Various Authors
Israel: 50 Years of Conquest
1999

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a minor irritant to progress … or as statistics on the United Nations agenda for refugees in general."

Even the defenders of the refugees are marginalized. At the 1994 Oxford Conference on Palestinians in Lebanon, Palestinian presenters on camp conditions were crammed into a single panel with less time to speak than international and Lebanese speakers. However, despite past and continued marginalization of refugee voices under the weight of the scholarly work about them, self-representation is finally emerging in film, plays, poetry and essays. Refugee voices are emerging and expressing their viewpoints unhindered, like that of the study of refugee attitudes to the peace process released by the Campaign for Refugee Rights to Return.

Hopefully, it won't take another fifty years to see the emergence of a determined Palestinian identity free of politically nationalist trappings, even in the face of increasing repression from host countries as well as further Israeli aggression. Already the victims of ethnic cleansing, refugees will likely be targets for further land dispossession and expulsion. Their only defense that won't don't lead down the dead end road of nationalism is a revolutionary movement of the camps, firmly grounded in anti-authoritarian principles. The potential lies in their identification with their villages of origin as opposed to a modern nation state.

But that could easily change, given the history of other movements, such as Zionism, which faced similar conditions and wound up operating on authoritarian models mirroring their oppressors. If so, the Palestinians will continue to suffer the degradations of the state and capital, a common thread to which all nations are bound. Whatever the future, the fact remains that the refugee existence is the product of racism and colonialism, and further evidence of the failure of nationalism and the nation state.

colonialism for the same reasons, find their descendants receiving similar treatment from other Arabs.

The possibility of expulsion continues to loom for refugees in Lebanon at two remaining Palestinian camps outside Beirut — Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh — located on land near the international airport. The camps are slated to be razed to make way for shopping malls and the expansion of a sports arena. Also, anti-refugee sentiment continues to be expressed by government officials such as in a recent statement by Lebanese Interior Minister Michel Murr on a 1997 trip to France. He said the refugees are a security threat comparable to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

Palestinians want to leave, but voluntarily and to their historic homes. Israel, of course, vehemently opposes this since it would both require the return of stolen Palestinian property and challenge the Israeli state's exclusive Jewish identity. In the meantime, Palestinians in Lebanon want civil rights — the right to work, to open cultural organizations, etc., but reject naturalization, which would be a negation of their right to return. Many don't identify with Yassar Arafat's Palestinian Authority and reject resettlement in the West Bank because it's not their land. They understandably demand a return to their specific villages of origin, many of which are in Israel. This orientation toward the tradition and place of the village functionally negates any larger nationalism or nationalist solution.

In the face of continual reversals for the Palestinians, a recent breakthrough has been the emergence of self-representation by the refugees themselves. In spite of the physical depredations, the camps can be sites for exciting and long-range struggle, which has also marked the Palestinian refugee experience. Previously, being the objects of scholarly study, refugees occupied a vacuum that didn't regard them as agents of history or producers of culture. Edward Said mentions the 1955 book, *Social Forces in the Middle East* by Sydney Fisher, as an example which only mentions refugees "as

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emergency appeal to donor countries which covered the deficit, but refugees still walk a precarious line.

Palestinians are frequently forced to move from one camp to another in order to escape violence or because of transfer programs designed to fragment the community and to control this potentially revolutionary bloc. Self-identity is therefore determined by power relations at specific points in time. In the pre-1968 era, Palestinians rejected the term "refugee" as insulting and demeaning, preferring the label of "returner." According to this idea the word "refugee" defines the problem as purely humanitarian, rather than acknowledging a distinct national identity and history that allow Palestinians to reclaim their homes and their hopes.

Following the 1960s emergence of the Palestinian resistance movement, refugees in Lebanon refashioned themselves from passive spectators to active resisters. But in post-1982 Lebanon, Palestinians became refugees once again, not by choice, but out of necessity. This gave them access to badly needed UNRWA services, but meant relinquishing their dream of returning to their homes. The new status also required subjecting themselves to their host government with the desperate hope of gaining rights and recognition in a foreign land.

