THE FORGOTTEN PALESTINIANS

A History of the Palestinians in Israel

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS NOT the first attempt to narrate the story of a group that numbered a mere 100,000 people when the story began and is today no more than a million and a half. It is not a very sizeable group of people, but nonetheless one that deserves our attention. It has been and still is the subject of much social science research as a case study – or rather a test case – for a plethora of theories. The excellent work done so far, therefore, has focused on specific aspects of this group's life, whether identified chronologically or thematically. The best way of covering this impressive scholarly harvest would be a well-edited book, which I hope will appear before too long. In the meantime, I have added an appendix to this book, giving a short summary of the scholarly developments in the research on the Palestinians in Israel, to complement this narrative.

What most of these works have failed to do – not due to any fault of their own – is to translate their scholarly interest into a more general and political focus. For the world at large, and for that part of it which is energetically engaged in the Palestine issue, the Palestinians in Israel have been an enigma for a long time. Sammy Smooha and Don Peretz called the Palestinians in Israel 'the invisible man'.[1] This may be changing now; as Nadim Rouhana puts it, 'the Arabs in Israel have grown to the point where they can no longer be ignored by either

Israelis or Palestinians'.[2] According to Rouhana this ends a period during which 'the Arabs in Israel have been an invisible, identity-less and potentially de-Palestinized group' and instead turned into a 'conscious, active and dynamic segment of the Palestinian people'.[3] And yet, it seems that on the global scene they are still ignored.

An important step in publicizing the particular circumstances of the community has been achieved by two noteworthy books that have recently covered the topic: Nadim Rouhana's *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State: Identities in Conflict* (1997) and As'ad Ghanem's *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel* (2001) are both still very valuable sources for anyone wishing to understand the development of the political identity and orientations of this group in a historical perspective.[4]

Rouhana's book focused on the development of the Palestinian identity within the state of Israel, demolishing along the way the prevalent academic assumption that saw the Arabs in Israel as being torn between 'Israelization' and 'Palestinization'. His book showed how the two communities developed in Israel with very little sharing in terms of collective identity. And thus both Jews and Palestinians grew up in Israel possessing incomplete national identities – a situation only reinforced and perpetuated by developments inside and outside the state of Israel, leading to inevitable clashes unless the ethnic state of Israel is replaced by a civil, bi-national state.

As'ad Ghanem's book, published four years later, added a new dimension for understanding the political streams that developed within the Palestinian community and drew our attention to the fact that the world of the Palestinians in Israel should not only be seen in constant reference to the Jewish state and its policies. There were issues of religion, modernity and individuality that also divided the community, and he agreed with Rouhana about the existence of a certain Palestinian consensus within the state of Israel. Ghanem's research in 2001 enabled him to detect the strength of the secular element in the Palestinian society, during a period of global and local Israeli Islamophobia; he also noted, with concern, the return of the clan as a retrograde powerbase for politics. Both books also offer a prescription for the future: a bi-national state instead of the existing Jewish state. In this book I do not provide my own idea of a solution;

I am more concerned about the lessons of history than the perils of the future.

What I would like to add to the existing excellent literature is the historical perspective (and expand on the historical background provided in the two books mentioned above). In the ten years that have passed since these valuable publications have appeared, Zionism and Palestinian nationalism have matured in a way that allows us to locate more clearly the Palestinians in Israel as victims of Zionism and an integral part of the Palestinian movement. As such, this book continues my research on Palestine and Israel, which I began in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006).[5] It is only through a history of the Palestinian minority in Israel that one can examine the extent to which the long-lived Zionist and Israeli desire for ethnic supremacy and exclusivity has brought about the current reality on the ground.

This book wishes to free the Palestinians of Israel from their role as a case study and tell their history. Only now is this possible, as the group has a history of more than sixty years of existence as a non-Jewish minority in a Jewish state. The reason that a coherent historical narrative of the group has not been attempted before has to do first with this short history – historians need perspective and the passage of time. But there is an additional reason: it is a very difficult group to define, lacking as it does clear ethnic, cultural, national, geographical or even political borders. The Palestinians in Israel themselves, through their leaders, activists, politicians, poets, writers, academics and journalists, are still searching for an adequate definition.

And yet there are good reasons for telling their story. The Palestinians in Israel form a very important section of the Palestinian people, and of the Palestinian question. Their past struggles, present-day situation, and hopes and fears for the future are intimately linked with those of the wider Palestinian population. They have played a marginal role on both the Palestinian and Israeli political scenes, yet any resolution of the present deadlock must take them into account.

