Introduction
Lands and Peoples
Attachment, Conflict, and Reconciliation

Omer Bartov

Preliminary Comments

The century-long conflict over the Land of Israel-Palestine has raised a plethora of questions over historical narratives and rights of possession, the morality of return and the injustice of displacement, the correction of past wrongs and the imponderables of reconciliation, the promise of coexistence and the right to self-determination. At heart, this is a dispute over attachment and belonging, over what both Jews and Palestinians consider to be their historical and emotional home, the core of their existence and the fountain of their identity. For that very reason, it is exceedingly difficult for each side to recognize the other's link to the land.

This book is the culmination of a multiyear research project titled "Israel-Palestine: Lands and Peoples," which I led at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs in 2015–18. The main goal of the project was to gain a more nuanced and empathetic view of the myriad ways in which the inhabitants of this region and those who made it part of their mental, mythical, and religious landscape before and after coming to it have felt linked to the Land of Israel-Palestine. I should say at the outset that to my mind, the strength of that sense of connection to a place need not be questioned or disputed. The feeling of being at home, or the longing for it, is ultimately subjective, although it can clearly also be politicized and exploited. We have as little right to deny an individual's or group's sense of belonging or to assert that ours is more powerful or authentic as we have to deny an individual's or group's experience of suffering or to claim that ours is greater or more authentic. This is not to say that we cannot or should not charge individuals or groups with committing crimes or injustices against others in the name of establishing, regaining, or protecting their homes. But that is quite different from negating and denying their

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connection to the place they call home, that is, depriving them of what they perceive as the root of their individual and collective identity and culture.

Hence, this volume is based on the premise that beyond all the heated arguments and bloodshed, political manipulation and abuse, and before one begins imagining or planning future scenarios, there has to come an understanding, indeed there has to be a consensus, that all those involved have a right to a home, in the deepest sense of the word, somewhere in the land they claim to be their own, as long as they do not deny that right to others or attempt to violently oppress or remove them. This is not an argument about symmetry, however. In the current reality of Israel-Palestine, there is no symmetry of power. The State of Israel has more or less absolute political, economic, and military hegemony, and it uses this overwhelming power to control, oppress, and subjugate the Palestinians it rules, though to different degrees and in different ways depending on whether they are its citizens or an occupied population. But neither Israeli oppression of the Palestinians nor the growing international and academic criticism of the Zionist undertaking as a settler colonial movement has succeeded in undermining the prevailing sentiment in both groups that they belong to that place and that the land belongs to them, a sentiment that continuously overrides any particular political configuration or the vicissitudes of contemporary history.

As in the original project, this is an interdisciplinary volume, engaging the perspectives of historians and geographers, political scientists and sociologists, philosophers and archaeologists, scholars of literature, education, and international law, experts in architecture, urban studies, and development planning, as well as political activists. This wide variety of approaches, alongside the diversity of the contributors, provides a multilayered and complex response to the question at the heart of this volume: What makes for the bond between individuals and groups, on the one hand, and a place, on the other, be it real or imagined, tangible as its stones or ephemeral as the hopes and longings it evokes, and what are the myriad ways in which this bond is expressed, fortified, undermined, reconfigured, or, ultimately, shared?

To be sure, despite its ambitious scope, this volume cannot encompass the entire array of excellent scholarship produced in recent years on Israel-Palestine. Indeed, some of the most interesting presentations at the workshops on the topic I hosted at Brown University did not find their way into this volume, for reasons that were beyond the control of either the editor or the presenters. These included, to cite just two examples, a fascinating paper by the Palestinian sociologist Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, "Taking Possession of Village Lands and Expulsion of the Land Tenants: Kibbutzim at the Edges of the Jezreel Valley," based on her Tel Aviv University PhD dissertation; and a highly original presentation by the self-described Palestinian-Bedouin-Israeli anthropologist Safa Aburabia, "Land, Identity, and History: New Discourse on the Nakba of Bedouin Arabs in the Naqab," similarly related to her Ben Gurion University PhD research. It should also be stressed that this volume cannot and did not

attempt to address all of even the most urgent questions that come to mind when we think about this region. Most important, as discussed below, this is not a volume focused strictly on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although doubtlessly this intractable, century-long struggle forms the backdrop of many chapters. Instead, this is a collective attempt to reach across some of the persistent scholarly and political boundaries in this contentious field by bringing in new thinking and approaches, even as we all acknowledge the enormous challenges we face as we strive for greater mutual understanding and compassion.

The two major axes of this volumes are space and time. By space I have in mind the changing and complex natural and built environment of these lands both over the longue durée and in reference to more recent environmental and man-made changes and challenges. On a less concrete level, this volume also grapples with the mindscapes of the region, namely the manner in which it has been imagined in myth and fiction, but also in cartography and urban/village planning. As for the temporal dimension, the volume contends with the varied and often disputed historical narratives about the Land of Israel-Palestine; the present political, socioeconomic, and cultural realities in all their complexity and diversity, the different prisms through which they are seen and interpreted, and the togetherness and apartness of human and group existence they reflect; and finally, the volume considers the starkly different, but perhaps increasingly converging future scenarios for these lands, where utopian yearnings and apocalyptic warnings are as old as their first inhabitants.

The twenty chapters in this volume, along with the afterword, provide a wide array of new research, original interpretations, and illuminating insights not merely on the conflict—a term that has rightly been disputed for assuming a nonexistent symmetry—but also on larger themes and deeper questions related to the lives of Jews and Palestinians in the lands of Israel-Palestine from the nineteenth century to the present. The authors of these chapters all have their different points of view on the history, present-day reality, and possible futures of Israel and Palestine. But what they have in common is an ability to go beyond the superficial political rhetoric and popular prejudices that so often cloud our understanding and to reconstruct with critical empathy the manner in which these lands and their inhabitants have profoundly changed, through tragedy and creativity, despair and hope, over decades of struggle and innovation. As Jews and Palestinians increasingly drifted apart, they also came together; as deep rifts of hatred and fear marked the landscape they traversed and transformed, their hopes for another future only swelled; as they demanded with ever greater vehemence to be separated from each other and to own as much of the land as they could, some of them have come to gradually internalize the fact that none of them were leaving, that they all had a stake in the land, its history and its future, and that they had no choice but to recognize each other's right to exist in peace with mutual respect. This volume, I believe, reflects these trends and allows us to express a modicum of cautious optimism for the future in these dark times.

