ILAN PAPPE

OUT OF THE FRAME

THE STRUGGLE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN ISRAEL

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BOSS – South African Bureau of State Security (in existence under the apartheid regime).
IDF – Israel Defence Force (Israeli Army).
NGO – non-governmental organisation.
PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation.
POWs – prisoners of war.
Shabak – Hebrew acronym for Shin Bet, Israel's General Security Service.

PREFACE

Writing about oneself is an embarrassing and demanding experience. The only good reason for embarking on such a project is when one is convinced that a personal story reflects a wider picture and context. It then needs to be asserted that an individual angle or perspective on a particular reality can help to illuminate it better and make it more accessible for others. The wider picture here is the history of Zionism in Israel/Palestine: its origins in the past, and the hold it has today over Palestinian and Jewish lives in Israel, the Occupied Territories and beyond.

I decided to write this personal narrative as part of an overall attempt by others, as well as myself, to deconstruct the story of modern Palestine. Both as an historian and a peace activist, I realised early on that my individual story symbolises and represents a larger reality. When addressing audiences in the West on the issue of Palestine, I sensed that it is through a personal chronicle that a more general situation can best be illustrated. I hope that this book will achieve this. It is a story of someone born into Zionism and struggling to leave it via an incremental process. The journey out of Zionism is intellectual, ideological and, of course, political. But it also involves an emotional turmoil and social estrangement that are experienced differently by different people.

In lecturing and the writing on the Palestine issue from the late 1970s up until now, I have found that the single most difficult question to answer in the typical question-

and-answer session, and one that seemed to be asked at almost every event I took part in, was: 'When and how did you transform your perception on the Palestinian and Israeli reality?'. I always gave an unsatisfactory reply. A favourite answer, which I at first presented jokingly, was that I would need to write a book about it. I now have to admit that this is the only possible serious reply. The scope of a book allows me to answer a far more important question as well as the personal one: can other people in Israel change their views in a similar way? Or, will they remain entrenched in their positions in a way that will defeat any hope for peace and reconciliation in their country?

This book focuses on the making and unmaking of a very powerful indoctrination. Israeli ideology is unique and comprehensive, and I offer a view from within. Of course, there are similar, but not identical, systems elsewhere. The closest example is white South African society during the apartheid years. There, too, the commitment to a dominant ideology was not achieved through coercion or intimidation, or by means of a highly structured and well-planned effort. In both cases, it is much easier to discern the level of obedience and submission to the ideological precepts and values than to explain why they have been maintained for such long periods.

I seek here to expose the overwhelming power of a 'voluntary' indoctrination through a successful, but very long, attempt to extract myself from it. It is a story of a journey that has more than one staging-post, each contributing to the transformation of and liberation from a Zionist perspective. I am not the only one who has undertaken this journey, but there are very few of us. Our role in our society and the fate that awaits us for

playing it is an indication that the depiction of Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East should be seriously challenged.

I would like to suggest that the uniqueness of my particular journey lies in its origin rather than its final destination. Many of the brave dissidents and anti-Zionist individuals came from families and backgrounds that can explain their eventual journey out of Zionism. My own journey started at a later stage in life, after completing a very conventional Zionist youth and education up until about 1982. After finishing high school I served as a regular soldier in the army on the Golan Heights and in the 1973 war. My reaction to the war was also very Zionist. Like many of my compatriots I was shocked by the surprise attack, disappointed with the leadership and decided to serve an additional half-year in the army.

From there I proceeded, as was conventional, to a university career. Politically, I associated with a left-wing Zionist party, which in those days meant looking for a functional and territorial compromise with Jordan over the Occupied Territories. After arriving in the United Kingdom to begin my doctoral studies at Oxford University, I was still willing in 1981 to represent the Zionist point of view in a debate within the Labour Friends of Israel organisation in the Houses of Parliament. But change came sooner than I expected.

During the first half of 1982 I helped to found the British branch of Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli group that campaigned for peace negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and an independent Palestinian state. Later, however, I was disqualified because I had accepted an invitation from the *Spectator* magazine to join in a debate in the House of Commons with the PLO

representative in London, Ali Mazzawi, and an academic, Dr Ghada Karmi – who became my friend and comrade many years later. This debate made the front page of *Ha'aretz*, a leading Israeli daily newspaper, and cost me my role as the Peace Now representative in the UK and Northern Ireland.

The year 1982 was also when I began the journey described in this book during and after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that summer. The first turning point was an invitation by the Israeli Embassy in London to speak at a pro-Israel rally in the north of Britain. The spokesperson explained that the ambassador, Shlomo Argov, was critically ill from an assassination attempt and it would be too dangerous to send his deputy. It was not only the willingness to sacrifice me, should there be another terrorist attack, but the presumption that I had no reservations about or objections to the invasion that served as a wake-up call. From then on, I embarked on a journey of no return. Powerful as the Zionist grip is on one's thoughts and life, as an Israeli Jew, once you have extracted yourself from its hold, you cannot understand how you could ever have been captivated by its lure, logic or vision. This book is a modest attempt to try to decipher the riddle of an ideology that was once seen by this author as the ultimate expression of pristine humanity, but when abandoned, as a racist and quite evil philosophy of morality and life.

Yet the 'divorce' from Zionism is in no way a desire to severe links with what is a vital and vibrant society, in which I still have family and dear friends and about which I cherish many fond memories. But in order to preserve the positive side of Jewish life in Israel, I believe that not only would Palestinians fare better under almost any non-Zionist regime, so would most Israeli Jews.

INTRODUCTION

From Dream into Nightmare

I have to confess that in my childhood I was bewitched by Theodor Herzl's utopian novel, *Altneuland* (Old New Land), but only recently did I decipher this strange fascination with a story which, on the face of it, was light years away from the Israeli reality into which I was born, educated and grew up.[1] I now know that this futuristic novel was part of my personal history. It included scenes from my childhood landscape and lingering memories from my boyhood. The novel's more descriptive passages constantly reminded me of the typical German Jewish household in which I grew up in Haifa in the late 1950s. There, on Mount Carmel, my parents and their friends who immigrated with them in the 1930s recreated a German-Jewish cultural enclave. In this bubble, people conversed and behaved as if they were citizens of Herzl's Arcadia.

Altneuland is the story of a group of travellers who visited Palestine during a world tour. When they return 20 years later they discover a perfect society – the reborn Jewish state. Just as in the shielded greenhouse of our living room, so also in the utopian Zion of *circa* 1923: Central European etiquette was painstakingly observed, classical European music was played too loud

and every detail of the latest trip to the countryside was cheerfully discussed. 'Ach, die Natur!', my father would exclaim excitedly, even before we left behind the polluted factory complex in Haifa Bay on our way north, to engage in what the heroes of *Altneuland* called 'the complete and full return to nature in our country in which we can be so happy.' And if you read this last sentence with the right German accent you can re-enact both my family's trip to the Galilee and that of the brave adventurers almost a century before.

In this atmosphere it was easy to forget what was called the 'Asiatic' reality outside, and to pretend that we still lived in Germany and were part of old Europe. I can see now how we mistook the pathetic group of pine trees that defined our yard for the Black Forest and why we saw every pond as a lake, every rat as a squirrel and every puny stream as a river. People like my father were among the enthusiasts who singled out one particular *wadi* (small valley) in Mount Carmel, no longer than a hundred yards, as a Little Switzerland. To do this you needed a fair measure of Middle Eastern imagination and an exceptionally cold day to believe that you were in the Alps and not the western hills of Palestine.

Within this make-believe world the German Jews succeeded first in surviving and then in prospering, after the fledgling Jewish state was awarded generous reparations by post-Nazi Germany. Unknowingly, they built what they called a 'Palestina' (their distortion of the word Palestine) that resembled the one envisaged by Herzl in his book; and like the heroes of that book,

they did not see the local people, or for that matter notice the Mizrachi or Arab Jews, or realise they were an intrinsic part of the Arab Middle East.

This mirage was not entirely hallucinatory. After all, the pine trees in our back garden were brought from Europe by the Jewish settlers. The trees and other species in our 'European woodland' now cover Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, where Theodore Herzl (1860–1904), the Austro-Hungarian founder of the Zionist movement, is buried. His tomb is the centrepiece of the hillside pantheon of Zionist and Israeli heroes, where the most recent grave is that of assassinated Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin. Palestinians call it al-Sharafa, 'the mountain overlooking Jerusalem'. In fact, Mount Herzl towers over Ein Karem and Beit Mazmil, two villages that were depopulated in July 1948 during Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestine or in the local jargon 'Israel's War of Independence'. Young Israelis have no trouble telling you how to get there; they are less likely – if we are to believe the latest surveys – to be able to tell you who Herzl was. They recognise his name from major roads in every big city and are familiar with its feminine version, Herzliya, the name of a coastal city north of Tel Aviv. This town, like the mountain, conceals the darker side of Zionism: it was built on the ruins of several Palestinian villages.

Until recently, Herzl's dream was rarely considered in the context of Palestine's history. I don't mean that he was idolised or never thought of cynically. His critics were already numerous during his lifetime:

he was scorned by the Jewish elite in the West and loathed by Orthodox Jews in the East. Even within the Zionist movement that he founded in 1897 there was opposition. When Herzl offered to establish Zionism in Uganda because Palestine seemed unattainable, the Russian Jews with whom he had co-operated forced him and the movement to focus on Palestine. Two years later he died. His biographers in Israel and abroad have been sarcastic about his personal eccentricities and extreme ambition, but all seem to agree with Isaiah Berlin that in essence, Herzl was a maverick visionary who was proved right:

> I have said that one of the distinguishing characteristics of a great man is that his active intervention makes what seemed highly improbable in fact happen. It is surely difficult to deny that the actions that culminated in the creation of the state of Israel were of this improbable or surprising kind. When Theodor Herzl began to preach that it was both desirable and possible to set up a sovereign Jewish State of a modern type ... reasonable people, both Jews and Gentiles, who heard of this plan, regarded it as quite insane.[2]

This seems to be the general verdict about Herzl and Zionism. When Israel celebrated the centenary of Herzl's death in 2004, very few people questioned the prevailing account of the man or his enterprise. Martin Buber, however, another German Jew – an alienated professor who did not share the collective self-aggrandisement and sense of moral superiority – wrote at the time to an American friend:

> Only an internal revolution can have the power to heal our people of their murderous sickness and causeless hatred. It is bound to bring complete ruin upon us. Only then will the old and the young in our land realise how great was our responsibility to those miserable Arab refugees in whose towns we have settled Jews who were brought from afar; whose gardens, orchids and vineyards we gather; and in whose cities that we robbed, we put houses of education, charity and prayer while we babble and rave about being the 'people of the book' and the 'light of the nations'.[3]

I was six years old in 1960, when Herzl would have turned 100 and Buber charted a history that I would connect to only 25 years later. If there was a German Jewish legacy in Israel I was proud to be part of, it was that of Buber (although I could never identify with his conviction of a divine Jewish right to Palestine, which he certainly never thought might mean that Jews would be allowed to dispossess Palestinians). Herzl's legacy was the one I gradually distanced myself from, and later devoted my public life to fiercely struggling against.

In 2004, when Israel and the world commemorated Herzl's centenary, I found myself preoccupied with questions that Buber tried in vain to interest his society in addressing in 1960. They became clear to me only with hindsight. A hundred years after Herzl's death, these questions were still missing from the public debate in Israel. While the Zionist leader occupied centre stage in the Israeli public space for a few days, it seems that remembering him was translated into gossip and sensational inquiry about his failed career

as a playwright, his ambition to become an assimilated European Jew, his theatrical manoeuvres on the world stage and his manic-depressive extremes (attributed to the syphilis contracted in his youth).

Had Buber been alive in 2004 and reflected on Herzl, I am sure he would have posed a different set of questions. Herzl's life and vision, like Zionism itself, have to be discussed from other points of view, and most important is that of the Palestinian victims of his ambition. How did Herzl's dream become Palestine's nightmare? How did a young European intellectual's struggle against xenophobia in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna turn into a campaign of destruction against another people's homeland 50 years later?

When Herzl first emerged as the saviour of Europe's Jews, there were other possibilities of escaping the impending catastrophe. To stay on, it was clear even then, was dangerous, and those who did, died in the Holocaust – as did the immediate family of both my parents. My parents joined the colonialist project of Zionism in Palestine, without, alas, developing the same regrets as Buber. Other members of my family, like the majority of European Jews who left in time, chose England, the United States and New Zealand as their destination. Those who left Eastern Europe and Germanic lands for Anglo-Saxon ones helped to found a much better world for humankind in general and for Jews in particular. It was not perfect, far from it, but it was better than the world they left behind in continental Europe. I became acquainted with a number of these

Jews after I was vilified in Israel: their support reasserted my connection to a Jewish heritage often sidelined, if not totally erased, in the Jewish state of Israel.

The choice that Herzl made and his successors endorsed was that of colonialism. Calling his and his movement's decisions colonialist may seem trivial to an outsider. It is almost unthinkable for an Israeli Jew to describe the man or his project in such terms, unless one recognises it as the beginning of a tortuous trip outside the tribe and far away from its ideology. Long before I contemplated such a journey, brave Israelis had embarked on such a road. Except for them, I would not have found the courage to start the journey myself. Their lives changed not so much as a result of their recognition of Zionism as a colonialist movement in its early years; it was rather their realisation that it has not ceased to be one in the present that led them into direct confrontation with their society and quite often with their families. Once you have crossed that Rubicon, you can not engage any more in a 'normal' or conventional way with your society, be it family members, professional peers or the general public.

Professionally and less emotionally, such a recognition reduces the 'uniqueness' of the Zionist case study in a healthy manner. There were attempts to build a holy land in other places and there, too, it was at the expense of others – indigenous and African Americans, Aboriginals and Maori, to mention only a few of the victims. But Jews in these new societies were often deeply involved in reconciling and rectifying

troubled pasts. Only in Palestine was it different. There Judaism became a synthesis of colonialism and romantic nationalism. It seems that Herzl was mesmerised by these two powerful ideologies. He was intoxicated by the brand of romantic nationalism that raged in Vienna among the young Austrians who refused to accept him as one of their own. It was a nationalism of race and ancestry: for a nation to excel, it needed to reign over all of its historical territory and to include all of 'its' people – 'scientifically' defined as the nation's flesh and blood. It was the nationalism of Herder, Fichte and Gobineau that eventually begat the Nazi aberration; it also planted a wild messianism in the hearts of the early Zionists and their successors, as Jacqueline Rose showed in her comprehensive analysis and that was more recently sharply analysed by Gabriel Piterberg.[4]

Indeed, a secular messianism played a crucial role in Herzl's utopia, a Germanic messianism of the kind that would tear continental Europe apart long after his death. But it is no longer Germanic; it was Hebraicised in Herzl's Arcadia. *Altneuland* tells among other things of the reincarnation of the biblical kingdom of Solomon, with its eternal capital built around the newly-erected third temple, described as a perfect replica of Solomon's great edifice. But even in the sacred hall of the shrine the Germanic musical heritage reigns, as it did in my parents' home, accompanying biblical lyrics. Today a group of extreme right-wing Jews in the Old City display their model of the Third Temple, and wait for the mosques on the Temple Mount to be dismantled either by divine

wrath or by the occasional fanatical human bomb. But the melodious sounds given that most of this group are from Brooklyn are more likely to be American pop and country music than Bach and Mozart.

Today, if you hire an official Israeli Tourist Board guide you will hear the updated version of Herzl's message: Zionism and the settlement of Israel was a miracle. You will not hear anything about Herzl's Germanic roots and you will be told a very shallow version of a man who based his right to Palestine on sheer force. Part of the story is the same. Herzl foretold a miracle, not only in predicting the creation of a Jewish state, but in prophesying that the Jews would transform themselves from the depths of humanity to its heights. In his utopian book he claims that for 2,000 years the Jews were in Elend – an ancient German concept of exile and the lowest form of existence – but in *Altneuland* they achieve greatness. Zionism, for Herzl and for many Israelis, was not just a matter of building a place of refuge: it was a healing process enabling Jews to ascend from the pit of misery to the peak of redemption.

As well as being a romantic who turned his private dream into a powerful ideology, Herzl was also, openly and proudly, a colonialist. He wished to relocate the Jews as a modern nation, not in Europe, but in one of Europe's colonies. In his day, of course, colonialism was a popular and respected term. He often spoke of 'colonising Palestine' as the master plan of Zionism. But in time, colonialism lost its popularity and became synonymous with oppression, expulsion and

destruction. This is why the description of early Zionism as colonialism is barred in Israeli academia and branded as a gross ideological distortion of the 'historical truth'. My attempt to reintroduce the colonialist perspective within the Israeli academic world generated the trajectory of events described in this biography. Even today it is unacceptable in Israel to have an academic discussion on Zionism as colonialism.

In colonialism, the native is transient and then absent. You won't find in *Altneuland* any consideration of the likely fate of the native population of Palestine. In more classical cases of colonialism the invisibility of the native meant that he was still there, but only as an exploited and marginalised human being with few, if any, basic rights. In Herzl's utopia the native, apart from a very tiny minority, is gone. He is invisible because he was NOT there; quite likely he was spirited away, as Herzl advocated in his diary. More precisely, he wrote that the Arabs of Palestine should be expelled 'unnoticed' and 'discreetly and circumspectly' (he was wise enough to declare in public a wish to advance the interests of the 'native population').[5] When colonialism was fused with romantic nationalism it produced this elimination of the native population not only in a vision of the future, but in actual policies of ethnic cleansing on the ground, as happened in 1948. The Palestinians were not driven out discreetly, as Herzl recommended, but remained 'unnoticed' by most.

Herzl did not speak Hebrew, but he invented the Zionist discourse and one of his more important

legacies was double-talk. It would be perfected by future generations and would insulate the state of Israel from international interference and rebuke. Whether it was Zionist leaders in the early days of the movement, or politicians in the early days of the state, or contemporary diplomats in the West, all declared loudly their desire to cater for the needs of all the inhabitants of Palestine, while in practice doing exactly the opposite and undermining the very existence of Palestinians in their homeland. Much of what is unfolded in this book is an outrage, at times extreme, propelled by the Zionist double-talk invented by Herzl that fooled the world for so many years.

Was a German Jewish background synonymous with Herzl? Hardly. I was troubled for a long time by the question of why Herzl succeeded in winning as much fame as far more deserving Jews in turn-of-the-century Austria. Around him were eminent Jewish humanists, intellectuals and visionaries, all troubled as he was by anti-Semitism and the problem of assimilation, but as far as I was concerned, ethically far superior. None of them became a Zionist or a role model for the Jews who built a state in Palestine. The answer probably lies in the 'irritating' third paradox of nationalism as articulated by Benedict Anderson:

> The political power of nationalisms v. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence. In other words, unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes or Webers.[6]

When nationalism was embedded into colonialism it was even less attractive to humanists, socialists and liberals. I can only hope that the bicentenary of Herzl's birth in 2060 or of his death in 2104 will be celebrated in a democratic, secular state of Palestine that has overcome the evils of both nationalism and colonialism.

But it was less Zionism as colonialism, or Herzl's dream turned into a Palestinian nightmare, that pushed me into a direct confrontation with my state and society: it was the particular evil of the events of 1948, which has created an impassable barrier between myself and everything I regarded as sacred and pure in my childhood.

1

THE DEMONS OF THE *NAKBAH*

As a Jewish child born in Haifa in the early 1950s, I did not encounter the Arabic term *Nakbah* (catastrophe), nor was I aware of its significance. Only in my high school days did the word make its first appearance. There were two Palestinian Israeli pupils in my class, and we all participated in joint guided-tours around Haifa and its vicinity. In those days there was still evidence of Arab Haifa in the Old City: beautiful buildings, remnants of a covered market that had been destroyed by Israel during the 1948 war, mosques and churches.

These relics testified to the city's more glorious past. Many of them are now gone, demolished by the bulldozers of an ambitious city mayor who sought to erase any urban features that pointed to the city's Arab past. But, in those days, there were quite a few Arab houses squeezed between the modern concrete buildings. Guides on the school tours used to refer to them as *hirbet al-shaykh*, a vague reference to an Arab house from an unidentified period. My two Palestinian classmates muttered that these were houses left from the 1948 *Nakbah*, but they did not dare to challenge their teachers, nor did they expand on what they meant.

I did not deal much with history in my youth. I learned literary Arabic in school, in the 'orientalist' class, as it was called, which prepared pupils for a career in the intelligence corps in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). My three compulsory years in the army, including the 1973 war, were spent in that corps, and were not a bad workshop for polishing my Arabic, but quite poisonous if you believed what you were told about the 'enemy'.

During my army days and BA studies in Jerusalem, in the department of Middle Eastern history, I was what one could call a left-wing Zionist, working in the Knesset as a voluntary adviser to the left-wing Zionist party, *Mapam*. I co-ordinated the party's activities on university campuses and advised its parliamentary representatives on 'Arab Affairs'. I viewed the reality around me through a leftist Zionist prism, which allowed a liberal pluralist critique of the ideology of the state of Israel, but inevitably vindicated its major precepts. Indeed, the logic was that this was a healthy and constructive criticism, as it would ensure a more morally valid and ideologically sound version of Zionism. How wrong I was, I learned only after I left the country in 1979 to embark upon my doctoral studies in Oxford.

But just before I departed some cracks appeared in the Zionist wall around me. The last seminar I attended as a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was given by Professor Yehoshua Porath, Israel's leading historian on

the Palestinian national movement at the time. He was then an ardent supporter of the Jordanian option and showed us how close the ties were between the Zionist movement and the Hashemite dynasty in Jordan. He argued, and I substantiated this in a modest essay I prepared, that the British Empire viewed favourably (as did Porath) the idea of a Zionist-Hashemite Palestine. Porath hoped that this triangular relationship would continue in the future. It was in that course that I decided to devote my advanced studies to the issue of 1948 – without realising what I would find out, and without grasping its wider implications for investigating the foundational mythology of the state.

I began working on the 1948 war in 1980 as a DPhil student at St Antony's College, Oxford, under the supervision of Albert Hourani and Roger Owen. Hourani was near the end of his formal academic career, and would begin his magnificent and popular *A History of the Arab Peoples*[1] soon after my arrival. But I was his last student in Oxford. Roger Owen was in mid-career, already a renowned and established scholar who was working, among other things, on the economic and social history of mandatory Palestine.[2] I could not have asked for more in terms of supervision. Albert was someone who had already, in 1946, represented the Palestinian cause in front of the Anglo-American commission of inquiry and he remained a keen observer of the Palestine conflict, and Roger was transforming the conventional orientalist historiography of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the political and economic

history of the area as a whole. Both were familiar with the Palestinian narrative of 1948. This meant not only recognising the version of the side that until then had been the 'enemy' for me, but also exposing the mythology and fabrication of the version to which I had subscribed since childhood. They both guided me into the archives. They, as much as I, were unsure of what I would find, or of how my own leftist Zionist politics at the time would affect my reaction to the newly-declassified documents on the 1948 war.

It was my hunch that I should first choose the British angle in my new journey into 1948. My proposition was that the overall British policy in 1948 was neutral in the sense that London's principal policymakers detested both sides. Methodologically, it meant a research unrestrained by any theoretical premises, a straightforward work of deciphering diplomatic documents and organising them into a coherent description of policy. As Roger Owen reminded me every now and then, the academic account of a policy is always far clearer than the policy itself, which is full of contradictions and paradoxes. After a few months in the archives I realised that British policy in the 1948 war was less neutral than I had originally thought: it was first and foremost anti-Palestinian. His Majesty King George VI's government viewed a division of historical and mandatory Palestine into two political entities, a future Jewish state and a future Jordanian state, as the best solution for the conflict and the best means of safeguarding the British Empire's interests in the area. This was an anti-Palestinian policy, and – as

Avi Shlaim, my colleague, chose to call it – a collusion between Israel, Jordan and Britain that almost wiped out Palestine and the Palestinians.[3]

Armed with a thesis that was wholly based on archives, most of which had not been declassified before, and a simple narrative, I was still convinced, when I finished my dissertation in 1984, that my work was purely academic and had very little relevance to contemporary issues or to politics. I toiled for several years searching for an academic job, while at the same time turning my thesis into a book that appeared in 1988 as *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–1951*.[4] In it, I debunked one Israeli foundational myth: that in 1948 Britain was the enemy of Zionism and Israel. Based on my research I went further, saying that Britain played a major role in allowing the Zionist movement to found a state in Palestine through the ethnic cleansing of its indigenous people.

Around that time, two more books by Israeli authors appeared that challenged other elements in the accepted version of the 1948 war. One was Benny Morris's *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*[5] and the other was Avi Shlaim's *Collusion across the Jordan*.[6] Morris was the first Israeli historian who, on the basis of archival material, conceded that a mass expulsion of Palestinians took place during the 1948 war. He claimed, however, that this was not the result of a blueprint or master plan, but rather the consequence of a war that developed according to circumstances on the ground. No less important was his exposure of Israel's

anti-repatriation policy – the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages and dozens of urban neighborhoods in the summer of 1948 in order to render impractical any idea of a Palestinian return, as demanded by the international community.

Shlaim dealt in depth with the history and nature of the collusion between the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan and Israel's leaders to divide Palestine between themselves at the expense of the Palestinians. From his book, it became clear that Israel's Arab policy had been aggressive and coercive as early as 1948, a theme that he would develop later in *The Iron Wall,* which comprehensively analysed Israel's Arab policy between 1948 and 2000.

The liberal Jewish journal *Tikkun* became the first vehicle through which these new historiographical developments were presented and their broader implications explored.[7] In 1988, the journal's editors convened some of the so-called 'new' and 'old' historians for a workshop at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. The gathering was summarised by Morris in an article in *Tikkun*, which introduced to the world the concept of the 'new history' of Israel.[8] His inclination and that of others was to describe the three books (and a previous book, *The Birth of Israel*,[9] written by the non-professional historian Simha Flapan), by the more appropriate term of 'revisionist history'. In Israel, however, 'revisionist' refers specifically to the Revisionist Movement of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, leader of a right-wing Zionist group that preceded the Likud

party. Thus, we settled for the less satisfying term 'new history', which in Germany, Italy and France means an attempt to justify some of the more unpleasant chapters in those countries' pasts. Not the best of associations, yet the term stuck and won legitimacy without any negative connotation. For my part, I summed up the debate in a narrative that was published in 1992 in a book entitled *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947–1951*.[10]

In that debate at the Van Leer Institute, it was clear that the 'new history' was a partial reconstruction of the events of 1948 as these related only to an analysis of Israeli policy. Nonetheless, it was a significant contribution. In this new narrative, the accepted Zionist version of how Israel had behaved in its early years was fundamentally challenged. The 'new history' was, however, very conservative in its approach to 'truth' and adhered closely to a positivist and empiricist methodology.

This kind of history writing has two deficiencies. It restricts the scope of historical discussion to 'new revelations' and relieves historians of the necessity of discussing their insights and the wider implications of the new perspective. Second, as an elitist history, it excludes most members of the societies involved in the country's historical development. Its greatest merit was that it adopted many, but not all, of the principal chapters of the Palestinian narrative of 1948. By doing this, and despite the historians' attempt to remain objective, the new works contributed to our knowledge of the past

as well as affecting our understanding of the present. In 1993, during the early negotiations of the Oslo Accords, when Palestinian negotiators doubted the sincerity of their partners' peace plans, Yossi Beilin, the chief Israeli negotiator, produced copies of the 'new history' books to convince his interlocutors that there was indeed a fresh perspective on the key issues in Israel.

The reconstruction of the past was now clearly connected to contemporary efforts to find a political settlement to the conflict. That this was intentional was strongly denied by Benny Morris and to a lesser extent by Avi Shlaim. It took me a decade after the *Tikkun* article to be convinced that this was the most valuable aspect of the 'new history' in Israel – that it reflected the major claims about 1948 that the Palestinians had put forward for many years. All three of us, on the other hand, failed in the 1990s to produce any works that went beyond an analysis of Israeli diplomacy and military action. We explored a crucial part of Palestine's history, but by no means an exclusive one. Ever since 1996, I have written about the need to expand the territory of this historical research and eventually attempted it myself.[11] These two issues, the wider political and ideological context in which history is written and the need to write a more encompassing history extending beyond the realm of the political elite, informed my academic work in the 1990s.

Although I moved far away from that association, especially with Morris who transformed to become a racist anti-Arab pundit and less of a professional

historian, I still fondly recall our early days as the 'new historians'. Benny, Avi and myself were a rare sight in the Israeli academic scene and we felt, quite wrongly I am sure, that much depended on our continued commitment to the 'truth'. When, in 1992, we were invited to a conference in Jerusalem after participating in one in Tel Aviv , we decided to go by car. Knowing the doubtful driving abilities of my colleagues I insisted on being the driver, fearing that otherwise an accident would kill the new history 'all together'.

I also moved away from my Oxford origins. As a young doctoral student there, I chose 1948 as the subject of my thesis. In a direct link to what I had studied in Jerusalem, I wrote about British policy in that critical year. It was an important subject and I think contributed significantly to a better understanding of Britain's moral and political responsibility for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948. For me, it had more far-reaching implications: the solid evidence of Israel's crimes compelled me never to let go of the *Nakbah*. This subject matter turned my professional career into an attempt to preserve the memory of these tragic events and to struggle for the rectification of the evil done. I found abundant proof for the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine, and was taken aback by the speed at which the Judaisation of former Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods was carried out after the displacement of the local population. This information was accessible beforehand, due to the work of Palestinian historians and knowledge of

the Palestinian struggle in general, but I needed my own personal journey to ascertain what was in front of me all the time, yet concealed by layers of denial and distortion.

The villages from which the Palestinian population was evicted in 1948 were renamed and resettled in a matter of months. This scenario contrasted sharply not only with what I had learned at school about 1948, but also what I had been taught as a BA student at the Hebrew University, even though several of my courses had covered the history of Palestine. Needless to say, what I discovered also contradicted the messages conveyed to me as a citizen of Israel during my initiation ceremony into the army, at public events such as the annual Independence Day, and in the daily discussion in the country's media on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

When I returned home to Israel in 1984 to begin an academic career, I discovered the phenomenon of *Nakbah* denial. It was part of a larger phenomenon of excluding the Palestinians altogether from the local academic discourse. This was particularly evident, and bewildering, in the field of Middle Eastern Studies in which I was now a lecturer. Towards the end of the 1980s, as a result of the First Intifada (1987–93) the situation improved somewhat, with Palestinian history being introduced into Middle Eastern Studies as a legitimate subject. But even then this was done mainly through the perception of academics who had been intelligence experts on the subject in the past, and

who still had close ties with the security services and the IDF. This Israeli academic perspective erased the *Nakbah* as a historical event, preventing local scholars and academics from challenging the overall denial and suppression of the catastrophe in the world outside the universities' ivory towers.

As mentioned after the *Tikkun* article, the term 'new history' was introduced into the Israeli academic discourse by Benny Morris and myself as part of an attempt to arouse public awareness regarding the existence of a non-Zionist counter-narrative of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. It was a year or so before the newspaper *Ha'aretz* became interested in the subject and most of the printed and electronic media in Israel soon followed. For a while, these public forums were full of lively debates about what had occurred in 1948. But this brief era of pluralism was to last only from 1990 to 2000. As happens so often in an eventful state like Israel, the debate did not last long and soon gave way to other more pressing problems. However, its relevance to topical issues such as the peace negotiations with the Palestinians, the relationship between Israel's Jewish majority and Palestinian minority and the overall questions of legitimacy and identity of the Jewish state ensured its return, every now and then, to the public arena and consciousness.[12]

There was only a slight rebuke from my colleagues in the university, and I did not have tenure at that time. I think most of them did not read my doctorate, and when it became a book, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli*

Conflict, it was still written in the style of a doctoral thesis, which has a way of muting even the strongest critiques. Publication in the press, on the other hand, had introduced me for the first time to hate letters and death threats by email and snail mail. Some were sent express or registered to stress the urgency of the 'well-wishers'. Then came the telephone calls – anonymous of course, and poisonous. Delivering public lectures became a second career for me, with every encounter with the public resembling a rugby match more than an academic occasion, but verbal violence very rarely turned into anything physical. I should have been aware of things to come when a well-publicised conference on the 'new history' at my own institution, the University of Haifa, in 1994 turned into real abuse. In a response to my own contribution, the leading local historian at the university, Professor Yoav Gelber, announced that adopting the Palestinian narrative was tantamount to treason in the battlefield.

I was compensated by winning the confidence of, and access to, Palestinian political and cultural scenes. In September 1993 I was invited to the headquarters of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Tunisia. On 28 September 1993, two weeks after the signing of the Oslo Accords, I visited Tunisia and met Yasser Arafat in his house in the town of Hammamet.

With all the cynicism that I developed later towards the Oslo process and my growing disappointment with the Palestine Authority, I still feel today the excitement of being at the PLO headquarters and meeting Arafat.

The only country I had previously been to in the Arab world was Egypt, and the fact that I was visiting another Arab country added to the general exhilaration. Flying to Cairo and on to Tunis was more than a physical journey out of the Israeli ghetto: it was a psychological liberation from past concepts and indoctrinations.

On arriving at the Diplomat Hotel I disobeyed the advice of my escorts to stay inside, and had a sense of freedom walking on my own first through the modern part of the city – a miniature Paris with its public gardens adorned with fountains – and then to the Habib Bourguiba Elise, the main boulevard, with its coffee houses and flower shops, until I stood in front of the statue of the great fourteenth-century polymath, Ibn Khaldun. Somewhat fearfully, I asked a local guide in literary Arabic with an Israeli accent (it must have been the strangest dialect he had ever heard) to take me to the rooftops of the *qasbah*, where we leapt from one to the other, overlooking tourist shops that were engulfing the *suq's* older and more authentic *dukkans*, which had seen greater days before the advent of crude modernisation.

