The Twilight of the Two-State Solution in Israel-Palestine: Shared Sovereignty and Nonterritorial Autonomy as the New Dawn

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Abstract

This article analyzes the international consensus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that there should be a two state solution and finds it unworkable on several counts. The conflict has no territorial solution: high population density makes partition impossible without leaving unwanted pockets of one people in the territory of the other; it is not possible for any Israeli government to dismantle settlements in the West Bank without causing a civil war; and in such a small and overcrowded territory, it is not feasible to have monocultural nation-states when the population is now evenly divided between the two conflicting national communities that reside in overlapping areas. Demographic forecasts show in the short term, a decrease in the proportion of Israeli Jews and an increase in the proportion of Palestinians. In the face of this stalemate, the article recalls the 90-year-old proposal by enlightened Jewish personalities to create a binational state under the modality of national-cultural autonomy. Furthermore, and paradoxically, in a reversal of the situation 90 years ago, Palestinian Israeli citizens are slowly creating a bottom-up series of autonomous communal organizations that provide self-government without territorial control, a model for nonterritorial autonomy in a manner that reminds of the earlier proposals of the Jewish personalities. The article concludes that this could potentially be a way out of this stalled and protracted conflict. A plurinational state in Israel-Palestine based on the model of National Cultural Autonomy with shared sovereignty and collective rights for all communities.

Keywords: Israel Palestine; national cultural autonomy; one-state solution; Brit Shalom; Hans Kohn

The time has come to think the unthinkable. The two-state solution—the core of the Oslo process and the present "road map"—is probably already doomed. With every passing year we are postponing an inevitable, harder choice that only the far right and far left have so far acknowledged, each for its own reasons. The true alternative facing the Middle East in coming years will be between an ethnically cleansed Greater Israel and a single, integrated, binational state of Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians.

But what if there were no place in the world today for a "Jewish state"? What if the binational solution were not just increasingly likely, but, a desirable outcome? It is not such a very odd thought. Most of the readers of this essay live in pluralist states which have long since become multi-ethnic and multicultural. "Christian Europe," pace M. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, is a dead letter; Western civilization today is a patchwork of colours and religions and languages, of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Arabs, Indians, and many others—as any visitor to London or Paris or Geneva will know.

Tony Judt FBA, The New York Review of Books, October 23, 2003

Introduction

This article makes the case for a single, plurinational state approach, based on principles of shared sovereignty, national cultural autonomy (NCA), and collective rights. It demonstrates how, through the actions of a myriad of nongovernmental organizations, Israeli Palestinians have already developed significant mechanisms of nonterritorial autonomy from below. NCA, moreover, has historical roots within the Zionist tradition, as I show with particular reference to the writings of *Brit Shalom* and Hans Kohn. All too often neglected in today's context, the ideas of this movement constitute an important precursor in the direction of an NCA-based solution which, I argue, offers the only viable means of moving beyond the current impasse arising from the two-state approach.

The Antinomies of the Two State Solution

Given the protracted and bloody nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is truly astonishing just how much agreement there is on how it should be solved. In the United Nations (UN) Security Council, at the Arab League,[1] and for many other governments worldwide (including the Palestinian Authority), the solution is seen to lie in a two-state solution that partitions former Mandatorial or Historical Palestine into a Jewish State (Israel) and a Palestinian state, roughly within the armistice lines of June 4, 1967. I call this widely accepted two-state formula "the international consensus" on the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Already before the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, the evolving international consensus pointed to the creation of two states. This emanates from three factors: the Balfour Declaration[2]; the various plans for the partition of British Mandatorial Palestine[3]; and, finally, the Nazi genocide of Jews. The World War II catastrophe of European Jewry elicited a sense of guilt on the part of many persons of good will and Western liberals, leading many to consider that Jews required a national home that could provide them with a haven from persecution.[4] Political Zionism greatly benefited from the empathy of many fair-minded Europeans and North Americans with the suffering of European Jews. Moreover, the Nazi genocide of Jews became a universal and moral icon of shame in European history (Diner and Golb 1997, 301). The recently deceased historian of the Zionist Project, Walter Laqueur, puts this argument concisely, "The birth of a Jewish state was the fulfillment of the Zionist dream. But it had taken the destruction of European Jewry to realize this dream. Zionism had not been able to prevent the catastrophe. On the contrary, the state owed its existence to the disaster" (Laqueur 1972, 564).

In the minds of many liberal and well-meaning individuals, the genocide of European Jews crystallized into the need for the creation of a Jewish State to protect Jews (Arnow 1994, 257). Without denying the nobility of this sentiment and the need to keep alive the memory of this horrendous stain on European consciousness, with the benefit of hindsight we can see that the support of these well-meaning persons for the goals of political Zionism was misguided. For one, they did not consider that, eventually, Israeli Jews would be more endangered than Jews that live in Western liberal democracies. Crucially, nor did they consider the suffering, death, exile, and destruction inflicted on the Palestinian people for no fault of their own. Disturbingly, the plight of colonial peoples was not yet on the horizon of European liberals. Furthermore, they also did not know the complex relationship of influential branches of political Zionism with the Nazi policy of *Judenrein Europa* (Jew clean Europe). See among many others, Black (1984), Mildenstein (1934), and Nicosia (2008). See also the 2011 Israeli film by Arnon Goldfinger *The Flat* (Heb: הדירה). This topic is complex and there is no space to develop it here.

In the early years of Israel, a derisive attitude toward the victims of the Nazi genocide dominated the Israeli public agenda. Influenced by the political Zionist slogan on "the Negation of the Diaspora" (שלילת הגולה), the victims of the Nazi genocide were regarded as "going like lambs to the slaughter" (ההולכים כצאן לטבח) (Segev 2000; Zertal 2005). Later, however, the discourse underwent a complete reversal, the Genocide of Jews was transformed from "what Israeliness is not" into one of the core elements of Israeli identity. With the notion of "destruction and rebirth," (חורבן ותקומה) (Friesel 2008, 44) the significance of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry became a

primary myth of Israel, providing Israelis with what they believed was the "right to their land" (Liebman and Don-Yehia 1983, 137; see in particular the excellent article by Klar, Schori, and Klar 2013, which gives abundant examples of this shift).

