

Palestine: the hour of truth

TAKIS FOTOPOULOS

The parameters of the Palestinian problem

The victory of Hamas, coming after the demise of the two historical protagonists in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict –Arafat and Sharon– marks, in all probability, the beginning of a critical and possibly final phase in the Palestinian problem. However, to form a comprehensive view of the situation in the Middle East as it develops today, we have to refer to the three main parameters of the Palestinian problem which will determine its final outcome: the transnational elite, the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national liberation movement.

The role of the transnational elite

As far as the transnational elite is concerned, as I attempted to show elsewhere,^[1] the global war against ‘terrorism’ launched by it after 9/11, involves also the ‘pacification’ of Palestine, a process which necessitates meeting the aims of the Zionist elite that has dominated the area for almost 60 years. The aim was to terrorise to submission the Palestinian people, so that a Palestinian protectorate could be created that would be totally dependent (economically as well as politically-militarily) on the Zionist regime and, through it, on the transnational elite. The ultimate aim was to secure the ‘stability’ of the crucial Middle East area within its overall strategic plan.

In fact, the aims of the transnational elite’s acts of aggression in the Gulf and Afghanistan in the last fifteen years, as well as of its increasingly likely prospective attacks on Iran and Syria, have never been just the control of oil but, mainly, the expansion in the area of the New Order based on the internationalised market economy and a kind of representative ‘democracy’. To the extent that this elite is achieving these aims –mainly through the exploitation of the internal conflicts between Shias, Sunnis and Kurds (Iraq), or between ‘modernisers’ and fundamentalists (Afghanistan, Iran)^[2]– its military aggressions are ‘legitimised’, despite the hecatombs of victims to which they lead, either directly or indirectly. This is particularly so if such interventions make possible the future control of the area (as is the Pentagon’s strategic plan), through an almost exclusive reliance on the unbeatable air power of the transnational elite, with the support of the land forces of the protectorates controlled by it. Needless to add that the better the New Order in the area is stabilised, the more the position of its protectorates in the area is enhanced—whether they be old ones (Saudi Arabia, Emirates, Egypt etc), or new ‘acquisitions’ (Iraq, Afghanistan and possibly Iran and Syria in the future).

In this context, the stand of the transnational elite with respect to Hamas’ victory in the

Palestinian elections was neither surprising nor unprecedented. Thus, when the Palestinians –faithfully following the rules of representative ‘democracy’– decided to reject the pro-American and corrupt^[3] Fatah regime, the transnational elite decided to strangle them financially until they committed themselves to its conditions: namely, to condemn ‘terrorism’, as the Palestinian national liberation movement has been renamed by the Zionists after 9/11^[4], and also to renounce their declarations (which before the Oslo agreements were part of the 1968 Palestinian Constitution) calling for the dissolution of the State of Israel and the creation of a ‘pure’ Palestinian State in Palestine. Needless to add, the transnational elite never demanded the corresponding repudiation by the Israeli State of the Constitution of the Zionist movement and the Balfour Declaration, which called for a, similarly ‘pure’, Jewish State in Palestine. It is therefore clear that the Zionists and the transnational elite are determined to continue and intensify the present vicious cycle of blood in order to achieve the two-state solution, which would secure the indefinite existence of a Zionist State in the area.

In other words, given the balance of power in the Middle East, it is hardly surprising that the two-state “solution” has always been supported by the transnational elite, as well as the Zionist establishment –apart from its extreme elements which still believe in a ‘Greater Israel’ and the massive expulsion of Palestinians. However, it is self-evident that a two-state solution will inevitably lead to the creation of two ethnically-cleansed states, a regional super-power which would play the role of the bulwark of the transnational elite in the area, and a Palestinian Bantustan.

The Zionist movement

The Zionist movement that emerged at the end of the 19th century was not one of the usual nationalist or anti-colonial movements, which were flourishing at the time and which were characterised by the fact that they had always had a geographical base that was not, however, recognised formally as belonging to them - although usually the vast majority of people living there belonged to a particular nation. Consequently, the aim of these typical nationalist movements was to acquire a national identity –something that usually involved their break from one of the empires of the time (Ottoman, British, etc).

On the other hand, Jews were dispersed all over the world and very few were left in historic Palestine at the time when the first Congress of the Zionist movement declared in 1897 that Palestine was the promised land-- a declaration later adopted by the British empire (which controlled Palestine at the time) through the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Palestine had been populated largely by non-Jews for hundreds of years and, as a result, just before the first world war (1914) only 85,000 Jews lived in the area (versus 700,000 Arabs) possessing just 2% of the land and, even on the eve of the second world war (1939), there were just 445,000 Jews in Palestine amounting to only 30% of the population. Still, although the Jewish population of Palestine had increased to almost 40% of the total at the time the UN resolution created the state of Israel (1948), the land assigned to them by the UN amounted to 55% of the Palestinian land.