But this was not a sightseeing tour. It was very political and had a profound impact on me. In the background were the Oslo Accords, which I did not support even before my visit to Tunis. I doubted the sincerity of the Israeli government. I feared the outcome, and I was right. It was a ploy to try to impose a Zionist diktat on the Palestinians under the guise of a peace process.

In those days I established a friendship with the Palestinian American scholar Edward Said, who helped me to navigate the murky intellectual waters of Israeli academia. His universalistic and very human approach to the post-colonial world, bereft of any desire for retribution or revenge, but full of constructive insights into the question of victimhood, has inspired my writings on Palestine ever since. His acute critique of Oslo as a corrupting process that would turn the PLO from the leadership of a liberation movement into the warden of new prison camps – the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – in the service of Israel proved to be chillingly accurate. Late in the day Arafat himself realised this and refused to play the role allocated to him in the Israeli script: he declined to sign the final document produced in the summer of 2000 at Camp David.

Said's criticism was also directed at Arafat. He never accepted corruption and abuse of human rights as practices that could be tolerated just because a leadership is engaged in a liberation struggle. Meeting Arafat in person, I was less convinced of the validity of this criticism. It was true that he was not a guardian of human and civil rights, but in my view he was not corrupt.

The thrust of Said's critique, which I fully agreed with at the time and also in retrospect, was that the Oslo Accords – and indeed all the American peace schemes that followed, including the Geneva Accord and the Annapolis Plan– ignored the refugees' fate and future. Like him, I believe that without Israel's acceptance of

the refugees' right of return there is no chance for peace and reconciliation in Palestine.

Yet I did find some positive aspects to the Oslo Accords. They included, after all, a mutual recognition of a right to exist between the PLO and Israel, even if this did not signify an end to the Israeli occupation, or to the misery of the refugees or the troubles of Jerusalem. Most importantly, Oslo enabled me to travel to Tunis as the PLO's guest. At the time I felt as if I was carried on the wings of history to play a crucial part in peacemaking. In hindsight, I realise it was a very minor role, in the unsatisfying script of Oslo.

In Tunis, as mentioned, I met Yasser Arafat for the first time. I found him quite impossible when facing a large group of people, but very charming and mentally sharp in a more private setting. There I also met people who in my youth were the 'most wanted men' on the Israeli hit list and in no time we became friends for life in this private journey of reconciliation. This trip had two very emotional moments: the first was a memorial service for young Palestinians who were killed by Israeli bombardments, and the second a meeting with the man who had commanded a guerilla attack on a yacht at Larnaca. On that yacht, my cousin – the only daughter of my mother's sister – and her husband had sailed to Cyprus and met their death, as they were suspected by Force 17, a military wing of the Fatah organization controlled by Arafat, of being Mossad agents. We had a frank and hopeful conversation that sowed seeds for

a different future, even when personal sacrifices had been made.

I had a less personal but similarly intense meeting at the house of Fawzi Nimr and Fatma Barnawi. Fawzi was a Palestinian from Israel who had been arrested after planting bombs in a residential area where I had lived in 1969. He had become quite a cult hero as a model for the leader of political prisoners in a famous Israeli film of 1986 called *Behind Bars*. His wife, Fatma, had also achieved public notoriety: she had been caught hesitating about whether to plant a bomb in a Jerusalem cinema. She escaped to Lebanon where she became a fighter, and was entrusted with guarding a group of Israeli soldiers captured during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. These soldiers were eventually exchanged for Palestinian political prisoners, among them Fawzi. Romance and politics led to a high-profile marriage. That night, I also met the author who turned their life story into a popular novella. The dinner on the roof of their apartment in a densely populated Tunisian neighbourhood went on into the small hours of the night. The conversation was charged with emotion and insights into the almost impossible reality into which we had all been propelled, willingly or unwillingly.

In Tunis I learned also about the power of memory. In every Palestinian house I visited, a corner of the living room was organised into a mini-museum portraying a narrative of national identity. When I returned to Israel, I discovered that similar niches were emerging in the homes of followers of a new political movement

that was coming to the fore, consisting of many of the internal refugees and the Palestinian minority in Israel, previously known as Arab Israelis. These were the refugees from the 1948 war, along with their families, who had lost their homes but remained in Israel. Shortly after my return, their leading activists decided to institutionalise their activity and to try to reconnect the Palestinian minority in Israel to the more general Palestinian agenda of refugeehood and return, which had been sidelined over the years. My own particular activities would fuse into that unique aspect of the Palestinian politics in Israel, as described later in this book.

Luckily for me, the debate on Israel's history in general and on the 1948 war in particular was reactivated only after I had received tenure. Attaining tenure is a painful process for most young academics in Israel; it was doubly difficult for me given my views, which were already quite well known. And yet, as I noted, my positions were not yet crystallised in such a way as constituted a threat to the system, and I passed over the hurdles successfully.

More than anything, it was a potentially humiliating process that became quite comical when taken with a grain of humour. Never in my life had so many professors, or for that matter people in general, winked or gesticulated at me, to the point that they seemed to have contracted some sort of mysterious nervous disorder or severe infection of the eyes. They did it everywhere: in the corridors or the lifts where we

happened to meet. They all hinted at the same message: 'your tenure is a secret process, but we know all about it, and you depend on us, so remember this ...'. At the time, in the early 1990s, I think most of them regarded me as an asset to the university and believed that my 'radicalism' was a game that enhanced the university's claim to pluralism and allowed it to boast of its openness to the world at large. Arnon Sofer, one of Israel's leading demographers, who conceived the idea of a wall of separation between the West Bank and Israel, told me: 'Between you and me, within four closed walls, you are one of us. But it is good that you are beautifying Israel's image abroad.' This particular conversation and similar remarks by other colleagues led me to join the communist-socialist party Hadash, an acronym for the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality. I guessed, and I seemed to be right, that such a public move would end these disturbing conversations. I was now officially out of the Zionist camp. But it was just the beginning of this road. I was soon to find out that I was even more distant from Zionism than some of the other Jewish comrades in the party.

But there were deeper reasons for my decision than the desire to avoid pernicious meetings in corridors or living rooms. It was easy in those days to meet other Israeli academics who deconstructed Zionism so convincingly that it was impossible to continue to adhere to it. Parallel to the appearance of the 'new history' of the 1948 war, a few dozen Israeli social scientists were showing a greater interest in history and recognised

its relevance for their analysis of contemporary Israel. They produced an impressive body of research, mainly in their own journal, *Teorya ve-Bikoret* (Theory and Criticism), which began in 1993, and later on in several anthologies and monographs. A critical eye was now cast on a longer period of history, from 1882 up until the present. It included an examination of Zionism as colonialism in the early years of the movement; the exposure of the historical origins of Israeli militarism and settlement colonialism; and a challenge to Zionism's supposed embrace of feminism and egalitarianism. The touchy subject of the attitude towards the Holocaust and the behaviour during it was also brought to the fore. The policy towards Mizrachi Jews (Jews from Arab lands) and Israeli Palestinians in the 1950s completed the new critique's impressive agenda, represented so admirably in the collection of articles by Uri Ram, *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*.[13]

I was much influenced by the theoretical and methodological background of these new studies (I was less impressed by their command of historical episodes, which seemed to interest them less than either the Marxist theories or postmodernist methodologies employed to interpret history). I was particularly taken with the whole discussion of power and knowledge in its local version and attempted to bring it into the historical study of the country. I wrote 'popular' articles in the press, lectured on it in my classroom and every now and then ventured into more scholarly contributions to academic journals. These writings included a call for a

new agenda for historians that included an awareness and even acceptance of the impact that ideology and politics can have on the historical events they encompass.[14] This was a welcome influence, because it was the only way to reintroduce into the country's historiography all those groups excluded from it by the sheer force of the state, the nation, the occupation and apartheid policies.

This appeal was made in the 1980s by Ellah Shohat who stressed particularly the nexus between Ashkenazi power and the poor representation of Mizrachi Jews in the local culture and academia. Shohat felt so ostracised by the hostile academic response she received that she decided to leave for the USA. Once there, freed from the stifling Israeli academic milieu, she continued to explore the dialectics between power and knowledge in Israel and wrote extensively on distorted representations of and discriminations against the Arab Jews, whom she rightly referred to as Mizrachis. She not only inspired a new generation of Mizrachi scholars, but also encouraged political activism that sought to combine feminist, Mizrachi and Palestinian agendas in Israel.[15]

Predictably, any call to discuss questions of historical narratives and objectivity were totally rejected by the local academia, whose mainstream stance was beautifully summarised by Moshe Lissak (a highly-respected professor of sociology and winner of the coveted Israel Prize) in a public debate with me in 1994 at Tel Aviv University: it is true, he declared, that there is such a thing as a historical narrative, but it so happens

that the Zionist narrative is also scientifically true. This meant that empirical research substantiated the ideological claims of Zionism. In those days it was less of a heresy to be pro-Palestinian than to be a relativist. In the 1990s pro-Palestinian positions were an affront to the ideology of the state, but were not a crime – although they would be in 2001 – but questioning the objectivity of historiographical research undermined the university itself, a far more serious offence.

I relished the intellectual challenge of the meta-historical, theoretical and methodological debates, although I was never so deeply immersed in nor sufficiently comfortable with the postmodernist and neo-Marxist perspectives as to fully enjoy the discussion. But I tackled it with growing thirst, as it provided me with insights that enabled the formulation of a position in the public debate in Israel not only over what had happened, but far more importantly, on what history was all about. There was no need to bring the message home to those in Israel who dealt with what is called general history, that is, everything that is not Middle Eastern, Jewish or Zionist history. But in these last three fields, the ignorance of historians about the state of their art, and their unawareness of the crisis that history was in, were no less harmful to building bridges with the other side than were the ideological positions taken by various Israeli governments.

My last contribution to this debate was made in the journal *Theory and Criticism* in 1996. With a postmodernist Hebrew, which in hindsight I myself do

not like very much, I called on historians to recognise the role that we play in the stories we tell. In addition, I urged my colleagues, on the one hand, to write narratives that can help reconciliation, and on the other, to include non-elite groups at centre stage in their forthcoming histories.[16] I will never write again such didactic articles and although I think every practising historian should dirty his or her hand in such pontifications, they should be left aside for the sake of spinning intriguing and relevant historical narratives.

In the mid-1990s, the discussion over the past resumed vigorously, especially in 1998 during the jubilee celebration of the birth of the state of Israel. It was triggered by the rapid infiltration into the non-academic media of the version of events in 1948 that emerged from the new history books. Three major points made by the books written by Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim and myself seemed to impress educators and in particular the makers of documentary films on Israel's state television. The first was the importance of the Jordanian-Jewish understanding prior to the 1948 war that tilted the balance on the battleground in Israel's favour; second, the claim that many refugees were expelled and did not leave voluntarily; and third, that Israeli leaders after 1948 were not eager to conclude peace treaties with their Arab foes (while the latter showed willingness to do so). The influence of these ideas went beyond a revised version of the 1948 war. The critical examination of Zionism, the attitude to the Holocaust, and questions about the ethnic and

national problems of Israel found their way into the more popular cultural media.

The most visible manifestation of this impact upon cultural production was the documentary series *Tekkuma* (Renaissance), prepared by the public television channel for the fiftieth anniversary of the state. The screening of the series evoked reappraisals of the past and returned the 'new historians' to the public mind. The first programme was shown on Independence Day 1998, and then for 22 consecutive weeks. The series attempted to encapsulate the state's history and did so quite convincingly. It was created under the influence of the more critical views expressed by the 'new historians' a decade before.[17] Various episodes echoed the doubts about Zionism in its early years, the questions asked by academics about the morality of Zionist policy during the Holocaust, and criticism of the treatment of Mizrachi Jews. This was a very tame critique compared to the one that appeared in academia, and despite these forays into more alternative views the general tone of the series remained very loyal to the Zionist meta-narrative.[18]

There was also a feeling – which was proved wrong – that the new ideas were finding their way into the educational system, in part through my own participation in some committees that were rethinking curricula and textbooks for history classes. Some textbooks were indeed peppered with critique and were introduced for a short while as an optional extra for history teachers, but no more than that. The optimistic

sense of making a change was compounded by the constant invitations I received to talk about 1948 in front of teachers and pupils. I could hardly respond to all of them. This ended as abruptly as it began, quite probably, I was told – although I could not find the relevant document – by direct instruction from the Ministry of Education.

At the time, when I was contemplating the idea of a joint narrative, I was fortunate in that similar views were circulating among my colleagues in the West Bank. We shared a recognition of the relevance of the past to the present attempts at reconciliation. We gathered a group of 20 Israeli and Palestinian historians (almost equally divided) together in the summer of 1997 in the city of Ramallah to discuss and further the idea of a bridging narrative. We worked almost frantically, motivated by a sense of urgency in the wake of the deadlock over and dissatisfaction with the Oslo peace process. Our common perception of the Oslo Accords was that the Declaration of Principles signed in September 1993 could have led to workable political and military arrangements, but not to a genuine national and cultural reconciliation.

The group studied Israeli and Palestine history in a dialectical manner, looking at national narratives and their power and varied topics such as collective memory and oral evidence. The critical approach was applied both to the Zionist and Palestinian historiographies. Sensitive subjects such as the Palestinian tendency to minimise the Jewish Holocaust and the Israeli denial of

the *Nakbah* were the focus of discussion.[19] This opened the way to developing a bridging narrative, dissociated from past ideological postures and disengaged from historiographies that served political elites.

In many ways our discussion was also a tribute to Edward Said. His seminal book, *Orientalism*, had influenced scholars all over the world but was only then beginning to affect Middle Eastern studies and research on Palestine in particular. It was Said's insights, later expounded also in *Culture and Imperialism*, on the nexus between power and knowledge, narration and nation, and his numerous lucid analyses of the Palestine situation[20] that inspired the group, Israeli and Palestinian alike. The group became known as PALISAD, the Palestine Israel Academic Dialogue, and was active until 1994. It managed to meet even when Ramallah was under occupation and segregation. The meetings gave to theoretical inputs that I had dealt with in the past – such as subjectivity, reflexivity, positionality and contextualization – a different and far more immediate perspective.[21]

What the dialogue taught all of us was how much working together could affect the final outcome of the historiographical enterprise, be it a book, an article or a curriculum. Through PALISAD, the Israeli scholars learned to accept the Palestinian perspective in a long process of intimacy; outside PALISAD, the balance of power and daily reality disabled Israeli Jews from respecting the individual and collective Palestinian experience. This kind of acquaintance

with the Palestinian historical narrative supplemented a knowledge already existing in archival documents and other primary sources. The Israeli participants found out that what for them were 'revelations' about the country's history in general and the 1948 war in particular were already an accepted part of the Palestinian narrative. Just as it was not necessary for black South Africans to wait for the BOSS (the South African Bureau of State Security) secret archives to be opened to know how Africans had been treated since apartheid was imposed in 1949, so most of the Palestinians did not need the IDF archives to expose the ethnic cleansing of 1948. For the positivists among the revisionists, the discourse of proof was needed in order to construct a bridge; for the more relativist ones, the discourse of trust was employed for the same purpose.

The need for a prolonged experience of joint writing was affirmed when a more instant and briefer attempt was made elsewhere to bring historians on both sides closer. In May 1998, under the auspices of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Israeli new historians were invited to a one-day dialogue in Paris with Palestinian historians about the history of 1948. The crux of that encounter was that the empiricist pretensions of some of the Israeli historians, such as Benny Morris and Itamar Rabinovitch, led to an inevitable clash with the Palestinian historians. Although critical of some chapters in the Zionist narrative, Morris and Rabinovitch rejected – on the basis of Israeli documents – many essential Palestinian points, such as the depiction

of Zionism as a colonialist movement or of the 1948 expulsion as an ethnic cleansing operation.

In the face of a positivist approach to their history, the Palestinian participants requested an explanation of why their own catastrophe was chosen as subject matter by cool-headed and objective Israeli historians? The Israeli answer was inadequate. These Israeli historians doubted the ability of the Palestinians to have the expertise or historical materials for writing their own history. Now, after their land had been taken away and their past history in it denied, they were given – or rather offered – a small portion of land back, but their history was still appropriated by archival positivists in Israel.[22]

From a positivist point of view there is no clear archival evidence for every crime committed by the Israelis in 1948, but if the historical methodology intact since the 1920s is employed, there is very little room for doubt about the validity of the Palestinian version of the 1948 war. In fact, Israeli historians, and rightly so, used the same methodology to refute attempts to deny the Holocaust. Memories of Holocaust survivors were as sacred as documents in the German archives.

But the PALISAD group was far more successful in pursuing a dialectical process of historiography, mainly because its participants were fully aware of the influence of external political developments on the academic project. The Paris meeting coincided with the end of the first chapter in the Oslo Accords. This Accord began as a five-year phase in which the Israeli occupation in the

West Bank and the Gaza Strip was rearranged in return for mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel. The second phase, meant to begin in 1998 but delayed until the summer of 2000, was an attempt to solve all the outstanding problems on the way to a comprehensive peace. One of these was the future of the Palestinian refugees. The solution to this question was closely associated with the question of responsibility; or more precisely, the Palestinian demand for a right of return was based on a certain interpretation of the past. This demand to associate the Palestinian narrative with the contemporary peace process was made throughout the Palestinian world: in the exiled communities, the refugee camps, the Occupied Territories, and more recently among the Palestinian minority in Israel. This latter group associated its internal struggle for citizenship with the Palestinian narrative of 1948, a process that matured in 1988, when the more than one million people of the Palestinian minority in Israel refused to continue to celebrate Israel's annual Independence Day and opted for a *Nakbah* Day.

In 1999, Ehud Barak won the elections and led both Israel and Occupied Palestine into a fatal collision that erupted into widespread violence in the autumn of 2000 and has continued in one form or another to this day. Within two years, critical voices in academia, in the electronic and printed media and in other sites of cultural and knowledge production were silenced, almost disappearing in some cases. The closing of the

Israeli mind and the militarisation of its public space during the Second Intifada provided the immediate background against which my personal struggle was waged; a struggle that might have taken a different turn had it occurred in the mid-1990s. My academic standing escalated, or deteriorated as the case may be, with what have seemed to be irreversible consequences.

2

THE ARMING OF THE ZIONIST MIND

In his book, *The Making of Israeli Militarism*, Uri Ben-Eliezer described Israel as a nation-in-arms. He meant that the Jewish collective identity in Palestine was constructed mainly through the militarisation of the society; the Zionist leadership used the army as its principal agent of development and integration. Through the ongoing enforcement of *miluim* or annual reserve duty and the organising of seasonal mass manoeuvres, the army became the forger of the Jewish nation state.

But as the years went by the army did more than that. It influenced the character of Israeli policy both inside and outside the country. Externally, it produced aggressive policies towards the country's neighbours, and internally, a coercive policy towards any group with an agenda that contradicted the overall objectives of Zionism as understood by the political elite. Civilian spheres of government activities were militarised from the very early years of the state and remain so today: the army is a dominant factor in economy, politics, administration and culture.

One such sphere of activity was settlement. Until 1948 this task was in the hands of the Jewish Agency, the

embryo government of mandatory Zionist community. After the 1948 war, settlement meant occupying the deserted villages from which Palestinians were expelled. This mission was entrusted to the IDF. The army had, and still has, a special unit to implement this prime Zionist imperative.

Media in Arms

The media were recruited very early on behalf of the nation-in-arms. Military reporters helped to create the mythology of Israeli heroism in the battlefield, even when the raw material was spun out of bloody reprisal operations against a civilian population in the 1950s. These heroes would become the core group from which many future leaders of Israel would emerge: Yitzhak Rabin, Binyamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon. The Israeli media's co-optation, as is the case with other cultural systems, curbed any significant criticism or alternative thinking. It was corrupted by its submission, if only because of the secretive nature of the army. The media could serve as the IDF's spokesman, but not as its watchdog; very rarely was the army's immunity from outside supervision questioned or challenged.

In the more optimistic air of the post-Oslo period after 1993, critical Israeli sociologists reported the beginning of a new era and found abundant evidence to suggest that the nation-in-arms model had weakened.[1] Then came the Second Intifada, at the end of 2000, and

all the sanguine assessments of a different Israel were crushed by the powerful IDF's re-entry into the Israeli public space.

There had been reasons for the optimism. One was the emergence of post-Zionist scholarship, described in the previous chapter. But it also seemed for a moment that the media were undergoing a dramatic change because of Oslo's new political reality. In Oslo's heyday, editors and reporters for the first time refused to pass their pieces to the military censor, as had been required since 1948. This resistance had begun during the First Intifada, when reporters felt that the army's coverage of events was false and misleading and they wished to show a more accurate picture. But in the end, only in the daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* could alternative reporting on the first uprising be found; the rest of the print and electronic media did not venture a counter-version to that provided by the army's spokespeople.

Following Rabin's assassination and Netanyahu's first term in office (1996–99), and even more so under Ariel Sharon's two governments (2001–06), these early signs of a less militarised media disappeared. It became even worse under Ehud Olmert's government (2006–09). Post-Zionism proved to be a passing phase, rather than a new chapter in the history of Israel. The election of Ehud Barak in 1999 aroused new hopes. Always verbose, although often impotent in action, Barak talked about an 'army of peace'. He promised to cut the IDF's budget, or in his words to 'cut anything that does not shoot'.[2] He charted a vision of a future

professional army that would replace the 'people's army'. This might have meant restricting the militarisation of the media as well. But the army was not reduced in size, nor was it professionalised. It assumed an air of professionalisation, such as adopting the American model of academisation of officers' careers, but its deep hold on the society in general and on the public space in particular continued, and even increased. In fact, the academisation of the officers' corps created the false impression that they were fit to be parachuted into civilian life at short notice. The number of former-generals in politics and the media grew, and with it their influence on the public space. Moreover, this nexus between the army and academia corrupted the traditional university ethos, strengthened the army's ideological grip over academic performance and disempowered the universities from playing an independent role in society.

For a short time, when public debate in Israel over the IDF's presence in southern Lebanon soared, the public space and the discourse on military affairs were successfully challenged by the Four Mothers' movement. In 1997 this group of soldiers' mothers formed a lobby calling for the army's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon, which eventually took place in July 2000. For a while mothers, and not only generals, were invited into the public space to debate the issue. But this was a brief episode that reflected Israelis' lack of interest in southern Lebanon, even on the far right, rather than

a fundamental change in the composition and hierarchy of those invited to participate in media debates.

In spite of all the tribulations and dramas of the 1990s, the new century began with the army as formidable a factor as ever in Israeli public space. Apart from shunting aside civilians from having a say in such crucial matters as the fate of the Occupied Territories or the future of the peace process, the capturing of the public space meant that a macho male subculture marginalised alternative contributions to these important national topics, particularly from women or feminists.[3]

The 1990s added new features that counterbalanced the more optimistic signs of pluralisation. The most important of these was the growing presence of religious nationalists among the senior officers' corps, most of them from West Bank settler communities. In the Second Intifada these officers were directly responsible for implementing the army's reprisal actions in the Occupied Territories. They assumed an even more central role during Operation Protective Shield – the April 2002 reoccupation of most of the West Bank in response to a particularly bloody wave of human suicide bombs inside Israel. One such officer, Ron Shechner, from a settlement near Hebron, was the commander-in-chief of the troops besieging Arafat's compound, the *Muqat'a*, in Ramallah. He was and still is a popular participant in TV and radio shows, where he appears as a 'neutral' and 'professional' expert on the current crisis.

When the al-Aqsa or Second Intifada broke out in September 2000, after Defence Minister Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, both the military and the media willingly echoed the right-wing agenda even without a significant presence of settler officers in the army. The media allowed the army to become its only source of information and interpretation from the moment the Intifada erupted. This process reached an unprecedented level of moral corruption in 2006 during Israel's attack on Lebanon – the Second Lebanon War – and even more so when Gaza was attacked in 2009.

In all three events: the Intifada, the Second Lebanon War and the Gaza War, the media was engaged in what one scholar called 'hermetic self-persuasion of righteousness'.[4] The printed and electronic media presented their constituencies with a one-dimensional and distorted picture of reality. The message was simple: Israel was once again at war against a barbaric enemy that had attacked it for no good reason.

We now know, with the help of research, that the message broadcast was not the natural consequence of what flowed from the field, through reporters, onto editorial desks. On the contrary, a strenuous effort of selection and distortion took place in order to fit news items to the required image of reality. In the Second Intifada, the end result in terms of tone and news selection stood in stark contrast to what reporters brought in from the Occupied Territories. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, and nowadays, these *Pravda*-ish tactics by the media's editorial boards

turned the Israeli press and television news into one of the world's most biased and nationalist media, providing a twisted picture to their readers, viewers and listeners. The media behaved as they did because they were motivated by hate, fear and ignorance. But more than anything, they adopted uncritically the government's and the army's narratives and interpretations. A few years after the Second Intifada broke out, you could not find any counter-narrative to that provided by the army of why the violence erupted: the official Israeli explanation was the only one we knew about.[5]

Against this background, it was very easy for the army to dictate the media's language as the Intifada progressed. Abiding by the army's structure of images, values and interpretations meant first and foremost portraying the Intifada as a war. A war demands a consensus and a recruitment of the media, just as it demands the calling up of reservists and a recruitment of the economy. Journalists in the print media and TV and radio personalities were asked to form a national consensus. This meant re-embracing the settlers, after they had been somewhat marginalised in the wake of Rabin's assassination. It also meant the exclusion of the Palestinian minority in Israel from what was considered to be 'our society' and their inclusion in the enemy camp, and it required the silencing of any alternative thinking, as well as a condemnation of any 'subversive' acts such as the refusal to serve in the army of occupation.

The central actors in the local media must have surprised the army by going even further than was required of them. From the very start, the electronic media in particular made an effort to exclude any reference to the conflict as the 'War of the Settlements' and frequently used the term 'War of Survival', or in the words of the Labour party leader and defence minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, 'A war for the survival of our homes'. When this was the opening gambit, it was very hard to introduce a wider outlook or alternative perspective.

When one adopts a military perception of reality, certain questions that would be essential for a conventional journalistic investigation disappear. For instance, the army's direction of media coverage absolved it from dealing with the question of why Palestinians resorted to terrorism and guerrilla warfare in the first place, and allowed it to focus instead on how to combat such threats effectively. Needless to say, the term 'occupation' has vanished from the media's vocabulary. Similarly, the army was absolved from providing an explanation of its overall objectives. The result was that the task of the media became to present audiences with information on tactical moves and successes, like a daily bulletin read aloud by commanders to their troops, rather than referring even obliquely to an overall strategy or to the political horizons behind military action.

The army provided and the media willingly received a pre-packaged, well-structured mythology that helped

to avoid any deeper analysis. Several intertwined myths were inside this wrapping. Each was substantiated by 'facts' provided by the IDF, the Shabak (internal security force, or Shin Bet) and the Mossad (external security force). This meant that in many cases there was no need to expand a news report beyond an elusive reference to its source, let alone furnish any details about it.

First and foremost was the Camp David myth, which was that Israel made an offer to give all or nearly all that was demanded, and the Palestinians rejected it. This was reinforced by providing a false picture of overall Palestinian behaviour during the Oslo meetings, which misrepresented the genuine Palestinian effort to comply with the Accords.

The second myth was that the Intifada was a pre-planned Palestinian campaign of terror and not a popular uprising. Although it was known that there had been no Palestinian decision on its outbreak, the press accepted the army's lead that this was a major, pre-planned act of terrorism. The early demonstrations in the Intifada were therefore reported as 'assaults on soldiers' and not as the peaceful protests and marches against the occupation that they really were. This myth was also applied later to the Palestinian Israeli community's attempt to voice its dismay about the situation. At first, the media were ready to accept that the case of the 13 Israeli Palestinian citizens killed by police in a demonstration in October 2000 should be officially investigated by a committee of inquiry (established by Ehud Barak, who probably also hoped

that he could win over the country's Palestinian citizens in the February 2001 elections). While exposing that the 13 were unarmed, the commission's report left in the air the important questions of responsibility and morality, and distanced the political elite from an act against its own citizens that in other democracies might have toppled the government and shaken the society.

The media's conclusions were even more negative, suggesting that these citizens of Israel did not just demonstrate, but were an integral part of the terrorist campaign against Israel, intent on causing unrest and disturbances, which led to the tragic and unprecedented consequence.

The third myth was about the humane Israeli reaction: that troops only used their weapons when in direct danger. The shooting of unarmed demonstrators – 65 in October 2000 alone – in the Occupied Territories and Gaza was never revealed to the Israeli public. The fourth myth was constructed independently by media leaders and presented the PLO as part of the al-Qaeda network in the wake of 9/11. The army soon joined in, providing – as media sources have it – classified information on the connection between al-Qaeda and the Palestinian Authority, the source of which was never disclosed.[6]

The mythology was cemented with the help of a list of laundered words prepared by the army that was willingly used by the media. Audiences and viewers could employ the new jargon and avoid calling a spade a spade. There were several categories of

word in this militarised discourse. The first could be called a 'surgical language': the use of technical terms intended to conceal questionable actions. Such was the vocabulary employed to describe the assassinations of wanted Palestinians as 'focused prevention' (*sikul memukad*). Another lexicon consisted of what could be called a discourse of incitement; it encouraged public support for the military *vis-à-vis* any criticism of the IDF's conduct, whether from Palestinian leaders, Palestinian Israeli politicians or the few Jews in Israel who dared to question the general consensus. This was done in a way that released anyone appearing in the media from past inhibitions. It was now possible to give vent to the innate racism in Israeli Jewish society.

The language of incitement was mostly used in radio chat shows. It is not a uniquely Israeli phenomenon to find such a vocabulary in talk-back shows. All over the world, jingoistic and fanatical views are freely vented in them. In this case, however, it intensified the feelings of hatred and racism that best served the army's war against the Palestinians. The most popular among the moderators of these programs was – and is still – Jojo Abudbul, whose opening line is quite often: 'If I were in charge of the gunships, I would bomb Ramallah and Bethlehem and let as many people as possible die'. This was expressed during a discussion on how to solve the political deadlock in these places. Similar remarks have been made by two cultural heroes in Israel, veteran pop singers Yoram Gaon and Yigal Bashan, each of whom

presented two-hour programmes on Israel Radio in the twilight zone between Friday and Saturday.

Third, army experts concocted an investigative rhetoric for the use of interviewers, which turned every journalist into an interrogator on behalf of the Israeli Jewish community when conversing with someone who does not belong to 'us': a foreign diplomat, a Palestinian leader, an Israeli Palestinian politician, or an Israeli Jew who supported the Palestinian cause. This newly-acquired technique cast strong doubt on the ethics of some journalists and affected their style. It was in these exchanges that they came out most clearly as servants of the army. For instance, Aryeh Golan, who hosts a daily morning show, interviewed a considerable number of Palestinians at the beginning of the Intifada (such interviews were later prohibited on directions from above). In one conversation with Ziyad Abu Ein, a Palestinian Authority official, he ended the discussion by threatening him with: 'You want war, you are going to get war. Israel is a powerful state, did you know that?' Abu Ein, however, replied: 'We want peace'.

These techniques helped to dehumanise Palestinians in general and armed Palestinians in particular in the eyes of the Israeli public. According to Dr Khalil Rinnawi, an Israeli Palestinian media analyst from Tel Aviv University, 'bloodthirsty' was the most common adjective.[7] In such a way, the media adopted uncritically all the adjectives suggested by the army for describing Arafat, thereby preparing the ground for lack of

objection to his long-term confinement in the *Muqat'a*, his compound in Ramallah, from 2002 to 2004.

The limited tactical analysis, the reservoir of stock images and the absence of alternative analysis of causes and possible objectives were particularly evident in Israeli talk shows. Despite the privatisation and decentralisation of Israeli radio and television, political talk shows on the national channels, such as roundtable discussions in prime time, still command very high ratings. Between 2000 and 2006 the Intifada was the principal topic and was mainly debated by generals or former generals. They were presented as authorities on the subject and were introduced as 'objective' and 'neutral' observers compared to politicians, who were also invited but were considered to be 'biased'. The uniformed participants conveyed the message that the military should be trusted without hesitation, and took every opportunity to urge the audience to support the army.

The views of these military experts were repeated daily via military correspondents and especially by 'our senior military commentator', of which there were only four or five in the media, and 'our experts on Arab affairs', also an exclusive group of four or five individuals, who usually had little to add to the statements of the military experts because they shared the same military and security intelligence sources. Sometimes on TV one of them would energetically wave a piece of paper that nobody could read, as documentary proof of one or another claim – usually one that the official spokesman of the army had just made.

The leading expert on Arab affairs at the time was Ehud Ya'ari, who was closely connected to military intelligence. He was a friend of Amos Malka, the chief of military intelligence, as well as of some of the popular guests on the talk shows, former generals or ex-colonels of the IDF. The result was that it did not really matter who provided the commentary, the military man or the journalist, as they all portrayed the Intifada in the same way, loyal to the army's interpretation.[8]

The corruption of the media was particularly evident in the lack of empathy with foreign colleagues who had been banned since 2000 from obtaining proper coverage of Israeli actions, especially of Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank in 2002 and Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2009. These foreign reporters were not only prevented from obtaining coverage, but they became targets of army harassment and abuse. In addition, the local media agreed to impose a blackout on its screens, radio transmissions and newspaper pages.