The Conundrum of the Two-State Solution

The idea of a Jewish national home tied in well with the state-nationalist demands of prewar political Zionism, which was transformed from a fringe movement among European Jewry to a mainstream idea after World War II.[5] Here, one is faced with an unhappy paradox, generally overlooked by those who support Israel as a haven for Jews. Three generations after the creation of the State of Israel, Israeli Jews are roughly 43% of world Jewry and they are more likely to face physical danger as Jews than the 57% of Jews in the diaspora. Nowadays, most diaspora Jews are citizens of Western liberal democracies, and as such have more rights and liberties than the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Moreover, over the course of the 70-year existence of the state of Israel, Jews from liberal democracies have shown little or no inclination to migrate en masse to Israel. Individuals and families have indeed migrated, but the numbers are not statistically significant and have had no impact on the balance of Israel's population. Indeed, about one million Israeli citizens permanently reside abroad, mostly in the United States (Braverman 2018, 379): there are four times more "Israeli Americans"[6]—Israelis permanently residing in the US—than there are Jewish US citizens residing in Israel (Wexler 2018). The fastest growing Jewish community in Europe is in Germany, particularly in Berlin, which attracts many young Israelis.[7]

Regrettably, the idea of creating a "Jewish National Home" as a solution to Jewish persecution in Europe was blind to the dangers for future generations of Jews in Palestine, and to the implications for the indigenous population of Palestine: the disappearance of what was until 1948 the local majority, and the subordination of the Arabic population, culture, and language to a Jewish state in which they are unwanted aliens (Said 1980, 70). Worse, the creation of Israel planted the seeds for a bitter and intractable conflict that currently has no solution in sight. Creating the space for Jewish immigrants required the emigration and expulsion of a substantial part of the local Palestinian Arab population who became refugees (Morris 1987; Kimmerling 2001; Pappé 2006; Masalha 2012). In this regard, Jacques Hersh (2009, 1) has observed that:

> The celebrations on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel brought forth mixed feelings for those of us who survived the Holocaust. The reason for this ambivalence is that, while the survivors of the Nazi genocide celebrated the creation of a Jewish state in 1948, few were aware at the time of the human costs and injustices that had been, were being, and would be perpetrated against Palestinian Arabs in our name.

Partition and the Creation of the State of Israel

During the first part of 20th century, Political Zionism wanted to create in Palestine a Jewish nation-state built on Western-Liberal ideas. However, with very few exceptions (see below), it embraced European Orientalists attitudes toward non-Europeans (both Arabs and Jews), by treating Jewish immigrants from the non-European countries as second class, and, either ignoring the Arab presence in Palestine, or, ignoring the movement of self-awareness that existed among Palestine's Arab population, which is an obvious contradiction to the liberal ideas it claimed to support (Amir 2019, 156).

In the Palestinian narrative, the term *Nakba* (النكبة, catastrophe) denotes the displacement and destruction of homes and villages that resulted from the partition of Palestine and the emergence of the state of Israel. Following the collapse of the British mandate in 1947, the United Nations approved a partition plan for Palestine.[8] A war followed, in which an estimated 700,000 Palestinians were either expelled or fled, and Palestinian towns and villages were depopulated and destroyed.

The depopulated areas were repopulated by incoming Jews, many of them survivors of the European genocide during WWII (Khalidi 1992; Morris 2003; Pappé 2006).

With the end of the war of 1947–1948—officially designated in Israel as "the war of independence"—the Palestinian state did not come into existence. Instead, its territory was absorbed by victorious Israeli forces, Jordan and—in the case of the Gaza strip—Egypt. During the war, the so-called Plan D was put into practice by the nascent Israel Defense Forces, the aim of which was the conquest of Arab towns and villages along the borders of the area allocated to the proposed Jewish State and beyond. This resulted in the expulsion, and in a few cases, the subjugation into a regime of military occupation, of the Palestinian Arab population (Khalidi 1988). The expellees joined the ranks of the refugees (Peled and Rouhana 2004), while those who were put under military occupation, became, several years later, what Israel calls "Israeli Arabs," or Palestinians with Israeli citizenship.

The 1949 agreements that formally ended the fighting established armistice lines between the belligerent parties. These are known as the "Green Line," which is invoked as a basis for the two-state solution. This arbitrary border, determined by an armistice between conflicting armies, ignored the existence of a Palestinian society, dismembered towns and villages, and separated families (Shenhav 2012, 5). The lines held until the Six Day War of 1967, in which Israel conquered the rest of Palestine, as well as the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria.[9] The Sinai Peninsula has since been returned to Egypt, while Israel abandoned the Gaza Strip and subjected it to an inhuman blockade (Roy 2005; Rynhold and Waxman 2008). While the circumstances of the 1967 war cannot be discussed here, it is considered a territorial turning point, for it brought the whole of historical Palestine under Israeli control (Shlaim and Louis 2012).

In terms of the international characterization of the two-state solution, the 1967 war caused a shift in the international definition of Israel's borders. The 1949 Armistice Lines (the green line) became the internationally recognized border of the state of Israel, including West Jerusalem. The perception was that a Palestinian state could now emerge in the areas west of the River Jordan abandoned by Jordan (the so-called West Bank) and in the Gaza Strip. The boundaries of Israel were thereby considered to correspond to the green line, and the Palestinian state would now encompass roughly 22% of British Mandatorial Palestine after an Israeli withdrawal. Israel was called upon to withdraw to the border of June 5, 1967, by UN Security Council Resolution 242, but the resolution did not explicitly mention a Palestinian State. The consensus among UN security council members was subsequently that in time, a rump Palestinian state could emerge in the West Bank and Gaza. This never happened, and for reasons to be discussed below, it is unlikely to ever happen. Later, the Oslo Accords of 1993 were a set of agreements between the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority that emerged from the Oslo negotiations, to consolidate a two state solution during a period of five years, but these were never implemented.