There is a second reason for providing a people's history of this particular group. Israel claims to be the only democracy in the Middle East; as its chief minority population, the situation of its Palestinian citizens forms the litmus test for the validity of this claim. Their story

is also that of multiculturalism and intraculturalism, issues fundamentally relevant to societies beyond Israel and Palestine and which affect the fate of the East–West relationship in the Middle East as a whole.

This minority is a heterogeneous community in which Christians live side by side with Muslims, Islamists and secularists who compete for political domination, and refugees struggle to make their presence felt in a community the majority of whose members are living in the same villages their ancestors built hundreds years ago.

It is a group that has been dubbed traitors both by the Palestinian movement in the 1950s and by current Israeli political forces. Theirs is an amazing story of almost impossible navigation in a sea of colonialism, chauvinist nationalism, fanatic religiosity and international indifference. It is a narrative of a group to which I do not belong, but in whose midst I lived most of my adult life. As I have outlined in a recent book, *Out of the Frame: The Struggle for Academic Freedom in Israel*,[6] due to my scholarly and intellectual critique of Jewish society I was ostracized by my own community, to the point where I decided to work abroad; I have been involved in public and political life within the Palestinian community since the 1990s. I think it is fair to say that my social connections, and even more so my ideological associations, are uncommon in the Jewish community in Israel. Although not unique, I am one of very few Israeli Jews who feel such a close affinity with the Palestinian minority in Israel. This has led to me undertaking intensive learning of Arabic, with constant reading of Arab literature and listening to Arab media, but more importantly to developing intimate relationships with many members of the community, and sensing a strong affinity and solidarity to the point of becoming a pariah in my own Jewish community. I have never regretted this, even when in October 2009 a small group of young Islamic activists tried to shout me down at a commemoration ceremony for the thirteen Palestinian citizens killed in October 2000 in the village of Arabeh, at which I was the only Jewish speaker tolerated after fierce opposition from the Islamic movement to any others. I am not saying this as a complaint, or because I feel I was unjustly treated; these activists were a small minority within an otherwise very receptive public, and I can understand why they might view me with suspicion. No, the reason

is that when you are part of the privileged oppressive majority, you do what you do not in anticipation of a standing ovation, nor indeed in any expectation of gratitude, but rather for your own peace of mind and moral satisfaction. This is the particular angle from which this book is written.

Let me add a word on methodology. On the face of it, this is an old-fashioned narrative history. The appendix to the book covers the theoretical paradigms offered by others as much as possible; these, in the main, lack a historical perspective, but are very useful in terms of analysing the group's present conditions. In its conclusion the book attempts to offer its own paradigm, that of the Jewish *Mukhabarat* (secret service in Arabic) state (a model explained in the epilogue to the book) in view of its major findings from the historical research.

Our narrative moves between two principal perspectives: that of the Israeli regime, in particular its relevant decision makers, and that of the Israeli Palestinian community at large, via its political and educated elite and the writings of or interviews with various members. The analysis is more nuanced in the case of the Israeli Palestinian community for two reasons. First, the state, or rather the decision makers and those operating the policies on the ground, have been informed by the same ideological perspective – Zionism – and therefore more often than not have acted in unison. Second, this book aims to present a people's history as far as possible and therefore the magnifying glass is cast more on the Palestinians than on those who formulated and executed the policies towards them.

The book has a constant variable and a number of dynamic factors. The historical periods are the only concrete foundations of the book, hence the chronological rather than the thematic structure of the book. Within each period the narrative moves from one perspective to the other – not, I hope, in a schematic, artificial way, but rather by the power of association that sometimes blurs the historical picture, but which I believe presents a more authentic image of past reality. The story is not interrupted by theoretical inputs, only by explanations and elaborations of certain events and personalities. Theory comes back into the picture when academia begins to play a role in the relationship between the Israeli Palestinian community and the Jewish state, and

therefore alternative scholarly understandings of this history appear twice: in the theoretical appendix and at the various junctures of history where theories introduced by academics became tools either in the hands of the government – such as the theories of modernization – or for those who challenged the governmental policy – such as the theories of internal colonialism and ethnocracy.