The desire to report only on what the army deemed right and useful sometimes ended in a public relations flop. Such was the case in March 2002, in the last big operation before Defensive Shield, when the army entered the refugee camp in the Palestinian town of Tulkarem. The IDF spokesman invited national TV crews and senior military correspondents to accompany its operation, hoping to show what it called 'the humane face' of the Israeli army. But the close-up pictures of soldiers hammering their way through walls from one house to the other, frightening women and children,

humiliating the men and destroying most of what was in their path, did not fit a commentary on a surgical operation intended to avoid harming innocent citizens. Shocked viewers responded angrily and the army learned the lesson: this type of public relations exercise was never tried again. The following month, in April 2002, the IDF did not allow any television cameras, even loyal local ones, to accompany troops into the Jenin camp. Only the military correspondent of Israel Radio, Carmela Menashe, was allowed to be present, and she read on air a prepared text handed to her by military commanders.

This is the sad story of the media in a society that presents itself as democratic. In the year and half after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, most of its elements were voluntarily militarised as part of a more general militarisation of the public space and political system. When the media performs such a dubious role, it helps to block the public mind to alternative analysis. It should be said that had the Israeli media wanted to be demilitarised, it had the means of doing so. The fact that it willingly chose to become the spokesman of the IDF, the Shabak, the Mossad and the ministry of internal security is worrying in itself. If one adds to this dismal state of affairs the hijacking of party politics by former generals and the militarisation of the education system, it is possible to grasp how profoundly Israel had become a nation-in-arms at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Sir Thomas Rapp, the somewhat unusual British colonialist who headed the British Middle East Office in the early 1950s, was a keen observer of Israeli society. Although in 1950 he favoured, as did almost all British officials at the time, closer ties between Britain and the newly-founded Jewish state, he warned: 'The younger generation [in Israel] is brought up in an environment of militarism and thus a permanent threat to Middle East tranquillity is thereby created, and Israel would thus tend to move away from the democratic way of life towards totalitarianism of the right or the left.'[9]

The Intellectual Eunuchs and Tamed 'Peaceniks'

The closed mind was not, of course, limited to the media, but extended to academia as well. Some scholarly critics from previous years, like Benny Morris, openly retracted their positions and returned to the all-embracing consensus, while others simply abandoned their previous interests.[10] What is very clear when analysing the fortunes of Israel's 'new history' from its inception in the late 1980s until its temporary disappearance in 2000, is that historical demythologising and reconstruction are closely linked to general political developments and upheavals. In societies torn by internal and external rifts and conflicts, the work of historians is constantly pervaded by the political drama around them. In such geopolitical locations a pretence of objectivity and impartiality is particularly misplaced, if not totally unfounded.

Anyone visiting Israeli academia in the mid-1990s must have felt a fresh breeze of openness and pluralism blowing through the corridors of a stagnant establishment that had been painfully loyal to the prevailing Zionist ideology in every field of research touching on Israeli reality, past or present. The new atmosphere allowed scholars to revisit the history of 1948, and to accept some Palestinian claims about that conflict. It produced local scholarship that dramatically challenged the historiography of early Israel. In the new research environment, pre-1967 Israel was no longer a small defensive country and the only democratic state in the Middle East, but a relatively strong nation that oppressed its Palestinian minority, discriminated against its Mizrachi citizens and conducted an aggressive policy towards neighbouring states in the region. The academic critique spread beyond ivory towers into other cultural areas such as theatre, film, literature, poetry, and even documentary television and official school textbooks.

Less than ten years later it would have taken an imaginative and determined visitor to find any trace of that openness and pluralism. Its disappearance was part of the general demise of the Israeli left in the immediate aftermath of the Intifada. The left was that part of Jewish public opinion which, with varying degrees of conviction and honesty, held peace-promoting and conciliatory positions on the question of Palestine. Academia had always had a strong presence in the left, and when it began to disappear, academia changed with it.

Since 1967, when the West Bank was conquered and then occupied by Israel, activists on the left had declared their willingness to withdraw from the Occupied Territories; they accepted a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital next to Israeli West Jerusalem, and they spoke of the need to grant full civic rights to the Palestinian Israeli minority within Israel. A large portion of this group, after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, publicly and privately confessed how wrong they had been to trust the Palestinians. They voted for Sharon in the February 2001 and March 2003 elections and later for Sharon's new party, Kadima, in 2006 and 2009. The 'gurus' and leaders of this group expressed their 'disappointment' with Israel's Palestinian citizens – with whom, they claimed, they had concluded an 'historical alliance'. The boycott by Israeli Palestinians of the February 2001 elections was the last straw that broke the back of this 'historical pact'.

The co-opting of the Israeli cultural, intellectual and academic scene and the disappearance of a political and moral voice that accepted at least the Palestinian right to independence and equality, if not the right of return, were twin processes that occurred at amazing speed. One would have expected, especially in the society's more learned and intellectual circles, a longer process of reflection and deduction. But it seems that what took place was a frantic rush, accompanied by some sighs of relief, to shed the few thin layers of democracy, morality and pluralism that had covered Zionist ideology and praxis over the years. The swift

disintegration of the institutes that had advocated peace policies and compromises, the hasty removal of peaceful and moral terminology from the public discourse and the disappearance of any alternative views to the sticky Zionist consensus on the Palestine question, all testified to an intrinsic shallowness in the Israeli peace discourse and the peace camp before the Second Intifada.

At the time, Israeli analysts attributed the U-turn to a genuine trauma caused by three factors: Arafat's insistence on the right of return, the Palestinian Authority's (PA) rejection of Barak's generous offer at Camp David and the violent uprising in 2000. But these explanations are hollow, as many of those who bring them up would be the first to recognise. Arafat never relinquished the right of return – he could not, even if he had wished to do so. He openly and constantly talked about it from Oslo onward. As for the so-called generous offers made at Camp David, it seems that (as Shlomo Ben-Ami and Yossi Beilin later admitted) if there were any 'generous offers' they were made only at a meeting at Taba, the resort village on the border of Israel and the Sinai, that took place a month after the Camp David summit, and then only tongue in cheek, since those concerned already knew that Barak was a lame duck prime minister and had no power to execute agreements.

Moreover, many Israeli leftists had read the American reports from Camp David, translated into Hebrew in *Ha'aretz*, and knew that Arafat had been presented with a diktat he could not accept under any circumstances.

Did he really disappoint them a couple of months later by failing to resist the popular anger in the Occupied Territories at the *cul-de-sac* into which both sides had been pushed, and which for the Palestinians meant perpetuation of the occupation?

The great prophets of the leftist camp, A B Yehoshua and Amos Oz, warned long before the al-Aqsa Intifada that if peace were not achieved in Camp David, war would reign instead. This was not an analytical statement, but a condescending threat to the Palestinians. When the Intifada broke out, the left exploited it to move back from an uncomfortable position of dubious patriotism to the consensual centre. There, at the heart of the Israeli polity, the lost sons were embraced in a process of erasing any ideological differences between left and right in the Jewish state, which continued into the next century.

It seems now that those like the present writer, who had warned that the Oslo Accords were no more than a political and military arrangement intended to replace Israeli occupation with another form of control, were right. Oslo did not cause any significant change in basic Israeli interpretations (from both left and right) of the past, present and future in Palestine. Most of Palestine, in the view of both left and right, was Israel, and there was no right of return – just as the Jews' only hope of survival was within a Zionist state, extending over as much of Palestine as possible, with as few Palestinians in it as was feasible. The argument was about tactics, not goals. The 'moderate' tactic was presented to the

Palestinians in Oslo as a 'take it or leave it' proposal, in return for which they were expected to cease all attempts to achieve more than had been offered. This did not work, although it seemed for a while that it would. Its initial success was due to three factors: President Clinton's deep involvement, the impressions conveyed by Palestinian leaders that this was indeed a peace process, and the indifference of the Arab world. Out of this, Israel reaped dividends and paid nothing back.

The 'peace camp' in Israel had enemies: those on the right, especially the settlers, who regarded the Oslo enterprise as dangerous. In the name of God and nation, they preferred to use force to impose the Zionist reality over all of Palestine. Because of these opponents and their violence, the Oslo peace camp had a martyr (Yitzhak Rabin). Now that it had a *shahid* or martyr (only one, it should be said), it was convinced it was at the midst of a genuine struggle for peace. In fact, what they were struggling for was the creation of a *bantustan*, a protectorate on most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In return, they sought to solicit from the Palestinians an 'end to the conflict' declaration. This did not require a reassessment of Israel's role in, and responsibility for, the ethnic cleansing carried out in 1948; nor did it require a revising of its brutal polices in the Occupied Territories or a review of its refusal to allow the Palestinians a full sovereign state on at least 22 per cent of Palestine (the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

It also led to the illusion that the Israeli left had succeeded in Zionising the Palestinian minority in Israel as part of the overall deal. It took time for the Palestinian minority and its leaders to understand that a final peace map included the perpetuation, if not accentuation, of discriminatory policies and practices against them inside the Jewish state. Just as the Palestinians at Camp David were told to accept the 'mother of all deals' – meaning they were expected not to raise any more demands in the future – so the Palestinian citizens of Israel were expected to forsake any aspiration of turning their country into a state for all its citizens, as well as giving up any hope for its de-Zionisation.

When the al-Aqsa Intifada broke out in the Occupied Territories and within the Palestinian community in Israel, the very narrow limits of the genuine Jewish peace camp were exposed. It had always been small, but with the help of the international media, the American peace discourse and the fanaticism of the Israeli right, it had appeared large enough to justify hopes for a comprehensive and just solution in the Middle East as a whole.

To move for a moment from the general scene to a personal biography, the process of the disappearance of the peace camp and the demise of any ideological pluralism on the Jewish side left people like myself as pariahs. With like-minded friends, I could not find a social reference group to belong to, nor could we associate with any of the existing political formations on the Jewish side. Both personally and professionally,

things became worse in the immediate aftermath of the Camp David summit, as my main agenda continued to be the struggle against *Nakbah* denial in my homeland.

The struggle against denial of the *Nakbah* in Israel then shifted to the Palestinian political scene inside the country. Since the fortieth anniversary of the *Nakbah* in 1988, the Palestinian minority in Israel has linked its collective and individual memories of the catastrophe with the general Palestinian situation, and especially with its own predicament, as never before. This was manifested through an array of symbolic gestures, such as memorial ceremonies on *Nakbah* Commemoration Day, organised tours to deserted or former Palestinian villages in Israel, seminars on the past and extensive interviews in the press with *Nakbah* survivors. The process was to become sufficiently successful to lead to an (unsuccessful) attempt in the Israeli Knesset, years later, to pass a law banning public mention of the term *Nakbah*.

Through its political leaders, NGOs and media, the Palestinian Israelis were able to force the wider public to take notice of the *Nakbah*. Its re-emergence as a topic of public debate was helped by the misleading impression that the Oslo Accords and Camp David summit would lead to a genuine discussion about the refugees' future, or would even locate Israel's responsibility for the *Nakbah* at the heart of the peace negotiations. Despite the collapse of the summit – due mainly to an Israeli desire to force its point of view on the Palestinian side – the catastrophe of 1948 was for a while brought to

the attention of a local, regional, and to some extent global, audience.

Not only in Israel, but in the United States and even in Europe, it was necessary to remind those concerned with the Palestine question that the conflict impacted not only upon the future of the Occupied Territories, but also upon that of the Palestinian refugees who had been forced from their homes in 1948. Israel had earlier succeeded in sidelining the issue of refugees' rights from the Oslo Accords, an aim helped by poorly managed Palestinian diplomacy and strategy.

Indeed, the *Nakbah* was so efficiently kept off the peace process agenda that when it suddenly appeared, the Israelis felt as if a Pandora's box had suddenly been opened before them. The worst fear of Israeli negotiators was the possibility that Israel's responsibility for the 1948 catastrophe would now become a negotiable issue, and this 'danger' was, accordingly, immediately tackled. In the Israeli media and Knesset a consensual position was formulated: no Israeli negotiator would be allowed even to discuss the right of return of Palestinian refugees to the homes they had occupied before 1948. The Knesset passed a law to this effect, and Prime Minister Barak made a public commitment to it on the stairway of the plane that took him to Camp David.

The media and other cultural institutions were also recruited to discourage discussion of the *Nakbah* and its relevance to the peace process, and it was in this atmosphere that I became involved in a direct

confrontation with my own university. It was an inevitable consequence of the attempts that I and others had made to introduce the *Nakbah* onto the Israeli public agenda. Until it erupted, I tried in several articles to assess the impact of these efforts. What emerged was a very mixed picture. I could detect cracks in the wall of denial and repression that surrounded the *Nakbah* in Israel. These had come out of the debate on the 'new history' and the new political agenda of the Palestinian Israelis. The adverse change in atmosphere, however, and the renewed opposition were helped by a clarification of the Palestinian position on refugees towards the end of the Oslo peace process.

As a result, after more than 62 years of repression it is now more difficult in Israel to deny the expulsion and destruction of the Palestinians in 1948. The limited success evoked two negative reactions, formulated after the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada. The first was from the Israeli political establishment. The government of Ariel Sharon, through its minister of education, initiated the systematic removal of any textbook or school syllabus that referred to the *Nakbah*, even marginally. Similar instructions were given to public broadcasting authorities. The second reaction was more disturbing: a considerable number of Israeli politicians, journalists and academics not only affirmed what happened in 1948, but were willing to justify it publicly – not just in retrospect but as a prescription for the future. The idea of 'transfer' entered Israeli political discourse openly for the first time since it was propagated in the early years

of Zionism, gaining some legitimacy as the best means of dealing with the Palestinian 'problem'.

Indeed, if I were asked to choose what best characterised Israel's response to the *Nakbah* in the twenty-first century I would stress the growing popularity of the 'transfer option' in the Israeli public mood and discourse. After 2000, the expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine seemed to many in the political centre to be an inevitable and justifiable consequence of the Zionist project in Palestine. If there was any lament, it was that the expulsion was not complete. When even an Israeli 'new historian' such as Benny Morris in 2004 subscribed to the view that the expulsion was inevitable and should have been more comprehensive, it helped to legitimise any Israeli plans for further ethnic cleansing.[11]

A circle has thus been closed. When Israel took over almost 80 per cent of Palestine in 1948, it did so through settlement and ethnic cleansing of the original Palestinian population. When Yitzhak Rabin based his 1992 election on the votes of the Palestinian minority in Israel, the first and only leader to do so, he signalled the possibility of a different policy. After his assassination in November 1995, Palestinian Israelis were once again excluded from the political arena and West Bank Palestinians were still exposed to the danger of further expulsion. All three main political parties, Labour, Kadima and Likud, took the view that resorting to settlement was the best way of maintaining a Jewish state in Palestine, and they resisted

any significant Palestinian independence in areas left outside Jewish control.

Thus, for some the *Nakbah* never existed and for others it was a necessary and morally justified act of self-defence. Whatever the interpretation, the full story remains to be told, as there may still be some Israelis who are sensitive about their country's past and present conduct. They should be alerted to the fact that horrific deeds carried out by Israeli troops in 1948 were concealed from them, and they should be told, too, that such deeds have been recurrent in Israel's history and will be repeated if they, and others, do not act to stop them before it is too late.

These political developments led me to write several articles connecting the research on Palestine to the present Palestinian predicament and to contemporary attempts to reach a solution.[12] History as a facet of existential life in Palestine and Israel was no longer an abstract idea for me. I found venues in which to explain the connection, mostly in articles abroad, which to my relief were accepted as legitimate academic studies. When I tried to import this approach into Israel I was instantly rejected. In the eyes of many of my colleagues I ceased to be a genuine scholar.[13] The fact that I had joined the anti-Zionist party, *Hadash* (a front with the Israeli Communist Party in its centre and non-affiliated members like myself), only reinforced the criticisms of my work as political and ideological. These barbs came from the very scholars who were ideologues of the Labour Zionist movement, and whose

main writing was on that movement's history. I was branded as a 'postmodernist' by colleagues who had little understanding of or interest in postmodernism – to which I did not subscribe – or in relativism – to which I did subscribe – in the work of the historian.

Internationally, however, the need to find avenues for a joint narrative and a new agenda was warmly welcomed. In 1999 I collected Palestinian, American and Israeli historical works together into one volume that shared a common perception of Palestine's history over the last 200 years.[14] I then condensed this research agenda into a single narrative in *A History of Modern Palestine; One Country, Two Peoples*.[15] In its introduction, I explained that I had attempted to write a history out of sympathy to the subaltern, the oppressed, the occupied, the exiled and underprivileged. In most historical junctures in Palestine's history these were the Palestinians. But it also included Jewish women, children, peasants, workers, town-dwellers and peace activists. These new heroes and heroines who take centre stage in the story sidelined the old heroes – politicians, diplomats, notables, religious dignitaries and generals – who are examined more sceptically than in standard textbooks on the subject.

The general flow of my book aimed to dissociate the narrative from modernisation theories, in which change comes always from outside and for the better, to an approach guided by a search for internal and quite often positive dynamics of transformation clashing with powerful, quite often negative, foreign interventions.

Beshara Doumani's impressive work, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900*, was an important source of reference for both projects.[16]

Parts of the book were written during the whirlwind of autumn 2000 that sucked into it almost everyone in Israel and Palestine. My attempt to write an overall history of Palestine coincided with the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada. In my study at home, I felt that I could no longer shut the windows to the outside world and its influences; there was no more room for the traditional reclusiveness of the professional historian. While writing on the Palestinians in Israel, I was simultaneously talking on the phone to friends who were being arrested, attacked and shot at in the October 2000 demonstrations that marked the beginning of the Intifada. While writing on the occupation, I received emails from friends in the West Bank describing yet another Israeli attack on their lives and dignity. And while completing research on the 1948 massacres, I was listening to distressing reports in the background coming in from the Jenin refugee camp, where dozens of innocent citizens were killed by the IDF and many more wounded.

History, historiography, ideology and academia now fused into a single reality that resembled more a battlefield than a library or a serene common room in the university. I was ill-prepared and inadequately armed for the confrontation I had never wished or asked for, and which was around the corner.

3

THE KATZ AFFAIR

In the late 1980s I gave a course at Haifa University on the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students were allowed a free hand in choosing how to present the issue. One older student, Teddy Katz, a member of Kibbutz Magal a few miles south of Haifa, decided to look into the chronicles of his kibbutz from the 1948 war.

Teddy is the ultimate kibbutznik of the left-leaning movement, Hashomer Ha-Zair. Sporting a Stalin-like moustache and always wearing shorts, even on the coldest day of the year, he was looking at history as a way of enriching his life and contributing to his already deep involvement in the local peace movement.

In his particular assignment he discovered that his kibbutz was built on the ruins of an Arab village called Zeyta. He further ascertained that this village had not been occupied by troops in 1948, but that its inhabitants were forcibly evicted after the war by the Israeli government, because the site was coveted by the kibbutz movement for its fertile soil and convenient location between Haifa and Tel Aviv. As was quite common in the years between 1948 and 1955, such a request from the kibbutz movement could easily become

reality. The villagers were ordered to leave, and they rebuilt their village further east. When the kibbutzniks arrived in their new location, however, they were still unhappy. They could see from their windows those who had been dispossessed in order to give them a home. They asked that Zeyta should be moved again, which was done by official edict.

Katz met the people of Zeyta and, rather naïvely, devised a private plan of reconciliation. Why should not the kibbutz, he suggested in the local newsletter, invite the Zeyta residents to visit, as one or two old houses were still intact and there were a few ancient olive trees that could be picked and tended. He was nearly thrown out of the kibbutz. But he was now irretrievably drawn into the history, or rather the historiography, of 1948. He wished to write an MA thesis on the war under my supervision. I suggested he should do this with others, so as not to ruin his chances because of my known views on the issue.

Katz tried several professors in his department – the Department of Middle Eastern History at Haifa University, and Professor Kais Firo agreed. On consulting with some other lecturers in the department Katz opted for a focused research on villages near Haifa. After a sustained effort of several years, which included long interviews with both Jews and Palestinians who had witnessed the occupation of what today is a section of highway No. 2, the main route between Tel Aviv and Haifa, he produced an excellent piece of work. It

received a high 97 per cent rating from the university (echoing similar grades in all the other modules he took).

One chapter dealt with the village of Tantura, occupied by Jewish forces on 22 May 1948. From the evidence he collected, Katz concluded that during the conquest of Tantura by Jewish forces in late May 1948 a large number of individuals had been killed, possibly up to 225. He estimated that about 20 had died during the battle and that the rest, both civilians and captured fighters, were killed after the village had surrendered, when they were unarmed. He did not, however, use the word 'massacre' in his thesis.

The research lay untouched for a few months, until the investigative journalist Amir Gilat, from the daily newspaper Ma'ariv, discovered it in a regular browsing of the university library. In January 2001, a wider public became aware of the story through his article in Ma'ariv. Two weeks later Gilat published responses to his original piece: some of the soldiers belonging to the Alexandroni Brigade, which had captured Tantura, denied the massacre, but others had come forward and corroborated the story, as had Palestinian witnesses.

The military veterans from the Alexandroni Brigade were unused to such publicity. Like other veterans of the 1948 war, researchers usually asked them to tell stories of personal heroism and gallantry, not of ethnic cleansing and massacre. The association of Alexandroni veterans decided to sue Katz for libel for the sum of 1 million shekels (around £150,000). They were veterans of the brigade, but not necessarily of the

33rd Battalion that carried out the killings, although the battalion commander was among the plaintiffs. I suspect that some knew the truth and relied on the near total lack of written documentation and very few Jewish witnesses. There were many Palestinian survivors, but their testimony did not count in Israel. The evidence of Holocaust survivors is valued in Israel even more then Nazi documentation but when it comes to Palestinian oral history of the Nakbah, it is always brushed aside as figments of an Arab imagination.

The former soldiers from other battalions perhaps did not know, or could not believe that it had happened. They claimed that Katz had systematically and intentionally invented the story of a massacre to defame them.

Katz asked his university for help in the legal proceedings. But the university administrators at that time (January–February 2000) refused to accept any responsibility for his research. In addition, the university decided to take its own action against Katz even before the trial had started. His name was erased – by the use of Tippex correcting fluid – from the roll of honour of distinguished students, a listing he had won not just for his thesis, but for his overall achievement in the MA programme. Correcting fluid was used because the graduation ceremony at which he would have been honoured was imminent when the affair exploded.

After long deliberation, the trial was set for 13 December 2000. In the eleven months that had passed between the announcement of the trial and its

opening, Katz had endured telephone threats and social harassment on his kibbutz. The dates are important. Both the proceedings at Haifa University and the court hearing took place in the atmosphere of the Second Intifada, which had broken out in late September 2000. The uprising had spilled over into Israel and was in danger of affecting life on the Haifa campus, where 20 per cent of the students were Palestinian Israelis. The university authorities prohibited any political activity and imposed draconian penalties on Palestinian students who expressed their national identity, such as waving the Palestinian flag or calling for the liberation of Palestine, while equivalent actions by Jewish students were encouraged during what was widely portrayed as a time of war.

These were the days I referred to in chapter two, when one after the other, academics who used to be on the left came out with a mea culpa in the local press or on radio, explaining how they had changed their views and would now toe a patriotic line because of the betrayal by the Palestinians at Camp David. There was a general stifling of criticism. It began in the media and soon affected academia.

On the eve of the trial Katz appealed to the judge, through his lawyers, to withdraw the case, on the grounds that it was an academic debate and not a criminal matter. I wrote an expert opinion, as is requested in such cases, in which I described the developments of the last 50 years in general historiography and particularly in the Israeli context. I concluded

that historical debates should be discussed in only one place: academia. Any major university in the West would have supported this argument without hesitation. But when I heard that the Alexandroni veterans were regularly meeting the managers of the university, I knew that normal academic procedures and ethics were not being followed in this case.

Judge Drora Pilpel declined Katz's request, stating that she could not accept it because the university did not support Katz's claim. From her response it was clear that had the university defended a thesis it had recently praised as one of the best in its history, she would have accepted Katz's request.

Katz hired three lawyers. The quite expensive leftist lawyer, Avigdor Feldman; Adalah, the Palestinian-run legal centre in Israel, which represented him without payment; and a relative of his, Amatzia Atlas, who was a non-litigating adviser. Amatzia's father had served in the Alexandroni Brigade. His advice to Katz from the beginning was to look for a compromise.

Under all the pressure, Katz, who was in his mid-50s, suffered a stroke a few weeks before the trial. It may partly explain what happened next. The trial began with him in the witness box. He was accused of systematic fabrication of the material he had collected and had voluntarily handed to the other side (believing it proved that he was mostly quoting from documents).

To demonstrate that Katz had systematically falsified his material, the prosecuting lawyer, Giora Erdingast, put forward six examples where the transcript of the

audio tapes did not match what was written in the thesis. Although aware that these were the only misquotations to be found out of more than 100 accurate ones, and that none of them challenged the main finding that massive killings of innocent farmers had taken place, Erdingast claimed that these examples indicated that the thesis as whole was a fabrication. Later, he suggested that there were many more misquotations, but never produced them.

The testimony lasted two days. Those who sat in the courtroom noted two features of the unfolding drama. The first was that the prosecution's ammunition was small and soon exhausted without conclusive results. The main part of the trial was to be the unprecedented appearance in an Israeli court of Palestinian survivors from the Nakbah, on behalf of the defence. The second feature was more worrying. Katz sat pale and numbed by the tribulations he had endured and it was doubtful that he could continue to take more public abuse.

In the evening, Amatzia Atlas, Erdingast for the university and Katz's own family met him without the knowledge of other members of the legal teams – including Katz's chief attorney, Avigdor Feldman. In a moment of distress and weakness, Katz agreed to sign a letter of apology in which he admitted that no massacre had taken place:

> After checking and rechecking the evidence, I am now certain beyond any doubt that there is no basis at all for the allegation that after Tantura surrendered there was any killing of residents by

> the Alexandroni Brigade, or any other fighting unit of the IDF. I would like to clarify that what I wrote was misunderstood, and that I did not mean to suggest there has been a massacre in Tantura, nor do I believe that there ever was a massacre in Tantura.

This was interpreted by many, including the media, that he had falsified the material in order to damage the reputation of the Alexandroni soldiers. A short time later Katz retracted his 'confession', but the document had already been presented to the court and Judge Pilpel refused to accept the retraction. She said that she did not pass any judgement on whether a massacre had occurred or not. The only issue she ruled on was the validity and contractual nature of the apology, and she declared the case closed because of this out-of-court settlement.

This was enough for the University of Haifa. Its directors rejected the retraction and treated Katz as guilty of systematic falsification of material. In January 2001, Erdingast asked the university to disqualify Katz's thesis and to take disciplinary measures against me. I had attracted his attention as someone whom Katz had warmly thanked in the preface to his thesis and as one of the defence's main witnesses. Far more important, in a university where no other lecturer had voiced dissent or indignation about the university's policies, I was a lonely voice of criticism.

Had it not been for my personal intervention, Katz's thesis would have been disqualified forthwith. On the day his letter was published on the university's internal

website, I began three consecutive days and nights of listening to the 60 hours of tapes that he had given me. I had never listened to them before. My defence of Katz had been based on friendship and trust. Those three days and nights not only revealed to me directly the chilling tale of the murderous acts that had taken place in Tantura in May 1948, but also persuaded me of the need to expand the oral history project of the Nakbah and of the duty to defend those testimonies. It dawned on me, to my horror, that my own university was the main force crushing and destroying the sacred memories of the people from these villages, as well as the evidence of the crimes committed in 1948.

I extracted the most revealing accounts and published them on the university's website for everyone to see. To my relief, this deterred the university for a while from taking action against Katz. Some faculty members began to doubt the wisdom of the university's intentions. However, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi, and the director of the History School, Professor Yoav Gelber, responded angrily to my intervention, attacking me personally and urging the university to take tough measures against both Katz and myself.

As a compromise between my demand that the university should stop its disgraceful behaviour and the demands of the alliance between Gelber, Ben Artzi and the prosecuting lawyer, Giora Erdingast, the university decided to appoint a commission of inquiry. This was not an attempt at compromise, but a façade

for abiding by the wishes of two powerful professors and a lawyer. For the inquiry, the university authorities selected either those known to dislike the whole trend of critical historiography of 1948, or else those who held extreme right-wing views. The results were predictable. The university refused to take part in a more neutral examination offered by an academic non-governmental organisation, Bash'ar, which wanted to widen the discussion to the question of 'what is historical truth?' and to include the judge who had presided over the case.

The commission of inquiry sat between April and June 2001. It included an historian who had written about the 1948 war, as well as a biographer of Saddam Hussein and two experts on Arabic dialects and early Islamic poetry. What was common to all four was a knowledge of Arabic. It should be remembered that they were asked to look into a matter of a student accused of fabricating a massacre, not one who had pretended to be an authority on Arabic. Indeed, Katz never claimed to have a good command of the language, although he has basic knowledge, and therefore took a translator to all the interviews and sat with one when transcribing the material. But the committee members soon moved away from their original brief and declared that they were not interested in whether or not a massacre took place, but were content to check the compatibility of the tapes with the quotes and summaries in the thesis. Their expertise in Arabic turned out to be less relevant. They decided to hire the services of a professional transcriber. He soon became redundant, because he inspected only

the few passages highlighted by the prosecution as the worst cases of misquotation and falsification.

In identifying six such passages, the prosecution had claimed that they were the tip of an iceberg of systematic misquotation and fabrication. The university's committee of inquiry reduced the number to four, regarding two out of the six as less serious. They also noticed, after they had been alerted to it by others, that the tapes included an interview with an eyewitness to the executions that had not been used in the thesis (it was with a collaborator whom Katz did not wish to shame in public). The four 'severe' distortions – places where the commission found serious discrepancies between the tapes and the thesis quotes – can be divided into two categories. Two, Katz admits, are problematic. In one of them he quotes evidence from an Abu Fihmi who cannot be found on the tapes. However, Katz explained that he had written down additional details from this witness after the tape had stopped working, and still had the notes to prove it. Thus, we were left with one inexcusable misquotation out of hundreds, which in no way undermined the conclusions of the thesis.

The second category was two places in the thesis where Katz had compiled a coherent piece from a very long interview, as he felt he could not quote in full the monologues of peasants who moved back and forth in their stories. He did this without losing the spirit of what was said, in a procedure recommended by leading oral historians when witnesses relate a story

in a jumbled manner. Both Alessandro Portelli and Barbara Allen stress that this is an acceptable procedure and cite examples resembling those discussed by the committee (whose members did not seek to familiarise themselves with oral history, its sources, procedures, or leading works).[1]

An astonishing mixture of fake patriotism, fear, moral corruption and mediocrity caused relatively reasonable and sensible members of my university to invest a large amount of effort in a procedure that did not deal with the central question: did Katz purposely fabricate the story of a massacre for political reasons?

It was not surprising that the committee's verdict was as harsh as that of Giora Erdingast. Its report, published in June 2001, did not say that Katz invented a massacre, only that his thesis contained grave problems and fallacies. It was left to the university to translate this into a decision. When judging the committee's conduct, it is important to stress that it acted within a McCarthyist atmosphere in Israeli academia and the media. Five months later, in November 2001, the Council for Advanced Studies at Haifa University decided on the basis of the committee's recommendations to disqualify Teddy Katz's thesis. Its decision was based on two reports written by close friends of professors Ben-Artzi and Gelber who had headed the campaign against Katz, and it echoed their highly-emotive language to persuade the council that Katz's work was not only academically sub-standard, but an act of treason against the state in a time of war.

In a ceremony reminiscent of the darker days of Europe's past, the director of the library at Haifa University formally removed Katz's dissertation from the shelf of MA and PhD theses. This action was sufficiently extreme to arouse some protest from one or two faculty members, but the outcry was short-lived.

In November 2001 the Supreme Court of Israel heard Katz's request to resume the trial and accept his decision to retract his by now famous apology. The court rejected his appeal. However, the judge made two intriguing remarks. The first was that he was not going to force Katz to publish his apology in Israel's three leading papers, as the regional court had ruled in December 2000. The judge commented that the Alexandroni Brigade veterans could publish the apology of their own accord if they wished. Second, he said that Katz was entitled to publish, a day later, an explanation of why he no longer stood behind the apology. The judge observed that each of the two actions he recommended could lead to further legal suits and counter-claims, should the two sides wish to proceed.

On 15 November 2001 the Alexandroni veterans published in Ha'aretz and Yediot Aharonot an advertisement in which Katz's apology appeared, prefaced – as required by the judge – by a statement that they were behind it. A day later, Katz sent both papers an advertisement of his own. To his surprise they refused to publish it. As far as I know, and after checking with many of my contacts in the press, this had never happened before. The two dailies asserted

that had they published his advertisement they would have been exposed to legal action. Once again Katz had been out-manoeuvred by media bias.

Under university rules, he was entitled to submit a new thesis within six months. He decided to do so, this time with greater focus on the Tantura killings. The original thesis had dealt with four other nearby villages. Since the affair broke, more evidence in the IDF archives and from Palestinian sources had come out and Katz was convinced that he had even stronger reason to declare (which he had not done in the original thesis) that a massacre took place in Tantura on the night of 22 May 1948. In a public letter I wrote at the time, I doubted very much whether this naïve approach would help to change the views of an institution that had succumbed to external and internal ideological pressures, and had a priori decided not to accept Katz's thesis unless he altered his conclusions.

A telling indication of what was expected from Katz came from the final report of the Council for Advanced Studies, which mostly repeated the commission of inquiry's conclusion that there were grave deficiencies in the thesis. In addition, this report pointed out that if Katz resubmitted a thesis he should mention the principal conclusions of Ephraim Karsh's book, *Fabricating Israeli History*:[2] that any critical revisionism of the Zionist narrative was biased and pro-Palestinian, and hence suspect as professionally inept. Karsh's book is a bizarre attempt to prove that all the quotes about 1948 from David Ben-Gurion – the Jewish leader at the

time – that shame Israel in Benny Morris's book are not what they seem. For good measure, he added criticism of the books by Avi Shlaim and myself, dealing with our motives more than with what we said. Then, of course, he could write that a massacre did not take place.