This isn't likely, given that the Lebanese state has emerged stronger and more solidified recently, with a renewed sense of national identity which does not include Palestinians. The "refugee" label is a method of exclusion enabling the Lebanese ruling class to control and exploit Palestinians. A renewed Lebanese national identity comes with the predictable chauvinism with which nationalism is built.

Nationalism requires an enemy whose presence leads to the creation or strengthening of state mechanisms that can remove and contain the object of national scorn. In Lebanon, the rise of a renewed national identity dangerously parallels that currently found in fascist and xenophobic movements in Europe and North America. It is ironic that the Palestinians, originally expelled by Zionist

Lebanese policy toward the Palestinians is rooted in the refugee concept itself. Refugee camps are designed to manage uprooted people into a process of re-nationalization to another nation-state. This means that along with de-linking the refugee situation from its root causes, such host countries and to the refugees themselves rather than holding the original country accountable. This not only places a greater burden on both parties, it sets refugees up as a target for xenophobic hostility directed at them in host countries.

Another confining measure has been the restriction of travel imposed on Palestinian refugees. In 1995, as a protest against the peace process, Libya expelled 1,000 Palestinians to Egypt and stopped renewing work permits for thousands more. About 4,000 with Laissez-Passers (Lebanese passports) tried to return to Lebanon. At the same time, Lebanon's interior ministry issued a decree requiring those with Laissez-passers also to have entry and exit visas. Since most Palestinians did not have them, the function of the decree was to prevent Palestinian re-entry.

Economic conditions have also steadily worsened. According to a recent study of 1,500 women both in and out of camps in Lebanon, 94 percent of the respondents' households had a monthly income less than the sum that UNRWA considers the basic minimum for a family of five. On top of Lebanese apartheid, UNRWA's own system further maintains Palestinian marginalization by creating categories such as "registered," "nonregistered" and "displaced persons" in order to minimize refugee numbers. The agency's accountability to the UN Secretary-General and to UN major donor nations, rather than to the people it allegedly serves, not only leads it to ignore human rights abuses, but to suppress refugee voices.

The biggest gap in UNRWA's ability to provide services has been chronic deficits despite a budget increase of 70 percent from $32 million in 1993 to $55 million in 1997. UNRWA began imposing austerity measures, including tuition fees in UNRWA schools that led to a 1997 nine-day hunger strike. Relief came following an

FE Note: We are publishing this essay to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. It is a substantially revised version of two articles written in the wake of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 ("The Israeli Massacre — Peace in Galilee?" and "Latin American Terror: The Israeli Connection") that appeared in the Fall 1982 *Fifth Estate* (now out of print). Both were written by David Watson for the special edition which included Fredy Perlman's "Anti-Semitism and the Beirut Pogrom."

* * *

When the founder of organized zionism, Theodor Herzl, proposed to create a European Jewish state in the Middle East as "an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism," he was acting within a long tradition rooted in the rise of the ancient slave-state empires.

This imperial program became predominant with the rise of capitalism and its expansion first into the heaths of Europe (home of the "heathen" to be conquered, christianized and civilized by the developing state powers across the continent) and later to the other inhabited continents of the world where these civilized men — explorers, missionaries, marauders, and colonizers — spread their empire.

The enterprise which all of these pyramid-builders undertook was and is nothing less than a war upon the wilderness of the other: the subjugation of nature and of "savage" peoples, the ordering and quantification of the universe, the victory of production over idleness, the construction of the Perfect State. The attitude of empire builders is always the same, no matter where they find themselves, in the lushest forest or the most arid desert. It is all "wasteland" to be subdued, dominated, transformed into energy and commodities.

Once embarked upon the imperial project, the Jewish colonists in Palestine — many themselves once members of a little tribe slated for extermination by capitalism's robot mass-men —

embraced all of its attributes. For the zionist settlers, "land without people for a people without land" — was a wasteland and wilderness to be conquered, and the inhabitants would have to submit, go elsewhere, or be annihilated. Their dream of manifest destiny required it, just as the imperial dreams of the Spanish conquistadors, English Puritans, and the Afrikaners has earlier required it.

