Challenging National Narratives in Palestine/Israel: Interconnections between Past and Present

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Abstract

Taking account of the original meaning of 'inextricability' among Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, the paper aims at exploring whether joint Palestinian and Israeli Jewish viewpoints should be considered as a feasible scenario. With the purpose of deconstructing conventional approaches towards resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the leitmotiv of the study is centered on the critical examination of the most prominent intellectual debates and historic examples that have challenged a daily reality developed around fear and hostility directed against the so-called Other. In this way, whilst recognizing a number of failures experienced by the majority of joint initiatives, I suggest how this type of political perspective has made it possible for potentially useful initiatives to emerge within the worsening context of military occupation and conflicting narratives.

- Introduction
- Alternative Prospects from Jewish and Palestinian Intellectual Debates

    A. *The Earliest Ideas of 'Binationalism'*
    B. *Martin Buber's Commitment to a Joint Arab-Jewish Future*
    C. *Hannah Arendt and a Shared Scenario between Jews and Palestinians*
    D. *Edward W. Said's Request for 'Coexistence' as the Only Alternative*

- Shared Daily Realities: *Pre* 1948

    A. *Workers' Joint Struggles under the British Mandate*
    B. *The Influence of the Communist Party on Joint Politics*

- 'Binationalism' *Post* 1948 and its implications

    A. *'Coexistence' in Palestine/Israel: What Does It Mean?*
    B. *The Case of 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam'*

- Current Status of Joint Initiatives: Overcoming the Demise of the Oslo Accords
- Conclusion

Introduction

With the purpose of deconstructing the mainstream approaches related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the core of the paper is concerned with the increasing influence of the conflicting national narrative identities, and in particular on the criticism directed against the Zionist one. Although the emergence of more and more boundaries among the contrasting ethno-national communities who live in the territory of Palestine/Israel has been observed, I aim nevertheless at examining alternative pathways, which have the potential to be applicable both at the theoretical level and in terms of practical activities on the ground. It is via these pathways that it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the original meaning of 'inextricability', following Edward Said's belief in the importance of close historic Arab-Jewish interrelations.

Within such a deeply engrained conflict,[1] worsened by a long-lasting military occupation, Palestinian and Israeli Jewish histories have constituted mutually exclusive as well as closely interconnected narratives in which each side has provided comprehensive explanations and justifications for collective group actions, including violence towards the so-called Other.[2] Taking into account this theoretical framework and focusing mainly on the writings of Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt, and on Edward Said's literature, I will consider some deep-rooted examples of shared politics between Palestinian Arabs and Jews, examples which date both from before and after the establishment of the state of Israel. I will commence with the most significant working-class struggles led by Palestinian Arab and Jewish workers during the British Mandate, as well as I will question 1948's consequences, examining the case of the village of 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam.'[3] I will attempt to suggest a thread which runs between a theoretical examination such as this and the historical cases I will take into consideration, in order to underline some diverse political alternatives of Jewish-Palestinian cooperation and shared peace-building. In the final part of the paper, I will discuss the present

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[1] I use the term 'settled conflict' since I believe the issue of 'settler colonialism' in

[2] On deconstructing juxtaposed narratives as a peace-building tool, see the essay by Rafi Nets in this volume, pp. 212-232.

[3] Unless spelled differently in the sources used, the editor has opted for the spelling 'Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam,' as it appears in http://nswas.org, accessed 28 June 2013.

By using what has been defined as the 'relational history approach' in order to tell the collective history of people and social groups in Palestine, the historian Zachary Lockman has dealt with the necessity of overcoming the dual paradigm of 'Jews against Arabs' in "Railway Workers and Relational History: Arabs and Jews in British-Ruled Palestine" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35/3 (1993): 601-627. The work of Zachary Lockman has reconsidered the whole complexity of the Palestinian question, trying to uncover its historical roots starting with the late Ottoman era. Lockman's work will be referred to again in the central part of this paper.

deadlock status of the majority of Palestinian-Israeli joint projects that seem to have become entrapped within an ongoing decline in the last decade, and ask whether some of the examples of cooperation and peace building I have highlighted can offer alternative paths towards conflict resolution.

Alternative Prospects from Jewish and Palestinian Intellectual Debates

Commencing in the 1920s under the British Mandate, a few Jewish academics and thinkers started to express a critical viewpoint on the preliminary steps of the Zionist political movement,[4] and more specifically concerning the validity of its claim to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. In the following pages, a historical-philosophical digression will focus on the earliest published works that attempted to question the centrality of national narrative identities for future egalitarian relationships between Jews and Palestinian Arabs. In addition, I will illustrate the political proposal suggested by the leading Palestinian intellectual Edward W. Said in relation to the foundation of a binational Israeli-Palestinian state.

Though proposing singular points of view and experiencing different historical events, the relevant voices I have decided to take into consideration have all expounded critical frameworks regarding this central issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In stating this I have in mind not simply their common emphasis on the importance of creating a broader consciousness on the question of Palestine, but also their anti-essentialism in extending and deepening their positions.

A. The Earliest Ideas of 'Binationalism'

In the spring of 1925 a number of Jewish intellectuals, who originated mostly from Central European countries, began to express the conviction that historic Palestine belonged to all the people who wanted to live there, and to advocate the creation of a multinational state. One group expressing such views founded 'Brit Shalom' (Covenant of Peace),[5] as an intellectual circle rather than a

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[4] On Zionism and its initial steps, two main books, *Auto-Emancipation* (1882) by Leo Pinsker and *The Jewish State* (1896) by Theodore Herzl, were considered to constitute the founding pillars of the idea of Zion and the so-called 'Promised Land,' concerning the special relationship between the Jewish people and the land of Palestine. Among the most contemporary literature related to such issues, see Georges Bensoussan, *Une histoire intellectuelle et politique du sionisme,* (Paris: Éditions Fayard, 2002).