Veteran readers of scholarly works will appreciate the unbearable gap between the clean and structured representation of reality and its murky, fractured and chaotic existence as an experience. When the research is too neat, the smells are gone and the sterile pictures fail to illuminate, especially in this history of an almost impossible navigation between conflicting demands, the hardship of daily life and the struggles for survival. This book does not seek to idealize the Palestinians of Israel, or as they are called in the Arab world, the 1948 Arabs; it wishes to humanize them in places where they are either forgotten, marginalized or demonized.

This book is also a modest attempt to understand the reality from the minority's point of view, seeing them not just as a community of suffering, but as a natural and organic part of the Palestinian people and history. You cannot begin to understand what this community has undergone if you do not begin the story at the latest in 1947, when the area that became Israel was still Palestine. This is where our story begins.

THE OPPRESSIVE STATE

ON 29 MAY 2007, the Israeli Knesset duly revalidated, as it has done annually in recent times, the Emergency Regulations that had been imposed in Palestine by the British Mandate in 1945 and readopted by Israel on its day of foundation in 1948.[1] On paper, even today in the twenty-first century, there are almost two hundred such regulations, which enable the state to legally declare any part of the country a closed military area, exercise administrative arrest without trial, expel and even execute citizens.

From the creation of the state until 1996, there was no need to extend this validation annually as it was regarded as a permanent situation. In 1996, in a celebrated display of democratic histrionics, official Israel announced the annulment of the regulations' permanent status and the government decreed a need for an annual approval. The recurrent approval, needless to say, was taken for granted (partly because, even without the annual approval of the Emergency Regulations, the government was still able to impose the same discriminatory regime on the basis of the general State of Emergency declared in Israel on the day of its creation and which was still intact in 2007). But for many observers, the 1996 annulment, or rather charade of annulment, was the last attempt to democratize the country. After that, and particularly in the wake of the second *Intifada*, the legislative effort in Israel

focused on restricting even further the limited rights citizens had enjoyed under the State of Emergency Rules and Regulations.

As mentioned throughout this book, critical scholars, both Jewish and Arab, inside Israel have chosen recently to define the state in which such realities are tolerated as an ethnocracy. I think that this is not a complete picture and would like to refer to Israel in this epilogue as a State of Oppression; not for all its citizens, only for its Palestinian minority. Oppression in the modern era can only be fully achieved with a developed security apparatus and I argue here that the worst aspect of the minority's existence is that its daily and future fate is in the hands of the Israel secret-service apparatuses. There is no parallel example for such total securitization in any of the states that make up the democratic world. The only states which apply similar methods of control are to be found in the very region where Israel's founding fathers attempted to build a European enclave: several states within the Arab world (and some African states). Of the models typifying the Arab world, one in particular applies to Israel: the Arab *Mukhabarat* (secret-service) state.[2] As such, the processes taking place in the state of Israel in recent years do not belong to the twilight zone between democracy and dictatorship, which was of concern to perceptive thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben, nor is it enough to define Israel as an ethnocracy. If it were, the deterioration could then be halted or slowed down by reinforcing democracy; but, as this book tries to argue, such a fundamental change would be a total sell-out of the most basic assumptions on which the Jewish state was built and on which it is currently maintained.

Israel controls the whole area that was formally Mandatory Palestine and the examination of its oppressive nature relates to its relationship with about five million Palestinians who live in the Mandatory Palestine area. In more ways than one, the oppression also affects the lives of the millions of Palestinians who live in exile or in refugee camps as a result of the ethnic cleansing Israel carried out in 1948.

The professional literature also offers models of such oppressive regimes beyond the Arab world, such as the term 'Masters' (*Herrenvolke*) democracy', chosen by some scholars to describe the apartheid regime in South Africa.[3] For the lack of a better paradigm I opt here for the 'Oppressive State' as the paradigm that can best describe the current

reality for the Palestinian minority in Israel. In reality, and in our analysis, the paradigm is applied to only a part of the population in the country, while the other part of the population is aware of the oppression and fully endorses and supports it. Therefore this paradigm of the Oppressive State is not an attempt to analyse Israel or Zionism in their totality as a historical, cultural or political phenomenon, only its relationship with its Palestinian inhabitants. The democratic paradigm assumes that there is one state, one society and one territory. Such a paradigm could never apply to apartheid South Africa and does not apply to the reality in Israel, a country whose founders wanted to build a central European liberal democracy, but instead created a hybrid between a settler colonialist state and a secret-service (*Mukhabarat*) regime imposed on its Palestinian population.