This modality is what has been historically referred to as the Partition of Palestine (Shlaim 1999, 10). After the 1967 war, the emerging international consensus advocated the creation of a Palestinian State in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, alongside the State of Israel. This proposal is based on the idea that two contiguous democratic nation states can coexist in what is generally called Historical Palestine.[10] However, there was never any precise detail as to how these two states could coexist in the same territorial space, nor as to what should be their precise borders. Even when discussed in the now defunct Oslo negotiations, this proposal was vague and lacked clear territorial and human delineations. The Oslo resolutions made no reference to the fact that, due to the small size and overpopulation of historical Palestine,[11] any form of sovereign division into separate ethnic states would entail enclaves or segments of both peoples being left abandoned as unwanted residents in the territory of the other. Thus, under the cruel logic of this kind of separation into monocultural national states, the presence of one group in the territory of the other becomes a factor that further inflames the conflict (Hillal 2007).

Thus, no proper consideration has been given either to the issue of Israeli settlers (discussed further below) or to the implications for two large segments of the Palestinian people: refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars and their descendants outside historical Palestine; and Palestinians that remained in the territories that subsequently became part of the State of Israel and are now Israeli citizens. Without

denying the urgent, humanitarian, and cruel catastrophe of expulsion of the Palestinian Refugees,[12] particularly in the dangerously overcrowded area called the Gaza Strip,[13] this paper refers to the section of the Palestinian People that remain in the territories that later became Israel and that became nominally Israeli citizens. They are a growing minority, comprising 21% of Israel's population.[14]

According to Barzilai (2000), Israel's oppression of its Arab-Palestinian citizens has been made possible by a contradiction to Israel's self-professed democratic principles. Israel claims to be a liberal democracy, but by its constitutional laws is an ethnic state that self-defines as "the state of the Jewish people." As such, it privileges members of the titular ethno-nation and subordinates almost one quarter of its citizens that do not belong to that category.[15] Thus, citizens that are not Jews are unequal to Jewish citizens. In light of this fact, some commentators argue that Israel is not a democracy, but an "ethnocracy"—a term denoting a political arrangement in which the state is controlled by a dominant ethnic group to advance its interests, power and resources (Peled 1992; Smooha 2012). Ethnocratic regimes display a combination of a superficial democratic facade covering for continuous ethnic dominance, in which ethnicity and not citizenship are the key assets to secure power and resources (Yiftachel 2006). While ostensibly civil members of the state, Palestinian Israeli citizens suffer systematic discrimination and are deprived of many political and civil rights (Barzilai, 2000). The rights and entitlements of Palestinian citizens of Israel thus fall short of those enjoyed by Jewish citizens of the State of Israel (Ghanem 2016).

Israel's Jewish Settlement Policy as the Negation of the Two-State Solution

A year after the occupation of the West Bank following the 1967 war, a process of Jewish settlement began in what was hitherto Palestinian land. The initial consideration was security, but with the change of government to the more right-wing *Likud*-led coalition, the settlements became a form of militant, messianic nationalism, both ideological and theological, related to a dubious and disputed interpretation of Jewish scriptures that affirms the centrality of the land of Israel to the Jewish ethos (Gorenberg 2006, 208). This was the key argument of the fundamentalist group *Gush Emunim* (Bloc of the Faithful), which exerted enormous influence within the governing coalition (Feige 2013; Aran 1991; Lustick 1991). Following this, the term West Bank ceased to be used in the official literature, and was replaced by the terms "Judea" and "Samaria," referring to the ancient biblical kingdoms. What initially was a trickle is nowadays a carefully planned and executed mass movement of Jews, designed to forestall any possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, as fundamentalists consider it to be part of the sacred land of Israel (Pedahzur and McCarthy 2015). Not all settlers are ideological. Easy loans and mortgage incentives for younger people and those unable to afford the skyrocketing prices of property in Israel encouraged some Israeli Jews to settle in various areas in the West Bank, particularly in the new urbanizations that encircle Palestinian East Jerusalem. With the building of Jewish-only motorways, transport and communication with the main cities on the coast is simple and fast, making commuting feasible (Newman 1996).

In 2012 the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that about 564,000 Israeli settlers lived in the West Bank, including the suburbs encircling Palestinian East Jerusalem. The figures for 2016 are 636,452 including 297,783 in surrounding suburbs of East Jerusalem. This is nearly 10% of the total Jewish population of Israel.[16] The rural settlements are deployed in such a way as to not allow for land continuity between Palestinian residential areas.

The two-state solution supported by the UN and world powers requires a border between the two states to be as close as possible to the Green Line. This will leave nearly 700,000 Israeli settlers in the Palestinian State, and 1.8 million unwanted Palestinian Israeli citizens in Israel. Any attempt at involuntary removal particularly of Palestinian Israelis will be ethnic cleansing and a crime against humanity. In addition, most rural Jewish settlers are fully-armed fundamentalists and will resist any attempt, Israeli or Palestinian, to remove them. The settler community has support within Israel and any attempt to remove them from "Judea" or "Samaria" will lead to a civil war. No Israeli government will be prepared to preside over this. The two-state solution is no longer viable in a small and overpopulated

country, and its implementation based on the "green line" will lead to significant bloodshed or ethnic cleansing (Gordon and Ram 2016, Judt 2003). Given these evident facts, it remains a mystery why important countries and international organizations continue to adhere to this flawed plan.

In this dangerous situation, other possibilities for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be considered, even if they are currently utopic. What appears today to be utopian could well under different circumstances be the logical outcome. As an example, let us consider an earlier forgotten approach, that of shared sovereignty and collective nonterritorial representation of both national communities in a single state—the model of NCA. This was advocated for a short period by leading Jewish academics and intellectuals during the interwar period, and it bears some unexpected and surprising similarities with the demands and plans advanced by Palestinian NGOs in contemporary Israel.

Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Emerging Mechanisms of Nonterritorial Autonomy

Palestinian Israeli citizens are described by the Israeli authorities as "Israeli Arabs",[17] a term they reject. They have responded to their complex subordinated status by creating a versatile network of NGOs and supporting institutions. The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organization Network (PNGO) is a coordination body with the purpose of strengthening Palestinian civil society and contributing to the establishment of a Palestinian society based on the principles of democracy, social justice, rule of law, tolerance, and respect of human rights.[18] Through networking, capacity-building, developing an information management center and mainstreaming of society concerns into public policies, plans, and programs, civil society NGOs have an important and lasting effect and generate forms of empowerment and mobilization that have an internal as well as an external political impact (Jamal 2008; Al-Haj 1995; Ghanem and Bavly 2015; Bishara 2017).