In his revealing introduction to Yaakov Morris' book *Masters of the Desert* (1961), Israeli founder and the country's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, sums up this spirit of conquest in his discussion of the Negev Desert. "The reclamation of the Negev Desert," he writes, "has more than local interest, vital as that interest may be to the State of Israel itself. Here, man is faced with a fateful and momentous challenge of nature. To conquer the wastelands, all his will and devotion, labor and energy, time-tested as well as newly invented techniques of science, will have to be employed ... The Negev, in short, is in many respects a small and modest pilot plant in mankind's over-all battle against the desert regions anywhere."

Not only does Ben-Gurion repeat the rhetoric of the early settlers of the North American continent, he repeats the formula for his success by drawing a portrait of capital itself: "The contemporary civilization advancing into the Negev embodies many of the characteristics of those which have appeared in the past. It is based as they were upon a combination of agriculture, industry, mining and international trade, the settlement of large units of population, the combination of settlement and defense. The heritage of the past is here being enriched with the conquests of modern science and technology." The project of Israeli capitalist development — successful settlement and economic expansion — cannot be achieved, of course, "without the transformation of the facts of nature," he adds. "Science and pioneering will enable us to perform this miracle."

Palestinian autonomy came definitively to an end with the Israeli 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

When the PLO left a destroyed Beirut in the summer of 1982, the refugees were reconfined in camps and subjected to repeated attacks from militia forces ranging from the Syrian-backed Amal militia to the right-wing Christian Phalangists. Three months after the assassination of Lebanese prime minister, Phalangist Bashir Gemayel, Israeli-transported and armed Lebanese militia units entered the Palestinian Sabra and Shatila camps and carried out one of the worst massacres in recent history, leaving over 2,000 Palestinians dead in 38 hours.

This military assault on an increasingly defenseless population was followed by a legal one; in December 1982, the Lebanese government issued laws restricting Palestinian employment opportunities by categorizing them as foreigners. A decree by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs excluded 73 categories of employment for foreigners from banking to cutting hair. Another detailed the jobs open to those with work permits — as workers in car washes, construction and excavation, agriculture, textiles, and the leather industry, and as servants, etc. In other words, Palestinians were allowed to be exploited in menial jobs.

The camps, which once were permitted autonomous and semi-autonomous status by the Lebanese state because of its own internal weaknesses and as a buffer against Israeli attack, were transformed into virtual concentration camps. Current tight control and surveillance is an interim process determines their fate. Meanwhile, military encirclement of the camps creates and sustains an atmosphere of intimidation where refugees are fearful to leave because of the likelihood of harassment and physical attack. Since the Lebanese state sees the refugees as a potential force for revolution or as a strong and sustainable movement os resistance against their treatment as an exploitable underclass, the ability of refugees organizing politically and culturally has been strongly curtailed.

UN established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the early 1950s as the main benefactor for Palestinians, providing social services and employment. However, this placed them outside the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and more specifically the 1949 General Assembly Resolution 194, with its call for either Palestinian repatriation or compensation for their losses.

Israel's refusal to abide by the resolution leaves Palestinians stranded in host countries where they are often perceived as alien and unwanted elements, designated as social and economics prey in the service of molding national identities.

An acute example of this process involves the 400,000-plus refugees in Lebanon who face a seemingly impossible living situation of high unemployment and diminishing social services, with no hope of return to their homeland. Lebanon refuses to participate in multilateral talks on refugees while pressuring the Palestinians to leave by making their lives unbearable — a policy referred to by the refugees as strangulation.

The refugees in Lebanon are those displaced during the 1948 war, which established Israel as an exclusive Jewish state, as well as their descendants. They lived relatively quietly until 1969 when Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon forced the Lebanese government to accept an armed Palestinian presence. A newly established Palestinian resistance movement assumed daily management of the camps, providing security, jobs, education, etc. Thus autonomous take-over of the camps was short-lived, however, when repeated assaults on refugees involved the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon's internal strife during its ruinous civil war which began in 1975.

As the violence escalated, Israeli-backed Lebanese Phalangist militias began attacks on refugees that resulted in numerous massacres. Syria's invasion of Lebanon in the 1970s, an its support of Christian forces, resulted in thousands of refugees being massacred such as at the Tel al-Zaater camp that was overrun in August 1976.