This is a dynamic model and its version in 2010 is not the same one employed in the days of military rule. Moreover, throughout the years of its existence, there have been attempts, wholesale or piecemeal, to strengthen the democratic variable in the impossible equation of a democratic Jewish state.[4] But it seems that in the last few years an opposite trend has emerged that indicates that the Jewish state has given up on the charade of democracy due to navigation fatigue and, as a result, has escalated its oppression of the minority in an unprecedented manner.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE OPPRESSIVE STATE

Zionism was born out of two impulses. The first was a wish to find a safe haven for Jews after centuries of persecution and maybe an insight that worse was yet to come. The second was the desire to reinvent Judaism as a national movement, a drive inspired by the Spring of Nations, the 1848 wave of national uprisings in Europe. However, as soon as these two impulses were territorially realized in Palestine, the national and humanist project became a colonialist one. Inside Palestine a third impulse was added, the wish to create a pure Jewish space in whatever part of Palestine was coveted as the future Jewish state. And when that part was finally delineated in 1947/1948, consisting of 80 per cent of historical and Mandatory Palestine, it was

clear that the only way of achieving it was by ethnically cleansing the one million Palestinians who lived there.[5]

The ethnic cleansing of Palestine that depopulated half the country's people as it destroyed half the country's villages and towns has never been acknowledged or condemned worldwide. The Jews became a decisive majority in the land as a result and claimed their state was a democracy, with its leaders committed to ensuring that 'the democracy' meant the permanent dispossession of the indigenous population of Palestine.

The global message for the state of Israel was that it could be included in the democratic world despite its actions in 1948. The result was that the value of ethnic supremacy was cast as superior to any other values. Most importantly, it was maintained as such, despite Israel's wish to be recognized as the only democracy in the Middle East. Indeed it was the only democracy in the world where the ethnicity and religion of the natives defined their citizenship, and where a supremacist ethnic state posed as a democracy. Moreover, the ethnic cleansing left 160,000 Palestinians inside the Jewish state, whose territorial expansionist appetite led to the incorporation of another 2.5 million Palestinians in 1967 (now there are almost 4 million). Indirectly the state also controlled the lives of the 5.5 million refugee community emerging out of the 1948 ethnic cleansing and subsequent waves of expulsion. While after 1967 Israel chose not to use the same drastic means for ensuring its ethnic supremacy, its substitute for them was the creation of an oppressive state.

The presence of Palestinians in what was supposed to be an exclusive Jewish space determined the nature of the state, which was dictated by a set of presumptions manifested in daily realities rather than in the law. However, a certain foundational legislation was deemed necessary, and was useful, as it attracted very little external attention, despite Palestinian scholarly attempts to show that even this minimal legislation was sufficient to brand Israel as a non-democratic state. The end result of minimal legislation and extensive practices was a total violation of the right to own property, land, identity or culture, or to receive full state benefits and rights. Sometimes this was achieved through military rule, sometimes by direct or indirect occupation, and sometimes through its semi-apartheid policy.

However, the wish to be recognized as a democracy demanded impressive navigation skills of the political class in order to steer the state between segregation, oppression and occupation on the one hand, and the pretence that these did not exist on the other. With American backing and European support this pretence became strategy, enabled by the quality of the leaders and a certain regional and global constellation, as Israel was accepted as a member in the world of Western democracies and recently as a member of the OECD. This could not have been achieved without the assistance of Israeli academia, the Supreme Court and the media, which re-cast the oppressive reality as democratic.

While liberal Zionists were at the centre of power in Israel, the navigation produced two golden rules about the Palestinians governed by Israel. One is that there are two kinds of Palestinians: the 'occupied', with no rights whatsoever, and 'our Palestinians', the citizens of the state who have no collective rights – apart from formal democratic rights such as voting. Unlike the Jewish majority, they have no right of land ownership, cannot identify in public with their national movement and cannot build autonomous educational or cultural systems. For most of the time this was sufficient for presenting Israel as the 'only democracy in the Middle East', but the apparition disappeared when, after 1975, the Palestinians in Israel increasingly demanded collective rights. Then, in October 2000, the state reacted brutally and violently to drive its message home.