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Trauma and Displacement

The volume opens with a section on trauma and displacement. These two connected events are part and parcel of the experience of the peoples of Israel-Palestine. The two obvious traumas both connecting and dividing Jews and Palestinians are the Holocaust and the Nakba. To be sure, the Holocaust did not spark the first waves of Zionist immigration to Palestine. But the growing incidence of anti-Jewish violence in Europe from the latter part of the nineteenth century, subsequently seen as heralding the Holocaust, did stimulate a very different kind of immigration from earlier Jewish settlement in the Holy Land. Eventually the events leading to the Holocaust strengthened Zionism and intensified Jewish immigration to Palestine, which further expanded in the aftermath of the Shoah, as hundreds of thousands of survivors came to Palestine and to the newly established State of Israel in the first postwar decade. Yet even as escaping Jewish persecution and the experience of the Holocaust were main motivators of immigration, the traumas of anti-Jewish violence, and especially of the "final solution," came to increasingly dominate Jewish-Israeli consciousness and identity. At the same time, many of the displaced, unwanted, and deeply traumatized Jews who landed on the shores of Palestine ended up as participants in or witnesses and beneficiaries of the traumatic displacement of another people, the indigenous population of Palestine. The trauma of the Nakba, the catastrophe of Palestinian expulsion, thus similarly became the organizing principle of post-1948 Palestinian identity, and its reversal emerged as the cardinal aspiration of an uprooted people transformed into a nation of refugees.[1]

Things did not begin that way. As Hannan Hever argues in the opening chapter, the Hasidic immigration to Palestine in the decades that preceded the arrival of the first Zionists made no claims on the soil of Eretz Israel and perceived the move to the Holy Land as a spiritual rather than a political journey. Conversely, he notes, Zionism was a reaction to violence against Jewish communities in Europe, and its goal was to create a space where Jews would constitute the majority of the population. But in Palestine, the Zionist immigrants found themselves in a position not unlike the one they had left behind in Europe, since once more they were a minority, this time vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Hence, the logic of the Nakba was built into their very political theology. This stood in stark contrast to the Hasidim, for whom the land had a spiritual significance rather than a material one. Additionally, while the Zionists were engaged in what they perceived to be a transformation of Jewish existence and the creation of a "new Jew" by way of "redeeming" the land and returning it to the ownership of the newly emerging Jewish nation, Hasidism was focused on a closer relationship to God and on personal redemption by dint of living on the sacred land of Israel—hence the radical difference between the longing for and contact with the Holy Land experienced by Hasidic Jews retaining their links to their communities in Europe and the modern Zionist colonialist and nationalist project of taking over the land and "negating" the Diaspora.

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If early Zionism was a response to the pogroms and other anti-Jewish measures since the early 1880s, the trauma of the Holocaust and the mass population displacement associated with it were on an entirely different scale. The hundreds of thousands of survivors transformed the nature of Zionism, the demography of the new state of Israel, and the way the "Jewish question" was perceived by the rest of the world. As G. Daniel Cohen has demonstrated elsewhere, the eventual recognition by the Allies and the United Nations that Jewish refugees in the displaced persons camps of postwar Europe differed in substantial ways from other refugees made both for a different attitude toward these Holocaust survivors specifically and for the creation of the new concept of political refugees, namely, those who cannot return to their countries of origin for fear of persecution and physical harm. In the case of the Jewish refugees, of course, the very notion of a country of origin was questioned, considering that they often came from states and societies that had collaborated in their attempted extermination and did not want them back. This made the Zionist argument, that the home to which such refugees should return was Eretz Israel, all the more compelling. But it also meant that the Palestinian refugees who resulted from the establishment of the Jewish state were largely relegated to a secondary position of importance in view of what was perceived as the Jewish refugees' purported homecoming.[2]

Cohen's contribution to this volume offers a wider look at the manner in which European attitudes toward Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust tainted their perception of Zionism and the Palestinian victims of Israel's establishment. Cohen documents many instances of what has been called "the whitewashing of the yellow badge,"[3] that is, the transformation of European intellectual and religious antisemitism into a new brand of philosemitism, a kind of "love for Jews" that contained many of the antisemitic stereotypes that had been part and parcel of European culture for centuries. But as Cohen shows, when applied to Zionism and the establishment of the Jewish state, philosemites could transform their earlier desire to be rid of the Jews of Europe into a celebration of the Jewish success in building their old/new homeland. This adulation of the new Zionist pioneers—who had stripped themselves of their former detestable Jewish traits—was combined with the perception of Jewish rebirth as the polar opposite of old Europe's inability to recover from the legacy of fascism and wartime destruction. Conversely, in the period before 1967, Palestinians were often seen by Europeans both through the old Orientalist prism as a backward people that could profit from Zionist help in order to climb up the civilizational ladder and as largely irrelevant in view of the triumph of Jewish nationalism, a success story that had the additional benefit of seemingly alleviating European complicity in the Holocaust and diminishing the need for any lingering feelings of guilt and contrition.