While designed to deal with specific issues, these mechanisms collectively build an impressive mechanism of nonterritorial autonomy that has similarities to the model of National Cultural Autonomy (NCA, see Smith 2010). The aim is to attain equal rights and collective representation, but not by separation or exclusion from the Israeli-Jewish population. This is done through creating novel mechanisms of collective representation in a common polity. The consequence of this proliferation of NGO's was that in an incremental manner, and by bringing together their activity into more unified and in wide ranging bodies, a remarkable and original mechanism for bottom up, nonterritorial collective empowerment emerges. The number of Palestinian-Israeli NGOs and lobby groups has increased exponentially in the last few decades, from around 41 in the 1980s to over 1600 in 2001, with a continued increase thereafter (Haklai 2009, 864). Their incremental amalgamation into more unified and wide-ranging bodies has created a remarkable and original mechanism for bottom-up, nonterritorial collective empowerment. The aim is to attain equal rights and collective representation in a common polity. Palestinian citizens of Israel are demanding collective rights, in addition to their existing campaign for equal individual citizenship rights (Jamal 2005, 1). In this their demands resemble the NCA model (Smith 2011). This remarkable example of empowerment and cultural renaissance under oppressive conditions has so far attracted only limited attention in specialized literature. The same is true with regard to the extraordinary renaissance of Palestinian literature, theatre, music, and other cultural activities, centered on the city of Haifa (Karkabi 2018). A conceptual analysis of this modality is required, as it could be exemplary for other cases where nation-states face difficulties in incorporating ethnic minorities and stateless nations.

It is not possible in the space of this article to examine the thousands of NGOs evolving into the new modality of nonterritorial autonomy among Israeli Palestinians. The oldest and most important are The Galilee Society, Adalah, and Mossawa[19], but there are thousands more. The Israeli Palestinians in the Galilee, who are the majority of the population in that region, had inadequate public services because of the lack of provision by the central state. Here the Galilee Society came into existence in 1981 to lobby and provide some of the services required. Founded in 1997 with the initial aim of promoting human rights for the Palestinian citizens of Israel, the internationally

renowned NGO Adalah ("Justice" in Arabic) has widened the scope of its activity to encompass all individuals subject to the jurisdiction of the state, using a team of distinguished lawyers to petition Israeli courts. The same year also saw the establishment of Mossawa (Equality in Arabic), which aims to uphold the economic, social, cultural, and political rights of Palestinians in Israel through governmental advocacy in the Knesset (Parliament) and interaction with human rights NGOs in the West. Mossawa also organizes youth summer camps attracting young volunteers from abroad and a program of civil rights education among young Israeli Palestinians. Its publications are of high quality and are widely cited in the academic literature. There are many more Palestinian NGOs working on different aspect of Palestinian Israeli life, including gender discrimination among Palestinians.

The evolving forms of nonterritorial empowerment among Palestinians in Israel provide a counter argument to the idea of a two-state solution, and to the misguided view that self-government can only be obtained in the context of a monocultural nation-state. They show an incipient model of plurinational autonomy that could become a substitute for unfeasible nation-states and their democratic deficit (Nimni 2015). As modalities of shared sovereignty in plurinational states are increasingly being considered as solutions to demands for minority self-determination, the case of Palestinian citizens of Israel is worth considering in detail (Amal 2007; Requejo 1999; Keating 2009).

Counter-State Zionism: National Cultural Autonomy in Historical Palestine

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines Zionism as "a Jewish nationalist movement that has had as its goal the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine."[20] This definition is incorrect, even if it is applicable to the majority of contemporary Zionist movements. A more nuanced discussion will lead to the conclusion that Zionism, like other nationalist movements, is multifaceted and polysemic, and has acquired different, contrasting and contradictory meanings as competing and contradictory world views and ideologies have embraced it. The dominant form of Zionism is political Zionism, which indeed responds to the definition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. In the struggle between competing interpretations of Zionism, political Zionism became hegemonic and dominant, incorporating other forms of Zionism into its own hegemonic project, even when these contradicted its aims (Nimni 2003, 119–122). Thus, contrary to the definition contained in the Encyclopedia Britannica, not all versions of Zionism aspired to create a monocultural Jewish State in Palestine.

The case of Asher Ginsberg, writing under the pen name of Ahad Ha'am (Hebrew for one of the people), illustrates how political Zionism co-opted and distorted other forms of Zionism. This not a new argument. Three decades ago, what were then termed the "new historians" in Israel conclusively showed, in publications in prestigious academic publishing houses, how the academic historiography of the Jewish state was continuously distorted and manipulated to serve the interests of political Zionism.[21] Ahad Ha'am is considered one of the leading early Zionist thinkers; indeed, in every city in Israel there is a street that bears his name. However, most Israelis are not aware that if Ahad Ha'am had his way, there would not be a state of Israel, and probably no conflict with Palestinians.

Ahad Ha'am founded a stream called "Cultural Zionism," which sharply contradicted the aims of political Zionism. He essentially disagreed with the political Zionist concept of *sh'lilat hagolah* (the negation of the diaspora), the doctrine that all Jews must abandon the diaspora and reside together in one ethnonational state in Palestine[22]. In successive articles, particularly one written in 1888 with the title *Lo zu Haderech* (This is not the way), he vehemently criticized political Zionism and the idea of building a Jewish nation-state in Palestine, a country already populated by another people (Dowty 2000). Ahad Ha'am was the first Zionist leader to understand that Palestinians would not give up their land for a Jewish state. He also argued that there was no space in Palestine to accommodate all diaspora Jews, explaining instead that the aim of Zionism was not mass

immigration to Palestine, but to create in Palestine a cultural center to revive and revitalize Jewish culture in the diaspora. He called for utmost respect to be shown for the local population with whom Jews needed to share the land. He was also the first Zionist leader to describe the Arab population of Palestine as "fellow Semites," considering them to have attributes similar to those of Jews. Ahad Ha'am strenuously argued that the ingathering of diasporas in Palestine (*Kibbutz Galuyiot*), which was the goal of political Zionism, was a religious messianic idea rather than a feasible contemporary project.