THE NAVIGATION FATIGUE OF THE OPPRESSIVE STATE

This navigation fatigue was fully exposed when the Palestinians citizens of Israel fundamentally challenged the definition of the state as a democracy. The serious challenge commenced in 1976 with the campaign against the vast land expropriation in the north and culminated in the widespread show of solidarity with the second *Intifada*, resulting in six deaths in the first instance and thirteen in the second, not to mention hundreds of wounded and thousands of arrests, marking the beginning of the end of the navigation efforts.

But these two challenges, in 1976 and 2000, were low-intensity actions compared with the deeper process of change that affected the Palestinian minority in Israel and which has produced unprecedented challenges to the state in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The more active and self-assertive sections of that minority clearly and unequivocally demanded the construction of a genuine democracy in a state which they branded as a supremacist ethnocracy. This was a new chapter in the life of a community that used to respond to governmental initiatives rather than initiate action itself. Whereas in the past the state had responded with violence, it now responded via its security apparatuses by dispensing with the charade of democracy, among other things through legislation. This could be analysed as democracy deteriorating into a 'state of exception' (to use Agamben's term, applied to the West's reaction to the events of 9/11), but as argued here in the case of Israel, this same curbing of civil rights had a different root and purpose.

The recent challenge revolves around one party, Balad, one movement, the Islamic Movement, and the four vision documents mentioned in the previous chapter. One could add to it a special antagonism towards the return of the *Nakbah* as a major constituent of the collective identity of the Palestinian citizens. The state's response came in 2007 as Bishara was expelled from political life via allegations that he spied for Hezbollah in the Second Lebanon War. At the same time, as we have seen, the leader of the Islamic movement, Sheikh Raid Salah, was charged with similar crimes and imprisoned for more than a year without trial before finally being brought to court, when it transpired that none of the charges against him could be validated.

The second challenge was the vision documents. On 13 March 2007, the daily *Maariv* reported on a closed meeting of the Shabak (the Israeli secret service) at which the head of the organization described these documents as indicating a 'dangerous radicalization of the Israeli Arabs; they tend not to identify with the state and this is caused by the rise of subversive elements among them'. When asked to respond to the piece in *Maariv*, Yuval Diskin, the head of the Shabak, reiterated his view that the documents were subversive, endangered state security and could lead to the closure of the NGOs involved.[6]

The vision documents and the reassertion of the right to refer to the birth of the state in 1948 as a Palestinian catastrophe were fought with new legislation. And thus Diskin's remarks were accompanied by legislative efforts to curb this 'subversive' trend. These amendments to the laws de-legitimized and stripped the citizenship of anyone who did not declare his or her faith in the Jewishness of the state or who supported Palestinian organizations such as Hamas.

The new discourse signalled a violent response to any attempt to express a collective Palestinian identity or challenge the ethnic state, denoting clear signs of the descending fatigue. At the beginning of the twenty-first century official Israel was tired of navigating between an actual policy of ethnic discrimination and the formality of a democratic state. The regional and global balance of power – as understood in Israel – made such navigational skills redundant. No one in the USA or the Arab world seemed to expect Israel to be a democracy.

The fatigue was also the inevitable result of the mediocrity of the political leadership, whose capacity to navigate seems to be significantly less than that of the previous generation of leaders. This came to light in the summer of 2006, when the Prime Minister and several ministers were busy fighting a legal battle against charges of corruption, and their skills of navigation were called for. In fact they showed very little skill and dragged Israel into the Second Lebanon War, which was universally regarded as the first-ever Israeli military defeat. The vacuum of military rule was filled by two outfits that had never had much faith in the need to appear 'democratic' for domestic or foreign consumption, that is, the army and the secret service. These two organizations were above the law anyway, and their position testified to the fact that Israel was not a democracy transgressing into a state of exception, but rather a secret-service – Shabak – state, a local Arab and Middle Eastern variant of the Oppressive State.

THE PARALLEL MODEL: THE *MUKHABARAT* STATE OF THE ARAB WORLD

Politically, the *Mukhabarat* state exists only within the boundaries of the Arab world (although there are similar states elsewhere). Such a

state is characterized as a mass mobilizing state, run by an all-pervasive bureaucracy and ruled by military and security apparatuses.[7] The variants of this model range from robust to liberal autocracies and the span is wide enough to include Israel.