[5] For an English-language bibliography regarding the historical and political prospects of 'Brit Shalom' see the occasional papers entitled "The Statutes of Brit Shalom" *Jewish-Arab Affairs*, (Jerusalem: Brit Shalom Society, 1931) and "Memorandum on an Arab Policy for the Jewish Agency" *Jewish-Arab Affairs* (Jerusalem, Brit Shalom Society: 1930). In addition, in relation to 'Brit Shalom''s major policy positions, refer to the following contributions: Susan Hattis Rolef, *The Bi-national Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times*, (Haifa: Shikmona, 1970); Hagit Lavsky, *German Zionists and the Emergence of Brit Shalom* in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 648-670; Shalom Matzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brit Shalom, 1925-1933*, (Boston and Leiden:

political party, and this circle included the head of the Palestinian branch of the 'Zionist World Organization' Arthur Ruppin, the historian of the Kabala Gershom Scholem[6] (considered to be a leading proponent of the 'binational' approach, together with the philosopher Hugo Bergman), the historian Hans Kohn, the agronomist Chaim Kalvarisky, and the philosopher and pedagogue Ernst Simon. The group was joined later by the philosopher Martin Buber, contributing to the disparate nature of the backgrounds of the members of this group, which ranged from veteran Jewish residents of Palestine to *Mizrahi* Jews and liberal Zionists.

In opposition to the design of a Jewish state in Palestine proposed by the vast majority of the Zionist movement, 'Brit Shalom' underlined that the real achievement of Zionism[7] was to develop a fair relationship and mutual recognition between the two peoples.[8] Although they emphasized the key position of the Jewish-Arab question in political as well as moral terms, this passionate voice in support of mutual cooperation in Palestine has never been regarded as leading among those who are in opposition to the traditional Zionist politics and working towards a unitary state for all its citizens. One deficiency of this group was its failure to involve enough Palestinian partners in their common struggle. However, they did initiate a few direct personal relationships with some Arab leaders, such as Jamal Husayni, Auni Abdul-Hadi and Mussa Alami, and in addition they recruited Fawzi al-Husayni.[9] On the other hand, they failed to consider the increasing role of the national aspirations of the Jewish and the Palestinian populations at that time.

A few years later, in 1942, a further initiative called 'Ihud' (Union) emerged, sharing the aim of promoting a socio-political and cultural reconciliation for a political project founded on the binational idea.[10] It included people belonging

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Brill, 2002); Yfaat Weiss, "Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism" *Jewish Social Studies* 11/1 (2004): 93-117.

[6] Gershom Scholem was one of the foremost representatives of the German-Jewish intellectuals who created an alternative to Herzlian Zionism by advocating complete civic equality between Jews and Arabs in a binational state in which both peoples would enjoy equal political, civil and social rights. In common with other members, Scholem believed Jews needed the land, but Eretz Israel should not tie to particular political boundaries or institutions. In detail, see Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, *Briefwechsel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980).

[7] A few Jewish thinkers - such as the ones I will deal with in the following pages - were critical of mainstream Zionism. Whilst suggesting different viewpoints and resolution proposals, their attitudes can be described in terms of a humanistic vision addressing alternative forms of society in Palestine. Although such perspectives did not triumph, they offered challenging debates within Zionism itself.

[8] Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exil et Souveraineté: Judaisme, Sionisme et Pensée Binationale*, (Paris: La Fabrique, 2007), 175-183.

[9] Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 115.

[10] In its declaration published on the 3rd September 1942, 'Ihud' stated its binationalist ideas in order to refute all misconceptions about itself and to cooperate with other organizations such as the 'League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement.' For information about 'Ihud' and its political proposals see Norman Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake: a Biography of Judah L. Magnes, the First*

to different parties, independents and academics (some of them who were already involved in 'Brit Shalom') such as Martin Buber, Chaim Kalvarisky, Judah L. Magnes, Moshe Smilansky and Henrietta Szold, who was also the founder of the 'American Women's Zionist Organization' called 'Hadassah.'

After more than eighty years, including the period of disillusionment with the Oslo process, a small group of activists have recently re-launched a similar political project under the banner 'Brit Shalom 2012.' Whilst proposing a six-point plan to create a regional confederation in order to allow full political and individual rights to all citizens, they have criticized both the original 'Brit Shalom' and 'Ihud' as failing to take into account the geopolitical reality along with the national aspirations of both peoples.[11]

B. *Martin Buber's Commitment to a Joint Arab-Jewish Future*

The binational statement was at the centre the political approach of 'Ihud', which was based on the idea of an inclusive state, and took into consideration the need for a process of recognition that was necessary in order for Jews to live with the Palestinian Arab population who had inhabited that land for hundreds of years.[12] The core of this challenge was firstly analyzed by one the most prominent intellectuals of the association, Martin Buber, who through all his political thought proposed two critical foundations necessary for an active cooperation between the two peoples. The first of these dealt with their historical common origins, languages and traditions which both come from their Semitic lineage, whilst the latter focused on their strong relationship to their homeland.[13]

Buber examined the prospect for the establishment of a new Jewish society in Palestine, acting as a bridge between Western and Eastern Jewish experiences, so that

> the return to Eretz Israel, which is to take place in the form of an ever-increasing immigration, is not intended to encroach upon the rights of

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Chancellor and First President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1954); *Palestine, a Bi-national State*, eds. Martin Buber, Judah L. Magnes, Moshe Smilansky, (New York: Association of Palestine, 1946); *Towards Union in Palestine: Essays on Zionism and Jewish-Arab Cooperation*, eds. Martin Buber, Judah L. Magnes, Ernst Simon, (Jerusalem: IHUD Association, 1947); *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Arthur A. Goren, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Susan Hattis Rolef, *The Bi-national Idea in Palestine during Mandatory Times*; *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[11] Elhanan Miller, "What Would Buber, Scholem and Arendt Say Today?," *Times of Israel*, July 27, 2012, http://www.timesofisrael.com/what-would-buber-scholem-and-arendt-say-today/ accesed 10 June 2013.

[12] Martin Buber, "The Bi-national Approach to Zionism," in *Towards Union in Palestine,* eds. Martin Buber, Judah L. Magnes, Ernst Simon, 7-13.