Almost a year later, Katz resubmitted a thesis without the six famous misquotes. Not surprisingly, he was failed again. After long deliberation by the university, in May 2003 the revised thesis was fully examined by five referees. Two of them failed it. Israel is a small country and its academic community is even smaller; nothing is kept for long behind closed doors. It was not difficult to find out which camp those who failed the thesis belonged to. The three who had passed the thesis were disregarded by the university, as was the high mark originally given by Katz's supervisor, Professor Firo. The university's governing regulations require that all previous grades be included in a final calculation, and Katz's work would undoubtedly have requalified had the university not employed shameful and deceitful tactics to exclude it.

The whole process within the university was cumbersome, but not because of the complications of an academic bureaucracy. Those who sought to fail a legitimate and excellent piece of work that exposed a war crime committed by Israel in 1948 had a simple plan of action. But they needed to co-opt the majority of people who were content not to know too much, in case they had to express their opinions and perhaps take action.

The survivors of Tantura keep in touch with Katz and myself.[3] They seem to be less disappointed than any of us. They had no expectations, nor did they need an Israeli court to decide if they had lied or told the truth about what happened to them in 1948. On the other hand, they began to frequent Tantura on Saturday nights, which they had not done for years. On these evenings they would visit the village clandestinely, quietly, in some sort of ritual of memory that repeated itself.

For me, this was not the end of the story. During and after the Katz affair I had my own struggle against Nakbah denial in Israel and faced a personal campaign of defamation and boycott.

4

THE TRIAL AND THE ACQUITTAL

Although the Katz and Tantura affairs were the main issues complicating my relationship with Haifa University, the wider reasons for my growing isolation were related to the general erosion of freedoms of expression and research in Israel. On the campus, this manifested itself in increased tension between the university and its Palestinian students. Their relatively large number (20 per cent) meant that the events of October 2000 – the killing of 13 unarmed Palestinian Israelis by the Israeli police – were immediately felt on the university campus. Indeed, the link was established in a personal and bloody manner. Two nephews of Arab lecturers in our university were among those murdered. One of them, Wissam Yazbak, I knew and his uncle remains a good friend of mine.

I was not the only one who openly expressed their views about the victims on the university internet, but my desperate call for a show of solidarity from members of my faculty was interpreted as an act of treason. The academic community of Haifa University almost unanimously parroted every move of the government's without the slightest criticism. My isolation in the university was predictable, given this immoral and

cowardly behaviour of a group of scholars in the so-called 'only democracy in the Middle East'.

The Katz affair caused my relationship with the university to plunge to new depths. After Teddy Katz signed his ill-fated apology, I became deeply involved in the issue. It began when the university authorities exploited their institution's own cyberspace to poison the atmosphere against research on the *Nakbah* in general, and against Katz's work in particular. They were soon joined by a number of colleagues inside and outside the university, who turned their participation in the academic internet debate into a direct confrontation with everything they thought the 'new history' represented.

The Tantura affair coincided with the intensification of the Second Intifada. The brutalisation caused by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the equally brutal Palestinian retaliation had toughened the university's policy towards its Palestinian students, who were virtually defenceless as very few faculty members came to their aid. Not surprisingly, the general intolerance of critical voices intensified as well. This clash and counter-clash – over the Tantura case in particular and the political situation in general – continued for a year until April 2002, when the Israeli army invaded the Jenin refugee camp and killed many of its inhabitants, as well as others in West Bank/Palestine locations. The people fell victim to the operation euphemistically called Defensive Shield, which in its inhumanity exceeded by far the pretext for its initiation:

the murder of 30 innocent Jews and injuring of 140 who were celebrating the Passover in a hotel in Netanya, an Israeli coastal town. I was in some of the areas worst hit by the IDF attack, and I could see why it could push one to look for the harshest possible way to express indignation and outrage.

During that year (see Appendix) I conducted my own research on the Tantura massacre, drawing on archival material and new oral evidence. I became even more categorical than Katz about the conclusion. I wrote in several languages that a massacre had been committed in Tantura, but the Alexandroni veterans did not dare to sue me as they had done Katz. They knew that I would not crack under the pressure of a trial, and would also use it as a forum to present what I believed to be the facts about the *Nakbah* to the Israeli and international publics.

My critique of the university fused with my open condemnation of the continuing callous policies that Israel exercised in the Occupied Territories: restricting food supplies to entire communities, which led to malnutrition; house demolitions on an unprecedented scale; assassination of innocent citizens, many of them children; harassment at checkpoints and the destruction of social and economic life in the Territories. Like others in the small but committed anti-Zionist camp in Israel, I made my criticisms known on every possible international stage. I chose external forums because I had come to two conclusions about the dismal situation that had developed. The first was that there was no

internal force that could stop Israel from destroying the Palestinian people and cause it to end the occupation, and second, that worse was to come, given American policy, European inaction and the impotence and disunity of the Arab states. Looking back at what has happened since that year, I was unfortunately right.

I became a pariah in my own university. Old colleagues and friends cancelled invitations to take part in seminars, symposia and conferences that had been sent to me before the affair broke out. Citing at first technical reasons, but then admitting that they did not want to risk their careers by confronting the university authorities, one by one they retreated to their secure ivory towers. Ever since the recommendations of the Katz inquiry committee had been published, it was impossible to recruit any of my colleagues to say in public what many of them communicated to me in private. A dozen or so faculty members of Haifa University and on other campuses were appalled by the university's conduct, but none of them dared to make his or her views known publicly.

I called them at the time the 'parking lot professors'. They met me by chance in the subterranean and dark car park of the university promising support in private, but never daring to repeat it above the surface in the open public space.

In retaliation for my explicit criticism, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities at Haifa University, Professor Ben-Artzi, and the head of the History School, Professor Gelber, banned my participation

in any formal event that came under the auspices of either unit. They had, of course, been active in the Katz affair. When the Department of Middle Eastern History invited Professor Avi Shlaim of Oxford University to a conference honouring the publication of his book, *The Iron Wall*,[1] I was at first asked to participate and even to deliver the opening remarks. After all, Avi was an old friend, a colleague among the 'new history' scholars and my examiner in Oxford, and always stayed with me during his visits. The dean of the faculty, who *ex officio* provides the funds and the venues for official events, at the last moment conditioned the holding of the event on my exclusion. Shlaim refused to participate under such circumstances and it was cancelled. What seemed a natural course of action for a British academic was apparently impossible for their Israeli counterparts.

Lecturers in the Department of Literature organised a seminar on A B Yehoshua's novel, *The Liberated Bride*, a tale about orientalist academia in Israel in which one of the heroes – or rather, anti-heroes – is based, among others, on myself. They requested my participation in a conference on the book at Haifa University. I agreed, but warned the organisers that I would be banned from such an event. They assured me that the author was sufficiently important to withstand such pressures. He did not, and the event was held without my participation. Needless to say, none of my colleagues at the university raised their voices against this excommunication policy.

Since November 2001, Professor Gelber had referred to me as Lord Haw-Haw in open letters, after the infamous Irishman who collaborated with the Nazis. This was readily endorsed by many of my university colleagues. I cared little what I was called, but the incident showed how easily Israelis had nazified the Palestinians, while their army resorted to a repertoire of cruelties reminiscent of the worst regimes of the twentieth century. Needless to say, to compare me with Lord Haw-Haw was, in the Israeli context, akin to calling on people to kill me. But this vindictive labelling was not a crime at Haifa University; on the other hand, to expose a massacre committed by Israelis in 1948, was.

These attacks continued for the whole month of April 2002. On 5 May 2002, on a Friday morning, an express letter arrived in my home summoning me to stand trial in front of a special disciplinary court. The prosecution, represented by Professor Ben-Artzi, demanded my dismissal from the university because of my position on the Katz affair. The specific charges were that I had violated 'the duties of an academic member of staff' and had 'slandered departments and members in the humanities faculty, damaged their professional reputation and endangered the possible promotion of some of them'. I had dared to accuse the university of moral cowardice and had attributed political motives to its conduct in the Katz affair. This was described as 'not a matter of freedom of speech'

but of 'non-collegial, unethical and immoral conduct, lies, bad-mouthing and impudence.'

In reality, what I had violated was not a code of honour, but the precepts of a very inflexible ideology. I was prosecuted by those who saw themselves as the guardians of national history. As such, they could not allow a thesis like Katz's, or my own statements and conclusions, to be accepted as the legitimate conclusions of academic research.

The Tantura affair exposed the brutal nature of the 1948 ethnic cleansing and gave credence to Palestinian demands for restitution and repatriation. The exposure of such atrocities by Israeli academia turns them into undisputed facts in the eyes of the world, and who knows, could even plant doubts in the minds of Israelis. Most important, the history of 1948, especially of the ethnic cleansing, is directly connected to the peace process today and to the shape of any future solution.

But the Katz affair had ended six months before my official condemnation as a *persona non grata* at the university, so I felt that the timing was probably explained by three reasons connected to my work and to the general closing of the Israeli public and cultural mind. The first was my signing of a petition in April 2002, endorsing the decision of European academics to boycott Israeli academic institutes. This led the university authorities to think that the atmosphere was ripe for settling older accounts with me. The second was my success in getting an article on Tantura published in Hebrew in a highly reputable academic journal. In it, I

reaffirmed my conviction about a massacre in Tantura and repeated my critique of the university's conduct. The third reason was my proposal to give a course on the *Nakbah* in the academic year 2002–03, the first such course to be offered at an Israeli university.

The very concept that the Palestinians were legitimate subject-matter was still quite new to Israeli academia and had been introduced only in the 1980s – not out of empathy for the plight of the Palestinians, but as part of an intelligence effort to 'know the enemy'. Because of my known positions on Israeli history, the course content identified with the Palestinian narrative of the *Nakbah* and candidly discussed its implications for a future solution. This was, and still is, a heresy at my university. Nevertheless, the course was a great success, filled with students and others who were not registered students, all of whom came to argue, agree and challenge – as indeed should happen in a healthy university.

But the timing of the action against me was also connected to the general atmosphere, which can be described as a conscious Jewish-Israeli desertion of, and fatigue about, the democratic pretentions of government and society alike. This sombre new mood was manifested in the silencing of any criticism, even the mildest, as happened to Israel's national singer, Yaffa Yarkoni, who dared to question the Jenin operation and was widely ostracised. In such a punitive national mood, the handful of lecturers who supported the soldiers refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories

were prosecuted by the minister of education. Public pressure led to some of the more critical Israeli scholars withdrawing their previous support for principles of peace and democracy in regard to the Palestinians. The time seemed ripe for settling old scores with the 'new historians', but it was less comfortable to be one. Under the pressure, my colleague Benny Morris succumbed and publicly justified the 1948 ethnic cleansing that he had once helped to reveal, warning that he would support it again if the present crisis continued. His retraction was distributed by Israeli embassies around the world.

At my disciplinary hearing, I was accused of:

> Relentless defamation of the University and its institutions, both in written publications and in public events in Israel and abroad. From time to time we have received astonished reactions from abroad from colleagues who fail to comprehend how we allow Dr Pappe to behave in this manner while being a permanent university faculty member. Only recently we received an angry and emotional reaction to a presentation given by Dr Pappe in Cambridge, Mass., wherein he presented in harsh terms his ideas relating to the University and the State of Israel.

Professor Ben-Artzi added:

> Dr Pappe has recently called for a boycott of Israeli academia. His actions threaten all members of the academic community, especially junior faculty, because a boycott will limit access to research grants and affect publication opportunities in scientific journals. Given Dr

> Pappe's embracement of the boycott of the Israeli academia, one may only wonder why he doesn't excommunicate himself from the university that he has urged boycotting.

The letter of the original complaint concluded by calling on the court 'to judge Dr Pappe on the offences he has committed and to use to the full the court's legal authority to expel him from the university'. I knew from past procedures that this was not a request, but in effect a verdict, given the prosecutor's status in the university and the way in which matters had been conducted in the past. The ostensible 'fair trial' did not operate in such circumstances, and I did not intend to participate in a McCarthyist charade.

On the same day, I wrote a letter to my friends around the world. Among other things, I said:

> I do not appeal to you for my own sake. I ask you at this stage, before a final decision has been taken, to voice your opinion in whatever form you can and on whatever stage you have access to, not in order to prevent my expulsion (in many ways in the present atmosphere in Israel it will come now, and if not now later on, as the Israeli academia has decided almost unanimously to support the government and to help silence any criticism). I ask those who are willing to do so, to take this case as part of your overall appreciation of, and attitude to, the present situation in Israel. This should shed light also on the debate whether or not to boycott Israeli academia. This is not, I stress, an appeal for personal help – my situation is far better than that of my colleagues in the Occupied Territories living under the daily harassment and brutal abuses of the Israeli army.

The international response was amazing. Within two weeks, friends from all over the world had established an international committee on my behalf that succeeded in eliciting 2,100 letters of support, copied to the rector of Haifa University. At the end of the two weeks, the university authorities suspended the disciplinary procedure with the same suddenness with which it had begun. The case remained suspended, not annulled, until I left the university in 2007. But the animus against me took other forms, and in combating these, the website established on my behalf by the international defence committee was of great help, empowerment and inspiration.

Meanwhile, the response had aroused the curiosity of the Israeli press, and although *Ha'aretz* was not particularly supportive of my point of view, its front-page reporting of the summons and the responses to it embarrassed the university authorities, who had thought they could expel me quietly. The university's spokeswoman told a local Haifa paper: 'Pappe was exploiting cynically the accusations against him,' adding, 'It is nothing to do with the freedom of expression' in the university.

The 2,100 emails and letters make fascinating reading. I have chosen examples almost randomly, because the quality and power of so many of them made it impossible the select just a few. I therefore decided not to publish the senders' names unless they gave their permission, and I chose examples that represented several groups of responses. Why are they

important? Because they represent what I had realised only in hindsight: a qualitative change in the Western attitude towards the Israeli mythology of being the only democracy in the Middle East. More particularly, I think it was the last appeal to the Israeli academic community by people who cared about the Jewish state. When it was not heeded, the way was open for a systematic boycott of Israeli academia.

A typical letter to the rector came from Jeffery Sommers, an assistant professor in the Department of History, at North Georgia College and State University Dahlonega:

> It has come to my attention that Ilan Pappe is being censured, and possibly removed, from the University of Haifa. I hope this is only a rumor rather than grounded in truth. There must be significant pressures to silence dissenting voices in these tumultuous times. Yet, it is only [in] these trying times that academic freedom matters. I want to lend my support to Professor Pappe, as I would [to] any intellectual who was being silenced. The threat Professor Pappe poses pales in comparison to the harm that will be incurred by Israel and the University of Haifa by his censure.

Professor David Ozonoff, Chair of the Department of Environmental Health, at Boston University, wrote:

> I am deeply shocked and distressed to hear of the actions taken against Ilan Pappe, a well-regarded scholar at your university. While his views may be unpopular with some colleagues, this is little reason to expel him from the university. At this rate your institution will

> gain a reputation as the academic equivalent of a Banana Republic. I urge you to reconsider your approach.

It took time for the charges, which were ten pages long, to be published in English. But they were very soon available in Hebrew. This time, brave academics – although still too few to my mind – protested strongly. Professor Jacob Katriel, of the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) in Haifa, who read it in Hebrew, wrote to the university:

> I have carefully read the ten-page complaint against Dr Ilan Pappe, and I am writing to you in order to strongly advise you to drop this case and to refrain from pressing official charges against him. While I claim no expertise in the relevant scholarly discipline, I followed the unfolding of the Tantura Affair closely enough to be convinced that, at the very least, you should exercise extreme caution while passing judgement on the expressions of anybody who has publicly supported your graduate student, Mr Teddy Katz (as I have done, too).

People who had been connected in the past to the university were astonished, because they had not absorbed how much the atmosphere had changed in Israel. One of them was Daniel Cohen from Boston, who wrote:

> It has been nearly 20 years since my last visit to the University of Haifa, yet I still have warm memories of my time spent there. What I remember most is the atmosphere of tolerance and the inspiring

student body. I am writing today regarding what I have seen on the internet regarding Dr Ilan Pappe. While I am unaware of the particulars of the case, I would like you to know that the American Jewish community will be looking carefully at your handling of the matter.

My late father was an important benefactor of the Technion and the Hebrew University. For many years, he served as Dean of the School of Management and Urban Professions at the New School University in New York. In 1946, he was the Director of Camp Foehrenwald DP Camp in Germany and helped many survivors of the Holocaust to emigrate to Israel. I mention this because he always stressed to me that the university system in Israel would always defend academic freedom. Because of his painful experience at Camp Foehrenwald and his long career as a professor and Dean, he cherished the role of the university as servants of a higher standard of truth.

I urge the University of Haifa to uphold its hard-earned reputation for integrity in the case of Dr Pappe. We all pray for Israel in these difficult times. Not only for her physical well-being, but also for the endurance of her heart and soul.

Protests came also from Europe. Baudouin Dupert, an historian in France, wrote to the university authorities:

After having heard frightening news concerning the possibility of seeing Prof. Ilan Pappe expelled from your university, I write to you this letter in order to express my deep concern. If you are shutting one of the very few voices currently expressing dissent in the Israeli academia *vis-à-vis* the totally blind, unjust and counterproductive policies of the government, it is not only your own respectability

> which you menace but the whole respectability of your profession and of your country. It is time that the Israeli academic community stopped supporting this government and Prime Minister who were elected on a security agenda and only brought more violence and sorrow. It is time that the Israeli academic community clearly denounce occupation and settlements and ask for an actual peace based on the recognition of a Palestinian state established on all the territories occupied in 1967. Silence is a solution only for ostriches. I still hope that most Israeli scholars do not behave like ostriches.

Dupert and others in France mobilised an impressive petition condemning the university for its action. Among those from several countries who signed it were Immanuel Wallerstein, Vidal Naquet, Professor Madeleine Reberioux, Etienne Balibar, Judith Butler, Susanne De Brunhoof, Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, Jack Goody, Marian Hobson-Jeanneret, Jean-Marc Levy-Leblond, Frances Wolff, Nira Yuval-Davis, Manfred Walther, Roshdi Rashed, Henri Korn, Avraham Oz, Marianne Debouzy, Annie Rey-Goldziger, David Seddon, Martin Spensky and Sami Zubaida. I pleaded with my publisher to leave this long list intact. For my own sanity these names are important when they appear in print. They helped me to pass those difficult days peacefully. None of them signed the petition for me alone, but for the far more noble and essential issues of freedom of expression and liberty.

From England, Professor Avi Shlaim, then Chair of the Department of International Relations at Oxford University, spelled out the implications of continuing the trial:

> I write to you this open letter to urge you in the strongest possible terms to drop the charges that have been pressed against Dr Ilan Pappe. These charges are a blatant violation of Dr Pappe's right to academic freedom and it is your duty, as Rector of Haifa University, to uphold his right. Israel rightly prides itself on being a democracy and democracy entails freedom of expression, including the right to criticise an academic institution of which one is a member. The attack on this right in the case of Dr Pappe is therefore a matter of the greatest concern to the entire international community of scholars. What is at stake here is not just the future of one academic but the reputation of the University of Haifa.
>
> Most of the charges against Dr Pappe arise out of the position he took in the Teddy Katz affair. I happen to agree with Dr Pappe's criticisms of the handling of this complex affair by the university authorities. But whatever one's view might be about the merits of the case, Dr Pappe's right to air his opinions, outside as well as inside the university, is surely beyond question. Frankly, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the charges against Dr Pappe are politically motivated. The timing of these charges reinforces these suspicions. Teddy Katz's trial took place in December 2000 and the remarks for which Dr Pappe is being prosecuted were made, for the most part, 12–18 months ago. Is it possible that Dr Pappe's enemies inside the University of Haifa are trying to exploit the lurch to the right in Israeli society in order to hound him out?'

In another section of the letter, Shlaim wrote:

> As an outsider, it seems to me that Dr Pappe has not received the credit he deserves for the outstandingly original and important contribution he has made to the study of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He is widely known in the world as one of the leading scholars in the field and he is very highly regarded. There is a huge gap between his high international standing and his lowly status as a senior lecturer at Haifa. In most universities, he would be a strong candidate for a professorship. I know his work well and would not have any hesitation in suggesting that he should be promoted. Despite the hostility and vilification to which he has been subjected in the last few years, Dr Pappe continues to produce serious scholarly work. He has completed a history of the Husaynis and another major work on the history of Israel and Palestine that is currently being edited for publication by Cambridge University Press. In short, far from being a liability and a menace, he is a real asset to Middle Eastern studies at the University of Haifa.
>
> The news that Dr Pappe might be put on trial has evoked shock and horror in academic circles outside Israel. In the last week I received numerous phone calls and emails from colleagues wondering whether this is for real. There is a widespread feeling that the persecution of Dr Pappe is not unrelated to the general shift of Israeli society to the right. I urge you not to give in to the totalitarian temptation of some of your senior colleagues. It is in times like this that real leadership is needed to uphold the values of freedom of expression, pluralism, and tolerance that are so crucial to our profession.
>
> As you are no doubt aware, there is a move to boycott Israeli academics because of the policies of the present Israeli government.

> I am opposed to this ban because it is incompatible with academic values. But so is the call for the expulsion of Dr Pappe. I have great respect for your university, I have many friends in various departments, and I served as an assessor in proposals for promotion. If Dr Pappe is expelled, I fear that I would not want anything further to do with the University of Haifa. Indeed, if the trial goes ahead, I would release this letter to the media and mobilize all the international support I can behind Dr Pappe.

There was no need to release this letter to the media, but it showed the consequences of the whole affair. These feelings were shared by some of the Israelis who lived and taught in the United States. Jennifer Hyman wrote:

> So, here we have it, just the latest political Israeli witch-hunt with its most atrocious cynicism – and then preaching, among other things, democracy to the world – Egypt, Iran, Saudi-Arabia – you name it ... I found your e-mail address on the University of Haifa website, after reading your letter distributed by Al-Awda News. As a South African-born Jew, now living in the US, who fought apartheid – especially its inroads into academia – I know how intimidation and suppression of intellectuals goes hand in hand with more general state repression. Why your case is so important is that it is an assault on academic freedom – an issue that many, many academics worldwide can identify with, regardless of whether they are ready to sign on to an academic boycott of Israel.

Another Israeli academic, Ran Cohen from Tel Aviv University, felt, as I did, that this all had passed without much reaction. He wrote to the members of ALEF – the

internet network that connects Israeli leftists – hence his reference to 'Alefs':

> EXCUSE ME, respected Alefs – esp. tenured ones – but is this message not worth ANY reaction? Are we going to sit back silently and watch McCarthyism at its worse against one of Israel's leading scientists? Is this not a scandal worth a national and international outcry? What about a rally in Haifa University? Boycotting Haifa University? An international petition? A solidarity strike in all universities? What's going on here? Are the lambs silent, or have I overheard something???

Jews outside Israel were also worried. A well-known Middle Eastern scholar, Dr John Bunzel from the University of Vienna and the Austrian Institute for International Affairs, wrote to the Haifa University authorities:

> As a long-time M[iddle] E[ast] scholar and as a Jew worried by the deteriorating image of Israel all over the world I appeal to you not to contribute to this process by threatening the internationally respected scholar, Prof[essor] Ilan Pappe, with expulsion from your university. It is a sign of intellectual poverty and a manifestation of totalitarian temptations not to be able to deal with dissent and pluralism in Israeli academia. You don't have to agree with the conclusions of Ilan Pappe's research or with his political opinions, but you cannot deny the scientific quality of his work and the fundamentally humanistic approach he has shown concerning dilemmas facing Israeli-Palestinian relations. If you put blind

> nationalism above all else you can serve neither science nor the future of Israel'.

I do not think my university was moved by letters from Palestinians or friends in the Arab world, but for the historical record I give one example from many who wrote in a similar spirit – Fahim I Qubain:

> I am an Arab-American retired academic. I have known Dr Pappe through his very highly respected writings. Some of his books are in my personal library. I am also aware of the Teddy Katz affair. To me, it is truly incredible that a highly-respected academic institution like Haifa University would even 'dream' of trying a distinguished professor such as Dr Pappe because of his position on the thesis of one of your very able graduate students. Such a trial is not only an attempt to suppress freedom of expression, but is tantamount to academic terrorism. This trial if carried out will only tarnish the name of your university.

A famous Palestinian Israeli writer, Anton Shamas, now professor of Middle Eastern literature at the University of Michigan, wrote to me:

> I am appalled and galled and disgusted, but somehow not surprised; as you say, it was only a matter of time in these atrocious times. Hang on there, my friend. I hope we all can make a big dent in – and, subsequently defeat – the moronic decision to sue you. And thank you again for being such a courageous and relentless voice.

From even farther parts of the world the case brought memories of a more distant past. Professor Yasumasa Kordoa from Honolulu, Hawaii, wrote:

I was saddened to learn of Professor Ilan Pappe's trial. I understand that he may be expelled from the University. I am writing this letter of appeal to you for two reasons: (1) I met and spoke with him and know him to be a patriotic Israeli scholar who believes in democracy and peace. (2) I do not want to see Israel become what its enemies characterise Israel to be – racist, anti-democratic and exclusive. I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking with him at length while I was at the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as a visiting research fellow in 1993. I found him to be a fine scholar who represents the best of Jewish conscience in dealing with difficult problems of nourishing peace in the Holy Land.

Academic freedom is a necessary condition for a university to exist. There will be no development of new ideas without academic freedom. I am not familiar with the details that led to your decision to take action against Professor Pappe. He may have done harm to your university from your perspective, but I can assure you that there are many who know him around the world who believe [that] his scholarly contribution to your university outweighs any possible harm he may have done. I appeal to your conscience to allow him a right to express his views. Dissent is not considered disloyalty in a democracy, but it is in a totalitarian society. I, who grew up in a totalitarian state of wartime Japan, do not wish to see Israel become a totalitarian state. May I ask for your serious reconsideration of his case?

When the university authorities answered some of its critics, they made matters worse. The British historian Sudhir Hazareesingh, from Oxford University, wrote to the prosecutor, Professor Ben-Artzi:

> I am grateful for your initial response to the messages you have been receiving from the colleagues of Dr Pappe. To begin with, I should point out that I have seen the summary sheet of the so-called charges which are to be levelled against Dr Pappe, and it is on this basis that I wrote to you. This summary sheet clearly contradicts one of the points you advanced in your reply below, which is that 'the charges have nothing to do with issues such as academic freedom, the freedom of speech and expression'. It seems, on the contrary, that a very large number of the charges are about issues of free speech, since you accuse him among other things of denigrating individuals and the University as a whole, distorting facts, speaking ill of colleagues, etc. These are all issues of opinion – unless you believe that there is only one version of events, one possible view which one can hold about individuals and institutions, namely your own. If this is the case, you should perhaps change the name of your Faculty to 'Theology'. I am grateful to you for forwarding further material to me as and when it arises.

No wonder a worried rector pleaded with me to 'stop the campaign'. There was little I could do to save the face of a university I once adored and whose job offer in 1984 I had preferred to all others. The disciplinary committee decided not to pursue the complaint, but the tribulations continued.

5

THE BEST RUNNER IN THE CLASS

This story is based on, and inspired by, events in two locations. The massacre in Tantura in 1948, which plays an important role in the narrative of this book and the research of it in the University of Haifa conducted first by the MA student Teddy Katz and then by myself. The names have been changed and the narrative is informed and inspired by tales from the villages of Tantura and Fureids. The inquisitive student is much more a representation of me as an interviewer than of anyone else and his are my genuine misgivings about the way we the historians approach the interviewees – whose image in this story is created out of hundreds of Palestinians – who are willing to cope with the traumatic and unpleasant experience of retelling us what they have repressed for years.

It was the quiet lapping of the waves that reminded her of that awful day. Like now, it had been the middle of May, and roughly – or was it? – the same time of day, the Mediterranean dusk, when the skyline above the sea becomes a glowing display of colours, contours and configurations. But, of course, on that day she did not rest as comfortably as she does now, with her bare feet

dug deep into the crisp warm sand of the beach near her village.

The flickering water and fading sunlight prodded the painful memories to surface and trouble her mind to the point of derangement. Then a sudden silence fell, for the shortest possible moment but crystal clear and sharp, as if everyone and everything were frozen in time. Fifty years ago it had been the same: a very brief interlude that allowed everyone on the beach – killers, victims and bystanders – to absorb the moment, even to grasp it in a lucid manner that would never repeat itself. Now her own realisation was more stoical, and free of the panic that had gripped her then. This time a sense of surrender enveloped her. '*Illi fat mat*' – bygones are bygones – Fatima murmured to herself.

Yet they were not gone. It was all the fault of that insistent student. Nosey and unpleasant as far as she was concerned, with broken Arabic, who had interviewed her about those traumatic days in the past. Fatima tried desperately to brush aside the memory of the meeting she had had with him that morning and to distance herself, as far as she could, from the beach and its dark secrets.

She walked to the gate – a gate that was not there 50 years ago. In 1948 none of the villages in Palestine had gates; but there was no village now. Its houses had become a kibbutz, its fields tourist bungalows and its graveyard a car park. In the last 15 years she had walked through this gate every Saturday at noon and

such comparisons did not trouble her. But this pushy student had brought it all back.

At the entrance to the car park – the old graveyard – her son Ali was already waiting in the driver's seat, patiently as usual, mesmerised by the voice coming out of his car radio. 'That same wretched cassette,' grumped Fatima inaudibly. She was fond of the singer and did not really dislike the song, but had had enough of hearing it again and again. But wait, there was someone in the back of the battered Toyota. Oh no, not that Jewish student.

'He happened to be in the area for his research and I ran into him,' Ali explained, and of course he had invited him not only to the house but also to dinner.

The 'of course dinner' pained Fatima, who did all the cooking. Out of her four boys and two girls, only Ali, the youngest, was still at home and whenever he felt hospitable it meant more work – and Ali was very sociable. Well, what could one do?

'Marhaba,' she muttered.

Yaacov appeared even more preoccupied than before. He did not wait for them to arrive at the house, or till the end of the small talk that was customary before food was served. He was obviously in a hurry and, as it turned out, did not run into them incidentally, but by intent.

'Fatima, I need to know exactly where the mass graves are.'

'Well, I told you, ya Yakub, it has been 50 years now and Allah is my witness, my memory betrays me.' She

stopped, looked anxiously at Ali, who seemed to focus on the road more attentively.

'Hear him out, ya mama, it is important. Tell her, Yaacov.'

'They want to come ... and it, I mean, they, will not be here. We have to show the world the bodies ... before them.' He interchanged Arabic and Hebrew at such speed that he lost her. He became even less coherent, unable to articulate his thoughts clearly. The rest of his explanation was rushed, and only parts of it made sense to Fatima.

'The professor, Dr Awad, is willing to alert the media and they will come and photograph and film the graves and then the world will know and ...'

And then what, indeed? wondered Fatima. From her late husband she had learned what happened if you annoyed the powers-that-be. Every trivial aspect of your life was affected by tax burdens, permits for this and that and, worst of all, by a constant and almost daily harassment by the police and the devils from Shabak, the Israeli secret service.

'This is for the sake of the truth', Yaacov continued, in the same muddled manner.

'Science' and 'national pride' were the only fractions of phrases she could make out from what now became an unstoppable diatribe, against Israel and the scholarly world, and in favour of the Palestinian struggle.

'Let's go home and talk further there.'

Ali had saved her, and the car ended the short drive between what had been her village and the neighbouring

village that became her new home 50 years ago. She now lived in one of the few villages that had survived the ethnic cleansing on the coastal plain of Palestine during those violent months of 1948.

* * *

They came through the barley fields – a sea of tawny stalks swaying back and forth in the early afternoon breeze of mid-May. The five young men who took it upon themselves to protect the village from the southern flank frantically raised their Hartushes, the old shotguns from the day of the Great War that were used for hunting, and aimed at the invaders. In less than five minutes they were gone; struck down by the troops who entered the village from the east, south and north, completing a full encirclement with the navy people who landed on the west from the sea.

Fatima was in her teens and on her way back from the new school for girls that had opened the previous year. Tired from a long day of parroting what the teachers asked her to memorise, she was heading home when she met her elder brother who hurried her along, yelling at the womenfolk in the house to hide wherever they could, because 'the Jews are coming'.

Fatima knew in a timeless way, in those days of May 1948, that the Jews were coming. For the last six months shreds from the daily news – traditionally the domain of the men in the village – had reached her. She was aware that the British were leaving and that the

Jews were occupying nearby villages at a frightening rate. She also heard the men complaining about the Arab world's betrayal: its leaders made inflammatory speeches, promising to send soldiers to save Palestine, but not matching their rhetoric with any real action. Yet the daily routine of those days was not interrupted even once, so that the threatened arrival of the Jews was like an evil spell, against which the blue-painted door and ornate ceramic *khamsa* – the amulet hand hanging on one side of it – should be sufficient protection.

But on that fateful day the evil spirits were stronger than any talisman or benevolent *jinns* hovering over the village to safeguard it, as they had in the past, from Crusaders, Napoleon and other would-be invaders who frequented the Palestine coast on the way to another conquest, or seeking a Christian redemption of the Holy Land.

Hiding was no use. The troops found them and ordered them to leave their houses, without exception. It took several hours and they huddled on the beach, not far from where Fatima now sat reflecting, 50 years later, relishing the warm holes carved by her feet in the soft sand. The one thousand villagers were immediately separated into two groups, one of men and the other of women and children, seated a hundred yards from each other. They were ordered to put their hands behind their necks and sit cross-legged in a circle. Fatima saw one of her brothers, aged 12, in the women's group, and from the distance she spotted another, aged 14, counted as a man with the male members of her family.