All of the elements are present: science and technology, industrialism and trade, urbanism, defense — all summed up in one word: pioneering. Of course the battle of the pioneer against the wilderness is also a struggle against the human fauna which is inevitably present in it. Here too, the Israeli model follows the general rule, be it in the development of the Negev for economic and military purposes (and a veritable war against the Bedouin tribespeople who have resided there for millennia), or in the conquest of significantly more settled areas, such as the towns, farms and orchards stolen wholesale by the Israeli colonial-settler state. As Ben-Gurion insists, "To maintain the status quo will not do. We have set up a dynamic state bent on expansion." (see below)

"An outpost of civilization"

Contrary to liberal pro-zionist mystifications that it is only this season's wave of brutality against the indigenous population that squander Israel's "moral capital," the drama of fascist settlers in the West Bank and what is more or less the ethnic cleansing of Arab Jerusalem is no aberration. Israel was established from the beginning on a racist, nationalist ideology of Jewish "manifest destiny." In this regard, Zionism is an integral part of the nineteenth century development of reactionary nationalist movements — and its revenge. The Jews, stateless, landless victims of every European nationalism, were themselves eventually unleashed on others as an advance guard of imperialism in the Middle East. As the Situationist International commented in 1967:

> Since its origins the Zionist movement has been contrary to the revolutionary solution to what used to be called the Jewish Question. A direct product of European capitalism, it did not aim at the overthrow of a society that needed to persecute Jews, but at the creation of a Jewish national entity that would be protected

> from the antisemitic aberrations of decadent capitalism; it aimed not at the abolition of injustice, but at its transfer … The success of Zionism and its corollary, the creation of the state of Israel, is merely a miserable by-product of the triumph of world counter-revolution. To 'socialism in a single country' came the echo 'justice for a single people' and 'equality in a single kibbutz.'
>
> It was with Rothschild capital that the colonization of Palestine was organized and with European surplus-value that the first kibbutzim were set up. The Jews recreated for themselves all the fanaticism and segregation of which they had been victims. Those who had suffered mere toleration in their society were to struggle to become in another country owners disposing of the right to tolerate others. The prolonged sleep of proletarian internationalism once more brought forth a monster. The basic injustice against the Palestinian Arabs came back to roost with the Jews themselves: the State of the Chosen People was nothing but one more class society in which all the anomalies of the old societies were recreated… ("Two Local Wars," October 1967, in *The Situationist International Anthology*)

The career of Theodor Herzl shows clearly the bourgeois nationalist and colonialist nature of Zionism. Herzl spent his life petitioning the various heads of Europe, including Bismarck, British imperialist architect Cecil Rhodes, the Czar of Russia and his pogromist minister Von Plehve, the Pope and the Turkish Sultan for funds and support to create a Jewish settler state in Palestine. Such a project would serve two fundamental purposes: it would siphon off the revolutionary Jewish masses and create a European outpost in the Middle East, where the Zionist state would "form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as

brutal and despicable political currents and regimes in the world today.

Yet, however impossible it may seem, only a radical break can transform unending national conflicts into class war against the capitalist nation states; otherwise the situation will only worsen until all contending parties succumb to their mutual destruction. The road ahead is unclear, but protagonists and victims must find a way to move beyond the fatal cycle of conquest and war. To do any less will be to accept the inevitability of the most dire and tragic consequences.

In his essay on the Negev, Ben-Gurion declared, "If the State does not put an end to the desert, the desert is liable to put and end to the State." But the State devours itself, and ultimately life along with it. Its desperation portends its approaching collapse. The desert they are making in the name of their peace cries out in agony. Can a different vision, and real peace, emerge?

Palestinian Refugees: Ghosts of Israeli Conquest *by Ali Moosaavi*

Of all the issues raised by Israel's fifty year anniversary, none holds more pain and longing, nor embodies the Palestinian experience more, than that of the refugees.

Numbering approximately 3.3 million, the Palestinians are the largest such group in the world and have suffered that status longer than any other. Besides being scattered in a diaspora in places as far-flung as Sweden and metropolitan Detroit, many continue to reside in refugee camps close to the land they were forced from a generation ago.