[13] Martin Buber, "Two Peoples in Palestine" (1947), in *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, 196-198.

others. Its sense is the constructive work of free people on a common soil.[14]

Looking towards the prospect of a joint future, Buber urged that success in the struggle for self-determination should be guaranteed to both peoples not through the foundation of separate states (one Jewish and one Arab) but within a joint binational socio-political entity set up on a basis of economic cooperation, equality of rights for all citizens, and joint sovereignty.[15]

C. Hannah Arendt and a Shared Scenario between Jews and Palestinians

Another foremost Jewish philosopher, Hannah Arendt, questioned the Zionist mainstream together with its emerging policies towards the native Palestinian Arab people. Although she supported in her writings the formation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which constituted a fundamental hope for Jews all over the world, she never identified with Zionism.[16] She made a sharp distinction between the creation of a Jewish homeland and the significance of establishing a Jewish sovereign state founded on the 'nation-state' concept. This latter proposal was completely rejected by Arendt, who instead preferred the idea of a mutual understanding between Palestinian Arabs and Jews.

Arendt criticized the main political aspirations of the Zionist movement pointing out the paradox of socialism and nationalism,[17] as being contradictory to their original principles and dangerous for the Jews themselves who, in her belief, could not ignore the presence of Palestinians in that land. Her bitterest criticism was derived from the fact that Jews in Palestine, after more than fifty years had elapsed since the first *alyiah*, had completely removed the Arab-Jewish relationship issue from their public discourse.

In two of her most famous essays, *Zionism reconsidered*[18] and *The Jew as Pariah: a Hidden Tradition*[19], she foresaw the tragic reality that happened after the

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[14] Susan Hattis Rolef, *The Bi-national Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times*, 28-30.

[15] Martin Buber, "Two Peoples in Palestine," 199.

[16] Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 101-103.

[17] In the Zionist movement, the combination of socialist-revolutionary ideologies and national aspirations has created repeated internal tensions between different viewpoints. Related to this issue, among selected writings on the creation of the Israeli Jewish narrative see Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: the Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots Collective Memory and Making of Israeli National Tradition*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[18] Hannah Arendt, "Zionism Reconsidered" (1944), in *Hannah Arendt: the Jewish Writing*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 343-374.

[19] Hannah Arendt "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition" (1944), in *Hannah Arendt: the Jewish Writing*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, 275-297. It has represented the expression that Arendt used to describe the status of Jews in Europe, going beyond their condition of most oppressed people. In her writing, she quoted Bernard Lazare, as the first Jewish

foundation of the Jewish state, without resolving the Jewish problem and, further, creating a scenario which was the opposite of the 'binational' solution. Just two options were presented to the Palestinian Arabs: either forced migration or acceptance of a minority status allowing the Jewish population to keep and expand their national aspirations.

In 1950, another celebrated piece of writing about the Palestine question emerged. This was entitled *Peace or Armistice in the Near East*[20], and it highlighted the necessity of achieving Arab-Jewish negotiations in order to produce a real mutual cooperation in the Middle East. The creation of a common economic structure in the Near East Federation was seen from this viewpoint as particularly beneficial for the Jews integrating themselves into the new social configuration. Arendt, in considering which alternative should succeed between federation and balkanization, warned of the conflict between the concepts of national sovereignty and national survival in these words:

> national sovereignty, which so long had been the very symbol of free national development, has become the greatest danger to national survival for small nations. In view of the international situation and the geographical location of Palestine, it is not likely that the Jewish and Arab peoples will be exempt from this rule.[21]

D. Edward W. Said's Request for 'Coexistence' as the Only Alternative

Following a belief in the inevitability of a shared future between Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, the intellectual contribution of the leading Palestinian scholar Edward W. Said remained focused in this direction. He fought strongly for the fulfillment of aspirations for a binational future in Israel/Palestine where each person could be considered a citizen with equal rights and freedom. Defining himself through the surprising image of Jewish-Palestinian and moreover as the last Jewish intellectual,[22] Said criticized the equidistant representations of the conflict, through which Palestinians and Israeli Jews have been portrayed as equals and symmetrically balanced, and he pointed out that such equilibrium has never existed. In his opinion, they are "not interchangeable, morally equal, epistemologically congruent" because of the central belief of Zionism, which is the complete denial of the Palestinian

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intellectual who was able to translate into political terms the position of Jews within the European culture.

[20] Hannah Arendt, "Peace or Armistice in the Near East?" (1950), in *Hannah Arendt: the Jewish Writing*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, 423-450.

[21] Hannah Arendt "Federation or Balkanization?" (1950), in *Hannah Arendt: the Jewish Writing*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, 450.

[22] Ari Shavit, "'My Right of Return': an Interview with Edward Said," *Haaretz*, August 18, 2000.

narrative, and because, in addition, Israeli Jews have continued to ask for concessions from Palestinians with nothing given in return.[23]

In the debate about the interaction of diverse narrative identities, Said put emphasis on the concept that:

> Israelis and Palestinians are now so intertwined through history, geography, and political actuality that it seems to me absolute folly to try and plan the future of one without that the other (…). Everywhere one looks in the territory of historical Palestine, Jews and Palestinians live together."[24]

In order to achieve a mutual reconciliation and a fair peace, Said suggested three basic pillars: the first of these is linked to the secular dimension of a possible resolution of the Palestine question; the second highlights the imperative of overcoming structures of exclusion; the third focuses on the need for political engagement concerning the issue of justice inside the region.[25] In disagreement with the mainstream viewpoint that has supported the peace process started in Oslo in 1993 as being the only instrument to have the potential to bring about the end of the conflict, Said's political proposal was founded on the development of an Israeli-Palestinian state, and moved beyond the common idea of irreconcilability between the opposite narratives. Following such a pathway, he pursued a sincere belief in the inextricability of narratives as the only future for that land and its inhabitants.