From the Jewish Israeli perspective, over time the Holocaust came to be perceived by the state and many of its citizens as a constitutive trauma and the main justification for the existence of Israel. As Lital Levy's insightful chapter demonstrates, however, the trauma of the Holocaust played a much more ambivalent role in Jewish

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Israeli perceptions of Palestinians. On the surface, the general argument has always been that since the Holocaust was an event of such magnitude and horror, it was essentially incomparable. At the same time, both critics and defenders of Zionism could not help but use it as a measuring rod, whether by asserting that Jewish Israelis were behaving like Nazis or by warning that the Palestinian/Arab urge to destroy the Jewish state would bring about another Holocaust. But as Levy points out, even those Jewish Israelis who are critical of their own conduct toward the Palestinians often rely on an implicit comparison that puts them, as the inheritors of Jewish fate and tragedy, on a higher moral plane and asserts their greater victimhood as compared to the suffering of Palestinians, even as they are in the process of observing or directly causing it. This can be seen as early as in S. Yizhar's 1949 novella *Khirbet Khizeh* and as late as in Ari Folman's 2008 film *Waltz with Bashir*. In both cases, the suffering of the Palestinians (expelled in Yizhar's story and murdered by Christian militias in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in Folman's film) evokes vicarious memories of the Holocaust, thereby allowing for empathy with the Palestinian victim, yet also serving as evidence of the Israeli soldier's humanity, and simultaneously setting up a comparison whereby the Holocaust necessarily wins out as the greater trauma. Hence the Jews displaced from Europe to Palestine are always victims of a greater trauma than the one they are perpetrating on the Palestinians by displacing them, even as they are humanized by recognizing the suffering they caused.

Yaël Ronen's chapter takes us to a very different aspect of the discussion over trauma and displacement, namely the legal discourse over repatriating Israeli settlers from the West Bank. Following the 1967 War, Israeli settlements were established in the West Bank, a process that greatly accelerated in recent years, bringing hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews to what are still officially recognized by both Israel and the international community as occupied territories. This massive settlement undertaking and the infrastructure it entails, along with intentional Israeli policies of segregation, have by now fragmented Palestinian territory to such an extent that it is difficult to envision the establishment of a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel, as proposed in the Oslo Accords of the early 1990s. Jewish Israeli settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) also raises a host of legal questions. On the one hand, as Ronen notes, the legality of such settlements is greatly disputed, since by international law a state is not allowed to move large numbers of its citizens to territories it is temporarily occupying. Moreover, Israeli settlers in the OPT live under a different legal system from that of the Palestinian population there. Massive settlement is also creating increasing hardship for the Palestinians and increasing the pressure on them to leave. Since about a third of the Palestinian population in the West Bank is made up of refugees from the 1948 Nakba, one displacement is now being followed by the threat of another.[4]

Conversely, this question arises: what would be the fate of these Israeli settlers under various optional resolutions of the conflict, considering that their status as illegal settlers does not necessarily deprive them of just treatment in the future, particularly

if they were motivated more by economic than by ideological reasons? Annexation of the OPT would presumably regulate the status of the settlers by bringing them directly under Israeli law; but it would also open up the possibility either of giving the entire population of the OPT Israeli citizenship, thereby threatening the Jewish majority in the state, or of depriving the Palestinian population of full citizenship and democratic rights, thereby officially creating an apartheid-like system. The alternative would be the creation of a Palestinian state, whose viability would depend on the removal of the majority of Israeli settlers from its territories. It is this process of repatriation that Ronen examines in detail, convincingly showing that it is both legally feasible and morally just. To be sure, the removal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in 2005 was presented by them as cruel and unjust displacement, and the far larger numbers of settlers in the West Bank would present immeasurably greater problems. But as Ronen indicates, considering the proximity of the settlers to their original homeland, the positive political outcome of such repatriation for the country as a whole, and the fact that this would bring about the elimination of a long-term illegal presence on occupied territory, there is every reason to include such an option of addressing the displacement of one population by the repatriation of another.

Redrawing Space

In Israel-Palestine, space is of paramount importance both because there is relatively little of it and because multiple religious, ethnic, and national groups fiercely lay claims to all or parts of it. At the same time, space in the region is malleable, its delineation and definition constantly shifting and never fully determined. It is concrete and imagined, ancient and envisioned, seen as both empty and yet also always already inhabited. Different individuals and groups attribute to it different meanings both at different times and in simultaneous opposition to each other. Its ownership is defiantly guarded and hotly disputed. Especially in the twentieth century, it has been repeatedly planned, restructured, and redrawn. Yet it is also always there, its main features unchanged, patiently waiting for what may still be in store for it.

As Rachel Havrelock shows in her highly original chapter, the main outlines of the Middle East as a whole, with major implications for what eventually became "historical" or, more precisely, Mandatory Palestine, were drawn by the colonial powers in the first half of the twentieth century, in large part under the impact of oil interests. Oil extracted in Iraq came to play an increasingly important role in the Western powers' economies and armed forces. The issue was not merely who owned the sites of extraction, but also who controlled the transportation of that oil to the most convenient ports, from which it could be shipped to Europe. The two main means of land transport were the railroads and underground pipelines. While the former served as a visible display and means of projecting power and modernity, they were also more vulnerable to attack and exposed the manner in which Western powers were

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draining the resources of their colonial territories or dependencies to their own benefit. Pipelines had the vast advantage of being invisible, requiring less protection and efficiently bringing the precious lifeblood of industry and armies across vast tracts of often sparsely inhabited terrain. These subterranean pipelines retained extraterritorial ownership by the companies that lay them down and, by extension, by the Western powers that provided for their protection. Additionally, as Havrelock argues, they largely determined the shape and location of the national borders that emerged at that time in the Middle East. Ironically, despite the artificiality of these state borders as mere indications of oil-carrying arteries laid down by competing imperial powers, they eventually came to be adopted and fiercely defended by local leaders and populations as the frontiers of the new postcolonial states of the region.