Fatima sat facing the sun, and when the men were moved toward the sea with loud shouts and kicks, their silhouettes were so blurred that she could not tell who belonged to her family and who did not. But she did hear the ear-splitting shots, the quick bursts of machine-gun fire. Then a silence – echoed now on the beach – descended on the scene. And she ran, as one who was the top runner in her class. She did not understand the Hebrew curses shouted behind her as she flew through the scrub and made it to the old school, now empty and desolate, on the eastern side of the graveyard. Shivering with fear, she curled herself into a ball, crouching in what must have been the storage part of the school, and found a small aperture through which she could see a limited view of the outside world.

Later she learned that the noises she heard were the vehicles that transferred the women and children from the village to a distant location. She still refused to leave her hideaway, and then saw what was now, 50 years later, so valuable in the eyes of a nagging Jewish student: the piling up of the bodies. Two huge pyres; but they were not set alight. The heaps were amassed by a group of villagers, most of whom she did not recognise, who were then shot and thrown on top of the corpses. The vision seared itself into her mind, and she never let it go.

* * *

Musalem Awad was the only practising Palestinian historian in Israel who had a permanent post at a

university. He was also Yaacov's supervisor, and had been interested for years in the 1948 catastrophe, particularly in the war crimes committed in the coastal area. Yet he never dared to write about it himself and felt uneasy when he assigned it to Yaacov.

Musalem was a conservative historian, believing in hard facts as the core material for telling the story of the past. Such evidence, he believed, had been brought to him by Yaacov. Here was the explicit documentation of atrocities that he was looking for. Yaacov had found the documents, not in the military archives whose directors were economical about such truths, but in his cousin's house. The material was so hot that Musalem became obsessed with it to the point of unconsciously using his student as an extension of his own mind.

The massacres on the coast had never been admitted by Israel, and international historiography did not mention them. 'Let's face it,' Musalem would say, 'there is no conclusive evidence' – a declaration that got him into trouble with the less professional, but more politically committed, Palestinian literati and pundits in the country who wrote about the past.

In Fatima's village, survivors of the massacre – a few women and those who were under 13 years of age at the time – told Palestinian historians they had only heard shots, but had never seen anyone killed, and that the buses had taken them deep into Jordan, where they waited in vain to be reunited with husbands, brothers, sons, cousins and friends. Fatima missed the bus convoy and was adopted by her relatives in a nearby

village, where she found refuge after the soldiers left her own village and before Jewish settlers took over the remaining houses and built their kibbutz, beach resort and car park, covering the scene of that dreadful day.

* * *

By the time he was half-way through the material in his cousin's attic Yaacov knew he had hit a gold mine. 'More like a minefield,' retorted his cousin Yigal. He could not understand Yaacov's excitement: why did he care about a bunch of old diaries left behind by his wife's father? The father had been an officer in the units that carried out military operations along the Palestine coast in May 1948. One of the entries detailed the frenzied events that ended with the slaughter of all the men and male teenagers in Fatima's village. A manic deputy commander, a very harsh battle the day before, and above all, the atypical decision of the villagers to stay and not run, as was usual in the hundreds of villages the troops had entered. Why he had recorded the description in his diary was a question that did not bother Yaacov for long. It was there, it was hot and even 'sexy', he told Yigal, and he hastened not only to Musalem, but also to the press.

The very marginal space accorded to the story was enough to produce an extraordinary litany of confessions and testimonies about the atrocities committed by the Israelis in the 1948 war. Massacres were revealed, tales of rape and loot were exposed, and

the initially confident and condescending official Israeli response was soon replaced by indignation, panic, and in some more thoughtful Israeli circles, remorse.

It was Musalem's ingenious idea that led Yaacov to enlist Palestinian legal aid, with the aim of demanding the exhumation of the graves in five villages along the coast where the same army unit had seemed to copycat the original massacre of Fatima's village in succeeding months. A group of young, professional and articulate lawyers filed the suit and made sure the world knew about it. The initial rebuttal became a public embarrassment. The army, used to dealing with Palestinians by force and firepower, felt somewhat helpless. Everyone now looked to the east, to the holy city of Jerusalem, where the Supreme Court of the land was asked to resolve the issue.

The Supreme Court, always the window of the state and reflector of its guilt complexes, ruled that in only one site, Fatima's village, would exhumation take place, and another decision would then be taken on the matter. Should the allegation turn out to be false, no further action would follow. However, if mass graves were found, the court would reconvene to discuss its next move.

The year 1948 never looked more menacing to the Jewish society as it did in those days of potential exhumation – some Palestinians even called it resurrection – of the victims of massacres and war crimes. The Independence War, the war of liberation, that miraculous war that was regarded as the emblem of

Jewish valour and moral superiority, suddenly seemed tainted by suspicion and discomfiture. It could even lead to pressure on Israel to accept responsibility for the ethnic cleansing within which these particular killings took place, and lend credence to the demand for the right of return, voiced for years by the millions of refugees crammed into camps since their expulsion.

* * *

The new triangular building of the Israeli Supreme Court reminded Fatima of a Crusader castle she had seen in one of the many albums that Ali collected obsessively. She was highly impressed, though, with the clinical cleanliness and polish of the long corridors that crisscrossed one another with alarming multiplicity. Musalem navigated her safely into courtroom C, where three distinguished judges were to rule on the question of exhumation.

A strange mix of people made up the crowd that day. Old men and women like her, some recognizable, some not, from the villages were compressed into the back seats and looked bewildered by the occasion. Another elderly group was of Jewish war veterans. To Fatima, they seemed to be clones of one person, the then prime minister: obese, white-haired, yet with round youthful faces. The media made up the rest, many of them equipped with the high-tech paraphernalia that went with the latest version of the information superhighway.

The session was amazingly brief, almost record-breaking, in terms of the usual slow turning of the Israeli wheels of justice. The pleasant and handsome advocate, Youssuf al-Jani, presented the demand. The equally personable representative of the state replied, and the chair of the session, who was the president of the Supreme Court, suggested that 'before we all sink into an endless and useless long trial, we may have found a way out of this muddle'.

Musalem and Yaacov looked baffled. This was not what they expected. Their surprise grew when the president, instead of calling for witnesses or opening speeches, requested the lawyers on both sides to join him in his chambers.

Fatima moved slowly toward the nearby cafeteria, where she was hardly rewarded by a stale cake and murky coffee. Fifteen minutes later they were joined by the lawyer and the professor. 'Good news,' radiated Musalem. 'They will allow – in fact they will order – an exhumation of the graves in your village, and if bodies are found then the graves in the rest of the villages will be dug as well.'

Fatima did not smile, and Yaacov suddenly realised why.

* * *

Fatima's cottage was at the very end of the eastern slopes of the ancient mountain. Her husband's clan owned all the houses in that corner. It was simple but very

welcoming. The door was immaculately white – Fatima had lost faith in the protective blue shields of the past, and did not bother with a proper lock even when crime soared in a community that had been impoverished and marginalised for years since it was occupied in 1948.

Yaacov twisted his lean body into a chair that seemed meant for toddlers rather than grown-ups, but he preferred to sit there, in a kind of an apologetic posture of someone who was conscious of having intruded into another's private space, in an unpleasant reminder of the past.

He was impatient, but knew he had to wait until Fatima returned from the kitchen. He glanced momentarily at Ali, but lowered his eyes, preferring to sit still. The table was laid with traditional salads, tastier than the food in the 'oriental' restaurants, as Palestinian restaurants were called in Israel. He was frugal with food that he usually devoured greedily, and could not control the tapping of his feet.

Finally, he found the courage to look directly at Fatima's face. 'I listened to the tape ... the one in which you talk.' Fatima dropped her eyes. Here it comes, she thought. 'I listened again and again. You say they piled the bodies, you never said they dug in the bodies. Did they dig holes? Did they throw the bodies into a mass grave?' Fatima did not answer. Ali seemed to awake from a dream or a nap.

'Did they, mama?'

Of course they did not, but why should she tell this, her secret, to Yaacov; and what would happen to her

beloved Ali if it all came out? The bulldozers needed only five to ten minutes to move the bodies into lorries, and Fatima, the best runner in her class, had followed them. She ran three miles and nearly collapsed, but then the vehicles stopped and the roaring bulldozers came in behind them. They excavated huge holes in the ground and shovelled the bodies into them, tidying the ground by running over it back and forth, back and forth. Years later, she found that they had planted pine trees over it, and the woods were named after the unit that had occupied her village and in memory of its own casualties in the conflict. Such pine trees became the recognised symbol of the recreation areas built over the ruined Palestinian villages of 1948.

If she wanted, she could take Ali and Yaacov there now, but why should she? Ali had the unnerving habit of reading her mind.

'They moved them, ah ya mama? Where to?'

She knew that if she spoke a local Arabic dialect quickly, Yaacov would not understand. She was about to repeat to Ali the worst case scenario that would unfold if they went on with this episode. But Yaacov interrupted.

'You know where the bodies are, don't you, and worse?' He was now talking to himself. 'The army and the Supreme Court knew that they are not in the graveyard. They will come tomorrow, excavate the graveyard and show us as fantasy people, don't you see. We have to take the media to the right place.'

He meant to go on and explain the historical, indeed the political, significance of the whole affair, but he felt emotionally depleted and look desperately at Ali for salvation.

* * *

She had not heard those loudspeakers for years. The last time was in the early 1950s when the villages were under strict military rule, and the jeep would roll into the narrow alleyways and order everyone to stay home till the end of the curfew. It was the same Iraqi accent as years ago. Even before Yaacov sank back into his squeezed space of a chair, the loudspeaker penetrated the air.

'All the good citizens are asked to stay in their homes; a curfew is in place; anyone found outside will be shot.'

Ali was the first to spell out what was going on outside Fatima's humble cottage. The Israeli army had encircled the village – against Fatima? Probably not, but just to make sure that the excavation would not be interrupted. It seemed that the well-publicised ceremony had been brought forward, that they wanted to finish that night and were determined no Arab would disturb them. They did not know that Fatima knew – and was terrified.

Ali, on the other hand, felt triumphant. He was willing to sit a whole year, confined to his mother's home, and then to lead the journalists to the right spot

and shame the Israelis. Fatima also seemed suddenly determined:

'Yalla, let's go now.'

'We can't, ya mama,' Ali laughed nervously. 'There is a curfew. Don't worry, tomorrow, or next week, or next month, no hurry.'

'I am going,' she said.

'La ya mama,' he beseeched her.

But she was heading to the door. Ali would never dare to obstruct her bodily, but Yaacov now tried. She nearly knocked over the lean student on her way out, but he was no obstacle. She needed to finish this business once and for all.

The air outside was cool and pleasant and Fatima marched steadily, not looking back, believing that the two young men were behind her. In fact, she was alone, a sole figure crossing the dark, dimly lit village square, when shouts of 'Stop, or I shoot,' overtook her.

'Aha,' she smiled to herself, 'but I am the top runner of my class,' and she felt as if wings elevated her, allowed her to hover above the air in a realm remote from the bullets fired at her.

* * *

Yaacov could not bear to participate in the funeral. He stood some distance away from the graveyard, leaning against a lone pine tree outside the grove that had been planted over a small mound three miles from Fatima's village in memory of the brave soldiers who liberated Israel.

6

THE BATTLE FOR THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF 1948

In May 2003, Dr Asa'd Ghanim, my colleague in the Political Science Department at the University of Haifa, suggested convening a conference on the historiography of 1948. We wished to present recent developments both in Israeli and Palestinian historiography on the 1948 war and the *Nakbah*. He and Salman Natur, a local poet and essayist, were asked to introduce the discussion on recent critical trends on the Palestinian side (with particular emphasis on studies that deconstructed the role of traditional leadership and the Arab regimes). In the latter part of the day we wanted Dr Udi Adiv, Teddy Katz and myself to present an updated picture of the historiographical debates on the 1948 war within the academic community in Israel. I asked my own division, International Relations, to host the meeting, and its head, Professor Michael Gross, agreed.

The conference was publicised on the usual campus sites. On learning of the event, the dean of Social Sciences phoned Professor Gross and then myself. Acting on direct instructions from the rector and the president of the university, he ordered us to cancel the

conference. He explained that he could not allow a conference to go ahead that included Udi Adiv.

In the early 1970s Adiv had been found guilty of spying for Syria and Palestinian groups and was sent to jail. After his release in the early 1980s, he completed a PhD thesis at the University of London under the supervision of Professor Sami Zubadia, one of the world's leading scholars on the Middle East. Adiv's thesis was on Zionist historiography and particularly that of 1948. He was then appointed a lecturer at the Open University of Israel, a position he still holds. I went over all these details with the dean. I did not even mention my view that the arrest was wrong and that Adiv was a victim of the regime's ideology rather than that of 'treason', but just indicated that according to the Israeli law he was now a citizen as any other citizen. He told me that my arguments were of no interest and the conference would not take place. He also explained he would send an official letter alleging that I had not correctly filled in the forms needed for convening a conference.

I telephoned my head of department and explained the dichotomy between what would be officially written in the letters and the real reasons for the cancellation. I then asked the dean, Professor Aryeh Ratner, what would happen if I filled in the forms again 'properly' and was told that this would not change the decision, as its source was ideological, not administrative. He also said that this was not his policy, but that of the president of Haifa University, Professor Yehuda Hayut.

The university codex lists the procedures for holding conferences. Like many other guidelines these had rarely been implemented since the university was founded in the early 1970s. I consulted some experts on the codex, who suggested that if the conference were a departmental symposium there was no need for codex procedures to be followed. The conference was therefore redefined as a departmental symposium. A room was ordered, a day set and invitations sent out.

On 22 May, at the arranged time, the lecturers and audience gathered in front of the doors to the designated hall. They were locked. In the corridor stood the chief of security at the university and ten of his staff, armed with pistols and walkie-talkies. I was pushed into a side room by the chief and his lieutenant and handed a personal letter from Professor Hayut. This was done in front of my wife and colleagues, who watched the macabre scene helplessly. The letter said that my actions were a serious breach of the university codex and hence the room was blocked and the event cancelled. The security chief explained that I would not be allowed to conduct the event in any other part of the campus. In the corridor, my wife heard two of the chief's lieutenants informing the president on their communication devices: 'We caught him'. One also said to another, 'High time: they should do the same to all the leftist lecturers in the university.'

The participants and I went to a cafeteria. The security chief explained to me that if we talked sitting down, and not standing, he would not regard it as a

conference. We followed this advice and conducted what to my mind was one of the best critical symposiums on the historiography of 1948. We were subtly subversive: every now and then when we thought the security people were not paying attention, we delivered our speeches standing or half standing: a small victory.

Haifa's local newspaper, *Kol Bo*, reported the event under the headline: 'Silencing the voices'. The university spokesperson responded: 'The conference was not up to the academic standards of Haifa University'. Indeed it was not. In the university's internal internet network there were only two references to the event. One was by Dr Yuval Yunai from the Department of Sociology:

> It's also a shame that the university management banned an event from taking place. The dept. of international relations wanted to discuss the historiography of 1948, but my friend and colleague, the dean of the faculty, decided to use a doubtful prerogative and to ban the participation of Dr Udi Adiv, a sociologist who wrote on the 1948 war, because of the sins he committed many years ago and for which he paid abundantly in many years of incarceration. Many people didn't like the composition of that event and its apparent challenge to the decision about Teddy Katz's MA thesis (Katz himself was supposed to talk too). Such objection is legitimate, but preventing the event by an instruction from above is against the academic spirit and freedom, even if deans have this authority (which is also legally questionable). In any case, it's against the necessity to compromise and to heal the wounds of conflicts and hostilities. While the circle of violence runs amok around us, can't we, here, in our campus with

its unique composition, show the citizens of Israel another way of living together, not side by side, but really together?

Professor Micha Leshem from the Department of Psychology wrote:

> Can anyone explain why on earth the university found fit to ban a seminar of faculty and students and invited speakers? I understand the doors of the meeting room were locked, and security personnel on hand in great numbers to accompany the participants away. Such an action is inexcusable in a university, and surely requires a bold and convincing explanation from our university authorities. I fear that the good name of our university will again be questioned by our colleagues and the media – might it not have been wiser to let the meeting take place and its organisers take responsibility for its consequences, if any? How parochial can the University of Haifa be? I suppose the next step will be for the seminar to take place in one of our less prejudicial and more academically-orientated sister institutions. Either way we are left with mud on our faces.

The conference affair was not an isolated event. It was part of the daily reality on campus that reflected the overall demise of basic civic and human rights in Israel in the third year of the Second Intifada. The shooting of journalists and the assassination of human rights' activists in the West Bank on the one hand, and the reign of terror and intimidation on the campus on the other, belonged to the same phenomenon.

The episode illustrated forcefully why the boycott of Israeli academia by university staff abroad was justified, not only as part of the overall pressure on the Jewish state to end its brutal occupation, but also as a warning to the academic community in Israel that its protracted moral cowardice had a price tag on it. As long as Israeli academia continued to exercise intimidation and tyranny on its own campuses and was silent about the destruction of academic life in the Occupied Territories, it could not be part of the enlightened and progressive world to which it wanted so eagerly to belong.

Writing about this in 2010, I am afraid that not much has changed. My colleagues still find it difficult to support me or to show solidarity for the beliefs I represent, and for some reason fail to learn from the historical lessons of the past: today it is me, tomorrow it will be them. Many come from families who experienced a similar incremental process of silencing in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Spain, and the military regimes of Latin America. Yet they still live in denial, believing it will never happen to them.

This book is written in the same spirit as my letter to the international community in May 2002. I ask readers to express their indignation and to protest and react in any way they deem appropriate, not for my sake, but for the sake of all those who were, and are, victimised by present trends and ideologies in the state of Israel: for the Palestinians wherever they are, under occupation, inside Israel or in the refugee and exilic

communities. It was, and is, also a call to solidarity with the few dissenting voices inside Jewish society. Such protests, at the end of the day, will be a valuable contribution to peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. The memory of such voices may help Palestinians to reconcile and forgive, for the sake of a new life in the torn land of theirs and mine.

7

THE HOME UNIVERSITY

My final effort to inject some criticism into the historical debate in Israel thus ended on a low note in the university's cafeteria. I did not attempt to convene any more conferences, nor was I invited to any. Colleagues who wanted me to take part in symposia or conferences in the university were told by the authorities that this was not a good idea and could affect their careers and prospects. At one point, this exclusion was extended to socialising with me, as one of my best friends found out when he was rebuked for sipping a cup of coffee with me in the senior common room. I could teach, but felt that my postgraduate students were deemed guilty by association. If this were not enough, I was barred from the public space during 2005 and 2006, so that an intellectual or historiographical dialogue with my own society became impossible.

This ostracism within Israeli Jewish society was compensated by the warm reception I found in the Palestinian community – in Israel, in the Occupied Territories and around the world. It signified the removal of any remaining barriers and a deep involvement in the Palestinian community through my political activity in

Arab parties and my appointment as Chair of the Emil Touma Institute for Palestinian Studies in Haifa.

My engagement with the tightly-knit Jewish society around me did not end during the two years leading to my decision to leave for England, because I conducted a home university in my house. This initiative had begun in 2000, with the outbreak of the Second Intifada and my growing public exposure. My critique of Israeli policies and actions on the ground had become sharper and more vociferous, and the Katz affair increased public awareness of my opinions. In those tumultuous days, for purely mundane reasons I left Haifa, where I was born and had lived intermittently for many years. With my family I moved to Kiryat Tivon, on the edge of what the Israelis call Emeq Yizrael – the Jezreel valley – and the Palestinians Marj ibn Amr. This beautiful spot, which has fewer than 15,000 inhabitants, overlooks Mount Carmel to the west, the upper Galilee to the north and the pastoral Jezreel valley on the east, all the way to Jenin and the West Bank.

The attention given to me by the national press was reflected in the small community we had joined. In 2005 the local press published an unkind profile of the 'new boy' in town. I was about to reply in a long article to what had increasingly become a smear campaign, when my wife wisely said that instead, I should engage in a constructive dialogue with the community. I gladly accepted this challenge. We thought it over, and decided that the best way to go about it would be to invite to our house anyone who wished to know what I

thought and to engage in a dialogue. We inserted a small advertisement in the local paper and notified our neighbours of our intention to have a public meeting, and waited anxiously for the results.

On the day, at around 9pm in the evening, guests began to arrive. We expected a handful of visitors, but our living room was filled by more than 50 people. I wondered how best to begin! I started by asking how many of my guests knew the names of the Palestinian villages on which Tivon was built. There were three: some of the residents had been forcibly evicted in the 1930s, after an absentee landlord in Beirut sold the land to the Jewish Agency. The other villagers were driven away during the 1948 war. My guests did not know about this, so I pointed out some visible remnants of the past that they were familiar with.

They were essentially a group of people who knew that they did not know. They did not share my views, and much of what I said to begin with – I introduced the 1948 war as an ethnic cleansing operation – intimidated them. But the unusual constellation of a lecturer hosting listeners in his own living room helped us all to remain civilised in our exchanges, and this is not easy for Israelis. The recurring theme was a provocative question: 'So, you are questioning our moral right to be here?' A year later the same people asked the same question, but this time in a much more contemplative and quieter tone. From the first meeting that year to the last, a limited number of similar questions were asked and remarks made, but towards the end of that

year they were expressed in a very different manner. The meeting became a home university, expanding on a weekly basis over the next four years with a clear structure and orientation. A home university that became, for me, a prime tool in my struggle against *Nakbah* denial in Israel.

In the following year I structured the meetings more systematically. At the opening of each session I presented a document: a report by the IDF on expulsion, Palestinian testimonies, extracts from professional historians on both sides, poems and novels. All of them attested to a Pandora's box, that if it were further prised open, would raise questions like the one above about the moral foundations of the Jewish state.

Among the many documents I presented, two in particular seemed to disturb them more than other pieces of evidence from those difficult times. The first describes a meeting in Haifa on the evening of 1 July 1948. The city's military commander called in the leaders of the local Palestinian community, who represented the few thousand who remained after an estimated 65,000 other Arab citizens had been expelled and 10,000 had fled. The purpose of the meeting was to order these notables to facilitate the transfer of Arabs in the city into one neighbourhood, Wadi Nisnas, in downtown Haifa – the poorest section of the city. Some of those ordered to move had lived for a long time on the upper slopes of Mount Carmel. They were told to complete the move by 5 July.

The leaders were shocked. Many of them belonged to the Communist Party that supported partition, and they had hoped that now the fighting was over they might be able to resume normal life. 'I do not understand: is this a military command? Let us look at the condition of these people. I cannot see any reason, even a military one, that justifies such a move,' protested Tawfiq Tubi, later a member of the Knesset for the Communist Party. He concluded: 'We demand that the people will stay in their homes'. Another participant, Bulus Farah, called out, 'This is racism', and called the move, 'Ghettoizing the Palestinians in Haifa'.

Even a dry document cannot hide the frosty and metallic reaction of the Israeli military commander: 'I can see that you are sitting here and advising me, while you were invited to hear the orders of the High Command and to assist it! I am not involved in politics and do not deal with it. *I am just obeying orders*... I am just fulfilling orders and I have to make sure this order is executed by the fifth ... If this is not done, I will do it myself. I am a soldier.'

Shehada Shalah asked, after the monologue by the commander had ended: 'And if a person owns a house, does he have to leave?'

The commander: 'Everyone has to leave.'

Then came the question of costs. The Arab leaders learned that the inhabitants would themselves have to pay for the cost of their enforced expulsion. Victor Hayat tried to reason with the commander that it would take more than a day for people to be notified and

this would not leave them much time. The commander replied that four days was plenty of time. The person who transcribed the meeting wrote that the Arab representatives cried out, 'But it is a very short time!', and the commander replied, 'I cannot change it.'[1]

Some of my guests wiped away tears; others tried to say it was not bad compared with other historical cases. But they were familiar with the houses from which people were evicted (in which some of them may even have lived), and with the names of the Arabs and Jews participating in the meeting; and many of them, like me, had previously lived in Haifa, so the atmosphere was heavy.

I reintroduced the same document at an event in my house that became a kind of a tradition: a meeting with the home university group and additional guests on Israel's official Independence Day. Most Israeli Jews celebrate this day outdoors, enjoying barbecues, music and public ceremonies. Since the late 1980s a few thousand Palestinians and myself, with a handful of Jews, commemorate the day in what we call the *Nakbah* march, a journey to one of the destroyed villages, each year a different one.

The same evening that I first introduced this document to about 70 people gathered in my living room, I also introduced another document. It sent similar shockwaves, this time to a much larger, uninitiated group of Jews who thought they knew all about their own history. It was about the city of Lydda – Lod in modern Israel – and was a testimony by a young

physician who was working in the local hospital when the Jewish forces entered the city on 11 July 1948. His written evidence described how the troops first indiscriminately bombarded the city, 'inflicting numerous civilian causalities, mainly among elderly men, women, and children'. This was followed by soldiers roaming the town, opening 'fire on the inhabitants, shooting through doors and windows. The streets had been crowded with people who had flocked from the outlying quarters to the less exposed areas of the center when the assault began, and many were killed and wounded when the Israeli tanks penetrated the inner city streets and started firing at everyone in sight'. The killings were followed by expulsions:

> Israeli troops began going into houses, hauling out the residents and gathering them inside the mosque and its courtyard ... Bit by bit, the mosque and its courtyard filled up with hundreds of families who had been evicted from their houses. Then it was our turn, the orderlies, nurses, doctors and hospital staff; a few soldiers came and ordered us out into the hospital yard with our hands up. When we were all gathered there, they ordered us to line up facing the wall with our hands over our heads ... We remained like this for a quarter of an hour ... awaiting the mercy of God. Thanks be to God, our fears did not materialise. We were ordered to march, hands up, to the grand mosque not far way. We found it teeming with people, especially women and children and the elderly.[2]

The scene got uglier. Soldiers fired above people's heads, forcing them to squeeze like cattle into the mosque

to make more room for newcomers. Then a selection took place and the Christian Arabs were separated from the Muslims and taken to a nearby church. Another ominous separation, similar to the one mentioned in Tantura (see Appendix), took place. The Muslim women and children were separated from the men. At that time, the doctor did not know the fate of these men, who were massacred. As a doctor, he was attached to the women, children, elderly and Christians who in the next few days were marched out of the city. During that night, the soldiers began going into houses in areas they had occupied, rounding up the population and expelling them from the city. Some were told to go to villages nearby, while other soldiers said: 'Go to King Abdullah, to Ramallah'.[3]

The last story he had to tell was that while the stream of refugees was marched out of the city:

> the Israeli forces were proceeding with their task: speeding up the expulsion of the population still remaining, entering the houses and dragging out the inhabitants, ordering them out of the city on to Ramallah and al-Bireh [a town adjacent to Ramallah]. The flood of displaced persons clogged the roads, a seemingly endless stream flowing east, with enemy soldiers firing over their heads every now and then.

This was not the end of it. Houses were looted and damaged by the occupiers, and before the stream of refugees reached its destination the women had to go through a roadblock, where their gold jewellery

was stolen 'from their necks, wrists, and fingers and whatever was hidden inside their clothes, as well as money and everything else that was precious and light enough to carry'.

In retrospect, I realised I did not allow enough time for people's feelings to come to the surface and respond to this description. Both documents covered a whole range of events and emotions and were a reminder of the present situation in the Occupied Territories, where some of my audience still served as reserve soldiers. Even worse, when my listeners heard how Jewish troops had forced the evicted residents of Haifa to pay for their own transfer, and when they read with me the unpleasant scenes that unfolded in Lydda in the summer of 1948, it was a reminder as one of them said 'of Nazi behaviour in Europe' and then retracted. I have never used this comparison in the meetings, nor did I find it always useful, but one has to understand that everything in Israel is measured vis-à-vis the holocaust. Only when in fact the association is made – rightly or wrongly – the moral space of Israelis begins to include the Palestinian victims of their government's policies.

Apart from jointly reading documents of this kind, both from Israeli archives and Palestinian oral history, we also discussed the occupation. We began the talk about it by simulating a day of occupation in Tivon. What would it mean to the owner of the delicatessen in the town, to the teacher, the lawyer, the physician,

the student, the child-minder who came to my house? I think it was vivid enough to persuade some of them, very untypically for middle-class Israelis, to go and see with their own eyes the horrors of the occupation. Parents brought their children, children brought their parents, and the project grew.

This home university expanded and went through various forms not only in my house, but also in other venues. The guiding principle was that discussions on 1948 were not limited to one meeting, but became a contractual dialogue based on hospitality of views as well as of people. After all, the big question for a post-conflict Palestine is not what will be the identity and place of the Palestinians, who are the indigenous people by right and history, but what will be the place of the Jews, most of them newcomers who for years have colonised, expelled and occupied the Palestinians. Recognition of the 1948 catastrophe can open the way for their admission and acceptance not only in Palestine, but in the Arab world as a whole.

The final meeting in my house took place after two Israeli soldiers were captured by Hezbollah, the Shiite Islamist group in Lebanon, on the Israel–Lebanon border in the summer of 2006. This was followed by Israeli air attacks and by Katyusha rockets lobbed over from Lebanon, some of which fell in the vicinity of Tivon, not far away from my home. The receptive mood to listen changed into a jingoism of the worst kind that I had encountered since I was born on Mount Carmel in

1954. This was followed by Israel's genocidal policies in Gaza, and if I needed additional evidence that there was very little hope for change within my society generally, or in my own personal predicament, this bloodshed was that final proof.

8

THE LAST STRAW: LEBANON AND GAZA

If you lose your place in the public and academic spaces, you may still be surrounded by understanding friends, neighbours and members of your immediate community. The best evidence of this was the little town of Tivon where we had chosen to live, as I learned through the experience of the home university and the local school that my children attended. It was a safe haven, and in many ways still is when I occasionally return there. But even that certainty was shaken in summer 2006, during the days of the Second Lebanon War and in the escalation that year in Israeli actions against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Imagine a group of high-ranking generals who for years had simulated Third World War scenarios in which they could move around large armies, employ the most sophisticated weapons at their disposal and enjoy the immunity of a computerised headquarters from which to direct their war games. Imagine, now, that they are informed that there is no Third World War, but their expertise is needed to calm down some nearby slums or deal with soaring crime in deprived

townships and impoverished neighbourhoods. And then imagine – in the final episode of my chimerical crisis – what happens when they find out how irrelevant their plans have been and how useless their weapons were in the struggle against street violence spawned by social inequality, poverty and years of discrimination. They can either admit failure, or decide nonetheless to use the massive and destructive arsenal at their disposal. In hindsight, this is the best explanation that I can come up with for the havoc wreaked on Lebanon by Israeli generals in the summer of 2006.

I had been teaching in Israeli universities for 25 years. Several of my students were senior army officers. I could see their growing frustration after the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987. They detested this kind of confrontation, called euphemistically by American-trained international relations gurus, 'low intensity conflict'. It was too low for their taste. They were faced with stones, Molotov cocktails and primitive weapons that required very limited use of the huge arsenal that the army had amassed over the years and that in no way tested their ability to perform in a battlefield or war zone. Even when the army used tanks and F-16s, it was a far cry from the war games that officers had simulated in their *matkal* or headquarters, and for which they had bought, with American taxpayers' money, the most sophisticated and updated weaponry on the market.

The First Intifada was crushed, but the Palestinians continued to seek ways of ending the occupation. They rose up again in 2000, inspired this time by a more

Islamist group of national leaders and activists. But it was still no more than a 'low intensity conflict'. This was not what the army expected; it was yearning for a 'real' war. As Raviv Drucker and Ofer Shelach, two Israeli journalists with close ties to the IDF, show in their book Boomerang, major military exercises before the Second Intifada were based on a scenario that envisaged a full-scale war. It was predicted that in the case of another Palestinian uprising, there would be three days of 'riots' in the Occupied Territories that would turn into a head-on confrontation with neighbouring Arab states, especially Syria. Such a confrontation, it was argued, was needed to maintain Israel's power of deterrence and to reinforce the generals' confidence in their army's ability to conduct a conventional war.

The frustration was unbearable as the three days of dealing with the uprising turned into a decade. And yet, the Israeli army's main vision for the battlefield today is still that of 'shock and awe' rather than chasing snipers, suicide bombers and political activists. The 'low intensity' war questions the invincibility of the army and erodes its capability to engage in a 'real' war. Most important, it does not allow Israel to impose its vision unilaterally over the land of Palestine – as a de-Arabised and exclusive Jewish space. Most of the Arab regimes have been complacent and weak enough to allow Israel to pursue its policies, apart from the Hamas and Hezbollah, Iran and Syria. They have to be neutralised if Israeli unilateralism is to succeed.

After the outbreak of the Second Intifada in October 2000, some of the frustration was allowed to evaporate with the use of a 1,000-kilo bomb on a Gaza house in July 2002 and during the three-week long Operation Defensive Shield, which began in March 2002. In this operation the army made incursions into all major West Bank towns and wreaked havoc in the refugee camp in Jenin. But it was a far cry from what the strongest army in the Middle East could do. Despite the demonisation of the mode of resistance chosen by the Palestinians in the Second Intifada – the suicide bomb – only two or three F-16s and a small number of tanks were needed to collectively punish the Palestinians by destroying their human, economic and social infrastructure.