What characterizes such states more than anything else is the sustainability of their security establishment (the *Mukhabarat*) in the face of internal challenges and external pressures. This sustainability is ensured by a strong connection to an outside power; to quote John P. Entelis, 'the *Mukhabarat* state cannot long endure if it lacks the financial resources to pay its soldiers, purchase arms, upgrade equipment, maintain supplies, and acquire externally-gathered intelligence data'.[8]

One of the experts on the subject, Nazih Ayubi, described such states as 'fierce', as distinguished from a 'strong' (democratic) state.[9] The relationship between the state and its citizens is not a legal one, but purely a function of fierce power relations (remember that this is a typology of Israel's relations with the Palestinians, not with its Jewish society). A fierce state resorts to the use of raw power as its default function – whereas in democracies which find themselves in crises such as the 9/11 bombing, the use of such power is a deviation from a set of non-violent default means of maintaining the state.

Readers versed in the critique of Israel are familiar with its depiction as 'an army with a state'. This is actually a common reference to the *Mukhabarat* state of Algeria, about which it was written that 'every state has an army but in Algeria the army has a state', describing how deeply enmeshed the linkage between the state and the security apparatuses is.[10] To be fair, this is not far from the very bold attempt by several critical Israeli sociologists to define Israel as a militarist society.[11] The role of the army or the security apparatuses in these studies appears not to be the outcome of anomie, as it would be in the state of exception, but appears to be a part of the state's foundation and *raison d'état*. Critical sociology points to the oppression as stemming from a non-democratic founding ideology and a colonialist reality, not from any internal contradictions in the democratic system that can produce states of exception. The ideology and the colonialist reality have produced a state in which the army and the security services reign not in exceptional situations, but as a rule. The militaristic model

mobilizes Jewish society, but, as a typical *Mukhabarat* state, oppresses the Palestinian population.

The authoritarian, rentier militaristic state of the Arab world is a model that better corresponds, historically and theoretically, with the state within the state of Israel: the state of the Palestinians within the Jewish state. However, as argued by others before me, it is a hybrid with another model, the settler-colonial state, which can be presented as a mixture between an Arab post-colonial model and a colonialist model, such as South Africa during the days of apartheid.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE TRENDS

The deep knowledge of theory and the equally deep involvement in their community's fate have led Palestinian scholars in Israel to intertwine theoretical paradigms with straightforward political polemic. A favourite source of inspiration that was exhumed from relative darkness was the work of Carl Schmitt, the German jurist and political theorist who, in one way or another, blessed dictatorship as a functional and just political system. Raef Zureik and others have wisely and sensitively tackled the uneasy dialectical relationship between romantic nationalist Germany and an analysis of present-day Israel. One can see why recent policies and discourses adopted in Israel, especially towards the Palestinian citizens, seem to come directly from Schmitt's theorizations.

Issam Abu-Raya, in response to the remarks of Yuval Diskin, head of Shabak, wrote: 'Diskin's statement fits beautifully with [Carl] Schmitt's arguments' about the sovereign having the final say under the law of a defending democracy.[12] This was a line of reasoning that pushed Schmitt into the Nazi embrace. However, although – if one follows Diskin's words on several other occasions – one can see the similarities with Schmitt, the story of Germany and Schmitt is of a deteriorating democracy that became a dictatorship and was salvaged once more. This trajectory is inapplicable in Israel unless one accepts the liberal Zionist claim that pre-1967 Israel was different. My argument is that the Israeli paradigm is a colonialist and post-colonialist mixture, a political outfit of a settler state ruling through a *Mukhabarat* state.

Israel's brand of oppression is the one that typifies both settler states and *Mukhabarat* states. Therefore the navigation fatigue, the harsh response to new challenges and the overall political situation at the beginning of the twenty-first century are indicators of an escalating cycle which carries the potential to end the pretence and the false inclusion of Israel in the frame of analysis of Western democracy. This escalating cycle is made up of a series of legislative measures, all intended to continue the oppression of the Palestinian population under the Israeli state rule.

The first wave was in 1948, leading to the rights to own land, water and buy and sell land being denied to the Palestinians by law, as was the right for full citizenship. This was followed by discrimination in every aspect of life, including welfare, education and protection from abuse of the law, all practised systematically and efficiently but not legalized.

The second wave was the legislation through the imposition of the Emergency Regulations on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 that denied basic human and civil rights to the millions who lived there. It began with ethnically cleansing 300,000 Palestinians and then constructing the oppressive regime we are familiar with today. All this was achieved without undermining Israel's membership in the exclusive democratic club.