Focusing more closely on Israel-Palestine, Yinon Cohen and Neve Gordon's chapter brilliantly demonstrates how the struggle over space is translated into population policies geared to settle the land with one ethno-national group and to empty it of its indigenous inhabitants. As the authors argue, Israel's biospatial strategies, namely its policies of space and race, have always been motivated by the goal to acquire or take over as much land in the available territories of Israel-Palestine as possible and simultaneously to "Judaize" the land by both settling Jewish citizens there and removing or greatly restricting the Palestinian population already inhabiting these lands. This perspective on the sacred Zionist objective of "redeeming" Eretz Israel as an exercise in Jewish spatial and demographic expansion and settlement and, simultaneously, in spatial and demographic expropriation and removal of Palestinians allows the authors to show a clear continuity of Israeli state policies from 1948 to the present. The chapter therefore undermines the conventional argument for a sharp dividing line between Israeli policies before and after 1967, according to which the illegal settlements in the OPT can be criticized and should be removed, while the 1948 expulsion of the majority of Palestinians from what became the Jewish state, the expropriation of their lands and the destruction or takeover of their property, can be relegated to the annals of long-forgotten and irreversible history. It is in this context, according to Cohen and Gordon, that Israel's recent Nation-State Law should be understood, since it clearly relegates even national minorities within the legal borders of the state to the status of second-class citizens. Hence, whether the OPT are annexed or not, the law in fact sets the scene for the formal creation of an apartheid state, a potential that the authors argue was always inherent to the biospatial logic of the Zionist colonizing project.

This sweeping gaze of Zionist policies over many decades of settlement is complemented by Noah Hysler Rubin's test-case study of Netanya, a coastal town newly established in the 1920s about twenty miles north of Tel Aviv. As Rubin shows in vivid detail, the founders of Netanya viewed themselves very much as the originators of a modern resort town that would provide all the most up-to-date amenities to its inhabitants and visitors, who would come to enjoy its natural beauty, climate, beaches, and facilities. Yet they also saw themselves as coming into their own space,

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a land that had just been waiting for them since the exile. As their local foundation myth narrated, although they bought the site from its Palestinian inhabitants, the Arabs were glad to hand it back to them, so to speak, for a meager sum, since they had always allegedly seen themselves merely as its guardians on behalf of the true owners. In this sense, as Rubin notes, on one level the city founders could present themselves (just like the European settlers of New England) as the "firsting," those who would begin the cultivation of a wild and abandoned site, and present the local Arabs (akin to the Indigenous population of New England) as the "lasting," the last members of a dying, backward breed.[5] Yet on another level, in their own minds the founders of Netanya were also merely returning to their home and, in the process, returning the homeland to its original state of cultivation and development under Jewish ownership centuries earlier.

Another crucial dimension of spatial imagination and fabrication in Israel-Palestine is analyzed in Haim Yacobi and Hadas Shadar's chapter. Here the authors shed light on the often ignored, perhaps even hidden connection of Israeli architecture and built environment to the traditional Palestinian village. Initially, in the wake of the 1948 War, Israel systematically destroyed hundreds of the so-called abandoned Palestinian villages, whose inhabitants had fled or were expelled; this undertaking was intended to erase the traces and memory of prior Palestinian life in the land, to prevent Palestinian refugees from trying to return to their homes, and to make way for the complete spatial and demographic restructuring of the territory now controlled by the new state. In the master plan for building Israel, remaining neighborhoods and houses in former Palestinian towns were either demolished—often on the argument that they lacked modern facilities—or were used to accommodate newly arrived Jewish immigrants. Conversely, in the late 1950s and 1960s, not least under the influence of a new global trend, Israeli architects found new interest in the Arab village as an example of vernacular construction and tried to incorporate some of its features into their own plans for Jewish neighborhoods, such as its geographical spread, narrow alleys, inner courtyards, building materials, and so forth. Finally, under the impact of the 1967 War, with the turn to greater religiosity in the Jewish public and attempts to justify the occupation of the West Bank, Israeli architects incongruously used themes from the Palestinian village to construct housing projects on a grand scale that supposedly hinted at authentic ancient Hebrew edifices.

Education and Ideology

The irony of first erasing hundreds of villages, then building Jewish neighborhoods in a vernacular style, and finally, erecting imposing pseudo-ancient Hebrew structures by magnifying indigenous architectural features in order to legitimize a second takeover of Palestinian territory exemplifies the ambivalent relationship of Zionism to the land: an urge to modernize and allegedly "civilize" it, on the one hand, and

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a reliance on its own ancient Hebraic roots, for which Palestinian village life is the only surviving model, on the other. A similar irony can be found in the revival of the Hebrew language as an ancient Semitic tongue that links modern Jews to Eretz Israel, yet which functionally facilitated segregation between the growing numbers of Jewish immigrants from Europe and the local Arab-speaking Palestinian population.

The re-creation of ancient Hebrew as a modern language, with the subsequent construction of an entire culture and society, including literature and journalism, a legal system and popular entertainment, a military and a statewide educational network, all speaking and writing Hebrew, is arguably the single greatest achievement of Zionism. As Miriam Szamet's chapter lucidly shows, however, the very urge to shape a new generation of Jews in Palestine whose mother tongue would be Hebrew dictated that the very notion of a bilingual education, whereby children would become fluent in the two languages of the land, did not even occur to most of those engaged in this pedagogical revolution. Another irony exposed by Szamet is that while the new immigrants brought with them universalist pedagogical approaches both to Modern Hebrew language teaching and to classroom teaching more generally, under the circumstances of the Yishuv in the last decades of Ottoman Palestine and the first years of the British Mandate, and in deference to Zionist ideology, they eventually succumbed to ethnic and national segregation; thus the new Hebrew/Zionist teachers ended up adopting a nationalist pedagogy that their own original methods were intended to reform and replace. And yet, as Szamet argues, this was not an inevitable development, not least because the innovative methods introduced by these pedagogues for foreign language acquisition could have in fact contributed to overcoming the very segregation that nationalist Hebrew-centrism eventually perpetuated. It remains for us to contemplate how different relations between Jews and Palestinians in the land might have been had they all been fluent in each other's language, rather than the current situation in Israel, where only Palestinian citizens of the state are bilingual.