I believe I know these generals as well as anyone. When Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert gave them the green light in July 2006, they had a field day. No more random use of 1,000-kilo bombs, but battleships, choppers and heavy artillery. Amir Peretz, the weak and insignificant minister of defence at the time, accepted without hesitation the army's demand to be able to crush Lebanon. It is possible that the politicians succeeded in taming the generals a little, as they would do later when the crisis with Iran developed. In 2006, the politicians only partially satisfied the army's hunger for a 'high intensity conflict'. But the politics of the day were already dominated by military propaganda and rationale. This is why Tzipi Livni, the Israeli foreign minister and an otherwise intelligent person, could say with sincerity on Israeli TV (13 July 2006) that

the best way to retrieve the two captured soldiers was 'to destroy totally the international airport of Beirut'. Abductors or armies that have two soldiers in captivity of course go and buy tickets on the next commercial flight from an international airport for the captors and the two soldiers. 'But they can sneak them out with a car,' insisted the interviewers. Replied Livni, 'This is why we will also destroy all the roads in Lebanon leading out of the country.'

This was good news for the army. At least the air force could show its 'real' might and compensate for the frustrating years of low intensity conflict that had sent Israel's best and fiercest to run after boys and girls in the alleys of Nablus or Hebron. In Gaza, the air force had by then already dropped five 1,000-kilo bombs, whereas in the previous six years it had frustratingly dropped only one. At the same time, the generals were saying pointedly on television that 'we here in Israel should not forget Damascus and Teheran.'

Soon after the attack commenced in Lebanon, the captive soldiers, whom we now know were already dead, were deleted from the public agenda. The 2006 campaign was about destroying Hezbollah once and for all, rather than bringing home the captives. In a similar manner to summer 1982, the Israeli public forgot the victim who provided the excuse to Prime Minister Menachem Begin's government for invading Lebanon that year in the First Lebanon War. He was Shlomo Argov, Israel's ambassador to London, who suffered an attempted assassination from a splinter Palestinian

group. This attack provided Defence Minister Ariel Sharon with a pretext for invading Lebanon, where Israeli troops stayed for 18 years.

Alternative solutions to the crisis of the two captive soldiers were not proposed in Israel, not even by the Zionist left. No one mentioned commonsense ideas such as an exchange of prisoners or beginning a dialogue with Hezbollah. The government's intransigent policy was fully supported by the Administration of President George W Bush. In Washington, Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defence, stridently maintained that the complete destruction of Hezbollah, whatever the price and if it was without the loss of American lives, would 'vindicate' the *raison d'être* of the Third World War theory that he propagated early in 2001. The Lebanon crisis for him was a righteous battle against a small axis of evil that was separate from the quagmire of Iraq, but would hopefully be a precursor of victory in the as yet inconclusive 'war against terror' in Syria and Iran. If to some extent the American empire was serving the interests of its Israeli proxy in Iraq, the full support that President Bush gave to Israeli aggression in Lebanon showed that the proxy was now trying to help the entangled empire.

Hezbollah wanted back the piece of southern Lebanon over which Israel still retained control. It also wished to play a major role in Lebanese politics, and displayed an ideological solidarity with Iran and the Palestinian struggle and a particular affinity with the Islamist struggle. These three objectives did not always

complement each other and led to a very limited war effort against Israel after 2000. The return of tourism on the Israeli side of the Lebanon border between 2000 and 2006 demonstrated that for its own reasons Hezbollah was content to accept a very low intensity conflict. If and when a comprehensive solution for the Palestine question is achieved, the Islamist organisation is likely to stop its attacks. The Hezbollah operation that triggered the devastating Israeli assault in the summer of 2006 did not change the tolerable *status quo* on the border. Hezbollah fighters crossed 100 yards into Israeli territory. Retaliating to such a low-key operation with war and destruction indicated clearly that what mattered was the grand Israeli design and not a particular Hezbollah operation.

There was nothing new in this. In 1948, the Palestinians opted for a low intensity conflict when the UN imposed on them a deal that wrested away half of their homeland and gave it to a community of newcomers and settlers, most of whom arrived after 1945. The Zionist leaders launched an ethnic cleansing operation that expelled half of the land's native population, destroyed half of its villages and dragged the Arab world into an unnecessary conflict with the West, whose powers were already diminishing with the demise of colonialism. These two designs are interconnected: the more that Israel's military might expands, the easier it is to complete the unfinished business of 1948: the total de-Arabisation of Palestine.

The focus on Lebanon, and later Gaza, allowed the Israeli government, throughout 2006, to construct a large portion of the apartheid wall separating the West Bank from Israel. For Israelis, the wall was the great symbol of their consensus. With its near completion in 2006, the internal ideological debate was over, and the government's master plan for settling once and for all the geopolitical reality on the state's eastern border was visibly put into effect. The plan was originally Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's, but was followed by all his successors: Ehud Olmert, Tzipi Livni and Binyamin Netanyahu. Israel was about to annex unilaterally half of the West Bank, de-Arabise it and allow the second half to be an autonomous *bantustan* that could be called a state. Gaza was supposed to have a similar fate, but as we know, matters did not develop according to plan.

The last phase of finalising the map in the east was delayed because of the promises made by Israel, first under the Road Map in 2002 when it agreed with the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia to an independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace, which meant freezing all settlement activity, and later at the Annapolis Conference with the Palestinians and Americans in November 2007, when it agreed to advance the peace negotiations. The Israeli government found two ways of circumventing this. First, it defined a large area of the West Bank as Greater Jerusalem and annexed it, which allowed it to build towns and community centres within the new area. Second, it expanded old settlements to

such a degree that there was no need to build new ones. In 2009, Barack Obama would be the first American president to take public issue with Israel about these policies, although with little success.

The settlements, army bases, roads and land taken for the wall allowed Israel to annex almost half of the West Bank by 2006. Compensation to the owners was sometimes paid later. Within these areas, Israeli authorities continued to implement creeping transfer policies against the considerable number of Palestinians who remain. They acted as if there was no rush. As far as they were concerned they had the upper hand; the combination of daily abuse and dehumanising by the army and the labyrinthine bureaucracy effectively strengthened the process of dispossession. All governing parties, from Labour to Kadima, accepted Sharon's strategic thinking that this policy was far better than the blunt one proposed by the proponents of a policy of 'transfer' or ethnic cleansers such as Avigdor Liberman, currently Israel's foreign minister.

By 2006, the West Bank was no longer regarded as a central issue on the Israeli agenda, nor was Lebanon. Iran was talked about, and might be targeted in a future war, but the might of the strongest army in the Middle East was directed against a strip of land 40 kilometres long and 12 kilometres wide, home to a million and a half people. Israel's generals and strategists had concluded that ethnic cleansing would be ineffective in Gaza. The earlier strategy had been to ghettoise the Gazans, but it was no longer working. The Jews

know from their own history that ghettos either revolt or are destroyed. It was not difficult to tell what the future held for the people of Gaza – already ghettoized, quarantined, rejected and demonised.

The situation in Gaza was not working because the Israeli strategy of creating a prison camp and throwing the key into the sea – as South African law professor John Dugard put it – was an option that the Palestinians in the Strip had reacted against forcibly since September 2005. Determined to show that they were still part of the West Bank and of Palestine, they began to launch a significant number of missiles into the western Negev, the largely desert area of southern Israel. This assault was in response to an Israeli campaign of arrests of Hamas and Jihad members in the Tulkarem area.

Israel responded with Operation First Rain, a week-long offensive in September 2005. Supersonic flights flown over Gaza terrorised the population and were followed by heavy bombardment of large swathes of territory from land, sea and sky. The logic, the Israeli army explained, was to weaken the community's support for the rocket launchers. As was expected (by some Israelis as well), the operation only increased support for the rockets. The real purpose was experimental. Israel's generals wanted to know how such operations would be received at home, in the region and in the world. It seemed that few took an interest in the scores of dead and hundreds of wounded Palestinians.

Succeeding operations were modelled on First Rain. The difference was more firepower, more casualties, more collateral damage and, as expected, more *Qassam* rockets lobbed into Israel. Accompanying measures ensured a full imprisonment of Gazans through boycott and blockade, with which the European Union shamefully collaborated. The capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in June 2006 was irrelevant in the overall scheme, but provided an opportunity for Israel to escalate further the military barrage. No strategy had been devised to follow up Sharon's decision in 2005 to remove 8,000 Jewish settlers from Gaza whose presence complicated punitive missions. Since then, the punitive actions continued and became a strategy. In June 2006 First Rain was succeeded by Summer Rains. In a country where there is no rain in the summer, showers of F-16 bombs and artillery shells hit the people of the Gaza Strip. Summer Rains brought a new element: a land invasion of parts of the Strip. The army presented the killing of citizens as an inevitable result of heavy fighting within densely populated areas, and not of Israeli policy.

In September 2006 Israel commenced a genocidal policy against Gaza. On the morning of 2 September, three citizens of Gaza were killed and a whole family wounded in the town of Beit Hanoun. Before the end of that day many more were massacred. After that, it became almost a daily event. An average of eight Palestinians died every day that month in Israeli attacks. Most were children. Hundreds were maimed, wounded

and paralysed. As with the ethnic cleansing operations, the genocidal policy was not formulated in a vacuum. Ever since 1948, the Israeli army and government had needed a pretext to put it into action. The takeover of Palestine in 1948 produced the inevitable local resistance that in turn allowed the implementation of an ethnic cleansing policy, pre-planned in the 1930s. Twenty years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank eventually generated some Palestinian resistance. This belated anti-occupation struggle unleashed a new cleansing policy that is still being implemented today in the West Bank. The withdrawal of troops and settlers from Gaza in the summer of 2005, which was paraded as a generous Israeli move, produced a missile attack and an abduction by the Islamist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Even before the capture of Israeli army corporal Gilad Shalit, the army was bombarding the Strip. After Shalit was taken, the killing increased and became systematic. The daily business of slaying Palestinians, mainly children, was reported in the internal pages of the local press in September 2006, quite often in microscopic fonts.

The chief culprits were Israeli pilots. In the First Lebanon War of 1982, the Israeli air force issued orders to its pilots to abort missions if they spotted innocent civilians within 500 square metres of their target. These orders may not always have been kept, but the moral *façade* remained. In the Israeli air force it is called the 'Lebanon Procedure' (*Nohal Levanon*). When the pilots asked if the Lebanon Procedure was in place for Gaza,

the answer was no. The same response was given to pilots during the Second Lebanon War.

For a while, the Lebanon war provided a fog that covered the war crimes in the Gaza Strip. But the policies in the south raged on even after the conclusion of the ceasefire in the north. It seems that the Israeli army was even more determined to extend the killing fields in Gaza. There were no politicians able or willing to deter the generals. A daily kill of up to ten civilians would leave a few thousand dead each year. This was different from killing a million people in a single campaign. But if the daily kill is doubled, the number rises to horrifying proportions. More important, it may force a mass eviction of people outside the Strip, either in the name of human aid, or as a result of international intervention or the people's own desire to escape the inferno. But if Palestinian steadfastness was the response – and there was no reason to doubt that this would be the Gazan reaction – then the massive killing would continue and increase.

The autumn campaign ended with the chilling attacks of Operation Autumn Clouds, which began on 1 November 2006 and lasted six days. Israeli troops killed 53 civilians. By the end of that month almost 200 had been killed, half of them women and children. From First Rain to Autumn Clouds there was escalation in every parameter. It began with fudging the distinction between civilian and non-civilian targets, so that the population itself became the main target for the army's operations. Second, there was escalation in the means:

utilising every possible killing machine that the Israeli army possesses. Third, escalation in the number of casualties. In 2006 I wrote on the *Electronic Intifada* website: 'with each future operation, a much larger number of people are likely to be killed and wounded'.[1] Finally, and most important, the operations became a strategy – the way in which Israel intends to solve the problem of the Gaza Strip.

When 2006 ended, the horrific sights on Gaza's killing fields became too obvious to be ignored. On 28 December 2006 *B'Tselem*, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, published its annual report. During that year Israeli forces had killed 660 citizens, triple the number of the previous year. Most of the dead were in the Gaza Strip, where Israeli forces had demolished almost 300 houses and had killed entire families. Since 2000, almost 4,000 Palestinians, many of them children, have been killed by Israeli forces and more than 20,000 have been wounded.

A creeping transfer in the West Bank and a protracted genocidal policy in the Gaza Strip were the two strategies Israel had employed by the beginning of 2007. But the Strip continued to fight back, lobbing its missiles into Israel. This enabled the Israeli army to initiate larger genocidal operations. In the same *Electronic Intifada* article I warned that 'there is also the great danger that, as in 1948, the army would demand a more drastic and systematic 'punitive' action against the besieged people of the Gaza Strip'.

The cruelty and inhumanity of Israeli actions was such that I assumed my friends and neighbours would share with me at least a minimal disdain and repulsion. But Jewish society in Israel, contrary to my hopes and, I have to admit, my sanguine assumptions, was not yet post-Zionised, let alone de-Zionised. If anything, it was even more Zionistic. In those years Zionism was reduced to a very narrow perspective that hardly warrants being called an ideology. Ideology usually means a relatively comprehensive interpretation of past and present reality, driven by a clear, quite often utopian, vision of the future. Zionism in 2005 and 2006 was reduced to a discourse about and actions against the Palestinians wherever they were. According to the simplest – perhaps simplified – version of this they were originally offered a place in mandatory Palestine made up of several enclaves subject to various regimes of oppression and control. In the Galilee, Wadi Ara (the western Galilee) and the Negev in the south, the areas of highest Palestinian density, they were given citizenship, although limited in scope and in effect excluding them from any national or ethnic collectivity. As individuals, they lived under laws and practices that discriminated against them in almost every aspect of life.

Nevertheless, they were better off than those Palestinians clustered in the West Bank in cantons and sub-cantons supervised and abused by Jewish colonists, checkpoints and roadblocks, in a space pervaded by a military presence. Far worse in 2006 was the situation in the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinians had demo-

cratically elected a leadership that they hoped would salvage them from the vast prison created after Ariel Sharon had extracted the last Jewish settlers. Strangled physically and mentally, Gazans took to resistance, or at least accepted the leadership of those opting for resistance, even if their new leaders endorsed a rather rigid vision of a future theocratic Islamic state. At that time, secularism and leftist politics did not offer any hope or resistance, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad became the focus of desperation and aspiration.

It is impossible to chart a graph of Palestinian suffering, but however one looked at it, several million Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip entered a fourth decade of dehumanisation, dispossession, occupation, house demolitions, killings and degradation. New generations had already been born into this ongoing catastrophe, which augmented the *Nakbah* of 1948 and its disastrous impact on human dignity.

With the advent of satellite TV, the appearance of alternative, internet-based media and some dedicated reporting in the Israeli press, one would have assumed that large sections of Jewish society in Israel knew what was going on beyond the apartheid wall and the barbed wire around the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But they were not aware, or did not want to be aware, of the way that Palestinians were treated. In most Jewish settlements inside Israel that were close to Palestinian villages, the Jewish population wanted to build a wall to exclude the Arab presence. Mayors of mixed

Jewish-Arab towns talked openly of their wish to oust Palestinians from their municipalities.

There were some hopeful signs that a distant future might be better and was worth staying for, if only I had the energy and the stamina, or if I thought it was more important to stay and not to work from the outside to strengthen the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. On the margins of society and politics, brave Palestinians and Jews were working towards desegregation through joint kindergartens, schools, cultural projects, business ventures and political activities. But they were the exceptions.

Indeed, the public mood was very different. In the press, in talk shows and phone-in programmes, as well as in my immediate vicinity – fellow parents of school-children, supermarket customers and near neighbours, Israeli actions were fully supported. There seemed to be a strong desire to see the Palestinians disappear behind visible or invisible walls. I heard uninhibited calls for their complete elimination: massive killings and a genocidal policy were endorsed from the left to the right of the Zionist political spectrum. Carpet bombing of civilians in Lebanon or Gaza would have been welcomed, and if any criticism was directed at the government it was that the army was not allowed to escalate its destruction.

Tivon was not badly hit by the Katyusha missiles fired by Hezbollah from Lebanon, but one just missed my house. I thought this was certain to kill any appetite for more Israeli wars and would trigger a desire to

find peaceful solutions to the problems and challenges facing the Jewish state. I was wrong. Whether it was the man in the grocery shop, the woman at the bus stop, the teacher in school or the lawyer next door, all wanted more war. They were also looking for a strong man to lead them. Israeli society was weary and did not wish to play the democratic game, which had never been entirely genuine. Politics became more and more reminiscent of the swansong of the Weimar Republic.

I joined my activist friends in the north in forming an anti-war front during the Second Lebanon war. We demonstrated in small numbers, and if we were not beaten by the police we endured the wrath of passers-by. During this abortive effort I was invited – for the first time after a long absence – to a live chat show on Israeli television. A leading editor and a former minister of justice were members of a panel that wanted to simulate a court martial of me, and as a principal witness for the prosecution they brought in my old colleague, Professor Benny Morris. As mentioned, he had been one of the new historians, but for various reasons (among them, perhaps, that he did not want to be as ostracised as I was) he revised his interpretation of the events of 1948 to the satisfaction of the Israeli media and academia. The 1948 ethnic cleansing was now justified, and its *modus operandi* would be justified as a future policy as well. He had, it seems, became an expert on the Arab and Islamic mentality – a bold move for someone who does not read or write Arabic. As such, he accused me during this televised court martial of working for

the enemy. I never appeared again on Israeli television, although I did manage – in spite of the vociferous shouts of the moderator, 'you are a traitor', with the ex-minister of justice adding, 'you are an agent of Hezbollah' – to call on people to join a demonstration in Tel Aviv against the war. I am sure fellow activists know now the trick – when you are invited to this shallow medium called television, and on top if as a hostile witness, concentrate on what you have to say and disregard totally the questions of the interviewers. That particular interview was taking place on a rooftop of a high building near Haifa – channel 10 was eager to catch me and a falling Katyusha if possible – to deliver the message home as forceful as possible. I had a feeling that I was seated at the very edge of the roof – which had no railings of fences to safeguard me – on purpose and was trying not be over agitated as not to fall. I was relieved when this was over, especially when I landed on a more solid ground.

This is when and why I decided to look for a safer academic haven abroad. It became urgent after direct death threats arrived at our home. Letters covered in excrement were put into our mailbox, which meant that the senders knew our house, and one persistent telephone caller indicated that he knew the movements of my wife and children and threatened to kill them. The police, to whom I had complained a year before, suggested changing my political views as the best recipe for putting an end to these threats. There were also comic moments. One of the letters smeared with

excrement was innocently taken from our mailbox by my wife, who put it quickly into her bag as she was in a hurry. All day we could not figure out where the stench came from and looked suspiciously at each other until we found the source of this 'dirty bomb'. Israeli Jews go more than any other people in the world to the local clinics bringing with them samples of whatever is needed for a full check up; so it is not that surprising that this is quite a common method of intimidation in a hypocendric Jewish state.

The telephone threats were voiced by different people. Some had North African accents and were louder than the others, cursing and shouting – but there was something quite intimate and less threatening about them, while Russian Jews spoke quietly, presenting themselves as members of a local mafia that had received contracts to kill me. Between them were typical younger Israelis who could not articulate a whole sentence. But the message was clear, and it increased to more than two to three threats a day. Changing the number helped for a while, but not for long.

Ostracised in my own university, conducting a dialogue of the deaf with my peers, neighbours, family and childhood friends, losing hope for any change from within, and continuing to assert that pressuring Israel and even making it a pariah state was the only way forward, added up to my conclusion that as a family we were ready to try life elsewhere.

Some good friends suggested that I apply to the University of Exeter, among other places, and in the

summer of 2007 I was appointed to a chair in its department of history. It was a logical move from an academic point of view. Indeed, academically I could not ask for a better place. Suddenly there was once more a clear distinction between professional life and commitment on the one hand, and public activity on the other. Adapting socially to English life was a bumpier ride. A decent society, welcoming in many respects, but introverted to an extreme point unless one lived in one of the cosmopolitan urban centres, which we did not. Children still seemed to be regarded as a liability, albeit an unavoidable one, and the local cuisine is not getting better, and then there are the dark winter afternoons and year-round soggy mornings. But what a rich cultural paradise of innovation and civility! Even when hit by the financial crisis it was still a space where one could contemplate a rosier future and maybe even peace and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine.

There were darker aspects to life in Britain: inner cities that no one notices or goes into and alienated minorities targeted by xenophobic policemen and authorities. I was tempted to become involved in the struggle against Islamophobia in particular, as it was closely associated with the Palestinian issue. Muslim immigrants from south-east Asia, Africa and the Arab world made up some of the new communities that I learned to respect and engage with even before the first year of my relocation was over.

On my arrival, the Jewish community's official bodies did not hide their close affiliation with traditional

Zionism and Israel. Jon Benjamin, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, told the press:

> After taking full advantage of all the freedoms accorded to him in Israel, a country he has so shamelessly attacked, Pappe has decided to set up shop here. Whilst this provides the opportunity for academics here to challenge him on his revisionist agenda, the uncomfortable fact is that in the lecture theatres and seminar rooms at Exeter, many impressionable young minds will be exposed to his partial and biased views.

He was followed by Mitch Simmons, Campaign Director of the Union of Jewish Students, who said: 'We are not angry or frustrated that he's coming to the UK. What is of concern is that he may use his position to vocalise support for the boycott of Israeli academics.' I responded by saying that when synagogues become Israeli embassies they should not be surprised if they are targeted as such by the society, instead of screaming about the rise of a new anti-Semitism. My new university ignored these insidious accusations, a novel experience for me.

I did not corrupt my students as the Board of Deputies feared, but I was active on two fronts in the United Kingdom. It was easier to see from a distance the ending of the two-state solution and the dire need to push forward the one-state solution. It was as if I felt that my newly-won peace of mind was the kind of peace deserved by all individuals in my homeland. Such a peace could not be achieved through the paradigm

constantly used by Israel to deepen its occupation and dispossession of Palestine. I was not the only one who felt that way. Since I arrived in Britain the number of people, both inside and outside Palestine, who are committed to the idea of one state in Israel/Palestine has grown exponentially. Books have appeared, conferences have been convened and political organisations formed. It became a mature enough movement to trigger further thought and research for when the time would be ripe to initiate the proposal, either as a result of economic collapse, political earthquake or even ecological disaster. Whatever transformative tide would make it possible, there was a need for activists, especially inside Israel and Palestine, to find an alternative model to the apartheid state of Israel.

As an historian, I could look into the future and feel more assured about the struggle over memory and the past. In Britain, I realised that the fabricated and false Israeli mythology had disappeared from the serious academic centres and been rejected by the informed public – not just in the United Kingdom, but around the world. Yet the struggle was not yet won. The political elites, the mainstream media and large sections of American society and of the world's Jewish communities still parroted the mythologies of the past. The battle over the past would only be over when the evils of ethnic cleansing were rectified by the return of the 1948 refugees to their homeland in Israel, and when a state based on equality in every human and civil aspect of life had been created.

But the more important campaign for ending present evils on the ground has so far failed. Despite a qualitative change in the international public mood at the beginning of the twenty-first century, governments of the day refused to change their policies towards Israel, as was clearly seen during the Israeli assault on Gaza in January 2009. Without such a change of policy these massacres will continue, as will the overall ethnic cleansing of Palestine that was begun in 1948. A disunited Palestinian leadership does not help, and yet the *sumud*, the steadfastness, of the Palestinians wherever they are, their basic preparedness to seek a shared life with the settler colonialist society built on the ruins of their lands, villages and towns and their sheer humanity still holds some hope for the future.

I would have left Israel/Palestine a long time ago if I had thought this would help to restore basic Palestinian rights and lives. Yet I do have a modest sense of achievement in that many of my Palestinian friends mourned my departure, and kindly bestowed on me gifts – that I will bring back when I return – and honours that I do not deserve.

9

THE KILLING FIELDS OF GAZA

In 2004 the Israeli army began building a dummy Arab city in the Negev desert. It is the size of a real town, with named streets, mosques, public buildings and cars. Built at a cost of $45 million, this phantom city became an imitation Gaza in the winter of 2006, after Hezbollah had fought Israel to a draw in the north, so that the IDF could prepare to fight a 'better war' against Hamas in the south.[1] When Israeli army chief Dan Halutz visited the site after the Second Lebanon War he told the press that soldiers 'were preparing for the scenario that will unfold in the dense neighbourhood of Gaza City.'[2] A week into the bombardment of Gaza, Defence Minister Ehud Barak attended a rehearsal for the ground war. Foreign television crews filmed him watching ground troops conquer the dummy city, storming the empty houses and no doubt killing the 'terrorists' hiding in them.[3]

'Gaza is the problem,' said Pinchas Sapir, then finance minister of Israel, in June 1967. 'I was there in 1956 and saw venomous snakes walking in the street. We should settle some of them in the Sinai, and hopefully the others will immigrate.'[4] Sapir was discussing the fate of the newly-occupied territories: he and his cabinet

wanted the Gaza Strip, but not the people living in it. Israelis often refer to Gaza as *me'arat nachashim*, a snake pit. Before the First Intifada, when the Strip provided Tel Aviv with people to wash their dishes and clean their streets and supplied myriad workers to the national construction industry, Gazans were depicted more humanely. This honeymoon ended during the First Intifada, after a series of incidents in which a few of these employees stabbed their employers. The religious fervour that was said to have inspired these isolated attacks generated a wave of Islamophobia in Israel, which led to the first closure of Gaza and the construction of an electric fence around it. Even after the 1993 Oslo Accords, Gaza remained sealed off from Israel and was used merely as a pool of cheap labour; throughout the 1990s, 'peace' for Gaza meant its gradual transformation into a ghetto.

In 2000, Doron Almog, the chief of IDF southern command, began policing the boundaries of Gaza: 'We established observation points equipped with the best technology and our troops were allowed to fire at anyone reaching the fence at a distance of six kilometres,' he boasted, suggesting that a similar policy be adopted for the West Bank.[5] In 2008–2009 alone, 100 Palestinians have been killed by soldiers merely for getting too close to the fences. From 2000 until the 2009 Gaza War broke out, Israeli forces killed 3,000 Palestinians in Gaza, among them 634 children.[6]

Between 1967 and 2005, Gaza's land and water were plundered by Jewish settlers in the Gush Katif settlement

in the Strip at the expense of the local population. The price of peace and security for the Palestinians in Gaza was to give themselves up to imprisonment and colonisation. Since 2000, they have chosen instead to resist in greater numbers and with greater force. It was not the kind of resistance that the West approves of, as it was Islamic and military. Its hallmark was the use of primitive *Qassam* rockets, which at first were fired mainly at the settlers in Gush Katif. The presence of the settlers made it hard for the Israeli army to retaliate with the brutality it uses against Palestinian targets. So the settlers were removed, not as part of a unilateral peace process as many argued at the time, but rather to facilitate any subsequent military action against the Gaza Strip and to consolidate control of the West Bank.

After the disengagement from Gaza, Hamas took over, first in democratic elections, then in a pre-emptive coup staged to avert an American-backed takeover by Fatah, the secular political party in power in the West Bank. Meanwhile, Israeli border guards continued to kill anyone who came too close, and an economic blockade was imposed on the Strip. Hamas retaliated by firing missiles at the southern Israeli town of Sderot, giving the government a pretext to use its air force, artillery and gunships. Israel claimed to be shooting at 'the launching areas of the missiles', but in practice the targets were more widespread. Casualties were high: in 2007 alone 300 people were killed in Gaza, dozens of them children.[7]

Israel justified its conduct in Gaza as part of the fight against terrorism, although its actions violated every international law of war. Palestinians, it seems, can have no place inside historical Palestine unless they are willing to live without basic civil and human rights. They can either be second-class citizens inside the state of Israel, or inmates in the mega-prisons of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. If they resist, they are likely to be imprisoned without trial or killed. This is Israel's message.

Resistance in Palestine has always been based in villages and towns. Where else could it come from? That is why Palestinian cities, towns and villages, dummy or real, have been depicted ever since the 1936 Arab revolt as 'enemy bases' in military plans and orders. Any retaliation or punitive action is bound to target civilians, among whom there may be a handful of people who are involved in active resistance against Israel. Haifa was treated as an enemy base in 1948, as was Jenin in 2002; Gaza's Beit Hanoun, Rafah and Gaza City are now regarded in that way. When firepower is matched by a lack of moral inhibition against massacring civilians, the situation arises that we have witnessed in Gaza.

But it is not only in military discourse that Palestinians are dehumanised. A similar process is at work within Jewish civilian society in Israel, and it explains the massive support for the carnage in Gaza. Palestinians have been so dehumanised by Israeli Jews – whether they are politicians, soldiers or ordinary citizens – that killing them comes naturally, as did expelling them in

1948 or imprisoning them in the Occupied Territories. The response from the West indicates that its political leaders have failed to see the direct connection between the Zionist dehumanisation of the Palestinians and Israel's barbarous policies in Gaza. There is a grave danger that the sequel to Operation Cast Lead will turn Gaza into a ghost town similar to the dummy city in the Negev.

After a long period abroad, I came back to Israel when the Israeli attack on Gaza commenced in January 2009. The state, through its media and with the help of its academics, spoke in a unanimous voice – even louder than during the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Israel was once more engulfed in a righteous fury that translated into destructive policies in the Gaza Strip. The disgraceful self-justification for the inhumanity and impunity should be examined in order to understand Israel's near-immunity internationally in spite of its actions in Gaza.

This was based first and foremost on sheer lies, transmitted with a newspeak reminiscent of the dark days of 1930s Europe. Every half hour during the onslaught on Gaza, radio and television news bulletins described the people of Gaza as terrorists and Israel's massive killing of them as self-defence. Israel presented itself to its own people as the righteous victim defending itself against a great evil. The academic world was recruited to explain how demonic and monstrous the Palestinian struggle was, if it was led by Hamas. These were the same scholars who had demonised the late, secular

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and delegitimised his Fatah movement during the Second Intifada.

But the lies and misrepresentations were not the worst part of it. The direct attack on the last vestiges of humanity and dignity of the Palestinian people was, for me, the most enraging aspect. The Palestinians in Israel showed their solidarity with the people of Gaza and were consequently branded as a fifth column in the Jewish state; their right to remain in their homeland was cast as doubtful given their lack of support for Israeli aggression. Those among them who agreed – wrongly, in my opinion – to appear in the local media were interrogated rather than interviewed, as if they were inmates in a Shin Bet prison. Their appearance was prefaced and followed by humiliating racist remarks, and they were accused of belonging to an irrational and fanatical people. But the basest practice was in relation to a few Palestinian children from the Occupied Territories who were being treated for cancer in Israeli hospitals. Israel Radio went to the hospitals repeatedly to demand that the parents tell the Israeli audience how righteous Israel was in its attack and how evil Hamas was in Gaza's defence.

There are no bounds to the hypocrisy that righteous fury produces. The discourse of the generals and politicians moved erratically between self-compliments about the army's humanity in its 'surgical' operations, on the one hand, and the need to destroy Gaza once and for all – in a humane way, of course – on the other. This righteous anger has been a constant phenomenon

in the Israeli, and before that the Zionist, dispossession of Palestine. Every action, be it ethnic cleansing, occupation, massacre or destruction, is always portrayed as morally just, as an act of pure self-defence reluctantly perpetrated by Israel in its war against the worst kind of human beings. In his excellent volume, The Return of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel,[8] Gabi Piterberg explores the ideological origins and historical progression of this self-justification. Today in Israel, from the political left to the political right, from Likud and Kadima to Labour, from academia to the media, one can hear the righteous anger of a state that more than any other in the world is destroying and dispossessing an indigenous population.

It is crucial to explore the ideological origins of this and to draw the necessary political conclusions. Righteous anger shields the society and politicians in Israel from any external rebuke or criticism. Worse, it always translates into destructive policies against the Palestinians. With no internal mechanism of criticism and little external pressure, every Palestinian becomes a potential target. Given the firepower of the Jewish state, this will inevitably end in more killings, massacres and ethnic cleansing.

Self-righteousness is a powerful act of self-denial and justification. It explains why Israeli Jewish society is not moved by words of wisdom, logical persuasion or diplomatic dialogue. And if one does not wish to endorse violence as the means of opposing this state policy, there is only one way forward: challenging it

head-on as an evil ideology intended to cover human atrocities. Another name for this ideology is Zionism, and an international rebuke, not just for particular Israeli policies but for Zionism itself, is the only way of countering it. We have to try to explain both to the world, and to Israelis themselves, that Zionism is an ideology that endorses ethnic cleansing, occupation and massacres. What is needed now is not only a condemnation of the recent massacre in Gaza, but also a delegitimisation of the ideology that produced this policy and justifies it morally and politically. Let us hope that significant voices in the world will tell the Jewish state that this ideology and the state's overall conduct are intolerable and unacceptable, and for as long as they persist Israel will be boycotted and subject to sanctions.

But I am not naïve. I know that even the killing of hundreds of innocent Palestinians will not be enough to produce such a shift in Western public opinion. It is even more unlikely that the crimes committed in Gaza will move European governments to change their policy towards Palestine. And yet, we cannot allow 2009 to be just another year, less significant than 2008 – the sixtieth commemoration of the Nakba – which did not fulfil the hopes of many of us that the Western world's attitude to Palestine and the Palestinians would be dramatically transformed. It seems that even horrendous crimes, such as the genocide in Gaza, are treated as discrete events, unrelated to events in the past and disassociated from any ideology or system. In the next few years we have

to try to reconnect public opinion to the history of Palestine and the evils of Zionist ideology. This is the best means of explaining genocidal operations like the Gaza War and of pre-empting worse to come.