Shared Daily Realities: *Pre* 1948

In grouping theoretical reflections and political proposals elaborated in different historical times and backgrounds, I am aware of the challenge of such a comparison in the direction of exploring a wide range of topics and their varying tensions. I argue, however, that this rich variety of valuable contributions can add a critical perspective to the discussion of current philosophical and political issues, along with those empirical concerns related to significances of equality, pluralism and justice for the Other. Despite not being the majority in terms of number of organizations, as well as of internal public opinion both in Palestinian and Israeli societies, these voices have, from the 1920s up to the present time revealed the existence of alternatives to the hegemonic narrative by reframing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In order to understand the meaning of the earliest episodes of socio-political interaction among Palestinian Arabs and Jews living in historic Palestine, it is

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[23] Edward W. Said, "The Burdens of Interpretation and the Question of Palestine" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 16/1 (1986): 33.

[24] Edward W. Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place" *Critical Inquiry* 26/2 (2000): 191-192.

[25] Edward W. Said, "The Burdens of Interpretation," 36-37.

of critical importance to avoid considering the two narratives into unchanging frameworks, and also to avoid regarding the subjects of these narratives exclusively as separated communities which are in violent opposition.

A. Workers' Joint Struggles under the British Mandate

Since the time of the British Mandate, Palestinian Arabs and Jews have participated in joint action and struggle on the basis of mutual collaboration within a number of trade unions. These actions have taken place in response to the necessity of reacting to occupational crises, anti-government sentiments and natural disasters, and have attempted to transcend deep-seated ethno-national identities.[26] In particular, joint strikes have represented the most complex contexts in which economics and politics were combined within national and labor movements. The earliest instances where this issue came to the fore within the working-class movement happened during the 1920s, when for the first time the 'Jewish Railway Workers' Association' (RWA) started to raise questions regarding joint actions between Palestinian and Jewish railway workers.[27]

Although only a small number of academic studies have specifically dealt with historical women's joint initiatives,[28] the sociologist Hannah Herzog has written:

> some women were among the first who identified emerging and intensifying social boundaries between Jews and Arabs and groups within the Jewish community, which in days to come would cause huge conflicts and struggles. From these early stages women not only discerned the boundaries, they also recognized the arbitrariness,

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[26] Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 108-116.

[27] Railway workers in Haifa were one of the earliest and most significant examples of interaction between Palestinian Arabs and Jews. They applied fundamental principles of cooperation and unity in their everyday lives: it was possible to speak about 'integral unity' of their experiences, rather than simple cooperation between separate trade unions. See Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

[28] One of the main difficulties of conducting research on such issues has been finding accessible resources, due to the lack of studies on these themes. Because of their challenges to ethno-nationalist boundaries, representations of women's joint groups have not prevailed; on the contrary, similar women's narratives have usually been ignored by their respective accounts. Nevertheless, the significance of women's cooperation before 1948 has been proven by a few analyses regarding interconnections between Jewish and Palestinian Arab women who struggled for equal rights and fair salary in their domestic life as well as in labour movements. In relation to Palestinian and Jewish women's joint actions see the following studies: *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, ed. Deborah Bernstein (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1992); Sheila H. Katz, *Women and Gender in Early Jewish and Palestinian Nationalism*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Janet M. Powers, *Blossoms on the Olive Tree: Israeli and Palestinian Women Working for Peace*, (Westport: Praeger, 2006); Elise G. Young, *Keepers of the History: Women and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992). For a historical overview of women's joint struggles from 1948 onwards see the essay by Valérie Pouzol in this issue, pp. 50-72.

discrimination and injustice embodied in delineation, and therefore called for the subversion of these restrictions.[29]

Looking at the inextricable linkage between Palestinian and Jewish narratives prior to 1948, the daily interactions of some women during this period constituted a de-facto attempt to challenge the male-dominated nationalism that was based on separation and hostility between opposite populations. By exchanging reciprocal support, they developed everyday relationships which were in contrast with the conventional nationalist policies in play among their population groups, and they called attention to socio-political and territorial consequences related to the waves of Jewish immigration to the historic Palestine.

Like a "story of missed opportunities" as Lockman stated,[30] an examination of Arab-Jewish cooperation in the Mandatory Palestine should start with the contrasting efforts that were developed by several Palestinian Arab and Jewish workers, activists, and common people through mutual solidarity. Although joint strikes and cooperation initiatives (involving women as well as men) have not changed the course of historical narratives, intertwining relationships arising from these activities have introduced alternative understandings of the past and, at the same time, future proposals for overcoming the boundaries of identity, at least at the theoretical level.

B. The Influence of the Communist Party on Joint Politics

The *Palestine Communist Party (Palestiner Kumunistishe Partie - PKP)*, which was established in 1919, was one of the earliest significant examples of a party which was in strong opposition to the Zionist settlements in the historic Palestine and, at the same time, to the Jewish mainstream labor policies. Although only Jewish members were involved in the party during its initial phase, it has been considered as one of few examples of unity between Palestinian Arabs and Jews, and placed emphasis on agreed strategies and a shared program. As regards their worsening relationships with other initiatives arising from workers and leftist minorities, one of their most substantial political efforts was the proposal to unify several communist organizations within one single party. In this frame, Palestinian Arab and Jewish Communists had to promote their political projects by diverging from their national backgrounds. Since the beginning, Jewish Communists had to face most Jews who accused them of being traitors towards Zionism, and expressed disapproval of their ambivalent interaction with Arabs.

The main turning point was represented by the dramatic consequences of the 1948 war when, on the one hand, Palestinian Arab nationalism and, on the other, the establishment of the Jewish state created an inextricable internal

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[29] Hannah Herzog, "Redefining Political Spaces: A Gender Perspective of the Yishuv Historiography," in *Gender and Israeli Society: Women's Time*, ed. Hannah Naveh, (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 16.