The main goal of cultural Zionism was to establish a quality cultural spiritual center for Jews, and NOT a Jewish state. The aim was to revitalize Jewish culture in the Diaspora by creating a cultural center in Palestine that will irradiate a renewed Jewish culture to it. Realizing that political Zionism had hijacked his ideas. Hans Kohn (1970, 203) cites one of his last letters, in which he conveys the pain and despair he felt upon hearing about acts of Jewish terrorism against Arabs: "My God! Is this the end? Is this the goal for which our fathers have striven? We now come to Zion to stain its soil with innocent blood?…I stated that our people will willingly give their money to build a state, but they will never sacrifice their prophets for it…And now God has afflicted me to have to see this with my own eyes."

Nevertheless, the original ideas of Ahad Ha'am strongly resonated not only with North American Zionists (Chylińska 2009, 250; Pianko 2010, 61–134), but also with a group of intellectuals and politicians in Palestine who had the vision to understand the tragic consequences of creating a Jewish nation-state. Their proposition was for a binational state, based on the Austrian socialist model of National Cultural Autonomy. It is to these ideas we now turn.

Brit Shalom, Hans Kohn, and the Model for National Cultural Autonomy in Palestine

The National Cultural Autonomy (NCA) model had its origins in the late 19th century Habsburg Empire. It was an attempt by Austrian socialists to transform the Austrian empire from a group of bickering national communities into a democratic federation of nationalities. Whereas conventional autonomy theories envisaged a territorial base for the autonomous ethno-national community, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer argued that such communities could be organized instead as self-governing collectives in plurinational states without considering residential location (Bauer 1898/2000; Renner 2005). The NCA model recognizes that national communities require collective rights and recognition in the public domain. This is achieved through legally guaranteed autonomous corporations. Members of each national community, whatever their area of residence within the state, form a single public body or association endowed with legal personality and collective rights (Nimni 1999; Nimni 2000; Nimni 2007; Smith and Hiden 2012).

These works strongly and persistently influenced debates on Jewish nationhood in Europe. The Bund, an anti-Zionist socialist Jewish organization, opposed the idea of a Jewish nation-state and adopted the NCA model as a way of integrating Jews into multinational states (Gechtman 2013, 2016). Simon Dubnow (1970), the influential theorist of Jewish autonomism, also argued for cultural and religious autonomy for Jews in any country in which they find themselves and adopted the NCA model. Raphael Lemkin, the Jewish-Polish lawyer and academic who coined the concept of genocide, saw in the NCA model an important mechanism to prevent genocides, by separating (ethnic) nationality from the state (Irvin-Erikson 2017, 58–63). In one of the strangest paradoxes of the dreadful conflict that emerged after 1947, a similar model is now advocated by Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Even if they were not socialists themselves, intellectuals and academics that migrated to Palestine in the 1920s in pursuit of the Zionist project were influenced by the activities of the Socialist Party of late imperial Austria and were well versed in Bauer and Renner's model of NCA. In the mid-1920s, an organization by the name of "Brit Shalom" sought peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews, to be achieved through the creation of a bi-national state. Brit Shalom (ברית שלום, "covenant of peace;" تحالف ألسلام,) also called the Jewish–Palestinian Peace Alliance, was a group of intellectuals in

Mandatory Palestine. They believed that peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews was to be achieved by following Ahad Ha'am's vision of cultural Zionism and the NCA model. The central belief of this organization was that cultural Zionism was fully compatible with the establishment of a bi-national state, and with the Balfour Declaration which called for a national home for Jews without prejudicing the rights of the Palestinian population. Jews and Arabs would have equal rights and collective representation in the form of NCA (Nimni 2003). As a Zionist movement that opposed the creation of an ethnonational Jewish nation-state in Palestine, Brit Shalom thus advocated a form of counter-state Zionism (Pianko 2010; Nimni 2012). The group was small in numbers, but it carried the support of distinguished academics and intellectuals of the period. Members and vocal supporters included Arthur Ruppin, Martin Buber, Hugo Bergmann, Gershom Scholem and Henrietta Szold. Hannah Arendt expressed sympathy for Brit Shalom (Arendt 2007, 441–442), as did Albert Einstein, who in 1937 wrote—prophetically—that:

> I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs based on living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. Apart from the practical considerations, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain—especially from the development of a narrow nationalism within our own ranks, against which we have already had to fight without a Jewish state. (Einstein 1956, 263)

Einstein's enthusiasm for the ideas of the group gained him a reprimand from the leaders of political Zionism, with the typical disingenuous accusation that he was aiding and abetting enemies of Jews.[23]

An illuminating analysis of Brit Shalom can be found in an important edited collection by Adi Gordon (2008), which has not been translated into English. One of the most intriguing members of the group was Hans Kohn, who moved to Palestine from his native Prague in 1925, but then abandoned Zionism and moved to the US in 1934 to pursue an outstanding academic career. As chair of modern history at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, Kohn came to be considered the founding father of the academic study of nationalism (Hobsbawm 1992, 3). Following his experience in the All-Austrian Socialist party, Kohn was influenced by the ideas of Bauer and Renner. On this basis, he vehemently criticized the political Zionist aspiration to become a majority in Palestine, arguing that the Zionist view had always been divorced from the "majority question." In fact, Kohn saw a striking similarity between the dilemma of majority-minority relationships that was beginning to develop in Mandatory Palestine and similar dilemmas in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania, for which he regarded NCA as the solution. His Zionism was unusual in that he rejected the idea of historical rights of Jews over Palestine. His vision of Zionism, and indeed of any nationalism, was that they are not divisive concepts, but are geared toward the integration of human beings in societies that recognize each other's difference in friendship and solidarity. For Kohn, the model of a binational state in Palestine was not a compromise to the demographic reality of a majority Palestinian Arab population. He saw the bi-national state as a vanguard model toward trans-nationalism, which is not a negation of nationalism, but a form of nationalism that abandons the curse of the ethnic nation-state, as he experienced in central Europe, in favor of forms of state that can encompass many nations (Pianko 2010, 154–155). Yfat Weiss (2004, 100) puts this very clearly:

> Kohn's attachment to the binational concept as the right and only possible solution for Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine cannot be attributed solely to nostalgia for the multina-tional empire in which he grew up. He examined the empire in terms of the states that emerged out of its ruins. The 'new' states, by which Kohn meant Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Romania, regarded themselves, in spite of their multi-ethnic composition, as nation-states, with one nationality 'native' to the state and the others being tolerated more or less as unwelcome guests.