In southern Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank as well as Libya, Jordan, Syria and Kuwait, they occupy a gulag of refugee camps marked by squalor and hopelessness. When the state of Israel was founded, the problem was viewed as so desperate that the

In Palestine-Israel, this means as fundamental precondition the abolition of Israel's repellent institution of ethnically-based citizenship, as well as respect for the inalienable prerogative of Palestinians, not just Jews, to return to their ancestral homeland. The Palestinians are, after all, descendants of the original pagan tribes of the region before the biblical exodus from Egypt, and, as Arabs, have dwelt there for more than thirteen centuries. Their rights to the places now claimed by Jews as promised by ancient tradition not only date from ancient history but from living memory.

There is also the distinctly forbidding question of the lands stolen at least since 1948 — a question not resolved in monetary, but in human, personal and communitarian terms. A section of the Jewish labor movement in Palestine understood this in its 1924 declaration (cited by Chomsky), "The main and most reliable means of strengthening peace and mutual understanding between the Jewish people and the Arab people … is the accord, alliance, and joint effort of Jewish and Arab workers in town and country."

Such a perspective of reconciliation based on justice seems manifestly impossible today — so much blood has been shed, so many crimes committed, so many lasting hatred sown. And the situation holds little promise for a humane solution to the conflict in the foreseeable future.

Thugs Who Currently Rule

The thugs who presently rule in Jerusalem enjoy widespread support for their unyielding, arrogant campaigns, and are being attacked for their narrow right by those who would push them further into genocide. The Palestinians, on the other hand, are more destitute and desperate than ever, and increasingly captive to the most authoritarian, fundamentalist and militarist tendencies in Palestinian society, tendencies aligned with some of the most

opposed to barbarism," as Herzl put it in his 1896 book, *A Jewish State*

This imperialist bulwark took the same form in Palestine in relation to the original inhabitants that such projects did everywhere (e.g. South Africa, Rhodesia and the Americas), confirming radical anthropologist Stanley Diamond's famous definition of civilization as *conquest abroad and repression at home.* And the colonization process was the same. Ahad Ha'am, a famous Jewish writer, noted in 1891 on a visit to Palestine, that the Jewish settlers there "treat Arabs with hostility, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable inclination."

Origins of the zionist state

In 1907, the Hebrew journal *Ha Shiloah* observed, "Unless we want to deceive ourselves deliberately, we have to admit that we have thrown people out of their miserable lodgings and taken away their sustenance." The German socialist politician Karl Kautsky noted in 1921, "Little more attention was paid to the Arabs than was paid to the Indians in North America." Employing land purchases from absentee landlords, the Jewish settlers forced small farmers and sharecroppers off land they had inhabited for generations.

At the end of World War I, Palestine was nearly 95 percent Palestinian-Arab, but by 1929, money from Europe, support from Great Britain, and land purchases and provocations had already driven almost 2,000 Palestinian families from their land. By 1940, Yoseph Weitz, head of the Jewish Agency Settlement Department, commented, "Between ourselves, it must be clear that there is no room in this country for both peoples … the only solution is Eretz Israel [Greater Israel], at least the Western Israel [west of the Jordan River], without Arabs, and there is no other way but to transfer them all — not one village, not one tribe should be

left." (cited by Noam Chomsky in his book, *Peace in the Middle East*). During the 1948 War, three-quarters of a million people were driven from their homes by armed zionist settlers; the newly formed state quickly employed its Absentee Property Law to dispossess thousands of their land, their shops, and their orchards. Of the approximately four hundred Jewish settlements established after 1948, some 350 were on Palestinian refugee property. Two-thirds of cultivated land was originally Palestinian-owned. As Don Peretz noted in the September 1969 issue of the Israeli magazine *New Outlook*, as a result of the 1948 War:

> Whole Arab cities — such as Jaffa, Acre, Lydda, Ramle, Baysan, and Maidal — 338 towns and villages, and large parts of others, containing nearly a quarter of all buildings standing in Israel during 1948, were taken over by new Jewish immigrants. Ten thousand former Arab shops, businesses and stores were left in Jewish hands as well as some 30,000 acres of groves that supplied at least a quarter of the new state's scarce foreign currency earnings from citrus. Acquisition of this former Palestinian Arab property helped greatly to make the Jewish state economically viable and to speed up the early influx of refugees and immigrants from Europe.

Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan observed afterward, in 1969, "There is not a single Jewish settlement that was not established in the place of a former Arab village." By 1958, a quarter of a million acres of land had been expropriated from Palestinians who had remained in Israel. This same genocidal, culturcidal policy remains in operation today.