[30] Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948*.

dispute about the legitimacy of the future state of Israel and its Zionist presumptions.[31] As a consequence of pressure from the clashing nationalisms, the Communist Party split into 'Maki' (*Miflagah Communistit Yisraelit*) in which most of the Jewish members remained, and 'Rakah', which was joined by the majority of Arab members.[32]

A decade later, during the 1960s and especially in consequence of 1967 war, a Trotskyite group called 'Matzpen' (compass) emphasized its opposition to Zionism and the military occupation of the Palestinian territories (oPt). Additionally, by enlarging its consensus among non-Communist Palestinians and non-Zionist Jews, the 'Democratic Front for Peace and Equality' ('Jabhah' in Arabic and 'Hadash' in Hebrew), founded in 1977, has represented another significant joint political experience with the purpose of making one of the weakest socio-economic minorities of Israeli society, the Palestinian Arabs, active within the national politics.[33]

By considering their ethno-nationalist trends,[34] Israeli Communists have been committed to fundamental socio-political attitudes and behaviors, although their public consensus has been rather marginal. Whilst their advocacy of social equality and economic justice could have the potential to put forward essential pillars for the resolution of conflict, opposite narrative identities have in practice frustrated every chance to provide sustainable perspectives.

'Binationalism' *Post* 1948 and its implications

In exploring the heterogeneous societal frameworks within the state of Israel, the relational dichotomy between Israeli Palestinians and Jews has reflected deep-seated narrative identities. On the one hand, the Palestinian minority has been required to show a dual loyalty, as citizens of the state of Israel as well as participants within their own national self-determination struggle, while, on the other hand, Israeli Jews have continued to assert their hegemony over Palestinians by representing the powerful majority.[35] The main focus of this

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[31] Since the 1930s most members of 'Mapai' (the dominant left-wing political party until the emergence of the Labour party in 1968) supported the idea of partition in order to end Arab-Jewish struggles. This helped enable Jews to obtain the majority of sovereignty on the greatest part of the territory. See Rael J. Isaac, *Party and Politics in Israel: Three Visions of a Jewish State*, (New York: Longman, 1981), 104-106.

[32] Ibid., 176.

[33] Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 225.

[34] Ilana Kaufman, *Arab National Communism in the Jewish State*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), 32-38.

[35] Since the foundation of the Israeli state a hierarchical situation in society has produced internal instability as well as conflict within Israeli society in which Ashkenazi Jews have been in the dominant position, followed by *Mizrahi* Jews, Palestinian citizens of Israel, and other more recent minority groups. In this way, the concept of 'coexistence' between majority and minority citizenships is rooted on the ground by day-to-day confrontations and societal fractures. In addition, among Israeli Jews the issue of mutual cooperation and integration is radically differentiated within the political panorama that includes a spectrum ranging from

section is on analyzing the contradictions and criticism occurring due to the lack of egalitarian conditions between Palestinians and Jews, providing evidence of how Israeli Jewish dominance has obstructed Palestinians from active participation, inhibiting their achievement of a complete involvement and an opportunity to go beyond dehumanized perceptions of the Other.

A. 'Coexistence' in Palestine/Israel: What Does It Mean?

The 'equality' pattern has become the most critical boundary, since Palestinians have recognized the majority of joint initiatives as being supportive of the prevailing *status quo* under military occupation and of the promotion of a condition of 'normalization'[36] within the asymmetrical power relations structured by the Israeli side.[37] Adverse expectations from both sides have caused the reality of the situation to be viewed through a distorting mirror, and this distorted view has implicated social, economic and political inequalities perpetuated not only by the military occupation policy, but also from within Israel.

The diversity of the different understandings of the notion of 'coexistence' provides an illustration of the mutual interrelations between the Palestinian Arab minority and the Jewish majority within the state of Israel. Nowadays, the word 'coexistence' signifies "the peaceful existence of two peoples, Jewish and Arab, living side-by-side within Israel." This is seen through different frames

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ultra-orthodox to left-wing parties, see Sami S. Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews*, (London and New York: Routledge); Ella Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29/1 (1999): 5-20. On the other hand, the so-called '1948 Palestinians' - Palestinian citizens of Israel, who amount to over one million (about twenty per cent of the Israeli population), continue to be marginalized and excluded mainly in occupation income, education and political power. On this problematic issue read Oded Haklai, *Palestinian Ethnonationalism in Israel*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980); Ilan Peleg, Dov Waxman, *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Nadim N. Rouhana, *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997).

[36] Even though the term has been used in common language following the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, during the 1990s it has taken on negative connotations. In the last decade, cooperation projects and joint struggles between Palestinians and Israeli Jews have been considered feasible only through professing strong commitments against the military occupation and the 'normalized' *status quo*. In detail, see "What is Normalization?" ed. Mohamed A. Salam, *Bitter Lemons-International* 42/5 (2007), see www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=203, accessed 7 June 2013.

[37] About joint programs, their potential as well as their struggles, see *Bridging the Divide: Peacebuilding in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, eds. Edy Kaufman, Waled Salem and Juliette Verhoeven, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006); Daphna Golan, "'Separation,' 'Normalization' and Occupation" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 2/2 (1995), 99-102; Ifat Maoz, "Peace Building in Violent Conflict: Israeli-Palestinian Post-Oslo People-to-People Activities" *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 17/3 (2004): 563-574; Bernard Sabella, "Reconciliation with Separation: Is it Possible in the Palestinian-Israeli Case?" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 12/4 (2005/6): 55-57; Salim Tamari, "Kissing Cousins: A Cautionary Note on People-to-People Projects" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 12/4 (2005/6): 16-18.

of interpretation, through which the majority of Jews underline social and interpersonal relations, while most Palestinians evidence political, civic and inter-group interactions.[38] With reference to the main challenges inside Israel, mutual relationships have usually continued to be asymmetrical, and firmly linked to the sense of victimhood concerning past histories and national narratives.

The aim of developing a shared common ground between Jews and Arabs within Israel started to manifest itself with projects such as that known as 'Givat Haviva', founded by the 'Kibbutz Artzi Federation' in 1949, which had the purpose of conducting mostly educational initiatives such as the 'Jewish-Arab Centre for Peace' and the 'Institute for Arabic Studies', and also the largest Arab-Jewish community centre 'Beit haGefen', established in Haifa in 1963 in order to reduce the hostilities and misinterpretations caused by antagonistic narratives[39]. With the passing of time, Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel have increased their involvement in different kinds of joint programs, peace organizations and research institutes. Among these are 'Nitzanei Shalom'/'Bara'em Al-Salam' (Interns for Peace)[40], 'Hand in Hand' (Center for Jewish Arab Education in Israel)[41], 'Netivot Shalom' (Paths for Peace)[42], 'Shutafut-Sharakah' (Partnership)[43], the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute[44], and the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement

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[38] See *Arab-Jewish Coexistence Programs*, eds. Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz, Tamar Zelniker, Cookie W. Stephan and Walter G. Stephan, (Oxford: Wiley, 2004).