Reviving Hebrew was one way of asserting the link between modern Jewry and ancient Israel. Another was by inculcating a certain imaginary of the Promised Land, as depicted in ancient texts, in generations of elementary and high school students. In her fascinating contribution, Orna Vaadia analyzes how the incorporation of maps of various biblical borders into pre-state and Israeli school textbooks widely used in the national-secular education system molded a particular spatial imagination among the students. Despite the secular context in which they were employed as teaching aids, these maps were given profound theological and historical meanings, by dint of originating in biblical depictions and divine promises extracted from a text that was taught both as a true history of the Jewish people and as an expression of the nation's metaphysical and timeless link to the land. As Vaadia argues, the prevalence of such maps in secular school textbooks reflects a much more complex and less dichotomous relationship between Zionism and religion than the conventional view of the former constituting a nationalist rebellion against the latter. Moreover, Vaadia shows that

the deeply embedded Zionist mental image of the nation-state's borders is malleable and fluid, stretching far beyond what political and demographic circumstances may dictate at any given moment, and thus allowing for ongoing fantasies of expansion.

Education takes place, of course, not only in schools but in the public sphere more generally, as nationalist movements going back to the nineteenth century have always appreciated. In his chapter, Avner Ben-Amos examines the manner in which the Zionist movement mobilized civic rituals as pedagogical tools to inculcate in children and adults the national values of the "new Jew." This healthy, muscular, uncomplicated, and patriotic type that Zionism hoped to fabricate was at the core of its effort to "normalize" Jewish existence by "negating" the Diaspora, or as the saying went, not only to take the Jews out of the Diaspora, but also to take the Diaspora out of the Jews. Surveying a series of newly invented or repurposed rituals over the last century, Ben-Amos identifies a similar "complex interplay of religious and national elements" in the self-presentation of secular Zionism to that detected by Vaadia. In the case of civic rituals, Ben-Amos takes note of how various elements of religious, traditional, and contemporary collective memory were cobbled together in order to create a sense of national solidarity. Because his analysis covers many decades, Ben-Amos is able to trace both significant changes in the combinations of religious and national ritual elements over time and to show how one set of rituals was replaced by another. Perhaps the most significant common characteristic of the civic rituals that came to dominate the national calendar is the manner in which they altered the traditional Jewish ritual by replacing its theological core with a focus on land, nature, or selected events from the historical or mythical past—a transformation of meanings akin to that explored from another perspective in Hannan Hever's chapter. And yet, Zionism's secularized religious ceremonies have retained what Ben-Amos describes as "an aura of sanctity," becoming, in that sense, sacralized civic rituals, attributing a transcendental, redemptive meaning to space and time—the soil of Eretz Israel and the ancestral link to the ancient Hebrews and the Maccabees. It is this seemingly timeless cycle of catastrophe and redemption, as represented by the quick transition from mourning the nation's genocide on Holocaust and Heroism Day to celebrating its rebirth on Independence Day, that has largely come to dominate Israel's self-perception.

For Palestinians in Israel this calendar of sacralized civic rituals serves as a constant reminder of their status as being outside the cardinal reference points of national-Zionist ideology and of the Jewish nation-state, of which they are formally citizens. As Majid Ibrahim Al-Haj carefully delineates in his chapter, the deep divide in Israeli society between Jewish and Palestinian perceptions of the past, their link to the land, and their relationship to the state can clearly be identified by analyzing the evolution of the history curriculum in Jewish and Arab schools in Israel. Al-Haj traces the main historical narratives taught to Jewish and Arab students since the establishment of the State of Israel, demonstrating the extent to which the school curriculum, dictated by the highly centralized Israeli education system, reflects the dominance of Jewish-Zionist political power and culture in Israel as a whole. Among Al-Haj's most

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instructive findings is that whereas the history curriculum in Jewish schools puts a heavy stress on Jewish history, the Jewish contribution to world culture, Jewish links to Eretz Israel, and Zionism's triumphant establishment of a Jewish state, it pays very little attention to Arab and Palestinian history and skirts over the Nakba altogether. Conversely, the Arab sector's history curriculum contains a great deal of the same kind of Jewish history taught in Jewish school but devotes almost as little attention to the history of Arabs and Palestinians (with the latter term appearing only belatedly and lacking any independent narrative). Another important finding is that while the curriculum for Arab high schools emphasizes the need for Jewish-Arab coexistence, as well as understanding and appreciation of the Jewish people's contribution to human culture and advancement, even the most recent version of the curriculum for Jewish schools makes no mention of Jewish-Arab coexistence or of understanding and appreciation of Palestinian culture. Similarly, while Palestinian students are urged to cooperate with Jews in building a state of all its citizens, the curriculum for Jewish students avoids this topic altogether. Consequently, Al-Haj concludes that the school curriculum in Israel mirrors the ethno-national character of the state, whereby formal education is employed as a tool in shaping an exclusive patriotism and national ethos among the dominant group, and practically works against any purported desire to promote peace and coexistence.