It is, therefore, clear that the Zionist demands implied the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the creation of millions of Palestinian refugees. The cycle of blood that followed the UN decisions at the end of the second world war to adopt the Zionist demands for a ‘pure’

Jewish State in Palestine was, therefore, the inevitable consequence of the fact that it was the Zionist trend that eventually prevailed in most Jewish communities rather than the alternative trends, like that of the progressive Left (supported by the progressive European Left), which proposed a multicultural federation of Palestinians, Jews and others. This would have allowed for the emigration of the hundreds of thousands of European Jews to the area, who had survived systematic persecution at the hands of anti-Semites – culminating in the massive Nazi crime—without the need to expel the indigenous Palestinians.

Furthermore, the hegemony of Zionism that was institutionalised by the UN resolution inevitably led to the creation of a racist regime, which had no qualms to resort to massacres whenever it felt that its reproduction was threatened in any way. The racist character of Zionist Israel is evident by the fact that it was founded on the emigration of Jews to it from every part of the world –assisted in this in every way possible– and the parallel indirect (and often direct) expulsion of millions of Palestinians during the ethnic cleansing that followed the establishment of Israel, who have since been forbidden to return to their home land. Furthermore, the present informal apartheid in Israel has been confirmed by several reports, which show that “the Palestinian minority in Israel has for decades been denied basic equality in health, education, housing and land possession, solely because it is not Jewish”.^[5]

It is not, therefore, accidental that South African Archbishop Tutu (who knows one or two things about apartheid!), after visiting the area, has described the situation of the Palestinians under occupation as being worse than that of black South Africans under apartheid!^[6] Neither is it surprising that the British Association of University Teachers, in its annual conference last year, passed a resolution to boycott Israeli universities, on account of their complicity with the Israeli apartheid system. It is also worth noting that this resolution (which was reversed by a later special conference, following a general mobilisation of the Zionist lobby) was supported by several progressive Zionist intellectuals, including Jacqueline Rose, author of a recent significant book on Zionism^[7] and daughter of second-generation Holocaust survivors, who does not hesitate to draw tentative analogies between Israel's treatment of Palestinians and Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews.

Finally, those Zionists who claim that the argument about a massacre of Palestinians is ‘unsubstantiated’^[8], clearly ‘forget’ at least 50 massacres of civilians that took place at the time of the founding of Israel, culminating in Deir Yassin - where Israeli fighters, together with the Irgun forces and the Stern gang, killed between 100 and 250 villagers in April 1948-^[9] as well as the massacres which followed : from those in Qibya (1953), the Mitla Pass (1956), the Gaza Strip (1971) and Sabra and Shatila in 1982 (with the complicity of Sharon’s troops which had invaded Lebanon), to that of Jenin in 2002.^[10] No wonder that 59% of European Union citizens had placed Israel at the head of a list of states "threatening world peace".^[11]

The Palestinian national liberation movement

It was not, therefore, surprising that the Zionist ethnic cleansing has led to the creation of a militant Palestinian national liberation movement and to the consequent massacre of the weaker side in this grossly unequal conflict, pitched between a technologically advanced

state enjoying the huge financial and military backing of the West and a guerrilla movement fighting the F16s, tanks and Apache helicopters with the usual basic guerrilla weaponry!

So, the fact that the Palestinian national liberation movement was dominated initially by nationalists and later by Islamists was another consequence of the dominance of Zionism. No wonder that the demands of the extreme currents among the Palestinians implied a 'reverse ethnic cleansing', with the aim of repatriating all Jewish settlers back to Europe and the USA, and the parallel return of the millions of Palestinian refugees to their homes from the miserable refugee camps all over the Middle East in which they have lived all these years.

The Fatah movement under Arafat, which dominated the Palestinian scene from the 1960s up to this year when the Islamists took over after the Hamas victory, was initially committed to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the destruction of the State of Israel. However, since the late 1980s, it has moved towards a two-state position and the Palestine Liberation Organisation turned from an armed organisation dedicated to Israel's destruction into one engaged in a political and diplomatic struggle to create an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. This solution met the wishes of both nationalists among the PLO, who would prefer a truncated state rather than no state at all, and also the interests of the emerging bourgeois class among Palestinians who were prepared to make significant concessions for the kind of peace which was necessary for any economic revival of the area. Unfortunately, very few among Palestinians, at least at that time, were in favour of a solution in terms of a multicultural state, something that could possibly have turned the tables against Zionists --as it happened with white supremacists in South Africa. Clearly, it would have been much harder for Zionists to justify a formally institutionalised racist regime, given the history of Jews in Diaspora and their struggles in favour of multiculturalism.