The third wave is the one that points to navigation fatigue. It concerns greater Jerusalem, defined as one-third of the West Bank, where potential Palestinian citizens of Israel have lived since it was officially annexed to Israel in 1967. A set of municipal regulations and town-planning ordinances have enabled the ethnic cleansing of the 200,000 Palestinians who live there – an operation that needed time and had not yet been completed at the time of writing (40 per cent have already been transferred).[13]

And there has been a fourth wave of legislation that began in 2001. A series of parliamentary initiatives led to new discriminatory laws, among them the 'nation and admittance to the country' law which bans any reunion for whatever reason between Palestinian couples or families living on different sides of the Green Line. In practice this is a means of preventing the return to the homeland of any Palestinian who

'overstayed' abroad. Other laws institutionalized discrimination in the welfare and educational realms (for instance the right of the secret service to determine the employment of school principals and teachers). And finally there are the laws, already mentioned, that equate objection to the Jewishness of the state with treason. These laws do not change the reality, but attest to the state's ability to forsake the charade and work more freely against the Palestinians wherever they are.

According to the scenario described and analysed in this epilogue, the short-term repercussions may be catastrophic; we expect either escalating state violence against the Palestinians, wherever they are, or further oppressive legislation. However, in the long run, they may rob Israel of the moral and political shield with which the West has provided it. If it continues its oppressive regime, Israel may be South Africanized or Arabized and thus judged by harsher criteria that the elite would take more seriously culturally and economically, much more than the current soft rebukes Israel receives as a democracy. This may mean that Israel will come to be regarded as a pariah state and that an end is brought to the dispossession and occupation. Moreover, de-democratizing Israel could give Palestinian resistance hope for change and lead it to abandoning its tactics, which are rooted in despair and anger, born not just as a response to the actual oppression but also as a reaction against the hypocritical, dishonest brokery of the West in the conflict from its very first day. If Israel is seen as a permanent oppressive state, the Palestinians may see a light at the end of their tunnel of suffering and abuse.

But I would like to leave the readers with some positive images. There are now five mixed Arab–Jewish schools in Israel, defying the educational system's total rejection of these brave attempts to create alternative enclaves for the future.

There are growing spaces of leisure and pastime, such as the German colony in Haifa, the promenade in Tel Aviv and the green parks on the boundary line between East and West Jerusalem, where Palestinians and Jews share a restaurant, a coffee house or a recreation park. There is no segregation in public transport, air travel included (although there is still abuse and maltreatment of Palestinians at the security checkpoints in the airports), and unlike in the occupied territories, apartheid

walls are still scarce (although most Jewish villages and suburban areas are gated communities, in the main to keep the 'Arabs' out).

One does not want to idealize the situation. In many other places of pastime and leisure, Palestinians are not welcome because of who they are and the daily abuse by whoever represents the government continues. There are two forces at work in 2010. One is the Arabrabiya, mentioned before as a distinct Palestinian Israeli dialect of Arabic intertwined with Hebrew words; it is a functional language spoken between members of the community. It broadcasts a clear message to the Jewish majority and the state: we are, so far, the only Palestinian group that knows you well, accepts your presence in our homeland as an ethnic group and wishes to share life with you despite everything that your state and movement has done to us.

The other force is the language of demographic danger. The headline of the newspaper *Yediot Achronot* in the early days of July 2010 was 'We Are Losing the Negev'. To whom? To the Palestinian citizens of Israel; not to a foreign army, illegal immigrants or to cynical profiteering from the outside, but to our own citizens. The media and political language of middle Israel is that a new Palestinian baby is a grave national danger to the state's existence. No affirmative action, no drastic improvement of standard of living or symbolic inclusion of Palestinians politicians as ministers in the government (which was done only once and hailed by the Zionist left as a genuine revolution); none of any of these theoretical and actual improvements could transform in any meaningful way the fate of the Palestinians in Israel and that of the Jewish state as a whole. Time will tell whether the articulate and impressive new member of the Knesset from Balad, Hanin Zuabi, who, as mentioned, lost some of her privileges due to her participation in the Turkish flotilla to Gaza in June 2010 (a loss greeted by some Jewish members of the Knesset parties with a toast) represents the future because of her excellent Hebrew and intimate knowledge of what it means to be an Israeli, or whether she too will be trumped by a state and a public that still believes in the twenty-first century that it is possible to create an exclusive Jewish space in the midst of the Arab world.