Nationalism, Settler Colonialism, and Decolonization

The perception of Israel as an ethno-national state—that is, a state that perceives itself as the political expression of a particular ethnos, or an ethnically defined nation—is related to a larger discussion over the nature of Zionism and its relationship to the Land of Israel-Palestine. As a national movement, Zionism had sought to instill in Jews throughout the Diaspora the idea that they all belonged to the same Jewish nation and to motivate them to immigrate to Eretz Israel and establish there a state of their own. At the same time, there can be little doubt that Jewish settlement in Palestine was the main cause of the conflict with the Palestinians. In his chapter, Sam Fleischacker proposes three distinct frameworks for understanding this conflict. The first perceives Zionism as being motivated by and practicing typical policies of European settler colonialism, albeit with some unique features. The second asserts that Zionism was largely a response to European antisemitism and that any opposition to it was and still is motivated by the same antisemitism that gave birth to it, thereby, in a sense, legitimizing Zionism's raison d'être. Finally, the third framework of understanding the conflict portrays it as a typical national struggle between Zionists (Jewish nationalists) and Palestinians, whereby, as in many similar national conflicts, the two groups are vying for the same territory. Fleischacker does not entirely dismiss any of these frameworks but ends up preferring the third paradigm of a clash of nationalisms, which he finds as having greater explanatory power, as well as being

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morally superior, in that it recognizes both groups as having equal rights rather than relegating either to an inferior position. It is, he believes, only through this prism that one can hope to bring Palestinians and Israelis to "a peaceful and mutually respectful resolution of their conflict."

To be sure, one could argue that there is no reason to choose between these three paradigms: Zionism was largely a response to the rise of territorial ethno-nationalism and the consequent modern antisemitism that swept Europe; Zionism established an ethno-national territorial national movement of its own, only its territory was not located where most Jews dwelled but in Eretz Israel; and, in realizing its project of settling that land, Zionism functionally acted as a settler colonial movement, borrowing much of the rhetoric and practices of other European settler colonists and being perceived as such by the indigenous Palestinian population. It can also be said that while now there certainly is a national struggle between Israeli Jews and Palestinian nationalism, the vast asymmetry of power between a strong state and a people made up of a national minority, an occupied population, and millions of refugees hardly merits the term "conflict." At the same time, it is just as true that no reconciliation between the two groups can begin without mutual recognition as nations with equal and inalienable rights over the land, their particular historical narratives, and their individual and collective dignity.

This is an optimistic scenario, not least because recognition of the other's rights is usually facilitated by a sense of confidence in one's own position and future. But as Ian S. Lustick argues in his chapter, that is far from the case in Israel. Lustick asks, why do Israelis regularly assert that the resolution of almost every major public issue will determine the survival of the state? The prevalent sense among Jewish Israelis that their state may not continue to exist, at least not in a form they find desirable or acceptable, he argues, is in itself a sign of the state's precariousness. Now, anyone who has spent any amount of time in Israel will be familiar with frequent predictions of catastrophe, though what might trigger it usually depends on people's political leanings. This may seem strange considering that Israel is recognized as a regional military and economic power and the majority of its Jewish inhabitants are highly patriotic. Additionally, as recently as March 2019, Israeli citizens were ranked among the happiest populations in the world, ahead of Britain, Germany, and the United States.[6] Yet, as Lustick points out, Israelis are simultaneously haunted by three main perceived threats: internal demoralization, the fate of the occupied territories, and the demographic balance between Jews and Palestinians. What these three have in common is that they threaten to undermine the existence of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, namely, a state in which a Jewish majority can maintain a democratic system without endangering its privileges. However, because of its fear of internal implosion, Israel failed to agree to a two-state solution when that was still possible; by now, thanks to the massive settlement of the OPT, that option is no longer available—hence the current dilemma of having to choose between a state that will retain Jewish privilege but do away with democracy and a democratic state that will no lon-

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ger maintain that privilege. In other words, according to Lustick, what Israelis mean by state demise is the end of the precarious balance—never truly accomplished in the first place, since Israel was never a real liberal democracy even for its Jewish population, and its Arab inhabitants were always treated as second-class citizens—between being a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time.

As Lustick sees it, "Israel was founded as a settler colonial state dedicated to the paramountcy of a particular ethno-national segment of the population, isolated in its region, and confronting a large aboriginal population." For that reason, "the two-state solution offered a historically unprecedented opportunity for Israel to avoid the fate of similarly situated and constituted states such as apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia, and French Algeria." But he is pessimistic about the future, because "opportunities for a negotiated two-state solution no longer exist," and no other viable solution is on the table. Ilan Pappé, for his part, while he has long described Israel as a settler colonial state complicit in the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in 1948, is somewhat more optimistic about the future, albeit not in the short run. According to Pappé, if we agree that the conflict in Israel-Palestine is indeed one between a settler colonial movement and an indigenous population, then the only way to resolve it is through decolonization, especially now that the two-state solution appears no longer viable. Pappé does not have in mind what occurred in French Algeria, where a violent struggle eventually ejected the European settlers altogether. Rather, he proposes the creation of a single democratic state in the entire territory of Mandatory Palestine as another form of decolonization. To be sure, this would be the possible outcome of a much darker near-term scenario. For, as indicated by the recent passage of the Nationality Law and growing pressures for further annexations in the West Bank, Israel may well be on the way to becoming a single state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River overtly engaged in what has been termed "incremental apartheid."[7] It is under these changing circumstances, Pappé notes, that unlike the failed Israeli-led "peace process," and more in line with events in South Africa in the early 1990s, the process of decolonization in the emerging single state will be led by a Palestinian grassroots struggle against segregation and apartheid with the goal of creating a truly democratic and just society in the entire land.