Academically, this has already been done. Our main challenge is to find an effective means of explaining the connection between Zionist ideology and past policies of destruction, and the present crisis. It is easier to do this when the world's attention is directed to Palestine. When the situation in Gaza is 'calmer' and less dramatic, the short attention span of the Western media once again marginalises and neglects the Palestinian tragedy, either because of horrific genocides in Africa, or the economic crisis or ecological doomsday scenarios around the world. While the Western media are not likely to be interested in historical stockpiling, it is only through an historical evaluation that the magnitude of the crimes committed against the Palestinian people during the last 60 years can be exposed. It is therefore the role of activist academics and an alternative media to insist on establishing this historical context. They should not shrink from educating public opinion and influencing the more conscientious politicians to view events in a wider historical perspective.

Similarly, we may be able to find the popular, as distinct from the highbrow, way of explaining that Israel's policy over the last 60 years stems from a racist hegemonic ideology called Zionism, shielded by layers of righteous fury. Despite the predictable accusations of anti-Semitism, it is time to associate Zionist ideology in

the public mind with a succession of familiar historical landmarks in Israel: the ethnic cleansing of 1948, the oppression of the Palestinians in Israel during the days of military rule, the brutal occupation of the West Bank after 1967 and the massacre in Gaza in 2009. Much as apartheid ideology explained the oppressive policies of the South African government, the Zionist ideology – in its most consensual and simplistic form – allowed Israeli governments, past and present, to dehumanise Palestinians wherever they were and to strive to destroy them. The methods altered from period to period, location to location, as did the narrative covering up these atrocities. But the clear pattern cannot be discussed only in ivory towers: it has to become part of the political discourse on contemporary reality in Palestine today.

Some of those committed to justice and peace in Palestine unwittingly evade this debate by focusing, understandably, on the Occupied Territories. Struggling against the criminal policies imposed on them by Israel is an urgent mission. But it should not convey the message to the West that Palestine consists only of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and that the Palestinians are limited to those living there. We should expand the representation of Palestine geographically and demographically by recounting the historical narrative of 1948 and thereafter, and demand equal human and civil rights for all the people who live, or used to live, in what today comprises Israel and the Occupied Territories.

By connecting Zionist ideology and past policies with present atrocities, we will be able to provide a clear and logical explanation for supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel. Challenging by non-violent means a self-righteous ideological state – aided by a largely mute world – that dispossesses and destroys the indigenous people of Palestine is a just and moral cause. It is also an effective way of galvanising public opinion not only against the genocidal policy such as the one perpetrated in Gaza, but, it is hoped, of preventing future atrocities. Most important, it will puncture the balloon of self-righteous fury that repeatedly suffocates the Palestinians. It will help to end Western passivity about the conduct of the Israeli state. As this proceeds, one hopes more and more people in Israel will begin to see the real nature of the crimes committed in their name, and that their fury will be directed against those who trapped them and the Palestinians into this unnecessary cycle of bloodshed and violence.

EPILOGUE
PROJECT: DISARM ISRAEL

When I was born, Israel was eight years old. When I joined the army, almost a quarter of century had passed since the foundation of the state. In those first 25 years of statehood, and almost a century of Zionist presence in Palestine, the two parallel spaces of the Israeli experience unfolded clearly and were already visible enough to the critical eye from within and without; but not for me until I started what we call in Israel the '*Ezrahut*' – life without uniform; namely when you finish your military service. Until then, I failed to see what lay beyond the thriving society and dynamic culture, to which I belonged and in which I felt happy and protected. I was totally oblivious to the parallel world of ethnic cleansing, apartheid, dispossession and occupation.

Rereading this book for the last time, I am not sure I fully answered the riddle of how I became such a defunct product of the Israeli educational system and aspirations. Even more troubling, I am not sure I have answered the question regarding why it took me so long. Was it really as I claim in this book the events in Lebanon in 1982 and my research for the doctorate on 1948 which made the difference? Was it only my

close ties with Palestinian intellectuals abroad and the distance from Israel that enabled me to deprogramme myself in such a fundamental and irreversible way? Why could I not see the reality for what it was without the geographical distance or the incidental choice of a professional career?

I revisited the explanations that were given for my 'betrayal' by my hostile Israeli colleagues – and there are quite a few of them around. It seems that people like me represent the new anti-Semitism, which had, like the old one, a strong self-hating component in it. And I think that through their distorted – and quite honestly insane – explanations I found the answer. It was my Jewish origins that did not allow me to tolerate anymore the lie and pushed me to take an active part in unmasking it.

I do not recall the precise moment of awakening, but there was such a moment when the un-Jewishness and immorality of the project became clear to me. I did, and still do equate Jewishness and morality, not as superior to any other position, but rather a comfortable heritage I belong to and I can rely on when making moral judgments. And from this perspective, the Zionist project abused this kind of Judaism and this kind of morality. Worst of all was the Zionist and later Israeli abuse of the Holocaust memory to justify the dispossession of Palestine that disconcerted and outraged me. The abuse is obvious and yet so many today can still not see it. It was this departure point human and Jewish that recently led so many Jews to

oppose crimes and policies done in the name of the state of Israel. In the name of the same heritage, Jews took an active role against apartheid in South Africa, racism in the United States, dictatorship in South America, imperialism in South East Asia and neo-colonialism in Africa. Israel should not have been a *sui generis* if the same moral and ethical departure points for these protestations would have been applied to it as well.

As crystal clear as this position is for me now, I do realise that even today it is difficult for others to make this very journey themselves because Zionism began as a noble response to an acute real problem of Jewish existence in Europe. But this noble impulse was gone the moment Palestine was chosen as the Zionist destination: it was not about rescuing people anymore, it was focused on colonisation and dispossession.

In fact, the Zionist movement appeared in central and east Europe in the late nineteenth century as a movement motivated by two noble impulses. The first was a search by the Jewish leadership for a safe haven for its community that was increasingly exposed to a hostile anti-Semitic environment with the potential, which was realised in World War Two, to become genocidal. The second impulse was a wish to redefine Judaism in a new secular form, inspired by the surrounding spring of nations when so many cultural, religious and ethnic groups redefined themselves in the new intoxicating terms of nationalism. The search for security and new self-determination was noble given the circumstances and quite common for its time.

However, the moment these impulses were territorialised, namely gravitated towards a specific piece of land, the national project of Zionism became a colonialist one. This was also normal at the time, when Europeans, for a plethora of reasons migrated to non-European lands, colonised for them by force of expulsion and genocide by their greedy governments. But noble it was not. Where genocide occurred alas there was no way back, but where colonisation did not deteriorate to such criminality, which was the norm, the settlers eventually returned to their countries of origin and the colonised became independent. The territory coveted by the Zionist movement, after other territorial options were examined, was Palestine where for hundreds of years the Palestinian people had lived.

The first Zionist settlers of Palestine arrived in the 1880s without declaring openly their dream of taking over the land and without disclosing their desire to cleanse it of its indigenous population. I hope that had I lived at that period I would have belonged to those who would have already seen the betrayal. The more difficult exercise in counter factual history is to assess how one would have acted during the late 1930s, when Palestine was gradually becoming one of the few places to which Jews could flee from the expanding Nazification of Europe. This is the most intriguing period which is the basis for the self-confidence of Zionists in Israel that ever since that moment they had the moral right to do everything in their power to survive. But the Jewish heritage provided the means to navigate safely between

the need to survive, given what happened in central Europe, and the temptation to use force to create a safe haven. Survival was a human and individual impulse not a political project of dispossession. The leadership of the community of settlers in Palestine was not interested in survival of the Jews, or looking for ways of confronting the calamity in Europe and the xenophobic attitudes of some of the Western governments. This is why it objected to a very positive attempt by Britain to save Jews by bringing them over to Britain but not to Palestine, or by finding ways of smuggling them into the USA despite the quota policies imposed by Washington. The way my family is scattered around the world indicates that most of them found a way out of the calamity without immigrating to Palestine. But even if one were in Palestine, if indeed survival was the issue, there were Palestinian partners for such a project; however if de-Arabising Palestine was the aim, there was no hope for Palestinian co-operation on this issue. The inevitable result was that the noble impulse for survival was transformed into a militarised project of dispossession ending with the making of an army that had won a state.

Until the 1930s, the leadership of the settler community was preoccupied with winning international support and legitimacy – which the British Empire gave them with the Balfour Declaration in November 1917 – and with gaining a foothold as a state within a state, which the British mandatory government allowed them to do. In that period their main predicament

was that world Jewry did not fancy Palestine either as their salvation or destination. It was only with the rise of Nazism and Fascism in Europe that the validity of Palestine as a safe haven for the Jewish people made sense and the community of settlers grew in numbers. Still, until the end of the British mandate, that population consisted of only one third of the overall population and it possessed less than ten per cent of the land in Palestine.

It was in the 1930s that the ideological weaponry, soon to be translated into real arms of destruction, was forged. A formula emerged which became consensual and almost sacred to those who led the Zionist movement then and those who lead the state of Israel today. The formula was simple: for the Zionist project in Palestine to succeed, the movement had to take over as much of the land of Palestine as possible and make sure that as few Palestinians as possible remained on it. This was – cynical though it may sound – in order for the new state to be democratic. The hope was to maintain a Jewish majority that would democratically vote for keeping the country eternally Jewish. In the 1930s, an additional recognition emerged: there was no hope that the indigenous people of Palestine would either diminish in numbers, or give up their natural right to live on their land as a free people, either then or in the future. Thus, for the 'existential' formula to succeed you needed military power of enforcement. This did not only mean building an army, but granting the military a prominent role, to the point of domination over all

other aspects of life in Palestine as a Jewish community. Critical Israeli sociologists traced with astonishment how systematic and ever-expanding this process has been since the conscious decision to militarise Zionism was made in the 1930s.[1] Political leadership, economic directorship, even social and cultural management are all won through a military background or a career in the security octopus that runs Israel. Moreover, the major decisions on foreign and defence policy – especially towards the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular – have since the 1930s been made by generals. The end result is only too visible today in Israel: the budget and the economy as a whole, the socialisation process, the educational system and even the media are all geared to service the army.

An Army with a State

Thus, the process of militarisation of Israeli society was intense and exponential. Israel indeed became an army with a state. Two aspects are in particular worth stressing in this context. The first is the militarisation of the educational system. Since this part of reality ensures that a militarised perception of life is reproduced time and again with each new generation of young men and women who will only be able to view reality through the perspective of an armed conflict, military values and wars. The second is the prominent economic role the Israeli arms industry plays in the state's national product and in particular how crucial it is for its trade

balance and export. Israel is the fifth largest exporter of arms in the world and hence any anti-militarised discourse, let alone action, can also be easily portrayed as undermining the very survival of the Israeli industry and economy.

This paramount position would not have been won without an occasional proof that the military force was badly needed. There are two types of military action: one a cyclic confrontation with regular Arab armies, not always initiated by Israel (the 1973 war was an Egyptian-Syrian initiative), but all could have been averted had not the Israeli army wished to be engaged in the battlefield for the sake of its own morale, its status and its need to experiment with weapons and exercise its soldiers. More importantly, each war enabled Israel to extend its territory in a never-ending quest for living space and margins of security. The last round of this kind of military confrontation was in 1973 and despite Israeli attempts to engage the Syrian army twice since, once in 1982 and then in 2006; Israeli troops have not fought a war against a conventional army in the last 35 years. Most of Israel's weaponry, the most sophisticated and updated in the world, was produced for huge land and air campaigns between mammoth-sized regular armies, but instead it has been used in the last 35 years mainly against unarmed civilians and guerrilla fighters. The collateral damage is inevitable, as are the doubts about Israeli ability to engage in a genuine conventional war.

The second use of the military power was for implementing the Zionist ideal and the formula mentioned above for upholding it, namely the need to maintain a hold over most of Palestine with as few Palestinians in it as possible, if the Zionist project is to survive.

It began with a carefully planned scheme of ethnically cleansing the country of as many Palestinians as possible in 1948 when the British mandate came to an end. The British government decided in February 1947, after 30 years of rule, to leave the question of Palestine in the hands of the UN with a genuine hope not to be involved any more in a country they developed on the one hand but helped to destroy by their pro-Zionist and anti-Palestinian policy on the other. After the tribulations of World War Two, the demise of British power in the world, a devastating economic crisis and loss of men on the ground, London had had enough.[2]

The Palestinian political elite and the Arab neighbouring countries hoped the UN would deliberate long on what to do with a minority of settlers living amidst an indigenous majority, but they were wrong. The UN was quick to decide on granting more than half of the country to that minority. The world was looking for a quick way out of the Holocaust and forcing the Palestinian to give up half of their homeland seemed a very convenient and reasonable price to pay. No wonder the Palestinian leadership and the Arab League publicly rejected the UN plan. This plan was articulated in a UN General Assembly resolution in November 1947

offering the Palestinians a mere 45 per cent of their home land. The Zionist leadership although unhappy at being granted only 55 per cent of the land, nonetheless realised that the resolution accorded a historical international recognition to their right of dispossessing Palestine. The UN, on top of it, due to the Zionist acceptance and the Palestinian rejection rebuked the Palestinians, praised the Israelis and ignored the fact that on the ground Jewish forces began to forcefully evict the Palestinians from their homeland.

In February 1948, within a year of the British decision to leave Palestine, the Zionist leadership began ethnically cleansing it. Three months later, when the British left, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were already refugees, pressuring the Arab world to take action, which it did on 15 May 1948. But the limited number of troops it sent to Palestine were no match for the efficient Jewish forces and they were defeated. The ethnic cleansing continued and at the end of it almost a million Palestinians became refugees (half of Palestine's population) and with them disappeared half of the country's villages and towns, erased from the face of the earth by the Jewish forces.[3]

The use of force against the Palestinians as means of achieving control over territory and containment of population continued after 1948. It was used in 1956 to massacre Palestinian villagers who were part of the small minority who had survived the 1948 ethnic cleansing and became Israeli citizens. Every now and then, but not too often, that minority would protest

against its oppression and would face the powerful fist of the Israeli military and police authorities.

It was then used, and this time frequently, in the areas Israel occupied in June 1967: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Whenever the Palestinians under occupation protested and struggled against the occupation, the Israeli military responded with all its firepower. Tanks, aircraft, naval destroyers and all the rest of the arsenal used in conventional war theatres against armies of similar might were mercilessly employed against the urban and rural areas of the densely populated West Bank and Gaza Strip, wreaking havoc and destruction of unimaginable proportions. Similarly, in two onslaughts on Lebanon in 1982 and 2006 like force was used to devastate the Lebanese urban and rural spaces.

Three chronological junctures are particularly worth mentioning to illustrate the ferocity of armaments when employed in order to implement a century old colonialist ideology. In October 2000, a frustrated Israeli army just forced to withdraw from southern Lebanon by the Hezbollah responded with its entire sophisticated army against a fresh Palestinian attempt to resist the occupation. For the first time F-16s and the mighty Merkava Tanks were used in an urbanicide to subdue the rebellion.[4] This same military might, but with more collateral damage and the addition of cluster bombs, was used against Lebanon in 2006 after two Israeli soldiers were captured by the Hezbollah. Finally, as is only too familiar by now, the Israeli army experimented with the most lethal state-of-the-art weapons, such as

phosphorous bombs and fibber glass shells, in order to quell a rebellious Gaza strip suffering under the yoke of closure and starvation for more than eight years.

If one adds to the deadly arsenal Israel possesses the armament of its Arab neighbours, always engaged in a crazy arms race, first fed by the cold war then by world military industry, it becomes obvious how any step towards disarming people of the ideological urge to use power could contribute to peace and reconciliation. Moreover, one has to consider the nuclear option available to Israel but which has not been used (although there have been reports of deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on several occasions). Atom bombs are still considered in Israel a doomsday weapon to be used only in case of an imminent defeat of the Jewish state. But I feel this is no longer the main scenario among the political and military elite of the state. There it is considered the main factor enhancing the myth of Israeli invincibility. Hence the desperate attempt of Arab regimes such as Syria and Egypt and, elsewhere in the Middle East, Iran, to follow suit; all leading to an ever-growing destructive capability that can be realised at any moment.

As suggested, all this armament and its frequent use are mainly, not exclusively, the product of an ideological mind set. The axiom is that colonisation of part of the Arab world was an existential inevitability for the Jewish people and that only by building a formidable military force so as to gain full control of the land but with as few of its indigenous people remaining

as possible, could it be realised. The arms amassed and their frequent deployment do not menace only the Palestinians, they prevent the Jews in Israel from leading a normal life and they pose a threat to the stability of the region, and quite probably beyond it. While disarmament, in the literal sense, is perhaps a dream, and quite frankly could turn into a nightmare, if only one side is disarmed, diffusing of the ideology is feasible, reliable and peaceful.

Diffuse and Disarm: Past Attempts and a Future Road Map

As mentioned in this book, in the 1980s, Israeli intellectuals, academics, playwrights, musicians, journalists and educators developed second thoughts about the validity of Zionist ideology, and some no longer take it for granted. Their critique on Zionism varied in its intensity and severity, but, for want of a better term, they were all dubbed post-Zionists not anti-Zionists. All in all, their understanding of Zionism was very different from the way it was interpreted by the vast majority of Jews in Israel: in their depiction Zionism was and remained a settler colonialist movement, informing a militarised society and nearly an apartheid system. This post Zionist critique entered for a while into the public sphere and influenced, albeit in a very limited way, the educational curricula, some of the documentary films on television and the general discourse. This new thinking was there for about a

decade, during the 1990s. Then came the Second Intifada, or uprising (2000), and the urge for openness subsided and almost totally disappeared in the process described in details in this book.[5]

The Jewish society in Israel at the beginning of the twenty-first century has closed the door that was prised slightly open in the 1990s. Today, it has become even more rigid in its ideological convictions and intransigence. Hence, all the factors mentioned above about militarism and armament are still relevant in this time and age. But it is this exposure of a harsh ideological society that may harbour the seeds for a future change. The logic of the present ideological realities, and their military implications, are that one cannot hope for a change from within in the near future. Without this change, arms production, lethal deployment of weapons and their deadly impact will continue unabated. So it is urgent to look for alternative ways of changing a public mind and a political system, with the realisation that a change from within is right now impossible.

In the face of more than a century of dispossession and 40 years of occupation the Palestinian national movement and activists were looking for the appropriate response to the devastating policies implemented against them. They have tried it all – armed struggle, guerrilla warfare, terrorism and diplomacy: nothing worked. And yet they are not giving up and now they are proposing a nonviolent strategy – that of boycott, sanctions and divestment. By these means they wish to persuade Western governments to save not only them,

but ironically also the Jews in Israel from an imminent bloodbath. This strategy bred the call for a cultural boycott of Israel. The demand is voiced by every part of Palestinian existence: by the civil society under occupation and by Palestinians in Israel. It is supported by the Palestinian refugees and is led by members of the Palestinian communities in exile.

BDS, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions as a three-tiered strategy for the future has become a valid option because of a fundamental shift in public opinion in the West. And indeed if there is anything new in the never-ending tragedy of Palestine it is the clear shift in public opinion in the West. Britain is a case in point. I remember coming to these isles in 1980 when supporting the Palestinian cause was confined to the left, and indeed, to a very particular section and ideological stream within the left. The post-Holocaust trauma and guilt complex, military and economic interests and the charade of Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East all played a role in providing immunity for the state of Israel. Very few were moved, so it seems, by the dispossession of half of Palestine's native population, destruction of half of their villages and towns, discrimination against the minority among them who live within Israel's borders through an apartheid system and the division into enclaves of 2.5 million of them in a harsh and oppressive military occupation.

Almost 30 years later, it seems that all these filters and cataracts have been removed. The magnitude of the ethnic cleansing of 1948 is well known, the suffering

of the people in the Occupied Territories recorded and described even by the US president as unbearable and inhuman. In a similar way, the destruction and depopulation of the greater Jerusalem area is noted daily and the racist nature of the policies towards the Palestinians in Israel are frequently rebuked and condemned.

The reality today, in 2010, is described by the UN as 'a humanitarian catastrophe'. The conscious and conscientious sections of British society know full well who caused this catastrophe. It is no longer related to elusive circumstances, or to 'the conflict' – it is seen clearly as the outcome of Israeli policies throughout the years. When Archbishop Desmond Tutu was asked for his reaction to what he saw in the occupied territories, he noted sadly that it was worse than apartheid. He should know.

This qualitative change in public opinion and mood is visible in other Western countries; needless to say that in the vast world this has been the case for years now. A similar mood prevailed towards apartheid in South Africa. The reality there then and the reality in Palestine now prods decent people, either as individuals or as members of organisations, to voice their outrage against the continued oppression, colonisation, ethnic cleansing and starvation in Palestine. They are looking for ways of protest and some even hope to convince their governments to change their old policy of indifference and inaction in the face of the continued destruction of Palestine and the Palestinians. Many among them

are Jews, though, according to the logic of the Zionist ideology, these atrocities are perpetrated in their name and quite a few among them are veterans of previous civil struggles in this country and for similar causes all over the world. They are not confined any more to one political party and they come from all walks of life.

So far the British government, like other Western governments, is not moved. It was also passive when the anti-apartheid movement in Britain demanded of its government to impose sanctions on South Africa. It took several decades for that activism from below to reach the political top. It takes longer in the case of Palestine: guilt about the Holocaust, distorted historical narratives and contemporary misrepresentation of Israel as a democracy seeking peace and the Palestinians as eternal Islamic terrorists blocked the flow of the popular impulse. But it is beginning to find its way and manifest its presence, despite the continual demonisation of Islam and Arabs and notwithstanding the persistent accusation that any criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic. The third sector, that important link between civil society and government agencies, has shown us the way. One trade union after another, one professional group after another, all sent a clear message recently: enough is enough. They do so in the name of decency, human morality and basic civil commitment not to remain idle in the face of atrocities of the kind Israel has and still is committing against the Palestinian people.

The validity of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions option is a first step in triggering a process of disarming

Israel from its lethal ideology and its real material arms. Boycotts and external pressure have never been attempted in the case of Israel, a state that wishes to be included in the civilised democratic world. Israel has indeed enjoyed such a status since its creation in 1948 and, therefore, succeeded in fending off the many United Nations' resolutions that condemned its policies and, moreover, managed to obtain a preferential status in the European Union. Israeli academia's elevated position in the global scholarly community epitomises this western support for Israel as 'the only democracy' in the Middle East. Shielded by this particular support for academia and other cultural media, the Israeli army and security services can go on, and will go on, demolishing houses, expelling families, abusing citizens and killing children and women almost daily without being called to account, regionally or globally, for their crimes.

Military and financial support is significant in enabling the Jewish state to pursue the policies it does. Any decrease in such aid is most welcome in the struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East. But the cultural image Israel enjoys feeds the political decision in the West to unconditionally support the Israeli destruction of Palestine and the Palestinians. A message that will be directed specifically against those who officially represent Israeli culture (spearheaded by the state's academic institutes which have been particularly culpable in sustaining the oppression since 1948 and the

occupation since 1967), can be the start of a successful campaign for disarming the state from its ideological constraints (as similar acts at the time had activated the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa).

External pressure is effective in the case of a state in which people want to be regarded as part of the civilised world, but whose government, with their explicit or implicit help, pursues policies that violate every human and civil right. Neither the UN nor the US and European governments and societies have sent a message to Israel that these policies are unacceptable and have to be stopped. It is up to the civil societies to send messages to Israeli academics, businessmen, artists, hi-tech industrialists and every other section in society, that there is a price tag attached to such policies.

There are encouraging signs that civil society and particular professional unions are willing to intensify the pressure they can exert. The achievements are symbolic in legitimising a demand for disarming the state from its practices and ideological prejudices.

However, pressure is not enough if an effective dismantling of the ideology that produces the weaponry is desired. It should be complemented by a process of re-education in Israel itself, though, as noted in the beginning of this article, the chances for a change from within are very slim. Pressure from the outside is called for because there is an urgent need to prevent the continued destruction of Palestine and the Palestinian people. However, that does not mean that one should

give up the attempt to dismantle the ideological weapon by education and dissemination of alternative knowledge and understanding. The two are actually interlinked. Those very few and brave ones who toil relentlessly in Israel to re-educate their society from a pacifist, humanist and non-Zionist perspective, are empowered by those who pressure the state to act along these lines and leave behind the old habits of aggression and militarism.

I would like to mention in this respect one particular group 'New Profile'.[6] It is committed to introduce to and disseminate among younger Israelis the idea of pacifism. They are the ones who inform young recruits that even according to the Israeli law you are allowed to declare conscientious objection from serving in the IDF on pacifist grounds. They produce educational material to counter the militaristic educational system and take part in debating these issues. They became potentially so successful that the Israeli security service declared them a menace and a threat to national security. Their pure, simple message of the sanctity of life, the stupidity of war and militarism, is not yet connected to a more mature political deconstruction of the reality in Israel and Palestine, but it will be one day and could serve a potent transformative agent. Perhaps it is so effective precisely because it is so pure.

The Palestinians of course have an agency in this as well. Non-violence, rather than violence, has less immediate effect on alleviating an oppressive reality, but

has long-term dividends. But at this stage no one can interfere in the affairs of a liberation movement torn by different visions and haunted by years of defeat. What is important is to ask for a Palestinian contribution to a post-conflictual vision free of retribution and revenge. A non-militarised vision for both Jews and Arabs, if transformed from the realm of utopia and hallucination into a concrete political plan, together with the outside pressure and the educational process from within, can help enormously in disarming ideologically the state of Israel.

Finally, the Jewish communities in the world, and in particular in the Western world, have a crucial role to play in this disarmament. Their moral and material support for Israel indicates endorsement of the ideology behind the state. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the last few years a voice of the non-Zionist Jews is increasingly heard under the slogan 'not in my name'. The main weapon official Israel uses against the outside pressure, or any criticism for that matter, is that any such stance is anti-Semitic. The presence of Jewish voices in the call for peace and reconciliation accentuates the illogical way in which the state of Israel tries to justify the crimes against the Palestinians in the name of the crimes perpetrated in Europe against the Jews.

The project of disarming Israel is thus presented here as an ideological disarming. It begins with asking people concerned with the realities in Palestine and

Israel, for whatever reason, to learn the history of the Zionist project, to understand its *raison d'être* and its long-term impact upon the indigenous people of Palestine. One would hope that such historical knowledge will associate the violence raging in that land with the historical roots and the ideological background of Zionism as it developed through the years.

Recognition of the role of the ideology that necessitated the building of a fortress with one of the most formidable armies in the world, and one of the most flourishing arms industry, enables activists to tackle tangible goals in the struggle for peace and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine, and in the general struggle for disarmament in the world.

An efficient process of ideological disarming should avoid unnecessary demonisation, should clearly distinguish between political systems and 'people' as such, should clearly perceive how reality is distorted, information manipulated, how educational systems and other socialisation organs can indoctrinate and governments misrepresent and demonise whom they wish.

This is in essence a strategy of activism that would initiate a very tough dialogue with a state and a society that wish to be part of the 'civilised' world, while remaining racist and supremacist. In it lives a society that does not wish, or is unable, to see that its ideological nature and its policies locate it within the group of rogue states of this world. For better or

for worse, what academics in the West teach about Israel, what journalists report about it, what conscious and conscientious people think about it and what politicians eventually decide to do about it, are the things that hold the key to changing the reality in Israel and Palestine. This dismal reality has repercussions not only for peace in the Middle East but also for the world as a whole. But it is not a lost case, and now is the time to act.

APPENDIX

TANTURA: THE EVIDENCE SPEAKS

I have no doubt a massacre took place in Tantura. I did not walk in the streets and shout it. It is not a case for any pride. But once the affair was publicised, one should tell the truth. After 52 years, the state of Israel is strong and mature enough to face its past.

Eli Shimoni, former Senior Officer in the Alexandroni Brigade, 4 February 2000.

On 21 January 2000, the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv* published a long article about the killings in Tantura. Written by journalist Amir Gilat, it was based mainly on a master's thesis by Teddy Katz, a student in the Department of Middle Eastern History at Haifa University. Entitled 'The Exodus of the Arabs from Villages at the foot of Southern Mount Carmel', the thesis had been awarded the highest grade for a master's thesis a few months earlier. It had been submitted in March 1998, but because of complications unrelated to the law case it was examined only at the end of 1999.

Katz's methodology was micro-historical research on the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, focused on five Palestinian coastal villages between Hadera and Haifa, and especially the villages of Umm Zaynat and Tantura. The testimonies reproduced in his fourth chapter tell a chilling tale of a massacre, the gist of which is that on 22–23 May 1948 some 200 unarmed Tantura villagers, mostly young men, were shot dead by Haganah troops (the main pre-state militia) after the village had surrendered, following an onslaught.

The thesis and the article caused an academic and legal controversy in Israel that has not yet ended. I was deeply involved in the Katz affair and later in the Tantura affair.

The former was the struggle of Teddy Katz, himself a Zionist, against the mainstream Zionist academia and polity about the history of 1948. On the one side was a graduate student, whom I alone supported among Israeli academics, but who received widespread legal and political support from the Palestinian Israeli community and from a few Jewish activists, and on the other an establishment that did all it could to discourage research that uncovered uncomfortable aspects of history, such as 'ethnic cleansing' in the 1948 war. The Tantura affair was the fierce debate about the veracity of events in this particular village.

What Happened in Tantura?

On 10 March 1948, the Haganah issued a military blueprint for the situation after the British relinquished their Mandate and left the country. The Arab world and the Palestinian leadership had rejected the UN proposal to partition Palestine. The blueprint prepared by the Jewish military command included Plan D (*dalet* in Hebrew). Plans A, B and C had formulated earlier Zionist strategy *vis-à-vis* an unfolding and changing reality. Plan D was in essence a scheme for taking over by force the areas allocated by the UN to the Jewish state, as well as additional territories designated for the Arab state that were deemed vital to the survival of the Jewish community. The plan instructed Jewish forces to cleanse the Palestinian areas falling under their control. The Haganah had several brigades at its disposal, and each received a list of villages it had to occupy. Most of the villages were destined to be destroyed; only in exceptional cases were the troops ordered to leave them intact.[1]

One of these brigades, the Alexandroni Brigade, was entrusted with such a list. Its mission was to Judaise the coastal plain stretching from Haifa in the north to Tel Aviv in the south, an area containing about 64 Palestinian villages. Except in very few cases, villagers left their houses without much of a fight. Where resistance was attempted,

quite often with the help of Arab volunteers belonging to the Arab Salvation Army (volunteers from neighbouring Arab states headed by Fawzi al-Qawqji), the brigade immediately destroyed the villages and expelled their inhabitants.

By 15 May 1948, the day the Jewish state was declared, 58 villages in this area had already been erased from the earth. Six remained intact. Three of them, Jaba', Ijzim and Ein Ghazal, would be destroyed in July that year. Two, Fureidis and Jisr al-Zarqa, lying about 20 miles south of Haifa, still remain today. They provided cheap labour to the veteran Jewish settlements of Zichron Yaacov and Binyamina and were spared.[2] Tantura, the largest of the six remaining villages, was located in the middle of Jewish territory like 'a bone in the throat', according to the Alexandroni official account of the war.[3] On May 22, its day came.

Tantura was an old Palestinian village on the Mediterranean coast. It was large in local terms, with around 1,500 inhabitants whose livelihood depended on agriculture, fishing, and menial work in nearby Haifa.[4] In Jewish sources of the time, Tantura is described as a pastoral village that was not involved in 'hostile activity' until the outbreak of the 1948 war. The villagers had strong ties with nearby Jewish settlements. In November 1947 these ties were cut as a result of the hostilities, but the villagers did not actively participate in the fighting until April 1948. Everything changed with the Jewish occupation of Haifa at the end of April and the eviction of the nearby village of Qaisaria. These two developments weakened the Tantura villagers' sense of security. Moreover, foreign elements entered the village's local politics, refugees from other villages and 50 fighters from the Arab Salvation Army.[5] A dispute developed in the village about whether or not to participate in the struggle against the Jews. Some notables recommended that they should be allowed to reach a surrender agreement. After a heated debate, it was decided to try to defend the village, which for the Haganah meant that it became a 'hostile base'. The Alexandroni brigade's command decided to occupy the village and evict its inhabitants.

On the night of 22 May 1948 the village was attacked. At first the Jewish commander contemplated sending in a van with a loudspeaker calling on people to surrender, but this did not happen. The offensive came from four flanks, which was uncommon. The brigade usually closed in on villages from three flanks, leaving an 'open gate' on the fourth to put the people to flight. Lack of coordination led to a full encirclement, leaving a large number of villagers in the hands of the occupying force. The captured villagers were moved to the beach. The men were separated from the women and children, who were sent to nearby Furiedis, to be reunited with some of the men a year and a half later.

From this point I have reconstructed the narrative, but differentiated between rumours, hearsay evidence, eyewitness accounts and documented evidence.

Rumours

In 1997, as part of his dissertation research, Teddy Katz interviewed Palestinians and Jews who had participated in the battle of Tantura. Several of his interviewees testified that they heard a rumour of a big massacre taking place in the village after its people had surrendered.[6] The rumour industry concerning Tantura was already active in 1948. Reports of robbery and rape reached the UN shortly after the campaign. A different kind of rumour was hinted at by the Palestinian Israeli novelist Emile Habibi, in his novel, *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist*. One of its heroines, Baqia of Tantura (Arabic for 'the surviving woman of Tantura') lives under the spell of traumatic events that occurred in her village in 1948.[7] Katz's interviewees were more specific, but could not give numbers or accurate details. Figures of a few hundred were mentioned, and horror stories of torture and rape added to the grim picture.