[39] See http://www.givathaviva.org.il/english/info/about.htm and http://www.beit-hagefen.com/index.php?lang=en, both accessed 7 June 2013.

[40] Founded in 1976, it is an independent, non-profit, non-political, educational program training professional community peace workers. See *American Jewish Year Book*, ed. David Singer (New York, The American Jewish Committee, 1996).

[41] Founded in 1997, it is a network of schools where Jewish and Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel can study together following the idea of "learning together, living together" in order to increase peace, coexistence, and equality. Refer to their website http://www.handinhandk12.org, accessed 9 June 2013. On this program, similarities and differences with 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam,' see the essay by Maria Chiara Rioli in this issue, pp. 22-49.

[42] In reaction to the founding of *Gush Emunim* in 1975 and later to the Lebanon war in 1982, a group of young Zionist-Orthodox activists established a separate peace movement advocating tolerance, pluralism and justice. See Mordechai Ban-Or, *In Pursuit of Peace: a History of the Israeli Peace Movement* (Washington, Institute of Peace Press, 1996). More information is available from the website www.netivot-shalom.org.il, accessed 9 June 2013. On this and other Orthodox Jewish movements for peace see the essay by Cristiana Calabrese in this issue, pp. 101-123.

[43] It includes a group of ten major Israeli organizations committed to the increase of a shared, democratic and equal society for all Israeli citizens, based on the mutual respect for each national community and towards a real partnership between Jews and Arab Palestinians. For more details see the website of the forum www.shutafut-sharakah.org.il/eng, accessed 9 June 2013.

[44] Founded in 1959, the main mission of the Institute is based on the vision of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people and as a democratic and egalitarian society for all its residents. For research programs, publications and aims see the website www.vanleer.org.il/en, accessed

of Peace.[45] Nonetheless, in the last decade joint encounters have produced controversial and asymmetric results, as the following examples will demonstrate.

B. The Case of 'Neve Shalom/*Wahat al-Salam*

Among such shared realities in Israel, one of the earliest well-known examples has been the cooperative village named 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam' ('Oasis of Peace'), founded in 1972 and settled six years later midway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Since that time, fifty-five Palestinian Arab and Jewish Israeli families, in an approximately equal number, have been full members of this community. This project is considered by most of the Israeli and international peace theorists as being unique among effective joint models for resolving conflict. This is the reason why I have decided to give prominence to it as being an expression of a move towards a binational solution working within Israel. Despite a number of obstacles and challenges, the primary aim of the community remains to promote the significance of cooperation and living together in their daily routine, and this is connected to:

> the possibility of coexistence between Jews and Palestinians by developing a community based on mutual acceptance, respect and cooperation. (…) *WAS-NS* gives practical expression to its vision through various branches: *Primary Bilingual and Binational School*, *School for Peace*, *Doumia-Sakinah* (*Pluralistic Spiritual Centre*), *Nadi al-Shabibah-Moadon Noar* (*Youth Club*) and humanitarian aid field.[46]

In a binational community such as this, the expression of 'coexistence' has also implied a controversial internal debate between the theoretical level and the common everyday reality: the literal meaning indicates that two parts exist together, but it is not enough to reach equality in superficial terms. In this frame, the Palestinian spokesperson Abdessalam Najjar has explained that:

> coexistence is an expression and people use the same expression with different meanings. Here if you ask about coexistence, what it means for the Jews is not the same of what it means for the Palestinians. (…) Here, we do not use the term coexistence a lot; if we use it we mean coexistence in equality, both sides of the conflict are making a dialogue and negotiations from equal positions. We are trying to create a coexistence reality based on free participation of both sides, Jews and

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9 June 2013. For some examples of the Institute's programs, especially on the front of deconstructing contrasting narratives, see the essay by Rafi Nets in this issue, pp. 232-252.

[45] Established in 1965 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem its research activities include a specific focus on mutual dialogue by organizing joint seminars for Israelis and Palestinians. Consult the website of the Institute at www.truman.huji.ac.il/index.html, accessed 9 June 2013.

[46] On the establishment and history of 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, and on Father Bruno Hussar see the essay by Maria Chiara Rioli in this issue, pp. 22-49.

Palestinians, and to explore together what are the conditions that should exist to call this reality a joint peaceful reality."[47]

Similarly, Michal Zak, one of the Jewish founders of the 'School for Peace', has expressed her perplexity about the significance of 'coexistence' stating that:

> I have not used it for a long time for two reasons: this word is becoming meaningless; it does not say anything, what kind of coexistence? But also because it becomes a word to describe this 'peace industry', I do not want to be associated with it. I think that many other words are becoming like this, for instance 'peace education', it has become not enough."[48]

In these terms, the general idea of 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam', and in particular of the 'School for Peace', has identified the linkage between theory and action, enabling the re-narration of the conflict and its possible resolution in terms of reciprocal awareness among former enemies. Current interactions between opposite sides have aimed to give opportunities for changing the reality from within and, at the same time, advancing analytical debates about the issue of the Other in relation to the concept of daily coexistence.

In reality, after October 2000 and with the beginning of al-Aqsa Intifada, such examples have found achieving success more difficult than ever, failing to achieve the majority of joint goals and to provide the opportunity to change common understandings that would allow overcoming national struggles. The deepest controversy within the community has continued to be represented by asymmetric power relations and mistrust, with these being centered on the role of national identity and its influence towards the Other.[49]

By calling 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam' into question as a model to share with other analogous frameworks, Michal Zak has stressed the efforts needed to conduct such encounter works through effective participation and awareness of unequal power relations. She has configured a gap between the optimistic wish of ending the internal Israeli discriminatory asymmetry and the current reality that has strongly continued to legitimize it.[50]

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[47] Interview of the A. with Abdessalam Najjar, 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam,' Doar Na Shimshon, 23 November 2009.