Decolonization, then, can mean different things to different people, ranging from the removal of the colonizers (as in Algeria) to the creation of a new democratic society—albeit still replete with historically determined socioeconomic inequalities—with the colonizers and the colonized living side by side (as in South Africa), to a federation of states that recognizes both nations' historical and emotional links to the territory as a whole (as outlined in more detail below). But as Raphael Greenberg forcefully argues in his chapter, it can also entail a reformulation of the relationship to the past and to the land in a manner that no longer serves ethno-national interests. Archaeology, as Greenberg sees it, has long been a tool of colonialism and nationalism; this has greatly skewed its ability to provide a path to a shared understanding of the past, certainly in Israel-Palestine, with its particularly intimate relationship

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between identity, place, and collective memory. Instead, Greenberg proposes what he calls a "decolonized archaeology," which would tell the history of the land and its peoples not through a Western-, Jewish-, or Palestinian-centered perspective, but by focusing on "shared matters of concern" of all its inhabitants. Rather than seeking to justify a national narrative, which eliminates from view those who do not belong to it, a decolonized archaeology could thus enable sharing and empathizing with different ways of understanding the past in Israel-Palestine. To be sure, this is an immense disciplinary and national challenge, and Greenberg does not expect it to become public policy. But somewhat akin to Pappé, he believes that decolonized archaeology could emerge "from the bottom up, by personal example and through professional solidarity," in part because, in an era of growing authoritarianism, archaeology can survive as a discipline only be reaching out to the public and offering a new perception of the past as a web of intercommunal coexistence rather than constant ethnic conflict. This kind of decolonized archaeology will thus both enrich our knowledge of the land's ancient heritage and offer a more optimistic image of a possible future.

Future Scenarios

The final section of the book considers possible scenarios for the future of Israel-Palestine. As we saw above, different analyses of the nature of the conflict, as well as different disciplinary approaches to it, can play a significant role in how one imagines the future and what solutions may be proposed for resolving the conflict. Nida Shoughry focuses on the Palestinian citizens of Israel, whom she refers to as "1948 Palestinians," namely the Palestinians who remained in what became the State of Israel after the Nakba. As she points out, the recent enactment of the Nationality Law was a major turning point in Israel's relationship with its Palestinian citizens, in that it explicitly cast them as second-class citizens, raising significant concerns within this population about their rights, status, and sense of belonging, as well as about Jewish-Arab relations within the state. Yet Shoughry sees this law also as an opportunity for political mobilization among the often-splintered Palestinian population in Israel, as long as the issues concerned are framed in a manner that resonates with wide sectors of the population. And, indeed, it would appear that in the last several elections in Israel since the passage of this law, Palestinian politics has undergone a (hopefully lasting) sea change, demonstrating that when parties with very different ideologies and agendas unite as a national bloc, they can bring into play the unified voice of a fifth of the electorate, which is all the more significant because of the ongoing stalemate between the block of the Right and the Left among the Jewish parties. As many observers have noted, the only way for the more moderate part of Israeli politics to win a majority is by working together with the Arab minority. That this is so difficult to accomplish is clearly a sign of the state's ethno-national character and insidious racism. But an effective mobilization of the Palestinian vote may yet swing

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matters in the opposite direction, however reluctant even many members of the Jewish "Left" may be to accept this. Once such a coalition is formed, it could have its own positive dynamic and demonstrate to all the benefits of transforming Israel into a state of all its citizens.

Said Zeedani's chapter sets out from a similar recognition of the traumatic impact made by the Nationality Law. As he sees it, this law made explicit and legalized the basic condition of Israel's Palestinian citizens as undesirable others of inferior status in a state that defines itself as Jewish and democratic. From Zeedani's perspective, as long as in Israel Jewishness takes precedence over democracy, Palestinians would never be able to gain full equality. Moreover, he argues that no genuine peace between all Palestinians and Israeli Jews can be reached without a fair resolution to the Palestine question. But Zeedani believes that there is a way out of both conundrums—the second-class status of Israel's Palestinian citizens and the impasse over peace in Israel-Palestine. His detailed proposal, which informed what has come to be known as the "two states, one homeland" plan,[8] is grounded in a thoroughly revised two-state solution. The main components of this proposal include the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state along the lines of the 1967 borders, side by side with the State of Israel, which in turn would be able to maintain its status as a democratic state with a Jewish majority; an agreement by the two states to share, most importantly, the united city of Jerusalem; a mechanism to address both the question of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and of returning Palestinian refugees, which would be based on the distinction between the status of citizen and resident; and ensuring mutual respect for Israeli Jewish and Palestinian attachment to the country as a whole, presumably allowing a degree of freedom of movement and residence throughout the land (as more explicitly stated in the two states, one homeland plan).

Zeedani argues that this vision is "both fair and practicable." Although plans along these lines are now being discussed in various quarters in Israel-Palestine, they are still known to only a few people on both sides and supported by even fewer. Nevertheless, such proposals seem to be breaking the conventional mode, if only by dint of being discussed by both Palestinian nationalist activists and settlers in the West Bank. The very fact that at the core of proposals such as that of Zeedani lies a mutual recognition of each side's right to the land as a whole and an exploration of a mechanism that would enable both sides to live with dignity side by side as independent yet linked nations and states has a great potential to appeal to conventionally rival constituencies. As noted in several chapters, it is likely that, according to the Leninist maxim, things will get worse before they get better, in the sense that the creeping annexation of the land by Israel and the consequent burial of the original two-state plan will make the two states, one homeland idea the only alternative to either apartheid or the loss of a Jewish majority state (barring another bout of violent ethnic cleansing). As Zeedani beautifully puts it, in his own case, "as in the case of so many other Palestinians, feeling at home in the homeland" was never quite possible, since it "requires, among other things, overcoming discrimination (the case of the Palestinians in Israel), end-

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ing the occupation of 1967, and addressing the problem of the Palestinian refugees since 1948 (inside as well as outside the country) in a fair and compassionate manner." This could only be realized once Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews find a way to live together in a country they "know how to share or to both divide and share."

