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Blood and Soil Ideologies

Excerpt-Reprint

E.B. Maple (Peter Werbe) and George Bradford
(David Watson)

2018, Summer

The following is an excerpt from an article commenting on the 1993 Palestine Liberation Organization/Israel peace agreement, “The PLO/Israeli Treaty: Another Defeat for the Palestinians,” from Fifth Estate #343, Fall/Winter 1993. (<https://www.fifthestate.org/343-fall-winter-1993/the-plo-israeli-treaty/>)

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Few realize that in the 45 years of Israeli existence, fewer than 700 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian guerrillas. In the same period, Israel has slaughtered tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians (including scores of children whose “crime” was throwing stones), wiped out 400 villages, imprisoned thousands without trial, dynamited houses, cut down thousands of trees in orchards, and engaged in collective punishment in an attempt to terrorize the “natives” into submission.

To anyone clear-headed enough to notice such hideous historic ironies, all of this starkly evokes the Nazi policy of ten-to-one retaliation, though in many aspects it is the same policy pursued throughout history by all expansionist empires based on blood-and-soil ideologies. A Jewish nationalist statism inevitably had to turn out to be as foul and irrational as all the others.

So insane became the Israeli attempts to repress signs of that other nationalism in the occupied territories that their policy of forbidding the display of the Palestinian flag led youth in the Gaza strip to taunt Israeli soldiers with slices of watermelon which contained the red and green colors of their flag. For this violation they often met the same fate as those engaging in more militant acts.

Despite the poignant images of celebrating Jewish and Palestinian crowds celebrating the Accord, peace and reconciliation appear to be as remote as ever. It was rather the sagging fortunes of the PLO, coupled with the desperation of an Israeli state plagued by economic stagnation, political crisis, and a relentless cycle of polarization and violence, that compelled both camps to sign a treaty which is so problematic it may never get off the ground. When one considers the model of Bosnia, the authentic human choice of dropping all borders and creating a secular, multi-ethnic, classless community seems even less possible. Outside of the PLO and the Israeli state machinery there exist glimmers of communities and projects paying allegiance to neither racket.

It is there where the only hope lies.