[48] Interview of the A. with Michal Zak, 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam,' Doar Na Shimshon, 23 November 2009.

[49] *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in Dialogue: the School for Peace Approach*, ed. Rabah Halabi, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 76-78.

[50] Interview with Michal Zak, 'Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam,' Doar Na Shimshon, November 23, 2009.

Current Status of Joint Initiatives: Overcoming the Demise of the Oslo Accords

In the period between the Oslo process in the early 1990s and the re-emergence of violent fighting in late September 2000 with the upsurge of the al-Aqsa Intifada, several joint initiatives emerged from the Palestinian-Israeli political background, with the aim of challenging the *status quo* of military occupation. These initiatives, also described as 'People-to-People' projects,[51] have claimed alternative politics as a means to end the conflict and move towards a sustainable and peaceful resolution. During the first stages of their involvement (or, at least, in their initial statements), a great number of participants in joint meetings, extending from youth to academics, from professional to humanitarian organizations, have declared the intention of transforming mutual attitudes. They also seek to challenge some stereotypic perceptions concerning the other side, in order to prevent the worsening of violence in the everyday life of both societies.[52]

A. Networking Joint Politics: Alternative Perspectives and Challenging Obstacles

In the last decades other forms of grassroots joint activism have taken place in diverse ways (ranging from more informal structures to official coalitions), demonstrating the richness and the variety of such realities as political alternatives to the ongoing conflict, both inside Israel and between Israelis and Palestinians from the oPt. Founded on the urgency of ending military occupation, which has been considered as the source of the oppression between Palestinians and Israeli Jews, powerful cases of solidarity and resistance have included: the protection of human rights as carried on by the organization 'Physicians for Human Rights-Israel' (PHR)[53] in association with several Palestinian medical committees inside Israel and in the West Bank; the non-violence practice supported for instance by the recent joint initiative called 'Combatants for Peace;'[54] the struggle for socio-economic rights mostly

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[51] This term was used for the first time in Article 8 of Annex VI of the Interim Agreement (also called Oslo II in September 1995), which was produced under Norwegian sponsorship and with the participation of the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority, and the support of the international community. See the Annex VI named *Protocol Concerning Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation Programs of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, see http://www.acpr.org.il/publications/books/44-Zero-isr-pal-interim-agreement.pdf, accessed 7 June 2013.

[52] Shira Herzog and Avivit Hai, "What Do People Mean When They Say 'People-to-People'? Origins, Definitions, Goals and Methods" *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* 12/4 (2005/6): 8-15.

[53] As reported in their statement of principles in 1988, it is "an independent organization that uses the integrity of medicine and science to stop mass atrocities and severe human rights violations against individuals." More details are available at www.physiciansforhumanrights.org, accessed 15 July 2012.

[54] This is one of the most remarkable joint non-violent groups, established in 2005 by former Israeli and Palestinian combatants who have renounced the use of violence in the direction of

represented by the 'Palestinian and Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions' (including ICAHD and JCSER – 'The Jerusalem Centre for Social and Economic Rights.')[55] Other significant joint examples of political cooperation have arisen between the 'Palestinian Popular Committees' against the expansion of the Wall and of illegal Israeli settlements established inside the West Bank[56] and several Israeli activist groups such as 'Anarchists Against the Wall'[57] and 'Ta'ayush - Arab Jewish Partnership.'[58]

Within the women's and feminist movements, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, Jewish and Palestinian women have been building up a number of everyday practices of cooperation since the time of the British Mandate. Commencing at a time immediately following the establishment of the Jewish state, the historically well-known 'Movement of Democratic

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ending the military occupation. Their primary goal is to make dialogue possible towards the Other, commonly considered only as the opposite side of the conflict, the enemy. By abandoning violence, they have initially tried to explore alternative perspectives in joint meetings and mutual understanding, and later on they have started to inform their own people about the main reasons of their political choice. Their website is available at www.cfpeace.org, accessed 6 June 2013.

[55] Founded in 1997, the 'Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions' (ICAHD) is a human rights and peace organization. As underlined by ICAHD's co-founder and director Jeff Halper, their main mission is "to liberate both the Palestinian and the Israeli people from the yoke of structural violence and to build equality between their people by recognizing and celebrating their common humanity." The 'Jerusalem Centre for Social and Economic Rights,' also established in 1997 and working in parallel, is a Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization that aims at "providing legal assistance and representation to Palestinian residents of occupied Jerusalem subjected to discriminatory policies by the Israeli authorities." See the websites of both organizations and their common work at www.icahd.org and www.jcser.org/, both accessed 6 June 2013.

[56] One of the most recent researches regarding non-violent resistance to the Israeli military occupation that have included Palestinian-Israeli joint initiatives has been conducted by Maxime Kaufman-Lacusta, *Refusing to Be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2010). Kaufman-Lacusta is aware that direct cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli Jewish activists needs to be analyzed by way of a complete awareness concerning the different degrees of working together and the internal dynamics of effective shared actions.

[57] Since 2003 the group has played a crucial role in non-violent resistance against the Israeli military occupation. Their website includes this strong declaration: "it is the duty of Israeli citizens to resist immoral policies and actions carried out in our name. We believe that it is possible to do more than demonstrate inside Israel or participate in humanitarian relief actions. Israeli apartheid and occupation isn't going to end by itself - it will end when it becomes ungovernable and unmanageable. It is time to physically oppose the bulldozers, the army and the occupation." For more details see www.awalls.org/ accessed 6 June 2013.

[58] Starting from its literal meaning 'living together,' 'Ta'ayush' has been one of the main joint grassroots organizations founded after the upsurge of the second Intifada in the fall of 2000. As stated in their founding declaration, they have jointly aimed at struggling physical and mental walls that have been constructed between Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, who live on the same land. More details are available at www.taayush.org, accessed 6 June 2013.