The bankruptcy of the two-state solution

The bankruptcy of the two-state solution became obvious by the huge Hamas victory in January 2006 when Palestinians expressed their rejection of the policies of Fatah not just at the domestic level (as western media generally presented it) but also at the level of its record with respect to the national liberation issue. It was clear that Palestinians did not vote Hamas for its reactionary free market policies, or even for its religious irrationalism but because of its welfare work and, even more so, because of its consistent stand against the Oslo agreement which has led the movement to a dead end. [\[12\]](#)

Hamas' victory, therefore, clearly reflected the frustration of Palestinian people from the continuous expansion of Zionists in their land, which was shown by:

- the fact that the removal of 8,000 settlers from the Gaza Strip –celebrated by the mass media of the transnational elite– has already been accompanied by the import of 6,100 more settlers in the West Bank to join the 250,000 Zionists settled there [\[13\]](#) and
- the acceleration of the 'apartheid wall', half of which is now complete or under way, completely encircling East Jerusalem, [\[14\]](#) despite the condemnation of it by the

International Court of Justice which ordered its demolition-- a demand supported also by the UN General Assembly by 150 votes to six, with 10 abstentions!.

It was clear to Palestinian voters that Fatah's soft policies were in fact leading to the de facto national cleansing of the larger part of historical Palestine and the consequent intensification of the massacre of Palestinians. Most Palestinians, therefore, voted for Hamas in the hope that a hardening of their line could possibly put them in a better position with respect to the final negotiations for a two-state solution. However, a few others realised that the two-state solution was inevitably leading, as I mentioned above, to an ethnically-cleansed greater Israel and a Palestinian Bantustan and began searching for other solutions. ^[15]

A multicultural state as the first step towards a Confederated Inclusive Democracy

It is becoming increasingly clear today that the way out of the vicious cycle of blood would have to transcend the catastrophic two-state solution. The demand for a multicultural state, which was initially proposed by the Jewish Left and backed by the European Left more than fifty years ago, is again on the agenda. Several currents are strengthening among both progressive Palestinians^[16] and post-Zionist Jews^[17] to find a solution which, rejecting both Zionism and religious irrationalism (Jewish and Palestinian alike), would aim to create a multicultural and inclusive state for all the peoples living today in Palestine.

Predictably, Zionists reject the one-state solution, usually on account of the supposedly realistic argument that it is an 'alien' solution to the wishes of both Jews and Palestinians. In fact, however, as Adam Shatz (the literary editor of the American progressive magazine *The Nation*) stresses, there has always been a secular anti-nationalist and anti-Zionist tradition –to which well-known members of the Jewish Left have belonged, from Hannah Arendt to Isaac Deutscher– expressing support for the 'one state, two nations' solution, as the basis for a socialist society of mutual respect.

Zionists, at this stage of the argument, usually invoke the findings of British commissions (like the Peel commission) in favour of the rejection of this solution, as well as the UN resolution establishing the State of Israel. But, Zionists 'forget' in the process the condemnation of British strategy by Hannah Arendt^[18] as simply aiming to prevent a peaceful solution between Jews and Arabs. Arendt's view is confirmed by Norman Rose, a Hebrew University professor (a leading historian of the period), who argued that British strategy, as from the time of the Balfour Declaration, was to have a Zionist State in Palestine that would act as "a pro-British bulwark on behalf of Britain, not least to help protect the Suez Canal"^[19]. One might also point out that the deference with which Zionists treat the UN resolution for the creation of a Zionist State in Palestine is at least preposterous. Particularly so, as it does not also extend to the dozens of later UN resolutions relating to Israel, which have been ignored by them, simply because they condemned the continuous expansion of the Zionist state, which, as early as 1948, occupied 23% more land than that which was assigned to it (never to be returned of course). No wonder that by 2000, thanks to the conquering of more land in the 1967 War and the constant expropriations and land purchases, Zionists possessed 90% of the land in historic Palestine – out of which only 12% is anticipated by the 'roadmap' etc to be returned to the Palestinians!

In fact, however, the real reasons behind the Zionist rejection of the one state solution are demographic, given that demographers predict that the majority of the population of Greater Israel would soon be Arab. As an acute observer pointed out:^[20]

This was a desperate problem for a country whose founding charter defined it as both Jewish and democratic. Either it respected democracy at the cost of its Jewish identity; or it sacrificed democracy to the preservation of that identity. There seemed to be only two solutions: either allow the creation of a genuine Palestinian state alongside Israel, or expel the entire Palestinian population. Sharon rejected the first and recognised that the second was currently impractical. So in 1998 he came up with a third solution: the establishment of four Palestinian enclaves in the Gaza Strip and across that part of the West Bank enclosed by the separation wall. This would allow Israel to annex the remaining half of the West Bank, in particular the blocs where 80% of the settlers live. The unprecedented unilateral withdrawal from Gaza was a step towards this new form of Israeli hegemony over Palestine.