Kohn was an accomplished linguist and a prolific writer. He could write in Hebrew and Arabic, publishing articles in the Palestinian Newspaper فلسطين (Filastin) in which he argued that Zionists were not there to colonize Palestine but to cooperate with Palestinians in building an Arab nationalism and a prosperous binational state. As Pianko (2010, 148) explains, his anxiety about the position of Jews as the prime victim of the totalizing logic of nation state nationalism motivated his version of counter-state Zionism and his rejection of the nation-state. He was a supporter of plurinational democracies *avant la lettre*, where different nationalisms can coexist and support each other.

As Adi Gordon (2017, 152) explains in his fascinating intellectual biography, Kohn was denied a chair of political science at the then nascent Hebrew University, despite his considerable academic merits. This was due to the first HU chancellor's dissatisfaction with "Dr. Kohn's Political Position."

Before abandoning Palestine, Kohn also wrote a book in Hebrew on Arab nationalism, which was probably one of the first monographs on the topic (Kohn 1925). In its final pages, he spells out how a binational state in Palestine, organized according to the logic of the NCA model, could be constructed. In 1930, however, Kohn left Palestine disappointed with the Zionist movement as it took a violent and colonial dimension. In his "Farewell to Zionism" he wrote.

> The means determine the goal. If lies and violence are the means, the results cannot be good…
> We have been in Palestine for twelve years without having even once made a serious attempt
> at seeking through negotiations the consent of the indigenous people…I believe that it will be
> possible for us to hold Palestine and continue to grow for a long time. This will be done first
> with British aid and then later with the help of our own bayonets—shamefully called Haganah
> [defense]—clearly because we have no faith in our own policy. But by that time, we will not be
> able to do without the bayonets. The means will have determined the goal. Jewish Palestine
> will no longer have anything of that Zion for which I once put myself on the line. (Hans Kohn
> in Bing 1990, 69; see also Aschheim 2007, 39)

Thereafter, Kohn never returned from the US and scarcely wrote on Israel-Palestine.

Shared Sovereignty in Israel-Palestine

For historians, Brit Shalom and Hans Kohn are a small curiosity in the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Contemporary political analysts might see them as an historical irrelevance. But are they? There is no doubt that the issues raised nearly 90 years ago remain current and are even more severe nowadays. At the same time, developments among the Palestinian citizens of Israel, through the vibrant network of NGOs and though the document "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel" readily call to mind the ideas, dreams, and proposals of Brit Shalom and Kohn.[24] Yoav Peled (2013) recently showed the similarities between the demands of the Jewish Socialist Bund in Vilna, which advocated NCA for Jews in central Europe, and the Palestinian Democratic National Assembly in Nazareth. These similarities, however, apply equally to the proposals of Kohn and Brit Shalom and the conglomerate of Palestinian NGOs in today's Israel. The recurrence of the comparison suggests its contemporary relevance. Azmi Bishara, the leading academic and intellectual among Israeli Palestinians, developed an argument similar to the one sustained by Brit Shalom through his work with the organization Brit Shivyon (The Equality Alliance), castigating the ethnocracy of the Israeli State and calling for recognition of the cultural rights of both communities (Smooha 2002, 481). Twenty years ago, post-Zionism called for an alternative to ethnonationalism in Israel that would enable it to become a state of all its citizens, as a liberal democracy must be (Nimni 2003).

The Long-Term Impossibility of a Jewish State

Seventy years after the removal of over 700,000 Palestinians from what is today Israel, the number of Jews and Palestinian Arabs in historical Palestine reached parity at the end of 2017 (Surkes and

Bachner 2018).[25] The process could be defined as a "Nakba reversal," for there is no Jewish majority in historical Palestine. While the rate of demographic growth of Israel's Palestinians is slightly higher than that of Israeli Jews, the rate of demographic growth in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank is considerably higher, particularly in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) estimates that the population growth among Jews in Israel is 1.8%, the population growth of Israeli Palestinians is 2.3%.[26]

In view of the current patterns of demographic growth, from September 2019 Palestinian Arabs again constitute a clear majority in historical Palestine, which is now under total Israeli control. An important factor determines this situation. Both before and since the creation of the Israeli state, political Zionism has relied heavily on Jewish immigration in order to make a Jewish state viable. In this regard, it distinguished between immigration "from wealthy countries" (העלייה ממדינות רווחה) and "deprived countries," (העלייה ממדינות מצוקה), with the former—a euphemism for Western countries—preferred over the latter. But Jewish mass migration from Western democracies has never eventuated and is not likely to, as Jews were and are comfortable in those counties. As Maimon (n.d., 68) argues, "benefiting from relatively high social, professional and economic individual status, most European Jews will in all likelihood remain in Europe." The same, perhaps more emphatically, could be said about US Jews. Mass migration came instead from the "deprived countries" of the Middle East and North Africa, or, most recently, from the former Soviet Union. Israel's early systemic discrimination and patronizing attitude toward migrating Jews from North African and Arab countries is extensively document in the academic literature (Chitrit 2010, Piterberg 1996, Swirski 1989, Shenhav 2006, Shohat 1998 and many others).[27]