Zionist propaganda, on the other hand, has always portrayed Palestine as an uninhabited desert before the arrival of the Jews, a racialist-nationalist mystique typified, for example, by the notorious declaration made by the American-born Israeli Prime Minister

to sabotage any kind of peace with justice for the Palestinian people).

From a radical perspective, however unrealistic, none of the basic realities has changed since *The Bulletin for Jewish-Arab Cooperation* (cited by Chomsky) pointed out in 1948 that "… the only alternative to a war between nations is not a static peace … but a war between classes between ruled and ruler, of the Jewish and Arab workers and peasants against the two upper classes, against the fascist parties of both nations, and the British or other outside interests that want to control the area." What might have been possible in 1948, or in 1967, or in 1982, when the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was protested by a significant section of the Israeli population and the country was divided over the issue of making peace with Palestinians, seems even more remote today, as the West Bank settlement crisis deepens and the Israeli bulldozers continue their work in Arab East Jerusalem, and nationalist maniacs continue their hideous projects of mutual annihilation.

The history of Jewish presence in Palestine is undeniable; no one who loves human freedom could ever deny their right to travel and to settle there out of a centuries-long yearning to return to the sacred places of their ancestry memory and their traditions. But the desire to return to one's ancestral homeland is not the same as the desire to construct a national state upon lands wrested from another people. Only in a world with open frontiers and the abolition of the nation-state and its border police, a world of free passage without necessity of passports and papers, can national conflict be resolved and a fabric of cooperative human communities be established, and fratricidal conflict prevented. Thus, peace will come not with the (inevitably temporary) triumph of the various regional enemies or with the construction of separate rival states, but through the destruction of *all* national states and the mutual recognition by Israeli Jew and Palestinian Arab, and of all the peoples of the Middle East, of the humanity and the legitimate aspirations of the other.

Breaking the circle

An increasingly lunatic Israeli nationalism has finally become a grotesque reflection of the anti-semitic fascists who set out to annihilate Jewry earlier in this century. If humane elements desirous of peace and reconciliation remain in Israeli society (some of them courageous activists for peace who have faced murder and violence for their work), the Israeli right is little different from the fascist Serbs lately slaughtering Kosovans in their crusade to preserve their own mythic locus of national origin. Some fundamentalist Israeli rabbis openly argue that driving out and exterminating non-Jews, including women and children, is sanctioned in Jewish scripture. "Death to the Arabs" is a common chant at the rallies of the Israeli far right, and fascist settlers have made a shrine of the grave of mass murderer Baruch Goldstein, an American rabbi who slaughtered more than fifty Arabs as they prayed in a mosque in Hebron in 1994.

While an exterminist mentality is common on the right the mainstream is little better. Israeli courts recently approved the holding of hostages randomly taken by the Israeli military in Lebanon to be traded later, and the Likud cabinet refused to pursue an investigation of widely acknowledged Israeli military massacres of unarmed prisoners during the 1956 and 1967 wars. Israeli General Eitan, who was implicated in the 1956 massacre of Egyptian prisoners, and who now is a leader of a right wing party, has likened Palestinians on the West Bank to "cockroaches in a bottle," and Menachim Begin called Palestinian fighters "beasts walking on two paws." Such remarks prompted Israeli peace activist Gideon Spiro, who refused to serve in the reserves in Lebanon and the West Bank, to warn against the process of dehumanization and fascisization" of Israeli values. The Muslim fundamentalist suicide bombers are a distorted mirror image of their zionist oppressors (and in fact serve the interests of the intransigent zionists who look for every excuse

Golda Meir, who declared, "It is not as though there was a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist." In reality the zionist invaders "made the desert bloom" by stealing the villages, orchards, gardens and pastures from their original owners — a desert that had been in bloom for centuries. The well-known, often-repeated tale among Palestinians of a grandparent, or uncle or aunt, who went into exile carrying a few seeds from the family garden, is testimony to the world and the dreams the people driven from their homes left behind.

A Palestinian state?

