville and Tallahassee, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 1999), p. 4.

9. LeVine 2005, pp. 63–64.

10. Rejwan 1999, pp. 4–5.

11. Nur Masalha, *The Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 16.

12. Avi Shlaim, *Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (2001:7). Jewish numbers in Palestine were initially even smaller. In the 1880s, there were only about 25,000 Jews in Palestine. See Rhoda Kanaaneh, *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2002), p. 29.

13. Kanaaneh 2002, p. 29.

14. Edward Said et al., "A Profile of the Palestinian People," in *Blaming the Victim: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*, edited by in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens (London: Verso Press, 1989), p. 238.

15. For an extended discussion, see the fine work of Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1996).

16. Theodor Herzl, in *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, edited by Raphael Patai (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), pp. 87–88, cited in Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 113.

17. Michel Warschawski, *On the Border* (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2005), p. xvii.

18. John Rose, *The Myths of Zionism* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p. 63.

19. Ibid., p. 74.

20. S.D. Goiten's comment is found in Ibid., p. 74; Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 126.

21. Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 21.

22. Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 8.

23. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem," in *The Open Veins of Jerusalem*, edited by Munir Akash (Syracuse, N.Y.: Jusoor Book distributed by Syracuse University, 2005), p. 124.

24. G.W. Bowersock, "Palestine: Ancient History and Modern Politics," in *Blaming the Victim*, edited by Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens (1989), p. 185.

25. Ibid., p. 187.

26. Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross* (1994), p. 112.

27. Ibid., p. 126.

28. S.D. Goitein, cited in Ibid., p. 126.

29. Leon Roth, *The Guide for the Perplexed: Moses Maimonides*, cited in Nissim Rejwan, *Israel's Place in the Middle East* (1999), p. 114.

30. Ibid.

31. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 32–34.

32. Ibid.

33. Kanaaneh 2002, p. 139.

34. Samih Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1997), p. 70.

35. Ibid., pp. 82–85.

36. See Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (1996); and Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000).

37. Warschawski 2005, p. x.

38. Ghazi Falah (1989), cited in Kanaaneh 2002, p. 52.

39. Abba Eban, cited in Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs* (1993), p. 31.

40. Alexander Scholch's population figure was taken from Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), p. 121.

41. Israel Zangwill, cited in Masalha, *Politics of Denial* (2003), p. 16.

42. Zangwill, cited in Ibid., p. 15.

43. Warschawski 2005, p. 14.

44. Ibid.

45. Arthur Hertzberg, "Jerusalem and Zionism," in *City of the Great King: Jerusalem from David to the Present*, edited by Nitza Rosovsky (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 150.

46. Theodor Herzl, cited in Amos Elon, "The Deadlocked City," *The New York Review of Books* (18 October 2001).

47. Theodor Herzl, *Old New Land*, translated by Lotta Levensohn (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener ([1902] 1997), p. 61.

48. Joseph Croitoru, cited in Joachim Schlor, *Tel Aviv: From Dream to City* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 31.

49. Avishai Margalit, "The Myth of Jerusalem," *The New York Review of Books* (19 December 1991).

50. Warschawski 2005, pp. 11–12.

51. Schlor 1999, p. 39.

52. Ibid., p. 40.

53. Theodor Herzl, *Old New Land* ([1902] 1997), p. 61.

54. Schlor 1999, p. 44.

55. Arthur Hertzberg, "Jerusalem and Zionism" (1996), p. 157.

56. Cited in Schlor 1999, p. 29.

57. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), pp. 125–26.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., p. 126. To be more precise, some "30,000 of the inhabitants of the Arab villages and urban centers around Jerusalem were driven out by force or fled the outbreak of violence… . The residence of the Israeli President stands today on Palestinian-owned land in Talbiya. The nearby Muslim cemetery of Mamilla [Ma'man Allah] was converted to the Israeli Independence Park with lawns, playgrounds, and restrooms."

60. Amos Elon, "Deadlocked City" (18 October 2001).

61. Avishai Margalit, "The Myth of Jerusalem" (19 December 1991).

62. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), p. 127.

63. Naseer H. Aruri, *The Obstruction of Peace: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995), p. 331.

64. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), p. 128.

65. Naseer H. Aruri, *The Obstruction of Peace* (1995), p. 329.

66. Amos Elon, "Deadlocked City" (18 October 2001). According to Elon, "200,000 more were settled elsewhere in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Michael Romann and Alex Weingrod, *Living Together Separately: Arabs and Jews in Contemporary Jerusalem* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 21.

70. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), p. 131.

71. Romann and Weingrod 1991, p. 38.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Beni Ricardo, quoted in Ian Lustick, "Reinventing Jerusalem," *Foreign Policy*, no. 93 (Winter 1994): 44–45.

75. Ibid.

76. Daphna Golan-Agnon, *Next Year in Jerusalem* (2005), p. 28.

77. Romann and Weingrod 1991, p. 21.

78. Amos Elon, "The Deadlocked City" (18 October 2001).

79. Ibid.

80. Golan-Agnon 2005, pp. 26–28.

81. Ibid., p. 19.

82. Edward Said, "Introduction," in Said and Hitchens 1989, pp. 4–5.

83. Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1992).

84. Edward Said et al., "A Profile of the Palestinian People," in Said and Hitchens 1989, p. 241.

85. Edward Said in David Barsamian and Edward W. Said, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts, 2003), p. 73.

86. Ibid.

87. Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2000), p. 3.

88. Ibid., p. 2.

89. Ibid., p. 3.

90. Nadia Abu el-Hajj, "Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem," *American Ethnologist* 25, no. 2 (May 1998): 168.

91. Ibid., p. 169.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), p. xix.

95. Nadia Abu el-Hajj, "Translating Truths" (May 1998): 171–172.

96. Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 3.

97. Trouillot 1995, p. 5.

98. Nadia Abu el-Hajj, "Translating Truths" (May 1998): 167.

99. Mourid Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* (2000), p. 14.

100. Yitzak Rabin, cited in Naseer H. Aruri, *The Obstruction of Peace: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians* (Common Courage Press, 1995), p. 330.

101. Naseer H. Aruri, "Misrepresenting Jerusalem" (2005), p. 133.

102. Ehud Olmert and Ariel Sharon, cited in Amos Elon, "The Deadlocked City" (18 October 2001).

103. Arthur Hertzberg, "Jerusalem and Zionism" (1996), p. 163.

104. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 114.

105. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1995).

106. Warschawski 2005, p. xvii.

107. Ella Shohat, "Dislocated Identities: Reflections of an Arab-Jew," in *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, edited by Tony Kushner and Alis Solomon (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p. 196.

108. Ahad Ha'am, "A Truth from Eretz Yisrael," in Kushner and Solomon 2003, pp. 15–16.

109. Martin Buber, "No More Declarations," reprinted in his collection, *A Land of Two Peoples* (New York: Oxford University Press ([1929] 1983), pp. 79–80.

110. Ammiel Alcalay, *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 7.

111. The Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish, cited in Kimmerling and Migdal 2003, p. 416.

112. Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. xv.

113. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 139.