The question "Who is a Jew" attracts controversies, even in Israel (Beilin 2000, 67–70; Kraines 1976; Peled 1992). In Western democracies, many people with ancestral Jewish connections no longer feel Jewish and have assimilated or have "married out." In addition, in Western democracies there is no official count of Jews and Jewish assimilation is high. Even if these figures should be taken with caution, there are 14.5 million Jews in the world (2017) of which 43.4% of them resides in Israel and 41.9 % resides in the USA and Canada. The rest (14.7%) reside mainly in Western countries, the major ones being France, the UK, Argentina, Australia, and Germany.[28] As mentioned, Germany is the only country outside Israel that has a growing Jewish population, mainly of young Israelis migrating to Berlin (Almog 2015). Mass migration of Jews to Israel from the Former Soviet Union is exhausted, and, as explained earlier, in the 70 years of the existence of the State of Israel, there has not been a mass migration of Jews to Israel from Western Countries. There are more Israeli citizens residing in the US than US Jewish citizens living permanently in Israel. The same for Canada and possibly the UK. Historically, for Eastern European Jews, the US has been in Yiddish "*Die Goldene Medine*" ("the Golden country"; Zeller 2003) to which they desire to migrate. The net conclusion of this is while a small number of Jews will continue to migrate to Israel from the West, these are statistically insignificant and will not change the balance of population. Resulting from the contemporary location of diaspora Jews in Western countries, it is possible to predict that there will be no mass migration to Israel. The main pattern of Jewish population growth is no longer based on Jewish migration, but rather on internal demographic growth. In the 2017 figures of the ICBS, less than 15% of the Jewish population growth was due to Jewish migration. As mentioned, the rate of demographic growth of Jews in Israel is lower than those in all sectors of the Palestinian society taken separately. Israeli Jews are a decreasing minority of the population of Historical Palestine and a monoethnic Jewish state will be impossible sustain in the long run other than by authoritarian, coercive, racist, and undemocratic means. This small country is overpopulated (Tal 2016) and it will be impossible to fairly partition historical Palestine into monocultural nation states.

The ultra nationalist right in Israel talks about "transfer," a euphemism for ethnic cleansing. Besides this being a crime against humanity, it is unfeasible, as no neighboring country will receive Palestinians forced from their homes. We know from recent German history what happens when people are forced out of their homes and no one receives them. There is also a "one-state solution"

proposal by the current government that entails continuous rule over a Palestinian majority. The nation-state bill, passed into law in July 2018 by the Israeli parliament,[29] proclaims that the land that runs from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea is the historic, national homeland of the Jewish people, wherever they reside, and only they have the right of self-determination in that land. This will eliminate any semblance of democracy to make Israel to the letter, a state where a minority rules the majority. The senior Israeli journalist Gideon Levy, from the liberal newspaper Haaretz, argued the point clearly in a recent interview:

> Look, we are dealing now with 700,000 [Jewish] settlers. It is unrealistic to think that anybody will evacuate 700,000 settlers. Without their full evacuation, you don't have a viable Palestinian state. Everyone knows this, and everyone continues with their old songs because it's convenient to everybody—to the Palestinian Authority, to the EU, to the United States—[saying] 'two states, two states,' and by this you can continue the occupation for another hundred years, thinking that one day there will be a two-state solution. It will never happen anymore. We missed this train and this train will never get back to the station.[30]

For all of the reasons outlined above, the 90-year-old model outlined by Brit Shalom remains an urgent and feasible solution. The proposal is not viable at present, as the hostile climate currently prevailing among Israelis means that it would elicit a violent reaction from neo-Zionist and religious fundamentalists (Ram 1999, 330). Yet the fact remains that, if some form of shared sovereignty with the Palestinians is not achieved, the Israeli state will eventually crumble under the weight of its own internal contradictions. Here, in the 1967 victorious war Israel acquired a Trojan horse, in the most literal meaning of the term. When more Israelis realize their predicament, the way will be open for the modalities of shared sovereignty now supported by Palestinian Israelis. Possibly the last opportunity to secure a two-state solution was lost in 2002, when the Arab League offered Israel full normalization with the Arab countries in return for its withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem, and the creation of a Palestinian state (Cohen 2012). For all its diplomatic influence and military power, in population terms, the Israeli state has lost the game. It cannot sustain a democratic nation state even in a part of historical Palestine without conceding democratic collective rights to Palestinians and making Israel a state of its citizens. It cannot dream in vain for greater Jewish immigration from Western democracies. The proportion of Jews in relation to Palestinians will continuously decrease. In these circumstances a move to shared sovereignty in a plurinational state with collective rights for both peoples, eliminating in this way the odious majority-minority relation, is a possible and perhaps the only solution to the conflict in this troubled and overcrowded land. What precise shape it will take could only be considered when both parties are prepared to consider this solution seriously. At this point, the contemporary Palestinian NGOs, Brit Shalom, and Hans Kohn will be vindicated. As the latter indicated 90 years ago, only a plurinational state will guarantee the continuity of Jewish national autonomy in Palestine. Call it counter-state Zionism if you wish. Here, the last word belongs to Hans Kohn in 1919: "Once there will be a Palestinian State, it will have two languages, Arabic and Hebrew…This future state will not be a national state (*Nationalstaat*) but a multinational (*Nationalitätenstaat*) one. If we do not realize this in all seriousness, we shall always suffer from a Jewish-Arab problem (quoted in Gordon 2017, 85; original translation, Hans Kohn "The Arab Question" in Iggers 1992, 240).

Notes

1 In 2002, the Arab League offered Israel full normalization with the Arab countries once it had withdrawn from the territories it occupied in1967 and resolved the Palestinian refugee problem and created a Palestinian State. In 2007, all the Arab League member states except for Libya endorsed the plan during a two-day summit in Riyadh. See Neve Gordon and Yinon Cohen (2012). It remains beyond belief that this proposal was not accepted by Israel. Perhaps it was the last opportunity to secure a Jewish state in two-thirds of historical Palestine.

2 The circumstances of the Balfour Declaration have been extensively discussed, remain controversial, and they cannot be addressed here. See among the extensive literature: Renton 2007; Cohen 1989; LeVine and Mossberg 2014. Levene (1992, 77) concludes that Zionism was based in the premise that Europe was anti-Semitic, and His Majesty's government obliged by supporting a national home in a remote place. Some historians argue that Balfour did not promise a Jewish State, while others see in the declaration the cornerstone for the Jewish State. The language is deliberately vague, arguing for a "Jewish Home" and "that "nothing shall be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." See the Balfour declaration here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration.