In the rumours, one person in particular figures as the villain of the piece: Shimshon Mashvitz, a Jewish intelligence officer whose sphere of activity covered the village of Tantura,

came from the nearby settlement of Givat Ada. Another intelligence officer, Tuvia Lishansky, who had been with Mashvitz in Tantura, asserted in his interview that it stands to reason that someone like Mashvitz would cold-bloodedly kill unarmed prisoners of war.[8] The tale also has a redeeming angel, Yaacov Epstein, the *mukhtar* or headman of Zichron Yaacov, who stopped the killing. One Palestinian witness who commended Epstein for his intervention said his arrival 'came too late'.[9]

Hearsay Evidence

Micha Vitkon, a soldier in the Alexandroni battalion, said at the beginning of his interview: 'Tantura, oh dear, I don't know if you know, but I will not tell you.'[10] But as the interview proceeded he told the facts as he had heard them from others in his unit immediately after the events described. He said that an officer in the battalion, whom he named, executed several people one after the other because they refused to tell him where the villagers' weapons were hidden (mostly hunting rifles from the First World War).[11]

Muhammad Abu Hanna is a resident of the Yarmuk refugee camp in Syria, where most of the Tantura refugees live today, apart from some in Israel and the West Bank. He was interviewed by Palestinian historians after the Tantura affair had broken out in Israel. He recalled hearing gunfire from the location on the beach where the men were taken after they were rounded up and separated from their women and children. Many other former Tanturians in Yarmuk remembered hearing the shots, but did not see anything. They had no doubt, however, that what they heard was the execution of the men taken from the group on the beach.[12]

Joel Skolnik, a sapper in the Alexandroni battalion, was wounded but heard from other soldiers that it was 'was one of the most shameful battles fought by the Israeli army.'[13] According to him, local snipers shooting at the soldiers triggered the killing of the villagers after they had ostensibly

surrendered by waving a white flag. He heard that the soldiers did not leave anyone alive, either women or children. He was also told that two soldiers in particular did the killings, and that they would have continued had people from Zichron Yaacov not stopped them, but he could not name the soldiers. Nor could he give an exact figure of the number of people shot, although he did point to the need to dig a mass grave after the battle.[14]

Eli Shimoni, the person responsible for new recruits in the Alexandroni brigade, also heard about executions. He was interviewed in January 2001 in the Israeli press and reported hearing about the massacre from three people who refused to repeat again what they had disclosed. According to his testimony, they said that:

> The prisoners were led in groups to a distance of 200 metres away and there they were shot. Soldiers would come to the commander in chief and say, 'My cousin was killed in the war.' His commander then instructed the troops to take a group of five to seven people aside and execute them. Another soldier came and said that his brother died in one of the battles. For a brother, the retribution was higher. The commander ordered the troops to take a larger group and they were shot, and so on.[15]

Shaul Dagan, Zichron Yaacov's local historian, who was interviewed on the same occasion, told the press that in about 1985 the leaders of this settlement, Yaacov Epstein and Zvi Zukerman, who had since died, told him that the Alexandroni people committed a massacre in Tantura and their own attempt to intervene was blocked. But most of the Jewish witnesses who heard, but did not see, atrocities being committed in the village, do not refer to summary executions after the battle had ended. They heard disturbing news about a chase in the village by soldiers who had run amok and indiscriminately shot everyone on sight.

The hearsay evidence from Palestinian informants was a repetition of stories about a summary execution of young men aged between 13 and 30 by soldiers who had come with

lists of suspects. The suspects were taken group by group from the gathering of men on the beach and were shot dead back in the village. They could not say what these men were suspected of.[16] The difference between a rumour and hearsay evidence is that numbers become clearer, as does the scope of the killing. Abu Fihmi, a native of Tantura who was in jail in Zichron Yaacov's police station, heard that the army announced that 250 Palestinians had died in Tantura. He also heard that only a few people were killed in the battle itself.[17]

Hearsay evidence reiterated the stories relating to rape mentioned in the rumour section. Few Palestinian witnesses talked about a specific rape of a woman and most of them insist that very few women were harassed.[18] Jews and Palestinians confirm that three women who tried to run away from the village were shot.

Eyewitness Accounts

The Jewish eyewitnesses, apart from one, remember soldiers running amok through the village and shooting, in an attack that left about 100 people dead.[19] Several Palestinians recall this too, but place greater emphasis on the summary executions, which were engraved in their memory.[20] Almost all the Palestinians interviewed witnessed the cold-blooded executions.

The Rampage

Yossef Graf was one of few guides from Zichron Yaacov who led the battalion troops to the village. He witnessed at first-hand the soldiers running amok in Tantura. He testified that the rampage began because snipers were shooting at the soldiers after the villagers had surrendered by waving their *kaffiyyes* (traditional white head-coverings).[21] Joel Skolnik, another local guide, saw the beginning of the rampage with binoculars as a sapper, he was one of the few with such equipment. Like Graf, he attributed the rampage to the

shooting at Jewish soldiers after the village surrendered. He added that the sniping had killed a very popular soldier, adding to the rage and the impetus to kill indiscriminately.[22]

The same narrative is corroborated by a third civilian guide from Zichron Yaacov attached to the military, Mordechai Sokoler. He owned tractors and was therefore called in at the end of the rampage and other killings to supervise the burial. He remembered burying 230 bodies. As noted, only about 20 villagers were killed in the actual fighting. Sokoler attributed all the deaths to the rampage. The exact number was clear in his mind, because 'I laid them one by one in the grave.'[23] Since he supervised the burial after the fighting had ceased, it is likely that the number he gave included everyone killed, in whatever manner. It is probable that Yossef Graf's estimation of 150 people killed in the rampage is more accurate. He described it as 'a justified massacre'.[24]

Yossef Cohen, another guide from Zichron Yaacov, also witnessed the rampage. He remembers civilians doing the killing 'out of hatred. I cannot explain it otherwise.'[25] Intelligence officer Tuvia Lishanski, who nearly died in the rampage as he was not wearing uniform at the time, also witnessed this attack. He assumed it happened because it was supposed to be an easy campaign, yet the battalion had lost twelve people, so it was out of 'vengeance'.[26] Lishanski commented that such a revengeful response was not typical. He attributed this behaviour to the Alexandroni Brigade's inexperience in tough battles. He was unable to give a figure, but thought that a lot of Palestinians were killed in the rampage.

The Executions

The second massacre was a systematic execution of able-bodied young men by soldiers and intelligence officers. One eyewitness, Abu Mashayich, was in Tantura staying with a friend. He was originally from Qaysariya, the village that had been destroyed and its residents expelled a short time

before. He saw with his own eyes the execution of 85 young men of Tantura, taken in groups of ten to a graveyard and the nearby mosque. He thought that even more were executed and estimated 110. He saw Shimshon Mashvitz supervising the whole operation. 'He had a Sten [sub-machine gun] and killed them. They stood next to the wall, all facing the wall. He came from the back and shot them at the head, all of them.'[27] He further testified seeing gleeful Jewish soldiers watching the executions. The people were selected for execution according to lists of villagers suspected of being involved in skirmishes with Jews before the war, or of having connections with the Arab Salvation Army, or just being aged between 13 and 30 and therefore being able-bodied men who could fight.[28]

Fawzi Muhamad Tanj, known as Abu Khalid, also witnessed the executions. In his account the village men were separated from the women, and groups of seven to ten were then taken and executed. He witnessed the killing of 90 people.[29] Mahmud Abu Salih of Tantura corroborated the killing of 90 people. He was 17 years old then, and his most vivid memory is of a father being killed in front of his children. Abu Salih kept in touch with one of the sons, who was deranged by the whole affair and never recovered. Abu Salih also witnessed the execution of seven male members of his family.[30]

Mustafa Abu Masri (Abu Jamil), aged 13, was spared due to his age and sent to the group of women and children. Another dozen members of his family aged between 13 and 30 were less fortunate and he saw them shot dead. The sequence of events he describes makes a chilling read. His father encountered a Jewish officer known and trusted by the family, and therefore let his family group go with the officer, only to discover later that they were shot. Abu Jamil recalled a total of 125 people killed in summary executions. He observed Mashvitz going around the gathered people with a whip, lashing them 'just for the fun of it'.[31] Anis Ali Jarban told similar horror stories about Mashvitz. He was

from the nearby village of Jisr al-Zarqa, and his family came to Tantura believing it was a safer place.[32]

Abu Fihmi corroborated the executions. He testified that they were on the beach, but added that the hundreds of Palestinians sitting there did not resist the killing, as they were surrounded by sub-machine guns mounted on boats and on the coast. He did not see the actual shooting, as it was done in the village, but did witness the attempt of some people from Zichron Yaacov to stop it, in particular Yaacov Epstein. Epstein was told by soldiers in the village that the executed were conscripts from Arab countries, but he refuted this angrily and shouted at the killers that he knew the people and they were all local villagers. Yet the official history of the Alexandroni Brigade comments that only 50 foreign volunteers were reported in Tantura.[33] Muhammad Abu Hanna recalled that 'my uncle survived thanks to the intervention of the *mukhtar* of the Jewish colony of Zichron Yaacov'.[34]

Tuvia Lishanski reaffirmed the use of lists to round up suspects for immediate execution. But it is not clear whether he saw this happening with his own eyes. He also doubted that Mashvitz was the main culprit, but he is the only one of that opinion.[35]

Nimr Dib Ali Jarban, Anis Ali Jarban's brother from Jisr al-Zarqa, witnessed the calling out of names from a list and the selection of those to be shot. He assumed that the list included notables in the village who had declined the offer of surrender before the war.[36] Anis added that masked people from Jewish intelligence identified the men to be shot. He saw the gunning down of 27 persons.[37] Mordechai Sokoler was one of those wearing masks, according to his own testimony and to that of Zhudi Abu Nida, a survivor from Tantura aged 32 on the day the village was occupied. Sokoler stated that he wore a mask, since 'I was ashamed I knew the people from the past'. This was in vain, because he was recognised anyway. Abu Nida, on the other hand, accused him of hiding behind the mask in order to identify prospective victims.[38]

The Burial

Sokoler, as mentioned, supervised the burial of 230 Palestinians. Several Palestinians who took part in digging the mass grave told of a terrifying moment when they realised that they were about to be killed themselves, had not Yaccov Epstein and others arrived in time to save them.[39]

Abu Khalid is one of those who witnessed the grave-digging. Murani Muhsayn, known as Abu Hasan, saw the digging of two mass graves, each containing 45 bodies.[40] Abu Fihmi was one of those recruited first to identify the bodies and then to help carry them to the grave. Shimon Mashvitz ordered him to number the bodies and he counted 95 of them. Jamila Ihsan Shura Khalil observed the bodies being put onto carts and pushed to the graveyard.[41]

Treatment of Women

As noted in the earlier discussion on rumour, the UN reported to the IDF that it had received reports of rape and abuse. The hearsay evidence also made reference to a couple of cases of rape and harassment. Men and women alike felt that giving names and specifics here was very difficult. Several of the eyewitnesses testified to maltreatment. Some reported a humiliating ceremony on the beach in which women were stripped of their jewellery, which was never returned.[42] Later, they were physically harassed by the soldiers and, according to an eyewitness, one woman had been taken and raped. Najiah Ayub said: 'I saw that the troops that encircled us tried to touch the women but were rejected by them. When they saw that the women would not succumb, they stopped. When we were on the beach, they took two women and tried to undress them, claiming they had to search the bodies.'[43]

The Documents

One of the most senior officers interviewed, Shlomo Ambar, refused to give the interviewer details of what he had seen.

But he did say, 'I want to forget what happened there.' His interviewer pressed him, but all he was willing to add was:

> I connect this to the fact that I went to fight against the Germans [he served in the British Army's Jewish Brigade]. The Germans were the worst enemy the Jewish people had, but when we fought we fought according to the laws of war dictated by the international community. The Germans did not kill prisoners of war, they killed Slav prisoners of war, but not British, not even Jewish.'[44]

He admitted hiding things about Tantura: 'I did not talk then, why should I talk now?'[45]

Ambar's evasive discourse is very close to that in the IDF documents, on which a purely empirical research method would have had to rely. On 1 June 1948 the chief of General Staff of the IDF, in an unusual and unprecedented manner, asked to verify what he had heard from his intelligence officers. 'There were hints that our soldiers who entered Tantura committed many unnecessary sabotage actions after the occupation.' Twelve days later he was told that 'a certain damage was caused by our people immediately after their entrance to the village. It happened mainly as a result of battle excitement.'[46] As noted by Benny Morris in relation to a better documented act of massacre in 1953 in Qibyya, the IDF term relating to the killing of civilians was 'sabotage'.[47]

The documents shed light on another aspect of the affair. They reveal the discrepancy between the number of people killed in the battle itself and the number of bodies buried by Mordechai Sokoler a few days later. The IDF reported 20 Palestinians dead in the battle, a number corroborated by the battalion commander. Sokoler supervised the burial of 230 Palestinians and testified that the women and children of the dead men had to stay with the bodies for two days before the burial began. The digging was hurried and sloppy, the bodies had become inflated and the burial had to be repeated.

The IDF documents do not give a figure and do not refer directly to a large number of casualties. But several references

indicate clearly that a large group of people died in Tantura, many more than the 20 killed in the fighting itself. The first indication is a document ordering soldiers to make sure that 'everything is all right with the mass grave in Tantura'. Another instructs the soldiers to shovel additional graves in order to prevent epidemics. In fact, the IDF requested injections against typhus because of the dead corpses lying around, as well as asking for disinfectant to be sprayed on the ground and in the water sources because first signs of disease had already appeared in the area. In one document the reference is to corpses of animals, in another to dead human bodies.[48]

But there is also a Palestinian document, the language of which is far from vague or ambivalent. It appears in the memoirs of a Haifa notable, Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib. A few days after the battle he recorded the testimony of a Palestinian who told of summary executions of dozens of Palestinians on the beach:[49]

> On the night of 22–23 May the Jews attacked from three sides and landed in boats from the seaside. We resisted in the streets and houses and in the morning the corpses were seen everywhere. I shall never forget this day all my life. The Jews gathered all women and children in a place where they dumped all bodies, for them to see their dead husbands, fathers and brothers and [to] terrorise them, but they remained calm.
>
> They gathered men in another place, took them in groups and shot them dead. When women heard this shooting, they asked their Jewish guard about it. He replied, we are taking revenge for our dead. One officer selected 40 men and took them to the village square. Each four were taken aside. They [would] shoot one, and order the other three to dump his body in a pig pit. Then they [would] shoot another and the other two [would] carry his body to the pit, and so on.

In one way or another, more than 30 Palestinians and seven Jewish witnesses told a tale of massacre. More information may be revealed in future. There is still a file on 'Jewish

War Atrocities' in the IDF archives that is inaccessible to the public.[50] The victims of Tantura wanted to excavate the parking lot of the Tantura resort beach, where they believe the bodies of their loved ones lie buried, but have so far been refused.

Implications for Historiography

The Tantura case study is relevant to a wider discussion of history in general, and of Palestine in particular. I would like to make two observations, one theoretical and the other methodological. The first concerns military historiography. In the professional academic historiography of the 1948 war, the clashes taking place in Palestine and Israel after the end of the British Mandate have been treated as part of an overall war between two armies. Such an assumption calls for the expertise of military historians on the military strategy and tactics of both sides.

Atrocities are part of the theatre of war, where events are judged on a moral basis very different from that in a non-combat situation. For instance, the death of civilians during a battle is accepted as an integral part of the conflict, and is deemed necessary, or at least unavoidable, as part of the overall attempt to win a war (of course, even within a war context there are exceptional atrocities that are treated as illegitimate in military historiography).

Such a view also entails the concept of parity. It is taken for granted that the historian's task is to assess the balance of power and evaluate its impact on the end result. The concept of parity relates to questions of responsibility. If two structures such as national armies are involved in a military confrontation, then their hierarchies, chains of command, manpower, armaments, strategies, tactics and conduct can quite easily be reconstructed by contemporary historians.

I suggest that the events unfolding after May 1948 in Israel and Palestine should be reviewed not only in terms of military history, but within a paradigm of ethnic cleansing. Historio-

graphically, this means that the acts were part of domestic policies implemented by a regime *vis-à-vis* its citizens. The area between Haifa and Tel Aviv with its 64 villages was within the new state of Israel. It was not a battlefield between two armies, but a civilian space invaded by military troops. Ethnic ideology, settlement policy and demographic strategy were the decisive factors here, not military plans. Massacres, premeditated or not, are integral to and not an exceptional part of an ethnic cleansing, although history has taught us that in many cases expulsion was preferred to killing.

The historical evidence in the archive of the regime committing the ethnic cleansing does not give a clear picture, because the regime's aim from the beginning is to obscure its intentions – as can be seen in the language of orders and in post-event reports. This is why the evidence of victims and victimisers, even in hindsight, is so vital. The act of reconstruction is achieved mainly through connecting the collective and personal memories of victims and victimisers alike. Thus, expulsions and not massacres were the essence of the ethnic cleansing doctrine after the Second World War. As was shown in the Balkan wars of the 1990s, within the act of cleansing, sporadic massacres were motivated more by revenge than by a clear-cut plan. But the strategy to create new ethnic realities was assisted by these massacres no less than by systematic expulsions.

Tantura stands out as typical of an ethnic cleansing reality. This comes out very clearly if we examine it against the available definitions of ethnic cleansing, from the most popular to the most professional. One encyclopaedia defines it as 'expulsion by force in order to homogenise an originally mixed territory'. The purpose of expulsion is to cause the emptying of as many houses as possible, by all means at the perpetrator's disposal, including non-violent ones, as in the eviction of Muslims from Croatia after the Drayton Agreement of 1996.

The US State Department holds similar definitions and adds that in its opinion the essence of ethnic cleansing is

'the eradication of a place's history by its depopulation by all means, and through an atmosphere legitimising acts of retribution and revenge'. The result is the making of a new refugee problem. The State Department investigated what happened in the town of Peck in Western Kosovo in May 1999, which was apparently depopulated within 24 hours. The systematic aspect was in the expulsion, not the massacres, but nonetheless the troops felt that periodic massacres could speed up the operation.[51]

Similar definitions can be found in the UN reports of 1993. The UN Council for Human Rights linked the desire to impose ethnic rule on a mixed area – as in the creation of Greater Serbia with acts of expulsion and other violent measures. The report defines acts of ethnic cleansing as including separation of men from women, detention of men, explosion of houses and repopulating them later with another ethnic group. In certain places in Kosovo, Muslim militias showed resistance. Where this was stubborn, the expulsions included massacres as well.[52] Almost all the Jewish witnesses of the Tantura massacre associated it with the fierce resistance encountered by the soldiers.

Drazen Patrovic has produced one of the most impressive works on the definition of ethnic cleansing. He links nationalism, the making of new nations and national struggle with ethnic cleansing. The political leadership delegates to the military level the implementation of ethnic cleansing, without systematic planning and explicit instructions although the overall objective is clear.[53] Patrovic and others refer us to the distinction between massacres that are part of a genocide, where the massacre is premeditated, and unplanned massacres that are a direct result of hatred and vengeance, against a background of a general directive to carry out an ethnic cleansing.[54]

In Palestine, the ethnic cleansing took place according to a scenario outlined in Plan D of 10 March 1948; a scenario that foresaw the de-Arabisation of the part of Palestine designated by the Jewish Agency as Israel (the area allocated by UN

Resolution 181, as well as an additional area to be taken from the designated Arab state (78 per cent of mandatory Palestine altogether). Eventually, out of 900,000 Palestinians who were living there, 750,000 became refugees.

The ethnic cleansing of Palestine as a whole, and of the coastal area in particular, was carried out without direct orders from above, as the commander of the 33rd battalion of the Alexandroni Brigade testified. He explained that the Haganah commanders who took over a village were free to decide what to do with the inhabitants, whether they surrendered or were captured. The procedure followed by the Alexandroni Brigade in occupying Tantura was a repeat of its previous conquests. The troops had occupied, expelled people and destroyed the villages of Hayria, Kafar Saba, Qaysariya, Sikkiya and Um Zeynat before they came to Tantura, and afterwards they did the same in Ein Ghazal, Ijzim and Jaba'.

In Tantura, due to poor co-ordination during the fighting, the village was fully encircled; boats blocked escape via the sea, while the Alexandroni units on the land blockaded the other three flanks and the people had no outlet. The concentration of such a large number of civilians – 1,500 inhabitants might have created fear in the soldiers, leading them to run amok and start shooting, while the 200 or 300 prisoners on the beach might have caused panic that led to the massacre. The Alexandroni record quotes a telegram that was sent to the battalion commander from one of the soldiers: 'I fear the large number of POWs.' The commander told the book's authors that '[in response] I instructed him to place heavy mortar on the roofs around the group and to distance the troops from the prisoners so that the latter will not try to take them over'. From the testimonies of those perpetrating the massacre, it seems that some saw it as a positive move by military intelligence to prevent young Arab men from becoming future fighters.

My second observation on historiography is about the difference between macro and micro-histories. The historiography of the 1948 war, Israeli or Palestinian, new or old,

is mainly macro-historical. This is due to the nature of the archival material, the dry, laconic language of which provides little description of individual cases. Positivist historians, who base their work on direct observation, do not usually venture to add imagined layers to bare narrative of this sort. The individual stories can only be filled in with the help of oral history, which is used extensively in Israeli historiography of the Holocaust, but is completely delegitimised if attempted by Palestinian historians reconstructing the *Nakbah*. My view is that oral history is a crucial methodology for pursuing the research on the 1948 war. As in the case of other subaltern groups, it is a vital tool for salvaging the voices of the Palestinian victims in that conflict.

In recent years, oral history has been acknowledged in the global academic community as a respected sub-discipline. There are more than 1,000 programmes of oral history in American universities alone. In a parallel development, the written document's status has declined and it is no longer considered more authentic or reliable than oral testimony. The validity of this reassessment in regard to Israel and Palestine can be seen from a closer look at the IDF archive and the relevant 1948 documents. Most of these consist of correspondence between military men, the purpose of which is not only to report events, but quite often to glorify their own roles in a campaign and to conceal fiascos and misdeeds. When Benny Morris, an ardent positivist and empiricist, wrote on another massacre in Dawayma, he reluctantly had to rely on interviews. Historians who rely exclusively on written documents quite often resort to guesswork and imagination when reconstructing the past from the documents (a truism already expressed in 1933 by the philosopher Robin George Collingwood, in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*).

Oral history is not a substitute for archival material, but it is a crucial source for filling gaps and for confirming the written evidence that quite often provides only the bare bones of events. Thus, while the official history of the Haganah may briefly describe an occupation of a village or the 'purifying'

of another in the 1948 war, the event appears in detailed and graphic form in the Palestinian collective memory: quite often it is a tale of expulsion and sometimes of massacre. Indeed, the massacre in Tantura can only be accepted as fact if one trusts at least part of the Palestinian and Jewish testimonies about it. The archival material is not sufficient to substantiate it, and readers and historians who reject oral histories out of hand may regard the whole event as non-existent until a precise document tells them it took place, even though the documents pertaining to the events in Tantura hint quite heavily at an atrocity. In our case, therefore, the documents help to fill gaps in the oral testimonies and not the other way round.

Alessandro Portelli, who dealt extensively with oral history, insisted that it tells less about events in history and much more about their significance. He examined the murder trial of Aldo Moro in Italy in 1987, and his main conclusion was that written documents are themselves quite often a processing of oral testimonies and hence do not deserve preferential treatment.

Oral history is undoubtedly as authentic as the documented version. Both types are broken clay pots from the past, which are themselves interpretations of a reality that historians, like archaeologists, claim they can reconstruct to reproduce an ancient vase or jar. The reassemblage is quite often carried out according to a contemporary agenda and is not necessarily faithful to the past. Fifty years from today, such clay fragments could be the basis for telling the story of the Second Intifada, drawing on IDF archives, media reports and recollections of Palestinian victims. There will be a range of narratives, all substantiated by evidence and all consistent with whatever the academic paradigm is at the end of this century.

The case of Tantura was brought before an Israeli court. The court did not complete its investigation and did not produce a verdict. Nor should it have. This is the job of professional historians, and their verdict is not a legal

decision. On the contrary, it should be treated as a temporary conclusion that will undoubtedly be recast in the future on the basis of new evidence or a re-reading of existing evidence. As in the past, this debate will be informed by an updated discussion about what is history, about the relationship between power and knowledge, about what is truth or reality, what comprises historical evidence, and many more questions that on the one hand, enrich the work of historians, but on the other, inject doubt about their scientific pretensions.

And yet, until proved to the contrary, those Palestinians who claimed that their version of the 1948 events was untold and ignored, should feel that the exposure of the Tantura massacre may win them more sympathy and support than in the past. Their narrative, unlike that of Israelis, did not fare well in the major academic centres of the world until recently. New evidence, different approaches to history, the deconstruction of Orientalism and the new Israeli historiography have changed that picture. But the struggle for the validity of their claim within academia has continued, and the political implications have been far more decisive for my own trajectory than the academic ones were.

GLOSSARY

al-Nakbah – The Arabic word for 'the catastrophe' or what the Palestinians call the events of 1948, whereby they were driven from their villages in acts of ethnic cleansing.

Altneuland (Old New Land) – A utopian novel by Theodore Herzl, the Austro-Hungarian founder of the Zionist movement.

Bantustans – These are small geographical areas that are not really viable as independent states but are given limited autonomy for political reasons other than to give people true self-determination. For example, in former Apartheid South Africa black people were herded into refugee camps called reservations known as bantustans and kept in poverty and despair. Each black person was given citizenship, regardless of whether or not they actually lived there. The policy thereby kept the rest of South Africa under the control of white people.

Bash'ar – A society of Israeli academics committed to social justice and spreading higher education.

Canton – A word of French origin that refers to a subdivision of a country established for political or administrative purposes.

Dalet – This is the fourth letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Haganah's plan for the village of Tantura in 1948 was part of what was called Plan Dalet.

Didacticism – A tendency to insist on the alteration or replacement of traditional spellings, meanings and pronunciations in the interests of social, ethnic or international amity.

Diktat – An order or decree imposed by someone in power or a categorical statement whose writ the issuing person or body expects to be followed.

Dukkans – An Arabic word for shops.

Empiricism – In philosophy, empiricism is a theory of knowledge that asserts that knowledge arises from sense experience. Empiricism is one of several competing views that predominate in the study of human knowledge, known as epistemology. Empiricism emphasises the role of experience and evidence. In a related sense, empiricism in the philosophy of science emphasises those aspects of scientific knowledge that are closely related to evidence, especially as discovered in experiments.

Ex officio – A Latin term meaning by virtue of one's position or office.

Ezrahut – An Israeli term for life without uniform, civilian life.

Façade – The word comes from the French language and literally means 'frontage' or 'face'.

Fin-de-siècle – A French term, meaning end of the century. It has come to imply decadent, with particular reference to the end of the nineteenth century.

Gurus – A name for spiritual leaders, especially ones who impart initiation.

Ha'aretz – Israel's oldest daily newspaper. Founded in 1918, it is now published in both Hebrew and English. The English edition is published and sold together with the International Herald Tribune. Compared to other mass circulation papers in Israel, *Ha'aretz* uses smaller headlines and print. Less space is devoted to pictures, and more to political analysis.

Hebraicised – Meaning to make Hebrew.

Hezbollah – A Shi'a Islamist political and paramilitary organisation that operates in Lebanon.

Hirbet al-shaykh – An Arabic term sometimes used to refer to an historic and architecturally-interesting Arab house from unspecified historical period.

Haganah – A Jewish paramilitary organisation which operated at the time of the British Mandate of Palestine from 1920 to 1948. Created by the Jewish leadership, it later became the core of the Israel Defence Force.

Hartushes – These are a type of old shotgun dating from the time of the First World War.

Hashomer Ha-Zair – Translating as The Youth Guard in Hebrew, this is the name of a Socialist-Zionist Youth Movement founded in 1913 in Galicia, Austro-Hungary. It was also the name of the group's political party in the Yishuv in the pre-1948 British Mandate of Palestine. It advocated a bi-national solution in mandatory Palestine with equality between Arabs and Jews.

IDF (Israel Defence Force) – The Israeli armed forces.

Intifada – The Arabic word for uprising.

Islamophobia – A hatred or fear of Islam or Muslims, especially when feared as a political force.

Jinn – According to the Koran, a *jinn* is a supernatural creature which occupies a parallel world to that of mankind and can be either good or evil. Together with humans and angels, the *jinn* make up the three sentient creations of God.

Kaffiyyes – The traditional white kerchiefs worn as a head-covering by Arabs. It is sometimes anglicised to Keffiyas.

Khamsa – An amulet shaped like a hand that is popular throughout the Middle East and North Africa. It is often incorporated into jewellery and wall-hangings as a defence against the evil eye. It is sometimes also known as Fatima's hand.

Kibbutznik – A member of a kibbutz, which is a communal settlement in Israel, usually a farm.

Kol Bo – Haifa's local newspaper.

Le Monde Diplomatique – This publication began as a journal in 1954 to keep diplomats up to date with world events. Based in Paris, under the umbrella of the French daily newspaper *Le Monde*, it is now an international source of news with 72 editions. It publishes in 26 languages.

Lord Haw-Haw – The nickname generally refers to Second World War Nazi-collaborator William Joyce, who was German radio's most prominent English language speaker. In the early stages of the war, the term was also applied to other broadcasters but it gradually came to be applied

exclusively to him. Through the use of Lord Haw-Haw's propaganda, the Nazis attempted to discourage and demoralise British, Canadian, Australian and American troops, as well as the British population.

Ma'ariv – An Israeli daily tabloid newspaper. The Hebrew word means 'evening'. It is second in sales after the *Yediot Aharonot* tabloid.

Mapam – A left-wing Zionist party which sprang out of the *Hashomer Ha-Zair* after the foundation of the state of Israel.

Matkal – A Hebrew term for the Israel Defence Force (IDF) headquarters.

Mea culpa – A Latin term that is an acknowledgment of one's fault or error.

Me'arat nachashim – A Hebrew term meaning a 'snake pit'. It is often used to describe Gaza.

Miluim – Annual reserve duty for the Israeli armed services.

Mizrachi – A term used to describe Jews who originate from Arab lands.

Modus ●perandi – A particular method of operating, especially something that is characteristic or well-established; the way something works.

Mukhtar – An Arab word for a village or town headman or chief.

Muqat'a – An Arabic term for Yasser Arafat's compound in Ramallah. It was largely reduced to rubble by the Israeli Army.

Neo-colonialism – This is a form of contemporary, economic imperialism: powerful nations behave like the colonial powers of imperialism and multi-national corporations continue to exploit the resources of post-colonial states. This economic control inherent to neo-colonialism is also seen as akin to the classical European colonialism practiced from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. In broader usage, neo-colonialism may simply refer to the involvement of powerful countries in the affairs of less powerful countries.

Orientalism – The knowledge and study of the languages and cultures of the peoples of west, east or central Asia. It can also mean something considered characteristic of such people.

Persona non grata – A Latin term for an unacceptable or unwelcome person.

Polymath – A person of wide-ranging knowledge or learning.

Positivist – Positivism is a set of epistemological perspectives and philosophies of science which hold that the scientific method is the best approach to uncovering the processes by which both physical and human events occur. The concept was developed in the early nineteenth century by the philosopher and founding sociologist Auguste Comte. He asserted that the only authentic knowledge is that which is based on sense experience and positive verification. A positivist adheres to this strand of thought.

Postmodernism – A late twentieth-century strand of thought that represents a departure from modernism and has at its heart a general distrust of grand theories and ideologies. It is a tendency in contemporary culture characterised by the rejection of objective truth and global cultural narrative. It emphasises the role of language, power relations, and motivations; in particular it attacks the use of sharp classifications such as male versus female, straight versus gay, white versus black, and imperial versus colonial. It has influenced many cultural fields, including literary criticism, sociology, linguistics, architecture, visual arts, and music.

Pravda – This Russian daily newspaper was founded in 1912. From 1918 to 1991, it was the official organ of the Soviet Communist Party. It developed a reputation for only printing the 'party-line'. The name comes from the Russian word for truth but the word now often carries connotations of 'managed propaganda'.

Praxis – An accepted practice or custom.

Qasbah – An Arabic word for the citadel of a North African city or the area surrounding such a citadel, typically the old part of a city. The word is often anglicised to Kasbah or Casbah.

Qassam – The name of the rockets used by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, as well as the name of the military wing of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Both are named after Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a Syrian preacher who was forced to leave Syria due to his participation in the revolt against the French Mandate in 1925. He became a leader of the Palestinian resistance movement to Zionism and the British Mandate until he was killed by British forces in 1935. The name is often anglicised to Kassam.

Relativism – The doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.

Shabak – A Hebrew acronym for Shin Bet, Israel's General Security Service.

Shahid – The Arabic word for martyr.

Sikul memukad – This is the Israeli vocabulary employed to describe the assassinations of wanted Palestinians as 'focused prevention'.

Sui generis – This Latin term means something has a distinct character of its own; unlike anything else.

Sumud – The Arabic word for the steadfastness.

Suq – An Arabic word for a market. The word is often anglicised to souk.

Tekkuma – The Hebrew word for renaissance. It is also the title of an Israeli documentary series.

Tikkun – The name of a liberal Jewish journal.

Wadi – The Arabic word for a small valley.

Xenophobia – An intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries.

Yediot Aharonot – A daily newspaper published in Tel Aviv, Israel. Established in the late 1930s, it was the first evening newspaper in the British Mandate of Palestine, and attempted to emulate the format of the London Evening Standard. Since the 1970s, it has been the most widely circulated paper in Israel.

Zeyta – The name of an Arab village that, before 1948, existed on the site of what is now Kibbutz Magal, which is situated a few miles south of Haifa.

NOTES

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13. Drazen Patrovic, 'Ethnic Cleansing – An Attempt at Methodology', *European Journal of International Law*, 5/3 (1994): 342–360.
14. See for instance, Norman Naimark, *A Century of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

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Compiled by Sue Carlton

IP in sub-headings refers to the author, Ilan Pappe