In other words, the option selected by Sharon simply expressed the inevitable, shifting of Zionism, in view of the demographic data, from a Greater Israel covering the entire historic Palestine to a truncated Zionist Israel compatible with a Jewish majority.^[21]

However, the anti-Zionist tradition discussed above is continued today by post-Zionists, as well as by some progressive Palestinians who, as I mentioned earlier, maintain that peoples of different races or identities could live together harmoniously, without the need for ethnic cleansings like the ones imposed by the transnational elite in Yugoslavia, or by the Zionists in Palestine. Yugoslavs, as well as Iraqis (including Iraqi Jews!), lived together harmoniously, until the New World Order used well-known nationalist or fundamentalist currents to split them.^[22] This is also confirmed by an elementary knowledge of History, which could easily show that Arabs and Jews did indeed lived harmoniously together in the Mediterranean basin when the Arab nation was flourishing^[23], and that silly religious differences did not prevent millions of Jews, Christians and others from living harmoniously within the borders of the Ottoman empire. Similarly, millions of Jews today have no problem living (and thriving) together with other peoples in Europe and the USA either.

Clearly, a one-state solution in the form of an inclusive multicultural state would be an important step towards a Confederal Inclusive Democracy in Palestine. This is because such a solution could not only lead to a form of government which would have no relation at all to the present racist Zionist 'democracy' and the authoritarian Palestinian Authority –solving, in the process, the problem of refugees from both sides– but could also represent a crucial move towards a future confederation of peoples in Palestine based on an Inclusive Democracy.

[1] See Takis Fotopoulos, "[The global 'war' of the transnational elite](#)", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 2002) & "[Iraq: the new criminal 'war' of the transnational elite](#)", *Democracy & Nature*,

Vol. 9, No. 2 (July 2003).

[2] see Takis Fotopoulos, "[The civil war as a means of imposing the New World Order](#)", *ID Newsletter* #22 (31/10/2005).

[3] Robert Fisk, "The problem with democracy", *The Independent* (28/01/2006).

[4] De Gaulle predicted it as early as 1967 when, six months after the war, stated that Israel's occupation of the territories it had conquered "can not take place without oppression, repression and expulsions; and this will be met with resistance that Israel, in turn, will brand as terrorism", Dominique Vidal, 'Israel: Sharon the blessed', *Le Monde diplomatique* (February 2006).

[5] see e.g. the article by Ronnie Kasrils (a former commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, military wing of the African National Congress) and Victoria Brittain, 'Both Palestinians and Israelis will benefit from a boycott', *The Guardian* (25/05/2005) and the illuminating articles by the Israeli journalist Meron Rapoport, *Le Monde diplomatique* (February 2004).

[6] see Ronnie Kasrils and Victoria Brittain.

[7] Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion*, (Princeton University Press, 2005).

[8] see e.g. David Moses, "Palestine: the hour of the aliens?", *Eleftherotypia* (21/01/2006).

[9] see Andy Beckett, *Guardian* (12/12/2002) for reference to a letter from Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt and dozens of other prominent Jews to the New York Times in 1948, condemning the then brand-new state of Israel for containing extreme Jewish nationalists of a "fascist" nature, who had recently carried out a "massacre" of Palestinian villagers.

[10] Dominique Vidal, "Israel: Sharon the blessed", *Le Monde diplomatique*, February 2006 & Amnon Kapeliouk, *Le Monde diplomatique* (May 2002).

[11] *Le Monde* (5 November 2003).

[12] See also Alain Gresh, "The Hamas landslide", *Le Monde diplomatique* (February 2006).

[13] The data are provided by the Israeli organisation Peace Now, www.peacenow.org

[14] Dominique Vidal, "Israel: Sharon the blessed".

[15] Johann Hari, "Sharon' vision of peace is so flawed that the Palestinians can never accept it", *The Independent* (24/11/2005).

[16] see e.g. Ahmad Samih Khalidi, "A one-state solution", *The Guardian* (29/09/2003) & Conal Urquhart, "Gaza shifts to a new solution", *The Observer* (14/09/2003).

[17] see, also, Esther Addley, "Lines in the sand", *The Guardian* (25/07/2002).

[18] Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah Peace or Armistice in the Near East* (1950).

[19] see "The birth of modern Israel", *The Independent*, (26/05/2005).

[20] Dominique Vidal, "Israel: Sharon the blessed".

[21] see also Johann Hari.

[22] see note (2) and also Takis Fotopoulos, "[The First War of the Internationalised Market Economy](#)", *Democracy & Nature*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (July 1999).

[23] John Rose, *The Myths of Zionism* (Pluto Press, 2005).