3 The Partition of Palestine was initially recommended by the British Royal Commission of Inquiry, headed by Lord Peel, appointed in 1936. The report of this commission concluded that the British Mandate in Palestine initiated in 1919 was unworkable and recommended a partition of the territory, with a transfer of population, citing as a precedent the 1923 Greek and Turkish exchange. The tone of the report was colonialist, condescending and racist, for it justified its conclusion arguing that: "(T)he continued impact of a highly intelligent and enterprising race, backed by large financial resources, on a comparatively poor indigenous community, on a different cultural level, may produce in time serious reactions." Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, 1937. His Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1937, 74, 299 https://unispal.un.org/pdfs/Cmd5479.pdf.

4 The reference here is not to specific persons, but to the then widespread perception among enlightened and liberal minded people horrified by the mass killing of Jews, that a Jewish state was necessary to protect Jews from harm. See as an example the quote by Hersh 2009 on above "Partition and the Creation of the State of Israel" on the third page of this article.

5 See Ottolenghi 2005. On the misuse of the Jewish genocide to support Zionism, see Zertal 2005.

6 The numbers are so large that there is now a new category in the US of "Israeli Americans." A conservative estimate puts them at approximately 400,000, about four times the number of North American Jews residing in Israel. See the Wikipedia entry on Israeli Americans and Ellen Wexler (2018) "The New Israeli Americans," The Moment Magazine, January http://www.momentmag.com/new-israeli-americans/?gclid=CjwKCAiA47DTBRAUEiwA4luU2eo9wrXhsDz0oFSHqPned224fYjCOA8UsZubXVVX_uK5KasryPU8YBoCbFEQAvD_BwE.

7 Fania Salzberger (2015) describes how many tens of thousands of young Israelis who came to Berlin during the last twenty years were fascinated by the city and made it their permanent abode. Many of them are escaping military service and some are from families touched by the Nazi Genocide, and for that reason they find it easier to obtain residential rights. The German-Hebrew-language radio station *Kol Berlin* (The voice of Berlin) entertains this large crowd.

8 See The Official Records of the United Nations on the Partition of Palestine, UN Special Commission on Palestine, 1947 at https://undocs.org/A/364(SUPP).

9 The 1949 armistice lines are also referred as the borders of June 5, 1967, the day before the war began. See Caplan 1992.

10 Historical Palestine is the territory of the British Mandate in Palestine 1918–1947, minus Trans Jordan ceded by the British Empire to Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca in 1921. This territory subsequently became the Kingdom of Jordan. For the contemporary use of the term Historical Palestine, see Burton 2015.

11 Israel population density was 387.3 per square kilometer as of October 2019 (http://countrymeters.info/en/ISRAEL#population_density). In comparison, ignoring small city-states, the most densely populated state in Europe is The Netherlands, with 393 per square kilometer. The UK has a population density of 267 per square kilometer, and Germany has a population density of 233 per square kilometer. See https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/european-countries-by-population-density.html. See also the Ynet News article by Yaron London: "Welcome to Israel, the Most Crowded Nation on Earth." Here London argues that "In October, the Israel Forum for Population, Environment and Society (known in Hebrew as "צפוף" "crowded") held a convention headed by Alon Tal, whose recent book warned of demographic dangers. Rachelle Alterman, an urban planner, gave a lecture describing Israel's scenery in 15 years time. According to her, nearly all of us will be living in towers but conducting our public lives underground" (https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5430319,00.html). The arguments about Israel's overpopulation and its dangers are put forward by senior academic researchers in the field. See the Israeli Population, Environment & Society Forum here: http://population.org.il/en/about-us/%D7%9E%D7%98%D7%A8%D7%AA%D7%A0%D7%95/.

12 For a discussion of the impact of the Nakba in Palestinian national identity, see Sa'di 2002.

13 See https://www.middleeastobserver.org/2016/07/12/pcbs-reports-gaza-strip-is-the-most-denselypopulated-place-on-earth/. For a discussion of the situation of the Gaza Strip, see: Bhungalia 2010; Butt and Butt 2016.

14 See Statistical Abstract of Israel, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, June 2017, http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/shnatone_new.htm.

15 According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2017 the total population of Israel was 8,680,000. Jews were 74.3% of Israel's population, with Palestinians at 21% and "Others" at 4.7%. "Others" is a bizarre term that refers to those who are neither Jews nor Arabs.

16 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/SETT8E-2016.html. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics does not count the number of settlers.

17 For the way the term is understood in Israeli mainstream literature, see Landau 1969/2015.

18 See the web page of the PNGO http://www.pngo.net/mission-vision/.

19 See The Galilee Society web page http://www.gal-soc.org/; Adalah's web page: https://www.adalah.org/; Mossawa's web page http://www.mossawa.org/.

20 https://www.britannica.com/topic/Zionism.

21 Among the key works of the so called "new Historians" are: Flapan 1987; Morris 1987; Morris 1988; Shlaim 1988; Pappe 1988. For a critical assessment, see Shapira and Wiskind-Elper 1995.

22 On this, Ahad Ha'am influenced US Zionist thinkers, such as Simon Rawidowicz and Mordechai Kaplan. See Pianko 2010 (61–134).

23 See "Tell Einstein Brit Shalom Has Misled Him" (1930) Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 27 August https://www.jta.org/1930/08/27/archive/tells-einstein-brith-shalom-has-misled-him.

24 The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, 2006, https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf.

25 The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics shows that at the end of 2017 the population of Israel was composed of 6,556 thousand Jews (74.6%) and 1,837 thousand Palestinian Israelis (nearly 21%). The Palestinian Bureau of Statistics indicates that at the end of 2017 there were 4,780 thousand Palestinians in the West bank and Gaza. If Israeli Palestinians are included with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza the number is 6,617 thousand in Historical Palestine. Sources: http://

www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=201711387 see also: http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/post.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=3183.

26 http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=201711387.

27 A recent shocking and well-researched documentary shows this in all its clarity. See the 2017 film by David Deri "The Ancestral Sin" (Heb: Sallah, Po Ze Eretz Israel). Available on-line in Hebrew only here: https://13tv.co.il/vod/sallah/.

28 Sources: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewishpopulation-of-the-world. See also DellaPergola 2017.

29 For the full text of the law see: https://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf.

30 Robert Fisk interviews Gideon Levy, "Here's what I found out when I spent the day with Israel's most controversial journalist, Gideon Levy." *The Independent*, September 27, 2018.

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