There is little doubt, as Lustick points out, that most Jewish Israelis view the return of the Palestinian refugees as an existential threat, just as most Palestinians would never consider a resolution of the conflict that does not address that very same issue. Salman Abu Sitta has thought long and hard about Palestinian return. He begins his chapter by contending (as Ronen argues regarding the repatriation of Jewish settlers in the West Bank) that there are no economic, political, or legal reasons for barring Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons in Israel proper from returning to their properties. As in the case of many other cases of ethnic cleansing, expulsion, and forcible transfer, he adds, the Nakba constituted a serious violation of international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Palestinian refugees and displaced persons therefore have an incontrovertible right to return to their places of origin. But rather than delving into the complex and polarized politics and legal aspects of such an undertaking, the bulk of Abu Sitta's chapter is dedicated to a meticulous demographic study of the feasibility of the refugees' return. As he demonstrates, most Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom are villagers, could return to their lands with only minor dislocation to the current Jewish population; indeed, he finds that save for a few urban concentrations, the country as a whole would remain sparsely settled. While most of these refugees' villages were depopulated and destroyed, Abu Sitta believes that they could be reconstructed and repopulated by the returning Palestinians, not least on the basis of plans drawn up in recent years by Palestinian architects and engineers in Israel. Repatriation would spare the region from future wars and destruction, and its cost would constitute but a fraction of the foreign aid Israel regularly receives, while the billions of dollars spent annually on weapons could be used instead to promote peace and prosperity in the region.

Abu Sitta's is a blueprint for reverse engineering of the demographic upheaval of 1948. It involves the potential transfer of millions of people from their current place of residence into other sites yet to be built. It would also, of course, radically transform the demography of the State of Israel in ways that are unlikely to be acceptable to its majority Jewish population, tilting the precarious balance, as noted, for instance, by Lustick, Shoughry, and Zeedani, of being both a Jewish and a democratic state. However, considered within the larger context of an overall resolution of the conflict over the entire land of Israel-Palestine, such a blueprint, even if it is greatly modified and adjusted to political realities, demonstrates that the question of Palestinian refugees can be transformed from an unsurpassable roadblock on the path to peace to a bridge on the way to perceiving the viability and even profitability of envisioning and practicing coexistence. The Jewish Israeli insistence that what happened in 1948 is entirely irreversible and that any discussion of a resolution ought to begin only in the zero hour following the Nakba, and the Palestinian insistence that

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the right of return is a sine qua non in any future scenario are thus extracted from the realm of ideology, fear, and resentment and brought down to the practicalities of demographic, urban, and village planning.

This issue, namely, the healing and reconciliatory potential of return and reconstruction, is at the heart of the final chapter, by Debby Farber and Umar al-Ghubari. As the authors reiterate, for Jewish Israelis, the very idea of the return of the Palestinian refugees is anathema; indeed, it is conceived, in their words, as a "monstrous dystopia, a colossal collapse of the normative order." Thus the notion of return is literally a utopia, in the sense that the Palestinian demand for justice is perceived as simply unrealizable. As former and current activists in the Israeli NGO Zochrot, which since its establishment in 2002 has promoted Jewish Israeli knowledge of and accountability for the Nakba, Farber and al-Ghubari set out here to explore the organization's and perhaps their own radical shift from engagement with the erasure of the past to an effort to generate thinking about return in a practical or, as they call it, topian sense. Most intriguingly, in discussing return as the undoing of historical injustice, the chapter presents a number of recent highly imaginative and original projects by young Palestinians and Jewish Israelis that sketch plans for the reconstruction of specific sites of destroyed villages and their repopulation by their displaced inhabitants and their descendants, creating models, as well as three-dimensional simulations, of how these villages would eventually look. The models and virtual digital re-creations of the villages as habitable, modern sites with numerous references to their original structures and spread on the land, make the impossible and unimaginable appear a mere matter of creative planning and construction. What had been pushed out of memory and mind reappears as if it had never been destroyed and emptied and seems naturally and effortlessly connected to the land and geography of the site and to the people who will inhabit it. This is of course an exercise of the imagination, even as it is also easily conceivable and feasible. Here we are speaking of the return not as a threatening reversal of history, but in terms of a village rebuilt from its ruins and reconnected to the land to which it had always belonged. The utopia of return becomes topia; the no-place is a place once more. As Theodor Herzl said at the beginning of the historical cycle that brought us all to this place, each in their own way, "If you will, it is no fairy tale" (אם תרצו, אין זו אגדה).[9]

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Notes

1. Omer Bartov, "The Return of the Displace: Ironies of the Jewish-Palestinian Nexus, 1939–49," *Jewish Social Studies* 24, no. 3 (2019): 26–50.
2. Gerard Daniel Cohen, "The Politics of Recognition: Jewish Refugees in Relief Policies and Human Rights Debates, 1945–1950," *Immigrants & Minorities* 24, no. 2 (2006): 125–43.
3. Frank Stern, *The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (New York and Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1992).
4. The total population of the West Bank is approximately 3.2 million. Over 750,000 Palestinians are refugees or descendants of refugees, making up about 30 percent of the population. About 390,000 Jewish Israelis live in the West Bank, with an additional 375,000 in East Jerusalem. See World Population Review: West Bank Population 2021, https://worldpopulationreview.com/territories/west-bank-population/.
5. Rubin cites Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
6. "Israelis Still Very Happy, but Slip Two Spots to 13th in World Ranking," Times of Israel, 20 March 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/israelis-still-very-happy-but-slip-two-posts-in-world-ranking/.
7. Oren Yiftachel, "The Dark Side of Modernism: Planning as Control of an Ethnic Minority," in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, ed. Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 216–34.

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8. Two States, One Homeland, https://www.alandforall.org/english/?d=ltr. See also Elhanan Miller, "Two States, One Homeland: The Promised Land of Isra-stine?," *Tablet*, 25 July 2016, https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/israel-middle-east/articles/promised-land-of-isra-stine; Yossef Rapoport, "Two States in One Homeland: Solving the Riddle of Resolution 2334," *Open Democracy*, 8 January 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/author/yossef-rapoport/; Judy Maltz, "Explained: Two States, One and Other Solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Haaretz*, English edition, 10 June 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israeli-palestinian-conflict-solutions/.premium-explained-two-states-one-and-other-solutions-to-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-1.7044468.
9. In the original German: "Wenn ihr wollt, ist es kein Märchen." This is the motto of Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann Nachfolger, 1902).

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