Women in Israel' ('Tandi') has continued to strive to promote a just peace in the region, with coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis.[59]

Only at the beginning of the 1990s did both Palestinian and Israeli Jewish women decide to take up again the advocacy of political alternatives, a development exemplified by the emblematic experience of the coalition 'Jerusalem Link,' founded by the 'Jerusalem Center for Women' (JCW) - the Palestinian non-governmental women's center based in Beit Hanina (East Jerusalem), together with 'Bat Shalom' (the 'Jerusalem Women's Action Center') - the foremost Israeli Jewish women's feminist organization. The emergence of these organizations and their subsequent experiences has been considered to be both one of the major outcomes of the Oslo Accords and also to provide one of the most discouraging pictures of its demise.[60]

In the analysis of the majority of these initiatives and projects it is necessary to elaborate the predominant attitudes that have affected mutual perceptions of the other side, and in particular that have shaped different roles implemented by both individuals and collectivities. On the one hand, active Israeli participation in joint projects has impressed the Palestinian partner, but, on the other hand, a number of misunderstandings and political mistakes have created further cleavages between the two sides. Along these lines, the building up of relationships based on mutual trust has become a crucial step in the process of increasing Israeli awareness concerning the military occupation and its consequences for everyday Palestinian life, but the reality on the ground has taken another direction.

As a result, in the *post*-Oslo era, the increase of physical barriers between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, and specifically the impossibility of travelling freely,[61] and the escalation of political-psychological tensions, mainly due to the lack of trust towards the Other, have influenced such joint politics on the ground negatively. The persistence of the military occupation has been one of the main causes of the failure to recognize equality as a basic principle within joint initiatives.

Furthermore, from a financial point of view, the extensive spread of similar projects has created joint-ventures which have often been sustained only by international funding, rather than joint peace proposals. Several cases have revealed the predominance of the Israeli partnership, which has received the

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[59] Janet M. Power, *Blossoms on the Olive Tree*, 104. On feminist and women's activism see the essay by Valérie Pouzol in this issue, pp. 50-72.

[60] For detailed analyses and critical opinions on joint projects led by Palestinian and Israeli Jewish women, see *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation*, Nahla Abdo, Ronit Lentin eds., (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2002); Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict*, (London: Zed Books, 1998); Tami A. Jacoby, *Women in Zones of Conflict*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: the Politics of Women's Resistance*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

[61] In particular, Palestinian participants have encountered major troubles in obtaining permits in order to attend meetings inside Israel, creating further tensions and discussions about politically-structural impediments to planning joint peace initiatives.

greater part of economic aid from international donors, violating the primary conditions of joint initiatives and producing controversial changes in the attitude of the Palestinian subjugated counterparts, who have been frequently silent.

In contrast to the original objectives of establishing "dialogue and co-operation on the bases of equality, fairness and reciprocity,"[62] the current evidence has shown how such examples have often produced the risk of building up a potential 'peace industry.'[63] In detail, the academic Salim Tamari has underlined the way through which these projects, also labeled with the anecdotal expression of 'Kissing Cousins,' have undermined the integrity of research activities as well as political initiatives that have ceased to assume critical perspectives concerning the real unfairness of the situation of the oppressed status of the native people.[64] Nonetheless, such initiatives have stressed the importance of dealing with and supporting such issues.

Conclusion

As a historic thread of political and philosophical analyses regarding joint pathways between Palestinians and Israeli Jews, my contribution has focused on the necessity of deconstructing the foremost mainstream approaches which are founded on exclusive narrative identities. On the contrary, I have sought to go beyond the standardized paradigms that have supported the denial of recognizing the Other by considering diverse theoretical frameworks from Martin Buber to Hannah Arendt and Edward Said, as well as past events along with most recent initiatives which have encouraged political alternatives for future peace resolutions in the land of Israel/Palestine.

At present, the context is destabilized by the urgency expressed throughout the discourse of normalization, which has been extensively discussed in academia as well as by grassroots movements, in terms of "a false image of 'normal' relations, as if there is no occupier and occupied and as if the two sides are

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[62] Colin Knox and Padraic Quirk, *Peace Building in Northern Ireland, Israel and South Africa*, (London: Macmillan, 2000), 138.

[63] With this term I refer especially to both civil society and institutional organisations that, in spite of working to advance peace resolution alternatives, have been significantly influenced by the will of decision-makers founded on the controversial issue of external aid. Concerning the problem of international donors and their political-economic power towards Israeli-Palestinian civil society actions, see Markus E. Bouillon, *The Peace Business: Money and Power in the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, (London and New York: Tauris, 2004); Benoit Challand, *Palestinian Civil Society and Foreign Donors*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009); Sari Hanafi, Linda Tabar, *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*, (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Muwatin, 2005); Anne Le More, *International Assistance to the Palestinians After Oslo: Political Guilt, Wasted Money*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010). For a representation of the peace industry in a satirical key, see the strips by the Palestinians cartoonist Samir Harb, as analyzed in the essay by Chantal Catherine Michel, pp. 185-211.

[64] Salim Tamari, "Kissing Cousins," 16-18.

somehow equal."[65] Indeed, although the Israeli presence in joint initiatives should mean that they support Palestinian activism, on the contrary, in most cases Israeli Jews have become leading actors by forcing their politics on Palestinians by means which include shared projects. The current demise of such initiatives has reflected divergences and unfairness between Palestinians, as components of the occupied population who has not yet achieved a potential for self-determination, and Israeli Jews, as citizens of the occupier state.

Internal mutual relations have dramatically changed, reflecting a deep sense of powerlessness accompanied by discouragement in transforming the discriminatory reality of military occupation. As a critical decline of such joint coalitions' experiences has become particularly apparent during operation Cast Lead, the credibility gap between Palestinians and Israeli Jews has worsened even more. Nonetheless, observing the wave of socio-political protests that has awoken the entire Middle East since the beginning of 2011, the considerable number of recent initiatives founded on non-violent resistance and civil disobedience (above all the popular committees in the West Bank supported by Palestinians along with Israeli and international activists) can still point out possibilities for further forms of joint struggles between Palestinians and Israelis, offering paths towards a just end of the conflict.

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[65] Walid Salem, "A Path to Peace," Mohamed A. Salam, *What is Normalization.*