Zionist ideology exploited the legitimate desires of the Jewish people to escape the cauldron of violence and extermination in Europe that brought about the annihilation of millions of their brethren. The ghastly irony of the search for security in the creation of a national state on plundered lands was that such a situation was bound to create greater and greater dangers and insecurities with higher stakes at every turn. Not only did zionism become the blighted mirror image of all the oppressive national state ideologies which immiserated and murdered the Jews, it set the stage for never-ending insecurity within a garrison state constantly threatened by surrounding hostile nation-state which saw it as an incursion into their own national or Pan-Arab designs.

Zionism also generated another wave of victims, its *own* demonized outsiders, who will continue to challenge the legitimacy of Israeli manifest destiny as long as they exist as a people, however dispersed and despised they may be. The efforts of these new victims of diaspora to return to and regain their ancestral lands have at times been peaceful, at times violent, sometimes reasonable and other times murderous. The colonial hubris of the Israeli state and betrayals by the neighboring reactionary Arab regimes gave birth

to a Palestinian nationalist movement which became the mirror image of zionism, similar in its nationalist ideology, its dependence on various nation-states for support, and its methods of military struggle and terrorism. Eventually, two national movements came to face each other, arms in hand: one powerful, with an army and police and nuclear arsenal, and the backing of the world's most powerful imperialist nation; the other outgunned, betrayed by all its backers, marginalized and desperate.

Of course, media images and zionist propaganda notwithstanding, Palestinians have overall been far more the *victims* of terror and violence than the perpetrators in this feud. To give a couple of examples, when Palestinian Black September commandos took Israeli athletes hostage in Munich during the 1972 Olympics, a shootout ensued with West German police in which the Palestinians and eleven Israelis were killed. The Israeli state immediately carried out reprisal air raids against Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon which killed three hundred people. While 192 Israelis were killed during the Palestinian Intifada on the West Bank, more than 1300 Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

As PLO columns were being evacuated from Beirut after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and terror bombing of its capital in 1982, Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin declared to a group of Lebanon and terror bombing of its capital in 1982, Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin declared to a group of American Jews in Jerusalem, "Very soon the fighting will be finished, and then perhaps that famous verse from the Book of Judges will be brought into realization: 'There shall be peace in the land for forty years.'" But neither the Israeli military "final solution" of the Palestinian problem in Beirut nor the peace treaty with Arafat more than a decade later have resolved the fundamental conflict. During the 1980s the Palestinian popular resistance that became the Intifada, much of it outside official PLO control, forced the Israeli state to the bargaining table as no terrorism or guerilla warfare had. But a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza under the present

configuration of power can be little more than an exploited, repressive, militarily regulated reservation for cheap labor under the domination of Israel and perhaps Jordan. Indeed, since the signing of the sham peace, the Israeli state has failed even to comply with a minimum of its agreements, and has used the accords with the PLO to continue its consolidation of "Eretz Israel," while the PLO proto-state fiasco has rapidly been reduced to the status of a corrupt ghetto administration subservient to its Israeli oppressors and squeezed from the other extreme by an increasingly furious Palestinian population.

Some wit recently remarked that the Israeli-Palestinian debacle has become the longest lasting crisis in modern history, but it's a crisis unlikely to go on forever. In 1970, Nathan Yalin-Mor, a member of the zionist terrorist Stern Gang in the 1940s who later became an advocate of Arab-Jewish reconciliation, observed, "A new selling out of the Palestinian people would amount to planting a time bomb to explode after a few years." While Israel maintains military superiority and the support of the U.S. military machine, Chomsky's warning in 1976 in *Peace in the Middle East?* remains valid: "In general, each military success simply reconstitutes the struggle at a higher level of military force … a higher level of potential danger to all concerned. From the Israeli point of view, this is a losing strategy. Israel can win every conflict but the last." The last, unfortunately, is likely to be a social and ecological catastrophe for the region perhaps for the whole planet. Israeli writer Uri Avneri's warnings made thirty years ago in his book *Israel Without Zionists* (1968) come to mind in the midst of the Iraqi standoff, Iran's efforts to modernize and nuclearize, and Israel's shadowy nuclear security state: "Nuclear weapons, missles of all types, are nearing the Semitic scene," Averni wrote; "…if the vicious circle is not broken, and broken soon, it will lead, with the preordained certainty of a Greek tragedy, toward a holocaust that will bury Tel Aviv and Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem."