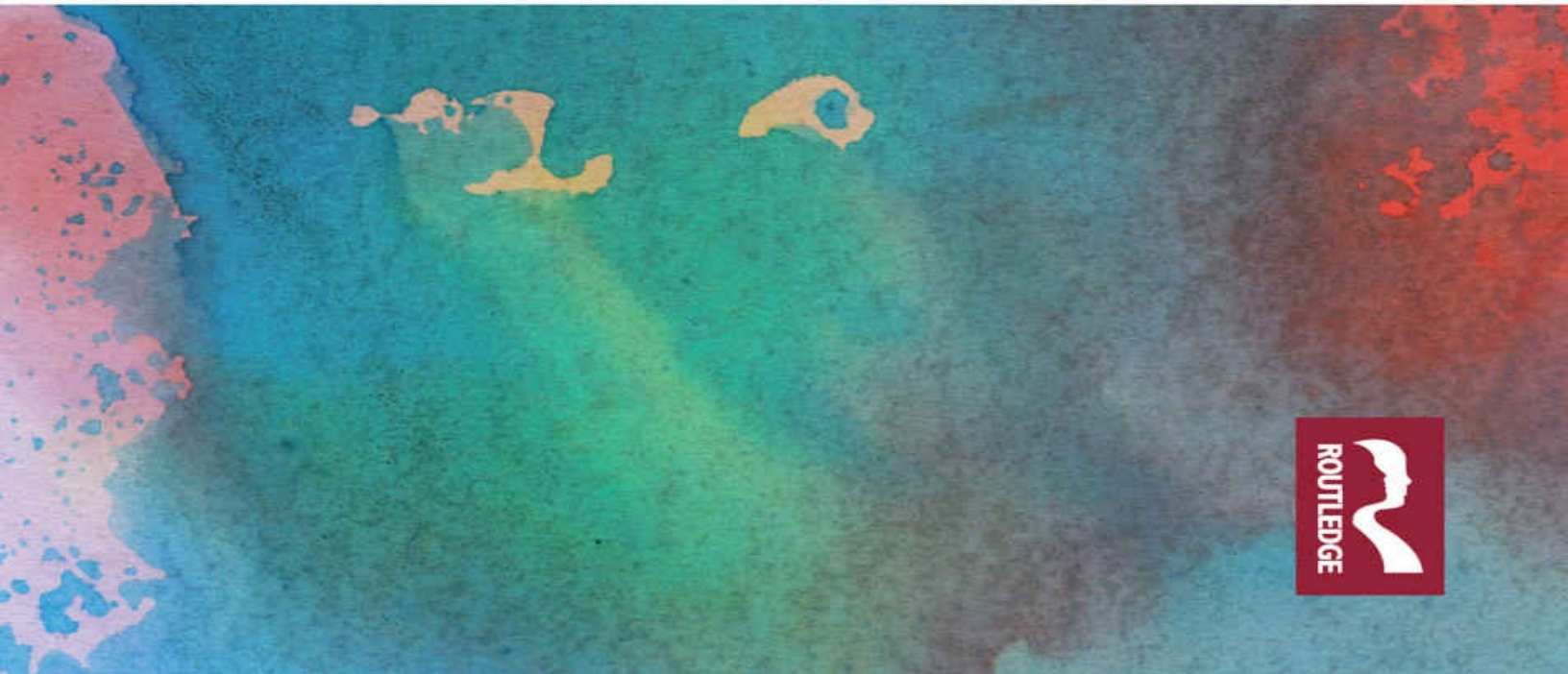
RETHINKING ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
Oded Nir and Joel Wainwright



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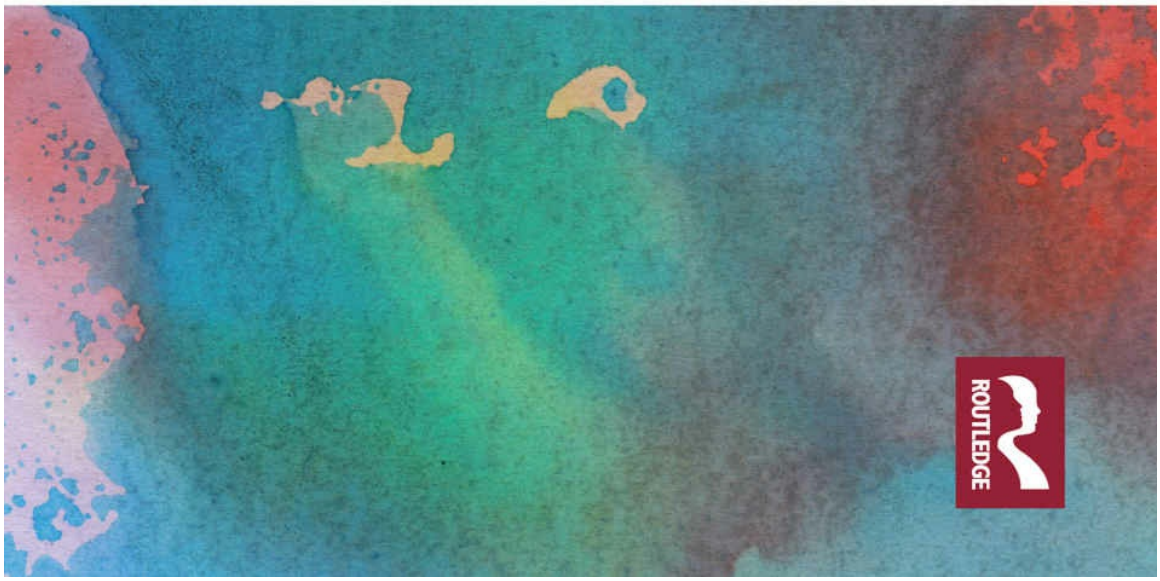

Rethinking Israel and Palestine

The Middle East seems to be in perpetual crisis. One might expect a plethora of Marxist analyses of Israel and Palestine. Yet in the literature on Israel and Palestine there are hardly any studies of class, relations of production, or the relationship between the political and economic balance of forces over time. This edited volume brings a diverse array of Marxist-influenced interpretations of the present conjuncture in Israel and Palestine. The collection includes works by luminaries of social theory, such as Noam Chomsky and Fred Jameson, as well as leading scholars of Palestine (Raja Khalidi, Sherene Seikaly, and Orayb Aref Najjar) and Israel (Jonathan Nitzan, Nitzan Lebovic, and Amir Locker-Biletzki). It comprises the first-ever collection of Marxist-influenced writings on Palestine and Israel, and the relationship between them.

This book was originally published as a special issue of the journal *Rethinking Marxism* .

Oded Nir teaches at the department of Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages and Cultures in Queens College, The City University of New Your, USA. He is the author of *Signatures of Struggle* (2018). He is the editor of the peer-reviewed quarterly *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* .

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Editors' Preface

Oded Nir and Joel Wainwright

This special issue went into production in May 2018, during Israeli massacres in Gaza. That such massacres seem almost routine—periodic, like stormy weather—testifies to our dreadful sense of being stuck, unable to move from the present horror toward some other future. These recurring violent events present us with an inversion of the notion of the end of history as the realization of reason and freedom: in each Gaza bloodbath, history seems to have ended but has left us only with the negation of freedom and reason as we face scenes of degradation and madness. This inversion should be understood in a strict dialectical sense; the project of realizing freedom within a capitalist system inevitably leads to unfreedom—just as in Marx's critique of the Proudhonists, which applies to all liberal projects today. To grasp how bleeding in Gaza relates to capitalist prosperity, one has to move beyond the immediate shock of the events themselves and toward a totalizing perspective that can grasp the violence as an expression of the capitalist world. Such an analysis, made today, is not necessarily reductive, and it has the potential to open new avenues of thought and action rather than keeping us locked within paradigms that (for all their sensitivity to injustice) may block critical thought.

This collection of essays was born out of a deep dissatisfaction with the impasse of the present, an impasse reflected by waves of violence on the ground but also a political Left whose liberal-reconciliatory agenda has long ago produced its opposite ("pacification") and has since lost all political effectiveness. This inability to invent a new collective project—in Palestine-Israel but also globally by the international Left—prompted us to assemble this special issue. It seeks to unsettle the positions on Palestine-Israel to which we on the left are accustomed. It aims to show that a return to Marxist theorizing of Palestine-Israel has the potential to produce insights that cut against the grain of what exists. It tells us, in other words, that to remain faithful to a Leftist project in Palestine-Israel, we should consider abandoning those older positions that were once at the core of this project, for the course of history inevitably transforms any vanguardism into conservatism. And so to restart history in Palestine-Israel would mean taking a different relation to reality than the one we know.

This special issue is precisely an attempt to revitalize our thinking about Palestine-Israel. Each essay offers one such new interpretation. Hence, the pieces are eclectic, in terms of both their disciplinary fields and their theoretical commitments. This is intentional. The reader will find no fully elaborated political agenda or conceptual system. Are the essays entirely Marxist? To that we answer with Fredric Jameson's (1996, 19) assertion that "Marxism is not … a philosophy at all," in the customary sense. Rather,

> It may be clearest to say that it can best be thought of as a *problematic* : that is to say, it can be identified, not by specific positions (whether of a political, economic or philosophical type), but rather by the allegiance to a specific complex of problems, whose formulations are always in movement and in historic rearrangement and restructuration, along with their object of study (capitalism itself).

* * *

We end this brief introduction by expressing our gratitude to all those whose help was essential to the process of publishing this special issue. First and foremost, we would like to wholeheartedly thank the coeditors of *Rethinking Marxism* , Serap Kayatekin and Marcus Green, for their endless encouragement, guidance, and very active promotion of this special issue. We would also like to thank the many scholars—who shall remain nameless—who attentively reviewed these essays on a very tight schedule, and thanks to the *Rethinking Marxism* collective for providing us with the opportunity to put together this special issue.

Reference

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Israel-Palestine as Capitalism's Laboratory

Fredric Jameson

The declaration of an intent to "rethink" something is often, particularly for the Left, an ominous sign. When the social-democratic parties openly declared such an "intent" and dropped Marx from their program, their decline quickly emptied their positions of content, leaving them just one more center-left or "liberal" party (in the American sense) among others, with little more than human rights, anticorruption, and identity politics to show for themselves.

But surely there are good reasons to rethink the Palestinian-Israeli struggle: in particular an experience of defeat become a way of life, an Israeli power so long identified with that of the United States that its "defeat" has come to seem unthinkable, and the famous "two-state solution" an old-fashioned pipe dream, yesterday's fantasy. We are then tempted to "rethink" this struggle into a wish fulfillment that might at least be up to date: what about a single nonconfessional democratic state in which the two sides fight it out in free elections and by parliamentary majorities? Is this not, after all, the Washington Consensus: free elections as the outward and visible sign of the inner free market? But perhaps it was this Consensus, along with the category of the nation-state in which it is articulated, that was the problem in the first place?

The present collection has a dramatic proposal for us, one which identifies two separate streams of faulty thinking and leaves us with the even more shocking implication that they might somehow be deeply interrelated with each other: on the one hand is the inconsistency of the older nation-state categories in a situation of globalization (that is to say, the world coordination of late capitalism); on the other is the assumption that leftist politics is to be reduced to the classic bourgeois concepts of civil rights and human rights, of equality before the law and voting rights, of multiculturalism and the end of ethnic, racial, and gender intolerance. "Rethinking" does not mean abandoning these programs (which liberals like to call "values") but rather presupposing them, just as the socialist tradition has always presupposed the achievement of bourgeois freedoms as the foundation on which a new and distinctive, radically different form of economic freedom might be built. However, if all politics are local, the traditional objections to such "rethinking" assume that the larger perspective inevitably saps the energies of local, everyday struggles against injustice, struggles which are difficult enough to launch in the first place. On the other hand, the Palestinian struggle is uniquely one in which the everyday and the ultimate end are inextricable and have to be solved together or not at all.

Unfortunately, not-at-all seems to have come out the winner, with the result that Palestine fatigue joins Israel fatigue, and the individual sufferings that have horrified and energized generations on the left now pale into seeming insignificance before the virtual *Völkerwanderung* of refugees and exiles, asylum seekers and boat people, from the Middle East in general. That unique struggle which was once considered to be the single festering open sore that poisoned Middle Eastern politics has now become a minor, well-nigh forgotten exception in the midst of a regional upheaval of "world-war" proportions. Why even bother to rethink it?

My own position on twenty-first century politics in this area has always been that the Americans were so successful in their overt or covert efforts to stamp out Middle Eastern Communist parties and left-wing movements (beginning, for example, with the massacres of

Communists in an older Iraq—the forerunner of their virtual genocide in Indonesia) that they created a situation in which only religion remained as a terrain of opposition and revolt. To be sure, the Americans did not feel that there was anything to revolt against (inasmuch as they were the target), and they failed to understand that there were whole populations who thought otherwise and who had only religion to fall back to as an oppositional ideology. But disposing of a religious opponent (save, perhaps, in Iran) does not automatically restore the coordinates of an earlier secular situation.

Indeed, even though the Palestinian struggle was and remains the most secular form of opposition in the Middle Eastern world (a term I continue to use inasmuch as Palestinians are not exclusively Muslim and Muslims not exclusively Arab), its nationalism might well be seen as a misleading ideological masking of deeper contradictions that only Marxism is capable of "rethinking" with any precision and comprehensiveness.

This is, at any rate, the proposal argued from a variety of directions by the present issue. It sees Fatah as a form of liberal or social-democratic alliance politics with all the weaknesses and vices of the Western versions, defects too visible now that Fatah has in effect come to power in the Palestinian Authority. And it seeks to rectify the misunderstanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a settler-colony struggle between colonists and the "native" or indigenous population by insisting on the development of capital in the Palestinian world and on the shared interests of Israeli and Palestinian workers who in fact—if not in political fiction—may not even constitute two distinct national proletariats but versions of that new globalized workforce coming into being in this third stage of capital. We may well remember American history here and Werner Sombart's famous answer to the perennial question of why no viable socialism emerged in the United States: namely, race! The most significant radical movement in U.S. history, indeed, that of late nineteenth-century populism, foundered on its opponents' strategic ability to set white farmers against black (see Larry Goodwin's pathbreaking work on American populism). Race is indeed a fictive concept with only too real consequences, and its analogous role in Israeli politics, articulated according to successive waves of immigrants from different class situations, has clearly played a decisive role in the staging of the so-called Israeli-Palestinian struggle, a role to be attributed not only to the rhetoric of an increasingly nonsocialist Israeli power structure but also to the "nationalist" appeal of a centrist Fatah, in which Marxists and socialists have played an ever more insignificant part. Here is then a momentous "revision" of the history of this period as it has been seen by the propaganda for both sides for generations. Indeed, since decolonization the international Left of whatever persuasion has considered "national liberation" to be a more urgent cause than class struggle and has given priority to the former under various political agendas. The essays collected in the present issue may indeed serve to shake the hold of this conviction.

But this changed conviction goes hand in hand with another one: namely, the development of capitalism in both Israel and Palestine alike. This is the "great transformation" some of us have called postmodernity, or late or finance capital, and others the neoliberal or neoconservative turn, or the end of history, the end of ideology, and so on. It is the local form of this transformation—situated in the early 80s with the Reagan-Thatcher moment and the liquidation of Keynesianism—which bears the name "post-Zionism," a term that suffers the ambiguous fate of all such formulations, depending on whether you grasp it as an ideological affirmation or simply as a marker for a fundamental structural break and transition.

In our context, the post-Zionist situation signifies the emergence of a full-fledged capitalist economy from the heroic (or ideologically heroic) period of Israeli state formation and the

concomitant transformation of its political reality along with the residual survival of its older political rhetoric. Few will doubt the historical reality of this evolution, but many are likely to be astonished by the affirmation, in the present collection, of a similar development in Palestine, where the existence of an analogous Palestinian capitalism seems to have been either a well-kept secret or an unmentionable fact of life.

With this revision of Israeli-Palestinian history from a Marxist perspective, we are suddenly confronted with the astonishing conclusion that, far from being a glaring exception in contemporary world politics, this seemingly eternal “open wound” of the global situation is in fact exemplary and offers something like a pure laboratory experiment in which theoretically to observe the dynamics of the latest stage in world capitalism. As to practice, however much it complicates the thinking of anticapitalist forces today, the rethinking of this experiment may well have strategic lessons for the forms that resistance can take today and the shape of some global Marxism to come.

Where Is the Marxist Critique of Israel/Palestine?

Oded Nir and Joel Wainwright

This essay argues for the urgent necessity of developing a new Marxist analysis and political horizon for Palestine/Israel. Two factors coalesce to affirm this conclusion: the near absence from contemporary academic writing of any discernibly Marxist analyses of Palestine/Israel and the deep crisis of the 1990s leftist project of peace, whose decline has not spurred a leftist alternative to it. The authors suggest several explanations for this state of affairs, from academic trends to the universalization of an older Marxist universalism to the near absence within existing leftist commentary of any attempt to present a materialist totalizing perspective on Palestine/Israel that relates the conflict causally to the contradictions of capitalism. Finally, the authors suggest that the essays included in the Rethinking Marxism symposium on Palestine/Israel (described briefly in this essay) can be used as so many potential starting points for narrating Palestine/Israel anew and reasserting forcefully this narrative's commitment to the Left's traditional political goals in Palestine/Israel.

1.

Noam Chomsky jokes that when he needs to provide a title for a public lecture more than a year in advance, he can always reuse "The Present Crisis in the Middle East." [1] That the Middle East will be in crisis, year in and year out, is a cruel constant. Yet the nature and qualities of the crisis are constantly shifting, and we must stay on the track of the forces shaping the political conjuncture. Doing so reveals that the present crisis—though undoubtedly extreme—is by no means an exceptional condition but rather an intensification of the norm. Any attempts to make sense of the recent wars in Syria and Iraq, the conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the intensification of Shia-Sunni tensions, or the pretensions of the United States as a broker of "peace" and "stability" all require patient dissection (however much those of us on the Left desire immediate action). The fact is that the Left has been defeated across the entire region. U.S. hegemony is clearly in decline, but resulting political openings have not been seized by the Left. The Arab Spring played out with no substantive gains. The crowds in Tahrir Square have gone; Egypt is firmly gripped by Sisi and the military (with ample backing from the United States). Wars, covert and open, continue unabated.

And at the heart of these conflicts lies the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The Palestinians continue to be ground down by the Israeli state, which (notwithstanding Netanyahu's present political troubles) is firmly held by the Right; there is no significant political Left (Marxist or not) to speak of on either side. The only meaning of the so-called "peace process" is to provide the Israeli state with cover as it continues to extend its domination over the Palestinians. Walls and settlements continue to spread across the West Bank; Gaza is an open prison. The seventieth anniversary of the Nakba has been marked by new mass evictions in the West Bank (Gordon 2018) while IDF soldiers shoot hundreds of protesters in Gaza (Cockburn 2018) and the United States has moved its embassy to Jerusalem (Holmes 2018). Across the region, elites exploit the Palestinian cause for opportunistic legitimation, but this results in nothing concrete for the Palestinian people. One of the many tragic results of the present crisis is that the situation in Palestine props up a variety of authoritarian neoliberal states.

In the face of the present crisis, one might expect a plethora of Marxist analyses of Israel and Palestine. But, in fact, there are few. It is a striking lacuna. [2] In fairness, there are stacks of books by left-wing critics of Israel (e.g., Abunimah 2014) and some brilliant critical analysis of

Zionism (e.g., Rose 2005; Butler 2012). One explanation for this lacunae—offered by Chomsky; see the interview in this issue—is that there are practically no Marxists active in U.S. universities anymore. Professor Chomsky has a point, but this gap goes beyond the United States, and there are still Marxists criticizing Israel and/or Zionism both in the United States and elsewhere. Yet when they have done so, it is almost exclusively by criticizing the violent colonization of Palestine and emphasizing the ethical rather than the systemic nature of this process. To make a generalization, in the literature on Israel and Palestine in English, there are hardly any studies of class, relations of production, or the relationship between the political and economic balance of forces over time, and so on. Naturally, there are exceptions, but they illuminate the norm. The failure in this respect of the journal *Rethinking Marxism* is symptomatic. From a search of the journal's digital archive of three decades, *RM* has published practically nothing on Palestine and Israel. [3]

Our basic contention is that a renewed Marxist position is necessary because the political situation is dire and the existing framework for explaining it is ineffectual. Marxism is essential because it is the only mode of social and political analysis capable of grasping capital, nation, and state synthetically. [4] One of our aims is to theorize this lack: that is, to explain *why* there is no Marxist analysis. The result of the political bankruptcy of the liberal Israeli position is the nightmare of today: perpetual conflict, suffering Palestinians, futureless Israelis. The articulation of a robust leftist position is essential. To generalize in didactic and simplistic terms, the Left has framed the conflict in terms of nation and religion—Israeli/Jew versus Palestinian/Muslim—leaving class and capital aside. The political situation is thus domesticated into familiar categories that leave only one imaginable solution: two separate states. Even if this position was once valid, the territorial basis for a Palestinian state has been systematically destroyed by the Israeli state through the construction of walls, barriers, highways, checkpoints, and other apparatuses of colonization (Weizman 2007; cf., Tartir 2015). Facing these conditions, to chant demands for a Palestinian state reflects either bad faith or a hypocritical false optimism. Recognizing the absence of a two-state solution, we contend, should compel us to rethink Israel/Palestine though categories that cut across national lines.

This is where a Marxist analysis of history, class, and capitalist political economy is crucial. The aim is to grasp Israel/Palestine as a part of a contradictory unity, a differentiated *totality* , within a world wracked by severe political-economic crises. This implies presenting both diachronic and synchronic alternatives that try to understand each detail within a contradictory totality. The notion of contradictory totality is already implied by the bifurcated object —"Israel/Palestine"—that we have become accustomed to name the problem. But does Israel/Palestine constitute a socioeconomic whole? Certainly not. Grasping this contradictory totality requires, inter alia, studying the formation of capitalist social relations in Palestine. [5] A robust literature examines the political-economic dimensions of Israel and the occupation of Palestine. [6] These and other non-Marxist works lay the critical foundation for a Marxist interpretation of Israel/Palestine as both a specific, constantly changing economic-geographical region and a capitalist society in which the "ordinary" qualities of bourgeois society express unusual characteristics.

Consider the market for labor power. Some Palestinians remain proletarians for Israeli capitalism. But since the early 1990s, "foreign" labor has largely substituted for Palestinian labor, a trend strongly encouraged by the Israeli government (Kemp and Raijman 2008). A 2011 ILO report observes that during the 1990s "a major influx of foreign workers [entered Israel] as substitute for Arab workers from the Palestinian Authority. Many of these foreign workers were

illegal and did not possess proper government permits. Many businesses employed foreign laborers in sub-par conditions, denying them basic rights and lowering wages and benefits" (Nathanson 2011, 32). Israeli capital is simply not dependent on Palestinian labor power. By implication, strikes by Palestinian labor cannot play the role that strikes played in the confrontation with South African apartheid (Chomsky 2015, 72–6). Thus, observed geographical and juridical contiguities are misleading: the causes of the Palestinians becoming surplus population are to be sought in the dynamics of global capitalism. The same could be said for the real-estate bubble currently propelling the Israeli urban economy (Cohen 2017). This is not to deny that the Israeli state bears responsibility for the Palestinians' plight; rather it is to recall that we must situate the Israeli state and society within global capitalism if we seek to understand it. [7] Among other things, this requires rejecting one of the most problematic claims concerning Israel/Palestine sometimes heard on the left: the mystification of the Israeli oppression of Palestinians via the conversion of violence into "spirit" ("the occupation corrupts"). This liberal formula should be demystified. The only system that unifies both arenas—the internal social one and the external national one—is capitalism. The liberal tendency to frame the conflict in religious terms (Jews versus Muslims) is symptomatic of the disavowal of confronting capital.

Our starting point, then, must lie with an honest recognition of the failure of the Marxist Left to produce justice for the Palestinians or even an account capable of explaining the present impasse. To those on the left committed to the immediate defense of Palestine, this may seem like unhelpful theoretical posturing. In response, we emphatically affirm a political commitment to justice for Palestinians, to liberation from occupation. But in the face of the present impasse, it may be useful to take a step back, to question our inherited thinking, and to resituate our commitment within different historical and theoretical trajectories. Where does a Marxist position start?

A Marxist position on Israel/Palestine, we contend, cannot be satisfied with nationalist ambitions—that is, only with Palestinian self-determination—but would situate this demand within a broader analysis of class relations, seeking the transcendence of capitalism. This analysis implies taking account of Palestinian society as a historical expression of capitalist social relations, including the era prior to the creation of the state of Israel as well as the contemporary passivity of Arab and Palestinian elites in the face of the ongoing violence (see, e.g., Shafir 1994; Seikaly 2015; Clarno 2017). A Marxist position would demand: How did the entry of capitalism into Palestine come about? How might we untangle the complex historical and geographical series of exchanges between Zionism and Marxism? [8] How have class relations shaped the oppression of Palestinians? Can a new political project be conceived in which national and class emancipation in Palestine/Israel are more explicitly articulated? Could we narrate the history of Zionism's crimes against Palestinians in a way that could link them causally to the exploitation of Israel's citizens? What is the relation of the Palestinian liberation effort to Marxism? What is the position of Israel/Palestine in the capitalist world system today? What does the specific experience of apartheid South Africa—so often cited on the Left as a parallel to Israel/Palestine—teach us about strategies to produce justice? How might space and territory be reorganized to produce geographical justice?

2.

Marxism and Zionism have a long and fraught relationship, extending well beyond the territory of Palestine and Israel. We cannot offer a full genealogy of Marxism and Zionism; there is far

too much to say (see, e.g., Greenstein 2009; Hen-Tov 2017). We will consider instead only three brief touchstones. Moses Hess (1812–75), one of the founders of Zionism, was also a major influence on the early formation of Karl Marx's thinking. [9] Ber Borochov (1881–1917) led Poalei Tzion (the Workers of Zion) and provided major influence on the kibbutz movement of the early twentieth century. A Marxist, Borochov argued that the exclusion of Jewish workers from primary production in the advanced capitalist countries made it impossible for them to participate in proletarian struggle. [10] Between Hess and Borochov, of course, stands Karl Marx (1818–83). Marx's first foray into the historical-materialist approach was applied to the question of Jewish national rights. In "On the Jewish Question," Marx (2009) criticized the leftist Hegelian Bruno Bauer (1809–82). In *Die Judenfrage* , Bauer argued that Jews in Europe should be denied civil rights until they have abandoned Judaism. [11] Marx, an atheist descendent of a line of Rabbis and Jews, forcefully rebutted Bauer. Marx historicized the distinctive social and economic position of Jews in Europe to show that the entire convoluted debate in Bauer's conception of the "Jewish question" was misplaced and lacked a class politics that considered how religious groups are transformed differentially by the emergence of capitalism. The claim that Marx's essay is anti-Semitic not only lacks historical sensibility (the concept did not yet exist) but also misses the crucial point that Marx wrote, pace Bauer, in defense of civil rights for Jews. Yet Marx also criticized the limited conception of citizenship then prevailing in Europe, observing that citizenship (formal political emancipation) was insufficient. What was needed, and not only for the Jews, was social transformation: the emancipation of humanity from capitalism. Contemporary critics who seek to undo the Israeli state's equation of Israeli citizenship and national security with Jewish identity are therefore repeating Marx's basic insight.

In recent years, the standard bearers of this position among the Israeli Left have been labeled "post-Zionist." Today, post-Zionism is usually invoked to refer to a group of Israeli scholars who in the late '80s started publishing historiographical work that contradicted the official Israeli line: Benny Morris, Gershon Shafir, Avi Shlaim, and Ilan Pappé, among others. [12] Pappé's (2007) book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* is arguably the high point of post-Zionist scholarship, and his book *The Idea of Israel* provides an account of the rise and fall of the field (Pappé 2014). Morris's (1988) essay "The New Historiography" can be seen as a preliminary manifesto of these New Historians (as they are sometimes called). In the essay, Morris explodes a series of widely held Israeli beliefs about the history of Zionism. Special place is reserved in this essay for the pursuit of peace: Zionist and Israeli leaders have never pursued peace with the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries very effectively or convincingly, according to Morris, counter to what Israeli historians have been saying. Even if some of the New Historians would refuse the label of post-Zionism (associated today with figures such as Adi Ophir, Ariella Azoulay, and Hannan Hever), it is clear that the post-Zionist intellectual enterprise originates in their critique. Post-Zionism reflects an Israeli version of postcolonial critique, yet with a difference. Post-Zionism still retains a totalizing explanatory horizon, no matter how distorted by its underlying idealism. [13]

To be sure, Israel is a settler-colonial state, yet recognizing this is insufficient for grasping the valences of the present conflict. This important point was established clearly in the 1960s by an anti-Stalinist Marxist organization in Israel (and journal by the same name), Matzpen. The four basic elements of Matzpen's analysis in the 1960s are elegantly summarized by one of its leading theorists, Moshé Machover (2012, x–xi), in the preface to his collected writings. The first point is, "1. Zionism is a colonizing project, and Israel, its embodiment, is a settler state." The other

three claims differ from many mainstream leftist analyses and bear consideration today:

> 2. Zionist colonization belongs to a different species from, for example, that of South Africa … rather than being based on exploiting the labor power of the indigenous people, it sought to exclude and eliminate them;
>
> 3. We insisted on the regional context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict … the balance of power is heavily tilted in favor of Israel (backed by its imperialist sponsor [the USA]) … This imbalance could only be redressed … as part of a revolutionary transformation of the region … ;
>
> 4. Our regional view … applied not only to the *process* whereby it would be resolved but also extended to the *form of the resolution itself* . Unlike almost all who addressed the issue, [14] we did not believe that a resolution would occur within the confines of Palestine … Thus, we did not advocate a so-called two-state solution in a repartitioned Palestine, nor a "one-state solution" in a unitary Palestine. Instead, we envisaged incorporation of the two national groups … as units with equal rights within a socialist regional union or federation of the Arab East.

Matzpen's analysis remained relatively marginal within Israel-Palestine and in international Marxism. We should recover these insights and bring them up to date in light of the changes in capitalism (accounting, e.g., for the neoliberal turn and present global crisis) as well as international political dynamics (the maturation and declining hegemony of U.S. imperialism).

From the Matzpen perspective, then, the central point of post-Zionism—Israel is a settler-colonial state—is old news, delivered without sufficient depth of analysis. Yet it should be clear that for all of Matzpen's appeal to a utopian socialist future, its analysis remains a non-Marxist one; it stops short of relating the analysis of political relations to the contradictions of capitalism. Instructive in this vein is the introduction to the 1999 edition of *Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace* , originally published in 1961 (Machover and Orr 1999). In the new introduction—absent from the book's English translation—the authors report that, in the time that elapsed between 1961 and 1999, they have changed their minds about how they view Zionism: while before they saw Zionism as a movement pitted against British imperialism, now they see Zionism as simply part of the colonial project. The missing term here is the post-Zionist revision of the history of Zionism, a line that Matzpen joined somewhat belatedly with this new introduction. [15]

The insufficiency of the settler-colonial framework is also clear in the case of Ilan Pappé. Pappé (2017, 13) writes that "the tale of Palestine from the beginning until today is a simple story of colonialism and dispossession, yet the world treats it as a multifaceted and complex story—hard to understand and even harder to solve." Since, from the vantage of its victims, colonialism is a tale of loss, violence, and violation, he is certainly right. Yet from the vantage of all those who would struggle for justice, collectivity, and another future, Pappé's claim is facile. There has never been, from this vantage, "a simple story of colonialism and dispossession." Like Tolstoy's unhappy families, the conditions of each colonial society are particular; the specific complexities that comprise them matter for those who wish to produce alternative worlds. One recent non-Marxist statement of this principal is provided by Rachel Busbridge (2018, 110). Busbridge contends that defining Israel as a settler-colonial state "promises to rejuvenate the Palestinian struggle under the prescriptive banner of decolonization," yet "this is where the most strident limitations of the settler-colonial paradigm come into view, due to, at best, underdeveloped reflection on the possibilities and practicalities of decolonization and, at worst, connotations deriving from its contextual point of origin flattening out important local historical and socio-political specificities."

Attentiveness to particularity requires historicizing Zionism anew. Zionism emerged in the nineteenth century as a utopian politics aiming for the liberation of a subaltern transnational proletariat through the formation of a new society. To appreciate the tragedy and prospects for change in Israel and Palestine, it will be insightful to consider Zionism as a failed project of

collective liberation. The realization of this political movement through the colonization of Palestine and the reorganization of Zionist society as a capitalist nation-state signaled the end of the utopian element.

Any sophisticated Marxist insists that history's march requires constant renarration. Only through the efforts of renarration are we able to represent the present as a space of collective historical practice, as a space in which the tensions of ever-changing subjective experience point toward objective systemic contradictions as a space of struggle over the future. For instance, the debates within the Marxist Left over the legacies of the 1968 revolts attest precisely to the continuous need to renarrate history as borne by history's movement itself. Yet when the political Left—including many Marxists—address Israel and Zionism, the commitment to renarrating history weakens. The same narratives are repeated with little variation: Zionism is seen as a colonial movement that has expropriated Palestinian land, and the state of Israel is seen as a direct continuation of this history, oppressing, dispossessing, and exploiting the Palestinians. To explore new historical narratives of Israel and Zionism does not mean a repudiation of these narratives. The veracity of their factual basis is not questioned here. Nor is there an implied abandonment of the ethical stance immanent to this historical account, that of an uncompromising demand for justice for the Palestinians. Rather than opposing these historical accounts, a commitment to narrating this history anew can translate it into a political project that resonates more strongly with popular concerns and contemporary realities.

Yet for those who are committed to a Marxist perspective, our call to historicize post-Zionism and renarrate the history of Zionism may cause disorientation: a troubling of one's political allegiances, a threat of losing one's political bearings. For post-Zionism was at its most influential precisely at the same time that the neoliberal transformation of the Israeli economy was beginning to take place. That both of these elements—neoliberalization and post-Zionism—share a deep antagonism to the nation-state and its institutions could be taken as a sign of the link between the two. The material or institutional connection between the attack on the state and the Israeli occupation has never been very difficult to find, even though few scholars have examined it in any detail. The wholesale liquidation of Israeli social protections and centralized economic planning drove poor Israelis to live in West Bank settlements, as Daniel Gutwein notes. [16] One implication is that coastal Israeli land, on which state-subsidized agriculture was thriving, became a goldmine for private capital rent extraction in the 1980s. But the implications are most significant with respect to the settlements spilling across the West Bank. Here is Gutwein's (2006) argument:

> The settlements project in the Territories and the rapid growth of economic inequality in Israel have been complimentary foundations of the social and political power relations that the Right has constructed since 1977 to secure its hegemony. Regarding the universal welfare state as one of the main sources of power of the Left, the Right has used Thatcher-like practices to liquidate the welfare state through privatization and commercialization of its services. Naturally, this policy initially affected mainly the lower classes. Accordingly, in order to offset the losses it inflicted on its voters, the Right has constituted a compensatory mechanism by splitting Israeli society into rival interest groups … [and has] worked to undermine the universal welfare state and replace it as suppliers of partial substitutes to its gradually liquidated services … [As] the universal welfare state was liquidated in [the area of] pre-1967 Israel, an alternative sectorial welfare state was constructed in the Territories. The enormous benefits which the "Land of Settlements" offers in housing, education, health, taxation, infrastructure and employment, have actually become a mechanism which compensated the lower classes for the damages inflicted upon them by the privatization of welfare services in Israel.

From this perspective the illegal program of constantly expanding settlements becomes an attempt to geographically solve the social contradictions generated by neoliberalism—a spatial fix where political economy reinforces ideology. A Marxist view could therefore see post-

Zionism as unintentionally useful for the champions of neoliberalism and the dissolution of working-class economic protections while inadvertently supporting the settlement enterprise and thus sabotaging the achievement of the peace in whose name it was acting, as we argue below.

The post-Zionist narrative could be seen as the intellectual wing of the Israeli Left's political project of the 1990s: renarrating history in a way that could help achieve the goal of peace. A new conception not only of Israel's origin is of course necessary in any such effort—hence the centrality of debates over the crucial 1947–9 period—but also of its end: the two-state solution. Cast in this way, the so-called "stalling of the peace process" (a.k.a., "the failure of Oslo," the "loss of the roadmap") signals the failure of the political moment that both inspired and sustained the new historiography. The near-total dissolution of the Israeli Left since 2001 has left post-Zionism without purchase. Much the same could be said for the Palestinian Left and Palestinian nationalism (see Khalidi 2018). And no significant Marxist organization has replaced the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a secular Marxist-Leninist organization founded in 1967 (see Leopardi 2017), and the Marxist analyses of the conflict from the Palestinian side.

The 1990s, with the rise and decline of the peace movement and post-Zionism, can be interpreted as a delayed response to this reality, a break in the Israeli conception of the situation, out of sync with history. Hence the swiftness of post-Zionism's collapse and its participants' challenge in explaining its failure (see, e.g., Pappé 2014, chap. 11–2). Put otherwise, the emergence of post-Zionism reflects the delayed afterlife of the defeat of the Israeli Left in the 1970s. While works from this genre are superior to those resulting from Hess's Zionist turn in the 1850s, they lack Marx's critique of political economy.

In fairness, the post-Zionists have at times implied that their project requires a Marxist counterpoint. For example, Chomsky and Pappé's (2015, 45) book *On Palestine* —principally a series of exchanges between them—laments the absence within post-Zionist and anti-Zionist work

> of any socialist discourse from the conversation about Palestine. This absence is one of the main reasons the so-called peace camp in Israel (and the same is true regarding the lobbyists on J Street in the United States) has no issue with neo-liberalism. This worldview is not opposed to Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories but has no position on the harsh economic and social oppression that does not distinguish between a West Bank inhabitant and an Israeli citizen … The absence of this angle also weakens our ability to understand the Oslo Accords, the creation of the PA, projects such as People to People, and the maintenance of the occupation by EU and USAID money as neoliberal projects. Economic elites supported the "peace process" because it was perceived to lead to an economic bonanza.

We agree fully with Pappé here. Yet what is curious and telling in this passage is its use of present tense to describe realities that were fully apparent in the 1990s, when post-Zionism peaked in influence. [17] This passage should then be read as a self-critique, if perhaps an unconscious one—a retrospective reflection upon a specific failure of the post-Zionist writings of the 1990s. [18]

The crisis of peace as a political project made challenges to post-Zionism grow stronger in Israel in the last decade. The heading "post-post-Zionism" (as used by Assaf Likhovski, Boaz Neumann, and others) designates a host of new scholarly approaches that abandon the post-Zionist commitment to Palestinian liberation. Instead, post-post-Zionist scholarship produces historical narratives that are like the proverbial Hegelian night: all cows are gray, making it impossible to distinguish the oppressed from their oppressors and reinventing the ideological myth of apolitical scholarship. Against this, the urgency of renarrating Zionism for a new Israeli political project on the left is thrown into sharp relief and becomes even more evident. Surely Marxism can rise to meet the challenge of post-post-Zionism?

3.

We must try to produce an explanation for this curious state of affairs: a global Left for which the Palestinians are a cause célèbre, yet, at least since the late 1990s, there has been no substantial leftist political project in Israel/Palestine and a near absence of Marxist writing on the topic. It should be stated at the outset that no such "Marxist" position could exist prior to the historical force field in which it is formed. Rather, a universal dimension must always appear in the guise of particularity, as Žižek's (2000, 168–9) more Hegelian formulation has it. A certain standpoint can become revolutionary and then cease to be so, depending precisely on the movement of history. The current lacuna should therefore make us search for what has disappeared—or for what is no longer revolutionary even if it once held that potential. So our diagnosis should start by asking what the Marxist position on Israel/Palestine was and what projects sought to radically transform Israeli and Palestinian societies.

One explanation would date the disappearance of a socialist alternative to 1989 with the collapse of the USSR and what used to be called the Second World. [19] Drawing a political analogy between apartheid South Africa and contemporary Israel/Palestine—an analogy taken up somewhat differently by Andy Clarno (2017)—means that one must turn a blind eye to the fact that an alternative to capitalism was still nominally present in the South African case (through Cuban support for the African National Congress's struggle) while an alternative is wholly absent in the case of Israel. The absence of an alternative way of life does not simply imply a blockage of our historical imagination; it also means an actual problem for political struggle: revolution playing again and again into the hands of capitalism, as the Arab Spring demonstrated yet again.

Still other explanations are possible. This explanatory multiplicity should not be seen as a problem, nor should it be ascribed vaguely to overdetermination (Althusser 2005, 87–128). Rather, we should treat the elaboration of multiple explanations as a reflection of different commitments and conceptual levels: what is visible from one analytical perspective is invisible from others. Crucial here is Edward Said's non-Marxist contribution to our (Anglophone) understanding of the Palestinian struggle for emancipation. Said's work contributed to the shifting of Leftist interpretations of Palestine away from totalizing Marxist explanations and toward a liberal multiplicity of critical perspectives whose unstated locus ultimately lies in cultural difference. Moreover, the East/West dichotomy that grounds Said's analysis of Orientalism does not permit grasping the distinctiveness of capitalist imperialism (e.g., the centrality of market domination and the importance of imperialism in resolving capital's contradictions). [20]

Now we arrive at another explanation: post-Zionism. We claim that post-Zionism is implicated in the transformation of capitalist social relations. This claim entails a consideration of how a cultural and political transformation is related to a transformation in the economic infrastructure or base. The attempt to bring about a more effective pursuit of peace, which guides many of the post-Zionists, is not unimportant in this respect. [21] As Nir (2018) argues, one should see the pursuit of peace as a vanishing mediator for the reconstitution of Israeli society along neoliberal lines. The vanishing mediator paradigm, based on the Hegelian ruse of reason, was developed by Jameson (2008, 309–43) and further elaborated by Žižek (1991, 179–227). It is meant to provide a historical-materialist account of historical transformation, avoiding two common pitfalls: idealism (or the notion that ideas themselves somehow magically transform the material world) and vulgar Marxism (or the notion that symbolic coding and struggle is always

epiphenomenal to, or merely derivative of, the "real" material transformation). The mediator that vanishes after it has facilitated material change is constituted of three distinct moments in Jameson's vanishing-mediator schema. In the first moment, a goal (read: superstructure) that was implicit and secondary in the old system is made explicit, and the old means (read: infrastructure) of achieving it are denounced as ineffective. In the second moment, new means are elaborated to achieve this old goal. This inevitably means the founding of new social practices and forms. In the third moment, the old goal simply vanishes, leaving us with the new means or social form (Jameson 2008, 330–2). In this light, one could interpret the pursuit of peace in the 1990s as a vanishing mediator for the neoliberal reforming of Israel and Palestinian society. [22] Here, post-Zionism played a key role in the second moment of the vanishing mediator: following Morris's accusation that national efforts to achieve peace were insincere or otherwise ineffective, post-Zionism elaborated new means by which peace was to be achieved. What followed was no less than a wholesale reeducation of Israeli subjective sensibilities in order to avoid state institutions; this reeducation argued that the state's ineffective pursuit of peace was related to its failure to address social antagonisms internal to Israeli society. In other words, post-Zionism played a crucial role in instilling a new set of ideological practices that no longer relied on mediation of social tensions by state institutions. It was this transformation—whose relation to neoliberalism could not be named at the time but becomes clear in hindsight—that made Israelis willingly cooperate in the dismantling of Israeli welfare policies, offering no resistance to the disappearance of social protections and the nation-state's broad commitment to the economic well-being of its citizens. The subsequent disappearance of peace as a political goal around which a massive Left could coalesce only strengthens the view that the 1990s pursuit of peace was a vanishing mediator for the neoliberal transformation of Israel's social structure.

To argue that the post-Zionist intellectual project is related to the advent of neoliberalism does not imply an abandonment of the commitment to Palestinian emancipation, nor does it detract from the post-Zionist achievement (for the post-Zionists did succeed in moving history along, even though not as they had intended). But it does commit one to a search for new theorizations, historical narrations, and collective projects. More importantly, it helps us trace the fate of the lost Marxist position that we set out to find. For it is precisely the two-state solution that has usually been identified with the Marxist Left. That was the case on the Palestinian side, as Raja Khalidi (2018) argues in his essay for this symposium; and that was the case on the Israeli side, as Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan (2018) note. Prior to Israeli statehood, communist or socialist movements opted for one-state solutions, as for example in the cooperation efforts that characterized the non-Zionist Palestine Communist Party, described in detail in Musa Budeiri's (2010) work or in the binationalism of the Zionist Young Guard movement. But after the Israeli state became a fact, it was the two-state solution or "peace" that became the goal of such movements, long before peace had gained its 1990s status as the central goal of the Left. In other words, it is precisely the pursuit of peace that used to characterize the Marxist position, which has since the 1990s been universalized. Everyone, including the Right, pays lip service to achieving peace today. We can therefore explain the absence of a Marxist position on Israel/Palestine: what was once a revolutionary position has performed its historical role, though it failed to achieve what it really set out to do. The Marxist position has therefore disappeared not through its abandonment but through the universalization of one element: peace between two states. [23]

Our position does not entail an embrace of Zionism and an abandonment of Palestinian liberation as a goal. To present Zionism and post-Zionism as the only two possible stances is

precisely to preclude their double negation—a conservatism common to both post-Zionists and the Right. The inevitable conclusion is that we are in dire need of a new Marxist position and a new political project. It is to fulfill this mandate that we organized this special issue. Its contributions should not be seen as different elaborations of one or another Marxist line; they all deviate from an older way of thinking about Israel/Palestine. In the absence of a Marxist position or living leftist project, the thread common to all of them is simply to rethink Palestine/Israel in new ways, suggesting new historical narratives and new analytical paradigms that could lead to new political projects.

The essays by Nitzan Lebovic (2018), on political melancholy, and Raja Khalidi (2018, 368), who surveys the "triumph of capitalism and unfettered marketization over justice and national rights for Palestine," approach these concerns from different perspectives. These essays can be seen as part of a new effort to reopen for discussion the question of anticolonial national-liberation movements and their transformative horizons. Khalidi argues that it is now evident, "however unacceptable any of the alternatives might have been, Palestinian communists' and nationalists' diehard belief in the necessity and inevitability of the two-state solution has been, at best, misplaced and, at worst, deceptive toward the Palestinian people's interests" (381–2). The pact with the bourgeois national struggle was thus misguided; persistent harping on reified national sentiment is meaningless. Khalidi's essay demonstrates that it is impossible to simply "add" a class-struggle perspective to existing theorizations of the Palestinian struggle. Rather, its renarration from an anti-elite perspective would require seeing the development of capitalism and resistance to it as the engine of this history: "The process that has had perhaps the most insidious effect on the prospects for liberation in any form is the relentless advance of Palestinian capitalism with a liberal face. This advance has empowered the formation of distinct social forces whose material interests, with every new paycheck, housing loan, and consumer fad, appear less and less dependent on and concerned with a successful national liberation" (371–2). Khalidi thus provokes us to renarrate this history with a different emancipatory horizon in mind.

Sherene Seikaly (2018, 404) notes that the study of Palestine's economic development remains almost nonexistent. Her essay ties this lacuna to the current political impasse: "To continue reveling in the marriage between national consciousness and politics reifies colonial epistemologies. Moving beyond nationalism as both the means and ends of politics is long overdue." By considering this seldom-explored capitalist history, Seikaly seeks to de-reify the emancipatory imaginary. Seikaly's approach remains stubbornly ambivalent in its commitments, refusing to either condemn or praise Palestinian capitalists for the contemporary plight. She argues, for example, that the absence of sustained Palestinian capitalist economic progress hurt the national liberation effort. In their contribution, Bichler and Nitzan (2018, 418)—well-known authors of a series of essays on the so-called "weapondollar-petrodollar hypothesis," concerning Middle East conflict and the political economy of oil and weapons—survey their own research trajectory, providing an account of the "[b]iography of [their] [r]esearch." Their essay offers a retrospective reflection on the development of their arguments, bringing some of them up-to-date with a focus on Israel/Palestine.

The essay by Amir Locker-Biletzki (2018) explores the limits of the settler-colonialism framework for an analysis of Israel through a critique of Gershon Shafir's (1994) landmark study, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: 1882–1914* . Locker-Biletzki argues that Shafir's narrative, while indebted to historical materialism, reaches its limits in its adoption of a settler-colonial approach. To address this, Locker-Biletzki renarrates episodes from Shafir's history to elaborate on immanent class alliances that cut across Palestinian and

Israeli lines. The aim is to show that an alternative approach that supplements Shafir and shifts the emphasis toward class processes can provide a more coherent and compelling account of the early twentieth century.

We must reemphasize that these contributions should not be read as definitive statements of the Marxist approach but as possible starting points for the elaboration of one. They offer a constellation of analytical possibilities that open up new avenues to think about Israel/Palestine and its history. Nothing could be more urgent.

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This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

1. See, e.g., Chomsky (1999).
2. This lacuna is not new. In the bibliographical note appended to his landmark essay "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," Edward Said (1979, 57) makes reference in passing to the lack of Marxist interpretations, noting that "aside from Isaac

Deutscher (in his *The Non-Jewish Jew* [recently republished by Verso; see Deutscher 2017]), the major European socialist statement on the Middle East has come from the French Orientalist Maxime Rodinson [1968; 1973]." From our vantage, Rodinson (still less Deutscher) did not produce an entirely persuasive Marxist account of Israel and Palestine. And at any rate, their writings on Israel and Palestine have been practically forgotten. The task must be taken up again.

3. Najjar's (2007) essay on Palestinian Marxist journalism is the standout: a first-rate, incisive piece of original scholarship. The essays by Buttigeig (2004), Renton (2001), and Kaminsky (2010) are thought provoking but short. There are passing references to Israel or Palestine in a few other essays, but that is all.

4. For a robust defense of this claim, see Karatani (2014).

5. On this, see Gozansky (1986), Ben-Porat (1993), Shafir (1994), and Seikaly (2015; 2018); see also Jameson (1979).

6. See Chomsky (1999), Samara (2000), Bichler and Nitzan (2002), Algazi (2006), Sa'di (2010), Abunimah (2014), Dana (2015), and Clarno (2017).

7. This also implies clarifying the U.S. role in shaping the Israeli state. On this point we acknowledge the importance of John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's (2007) *The Israel Lobby* , a book that is not Marxist (nor is it post-Zionist); indeed, they are anti-Marxists, and yet we should rightly celebrate their contributions to the critique of Zionism. The point is not that anti-Marxists have produced important criticisms of Israel but that the Marxist critique of post-Zionism is part of a much larger project of criticizing everything existing—for the sake of producing a genuinely radical conception of the world.

8. On this point it is helpful to recall Isaac Deutscher (1954, 97): "While in the West socialism, liberalism, and Zionism were benevolently related to one another, in Eastern Europe they bitterly competed for the loyalty of the Jewish masses. A deep cleavage always existed there between the Zionist and the anti-Zionist Jew. The anti-Zionist urged the Jews to trust their gentile environment, to help the "progressive forces" in that environment to come to the top, and so hope that those forces would effectively defend the Jews against anti-semitism. "Social revolution will give the Jews equality and freedom; they have therefore no need for a Zionist Messiah"; this was the stock argument of generations of Jewish left-wingers. The Zionists, on the other hand, dwelt on the deep-seated hatred of non-Jews toward Jews and urged the Jews to trust their future to nobody other than their own State." The former position, represented by Marx, won over most Western European Jews before World War II. Numerically these Jews would comprise only a fraction of the postwar immigrants to Israel, where Zionism was dominated by the latter position. The ideological center of gravity within Zionism thus shifted from West to East. The current effort by left-wing Jewish intellectuals in Europe and the United States to confront Israel could be seen as a belated counter-response.

9. Hess, a Hegelian socialist, helped to bring Marx to communism (see, e.g., Kouvelakis 2003, chap. 3). But after the failure of the great European revolutions of 1848—for which Hess and Marx wrote separate, competing manifestos—Marx turned Hegel on his head to produce his critique of capitalist political economy. Hess (1958) dredged up the most teleological and messianistic interpretations of Hegel to produce Zionism. Hess advocated for socialist secular Jews to move to Jerusalem and create a model socialist society. By weaving Spinoza and Hegel together with communist and nationalist convictions, Hess laid the foundation for seeing Jewish nationalism and revolutionary horizon as not in principle contradictory.

10. Borochov (1937; 1955) advocated the creation of a society in which Jews would be free to occupy basic productive functions, a Jewish homeland with socialist ends: in his conception of Marxist Zionism, proletarian solidarity by Jewish and Arab working classes would facilitate the creation of multinational communism in Palestine. On Marxist Zionism, see Novack (1969), Mintz (1976), Gutwein (1989), Peled (1995), and Sternhell (1997).

11. Douglas Moggach (2017) provides a succinct summary of Bauer's position on the Jewish question: at question was "whether the explicitly Christian state of Prussia could eliminate restrictions on Jewish participation in civil institutions. While liberals and republicans advocated [Jewish] emancipation, conservative opponents defended the state's exclusive [Christian] confessional allegiance. Bauer's interventions attacked the [Prussian] state for defending privilege, and claimed that it used religion as a mask for its interests in maintaining relations of subordination; but he also criticized Jews and their supporters for claiming freedom on the basis of a particular religious identity … [For Bauer,] Christianity demonstrated a historically higher degree of consciousness, since it cancelled the externality of the deity. But this was not a unilateral progress upon Judaism, because Christianity, and especially Protestantism, generalized alienation to encompass all aspects of life. The superiority of Christianity consisted in its radical negativity, making requisite a transition to a new and higher form of ethical life."

12. We could also add Shlomo Sand's name to this list. He is the best known post-Zionist among Anglophone Marxists thanks to the publication of a trio of his books by Verso (Sand 2010; 2012; 2017). Sand continues to produce post-Zionist works after the genre has been declared dead (Pappé has written its history). Though his books are not Marxist, in *Twilight of History* Sand (2017, xx) claims that his earliest motivation for writing history—the epistemological perspective at the start of his career—was "Marxist" and "materialist." By our reading, Sand's post-Zionism offers a critical, relativist historiography of Zionism.

13. An antitotalizing post-Zionism becomes more visible only circa 2000: for example, in some writings of Gadi Algazi (2006) or more prominently those of Tamar Berger (1998).

We on the left tend to treat early twentieth-century Zionism as the main culprit in instituting the oppression of Palestinians. However, without detracting from Zionist responsibility, we should also recall the historical role of the British, who pushed for the restructuring of Palestinian society along capitalist lines. The Zionists were degraded to the status of self-deluded watchdogs for the British Empire. A contemporary example is even more troubling: we tend to think of Israeli settlers in the West Bank as wrongdoers, as the main opposition to Palestinian emancipation. But as Gutwein (2001) argues, the growth of the settlements is the result of the neoliberalization of the Israeli economy. The Israeli settlers are in this view also subaltern, victims of state and capitalist exploitation. The ethical conundrums thus produced should not simply lead us to turn the problem into its own solution, arguing that everyone is both a victim and a perpetrator under capitalism and ergo there is no way out of the horror. Rather, it should propel us beyond abstract bourgeois ethics to explore the material contradictions of capitalism that give rise to these surface injustices.

14. Then and now, we would add.
15. We will return to the historical role of post-Zionism, and to the difference between it and a Marxist position on Israel/Palestine today, below.
16. The West Bank Israeli settlement population soared not after the occupation of the area in 1967 but in the late 1980s.
17. Noam Chomsky often implies that Israel's disastrous fate was sealed in the 1970s (Chomsky and Pappé 2014, 70–6; see also Chomsky 1999). Chomsky's point is that the prospect for producing something like a socialist society in which Jews and Arabs live together was destroyed by several overlapping events in the 1970s, which have (as both cause and effect) pulled the center of gravity in state and society ever farther to the right. These events include the persistent attempt to expand Israeli territory; the raising of Israel's "security" to the organizing principal of the state; the consolidation of neoliberalism as de facto economic policy for the entire world; and (after 1979) the double fragmentation of political Islam, igniting conflict between Sunni and Shia that has since only spiraled outward (with particularly negative effects for any hope of positive political influence from a unified Islamic world).
18. See also our interview with Chomsky (Nir and Wainwright 2018) in this issue of *Rethinking Marxism* and Pappé's (2014, 70, 74, 86, 97, 101, 119, 140, 160, 170, 185–6, 194, 212, 260-2, 265) references to class, Marx, and socialism in *The Idea of Israel* .
19. One could go further back, to 1917. Although nothing prior to 1948 determined the fate of Israel and Palestine, two nearly simultaneous events in 1917 shaped the future in fundamental respects: the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution (28 October 1917) and the Balfour Declaration (2 November 1917). The latter provided international legitimacy for Zionist colonization in Palestine. The implications of the Russian Revolution are more complex (too complex to be analyzed here). Lenin elevated the principle of national self-determination (see Lenin 1968) and, particularly after World War II, the USSR supported anti-imperial struggles in many colonized societies. Ironically, the global sweep of postwar decolonization coincided with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. One reason is that the United States came to support the creation of Israel; the presence of a well-articulated socialist Zionist position may have helped inoculate USSR opposition. At any rate, the USSR was never particularly useful to the Palestinian cause. Indeed, by the 1950s the USSR came to also support Israel on communist grounds. By the start of the First Intifada in December 1987, when the Palestinian struggle to overcome Israeli occupation reached a critical stage, the USSR was too weak to confront or counteract U.S./Israeli power in the region, and by the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000, the USSR was gone. Today, though Palestinian self-determination is a cause célèbre for the international Left, the movement is at a nadir. In sum, Marxism and Palestine have been out of sync for a century.
20. As Aijaz Ahmad (1992, 159–220) argued, Said's (1978) separation of Orientalist discourse from historical and material processes confused superstructure (Orientalism) and infrastructure (imperialist capitalism).
21. Even when post-Zionist critics write scathing critiques of the 1990s peace process, they do it in the name of a more equitable peace arrangement than that discussed in the actually existing peace process rather than to eschew the goal of peace altogether. This is the truth of Edward Said's (1996) *Peace and Its Discontents* , dedicated to a "champion of Peace and Justice" even as it offers its readers a damning critique of the peace process. The same is true of Tanya Reinhardt's (2006) *Roadmap to Nowhere* , which exposes the gaps between the offered Israeli concessions, their representation in the Israeli media, and what would be a fair resolution.
22. An argument elaborated more fully by Nir (2018).
23. This claim is also made by Fredric Jameson (2018) and is implicitly rejected by Chomsky in our interview with him (Nir and Wainwright 2018).

“There Are Always Grounds for Seeking a World That Is More Free and More Just”: An Interview with Noam Chomsky on Israel, Palestine, and Zionism

Noam Chomsky, Joel Wainwright and Oded Nir

In this dialogue, Joel Wainwright and Oded Nir interview one of the most influential commentators on Israel and Palestine, Noam Chomsky. Their wide-ranging discussion examines key controversies surrounding the issue: Israeli aggression, the paradigms for potential solutions to the conflict, early Zionism, the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign, and the analogy between Israel/Palestine to apartheid South Africa.

JOEL WAINWRIGHT AND ODED NIR : Let’s start with the headlines. What are your thoughts on President Trump’s announcement about moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem?

NOAM CHOMSKY : It is important to bear in mind that Trump is guided by three related principles: (1) Me; (2) keep My passionate base in line; (3) keep attention focused on Me and My antics while the Ryan-McConnell wrecking crew use this rare opportunity to implement the most savage of Republican policies, loyally serving their constituency of extreme wealth and corporate power while dismantling the objectionable parts of government—that is, those that serve the interests of the “underlying population” (Veblen’s evocative term).

The effects on the world, or future generations, are a marginal annoyance.

The Jerusalem announcements served all three purposes. The base in this case is rich Jewish donors and Christian Evangelicals, the main popular base of support for the reigning right-wing Zionism. And it is important to bear in mind that “Evangelicals” now include what one traditional Evangelical Christian commentator calls “Fox Evangelicals,” referring to Murdoch’s ultraright Fox News: a cover term for racist ultranationalists who adopt the Evangelical label—not the first resort to the label for purely cynical motives.

To the extent that there was any geopolitical thinking behind it, the move might contribute to the project of creating a regional bloc, backed by the U.S. and promoting U.S. power interests in the Middle East, confronting Iran’s growing influence. The bloc, which consists of the reactionary dictatorships of the Arab world and Israel, has been forming for some time, if only tacitly. It might be remembered, for example, that Israel performed a great service to both the U.S. and its close ally Saudi Arabia in 1967 by smashing Egypt and Syria, centers of secular Arab nationalism that were in direct conflict with the leader of radical Islamism, Saudi Arabia. Traditionally, like Britain before it, the U.S. has tended to support radical Islamism in opposition to secular nationalism, considered a greater threat to Western imperial dominance. The same happened in 1970, at the time of Black September, when Israel mobilized forces to deter Syrian moves to protect Palestinians being slaughtered in Jordan.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : We’ve heard you tell a joke that, whenever you need to give a title for a talk a year or more in advance, you can also reuse “The Present Crisis in the Middle East.” [1] How would you describe the present conjuncture? What is the role of the present crisis in Israel/Palestine in shaping this conjuncture?

CHOMSKY : What is a crisis is in the eye of the beholder. For Palestinians, the crisis is serious

indeed: national survival is at stake. The same is true, in somewhat different ways, for Kurds. For the U.S. and Israel, the crisis is the spread of Iranian influence, in part a gift of the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which undermined Iran's enemies.

Palestinians pose problems for the U.S.-led project. Palestinians have no power, hence no rights in accord with the calculus of imperial strategy. In fact, they have negative rights: their stubborn insistence on existing—their *sumud* , in Palestinian terms—is a constant irritant, stirring up bitterness and concern among the populations that must be kept under control for imperial power interests to be fostered.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : In your youth, you were exposed to and influenced by radical interpretations of Zionism—ideas that are distant or even incomprehensible to many people today. Could you describe your early exposure to Zionist ideas? What were the major points of debate?

CHOMSKY : Pre-1948, part of the Zionist movement was strongly opposed to a Jewish state, favoring some kind of binationalist arrangement. On the left, the goal was Arab-Jewish working-class cooperation to build a socialist Palestine based on cooperatives and worker self-management. Those were the tendencies to which I was attracted; more specifically, Kalvarisky's *League for Arab-Jewish Cooperation* . [2] I had contacts with Hashomer Hatzair, which had somewhat similar conceptions, but I could never join because they were torn between Trotskyist and Stalinist tendencies and from early on I had been sympathetic to the critique of Leninism from the left. From my midteens I was strongly influenced by the thinking of Zellig Harris, who had a powerful influence on a great many young people, understandably, because of his character, insights, and understanding. [3] In his circles, including me, November 29, 1947, the date of the UN partition resolution, was a day of mourning for dashed hopes—hopes that seemed more realistic in the general atmosphere of the times than they may today.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : In retrospect, was there ever a social and political basis for a revolutionary Zionism, one that might have realized its socialist and radical potential?

CHOMSKY : That's one part of a far broader question. The Depression and the war fostered a worldwide wave of radical democracy, inspiring powerful popular forces demanding deep-seated social change. The Western victors, the U.S. and Britain, recognized this to be a major threat to traditional class rule. Their earliest actions to contain the threat of democracy began when they initiated their peripheral support for the Russian war against Nazism, first in North Africa, then in Italy and Greece. A high priority of the U.S.-UK advance was to restore traditional ruling structures, including fascist collaborators, while dispersing the antifascist resistance and dismantling structures of popular governance of economic and political institutions that resistance movements had been constructing, particularly in Northern Italy. This is a core part of the history of the latter part of the European war and the postwar years in Western-occupied Europe and Japan. The influential statesman George Kennan, regarded as something of a dove, even called for "walling off" Eastern Germany from the West to curb the infection of dangerous ideas of labor power.

It's in this general context that the question of radical potential in Palestine arises. In isolation, the prospects were very dim. In the broader context, it was unclear. It took some years and substantial violence and subversion before the democratizing tendencies were suppressed and traditional domination reestablished. A social-democratic residue remained during the great

postwar growth period, since then being systematically reversed under the neoliberal regression of the past generation, which is systematically eroding functioning democracy and the subversive idea that people might have rights apart from what they can obtain in the carefully structured "market." Israel has participated fully in this regression.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : If so, what led to the failure of this movement? And if you were to engage in historical speculation, what do you think they could have done differently to succeed?

CHOMSKY : It's doubtless possible to think up better tactics and ideas, but I doubt that it would have made much difference in the context I just described, and by the time the state was declared [in 1948] and the internal conflict took off, there was little hope.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : How did the ideological contours of Zionism change after the creation of the state of Israel?

CHOMSKY : Zionism moved in the predictable direction: nationalist fervor, internal repression, state terror, and erosion of authentic socialist and other humanistic ideals and practices.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : You have claimed that the present state of affairs was effectively caused by strategic decisions made by Israel in the early 1970s (1971, specifically). [4] What in your view was so decisive about the early 1970s? Why did these changes occur, or what led Israel's leadership to make these fateful decisions?

CHOMSKY After the '67 war, Egypt—first under Nasser, then more explicitly under Sadat—moved towards political settlement. At the same time, Israel began its systematic efforts to construct a Greater Israel in the occupied territories, and at the time in the Sinai, where the Golda Meir government was preparing major settlement programs. Plainly these goals were in conflict. The confrontation came to a head in February 1971, in the course of the Gunnar Jarring negotiations, when Sadat offered Israel a full peace treaty in return for withdrawal from the Sinai (he referred to the occupied territories, but it was clear to all that he was really concerned about the Egyptian Sinai). That would have enormously increased Israel's security. Israel's Labour cabinet considered the offer but rejected it, choosing expansion over security: a fateful decision, adhered to with little deviation since.

Sadat tried in many ways to pursue his objective of political settlement, even expelling the Russians and inviting the U.S. in, but to no avail. Henry Kissinger meanwhile had managed to replace his rival, the more conciliatory William Rogers. Kissinger kept to his doctrine of "stalemate": no diplomacy, just force. During those euphoric days—eloquently captured in an important book by Israeli journalist Amnon Kapeliouk (1975), *Lo Mehdal* (Not by omission)—it seemed that in the arena of force and violence, Israeli dominance was overwhelming.

Israeli-U.S. rejectionism led finally to the '73 war, a near disaster for Israel. That convinced Kissinger that the Arabs could not simply be dismissed, and he began his well-known diplomatic maneuvers to try to restore U.S. and Israeli dominance after the debacle, for which he shared responsibility; Israel meanwhile remained adamant.

Matters came to a head again in January 1976 when the three Arab "confrontation states"—Egypt, Syria, Jordan—brought a resolution to the UN Security Council calling for a two-state settlement on the internationally recognized border (the cease-fire "green line"), with guarantees for the right of each state, Israel and the new Palestinian state, to exist in peace and security

within secure and recognized borders. Israel was furious. It refused to attend the session, instead gratuitously bombing Lebanon, killing fifty people, presumably as a show of defiance towards the hated UN. The U.S. vetoed the resolution. A U.S. veto is typically a double veto: the events are also vetoed from history. Subsequent history is much the same, as we see clearly when convenient illusions are swept aside.

The proposal of the three Arab states has since become an overwhelming international consensus, excluding the U.S. and Israel, illustrated in repeated UN resolutions and in practice.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Is there any basis to speculate on the relationship between these events in the early 1970s and the global economic crisis of that era? Can we define any causal relationships, for instance, between the consolidation of neoliberalism as the de facto global strategy of the capitalist class and these changes in Israel and Palestine (or the Middle East more generally)?

CHOMSKY : I don't think there was a significant connection.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : In *On Palestine* , you agree with Pappé that Zionism is, in the final analysis, a settler-colonial movement. [5] But in other parts you mention other Zionisms: the antistate Zionism, or Ahad Ha'am's cultural Zionism. How can we square the two claims? If the post-Zionist definition of Zionism as a settler-colonial movement is a politically useful reductive view of it, can we not think of other such reductions, ones that can be even more potentially useful?

CHOMSKY : Binationalist and cultural Zionist approaches would not have changed the fact that (at the time mostly) European Jews were coming to Arab Palestine, but they could have led to integration and cooperation, perhaps along the lines I mentioned earlier. The outcome of conflicting aspirations was not settled in the prestate years.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Israel has long displayed expansionary practices—the settlements—that jeopardize the security of its citizens and bring international condemnation. Many have speculated on why Israel would adopt such policies; the answers usually hinge on ideology. Is there an economic dimension, too? Could it be argued that Israel's expansion is partly driven by economic contradictions: the settlements as a convenient solution for housing poor Israelis that cannot afford to live within the "green line" border? Are such assessments important or useful for the Left?

CHOMSKY : A good answer to the question was given in 1972 by General Ezer Weizmann (quoted in Chomsky 1983, 100), later President, considered to be a dove in the Israeli spectrum. He explained that Israel could indeed reach a political settlement, of course improving security, but that would mean that Israel would not then "exist according to the scale, spirit, and quality she now embodies." [6]

Over time, the expansionist project has been adapted to many purposes, particularly after Shimon Peres initiated the programs of settlement deep in Palestinian territory, again favoring expansion over security, in the standard pattern. Much of the settlement project consists, basically, of well-subsidized housing in pleasant suburbs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, easily accessible through the vast infrastructure development (for Jewish settlers, not the indigenous population). Not just housing for poor Israelis but also pleasant villas for the well-to-do.

Resources of the West Bank have also been exploited by Israel. All of this is in gross violation of international law, as has been determined by the highest international authorities. But such trivia are easily dismissed as long as U.S. rejectionism prevails, and the U.S. continues to provide lavish military, economic, and diplomatic support for Israeli actions.

Importantly, all of this is backed by massive ideological support by American media and intellectuals generally. That has been a particularly striking phenomenon since the 1967 war, when Israel demonstrated its military prowess, enthralling the intellectual community, which previously had not had much concern with Israel.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : We find it remarkable that there are practically no books on Marxism and Israel (or Zionism) in English. There are plenty of works by Marxist critics of Israel, but these typically focus exclusively on the colonization of Palestine. There is little to no analysis of class politics, political economy, labor and relations of production, the interrelationship between the political and economic balance of forces over time, and so on. To your mind, what explains this absence of Marxist analyses today?

CHOMSKY : Or more generally, how many Marxist professors are there in U.S. universities? Ideological purity is zealously guarded in free societies.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : In your recent book with Ilan Pappé, Pappé argues for the need for a socialist politics:

> The third [absence within leftist advocacy today] is the absence of any socialist discourse from the conversation about Palestine. This absence is one of the main reasons the so-called peace camp in Israel (and the same is true regarding the lobbyists on J Street in the United States) has no issue with neo-liberalism. This worldview is not opposed to Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied territories but has no position on the harsh economic and social oppression that does not distinguish between a West Bank inhabitant and an Israeli citizen … The absence of this angle also weakens our ability to understand the Oslo Accords, the creation of the PA, projects such as People to People, and the maintenance of the occupation by EU and USAID money as neoliberal projects. Economic elites supported the "peace process" because it was perceived to lead to an economic bonanza. [7]

Do you concur with Pappé's analysis?

CHOMSKY : I certainly join him in his critique of neoliberal projects and advocacy of socialist discourse. But I don't think that these are crucial factors in the "peace non-process." In contrast, Israel's U.S.-backed construction of a Greater Israel is a real process, one with roots going back to the early days of the Zionist enterprise.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : You have noted that the widely used metaphor of apartheid—the parallel between Israel and South Africa—fails on two grounds. On one hand, the support of Cuba meant that black South Africans were provided external support as well as an alternative basis for organizing postapartheid society. On the other, Israeli capital does not depend upon Palestinian labor in anything like the manner that white South African capital depended upon black South African labor. As you put it in your discussion with Pappé: "There was a crucial class issue [in South Africa]. It was possible to reach a settlement in South Africa … which is impossible in Israel. The final settlement was, let's keep the socio-economic system and have some Black faces in the limousines. You cannot do that in Israel." Could you elaborate?

CHOMSKY : Those are important issues, but the more basic point is simply stated. Within Israel, there is serious repression of the rights of Palestinian citizens, but it is not at the level of the

apartheid regime. In the occupied territories, however, the situation is much worse than apartheid: South African whites needed the black population and therefore made some effort to sustain them, even seeking recognition for the Bantustans. Israel, in contrast, wants to get rid of the Palestinians, and is intent on making their lives impossible in the hope that most will go away and leave the country to its "rightful owners," fulfilling the promises of the Lord. A standard joke among secular Zionists in the early years was that "I don't believe in God, but He promised us the Land of Israel."

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Pappé conceded your argument, remarking that there "already [is] a Palestinian bourgeoisie inside Israel," but he did not explain. By our understanding, Pappé means that the would-be Palestinian bourgeoisie that would "win" from a peace settlement of the type imagined in the 1990s has already "won" whatever it was going to "win." Thus, we cannot expect national bourgeois leadership for Palestinians analogous to the role played by the ANC (African National Congress) in South Africa. Is this fair to say?

CHOMSKY : It's an important observation, but not the basic reason why the analogy to apartheid is misleading, in my opinion. Rather, the reason is as just indicated. Independently, the Palestinian bourgeoisie could gain considerably by ending the occupation and the internal repression.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Regardless of how we answer the previous question, one implication of this line of reasoning is that, from a Marxist perspective, the ANC model of resistance to apartheid is doubly limited for the cause of Palestinian liberation: it does not really fit (because of the economic and political dimension), and given how South Africa has changed in the past quarter century, it is hardly a reassuring blueprint. Yet what remains crucial is the strategy of international delegitimization of Israel. [8] How concerned are elites in Israel by international delegitimization? Is the most crucial point the need for international delegitimization of U.S. support for Israel?

CHOMSKY : Israelis, including elites, are deeply concerned about international delegitimization, for many reasons, and the Israeli government is making major efforts to confront the threat. Israeli elites are also well aware that Israel is losing support among sectors of the world population who have some concern for liberal values. That's one reason why Israel is looking East for support, seeking alliances with China, Singapore, and India, a particularly natural ally in its current ultranationalist and anti-Muslim phase.

The reasons for this shift in orientation are outlined by Mark Heller (quoted in Ferziger 2016), principal research associate at Tel Aviv's Institute for National Security Studies. "Over the long term," he explains, "there are problems for Israel in its relations with Western Europe and with the U.S., while in contrast," the important Asian countries "don't seem to indicate much interest about how Israel gets along with the Palestinians, Arabs, or anyone else." In short, China, India, Singapore, and other favored allies are less committed to the kinds of liberal and humane concerns that sometimes influence Western policy and are unlikely to object to Israel's illegal expansion and repression.

Heller is right to mention the U.S. along with Western Europe. The U.S., of course, has been the main supporter of Israeli repression, violence, and illegal expansion, and in this and other ways has posed the primary international barrier to the international consensus on a two-state settlement. But that stand is not graven in stone. In the U.S., attitudes are shifting, in much the way Heller describes, a matter of deep concern to Israeli planners.

Not long ago Israel had very powerful support from liberal Americans, so much so that dissidence was scarcely tolerated. It wasn't long ago that I had to have police protection at major universities, including my own, if I criticized Israeli policies in ways that are much less controversial now, and advocated the international consensus as a short-term step towards a just solution. That's changed. Liberal America is becoming much more critical of Israeli policies and of the rightward shift within Israel.

Israel's main basis of support in the U.S. now is among Christian Evangelicals—primarily the cynical Fox Evangelicals and more reactionary sectors generally. Support among young Jews has also significantly declined. These changes have been particularly striking after recent atrocities, such as the vicious and brutal Cast Lead operation in Gaza, and they might lead to changes in policy towards Israel.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : In recent years many activists for justice in Palestine have placed great emphasis on BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions). You have criticized this strategy as misguided. [9] As we understand your position, the basic problem is that a boycott of Israeli universities and firms is unlikely to change the concrete circumstances facing Palestinians. Are there ways that the BDS strategy could be refocused and refined to bring about genuine results for Palestinians?

CHOMSKY : That's not quite accurate. As the cited article makes clear and explicit, I've been supporting and indeed directly engaged in BDS efforts since well before the "BDS movement" was founded in 2005, and continue to support these efforts. The article does discuss some truisms in activist circles: in particular, that "those who are sincerely dedicated to the Palestinian cause should avoid illusion and myth, and think carefully about the tactics they choose and the course they follow." It then discusses the tactics that have been successful since BDS efforts were initiated by Uri Avneri's Gush Shalom in 1997, and those that have failed, and why. [10]

The reasons discussed are not primarily those that you mention. The successful tactics are those that focus on the occupation and on the support for the occupation by Western multinationals: the initiatives of the Presbyterian Church, for example. These tactics can gain broad support and also have a crucial educational function, serving as a basis for successful organizing and activism for policy changes. Other efforts, such as academic boycott, are often harmful to the victims, eliciting a backlash that overwhelms the efforts, diverting attention from Israeli crimes to irrelevant issues of academic freedom, and the like, and raising obvious questions of hypocrisy: why not boycott American universities, since U.S. crimes vastly exceed those of Israel? Such discussions about tactical choices and their consequences for the victims are normal and essential in serious activist movements.

It is rather curious that the "BDS movement"—to be distinguished from those engaged in BDS activism—often seems to interpret normal debate about choice of tactics and effects on victims as an illegitimate departure from orthodoxy. Not helpful to the victims, to say the least.

Pursuit of the successful tactics, focusing on the occupation, can proceed much further: for example, to efforts to enforce the Leahy Amendment that bars military support for forces engaged in systematic human rights violations, surely applicable to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). And indeed, arms embargo on Israel has been advocated by leading human rights organizations, including Amnesty International. Even a modest campaign for such objectives could have significant impact on U.S. and Israeli policies. And there are many more examples.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Many activists, ourselves included, advocated for the two-state solution

in the 1990s. But the past two decades have seen severe attacks on Palestine, resulting in deep losses and divisions of Palestinian territory; today, discussion of “two states” often feels like pious sloganeering (not least when it comes from the mouths of those who are causing the damage). Against this, you have said that there is no real alternative to building a Palestinian state. [11] Given our distance from both potential forms of potential resolution to the present crisis —a genuine “two-state solution” and a just “binational nation-state”—is there any real basis for one side or the other in the debate to claim the “realist” position? Shouldn’t the debate on the left about a one-state versus two-state solution be carried out on the basis of some other principle than proximity?

CHOMSKY : It’s true that this is the way the issues are generally formulated, on all sides. But the framework is fundamentally in error, and formulating the issues this way is a great gift to Israeli expansionists. That’s important to understand.

The debate, so formulated, crucially omits a third option: not one state or two states but creation of a Greater Israel that will incorporate whatever is of value to Israel in the West Bank, leaving Palestinians in unviable fragmented cantons, with Gaza rotting in misery. That third option is not abstract: it is the policy that is actually being implemented. The real choice is between Greater Israel and the international consensus on a two-state settlement that Israel and the U.S. have been blocking ever since it was formally presented at the Security Council in 1976.

It is also important to recognize another point, often ignored. It is crucially important, and second nature for activists, to distinguish between proposal and authentic advocacy. We can propose that all nations live in peace, but that pleasant gesture rises to advocacy only when we sketch a realistic path from here to there. Proposing one state is a meaningless gesture unless it rises to advocacy. There is only one proposal on the table that meets that condition: begin with the international consensus, then move on as circumstances permit to further integration, perhaps a form of federalism, perhaps beyond. And there is no reason to stop there. We need not worship the boundaries imposed by imperial force. Further integration in some regional arrangement is a prospect that can be seriously envisioned—but only if we accept the demands of true advocacy.

Calling for one state now is pretty much an empty gesture. If meaningful support ever developed, Israel would surely use all the means at its disposal—and they are ominous—to refuse to go out of existence in favor of a state with a Jewish minority. Those seriously concerned with Palestinian rights, therefore, will address the realistic alternatives: Greater Israel or two states with prospects for moving on. Proposal without advocacy of one state simply diverts attention from what is actually happening, thus lending indirect support to the Greater Israel project that has been underway since the ‘67 war.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Some Zionist movements, such as the Young Guard, had concluded in the 1930s that Jewish capitalist nation building was inevitable in Palestine. Revolution will only take place after the state is already established, and revolution must happen—because the capitalist project will inevitably fail to fulfill its emancipatory promises. We are accustomed to criticizing such “stage-ist” approaches, since they relegate justice or revolution to some later phase. But we could, instead, take up this historical schema, arguing that we have finally now seen the ultimate failure of the state of Israel to fulfill its promises, and that it is now time for some version of revolution. Are there any grounds for such a recuperation of revolutionary Zionism?

CHOMSKY : There are always grounds, everywhere, for seeking a world that is more free and

more just, without known limits.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : You suggest that we see the two-state solution not as the final horizon of our politics but as a possible phase of transition to a more just society. Couldn't we draw an analogy between your analysis and the Zionist Young Guard's positing of "stages" to revolution (mentioned in an earlier question)? It is challenging to grasp a vision of two states—Israeli and Palestinian—as a transition phase, as you suggest. How would our way of narrating Israel and Zionism's past and present need to change to clarify this vision?

CHOMSKY : I don't think there's much of an analogy. The basic picture seems to me pretty straightforward, as sketched above. One possible course, as already outlined, is this: two states; lessening of tensions; natural increases in cultural, commercial, and other interactions; recognition of the benefits of closer integration; moves towards federalism, and beyond; erosion of imperial borders; regional integration, and maybe beyond.

WAINWRIGHT AND NIR : Let us conclude on a utopian note. Are there any bases for a more radical, collective transformation?

CHOMSKY : I can only repeat what I said above: There are always grounds, everywhere, for seeking a world that is more free and more just, without known limits.

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1. See, e.g. Noam Chomsky's (1999, ix) preface to the updated edition of *The Fateful Triangle* .
2. See Barsky (1998, 75).
3. For a biography of Harris, see Barsky (2011).
4. See Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 71–2).
5. See, e.g., Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 55–6).
6. The original publication was in *Ha'aretz* , 29 March 1972.
7. Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 45).
8. Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 115).
9. See Chomsky (2014); cf., Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 82–5, 90–5).
10. Uri Avneri (1923-2018) was a significant figure in the Israeli left. Publisher of Haolam Hazeh magazine and twice elected member of the Knesset, Avneri was a founding member of Gush Shalom, or Peace Bloc.
11. See, e.g., Chomsky and Pappé (2017, 108–13).

Nation and Class: Generations of Palestinian Liberation

Raja Khalidi

After a century of confrontation with Zionist settler colonialism, the triumph of capitalism and unfettered marketization without justice and national rights for Palestine appears an irresistible and assured process. The Palestinian ruling class and Arab, international, and Israeli forces have sustained belief in a peace process that for a generation has persuaded or coerced Palestinians living in exile and within Israeli colonial dominion to delay or abandon the collective national goals of liberation, independence, and return. The market promises but can hardly deliver individual prosperity, quality services, and civic rights. But in the standoff between the interests of nation and of class, material conditions are being created for a generation of Palestinian liberation that may challenge settler-colonial exclusion and domination. A redefined notion of liberation would demand the people's systematically denied social, economic, and political rights, which the people's own political and economic leadership cannot indefinitely subordinate to a lost national struggle.

> The national state is the rule and the "norm" of capitalism; the multi-national state represents backwardness, or is an exception. From the standpoint of national relations, the best conditions for the development of capitalism are undoubtedly provided by the national state. This … means that Marxists cannot lose sight of the powerful *economic* factors that give rise to the urge to create national states. It means that "self-determination of nations" in the Marxists' Programme *cannot* , from a historico-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state.
>
> —Vladimir I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination"

The Marxist conception of the significance of national self-determination entails a positive relation with the material economic and social conditions for the emancipation of the working classes and the emergence of socialism. The former advances—is even a prerequisite for—the latter. Class formation can proceed naturally according to the laws of history in the context of nation-states. Hence, Marxists have generally dismissed the reactionary, chauvinist, or bourgeois dimensions of nationalism as secondary to the liberating force of national independence for colonized peoples. In many anticolonial situations, this ideological commitment entailed a national unity between working, middle, and bourgeois classes that superseded underlying economic and social contradictions between them and postponed social struggles (of workers, peasants, women, youth, and students). Subsequently, as newly independent nations attempted to redress the uneven development they suffered under colonial rule, and in the international economy since, the unity of the nation became a rallying cry for the continued rule of liberation-era leaderships and elites. Only with the eventual discrediting of ageing, occasionally benevolent autocrats and the postcolonial regimes that perpetuated their rule have social and class conflict become as commonplace in the South as in the advanced industrialized countries of the North. In that sense at least, the Marxist vision of national self-determination as a necessary stage on the path to addressing, if not resolving, socioeconomic inequality and injustice has been vindicated.

In the Palestinian context, the promise of national liberation has spanned a century of Palestinian efforts at achieving a self-determination that seems more incredible with every passing year. Here, the relation between the imperatives of national and social liberation is neither complementary nor positive but rather appears perverse. During a century of Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian/Egyptian, and now Israeli rule, the relation between class formation and nation building has repeatedly been disrupted by war, displacement, exile, and continued colonial rule. Nevertheless, a Palestinian capitalist market economy has been built with vigor for

the past twenty-five years in the West Bank and Gaza, and class formation in Palestine has taken root in a defined space. This process has been shepherded by a ruling regime dominated by the national liberation movement that appears further from realizing its raison d'être than ever and yet is increasingly allied with national capital interests. The appeal to Palestinian class unity necessary to achieving the national mission has remained a persuasive justification for glossing over the rough realities of impoverishment and exclusion. These realities have been created inevitably through the process of capital accumulation and the uneven development of a national economy still under settler-colonial oppression.

This essay does not seek to assess the validity of Marxist theory regarding the place of national liberation in class revolution. Nor do I propose to evaluate whether or how a commitment to the Palestinian national struggle has advanced or retarded the building of a capitalist market economy and the formation of social classes either allied with or in opposition to state power. This essay does not tackle ideological struggle or social transformation under neoliberalism. Rather, it charts the tradeoff between the causes and advocacy of national and social liberation at different stages of Palestinian history, overshadowed by the steady advance of market capitalism under settler colonialism.

My analysis focuses on the positioning and repositioning over the years by the main protagonists, especially the Marxist Left, regarding the primacy of the national struggle over the social. This has created a quasi-national state regime that has allowed for the embracing of neoliberal economics in Palestine with a corrosive impact on potential perspectives for national liberation. I question whether the process of capital accumulation and class formation has reached a stage whereby denial of national self-determination is no longer the primary contradiction for the Palestinian masses and if instead social justice and economic equality are indeed coming to define the national agenda.

Nation and Class in the Palestinian Context

Well into its sixth decade, the struggle for Palestinian national liberation is at risk of redundancy, if not at the end of its road (Agha and Khalidi 2017). Since it erupted in the 1960s, the Palestinian national movement has morphed from an armed struggle with decolonization of all Palestine in its crosshairs to a diplomatic offensive with independence in only 22 percent of that territory as its goal. Most recently, the Palestinian national project has reformed into a (nonsovereign) state-like entity (the Palestinian National Authority, or PNA) that is preoccupied with safeguarding the achievements of the ruling of national-liberation veterans, national capitalists, and a burgeoning middle class.

The sheer weight of forces aligned against the cause of Palestinian national self-determination has never been so formidable. Zionist settler colonialism has reached all corners of Palestine, including the reduced area of the putative State of Palestine. [1] For all of Israel's successes in legitimizing its existence as an equal among nations, it is today perhaps more than ever viewed by mainstream public opinion as a serial violator of international law and an aggressive colonial power that insists on eternally oppressing another people. [2] However, Israel's global legitimacy is no longer confined to the West but now boasts alliances and arms deals with emerging powers such as India and China, who previously were wholly aligned with Palestine. Against this legitimacy the Palestinian movement's pan-Arab revolutionary wellspring has transformed into a regional scene fraught with mistrust, political intrigue, and the faltering mobilizing power of the Palestinian cause, especially in the past years' Arab civil wars.

One of the driving forces of the ideological transformation of the national-liberation movement that empowered the mainstream Fatah domination of the Palestinian political and institutional scene has been the influence of Palestinian Communists (and until the 1990s, the PLO's Soviet-bloc allies). Under the pressure of regional political power balances and the calculations of realpolitik, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) eventually redefined the original Palestinian national goal of the liberation of all Palestine and the establishment of a unitary, secular democratic state for Muslims, Christians, and Jews, as had been advocated by Fatah. Instead, the PLO began in 1974 its long march to acceptance of the partition concept of two states. It took another twenty years before this was explicitly spelled out in binding agreements and positions.

Compared to the pivotal role of the Palestinian Communist movement and ideology in that process, the influence of Marxist social ideology on Palestinian national politics has been less evident. Indeed, socialist politics, even social-justice politics, are today marginal in Palestinian discourse, political formation, and struggle. This primacy of the nation (redefined in today's Palestinian politics as a nonsovereign state) over the people (now so-called citizens) has been maintained through a social contract that assumes that the national leadership, through dedicating all resources to national liberation, could best defend the interests of the people. This formula is consistent with the examples of many decolonization struggles whereby all social forces were in solidarity for the cause of national liberation, with the fruits of social equality delayed until after independence (Prashad 2007).

However, during the hiatus of Palestinian armed struggle for national liberation that has ensued since the Oslo Accords of 1994 (broken in the Second Intifada of 2000 and the Gaza wars of 2009 and 2014), the market, capital, and free enterprise have not been idle. Indeed, as we enter the third decade of the political, institutional, and economic arrangements that were put in place by the Oslo Accords as an indefinite interim period before statehood, we see the flourishing of capital accumulation, marketization, privatization, financialization, and liberal trade. Meanwhile, masses of Palestinians both inside and outside Palestine flounder in poverty, unemployment, urban squalor, dispossession, environmental degradation, and general human indignity. Whether by design and collusion or by force of circumstance and skewed balance of power, in 2017 the functional tradeoff between more capital accumulation, commodity consumption, and class formation and less focus on the nation, on Palestine as a whole, and on politics could not be starker.

Causality is not the issue here. What is striking is the corollary between the twin processes of capitalist development and national failure, which seemingly challenges both theory and empirical experience. The national-liberation movement may have been able to persuasively lead a fragmented Palestinian people and to avoid delivering social gains at least until Oslo, if not throughout the reign of the founding father Yasser Arafat until 2005. However, the dead ending of the peace process and the regime's and its advocates' embracing of free-market economic and social values have strained the logic and credibility of that contract.

The process that has had perhaps the most insidious effect on the prospects for liberation in any form is the relentless advance of Palestinian capitalism with a liberal face. This advance has empowered the formation of distinct social forces whose material interests, with every new paycheck, housing loan, and consumer fad, appear less and less dependent on and concerned with a successful national liberation. This relationship is not a new constellation in the by now more than a century-long struggle over Palestine. The alliance and at times the contradiction between national capital and the national-liberation movement has seen its ebbs and flows ever

since the 1930s when the first Palestine-wide revolt against Zionism dashed the liberal expectations of the Palestinian nascent bourgeoisie and forced it into an uncomfortable second-fiddle position in national politics (see below).

When the modern Palestinian national-liberation movement launched its armed struggle in the early 1960s, the politics of the region and the world were in many ways much simpler and the options more limited than they have become half a century later. Those young middle-class professionals who emerged from refugee camps and exile to pioneer the twentieth-century Palestinian liberation movement may not have envisaged how deeply and extensively their bold move would contest ideologies and theories of revolution that had prevailed among dispersed Palestinians since the 1948 Nakba. The Palestinian resistance became the concern of regional and global powers and international public opinion, even challenging simplistic orientalist perceptions of Palestinian peasants and refugees. Fatah's first formulation, in the early 1960s, of core Palestinian national goals at once repudiated the pan-Arab nationalism to which Palestinians had been attached for decades, the partition (two-state) logic advocated by Arabic and Palestinian communism since the 1940s, and even the option of Ghandian nonviolent struggle. Certainly, there was no countenancing either an Israeli people or a Jewish right to national self-determination. In one fell swoop, Fatah and the Marxist and Arab nationalist factions that joined it in battle redefined the conventional wisdom that had held sway among the elites of the post-1948 era, whether radical-revolutionary, liberal-intellectual, or political.

To begin with, Palestine centrism trumped the politics of Arab national identity that saw the rise to state power of Nasserism in Egypt and Baathism in Syria and Iraq (Cobban 1984). Nationalism also challenged the adherence of many Palestinian intellectuals and popular movements to a Stalinist Marxism that had created Communist parties in every Arab country (including Palestine)—parties that continued in Israel and Jordan after 1948. [3] These ideological trends were soon revived and recast in the Palestinian movements, fronts, and organizations that came to constitute the PLO. But these factions remained subordinate to the mainstream Fatah movement, which espoused neither Arab nationalism nor socialism but instead a sole focus on liberating Palestine. At the same time, this newly energized national movement upheld the Arab nationalist position of rejecting the legitimacy of Jewish/Israeli national self-determination, which was seen as cloaking an aggressive, exclusivist settler-colonial essence of Zionism in the guise of a legitimate national solution (in Palestine) to the Jewish question (in Europe). Hence, at their birth, Fatah and the PLO refuted the long-held Communist (and Soviet) support of the partition of Palestine (and an eventual two-state solution), which had sealed the international position on Palestine since the UN partition resolution of 1947 (Dannreuther 1998). Meanwhile, the adoption of armed struggle placed the PLO firmly within the camp of numerous national-liberation movements in Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Chamberlin 2012).

So many upended beliefs and political forces in the space of a generation; so many battles fought in different places and spaces in Palestine and throughout the region. It is hence little wonder that the trajectory of the Palestinian national-liberation movement has spanned every imaginable form of resistance, ideology, power relations, and political alliance, shedding many of these along the way. But today the movement is reduced to seeking a liberation that entails much less ambitious goals, with less territory, population, and achievement of national rights than envisaged, or promised, by the historic leadership of the Palestinian people.

The last vestige of that national-liberation legacy governs today from Ramallah in the form of a placid PLO, rebaptized as the State of Palestine, presided over by a geriatric old guard while a still unknown successor regime waits in the wings. None of the core Palestinian national

demands have been achieved, and the hostility of the Israeli and U.S. governments to Palestinian self-determination is unprecedented since Oslo. However, the past few years have witnessed ongoing Palestinian confrontations with Israel: violent and nonviolent, clandestine and mass/popular. So however much the quality-of-life paradigm may have deterred organized resistance and created vested material interests in stability among many Palestinians, their cause endures, and it seems that the thirst for national self-determination is not yet quenched.

The Alliance between Nationalism and Capitalism: Theory and Palestinian Experience

This section explores how the conventional Marxist-Leninist assumptions about the primacy of the national question over the capital/labor contradiction has held up in the Palestinian case as well as in the class alliances that have been necessary to sustain those assumptions. I first recap the evolution of the main tenets of the concept of national determination from Marx to Lenin, bearing in mind their influence on the thinking of Communists and nationalists around the world ever since. [4] I then recap significant points in the history of the broad Palestinian nationalist movement in order to set the scene for a subsequent discussion on how Palestinian Communist and leftist tendencies have bridged the ideological and political space between nationalism and socialism. In doing so, I argue that Palestinian theorists of the necessity of resolving the national contradiction before it could be possible to tackle social and economic inequality may have been armed with the correct theory but bear a distinct share of the responsibility for Palestinian national and socioeconomic systemic failure.

As V. I. Lenin (1972, 400), the most influential theorist-practitioner of Marxism in the real world, stresses in an excerpt from his 1914 treatise (see the epigraph to this essay), the advancement (and eventual overthrow) of capitalism is best framed by nation-states, which generate “powerful economic factors” needed for class formation. Lenin’s polemical handling of the subject took place in the context of a fierce ideological debate with Luxemburg and Plekhanov in the Socialist International and with the breakup of the Russian Empire on the horizon along with the emergence of powerful nationalist sentiments throughout Europe. His argument presents a clear-cut, common sense logic derived from Karl Marx’s own thought, engaging the realities of the time as well as the political pragmatism of Bolshevik Communism.

Compared to his earlier work on Asia, which has been criticized as Eurocentric, Marx demonstrated his acknowledgment in his later period of the potentially revolutionary character of national self-determination, notwithstanding his own revulsion toward national chauvinism, populism, and the oriental despotism of Asian nation-states. By this time, Kevin Anderson (2010, 40) notes, “Marx was finding in colonial India something similar to capitalism’s forging of the working class. Thus, the very progress of colonialism was producing its gravediggers.”

Before this, Marx (1961, 335) had acknowledged that for Ireland, leaving the United Kingdom in favor of national self-determination was the only avenue to “hasten the social revolution” in England: “The national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment but the first condition of their own social emancipation.” Furthermore, Irish independence would permit for economic structural transformation and industrial development within Ireland:

> What the Irish need is: (1) Self-government and independence from England. (2) An agrarian revolution. With the best intentions in the world the English cannot accomplish this for them, but they can give them the legal means of accomplishing it for themselves. (3) Protective tariffs against England. Between 1783 and 1801 every branch of Irish

> industry flourished. The Union, which overthrew the protective tariffs established by the Irish Parliament, destroyed all industrial life in Ireland. (324)

Beyond the historical case of Ireland some 170 years ago (which rings uncannily similar to some of the common arguments for Palestinian national separation from Israel today), Micheal Lowy (1976, 85) outlines the implications of Marx's position in terms that have relevance when examining the choice between national or social revolution that the Palestinian people face:

> 1. only the national liberation of the oppressed nation enables national divisions and antagonisms to be overcome, and permits the working class of both nations to unite against their common enemy, the capitalists; 2. the oppression of another nation helps to reinforce the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie over workers in the oppressing nation: "Any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains"; 3. the emancipation of the oppressed nation weakens the economic, political, military and ideological bases of the dominating classes in the oppressor nation and this contributes to the revolutionary struggle of the working class of that nation.

In his 1914 treatise, Lenin (1972, 393) contended that politically united territories and a common language "are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism"—that is, for class formation and marketization of an economy. "Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied," Subsequent iterations and revisions of this basic understanding of national liberation stipulated an alliance of bourgeois and working-class patriots as a precursor to, if not generator of, the natural conditions for social revolution. This formula underpinned the contributions of subsequent generations of Marxist revolutionaries in struggles against colonialism and imperialism (Prashad 2007). Though this approach to struggle entailed often uneasy alliances between otherwise contradictory class forces, the basic model was replicated not simply out of adherence to some abstract ideological prescription but because it worked in real-world conditions. This concept of bourgeois nation-state as the incubator of socialist revolution was further elaborated by Stalinist and Maoist political thought in the subsequent fifty years and also framed the liberationist strategies of Castro and Guevara in Latin America, the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, and the Vietcong and other socialist movements in Asia. First secure the nation; then launch the social revolution.

The existence of a class of national bourgeoise that, in anticolonial confrontations, exhibited a patriotic or even progressive tendency may have been a construct of Marxist Third World liberationist ideology, but it was equally a necessary ally in the material world of the struggle with colonialism that Communists seeking power could not afford to ignore or antagonize. Such alliances proved over time to be the most reasonable vehicle for the mass mobilization needed to end colonial rule and establish independent nation-states where British, French, and other European powers had ruled for many years (Prashad 2007). However much such national fronts have been fraught with uncertainty, power imbalances, and generally strange bedfellows in different circumstances, they allowed for the preservation and consolidation of Communist or Marxist formations during the stage of national liberation and the positioning of their agendas for social liberation (after independence).

Palestine is no exception to this general formula, even from the earliest period of Palestinian national awakening and resistance to British Mandate rule and encroaching Jewish settlement framed by an expansive and exclusivist Zionist nationalism. Sherene Seikaly (2016) is the latest scholar to analyze this period and reveals how, from the 1930s, Palestinian "men of capital" began to form a distinct class identity defined by classical economic and market concepts and modern openness to technology and change. Yet they were equally tuned to social justice and national liberation, funding and supporting Palestinian resistance to Zionist settler colonialism in

a movement largely powered by the rural peasantry and a national leadership composed of traditional religious figures and notables. Alongside the traditional postfeudal, aristocratic, commercial, and white-collar elements of the Palestinian bourgeoisie-in-the-making, these new capitalists envisioned for their future nation the type of liberal, industrial, and financial Palestine that Israel actually became after 1948. By then, the Palestinian aspiration for imminent national independence and smooth capitalist development had been rudely dashed by the triumph of the Zionist movement and the defeat of the Arab forces that had tried to resist it.

This pre-1948 experience of the economic and social transformation of Palestine sowed the seeds of a natural coalition of different social forces united under the banner of national liberation. This national unity had crystallized by the 1960s in the form of the PLO even as class formation took a tortuous path in the abnormal conditions of the exile, impoverishment, dispossession, and geopolitical-legal segmentation of the Palestinian people (Smith 1986). This formation entailed the disruption and dispersion of those in situ links between class, capital, labor, and place that had begun to emerge before the Nakba. The bulk of the Palestinian people remaining within the area of historic Palestine ruled by Israel, Jordan, and Egypt from 1948–67 were the poorer segments of the rural peasantry and urban workers along with the middle- and small-merchant class. Much of Palestine's capital (industrial, real estate, financial, and commercial), estimated at $147 billion in 1984 prices, had either been destroyed or expropriated by Israel (Hadawi and Kubursi 1988).

Whatever was moveable to relative safety in neighboring Arab countries became the primary investments of those who could reestablish businesses, banks, or professions in exile while gradually beginning to reaccumulate capital. The marginalized Palestinian territories not under Israeli rule were either natural resource poor and predominantly rural (the West Bank) or overburdened with the influx of a refugee population (the Gaza Strip; Abed 1988). Palestinians in Israel were overwhelmingly composed of the rural peasantry and lived under military rule until the mid 1960s. So, for the first decades after 1948, there was little material basis for a Palestinian class-formation process to resume on any stable trajectory, especially as 1967 created yet another break in time and a reconfiguration of Palestinian capital, society, and political power.

The new Palestinian business and capitalist entrepreneurial classes assumed positions of economic influence in Arab host countries where they had settled after 1948, especially Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt (Smith 1986). Many became significant players in the building of modern states and oil economies in the Arab Gulf countries as the need for a skilled, mobile, and educated workforce grew. For those Palestinians in exile who aspired to and organized for return and liberation, the developmental state models proclaimed by the different champions of Arab socialism seemed politically viable and socially just in the postcolonial Arab context, and also viable as demonstrated by the parallel experiences of many countries in the developing world. The preeminent Palestinian economist of that generation, Yusif Sayigh (1961), emphasized the potential for such a role for the newly independent Arab socialist states in one of his earliest contributions, the pointedly entitled "Bread with Dignity." For others simply trying to reconstruct their livelihoods in exile by integrating into Hashemite Jordan or working in the Arab Gulf States, the fruits of capitalism were perhaps something of an antidote to the pain and alienation of losing a homeland. No wonder that many of the most influential Palestinian capitalists of today claim to view their own investments in Palestine through the lens of return, homeland, and development as much as investment, profit, and loss (Diab 2015). Meanwhile, their less fortunate compatriots based in the refugee camps and the suburbs of Arab capitals were

plotting the resumption of the national-liberation struggle.

An unlikely assortment of Palestinian refugee intellectuals and teachers, engineers and doctors, journalists and writers, bureaucrats and merchants, possessing no capital or wealth, indeed little but their labor and professional skills, soon launched their revolution (Sayigh 1997). In creating the modern Palestinian national-liberation movement, these disparate refugees came mainly from the ranks of the Arab nationalist, Nasserist and Baathist, Muslim Brethren and liberal, and Marxist and Communist political formations around the Arab world, all of which had dominated Palestinian politics since the 1950s. If not working class in any Marxian sense, and if perhaps more aptly classified as petit bourgeois, this vanguard became (and largely remains) the Palestinian national leadership. It soon mobilized the Palestinian refugee camp populations in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, who were collectively energized by the emergence of a bold Palestinian armed resistance in the wake of Israel's 1967 defeat of the combined Arab armies. Under this leadership of diverse social forces, which had not assumed such position or power in the pre-1948 national movement, a new Palestinian revolutionary identity began to take shape just as a new program of liberation and national self-determination was being elaborated.

In the wave of patriotic solidarity and hope that swept the region as the first Palestinian guerrilla actions of 1967 and 1968 garnered Arab and international attention, the impoverished masses flocked to join the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and its democratic (Communist) splinter formation, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), as well as pro-Baath and other guerrilla organizations (Sayigh 1997). The wide array of ideological trends that were soon grouped within Fatah and the PLO provided ample space and options for contribution to the movement by a growing body of fellow travelers from the reconstituted Palestinian bourgeoisie in exile, representing both its nouveau riche and older aristocratic elements (Hanafi 1996). Their contribution was not only moral but also encompassed direct financial aid to the movement, political networking, logistical support, and technical advice. Perhaps most importantly, the former Palestinian ruling class's rallying behind the new leadership provided the latter with a needed national and pan-Arab political legitimacy, signifying the passing of the national torch to the new generation.

This changing of the guard was somewhat awkward, in retrospect at least. A new breed of guerrilla leaders, hitherto unknown politically, socially, or financially, were pursuing bold plots that entailed violent confrontation not only with Israel but soon enough also with Arab regimes and international players. Some of those with Marxist or Communist backgrounds advocated socialist revolution and Leninist mass organization. The new Fatah leaders had from the 1960s established relations with several socialist countries, including both the Soviet Union and China, as well as relationships with a growing number of Third World national-liberation movements, socialist and otherwise. The first manifestations of international terrorism in the form of airplane hijacking and violent attacks on Israeli targets globally had by 1969 begun to have an adverse impact on public opinion.

It might have been expected that the class interests of Palestinian diaspora capitalists and middle-class professionals would dictate that they keep their distance from such dangerous radicals and continue to serve the Arab regimes within which they had become increasingly integrated. But they too were disillusioned with the defeat of official and popular Arab ideologies of the preceding decades. They were attracted by the pull of national unity and inspired by this younger generation of dedicated, fearless soldiers of national liberation who were willing to sacrifice themselves for the cause (Abu Iyad 1981). These factors combined in a

powerful potion to solidify an alliance of mutual interest and convenience between Palestinian capital and a nationalist political regime that endures today, though exactly which ally now calls the shots may be a matter of contention. The resilience of the relation is fully consistent with most decolonization struggles of the past century, is coherent in terms of Leninist and other Marxist assumptions about the class-nation dialectic, and is apparently an inescapable joining of the fates of Palestinians of all classes to confront the contradiction between the Palestinian nation and the Israeli settler colony.

With the mobilization of Palestinian productive, social-service, and trade-union organizations in exile, additional forms of socioeconomic concern and initiative were promoted by PLO factions through the 1980s. Fatah was not alone in such ventures, and the Palestinian leftist factions had smaller-scale, less ambitious self-financing projects that extended their reach, but the historical record of this social and economic experiment was largely powered and registered by Fatah (Khalidi 2014b). It had wider mass political support, greater financial resources, and less stringent criteria for performance and success, not to mention the ability to mobilize broader interclass engagement with its economic projects than its rivals. Though Fatah has always been criticized from the left for its right-wing bourgeois alliances, it claimed early on the mantle of promoting the public good and pioneering a real-world, quasi-socialist socioeconomic project to support the national movement. The standard narrative [5] of the Palestinian Left considers the movement to have been composed of the Marxist and Communist factions of the PLO, disregarding their Communist fellow travelers in Fatah. However, in one of the paradoxes of Palestinian militant history, it was the leftist tendency within Fatah that provided an umbrella of protection for the non-Fatah PLO leftist factions to function and take part in decision making. It was also Fatah that deposited a faint imprint of its developmental state in the revolutionary climate of that period.

The Two-State Solution, Palestinian Communists, and Palestinian Nationalists

The emerging picture depicts an uncomfortable alliance between patriotic bourgeois and socialist tendencies in the PLO around the cause of national liberation. This is well illustrated by the respective positions adopted toward the question of the optimal resolution of the competing struggles for national self-determination in Palestine by Jews (for their State of Israel) and Palestinian Arabs (for their State of Palestine). Notwithstanding an unresolved confrontation, the Palestinian movement’s acceptance of the partition of Palestine into two states has led to a prolonged period of self-government under Israeli colonial rule since 1994. More recently, Palestinian commitment to dual statism has entailed sustained efforts to impose the political and physical reality of Palestinian statehood even in the absence of legal provision or Israeli acquiescence. Pursuit of these two planks of the Palestinian self-determination strategy have created fertile ground for the development of a capitalist market economy, neoliberal economic and social policy, and a process of capital accumulation and class formation, even as the national contradiction remains unresolved.

In its first iteration, enshrined in the 1964 PLO charter, the goals of national liberation and independence were to be realized in a single State of Palestine for Palestinian Arabs, including only pre-1917 Jewish communities. This formulation of Palestinian nationhood effectively negated the Jewish claim to national self-determination and the legitimacy of the existence of a State of Israel or an Israeli people. In that sense, little had changed in the essential Palestinian national vision since well before 1948 with its rejection of the UN partition resolution that

recognized competing Arab Palestinian and Jewish Israeli claims to the same right of national self-determination within the same country. But this position was soon modified.

By the early 1970s, a savvy and more progressive Fatah leadership, aware of regional and global realities and concerned with their public image, redefined the envisaged postliberation Palestinian state as being nonsectarian and democratic, implicitly acknowledging equal cultural, political, and civil rights for Muslims, Christians, and Jews (Fatah 1970). This model was, for that moment in history, an appropriate concept to which bourgeois patriots, socialists, and Arab nationalists, as well as international supporters, could all adhere. It furthermore provided a respectable public veneer to an otherwise radical and violent liberation movement that was rapidly antagonizing its Israeli enemy, as well as alarming many of the Arab regimes whose internal stability or regional and international relations were threatened by Palestinian revolutionary activity.

A strategic turnaround was eventually dictated both by regional pressures on the PLO and by its own revisionist thinking about the feasibility of liberating Palestine "from the river to the sea." By 1974, the national movement had begun to prepare for acceptance of what has become known as the "two-state solution" and to eventual recognition of the State of Israel. [6] This was certainly a welcome development for the allied Palestinian bourgeois and middle classes. In their own conservative worldview and material interests, these forces were naturally inclined toward compromise and political realism, and in the wake of civil wars spawned by the PLO presence in Jordan and Lebanon, they were eager to encourage a path of moderation and engagement in the political negotiations advocated by Arab states and global powers (including the allied Soviet Union). Palestinian Communists who remained in Israel as part of the Israeli Communist Party, those who reformed in exile within Jordan and within Fatah, along with the DFLP, were the earliest and most ardent supporters of the two-state solution (Cobban 1984, 61–2). The Palestinian Communist movement remains today those Palestinian political formations whose very raison d'être and ideological DNA is predicated above all on the ultimate validity of that goal.

I focus here on the position and influence of Palestinian Communist and Marxist tendencies over the past seventy years because their awkward straddling of the gulf between Palestinian national and social liberation is emblematic of the paradoxical and, I would contend, increasingly tense balance between the questions of nation and class in Palestine today. On the one hand, they have accepted relegating social revolution to a subordinate position as long as the national struggle remains inconclusive, all the while conceding that Israeli self-determination must be accepted as legitimate. On the other hand, various strains of Arab and international socialist (or Third World liberationist) agendas and alliances have dominated PLO political positioning, helping to keep the movement on the left of history until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the one country where Palestinian Communists were free to operate uninterruptedly since 1948 (Israel), working-class demands went side by side on their agenda with those advocating national rights for the Palestinian people in a two-state format (Beinin 1990). But the real prospects for achieving socialism in Israel, or even equal civil and cultural rights, are perhaps dimmer than they have ever been. PLO trade unions in exile and inside Palestine have organized and advocated for workers, professionals, women, and student groups by occasionally advancing social demands, but they have disingenuously focused on mobilizing people for the national-liberation struggle. In an ironic twist, through their adherence to the Marxist orthodoxy on national self-determination, Palestinian Communists have constituted one of the most influential forces in delaying Palestinian social-liberation struggles. In that respect, at least, the bourgeois

patriotism of Fatah has been more consistent and coherent than the intellectual acrobatics that Palestinian Marxist, Leninist, Stalinist, and Maoist schools of thought have deployed.

While Fatah has always dominated the political system's institutions and decisions in the power-sharing deal between PLO factions, Palestinian socialist formations have accepted a limited share and role therein. As in other Third World experiences, their disillusioned former leaders have often become avid supporters of PNA economic policy, with unwavering adherence to achieving a two-state solution through political and diplomatic nonviolent processes. [7] The continued acquiescence of the Palestinian Left in the political and socioeconomic system begat by Oslo provides legitimacy to Fatah and its allied leadership, just as the national bourgeoisie's capital investments provide material strength to the system and to PLO economic strategies set up to deal with Israeli asymmetric containment policies (Khan 2004). The persistence of a broad national front (the Hamas breakaway notwithstanding) has entailed commitment both to the two-state formula (despite all realities on the ground to the contrary) and to the principles of the open-market economy that the PNA was destined to manage once the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations was agreed upon between Israel and the PLO in 1994 (UNCTAD 2006).

Several decades down the road, it is evident that, however unacceptable any of the alternatives might have been, Palestinian Communists' and nationalists' diehard belief in the necessity and inevitability of the two-state solution has been, at best, misplaced and, at worst, deceptive toward the Palestinian people's interests. More injurious perhaps to a long-suffering people has been the idea that the achievement of essential social, economic, and civil rights will have to wait until after national independence. Until that happens, a strong dose of liberal market economics has been adopted as the best formula to ensure a measure of individual prosperity, even while communal impoverishment and national economic dependence on the colonial power persists (Khalidi and Samour 2011).

Responsibility for this sleight of political hand—whereby insistence on an unachievable goal for the nation becomes the principal obstacle to achieving or advocating for just social and economic solutions for the people—should be equally apportioned between the Palestinian Right and Left, nationalists and socialists, capitalists and intellectuals alike. With a stalled national-liberation struggle and a postponed social-justice revolution as its principal ideological outcomes, the modern Palestinian national-liberation movement has chalked up only a few enduring achievements. Some of these may indeed be, as PNA officials point out, the services and government jobs it provides, the internal security and civil administration function it performs, and the statist institutions and symbols in place even in the absence of sovereignty, not to mention an enhanced quality of life for many upper- and middle-class West Bankers (even as Gaza and Jerusalem constitute exceptions). To this they may add that the center of gravity in the Palestine-Israel conflict and in Palestinian social and class formation has been brought back to the actual territory of Palestine after a generation of liberation from exile. Not insignificant achievements at all.

Whatever happens in the "peace process," these developments have a staying power, if not a popular appeal, that only major external shocks (from confrontation with Israel) or internal upheaval (of the many jobless, working poor, and marginalized) can put at risk. While the PNA does all it can to avert the former (and even Hamas in Gaza appears to ascribe to that policy), the political and economic system in both regions have no Plan A or B to address the latter. In fact, the sort of open, service-based, dependent economy that has emerged over the past decades can only create more unemployed youth, less share of the national income for labor (compared to rising profits), and new social strata excluded from the fruits of limited growth (Khalidi 2018).

The Rise of a New Liberal Capitalist Order and the Trade-Off with National Liberation

The transformations in the material basis of Palestinian society under the yoke of settler-colonial rule and limited self-government have taken their toll on the credibility of prevailing Palestinian nationalist and competing socialist ideologies. This has not taken place in a vacuum, without Palestinian agency. The driving forces of external and internal dynamics, especially since Oslo, have complemented and reinforced each other. While the PLO has remained committed to national-liberation goals, the rules of the game accepted since 1994 have entailed buying into an interim self-government regime that has allowed capitalist market economics to prevail. Both the bourgeoisie and the middle classes forming through this process, as well as the ruling political elites of the PLO, have developed material and power interests in a status quo that can deliver neither development nor national statehood. This is a dead end that can possibly be perpetuated but only at a growing risk to both social and national liberation.

The overwhelming military, economic, and ideological power of Israel's national project as compared to the dwindling Palestinian/Arab weight in the balance of power has certainly been the centrifugal engine around which other influences have operated (Khalidi 2014b). Israel's transformation from what was until the 1990s a highly regulated postsocialist economy to a liberal export-driven and financialized member of the OECD not only ensured its regional predominance but also provided a model that many of its neighbors would emulate if only they could (Naqib 2001).

Meanwhile, the advance of liberalization, privatization, and marketization, supposedly irreversible under globalization, has created a policy environment in Palestine and the region that has provided incentives to economic cooperation and a peace dividend for those committed to it. This has entailed an undeclared "economic peace" pursued by Israel to entice Palestinian commercial and consumer interests into a "quality of life" paradigm (Khalidi and Taghdisi-Rad 2009). An essential ingredient in this formula was the launching of a Palestinian state-building project whose initial phase was abandoned when the Second Intifada erupted in 2000 (largely because of the failure to establish the state after the five-year Oslo-prescribed "interim period"). The process resumed with renewed vigor, and in a different sense, with the death of Yasser Arafat and the dismantling of his regime after 2005. The rapid accumulation of Arab Gulf capital and the failure of the remaining Arab nationalist/socialist regimes since the invasion of Iraq and the more recent Arab civil wars have provided a persuasive narrative and created new material interests for advocates of market-led liberalization, even if the challenge of occupation could not be tackled.

In the past decade, the PNA has embarked on a series of institutional and policy reforms targeting security and rule-of-law measures, enhanced public-finance transparency and efficiency, and the provision of improved public services and utilities (Khalidi and Samour 2011). In doing so, the PNA has followed Washington Consensus conventions that limit active state intervention in the economy beyond the protection of property rights to release the full potentials of the market. In the Palestinian case, this policy bias is particularly curious, as if too much government regulation or fiscal preponderance has been the real ailment of the Palestinian economy under occupation. The commitment with which the PNA continues to pursue these reforms, coupled with the international support they have garnered, is premised on the idea that the PNA needed to successfully navigate its state-readiness program in line with some of the more dated World Bank notions about good governance. This was a new twist on the Palestinian

strategy for national liberation, in what amounted to dropping the "freedom fighter's gun" not only for the "olive branch" (both of which Yasser Arafat proclaimed he had come bearing to the United Nations in 1974) but equally for the fruits of capital accumulation and market liberalism.

Within the PNA's constrained economic policy-making space, the only macroeconomic policy option it has ever really had was to stimulate aggregate demand through public expenditure. This was in turn fueled by high levels of international aid, which only recently has started to decline, while recent years have seen the expansion of private credit to around $5.5 billion, or some 40 percent of GDP in 2016. [8] The PNA's dedication to liberal economics is explicit, and its institution building and financial management has earned fulsome praise since 2011 from both international financial institutions and donors (Khalidi 2011).

Even if Palestinian negotiators had assessed the possible economic impact of their policy commitment at the time, they could not have realistically predicted how such measures might play out in a distorted, fragmented, and occupation-throttled economy. In such a laboratory environment with unstable substances, untried formulae, and uncontrollable internal and external pressures, any number of things could go wrong, from the perspective of IMF-inspired prescriptions for fiscally vulnerable developing countries. In 2012, the first explicit social protest against government economic policy and the Paris Protocol that frames it became the rallying point for a range of forces that had become dissatisfied with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's political, economic, and security agendas (Khalidi 2012), paving the way for his resignation the following year. By 2017, the economic landscape could not have become bleaker. Palestinian unemployment and poverty levels were now stuck at stubbornly high levels, and primary and secondary productive sectors were struggling to survive amid a proliferation of service activities. Palestinian international trade channels were still controlled by Israel while a booming banking sector was producing record profits at the same time household debt levels were continuing to rise. The PNA buckled under the constant IMF and donor pressure toward fiscal consolidation by cutting the government payroll and restraining social-service expenditures. [9] Meanwhile, the separate fates of the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, constituting some two-fifths of the Palestinian people under occupation, had grown especially dim. Gaza entered its tenth year of blockade, with its economic and public infrastructure collapsing (UNCTAD 2017), while the putative governmental capital of Palestine, Jerusalem, was confronted with the relentless drive of "Israelization" (UNCTAD 2013; MAS 2017).

If ever there was a clear illustration of the adverse outcomes of uneven development, the dual challenge that the Palestinian economy faces in the yawning development gap with Israel and in its own growing socioeconomic and class disparities is surely a textbook case (Smith 2008). This festering, untreatable socioeconomic crisis coexists uncomfortably with the end of the road for the modern Palestinian national-liberation movement, even as Palestinians continue to struggle, resisting Israeli oppression through armed, peaceful, popular, and legal means. But as history advances, new Palestinian classes are forming, if not consciously then certainly in terms of the de facto creation and distribution of wealth within a (distorted) free-market system. However, conventional typologies seem inadequate to understand the complexities of this process.

In the analysis of the preeminent narrator of neocolonialism, Frantz Fanon (1965), the "national bourgeoisie" is little more than a "national middle class" with a "historic mission: that of intermediary." In the Palestinian case, this would include strata such as Fanon's "university and merchant bourgeoisie," "army and a police force," "the young national bourgeoisie," "the party," a "profiteering caste," a "native bourgeoisie," "honest intellectuals," and a "bourgeoisie of the civil service." In Fanon's view of this parasitic, nonproductive, and generally "useless"

bourgeois/petit bourgeois class, there is no particularly important role for domestic and expatriate industrialists and masters of finance. Their weak industrial and technological base and "comprador" links to global capital determine their objectively hostile position toward the national-liberation project, even if they may be willing to strike an accommodation with it. However, in a departure from Fanon's typology, in the Palestinian case these diaspora millionaires were never hostile to national liberation; indeed, they have been important players who have always been closely aligned with PLO economic interests and its political program, players who have underwritten it financially and invested in productive sectors and development in Palestine. Combined with the other strata of the national middle class, these may be described as the core constituent of a "neo-colonial, national liberal class."

This strange Palestinian brew implies a hitherto unknown hybrid that interweaves a Fanonist scenario of institutional failure (which usually takes place after independence) with an unachieved national-liberation project (which usually is not mortgaged to neocolonialism). For example, the (usually) postcolonial demobilization of the previous militant leading cadres, vividly described by Vijay Prashad (2007) with respect to the Algerian experience, has been pursued with vigor by the PNA since 2005. A new entrepreneurial technocracy has taken the place of the PLO and Arafat-era PNA administrators, leaving behind the PLO military cadres whose struggle since the 1960s made the PNA self-governance project possible. But such a deformed neocolonial governance pattern has not been witnessed while decolonization is still unachieved or in the absence of sovereignty. In that regard, Palestine presents a unique situation.

Throughout the Arafat era, the national front shared political decision-making powers and comanaged national wealth to the extent that such public goods were nurtured, mobilized, or otherwise created by the PLO (Khalidi 2014b). From the taxation levied by the PLO on Palestinian workers in the Arab states since the 1970s to the mobilization of the expatriate Palestinian capitalist classes in the 1980s and the generous sharing of rents from public-utilities franchises and selective commodity-supply monopolies under the PNA since 1994, there has usually been a common ground, material interests, and good national political sense for such an alliance. In a process like one recently analyzed with respect to the Musevini (liberation) regime in Uganda, "The violent struggle in itself also has an impact on feelings of belonging and cohesion for the regime in place: it has produced a particular identity and sense of community, which for example allows the legitimization of particular hardships" (Reuss and Titeca 2017, 3).

Such a political-economic consensus unites the material forces of Palestinian capital and the national bourgeoisie with the national-liberation movement, mainly represented by the dispossessed and deprived masses of Palestinian refugees in exile, the peasants, the urban poor, and a growing middle class of educated professionals (Khalidi 2018). The rise of a Palestinian Islamist national-liberation movement bonded by faith and tradition may seem to have rendered such an alliance obsolete, but the governance experience of Hamas suggests that its relations with its own capitalist support base inside Palestine and in the region has also been vital to its economic and financial survival (Pelham 2014). Indeed, this constitutes a national front of a greener color, perhaps, but nevertheless comports with the tradition of the secular national movement.

In his timeless indictment of the (inevitable) treachery of the postcolonial national bourgeoisie, Fanon defines its essentially middle-class traits. These include its readiness to abandon the social-emancipation goals of the preindependence stage; its scrambling to assume the functions vacated by the colonial bourgeoisie and to apportion national resources among party, security, and affiliated elites; its failure to develop indigenous productive power; and its

ultimate reliance upon and integration with colonial capital. This typology became evident in the post-Oslo configuration of power that has been entrenched in the past years, and it cannot be ruled out as becoming more explicit in the future. Fanon (1963, 148–9) bluntly sums up the worst-case scenario:

> The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour; it is completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type … The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of the captain of industry … Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism.

Can the Bourgeoisie Be Patriotic and Tolerate a Progressive Wing? The Blurring of the National Boundaries between Capital and the Working Classes in Palestine and Israel

Today not only do PNA economic policies fail to elicit the public acquiescence enjoyed in the past but the PNA is fiscally weak and the PLO appears incapable of leading or unifying its ranks, much less achieving the national reconciliation with Hamas in Gaza that might allow for renewal of a national-liberation struggle. This situation undermines the Leninist rationale for sustaining the alliance between revolutionary forces (disorganized and weak in the Palestinian case) and the national bourgeoisie (increasingly empowered and embedded in the political system). Of special concern is whether the neoliberal project in Palestine has advanced as if it were operating well into a post-conflict phase while settler colonialism has reached so deep that there is no more nation to liberate in the traditional meaning of the word. Has the elusive pursuit of national self-determination been misguided and even impossible? Are there other models for a shared sovereignty that transcends separate Arab and Jewish states? Maybe a different path of struggle for liberation is in order?

From Fanon's vantage point, the PNA regime and its economic policies appear as just another failing postcolonial-development governance experience, bereft of the usual vestiges of formal independence that most other neocolonial states have attained. Indeed, in tune with guidelines regularly reasserted by either the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, the PNA has evolved quite a way along the plane of postliberation state building, middle-class entrenchment, and crony-elitist capitalist governance devoid of the usual reality of sovereign statehood. By hook and by crook, the worst possible conditions for prolonged neocolonial dependence have been created and are flourishing. By virtue of its neoliberal program as a facile substitute for its inability to lead a struggle that delivers independence, the PLO and its allied national bourgeoisie have effectively broken the national-social contract and, in a sense, have betrayed their historic role. The Palestinian Marxist Left bears a special burden of responsibility in this respect.

It might well be argued that, owing to the inherent flaws in the fabric, interests, and wealth of the national bourgeoisie in postcolonial countries, there can be no progressive nationalist bourgeoisie in any case. Post 1917, Leninism was already flush with the victory of Communism in one country and was preaching the cause of internationalist proletarian solidarity and class struggle. In November 1919, Lenin (quoted in Riddell 1987, 261) explained the implications of this struggle: "The socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie—no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism … the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and

exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism." The assumption of Soviet power and the establishment of Communist parties around the world generated a revision of the position toward nationalism and the role of the bourgeoisie in creating a capitalist nation-state framework for socialist revolution.

While the Bolsheviks considered that the colonial bourgeoisie might benefit from national independence, by the time of the Second Comintern the Indian Communist M. N. Roy was skeptical of the prospects for a viable alliance with bourgeois nationalists (Riddell 1991). The outcome of the debate was a more nuanced view of the national bourgeoisie, though one that still admitted the bourgeoisie's potentially revolutionary role in an anticolonial framework. According to Lenin (quoted in Riddell 1991, 213), by 1920 "the significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie."

Going further, Alec Gordon and Radhika Desai (1973) have insisted that there is no empirical basis for a credible theory of a leading role for a patriotic bourgeoisie in an independence struggle, effectively repudiating the core Leninist assumptions. But we cannot ignore the range of class alliances experienced in decolonization struggles—from those failed revolutions described by Fanon (aptly updated by Prashad in the Algerian context) to those in which national fronts were Communist-led and successful (e.g., Vietnam, southern Africa). Even the postcolonial pan-Arab socialist regimes for many years maintained national fronts with Communists until they eventually crushed or co-opted them. Among the more stable outcomes—as in Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, India, China, and other emerging economies—perhaps the worst pitfalls of neocolonialism have been avoided. A tentative social contract between capital, labor, and the state has been pursued since independence, but this is far from the promises of development that nonalignment and the rise of the Global South entailed.

So where does this theoretical and empirical record leave the Palestinian people's struggle? At this eleventh hour, or crossroads, it is not too late for Palestine to try to uphold the best traditions of Third World liberationism. Even as the logic and viability of separate sovereignty and statehood for Palestine might today seem less credible, an explicit abandonment of the two-state solution by the PLO is not imminent. So far, social upheaval has been avoided, mainly in deference to the national cause but also because the PNA remains aware of its public obligations. But the options of pursuing nation or class may not be mutually exclusive. Indeed, the former might only advance if the latter takes center stage.

No doubt, mobilizing a broad national front in a short war of national liberation from nonsettler foreign military occupation is not the same challenge as sustaining a movement for national self-determination and decolonization over a century. Both the PNA socioeconomic policy and the PLO capacity to resist Israel or achieve national rights are at a historic low point. Even were the PNA armed with the best of socialist intentions and national-liberation policies, it faces monumental challenges. For example, the limited goal of building a productive, self-reliant, and socially equitable economy protected from the most corrosive influences of today's liberalized and financialized global economic order would be a great success at current odds. The Palestinian people's resilience and ability to cling to their land and country is a main reason that their cause has yet to be extinguished. Yet this remains largely a defensive posture and serves as damage limitation rather than to shift the balance of power.

In the light of the above breaking points, I am not able to perceive the basis on which the national alliance and its leading class can credibly and conscientiously sustain engagement with both a fragile economic and social-engineering project and also a frustrated and restless mass base (Khalidi 2016). There is no reason to assume that the Palestinian national bourgeoisie will discover its inner progressive tendencies at this late date and lead a process to reinvigorate a flagging national-liberation struggle except if it is obliged to in the face of major social upheaval. Given the current aggressive Israeli and U.S. policy horizon, at some point confrontation with Israel seems likely to again rear its ugly head. In such a circumstance, perpetuating the Palestinian system currently in power will require that the private sector and capital interests condone and support (and at least refrain from aborting) renewed mass action against Israeli oppression, however limited and sporadic that might be.

The path of reasserting the PLO's historic mission of liberating the land and the people could still ensue from a national reconciliation that reinstates the primacy of ending colonial occupation. However, this would not necessarily entail a turn away from PNA neoliberalism. Indeed, the disorganized, dispirited, and impoverished masses of urban and refugee-camp poor, rural peasantry, and working poor at the fringes of the private economy are hardly arrayed in a coherent opposition to neoliberal policies in any conscious sense. Their capacity to resist is already sapped by relentless Israeli harassment and deprivation. Anyhow, sharing the spoils of Palestinian financial and political power is central to the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation dialogue underway since 2017. So under the external threat of Israeli and U.S. sanctions, the interests of big Palestinian capital, economies of scale, and economic inducements could yet unite to impose a Palestinian unity between Gaza and the West Bank under yet another variation of the nonsovereign autonomy experienced since Oslo.

On the other hand, it is not implausible that we continue to witness a gradual weakening of the PLO's and nationalist politics' hold on public debate/expectations and on demands for less neoliberal influences in economic decision making. A fledgling national industrial lobby, an impatient middle class oblivious to the risks of indebtedness or redundancy, and the impoverished masses of unemployed and working urban poor (lumpen) are expected to voice demands that the state or the market cater to their perceived or denied rights. And while I have not analyzed here the significant processes of capital accumulation and class formation underway in Palestine, their significance should not be discounted (Khalidi 2018).

A different discourse and another set of struggles for social justice and economic equity could yet find greater resonance and emancipatory potential than a flailing twentieth-century national-liberation strategy and an exhausted nationalism full of symbols and bereft of power. The distinct social and economic demands of Palestinian workers, women, youth, and unemployed and of other marginalized sections of society should become increasingly critical in shaping the governance agenda of the PNA. Resistance to unjust, misguided, or poorly designed socioeconomic policies and governance could acquire legitimacy as part of a broader struggle to mobilize the Palestinian people—including compatriots who are citizens of Israel—toward determining their collective future, perhaps under some shared or parallel sovereignty (Khalidi 2014a; Le Vine and Mossberg 2014). Such a focus need not detract from confrontation with occupation and colonization but instead would entail parallel efforts within both Palestine and Israel to create more just, equitable, and progressive social and economic systems. How such an alternative scenario might play out between the five fragmented regions of the Palestinian people's dispersion plus an activist and engaged regional and global diaspora remains a matter for conjecture.

For the moment, such a dramatic shift may not be in the cards. Indeed, if the past century is a guide, the nation (when organized) has always trumped other ideologies or causes in the Palestinian consciousness. The sheer brutality and inhumanity of Israeli colonial domination has always been the best ally of the Palestinian people's national cause and the perpetuator of their struggle. In Palestinian history, a new generation of leadership that challenges the status quo has emerged at such low moments to reinvigorate a national-liberation ideology. However entrenched and dominant the interests of Palestinian capital may have become, and however much new social classes may reshape the landscape of Palestinian politics and economics, the primary national contradiction remains predominant. The dependence on a national framework for the full realization of class formation and the creation of the necessary conditions for socialism may yet prove Lenin to have been right after all.

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1. The West Bank and Gaza Strip, occupied by Israel in 1967, are claimed by the PLO as the territory of the State of Palestine, and they constitute some 22 percent of historic Palestine.
2. Repeated United Nations resolutions condemning Israel's occupation are the most evident manifestation of this status, though other forms of solidarity with Palestine are emerging, including boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Israel and a generational shift in U.S. Jewry's position toward Israel's occupation.
3. See "Communist Parties in the Middle East," *Khamsin* , no. 7 (1979).
4. I do so without here delving into the polemics or the nuances of a still contentious debate.
5. Most recently demonstrated in Hilal and Hermann (2014).
6. This was at the initiative of a key Palestinian Marxist faction, the DFLP, which had split from the Arab nationalist Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (itself a reluctant latecomer to endorsement of the same position).
7. As demonstrated by the number of senior Palestinian Communist Party cadre members who have served as PNA ministers over the years, who in some cases championed reform inspired by the Washington Consensus.
8. See the fourth quarter 2016 data in *Economic Monitor* , no. 48 (2017), http://www.mas.ps/files/server/Monitor/monitor%2048-%20eng.pdf.
9. See *Economic Monitor* , no. 48 (2017), http://www.mas.ps/files/server/Monitor/monitor%2048%20eng.pdf.

Men of Capital in Mandate Palestine [1]

Sherene Seikaly

This essay examines Palestinian "men of capital" in British-ruled Palestine. It lays out their historical erasure as the product of settler colonialism; the historiographic dominance of the aristocrat, the comprador, and the middle-class hero; and how nostalgia, mourning, and the idealization of pre-1948 Palestine have flattened social life. Elites were not homogenous landowners but worked in commercial and industrial ventures. These men (and to a lesser extent women) shaped a broader Arab nahda, or renaissance, as an economic project. This essay maps out the regimes of calculation that realized national economy as a space of surveillance. It argues that attention to how these regimes unfolded could destabilize the conventional depiction of the colonial body as the agent and the colonized body as its ephemeral shadow.

On 5 April 1948, Fuad Saba, founder of the accounting firm Saba and Company, wrote the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) [2] —the Palestinian national leadership body that originally came together during the Great Revolt of 1936–9—to request an exit permit. Khalil Sa'ada, the assistant director of Saba's Jaffa office (founded in 1920) was moving to the company's Baghdad branch. Along the way, he would stop at the firm's Beirut and Damascus offices. Once in Baghdad, Sa'ada could better serve the Arab Bank and other Palestinian businesses that were relocating their headquarters. The year 1948 marked the birth of Israel and the death of contiguous Palestine. A 17 March 1948 letter from the National Committee of Bir al-Sab'i implored the AHC: "We are being attacked and the Jews are close to taking over all of the transportation roads between Palestine and Egypt, please lend us tanks and heavy machinery or direct us to where we can buy [them] … We have sent you many requests but have not received military attention or organization … we are without leadership or direction." [3]

Urgency and desperation united the requests the AHC received in those momentous months on the eve of the Palestinians' massive displacement. But Saba's tone was measured. Saba and the businessmen he traveled with were rapidly transferring their capital and interests to other parts of the Arab world as they faced the national defeat that would indelibly mark their trajectories. In the 1930s, these men drew on diverse philosophies to craft economic thought and envision an economic *nahda* , or renaissance. They defined themselves as "men of capital" (*rijal mal*). [4] These men (and to a lesser extent women) preached to their elite brethren about the proper spending and saving patterns that would ensure Palestinian progress in a pan-Arab utopia of free trade, private property, and self-responsibility.

In their developmentalist projects, Saba and his colleagues did their best to sever the economic from the political. They lobbied the British colonial government for institutions, statistical surveys, and calculations. They believed these were necessary for realizing a healthy economic life. They knew that the British Mandate and its foundational commitment to the Zionist enterprise in Palestine subordinated them as political subjects. They both collaborated with and resisted this subordination, engineering initiatives that wedded economic achievement to national independence. Shut out of institutional spaces, men of capital proselytized the economy not as a science of markets but as a science of the self. They differentiated between needs and luxuries and emphasized the imperative of management while creating and guarding new notions of class and status. In their periodical, *Al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya* (Arabic economic journal), these men of capital were careful not to address the "Great Revolt" (1936–9). At the same time, some of them funded the rebels. During this time, Saba himself took part in the AHC's effort to wrestle the revolt from the hands of the rebels and contain one of their most

radical demands: social change. The British colonial government exiled Saba and his colleagues, such as the banker and dissident Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, for this leadership.

The end of the 1930s was a period of devastation for the farmers and villagers, who were the large majority of Palestinians. Landlessness and indebtedness had plagued most Palestinians throughout the mandate period (1923–48). The British colonial government's brutal counterinsurgency during the revolt further heightened these conditions. Bankruptcy, unemployment, house demolitions, mass detentions, torture, and the wounding, imprisonment, exile, or killing of over 10 percent of Palestinian males were the consequences of this brutality (Khalidi 2006, 108). In 1939, Saba and Ibrahim, alongside the better-known Palestinian national leader, al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, waited in their Seychelles exile for news from the ground. The news came. Total war was on the horizon, and it would irreversibly change the course of the years to come.

The onset of World War II meant an influx of capital, war-induced industrialization, and the implementation of ambitious rationing, distribution, and marketing schemes. The British colonial government transformed Palestine into the Empire's second largest military base in the Middle East after Egypt. A crisis of supply and an abiding fear of further upheaval forced the British colonial government to begin calculating bodies and their consumption in Palestine. New indices such as the calorie and the cost of living, wrapped in the ambiguous folds of the science of nutrition and the aim of colonial development, became tools of governing. War forced British colonial rule to measure people and their consumption. Their incoherent efforts to assure "food for all" and implement a "nutritional economy" revealed the depth of two decades of apathetic rule and the extent to which British rule could never envision a future for Palestine or the Palestinians (Seikaly 2016, 77–102).

Perhaps one could imagine that men like Saba and Ibrahim would welcome what appeared to be a colonial turn to a developing Palestinian economy. That economy, especially the "Arab" part of it, had never been fully legible, broken in its numerical representations into "Jewish" and "Arab" divides, with the former enjoying parastatal institutions and their calculations, of which the Palestinians could only dream. In the settler-colonial context of both British rule and Zionist settlement, the persistent juridical erasure of Palestinians as political actors meant they could never become developmental subjects. World War II brought this reality into stark focus. It was a time of deep crisis, exposing long-festering realities. Men like Saba and Ibrahim could no longer separate their economic visions from their political obligations. The self-proclaimed vanguard of the future turned away from their imaginings of a broad Arab horizon of commercial plenty. Through the nascent institutions of the chambers of commerce, they focused instead on the realities of scarcity and the urgency of managing basic needs. It was during the 1940s that they sought to address the many others who in the previous decade they had naturalized as their inferiors—those "Bedouins" and "peasants"—and as objects of representation. By that time, Palestinian men of capital understood that the economy was not simply a vehicle for individual and national uplift; it became linked to a continued presence in the land.

Very few would maintain that presence. The large majority of Palestinians, 700,000 to 800,000 people (Khalidi 1984), became stateless refugees as a result of the Nakba (or "catastrophe") of 1948. [5] The 150,000 Palestinians who did remain in the land became second-class citizens under military rule living in that 80 percent of Palestine that was now called Israel.

Saba, Ibrahim, and the businessmen and bankers who made money and shaped the economy in Palestine do not appear in the historical record. Their invisibility is not the result of one condition but a confluence of three factors. First is the historiography of settler colonialism in its

British and Zionist articulations. Second are three characters that continue to dominate the historiographic scene: the aristocrat, the comprador, and the middle-class hero. Finally are the linked impulses of nostalgia, mourning, and idealization from pre-Nakba Palestine that flatten the topography of Palestinian social life.

Saba, along with Abd al-Muhsin al-Qattan, Hasib Sabagh, and Wahbe Tamari, among others, became leading figures in accounting, banking, contracting, and insurance throughout the Arab world. They accumulated wealth and expertise and took part in leading the commercial horizon they had imagined in the 1930s. Yet despite these successes, Saba was never the same after 1948. There was, his grandson explains, a lot of silence in the house. [6] Saba remained in Beirut until his death. Not far from where he lived stood Sabra and Shatilla, refugee camps where many Palestinian refugees remain confined today.

Settler Colonialism

Until 1948, the majority of Arabs in Palestine were small farmers and sharecroppers. The formation of large estates and the growing power of merchant capital in the late nineteenth century began causing the indebtedness and displacement that would come to characterize rural life (Anderson 2013, 379). [7] Palestinians would survive the economic duress and famine of World War I only to face a new regime of colonial control that the League of Nations called mandatory rule. In 1919, the "Covenant of the League of Nations" divided the world into "advanced nations" and those peoples who were "not yet able to stand by themselves." [8] Based on the principles of "well-being and development," the Covenant sought to provide "tutelage" to these not-yet-peoples of the former German and Ottoman territories, which the document further divided into a three-tiered hierarchy (A-B-C) based on potential for self-rule. The Covenant graded the Arab provinces of the former Ottoman Empire, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq as A territories, whose independence could be provisionally recognized. Under the monitoring body of the Permanent Mandates Commission, the Mandate system was distinct from imperial frameworks because it promised eventual self-rule. At the same time, it continued what Uday Mehta (1999, 31) has called the metaphor of childhood that informed British liberal understandings of imperial subjects.

Mandatory rule in Palestine was exceptional. We typically interpret this exceptionalism as rooted in British support of Zionism, a result of conflicting promises to Arabs and Jews in a post–World War I order, and an outcome of British colonial ambiguity. These explanations lead to a faulty narrative framework that pits a settlement movement and a colonized people as equivalent national movements competing over one strip of land. This narrative has persisted until the present day, as has the reality on the ground of an occupier and an occupied that cannot be equated. The Mandate in Palestine was not exceptional simply because the colonial government supported one so-called side over another. The Mandate in Palestine was exceptional because it was the only case in which the Permanent Mandates Commission endorsed settler colonialism (Pederson 2005, 124).

The November 1917 Balfour Declaration inaugurated the British commitment to "a national home for the Jewish people" with the qualification that this would supposedly not prejudice "the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities." This memorandum rendered Jewish an ethno-national category in Palestine. It defined the land and its inhabitants by this category, despite the fact that Jews constituted five percent of the people who lived in Palestine at the turn of the twentieth century (Campos 2009, 12). The memorandum rendered the majority

of the Palestinians who lived on the land nameless. Two parallel processes began to take root: the partitioning of people into categories of Jewish and non-Jewish (deserving and undeserving of a national home) and the erasure of the Palestinian (who appeared now as a non-Jewish inhabitant bearing religious and civil, but not political, rights). One of the first partitions that took place after World War I was the separation of Palestinian Jews from their former Muslim and Christian brothers under Ottoman rule (18). [9] What Edward Said (1979, 14) called the malicious simplifications of Arab and Jew began to harden. [10] Despite scholarly arguments that the Balfour Declaration was primarily a piece of war propaganda and not a blueprint for British rule (Renton 2010), the two principles that the Declaration inaugurated—the erasure of the Palestinian and the partition of the people into those deserving versus those undeserving of a national home—became the foundation of the Mandate Document. Article 2 of that document recognized the Jewish Agency as the body responsible for realizing the Jewish national home in Palestine. It was the only non-Anglo institution that received official recognition in Mandate Palestine. Article 6 committed British colonial rule to Zionist land settlement and Jewish immigration. From its inception, British colonial rule was premised on enabling the settler movement and denying the possibility of politics to Palestinians. Mandate rule brought into law the Zionist mantra of "a land without a people for a people without a land."

This mantra has enjoyed an impressive longevity. However, we should qualify its meaning to get at the specific condition of Palestinian invisibility in colonial epistemologies. Zionists of the late nineteenth century did not imagine that there were no people in the land of Palestine but rather that they were not *a* people. Theodor Herzl (1988) described a set of caricatures that inhabited what he called the land of Israel: the wealthy effendis who could be had for a price and the remaining impoverished peasants who could be smoothly removed without incident. These people were a motley crew without anything defining or unifying them. [11] Zionists from various political leanings did not share Herzl's confidence that the people who lived in Palestine would not be attached enough to their land to resist displacement (Ha'am 2004, 31–4). [12] However, the Zionist emphasis on the lack of a politically coherent and distinct people in Palestine continued.

Zionists were hard at work shaping a cohesive settlement community and a new ethno-national understanding of what it meant to be Jewish. They called themselves the Yishuv. Zionism promised Jews who had suffered religious, political, and racial persecution for centuries in Europe that they could finally become European and realize their own nation-state, but only by *leaving* Europe. Anti-Semitism and Zionism shared a belief that Jews could never assimilate in Europe (Arendt 2007, 46–121). [13] But the process of becoming European by realizing a settler colony would become an abundant source of persecution: for the Palestinians the settler colony's existence was premised on erasure; the Eastern (Mizrahi) Jews did not fit the Ashkenazi (European) mold; and for the Ashkenazi, the journey across the Mediterranean required killing centuries of tradition, language, and culture to fit the mold of the new Jew (Alcalay 1993). [14]

By the 1920s, the Zionists had realized a network of institutions that would become the foundation of the Israeli state. These included the governing body of the Jewish Agency; the Jewish National Fund, which Zionists had established in 1901 to purchase land; the labor organization of the Histadrut, which organized Jewish laborers during the Mandate; the military organization of the Haganah; and the Vaad Leumi, which was a Jewish people's council that would become the Israeli parliament or Knesset in 1948. The British colonial administration bolstered the legitimacy of each of these institutions. In addition, as various crises of supply and informal markets during World War II amply indicate, these institutions often outranked the British colonial government in capital and expertise (Smith 1993, 94).

The British colonial government also supported Zionist enterprise in Palestine. Conventionally, colonial policy deemed tariff manipulation "uneconomic" (Smith 1993, 46). But the colonial government departed from this convention, supporting Yishuv industry through tariff manipulation. Article 11 of the Mandate stated that the colonial government could arrange with the Jewish Agency "to construct or operate, upon fair and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities, and to develop any of the natural resources of the country" (League of Nations Council 1922). It was on this basis that the colonial government granted three major monopoly concessions to Zionist interests in the 1920s: the electricity concession to the Palestine Electric Corporation Ltd (est. 1923; see Shamir 2013), the Dead Sea salt concession to the Palestine Potash Company (est. 1929), and the salt concession in 1923 to the Athlit Salt Company (Smith 1993, 131). [15] In addition, a long list of companies received specific customs concessions from the Palestine government. The emerging diamond industry, which flourished during World War II, received a concession from High Commissioner Herbert Samuel in 1923 to allow uncut diamonds duty-free entry, encouraging unprocessed exports (164). [16] Other companies that received customs concessions on duty-free raw-material imports included Nesher Cement Company, Palestine Oil Industry (Shemen), Delfiner's Silk Factory, Yehuda Steam Factory, Raanan Company (confectionaries), and Lodzia Textile Company. Economic historian Jacob Metzer (1998, 183) has argued that the claim that the prime beneficiaries of the tariffs were Jewish industrialists and that these benefits were in any way consequential remains "empirically unverified." For Metzer, British colonial support was simply in response to the demands of what he calls a growing and modernizing Jewish-led economy (Smith 1993, 189). Beyond the value-based assessment of Jewish economic superiority deserving of colonial support, Metzer undermines his own argument. A brief glimpse at the historical record supports Barbara Smith's point that the colonial government protected Jewish industry (131, 167).

The Zionist approach to the economy in Palestine posited a backward, primitive, semi-feudal Palestinian Arab society based on subsistence agriculture with an Islamic reluctance toward moneylending. In these accounts, Zionism civilized the Palestinian primitive-native in the late Ottoman and mandate period. Jewish capital introduced a set of progressive changes that benefited the peasant, or fellah (Ohana 1978). Never mind that Jewish land settlement and expropriation displaced the fellah, who became unemployed, a condition impossible on the land, as Nahla Zu'bi (1984, 88–109) points out. But in these renditions, obdurately wedded to how settler-colonial economic growth could ostensibly benefit the colonized, Palestine is marked by two distinct economic systems with limited market relations (Eisenstadt 1967). [17] There were two separate national economies: the traditional and backward Palestinian economy and the Jewish capitalist economy, and each developed independently. One sector did not exploit the other. What emerged was a competition between the two, accompanied by a crisis of modernization in the Arab sector (Flapan 1979).

Scholars such as Roger Owen, Alexander Scholch, and Beshara Doumani have overturned the conviction that Palestine came into the world capitalist system with the onset of British colonialism. Before 1882, Jaffa, Haifa, and Acre were important export points for external trade. Nablus was the most important center for local and regional trade, manufacturing soap, oil, and cotton. Jaffa exported the produce of southern Palestine—wheat, barley, maize, olive oil, soap, oranges, and other produce—to France, Egypt, England, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Malta, and northern Syria (Owen 1982, 1–9). [18]

Yet the dual economy model continues to be conventional wisdom. It is perhaps most potently articulated in Metzer's study, *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* . The stark

binary between the modern Jewish economy and the premodern Arab economy takes visual form on the cover of the paperback edition. There, a 1946 photograph depicts a camel caravan passing the electric power station in Tel Aviv. The image resonates with Metzer's (1998, 208) reasoning that Zionist industry and economic growth were beneficial to Palestinians. [19] Recent work has overturned these claims. Amos Nadan (2006) has effectively shown that Metzer's claims of progressive growth in the Arab agrarian economy are unfounded. [20]

Most of these accounts contain a resounding silence about Arab capitalist practice. The scanty and speculative character of figures on Palestinian wages, commerce, trade, and industry justifies this silence. Metzer (1998, 154; emphasis added) claims that "the dynamics of manufacturing in Mandatory Palestine was primarily, although *definitely not exclusively* , a Jewish story." Thus, the Palestinian story becomes an acceptable gap in historical inquiry. This lack enables the divided-economy narrative of modern European industry versus traditional rural Palestinian agriculture to proceed unchecked. Certainly, the Yishuv's forces in 1948 attempted to erase the Palestinian presence in the land as well as the records of that presence. [21] Moreover, Metzer's (2003, 14) claim that the Palestinians did not create statistical mechanisms for the systematic collection and analysis of economic data is correct. Ronen Shamir, building on the idea that the economy does not exist independently of the sciences that define and measure it, takes Metzer's conclusion one step further. Since Arab economists did not assemble a separate economy, Shamir (2013, 137) explains, "The 'Arab economy' … perhaps may be better understood as a 'negative assembly.'" This negative assembly "mainly existed as a kind of ephemeral shadow, appearing as the ambiguously inferior 'other' of its Jewish counterpart" (138). Shamir is of course correct in pointing to the Yishuv's successful "politics of calculation" (134). But, here, archival absences can play a pernicious role. While there *may* be a Palestinian economic story, the documents that could reveal it do not exist. [22] The assumption that there are no traces to unearth does not simply result in the story remaining untold. It leads to the conclusion that there is no story to tell. [23]

As it turns out, there are stories to tell about Arabs, calculation, and economy in Palestine. The best response to these accounts of stories untold comes from a return to scholars like Baruch Kimmerling (1983a, 1983b) and Gershon Shafir (1989), who historicized Zionism in Palestine as a settler-colonial movement. Zachary Lockman has begun a relational approach that insists on understanding Zionism not as an isolated European phenomenon (or as a colonial subject and his shadow) but in its interaction with the land and the people of Palestine. This work in turn has inspired scholarship that seeks to study both Arab and Jewish life in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine. [24] Yet in this scholarship, perceived or actual archival absences also lead to a particular formula: the Jews act, the Palestinians react. However, despite archival absences, scholars have provided intriguing portrayals of early twentieth-century Palestine as a dynamic time of cultural and literary production, as well as a period of significant social transformation that included an active women's movement, labor organizing, mass mobilization, and popular politics. [25] Still, the picture of Palestinian social life peopled by poor, illiterate masses of peasants and workers, alongside a small group of venal notables fraught with internecine competition, remains predominant.

The Aristocrat, the Comprador, the Hero, and the Catastrophe

In earlier periods in Palestine, social life does not appear quite so static and unchanging. Beshara

Doumani revealed the rise and fall of old and new urban elites in relation to shifting village politics from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Yet as the historical trajectory edges closer to the British Mandate era, there is an intense scholarly investment in the predictability of elites, who appear doggedly out of step with the times. Weldon Matthews's (2006) work on the Istiqlal Party in Palestine is an important corrective to this general trend of homogenizing elites. He addresses the growing influence of pan-Arab populism and destabilizes stock characters and stale strategies. But a scholarly insistence on the Palestinian elite as unchanging remains. Take, for example, the penchant to refer to families such as the Husseinis and Nashashibis as an "aristocracy." [26] Such a term is profoundly ahistorical, not simply in Palestine but for much of Europe as well. Parallel to the long life of the aristocracy as a social category of historical narrative is the continued insistence on describing early modern economic organization in Palestine as "feudal." While less fashionable in academic circles, the moniker of the feudal, or *iqta'i* , is still salient in everyday vernacular Arabic.

When they do take shape, they appear as compradors, indistinct or overwhelmingly Christian. For example, Walid Kazziha (1981) has argued that it was the notables in the Middle East who were the nascent bourgeoisie. They were compradors aligned with colonial rule while benefitting from economic growth and industrialization. In Palestine, Salim Tamari (2005) has argued that a "middling" new class of merchants and manufacturers was growing in the mandate period, particularly in the coastal cities of Gaza, Jaffa, Haifa, and Acre. However, this class was not distinguishable because of their organic links to landowners (Owen 1982, 199). Another characterization of this period is that many of these actors were Christian and thus exceptional. [27] "Christian merchants" thus became an easily understood collective, who appear in some accounts as unified in their stance against the boycott and the revolt (Porath 1974, 1977). During Ottoman rule, affiliation with European consulates and institutions privileged Christians in the realms of education and capital accumulation. However, the sectarian representation of men of capital is a drastic misreading. Christians played important roles in the propagation of an economic *nahda* in Palestine, but they were not dominant among the men who forged their philosophies in periodicals like *Iqtisadiyyat* or in spaces like the chambers of commerce. Eliding sect with politics is also inaccurate. Christian businessmen such as Emile Butaji and Jad Suidan did oppose the boycott and the revolt in Haifa. But others, like Fuad Saba, funded the rebels. Moreover, Muslim businessmen like Ahmad Hilmi Pasha and Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim shared the concern that the revolt would lead to their economic ruin.

Historians have used the divides between the comprador and authentic economic nationalist to explain late capitalism and the failure of the national bourgeoisie to uproot older forms of economic power. Robert Vitalis has thoroughly upended the comprador and nationalist divide in his work on capitalists in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century. Scholars depicted that period as one of a confrontation between parasitic compradors that shunned productive investment and consorted with colonial power and a patriotic, nationalist faction. Vitalis (1995) argued that local investors created private enterprises and national industries because of their access to both state and foreign capital. He has shown how businessmen, irrespective of label, undermined British attempts to construct a neocolonial regime in the decades after World War I.

Palestinian businessmen, like their Egyptian counterparts, used nationalism in a flexible way to protect their interests (Vitalis 1990). They shaped an ideal "social man" and categorized people into ranks and classes based on education and vocation. Central to these categorizations was the "middle class" (*al-tabqa al-wusta*), which these men used to define themselves and their social world. In the optimistic 1930s, men of capital in Palestine confined the middle class to the

so-called civilized people who were to embody a new kind of economic conduct. By the 1940s and in the face of both wartime constraints and the rapid erosion of political possibilities, men of capital expanded their understanding of the middle class to include what they called the authentic Bedouin and fellah who they sought to represent.

This shifting and exclusionary middle-class project has, like its protagonists, been subject to both neglect and celebration. Keith Watenpaugh (2006, 18) has suggested that this neglect is a wider phenomenon in Middle East historiography. [28] Because of the impression of a slavish imitation of its European cognate, the middle class has embarrassed scholars and led to "a paucity of work on this group." Watenpaugh (2012) has argued that the middle class in early twentieth-century Syria formed civil-society institutions that articulated participation, accountability, and equality as legitimate social expectations. This middle class failed to realize these expectations because its members were vulnerable to the bonds of religion, ethnicity, and family. But the time has come to question this rendition of civil society as a space distinct from and purified of other social loyalties. Perhaps, too, we should more carefully attend to a broader global conviction that the middle class has the potential to eradicate inequality and political instability (Weinstein and Lopez 2012, 3). As Barbara Weinstein and Ricardo Lopez point out, such a conviction positions the Anglo-American model as both universal and exceptional. In comparison, all other historical classes, within Europe and outside of it, will always be "found wanting" (8). But beyond the inevitability of frustrated emulation, the deeper problem is the middle class's self-description as a force of positive social change. After all, the goals of eradicating inequality and instability are not necessarily compatible. The imperative of stability works, historically and in the present, not to challenge social and economic inequality but to govern it. As men of capital in Palestine put it in the 1940s, rebellion and uprising were "not in anyone's interest." [29] Should we indict then, men of capital as the villains of the early twentieth century? This is a tempting conclusion, especially in light of the urge to explain the devastation of the Nakba.

When the story of a people pivots on a moment of tragic loss, the quiet before the storm is a source of nostalgia. As Rema Hammami (2003) points out, oral history and Nakba commemoration have taken on a life of their own in the West Bank, Gaza, and the various sites of Palestinian exile. There have been countless attempts to recreate the times of pre-Nakba Palestine (35–60). Some scholars continue to explain the outcome of 1948 as a result of a Palestinian "lack" and the absence of an "authentic nationalism" (Cohen 2008, 18). Idealization and nostalgia are linked to historical renditions of a period that epitomizes the failure to realize a nation-state. Given the widely scattered realities of Palestinians, the continued siege and occupation of Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank, and the persistence of statelessness, it is compelling to search the Palestinian historical record for what went wrong.

But in such a search, it is almost inevitable that nationalism—its "lack," its "strength," or its "weakness"—will stand as a metonym for politics. In some renditions, the weakness of normative nationalism—a "political deficiency" and a lack of a national "spirit"—resulted in, as the leading historian of collaboration continues to argue, the catastrophe of 1948 (Cohen 2008, 261, 263). In response, scholars have documented a national project among the Palestinians. This work is invaluable and has shifted the terms of debate as well as our understanding of the social and cultural geography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Palestine. However, to continue reveling in the marriage between national consciousness and politics reifies colonial epistemologies. Moving beyond nationalism as both the means and ends of politics is long overdue. Certainly, nationalism was one aspect of subjectivity formation, but it was not the only

way to make politics.

What I seek to destabilize here is not whether or not Palestinians were sufficiently national, but to ask why that sufficiency and its lack remain the measuring stick for whether people can remain on the land they resided on for centuries. Must people's investment in the shifting borders that imperial officials drew determine their status? Are there other ways to think about politics outside, beside, underneath, and alongside the nation?

I propose that we think of the political as the stuff of the everyday: the new anxieties about money, how to manage it, how to shape and reform the social body that both money and its lack threatens. I propose that the very ideas of need and basic needs are deeply political. What is a need? How does a need change? Who has which needs? These are all questions that occupied Palestinian men of capital and the British colonial officers who ruled them.

Men of Capital, Women of Thrift

Elites in Palestine were not homogenous. A growing group of men working in commercial, and to a lesser extent, industrial ventures were accumulating capital and expertise in the early twentieth century. These businessmen were a primarily urban, relatively wealthy group of men who attempted to build a new sort of hegemonic power. Their strategies and visions were invested in shaping and maintaining new forms of social hierarchy (just as radicals and rebels were invested in dislodging them). Elites shaped philosophies and visions of the ideal social body (*hay'a ijtima'iya*), the ideal "social man," and his ideal partner, the domestic manager. The home thus became a crucial site that was parallel to a national economy, in which saving, spending, needs, and desires had to be counted, surveilled, and controlled. An ideal woman was fashionable but frugal. She was scientific in her management of time, space, and money. By maintaining both aesthetic and culinary standards, this elite woman could forge the home as a space of moral containment for men tempted by what the domestic manager Salwa Sa'id called "houses of entertainment." Like the national economy, Sa'id and other reformers forged the domestic space that was also a place of shaping gendered norms and containing those others that haunted elite arrival: the servant, the worker, and the peasant (Seikaly 2016, 53–76). Attending to and critiquing these elites and their projects opens up new ways to think about Palestine's past, its present, and its relationship to the intellectual and social world in which it existed.

The British commitment to maintaining the status quo among Palestinians strengthened a handful of the landowning nobility. [30] The Husayni family and its main rival, the Nashashibis, used municipal elections, competition for mayoral posts, and control of institutions like the Supreme Muslim Council to jockey for power and create alliances. The foregone conclusion has been that the property, money, income, and power of these urban notables dominated the entire country (Carmi and Rosenfeld 1974, 470–85).

However, there is a history outside of this narrative of Palestinian factionalism and family rivalries. As Issa Khalaf (1991, 46) has shown, by World War I, local industries including flour milling, soap making, weaving, pipe making, and metal shops saw a diversification. Between 1918 and 1927, Arabs and Jews established 2,269 commercial and manufacturing enterprises. Some 60 percent of these enterprises were Arab, representing an investment of 613,000 Palestinian pounds. By 1927, there were 3,505 industrial establishments in Palestine. By 1935, Arab capital investment was mostly in tobacco, cardboard, soap and milling factories, and a growing textile industry, but Arabs also made industrial advances in metals, chemicals, leather, beverages, and quarrying. The largest shift occurred in the wartime period. In 1939, there were

339 Arab industrial establishments employing 4,117 people. The number of Arab industrial establishments jumped in 1943 to 1,558, employing 8,804 people. Arab capital investments went from 703,565 Palestinian pounds in 1939 to 2,131,307 pounds in 1942 (49). These numbers are small in comparison to the rapid growth of Jewish manufacturing during the Mandate, which went from generating 50 percent of Palestine's output in the 1920s to 60 percent in the early 1930s and reached 80 percent during wartime-induced industrialization (Metzer 1998, 154). Palestinian stagnancy and paralysis, however, was not the corollary of the growing hegemony of European Jewish industry.

A "middling" class existed which was not synonymous with the landowning class that continued its hold over inland cities like Tiberias and Nablus. Important shifts in political economy took place along the coast. Khalaf (1991) draws on Bayan al-Hut's study of one hundred political figures [31] to show that 35 percent of these elites were engaged in private enterprise and that many fell in the "middling" as opposed to wealthy categories. The Jaffa and Jerusalem Chambers of Commerce record evidence of a growing commercial and manufacturing class distinct from the landed nobility. In Jerusalem, for example, there was a rise from 84 to 118 businesses and companies from 1938 to 1947 (52). The Jerusalem Chamber included 260 general commission agencies, importers of luxury goods and appliances, retailers and wholesalers, and automobile, spare-part, and tire dealers. The Jaffa Chamber in the late 1940s shows a similar growth in trade, commercial sectors, and light industry. Of the 670 businesses in Jaffa, only 23 belonged to individuals from large landowning families. Similarly, in Jerusalem, 56 of 528 businessmen were from these families (52–8).

Economic diversification was not dependent on businesses associated with the investments of the urban nobility in imports and exports of cereal, the sale of construction materials, and milling factories (Khalaf 1991, 52). Nevertheless, Tamari's insistence on cross-fertilizations between a "middling" sort and a landowning class is crucial. Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, an influential man of capital in 1930s and 1940s Palestine, was "a landowner" (Owen 1982, 102), "a prominent merchant, a leader of the Haifa Islamic Society, and … a member of the Istiqlal Party" (Matthews 2006, 52), "a Haifa businessmen … [and a] banker" and a "Chamber activist" (Khalaf 1991, 74, 86). None of these descriptions are inaccurate. They point to the many positions that Ibrahim and men like him could occupy.

A Material *Nahda*

Men of capital, such as Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, and "women of thrift," such as the domestic reformer Salwa Sa'id, did not understand themselves primarily through their confrontation with Zionism. In their projects of economic cultivation and domestic reform, they positioned themselves as part of a broader Arab *nahda* . Positioning Palestine and Palestinians in this world of Arab thought and social life provincializes the Zionist-Palestinian conflict as the only way to tell the story of the early twentieth century. The *nahda* was that heterogeneous movement wherein the nation was to rise up, discard corrupt and outdated traditions, and realize the triumphant arrival of the modern. [32] For economic thinkers in 1930s Palestine, the *nahd* a was very much alive, formulating the contours of a utopian capitalist future in terms of conduct, ethics, and territories. The rights of the individual were crucial to their prescriptions for a healthy and organic social body. They drew on various universes of thought that spanned al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun to Locke, Rousseau, Smith, and Marx. Men of capital shaped social life in ways parallel to and divergent from European liberal thinkers, whose relationship to imperialism has

been the subject of rich and ongoing debate. [33]

The *nahda* , then, was an intensive time of intellectual exchange and plurality. Ilham Khuri-Makdisi has gone far in making unexceptional the intellectual history of the Middle East by narrating the significance of socialism among thinkers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her groundbreaking contributions challenge the emphasis on nationalism in Arab and Middle Eastern intellectual life. However, the importance of economic thought and the capitalist threads of the *nahda* have not been overstudied, as Khuri-Makdisi suggests. In fact, we lack a historical narrative of economic thought in the Arab world. Moreover, one of the intriguing nuances of Khuri-Makdisi's account is her finding that figures like Amin al-Rihani, who was a leading socialist voice, would regularly share drafts with the Islamic modernist, Muhammad Abduh. Khuri-Makdisi positions these exchanges in older practices of collective writing. But they help us further complicate the *nahda* as a type of intellectual environment in which the categories of Islamist, capitalist, and socialist were neither stable nor categories that could preclude a shared intellectual project. Indeed, Rihani contributed to the Palestinian economic periodical *Iqtisadiyyat* . Through a carefully crafted *nahda* narrative, he portrayed a transhistorical commercial essence of Arab culture that could unite the quest for awakening, dignity, and modern arrival.

Thus, the twentieth century in Palestine was not simply a period of "unfulfilled promise" that entailed "a pervasive cultural tone of anguish and disgust, of resentment, resistance, rebellion, and death" (Khalidi 1981, 59–60). [34] Elite Palestinians envisioned and imagined the future through notions of progress, class distinction, and civilizational superiority. A pervasive tone of conspiracy and crisis only became prevalent after the 1940s. But even that decade was not (as scholars have long described it) a period of political or social paralysis (Yasin 1967, 230). [35] Furthermore, while we are accustomed to understanding visions of pan-Arabism as wedded to socialist economic planning, here we see another type of marriage that is worthy of further exploration: an Arab utopia built on the foundations of private property, investment, self-responsibility, and the accumulation of capital.

Making Economy Visible

Palestinian men of capital and British colonial officers mobilized economy as a site of social management in the early twentieth century. They took part in broader efforts to forge economy as objective, bounded, and external (Goswami 2004, 335).

Mapping territory, growth, time, and the future became central preoccupations for bureaucrats and theorists alike in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Calculations made the future and progress statistically representable and rationally attainable (Kalpagam 1999, 151). They also required the separation of various entities as constitutive outsides, such as the state and the household. Such distinctions could work to render the informal economy residual, though it might be at the very heart of economic production (Roitman 2005, 19). [36] The push to calculate and make visible also led to new possibilities in surveillance. Managing economy through statistics was a new art of government in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Foucault 1991, 92). [37] Adam Tooze (2001) has argued that new data technologies led bureaucrats to fantasize about controlling the economy not only by manipulating national aggregates but also by innovating systems of individualized surveillance. Catherine Gallagher (2006) has shown that the health and vitality of the laboring body demanded constant attention from economic theorists. Economic representations and forms of knowledge dominated subjects.

However, Janet Roitman (2005, 8) has pointed out that new "techniques of the self" were also components of that domination. Through this calculability, and the many areas it rendered invisible or residual, men and women constructed the object of the economy (Dummont 1977). The economy from this perspective is not a preexisting reality but an achievement (Çalişkan and Callon 2009, 369).

How did that entity, the economy, take shape outside the "the homes of Quesnay, Petty, Smith, Playfair, Ricardo or Marx" (Kalpagam 1997, PE2)? Certainly, in Palestine just as for much of the world outside the West, colonial domination facilitated the forging of the economy as an autonomous sphere (Estava 1992, 17). The particular form of colonial domination in Palestine was the mandate system. This system, Antony Anghie (2004) has argued, was an experiment in international management that attempted to govern the gap between the civilized and the uncivilized in economic terms; the discipline of economics promoted the development of the colonized through new, ostensibly neutral indicators. But as we have seen, the Mandate in Palestine was exceptional in its endorsement of settler colonialism. How then did the achievement of an economy take shape in a settler-colonial context? What happened when the large majority of bodies to be counted were not only colonized but also stripped of a political name to inhabit a foreclosed national future?

In Palestine, the division between politics and economics, the politics of growth and abundance, and the shaping of the household and the body as sites of management and surveillance were all in process. The colonial regime conducted its own attempts to subject bodies and commodities to greater surveillance (Kalpagam 1997, PE8). But it was not growth that inspired these colonial efforts. It was the threat of war and the management of scarcity that necessitated them. Incoherence and inefficiency marked the metrological regimes that the British colonial regime introduced, through new indices such as the cost of living and the calorie. Time and again, British colonial officers failed in standardizing and homogenizing everything from weights to rations. This failure was intimately linked to the settler-colonial condition of the Palestinian present and future (Seikaly 2016, 77–102, 103–26, 155–78). It would be much longer before the overall project of constructing the economy ushered in a "new sociality for things and persons" (Kalpagam 1997, PE7). It was elite Palestinian conceptions of social hierarchy that consolidated and marked those techniques of the self.

To map these Palestinian techniques, it would be wise to avoid what Tooze (2001) has called the "tree model" of cultural development, in which branches, stems, and shoots of conceptions of economy all sprout from Keynes (1936, 14) and his cohort. Following Franco Moretti (2000), Tooze (2001, 13) advises a "wave" approach to understand how innovations in conceiving and measuring economy swept the globe in the first half of the twentieth century. The aim is not to map "a repository of pure difference" (Goswami 2004, 24) that will cleanse the "derivative" (Chatterjee 1986) character of Palestinian economic thought. One of the reasons men of capital in Palestine are difficult to understand today is because they occupied multiple universes of thought that are not immediately accessible to us. It would be more productive to approach these universes not through a closed tautology of origin and copy but through an attention to how the idea of economy, the imperative of management, and the crisis of bare needs worked across national, regional, and colonial divides.

To What End?

What does the visibility of men of capital accomplish? Does it prove once and for all that there

was a Palestinian economy that was more than a "negative assembly"? Or alternatively, is it a way to evidence a heroic character, invested in some pure and distinct space called civil society, as the historical alternative to the twentieth- and twenty-first-century suicide bomber, as Keith Watenpaugh (2006, 301) has suggested?

To relegate the Palestinian businessman to the shadows of inferiority or to recover him as an artifact of the modern are two sides of the same conceptual bind. The first takes colonial epistemology for granted: the colonial figure and his shadow become an acceptable way to tell the history of Palestine. The second impulse, recovering the shadow into the light, appears at first glance to respond to this colonial logic. But is it trapped within it? The recovery works as a salve against everything that is wrong with the Palestinian and Arab present (Elyachar 2012). [38] To access and critique the debates that have shaped the present requires rejecting the logic of the colonial body and its shadow, to decenter the colonial body, and to ask new questions.

Jacob Metzer (2003) points out that the Palestinians did not create mechanisms to collect and analyze Arab economy. He is right. The Palestinians were unable to calculate their commercial, financial, and industrial ventures. Avi Shlaim (1995, 299) has argued that the Palestinians did "next to nothing" to build an independent state. He is right too. Missing from these assessments is the condition that Palestinians continue to grapple with until today: settler colonialism. Palestinian men of capital understood the need for calculation, statistics, and economic visibility, they understood the need for national institutions, and they forged attempts and intellectual projects around both. What was the content of these projects and how did settler colonialism foreclose them?

In a different vein, scholars like Issa Khalaf (1991) and Salim Tamari (2005) have argued that the Palestinian "bourgeoisie," to the extent that it existed, did not succeed in realizing a national economy. They too are right. Men of capital failed in realizing the economic accumulation that would realize national independence. What were the conditions of this failure? How did men of capital link their economic interests to national sovereignty? More importantly still, in what ways did these men of capital succeed?

As opposed to the easily understood and reiterated narratives of Palestine in the early twentieth century, this British-ruled Palestine features a diverse set of characters: the man of capital, the false intellectual, the true intellectual, the unemployed youth, the spendthrift urbanite, the fashionable but frugal domestic manager, the maid, the worker, the native, the foreigner, the abundant farmer, and the law-abiding and authentic Bedouin and fellah. A set of spaces also come into view: the "black market"; new "houses of entertainment," cafes, cinema houses, and restaurants; the idyllic and healthy Arab home; and a broader territory of capitalist pan-Arab utopia.

The focus on economy highlights the significance of the *nahda* in Palestine and Palestine's significance to the *nahda* . In turn, the centrality of economy in Palestinian economic thought, as a mode of conduct and as an indicator of well-being, challenges how we have understood the *nahda* in the broader Arab world. It was not only a cultural or literary project. It did not only contain national or radical ideologies. In the 1930s, in Palestine and beyond, the *nahda* was an economic project that shaped subjectivity and territory.

It was during this period that the British colonial government embarked on a series of its own attempts to count and regulate subjects and territories. In the 1940s, it used the calorie and cost of living as technologies of rule in Palestine. It was not an obsession with numbers or a fascination with omniscience that drove their efforts. It was the crisis of supply, the fear of upheaval, and the exigencies of war that propelled them to action. This disarray qualifies the

tempting coherence of economic calculation as a disciplinary project in Palestine and beyond.

Yet regardless of its limitations, economic calculation would have lasting legacies for the relationship between basic needs and political containment. Indices like the calorie and the cost of living across colonial and postcolonial divides functioned to contain dissident politics. These indices' claim to being universal was contingent on exclusion. In Palestine, a diversity of people and practices defied categorization and resisted homogenization. For example, a disastrous colonial scheme to control vegetable production, distribution, and marketing in Palestine nourished the informal markets that it ostensibly sought to "rationalize." In another example, the category of the "Oriental Jew" confounded colonial scientists as they sought to forge a nutritional economy and identify "racial expenditure groups" (*A Nutritional Economic Survey of Wartime Palestine* 1943). At every turn, the attempts to make economy visible revealed how deeply the colonial government had neglected Palestinians as subjects to be counted and categorized. That neglect, regardless of ongoing speculation about British colonial intent, was not coincidental or contingent. The invisibility of the Palestinian in the colonial archive was one component of the broader condition of settler colonialism.

Palestinian economic thinkers and businessmen may tempt us at first as indicators of a lost world, glimpses of an alternative future. But we must reject the impulse to mourn. The social ordering these men and women prioritized worked to contain social mobility, silence dissent, and stunt the potential for revolutionary change. The emphasis on private property, individual freedom, and self-responsibility in which Palestinian capitalists were so invested in the 1930s receded in the face of austerity in the 1940s and national dispossession in 1948. That recession, however, was temporary. Indeed, in business narrations of the time, it was abnormal. The imperative of profit as a vehicle for and an indication of progress and its inextricability from the closely linked goals of maintaining social hierarchy and containing politics would not simply flourish; they would become the scaffolding of the future.

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1. This article is adapted from *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* , by Sherene Seikaly.
2. See Saba, F. S. Letter to Secretary of Arab Higher Committee. Jerusalem. 5 April 1948. Israel State Archive in Jerusalem: AAD/RG65/al-Hussaini. The Arab Higher Committee was first constituted in 1936 in response to the outbreak of the revolt. In 1946, the Arab League reconstituted the Committee. See Mattar (1992) and Pappé (2004).

3. National Committee of Bir al-Sabi'. 1948. Letter to Secretary of Arab Higher Committee. Jerusalem. 17 March 1948. Israel State Archive in Jerusalem: AAD/RG65/al-Hussaini.
4. As I discuss in my book *Men of Capital* (Seikaly 2016), I have made a conscious choice here of calling these figures what they called themselves. As I suggest below, the categories of the "middle class" were in formation and were not categories of self-identification.
5. See also Khalidi's (2006) *Iron Cage* and Morris's (1987) *The Birth of the Refugee Problem 1947-49* .
6. Personal interview with Fuad Saba, grandson of the elder Fuad Saba. 21 January 2013.
7. See also Alexander Scholch (1982, 56).
8. See article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, Versailles, 28 June 1919, in force 10 January 1920.
9. As Campos (2009, 18) puts it: "Many memoires argued that 'native' Sephardi and Maghrebi Jews shared cultural, spatial, and everyday practices with their Muslim neighbors that sharply differentiated them from 'newcomer' Ashkenazi Jewish co-religionists."
10. I am grateful to Max Ajl for pushing me on the processual and incomplete process of partition.
11. See also the discussions in Lockman (1996) and Said (1979).
12. Herzl's contemporary, the cultural Zionist Ahad Ha'am (2004), warned as early as 1891 that the promise of an empty land was a myth: the truth from the land of Israel, as he titled his essay, was that every piece of tillable land was already being tilled. The Arabs, he explained, were not dupes, and they would most likely put up a fight. Across the political spectrum and several decades later in 1923, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the father of the Revisionists, and the forefathers of the Likud Party weighed in on the debate about Zionism's relationship to the Palestinians. Zionist colonization would not happen, he explained, without the use of force. The Arabs who lived on the land of Palestine would not accept the imposition of Zionism. See Jabotinsky's (2002) "The Iron Wall."
13. See also Piterberg (2007).
14. See also Boyarin (1997, 21–52), Raz-Krakotzin (2005), Said (1979), and Shohat (1988).
15. Ronen Shamir (2013) explores how electric currents, poles, and networks *made* politics rather than simply *transmitting* politics. The concession to the Athlit Salt Company lasted until 1928 when the government extended preferential treatment to the company's poor quality and expensive salt in the form of a protective customs duty on the higher-quality and lower-cost salt from Egypt.
16. See also de Vries (2010).
17. See also Horowitz and Lissak (1978).
18. See also Scholch (1982, 10–87), Owen (1981), and Doumani (1995).
19. Metzer's (1998) postscript on the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 is a continuation of these convictions: "The simple fact that the territories were economic lightweights meant that they stood to be the main beneficiary of the bilateral economic relations with Israel, which dominated their external trade. These relations were conducted under the control of the occupational administration."
20. See also Mousa (2006).
21. Indeed, it is not coincidental that subsequent Israeli incursions since 1948 in Beirut, Nablus, and Gaza have often targeted archives. See Amit (2008), Banko (2012), Doumani (2009), Mermelstein (2011), Twiss (2002), and Gdoura (2003). Thanks to Mezna Qato for leading me to these sources.
22. On approaching archives with skepticism, see Steedman (2011).
23. On archival production as an act of governance, see Stoler (2009).
24. See Jacobsen (2011), LeVine (2005), Sufian (2007), and Sufian and LeVine (2007).
25. An abridged list of such efforts includes but is not limited to: Abu-Ghazaleh (1973), Budeiri (1981), Graham-Brown (1980), Khalidi (1981), and Miller (1985); and more recently, Ayalon (2004), Fleischmann (2003), Ghandour (2010), Haiduc-Dale (2013), Kabaha (2007), Khalidi (1997), LeVine (2005), Lockman (1996), Matthews (2006), Norris (2013), Stanton (2013), Swedenburg (1995), Tamari (2005), and Tamari and Nassar (2005).
26. See, e.g., Ghandour (2010), Pappé (2011), Lavie (1996), Saloul (2013), Suleiman (2011), and Swedenburg (1995). Zachary Lockman gently pointed out to me many years ago that my use of the term aristocracy was inaccurate. I have been grateful ever since.
27. See Porath (1974, 1977) and Smith (1993, 14). For a critique of this depiction, see Haiduc-Dale (2013).
28. See the work of Abou-Hodeib (2012), Gasper (2009), Gekas (2009), Hanley (2008), Mataraci (2005), Khater (2001), Martin (2005), Tignor (1998), and Watenpaugh (2006).
29. See "Representations by the Arab Chamber of Commerce to the Control Department of Post War Trade," 1945. Israel State Archive in Jerusalem: RG2/CSO/87/19.
30. The big landowning families in this period were: Khuri (Haifa), 'Abd al-Hadi (Nablus), al-Taji al-Faruqi (Ramli), al-Ghusayn (Ramli), Baidas (Shaykh Mu'nis), Abu Khaddra (Jaffa, Gaza), Shawa (Gaza), Hanun (Tulkarm), Baydun (Acre), al-Fahum (Nazareth), al-Tabari (Tiberias), and Jarrar and Nimr (Nablus).
31. Khalaf (1991) draws on the work of al-Hout (1979). Khalaf surveys one hundred political figures, and her sample includes individuals in political institutions throughout the Mandate, including the various political parties, the Arab Executive, the Supreme Muslim Council, the Arab Higher Committee, the Muslim Christian societies, the National Committees, the Arab League, and delegations to the United Nations.
32. This definition of the *nahda* is adapted from Khater's (2001, 155) work *Inventing Home* . The call for "awakening" had wide resonance in pan-Arab movements as well as in Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian Arab nationalist movements. "Awake, O Arabs, and arise!" were the first lines of the 1868 ode "Tanabbahu wa istafiqu" by the Syrian poet Ibrahim al-Yaziji. George

Antonius (1938) was to later evoke these words in his treatise *The Arab Awakening* . This theme of awakening was to characterize the language of Arab nationalists and its historians for decades to come. In the wake of the 2011 uprisings and revolutions in the Arab world, this theme of awakening has again found dominance in intellectual and media circles.

33. For a taste of this debate, see Ince (2013), Losurdo (2011), Mehta (1999), Mantena (2010), Pitts (2005, 2010, 2011), Muthu (2003), and Sartori (2006, 2008). Scholars have convincingly argued that the project of British and French liberalism cannot be fully understood outside of the material conditions of imperialism and colonial capitalism that informed it. Here, the shift is to trace not how European liberals understood and acted on the colonized but how colonized elites adapted a variety of ideas and practices to navigate the promises and dangers of economic growth.

34. Tarif Khalidi punctured this narrative by detailing Palestinian intellectuals' turn to history.

35. Subhi Yassin, among others, speaks of the post-revolt period in Palestine as one of severe political stagnation. The "frustration trope" can be read in such works as Lesch (1979) and Khalidi (1997). For a critique of this narrative, see Eldin (2008).

36. See also Elyachar (2005).

37. See also Roitman (2005).

38. Here I am adapting Julia Elyachar's critique of the use of neoliberalism as an epithet that stands for everything that is wrong with the present.

Arms and Oil in the Middle East: A Biography of Research

Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan

This essay interweaves two stories—one theoretical and empirical, the other autobiographical. The first story embeds the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the broader political economy of the Middle East and the global accumulation of "capital as power." The second story narrates the authors' personal journey to uncover, theorize, and research this enfoldment. The essay explores and contextualizes the misleading duality of politics and economics; the link between military spending, finance, and stagflation; the concepts of "dominant capital" and "differential accumulation" and their evolution through "breadth" and "depth"; the manner in which these concepts and processes inform the political economy of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the ways in which they help identify the key role of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition and predict the periodic eruption of Middle East "energy conflicts." In their explorations, the authors have encountered numerous gatekeepers who tried to derail their research as well as a few open-minded editors who sought to promote it, and it is probably fair to say that, dialectically, they have benefited from both.

1. The Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition

During the late 1980s, we published a series of working papers offering a new approach to the political economy of Israel and wars in the Middle East. [1] The research journey leading to these papers started a decade earlier, with our attempt to understand the local political-economic roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Our local focus, though, proved too narrow. Gradually, we realized that the conflict, however domestic in appearance, could not be understood in isolation from the broader political economy of the Middle East, the role of the superpowers, particularly the United States, and the logic of capital accumulation more generally.

In line with this broader vista, our approach in these working papers rested on three new concepts. It started by identifying the *Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition*— an alliance of armament firms, oil companies and financial institutions based mostly in the United States—whose interests, we posited, converged in the Middle East. [2] It continued by arguing that the interests of this coalition were best measured by its *differential accumulation*— i.e., by its performance relative to other large firms. And it concluded by showing that variations in differential accumulation predicted subsequent *Middle East energy conflicts* .

At the time, the papers seemed unpublishable. They were politically unaligned (neither neoclassical nor Marxist), and they were nondisciplinary (belonging to neither economics nor politics nor to any other social science, for that matter). But they made a scientific prediction: the Middle East, they argued, was ripe for another round of military hostilities and oil crises (Bichler, Rowley, and Nitzan 1989, sec. 2.3), and when the 1990–1 Gulf War broke out, their theoretical framework sounded very relevant.

Now, prediction alone does not guarantee publication, certainly in the mainstream social sciences. But these were no ordinary times. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and the global victory of neoliberalism, the world of academic publishing began to change: talk of "capitalism" and "accumulation" was no longer politically incorrect, journals of critical political economy started sprouting everywhere, and enterprising editors, energized by the rekindled spirit of competition, hunted for new and different takes on a rapidly changing world.

One of these new journals was the *Review of International Political Economy* (*RIPE*). The

referees who vetted our piece were clearly schizophrenic, finding it hard to decide whether it was innovative and path breaking or faulty and unsubstantiated. But the *RIPE* editors decided to gamble, publishing our 124-page submission as-is in a two-part paper series (Nitzan and Bichler 1995; Bichler and Nitzan 1996b). Moreover, despite the exceedingly long page count, they agreed to include a data appendix with the articles' raw financial time series.

2. The Unknown Facts

This last point merits elaboration. Good science depends on empirical evidence, and empirical evidence means more than findings and conclusions: it also requires authors to provide their raw data, discuss the data, and show that they indeed measure what they claim to. In economics (and in the social sciences more generally) this requirement is rarely met. In practice, most economists do not engage in empirical analysis at all. The few who do empirical work seldom provide their data. And surprising as it may sound, many of the basic data they use—from "real GDP" to "productivity" to the "capital stock"—bear little or no connection to their declared conceptual underpinnings (Leontief 1982, 1983; Nitzan 1989; Bichler and Nitzan 2009, ch. 5–8).

But our reason for engaging with the data went beyond mere formalities. When the subject at hand is hamstrung by rigid disciplinary boundaries, exploring new data can be highly generative: it exposes contradictions, casts doubt, and calls for new categories, original ways of thinking, and novel theories.

To illustrate, take the study of oil. As it stands, the subject is crisscrossed with disciplinary barriers and boundaries: energy policies, the machinations of politicians, and the activities of state officials are normally dealt with by international-relations pundits; the causes and consequences of oil production, prices, and trade are monopolized by macroeconomists; individual companies and sectors are handled by applied microeconomists and finance specialists; the interaction between oil, religion, and ethnicity is dominated by experts of culture; and so on. Every aspect of this subject seems tucked within its own protected niche, mediated by its own concepts and methods and dominated by its own gatekeeping experts.

And the same holds true for the study of military spending and the arms trade. Here, too, the boundaries are clear: the interaction between armament, interstate conflict, and the balance of power belongs to international-relations specialists; the effect of armaments on overall trade and the balance of payments, employment, and growth rates is the domain of economists; and the impact of armament on domestic bellicosity is the purview of political scientists and culturalists.

These boundaries can be very stifling, serving to safeguard consensus, ward off challenges, and prevent novelty—and it is precisely in such a context that new data can prove subversive. As we shall see in the next section, our own work uncovered a new, long-term correlation between the differential profitability of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition and the periodic eruption of Middle East energy conflicts. The data showed that, although every regional conflict has its own features, and although these features relate to various aspects of society and therefore to different social sciences, we can go beyond these particularities. Specifically, we can identify a *general* process that encompasses, molds, and gradually shapes these otherwise unique conflicts, and we can show that this process belongs not to this or that narrow domain of society, but to the *universalizing power logic of capitalism at large* .

By predicting the historical ebb and flow of Middle East energy conflicts, differential profitability allows us to overstep the fractures separating international relations, economics, domestic politics, and culture. And as these fractures become less relevant, so do the categories

they enforce and the theories they impose.

Take the foundational concept of "scarcity." Economists use it to explain, rationalize, and justify the ways in which commodities are produced and priced. The larger the gap between our unlimited wants (demand) and limited means (supply), they argue, the greater the scarcity. The greater the scarcity, they continue, the higher the price on the one hand and the stronger the incentive to produce on the other. And since oil is a commodity like any other, they conclude, it follows that its production and pricing—just like the production and pricing of every other commodity—is driven by scarcity mediated by supply and demand.

Our own work, however, shows that this foundational concept is dubious. We have demonstrated not only that the very notion of scarcity is circular and nonscientific, but also that, even if valid, its conventional measure bears no systematic relation to the production and pricing of oil (Nitzan and Bichler 1995, 489, fig. 6; Bichler and Nitzan 2015, 52, fig. 1). In addition, we have showed that OPEC governments—which mainstream economic theory loves to blame for "intervening in," "shocking," and "distorting" the otherwise "free market" for oil—share the same pecuniary interests as the very oil companies they supposedly seek to undermine (Nitzan and Bichler 1995, 485, fig. 5; Bichler and Nitzan 2015, 58, fig. 2).

With so much going against it, it is no wonder that research like ours has been rare. Very few researchers have ever bothered to examine the historical profits, contracts, and sales of the leading oil and armament firms over the past century, let alone relate them to the political economy of the Middle East. And since nobody had investigated this subject, when we started our research in the late 1980s, these long-term time series simply did not exist: they had to be conceived, collated, analyzed, unified, and standardized, often from scratch.

And that wasn't easy. First, there were theoretical issues. For example, what constitutes a "leading armament firm" or a "dominant oil company"? How should they be ranked? How do we reconcile their various accounting methods, different reporting periods, and numerous retroactive revisions? What is the meaning of "real" military spending and arms exports (as opposed to their nominal dollar values)?

And then there were practical hurdles. Recall that these were the 1980s, before the internet, the World Wide Web, and readily accessible databases. The "data points" were scattered across different libraries around the world, buried in various print publications. They had to be located and requested via snail mail. When found, they were snail mailed back via interlibrary loans—sometimes in print, at other times as photocopies or on microfiche. And when they arrived, they had to be collated, organized, and inputted, one datum at a time, into user-unfriendly computer programs (Microsoft Excel came into common use only five years later).

Given these difficulties and the amount of work needed to overcome them, we thought it was important to make our raw data freely available. We hoped that these data would enable other scientists to critically engage with and extend our work, and we were therefore delighted that *RIPE* shared this vision of open science and was willing to put in the extra pages.

3. Energy Conflicts and Differential Profit

The historical link between energy conflicts and differential profits is demonstrated in figure 1 . [3] The chart shows the differential return on equity of the Petro-Core. This measure is computed in two steps: first, by subtracting the return on equity of the group of Fortune 500 companies from the return on equity of the Petro-Core; and second, by expressing the resulting difference as a percent of the Fortune 500's return on equity. Positive readings (grey bars) indicate differential

accumulation: they measure the extent to which the Petro-Core beats the Fortune 500 average. Negative readings (black bars) show differential *de* cumulation: they tell us by how much the Petro-Core trails this average. [4]

A stretch of differential *de* cumulation constitutes a "danger zone"—a period during which an energy conflict is likely to erupt in the Middle East. The actual breakout of a conflict is marked by an explosion sign. The individual conflicts are listed in the note underneath the chart (for a similar analysis that uses different data to show the same results, see Bichler and Nitzan 2015, 65–7).

Figure 1 shows three stylized patterns that have remained practically unchanged for nearly half a century:

- First and most important, every energy conflict save one was preceded by the Petro-Core trailing the average. In other words, for a Middle East energy conflict to erupt, the leading oil companies first have to differentially decumulate. [5] The only exception to this rule is the 2011 burst of the Arab Spring and the subsequent blooming of "outsourced wars" (our term for the ongoing fighting in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, which is financed and supported by a multitude of governments and organizations in and outside the region). This round erupted without prior differential decumulation—although the Petro-Core was very close to falling below the average. In 2010, its differential return on equity dropped to a mere 3.3 percent, down from 71.5 percent in 2009 and a whopping 1,114 percent in 2008.

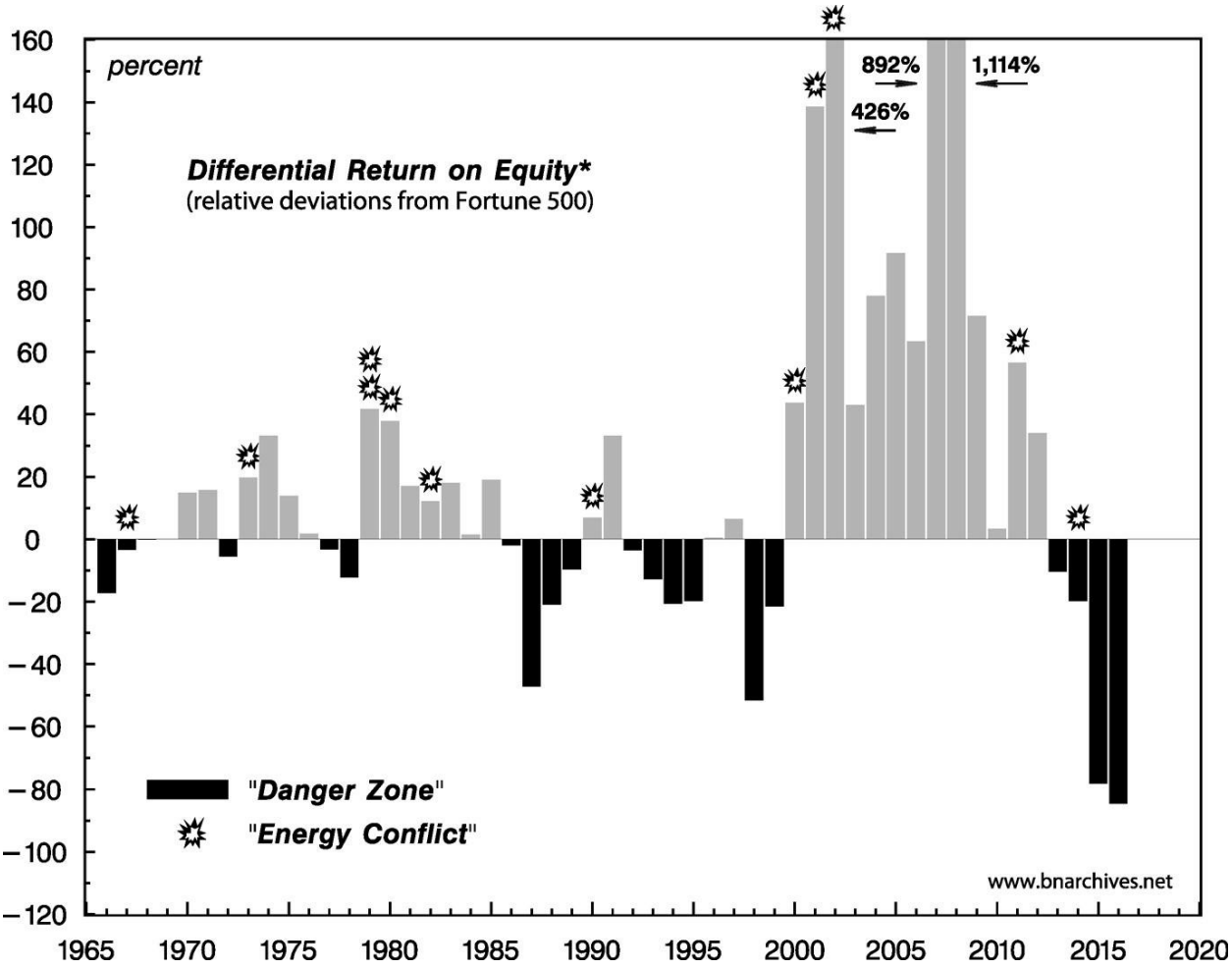

Fig. 1 Energy Conflicts and Differential Profits: The Petro-Core vs. the Fortune 500

* Return on equity is the ratio of net profit to owners' equity. Differential return on equity is the difference between the return on equity of the Petro-Core and the Fortune 500, expressed as a percent of the return on equity of the Fortune 500. For 1992–3, data for Fortune 500 companies were reported without SFAS 106 special charges. The last data point is for 2016.

NOTE : The Petro-Core consists of British Petroleum (BP Amoco since 1998), Chevron (with Texaco since 2001), Exxon (ExxonMobil since 1999), Mobil (before 1998), Royal Dutch Shell and Texaco (before 2000). Company changes are due to mergers. Energy conflicts mark the starting points of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the 1980 Iran-Iraq War, the 1982 second Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the 1990–1 first Gulf War, the 2000 Second Palestinian Intifada, the 2001 attack of 9/11 with the launching of the "War on Terror" and the invasion of Afghanistan, the 2002–3 second Gulf War, the 2011 Arab Spring and outsourced wars, and the 2014 third Gulf War.

SOURCES : Reproduced and updated from Bichler and Nitzan (2015, 64, fig. 4); data from *Fortune*, *Compustat* through WRDS, and *Mergent* .

- Second, until 2014 every energy conflict was followed by the oil companies beating the average. In other words, until very recently, war and conflict in the region—processes that are customarily blamed for rattling, distorting, and undermining the aggregate economy—served the differential interests of the large oil companies at the expense of leading nonoil firms. [6] This finding, although striking, should not surprise us: differential oil profits are intimately correlated with the relative price of oil (Bichler and Nitzan 2015, 60, fig. 3); the relative price of oil is in turn highly responsive to Middle East risk perceptions, real or imaginary; these risk perceptions tend to jump in preparation for and during armed conflict; and as the risks mount, they raise the relative price of oil and therefore the differential

accumulation of the oil companies. (This long-term pattern, though, appears to have been broken with the onset of the third Gulf War in 2014. Despite the ongoing hostilities, oil prices have plummeted and differential decumulation has not only continued but reached record lows. We return to this apparent structural change in the last section of the essay.)

- Third and finally, with one exception, in 1996–7, the Petro-Core never managed to beat the average without there first being an energy conflict in the region. [7] In other words, the differential performance of the oil companies depended not on production but on the most extreme form of sabotage: war. [8]

As far as we know, this analysis remains unique: no one else has uncovered the patterns it reveals, let alone analyzed its underlying relationships and broader implications.

4. Politics and Economics

The questions leading to this analysis first emerged in the early 1980s when we were still university students—though initially these questions pertained not to the global political economy of the Middle East but to Israel. During those years, the country was mired in a deep crisis that had started in the early 1970s and intensified after the political rise of the radical Right in 1977. The crisis was marked by two seemingly unrelated phenomena: stagflation and militarization.

The stagflationary process combined decelerating growth and rising unemployment on the one hand with soaring inflation and a booming stock market on the other. In 1983, at the peak of this process, Israel's one-year-old invasion of Lebanon appeared headed for a humiliating defeat, the economy stagnated, and inflation hit 200 percent. The stock market, however, rigged by the large conglomerates, the finance ministry, and the central bank (yes, by all three, in daily collusion) reached an all-time high. [9]

In this context, we found it striking to see Israeli academics insisting that politics and economics must be studied separately and independently. On the "political" side, the country was becoming increasingly militarized and racialized. Labor governments have long maintained that Israel's was an interstate conflict with its Arab neighbors. However, Menachem Begin's new right-wing government abandoned this facade. By embarking on an open policy of Jewish settlements and permanent military rule in the occupied Palestinian territories, by invading Lebanon with the stated intention of "cleansing" it of "Palestinian terrorist organizations," and by cementing the bond between the Rabbinate church, Israeli nationalism, and Jewish racism, this government exposed the true roots of the conflict: a foundational clash between the Zionist project and the indigenous Palestinian population.

The "economy," though, continued to function as if none of this mattered—or so it seemed. For Israeli social scientists, the economic categories of supply, demand, equilibrium, productivity, the capital stock, output, and prices—and therefore the actual economy they defined—remained self-contained. Politics, militarization, religion, and racism of course counted but only as "external shocks" and "distortions." Moreover, these shocks and distortions were remnants of an old statist legacy, and the good news was that, courtesy of the new "liberal" government, they were finally on their way out.

The insistence on separating economics from politics produced strange bedfellows—for example, free-market economists leading Peace Now demonstrations. During the day these economists worked in the service of capital, advising governments, consulting corporations, and

preaching the wonders of perfect competition and the evils of government intervention. At night, though, they marched the streets and gave speeches, calling on their government to end the occupation and give the Palestinians their own state. And for most observers this marriage looked natural. In their minds, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and its statist economy were offspring of the same original sin: Socialist Zionism. Relieving Zionism of its socialism, they argued, would liberate both the Palestinians and the market in one fell swoop.

This context helped keep the country's social sciences, founded during the Cold War, highly conservative. They dismissed Marxism as irrelevant to the Israeli case, discouraged broad criticisms, and penalized innovative dissent. Most of their academics were mainstream, and even those who saw themselves as radical and socialist rarely allowed their "political beliefs" to affect their "professional research." Between the late 1970s and the late 1980s—the dark years of the Begin-Peres-Shamir regime—you could not find a single paper written by an Israeli academic in a heterodox journal of political economy (let alone a paper that used radical methods and theories). [10]

At the time, the only people who offered Marxist political-economic analyses of Israel and its broader context were members of Matzpen, a radical left movement of Hebrew and Arab activists founded in the 1960s. According to Orr and Machover's seminal book *Peace, Peace, and No Peace* (1961, 2009; the latter, English translation has a slightly different title), Israel's evolution was rooted, first and foremost, in its conflict with the Palestinians—a process that, they argued, began in the late nineteenth century with the Zionists' first organized colonization of the country, abated after the Palestinian defeat of 1948, and reignited with the 1967 occupation of additional Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza. [11]

An innovative Marxist exploration of this process was offered by another Matzpen activist, Emmanuel Farjoun (1978, 1980, 1983). Farjoun identified a progressive "dual-economy" bifurcation of the Israeli labor market into both a monopoly sector of large firms with unionized employees and also a competitive sector of small firms with unorganized workers. The 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, he showed, hastened this bifurcation by flooding the competitive sector with cheap Palestinian labor. And this hastening, his work suggested, made the Palestinians highly dependent on Israel, weakened the position of organized Jewish labor relative to capital, and eventually paved the way for the rise of Israel's radical Right.

5. Military Spending and Inflation

As noted, our own research focus was the twin processes of militarization and stagflation, and at the time this focus seemed congruent with "macro-Marxist" theories that emerged in the United States in the 1960s during the Vietnam War and that gained traction during the stagflation crisis of the 1970s. The most relevant of these theories, we thought, was the monopoly capital thesis, which was broadly associated with the works of Kalecki (1971, 1972), Huberman (1961 [1936]), Tsuru (1956), Steindl (1945, 1976 [1952], 1984 [1979]), Baran and Sweezy (1966), Magdoff (1969, 1972), Braverman (1998 [1974]), and Magdoff and Sweezy (1987 [1983]), among others. The monopoly capital thesis posits that the monopoly stage of capitalism is characterized by a growing divergence between falling costs and rising prices. This divergence, the theory claims, generates on the one hand a tendency for the surplus to rise while on the other hand it limits the system's inherent ability to offset or absorb this surplus. And these conflicting processes, it concludes, serve to alter the nature of the state.

During the competitive capitalism of Marx's time, argued the theory's advocates, growth was

led by private investment, and since taxation was imposed mostly on profit and therefore reduced the amount available for investment, the state was expected to stick to a laissez-faire policy of limited intervention and to a minimal tax footprint. The monopoly phase of capital, though, shifted the emphasis. The growth of large firms made capitalism hyperproductive, which meant that the key challenge now was not how to produce more surplus (supply) but how to realize it (demand). And this is where "state intervention" became crucial.

In principle, the state can expand the economy's aggregate demand in a variety of ways: it can spend on civilian items such as low-cost housing, education, R&D, health, and infrastructure (welfare); it can increase its military budget (warfare); or it can engage in some combination of the two. In practice, though, the state's options are more limited. Big business and the leading capitalists loathe facing government competition in civilian markets. They also dread losing their commanding heights—and therefore the ideological supremacy of private investment—to public management of the economy. And given these objections, the only way left for a capitalist government to avoid stagnation is through what David Gold (1977) called "military Keynesianism": a bellicose form of demand management led by a "Keynesian Coalition" of big business and large unions that shun peaceful civilian spending in favor of armaments and an aggressive foreign policy.

Figure 2 contextualizes this new order of monopoly capitalism. The graph shows the century-long relationship between U.S. economic growth and the country's military spending. The thin line plots the annual rate of economic growth against the right-hand scale. The thick line shows the level of military spending, expressed as a share of GDP, against the left-hand logarithmic scale. Both series are smoothed as a ten-year trailing average to emphasize their long-term tendencies.

The data show the close co-movement of the two series (a Pearson correlation coefficient of + 0.58). After the First World War, disarmament went hand in hand with falling growth, but this situation proved temporary. In the 1930s, the tide inverted: military spending soared in preparation for the Second World War, and the economy boomed. After the war, when demobilization coincided with a sharp drop in growth, the U.S. National Security Council (1950) suggested that, looking forward, the government should consider keeping military expenditures permanently high as a way of avoiding another depression. The subsequent adoption of military Keynesianism, along with the wars in Korea and Vietnam, helped achieve that goal. During the 1960s–80s, military expenditures remained over 10 percent of GDP and economic growth above 4 percent—lower than during the Second World War but rapid enough to sustain the buoyancy of American capitalism and the confidence of its capitalists. By the early 1990s, though, the Cold War had ended, and with neoliberal "peace dividends" undermining military budgets, economic growth decelerated sharply: in the decade ending in 2016, growth fell to a mere 1.3 percent, a level last seen in the 1930s.

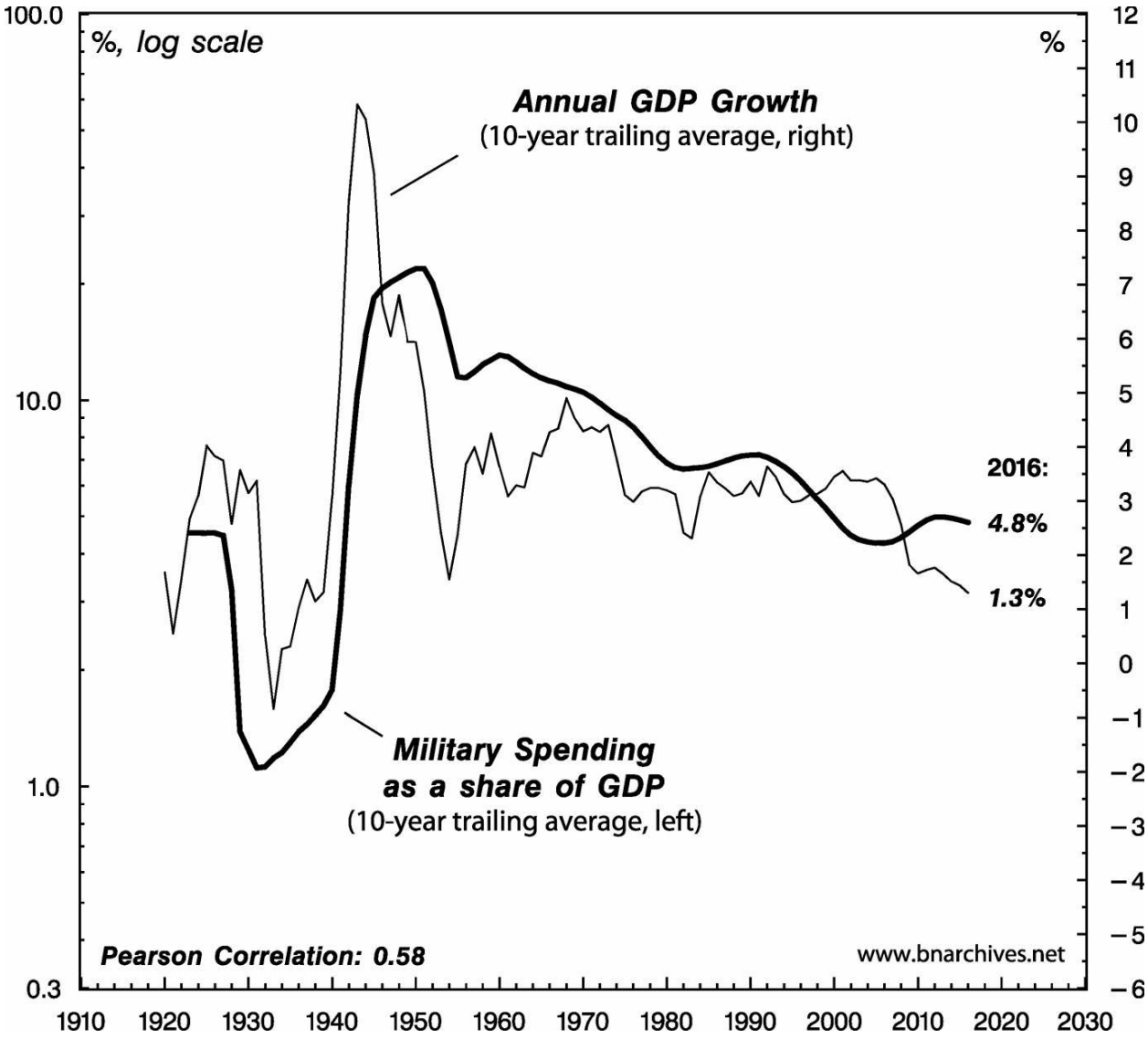

Fig. 2. U.S. Military Spending and Economic Growth

SOURCE : Reproduced and updated from Nitzan and Bichler (2006a, 6, fig. 1); original data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Global Financial Data.

On the face of it, the loic behind this correlation was highly pertinent to 1980s Israel, in whose economy rapid business concentration and soaring inflation appeared to have been offset by rising military budgets, massive spending on settlements, and the bloating of religious institutions and organizations. The only thing left to do was to test this relationship empirically, but this testing proved easier said than done.

6. Mapping Israel's Dominant Capital

The main problem was that Israeli scholars—including those on the left—had never bothered to map their country's unfolding capitalist structures, class relations and power dynamics. The most neglected subject was the corporate core—that is, the largest holding groups and their intricate relations with the state. In our view, any investigation of a modern capitalist polity must begin

with this core, yet in Israel of the early 1980s, nobody knew the basic historical facts about it. Even the most rudimentary financial time series—the core's total assets, net profits, and sales and the owners' equity—were unavailable.

In fact, even the raw data—the companies' annual financial reports—could not be found in any one location. The most obvious depositories—the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Bank of Israel, the Ministry of Finance, and the Office of the Tax Comptroller—possessed only disorganized fragments. The National Library, which according to Israeli law must be given two copies of every print publication, had no more than a limited sample. And when we checked with the companies themselves, we learned that they too had only a few specimens—and we were asking for their *own* financial reports! The net result was that the financial history of these firms, and by extension their political-economic significance, was largely unknown. For lay persons, these firms seemed everywhere; for the pundits, they were nowhere.

And so we decided to fill the void. We labored for months, excavating, deciphering, and organizing the obscure facts. And since these were the mid 1980s, before the internet and readily accessible computerized data, everything had to be done manually. We had to go from office to office, from library to library, from archive to archive. We had to collate, photocopy, and when necessary hand copy the individual printed reports wherever we found them. We had to read the numerous footnotes and extensive small print to reconcile endless inconsistencies and numerous revisions (particularly those associated with hyperinflation "adjustments" and retroactive "restatements"). Eventually, we managed to assemble a rudimentary, albeit historically complete, statistical picture of what we subsequently called Israel's *dominant capital* (see Bichler 1986, 1991; Nitzan 1986; Rowley, Bichler, and Nitzan 1988). And it was only then, when we started analyzing this entity, that we finally realized why everyone was trying to keep it safely in the statistical shadows.

1

7. From Breadth to Depth: Accumulating through Crisis

Our analysis indicated that until the mid 1960s, the structure of the Israeli market had been rather dispersed, at least by subsequent standards (Nitzan and Bichler 2002, ch. 3). This structure, formed during the British Mandate era, consisted of three distinct sectors. The dividing lines were primarily "political": the largest and most important sector was the government; the second largest was the Histadrut (confederation of labor unions); and the third was private. Since greenfield investment was almost entirely financed by unilateral capital inflows, and since these inflows were allocated almost exclusively by the government, the economy was considered "statist."

The leading corporations and economic organizations, often in collaboration with politically connected families and foreign investors, acted as de-facto agents of the state, abiding by its macro and micro priorities. In return, they were invited to invest in and trade with government-sanctioned projects, were awarded state subsidies and exclusive licenses, enjoyed multiple protections against foreign and domestic competition, and participated in looting the properties abandoned by and confiscated from the Palestinian refugees of 1948.

In retrospect, we can say that the state during those years acted as a sheltering "cocoon," incubating the future business organizations and institutions that would eventually become the core of Israel's political economy. The 1966–7 recession helped shed this cocoon. Following a massive wave of mergers and privatization, the old "political" sectors disintegrated, replaced by

dominant capital: a small cluster of giant holding groups surrounded by big monopolies and large investors that gradually took over the commanding heights of Israeli society and eventually transformed it into a full-fledged capitalist mode of power. In 1996, we summarized this transformation as follows:

> Until 1972, economic growth in Israel was disproportionately affected by two "external" stimuli: (1) the unilateral capital inflow of German compensation between 1955 and 1965, and (2) the "Palestinians boom" in the immediate years after the 1967 War. During the 1955–1965 period, unilateral transfers from Germany accounted for most of the capital inflow, and were almost identical to the annual change in GNP. The end of these transfers in 1965 was followed by the severe recession of 1966–1967. The situation changed again in 1968, when the Israeli market suddenly expanded to include one million new consumers from the occupied territories. …
>
> … From the early 1970s onward, the growth of the large conglomerates came to depend increasingly on the differential *depth* [relative growth of profit per employee] rather than *breadth* of accumulation [relative growth of employment]. This was achieved in three principal ways. First, mergers and acquisitions brought a larger share of the profit under the control of these firms, enabling them to better control competition and prevent an unruly rise in capacity. Second, with civilian production entering a period of protracted stagnation, resources started shifting into financial activity and inflation began to rise. The conglomerate's financial assets where inflated relative to the economy's total, and the share of labour eroded. Finally and perhaps most importantly, the intensification of the Israeli-Arab conflict contributed to rising military spending and growing arms exports. This burdened the aggregate economy, but much like in the US, the ensuing "military bias" was highly beneficial, both relatively and absolutely, to the leading arms contractors of the big economy … This pattern of "military/financial accumulation" was typical to all of the core firms. (Nitzan and Bichler 1996, 74–5, 77)

As part of this transformation, the government—particularly after the 1977 rise of the radical Right—altered its domestic and foreign stance. Domestically, it adopted a laissez-faire rhetoric of deregulation and privatization, gradually withdrawing from its former role of directing and determining greenfield investment. In terms of foreign policy, however, it pursued a proactive, bellicose line, menacing neighboring countries and especially the Palestinians. This double movement helped alter the focus of accumulation: instead of the rapid employment and GDP growth that had marked the previous regime ("external breadth" in our terminology), the emphasis shifted to income redistribution via rising military spending and stagflation ("external depth").

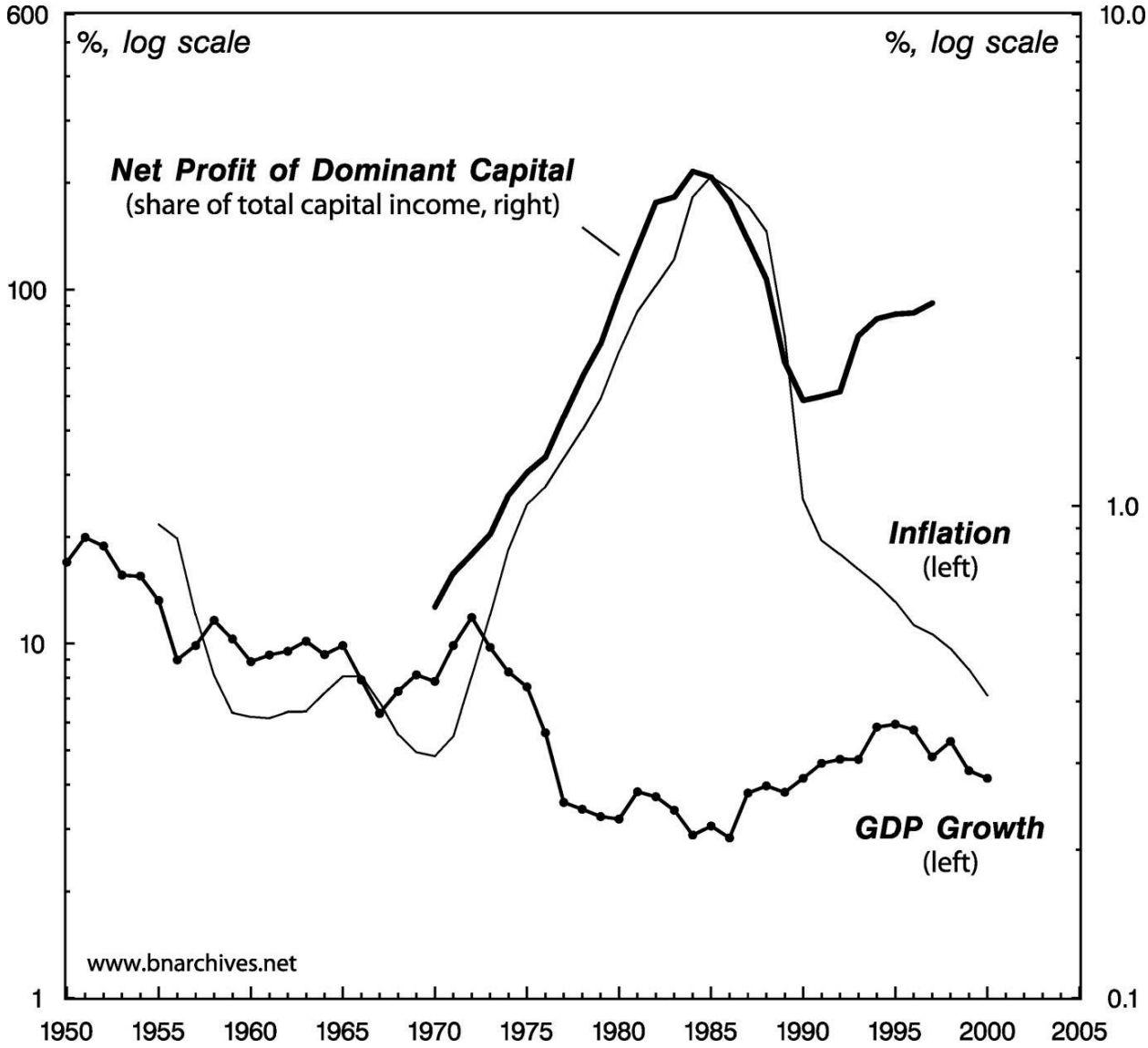

Fig. 3. Israeli Stagflation and Differential Accumulation

NOTE : Series are shown as five-year trailing averages. Inflation is the annual rate of growth of the GDP deflator. Dominant capital includes Leumi, Hapoalim, IDB, Koor, and Clal.
SOURCE : Reproduced with slight stylistic modifications from Nitzan and Bichler (2002, 124, fig. 3.2); original data from corporate financial statements and Israel Central Bureau of Statistics.

And so began the gilded age of Israel's militarized capitalism (Nitzan and Bichler 2002, ch. 4). The gist of this period is illustrated in figure 3 . The chart shows two sets of series, both smoothed as five-year trailing averages. The left-hand log scale denotes the rates of GDP growth and inflation while the right-hand log scale indicates the differential profits of the top five holding groups (computed by the share of their net earnings in total capital income).

As we can see, until the mid 1960s, when the Israeli market was still relatively dispersed, growth was very high (~10 percent) and inflation relatively low by subsequent standards (~8 percent). But by the late 1960s, the rise of dominant capital had triggered a radical change. GDP growth plummeted, reaching less than 3 percent in the mid 1980s, while inflation, instead of falling as mainstream economics would have predicted, soared to over 200 percent. This

stagflation was a boon for dominant capital. As the figure shows, its differential earnings benefited massively and disproportionately relative to the rest of the business sector, soaring eightfold to 5 percent in the mid 1980s, up from 0.6 percent in 1970. This bonanza, though, ended in the late 1980s, when the global rise of neoliberalism introduced a totally new regime of accumulation, forcing small-to-medium bellicose countries such as Israel and South Africa to radically transform their mode of power, open up to foreign takeovers and scale back their militarized structures (Nitzan and Bichler 2001; Bichler and Nitzan 2007).

8. The Gatekeepers

Nowadays, these observations may seem less controversial. But when they were first made in our master's theses and doctoral dissertations, they elicited stiff academic opposition. Nitzan's (1986) master's thesis, submitted to the Department of Economics at McGill University, was failed by its external referee. Titled "Holding Groups and the Israeli Economy," the thesis demonstrated the close connection between rising inflation and the differential consolidation of Israel's dominant capital, among other relationships, and these claims were too much for its Canadian Zionist reader to stomach. As an orthodox agricultural economist, conditioned by the elegance of supply and demand, she could not fathom how a purely macroeconomic process such as inflation could have any connection to a "social" phenomenon like the redistribution of income, so she ceremonially failed the thesis. [12] It cost Nitzan two years of legal wrangling, grievances, appeals, and lost reputation to have the referee's report jettisoned and the thesis accepted and reinstated. The research itself was later published in *Science & Society* (Nitzan and Bichler 2000).

Similarly with Bichler's work. His Ph.D. dissertation, titled "The Political Economy of Military Spending in Israel," was submitted to the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University (Bichler 1991). The thesis examined the connection between military spending and the rise of Israel's dominant capital. The research, based partly on Kalecki's framework, bifurcated the business sector into two segments—dominant capital and "the rest"—and showed, among other things, that military expenditures operated to redistribute income in favor of the former group while civilian spending worked in favor of the latter.

The dissertation committee members had never heard of Kalecki and were therefore indifferent to his radical model being applied to Israel. They were flabbergasted, though, by Bichler's unpatriotic econometrics. His empirics demonstrated that Israel's wars might have served and even depended on the profits of its large corporate groups, and this possibility was impossible for them to contemplate.

The dissertation was sent to an external referee with an explicit instruction to fail it—only that here, unlike in Nitzan's case, the referee refused to cooperate and informed Bichler of the plot. The committee, though, was unfazed and approved the dissertation only after Bichler deleted the offensive econometric chapter. Our attempts to publish this research in mainstream journals were repeatedly rejected on equally embarrassing pretexts. Eventually, it was published in the *Review of Radical Political Economics* (Bichler and Nitzan 1996a).

9. The CasP Triangle: Capitalized Power, Dominant Capital, and Differential Accumulation

As noted, our early research was heavily influenced by Marxism, particularly the neo-Marxist version of monopoly-capital theory. [13] Yet from the very beginning we sensed that something in this framework was seriously lacking. Our initial plan was simply to "follow the surplus." We naively thought that, by tracing the various realizations of this surplus—from military spending and the settlements to religious institutions and financial intermediation—we would be able to narrate the development of Israeli capitalism and model its gyrations. But as we delved into the actual research, we realized that the basic categories (surplus, capital accumulation, rate of profit, etc.) and the dualities in which they were embedded (economics-politics, real-financial, productive-speculative, actual-fictitious) were difficult if not impossible to concretize and measure. Seeking solutions, we delved into Marxist debates on these subjects, but they discouraged us even further.

The problem, we concluded, was that the neo-Marxist revisions of Marx's value theory did not go far enough. Instead of placing power at the center of analysis, they treated it as an addendum, a separate sphere that merely complements the key "economic" entities of capitalism. And that path, we thought, was leading to a dead end (for a concise summary of these difficulties, see Bichler and Nitzan 2012).

To analyze contemporary capitalism, we argued, requires a fundamental rethinking of capital itself (for a full account, see Nitzan and Bichler 2009). First, we posited that accumulation is neither a utilitarian process distorted by power (the neoclassical version) nor a productive process assisted by power (the Marxist view) but rather a power process quantified as capitalization.

Second, we argued that, with power at the center of analysis, the macro-Marxist notion of "capital in general" becomes insufficient and potentially misleading. Instead, we need to *differentiate* various forms of capital, and we need to do so based on *relative power* . This requirement led us to the notion of dominant capital—the idea that the capitalist mode of power is dominated by a core of leading corporate groups and state institutions—and that it is the inner and outer alliances and conflicts of this core that stir the historical development of capitalism as a whole.

And third, we claimed that the shift from utility and labor to power, on one hand, and from general capital to dominant capital, on the other, called for a *new building block* . The conventional view of capital is economic and therefore absolute. Wedded to production and consumption, capital in this view is counted in stand-alone units, be they neoclassical "utils" or Marxist "SNALT" (socially necessary abstract labor time). But if we think of capital in terms of power, we must also change our elementary particle: we need to think not of absolute accumulation but of *differential accumulation* .

10. From Israel to the Middle East

As we came to realize, the significance of this CasP triangle—that is, capitalized power, dominant capital, and differential accumulation—goes beyond Israel. Many Middle East analysts, both mainstream and radical, continue to see the region's conflicts as imperial in nature, related first and foremost to securing Western access to cheap oil. But as figure 1 in section 3 shows, using the CasP triangle, the underlying logic of these conflicts can be explained very differently.

The chart analyzes the hstory of these conflicts not in relation to the level of oil production or the rate of Western economic growth but to the differential profit of the dominant oil companies.

As noted earlier in the essay, over the past half century the differential profit of these firms as well as the relative earnings of oil-producing countries (OPEC and non-OPEC) have come to depend not on the volume of oil being produced and sold but on its relative price, [14] and this relative price hinges not on the "scarcity" of oil, but on the mayhem and fear created by Middle East energy conflicts.

The predictive power of this framework has been remarkably robust, at least until recently. To reiterate, according to figure 1 , every energy conflict save one was preceded by the leading oil companies trailing the average (differentially *de* cumulating); until 2014, every energy conflict was followed by the oil companies beating the average (differentially accumulating); and with one exception (1996–7), these companies never managed to beat the average in the absence of a prior or concurrent energy conflict. Clearly, accumulation here represents and manifests not productivity and utility but power and violence.

11. Still About Oil?

Is this framework still valid today? In our opinion, the answer is "only in part." On the one hand, the differential profits of the oil companies and the revenues of the oil-producing countries remain tightly correlated with the relative price of oil: over the past decade or so, both have plummeted in tandem. So this side of the theory still works. On the other hand, as figure 1 demonstrates, since 2014 the synchronized decline of oil prices and earnings has occurred *despite* ongoing regional conflict and plenty of violence. On this count, the theory seems inconsistent with recent events.

Is this partial breakdown a sign of things to come? Will the differential profits of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition continue to stir *Blood and Oil in the Orient* , as Essad Bey (1932) poetically called it, or are we witnessing the end of an era?

In our view, the answer to this question will depend crucially on the conflict within the global ruling class. [15] The potential significance of such intraclass conflicts was illustrated during the 1960s by Michael Kalecki (1964, 1967). In his essays "The Fascism of Our Times" and "Vietnam and U.S. Big Business," Kalecki forecasted that continued U.S. involvement in Vietnam would increase the dichotomy between the "old," largely civilian business groups located mainly on the U.S. East Coast and the "new" militarized business groups, primarily the arms contractors, of the West Coast. The rise in military budgets, he anticipated, would force a redistribution of income from the old to the new groups. The "angry elements" within the U.S. ruling class would then be significantly strengthened, pushing for a more aggressive foreign policy and further propagating what Melman (1974) would later call the "permanent war economy."

Is there a similar intraclass conflict affecting the ebb and flow of Middle East wars? To contextualize this question, consider figure 4 , which juxtaposes two global coalitions: the Weapondollar-Petrodollar cluster, made up of listed integrated oil and defense corporations, and the Technodollar Coalition, comprising listed technology firms, both hardware and software. Each series measures the market capitalization of the relevant coalition, expressed as a percent share of the global market capitalization of all listed firms. [16]

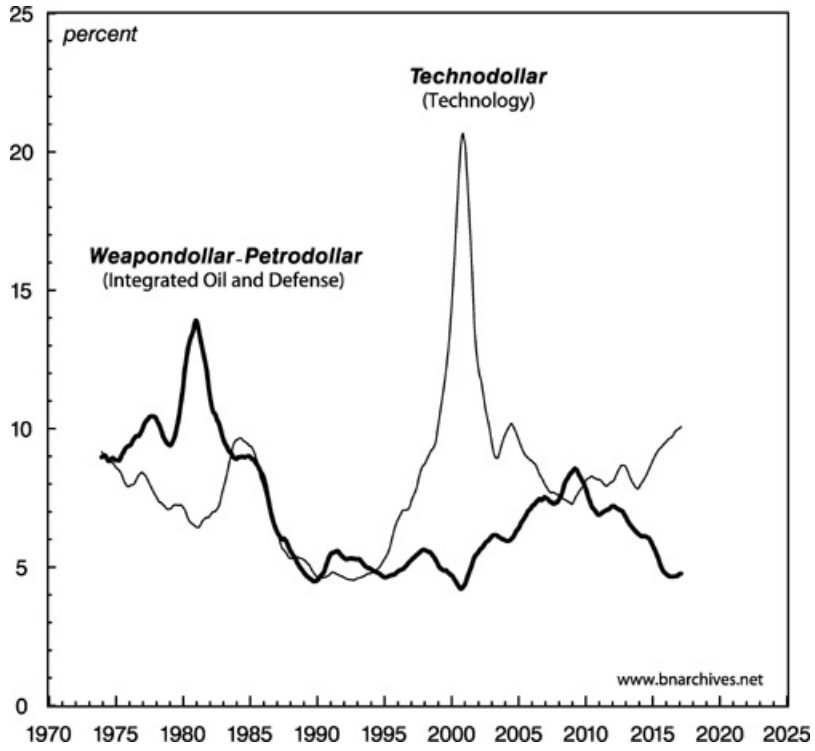

Fig. 4. Shares of Global Market Capitalization

NOTE : Series denote monthly data shown as 12-month moving averages. The last data points are for February 2017.
SOURCE : Reproduced and updated from Nitzan and Bichler (2009, 373, fig. 17.3); original data from Datastream (series codes: TOTMKWD for world total, OILINWD for integrated oil; AERSPWD for defense; TECNOWD for technology).

The figure shows a clear inverse relationship: since the mid 1970s, the global market capitalization shares of the two coalitions have moved in *opposite* directions (with only a brief exception in 1985–90). Now, since relative capitalization hinges on differential profit expectations and risk assessments, and since these expectations and assessments reflect the broader trajectories of the global political economy, we can hypothesize that there is an *inherent conflict* between these two coalitions: conditions that favor one coalition undermine the other, and vice versa.

The significance of this structural conflict is best evaluated in historical retrospect. The classical imperialism of the early twentieth century was spearheaded by the leading oil companies, whose activities dominated and often dictated the foreign policies of the old powers. After the First World War, these companies helped draft various regional agreements—from Sykes-Picot (1916), San Remo (1920), and Cairo (1921) to Red Line (1928) and Achnacarry (1928)—carving and shaping the Middle East in line with their own interests. During that period, their main concern was the "free flow" of oil—that is, political stability, open access to oil at low prices, and minimal royalties to the region's rulers.

This free-flow era ended in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The demise of colonialism undermined the oil companies' former autonomy. Instead of calling the shots, they now had to negotiate and align with oil-producing oligarchies, elements in their own parent governments and armed forces, and other corporate coalitions, particularly in armament and finance. The center of this complex network, we have argued in our work, was the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition. Unlike during the free-flow era, their interest now lay in *limiting* the flow of oil. The main purpose was to *raise* the price of oil so as to boost oil incomes and augment military spending

and arms exports into the region. And that goal was best served by a divide-and-rule strategy that kept the Middle East embroiled in a never-ending string of managed energy conflicts that stoked the Cold War and the arms race and pushed the world into reoccurring stagflation crises.

In the 1990s, the capitalist mode of power was again transformed. First, the end of the Cold War accentuated the gradual decline of the United States and the former Soviet Union relative to the former periphery, particularly in Asia. Second, the ongoing global wave of corporate mergers and acquisitions gave rise to a new and highly complex power hierarchy of giant transnational corporations whose activities, although deeply embedded in state structures, gradually work to undermine the very notion of "state sovereignty." And third, the pivotal political-economic role of oil has been challenged by the threats of peak oil and climate change, the development of renewable alternatives, and most importantly, the emergence of new power hierarchies built not on raw materials, but information—hence, the Technodollar Coalition.

The rise of this new, information-based power is illustrated in figure 4 . Between 1990 and 2000, the global market capitalization of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition continued its long-term slide, hitting a record low of 4 percent of the total in 2000, down from 14 percent in 1980. By contrast, the market capitalization of the Technodollar Coalition more than quadrupled —rising to 21 percent of the total in 2000, up from a mere 5 percent in 1990.

In the early 2000s, the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition embarked on a last-ditch attempt to resurrect its capitalized power, pushing the U.S. White House toward yet another Gulf War. And for a decade or so, the effort succeeded: by 2010, the Technodollar Coalition's market capitalization dropped to a mere 7 percent of the total—the experts called it a "burst bubble"—while the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition's share doubled to 8 percent.

This comeback, though, was partial and short-lived. In 2010, with the Middle East still in flames and the analysts predicting the imminent arrival of peak oil, the price of oil—along with oil profits—started to plummet. And as the plunge continued, the market capitalization of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition again fell below 5 percent of the total, while that of the Technodollar Coalition resumed its uptrend. Evidently, the current conflicts in the region are not "intense" enough to create a crisis atmosphere, and with oil prices low, the petroleum and armament firms, along with OPEC, remain stuck in the doldrums.

The new Trump Administration, populated by key oil, armament, and finance representatives and seemingly hostile to the high-technology sector, may try to revive the fading fortunes of the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition once again. But over the longer haul, this fight might prove difficult to win. Unlike in the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. government can no longer easily instigate, let alone manage, Middle East energy conflicts, particularly against opposition from the ascending Technodollar Coalition. And if this prognosis turns out to be correct, the Middle East might witness yet another significant transformation.

The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, the oppression of Arab populations by military and religious theocracies, and the global spread of Saudi Wahhabism and terrorism have not happened in a vacuum. Over the past half century, these activities aligned with and were in turn supported by the Weapondollar-Petrodollar Coalition. And if the power of this coalition continues to slide, that slide might spell the demise of Israel's occupation of Palestine and a major shakeup of many of the region's oligarchies.

Acknowledgments

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1. See Rowley, Bichler, and Nitzan (1988, 1989), Bichler, Nitzan, and Rowley (1989), Nitzan, Rowley, and Bichler (1989), and Bichler, Rowley, and Nitzan (1989).
2. Our original term was the "Armadollar-Petrodollar Coalition," but a journal referee later opined that the term "armadollar" sounded too much like armadillo, so we reluctantly replaced it with the duller yet safer "weapondollar."
3. Fig. 1 was first published in Nitzan and Bichler (1995, 499, fig. 10b) with data ending in 1991. It was later updated in Bichler and Nitzan (2015, 64, fig. 4) with data through 2013. An earlier, nondifferential chart is given in Rowley, Bichler, and Nitzan (1989, 26, fig. 8).
4. The disproportionately hig values for 2002 (+426 percent), 2007 (+892 percent), and 2008 (+1,114 percent) are due to the Fortune 500's very low rates of return in those years.
5. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, and again during the 2000s, differential decumulation was sometimes followed by a string of conflicts stretching over several years. In these instances, the result was a longer time lag between the initial spell of differential *de* cumulation and some of the subsequent conflicts.
6. It is important to note here that the energy conflicts have led not to higher oil profits as such but to higher *differential* oil profits. For example, in 1969–70, 1975, 1980–2, 1985, 1991, 2001–2, 2006–7, 2009, and 2012, the rate of return on equity of the Petro-Core actually fell; but in all cases the fall was either slower than that of the Fortune 500 or too small to close the positive gap between them, so despite the absolute decline, the Petro-Core continued to beat the average.

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7. Although there was no official conflict in 1996–7, there was plenty of violence, including an Iraqi invasion of Kurdish areas and U.S. cruise missile attacks ("Operation Desert Strike").
8. For the details underlying the individual energy conflicts as well as a broader discussion of the entire process, see Bichler and Nitzan (1996b, 2004), Nitzan and Bichler (2002, ch. 5; 2006b).
9. The rigging of the stock market was reluctantly and only partially investigated by the Bejsky Commission (see Bejsky et al. 1986). See also Nitzan and Bichler (2002, 119).
10. On the academic literature of the period, see Nitzan and Bichler (1996, 1997).
11. Although it relied solely on public sources, their book was banned by the Israeli censors.
12. As a devout Zionist, she was also enraged by many of the unpleasant facts cited in the thesis. For example, she did not like Nitzan's reference to the 700,000 Palestinian refugees produced by the 1948 war, a number she believed to be grossly exaggerated. She also disliked some of Nitzan's sources: for example, Israel's most important investigative weekly, *Ha'olam Hazhe* , which in her view was a yellow newspaper.
13. Since the 1980s, "neo-Marxism" has been broadened to include various cultural theories associated with writers such as Gramsci, Foucault, Leotard, and Jameson. In this essay, we use the term much more narrowly to denote scientific attempts to revise and adapt Marx's value analysis to the new age of monopoly capitalism.
14. At the global level, the price and volume of oil show little or no correlation (Bichler and Nitzan 2004, 305–6, n42).
15. For more on the issues discussed in this section, see Bichler and Nitzan (2004, 2015), Nitzan and Bichler (2006b).
16. A similar chart, focusing only on the United States, is given in Nitzan and Bichler (2002, 272, fig. 5.9).

Rethinking Settler Colonialism: A Marxist Critique of Gershon Shafir

Amir Locker-Biletzki

In recent years, the use of settler colonialism as an analytical framework to understand the Zionist-Palestinian conflict has become prevalent. Spurred by the works of such scholars as Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, critical scholarship has argued that Israel as a settler-colonial society sought to eliminate the indigenous Palestinians in a bid to create a Jewish settler nation-state. The grounds for understanding the Zionist-Palestinian conflict through the settler-colonial prism have been laid by the seminal work of Gershon Shafir. His work's relation to the reality of Palestine/Israel is the focal point of this essay. By constructively critiquing his book Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914, the essay demonstrates Shafir's relative discounting of important processes of capitalist development within the settler-colonial divide he so masterfully describes.

In recent years, settler colonialism has become a hotly debated concept. Within the controversies of its interpretation of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, settler colonialism has developed into a focal point for critical thought. The purpose of this essay is to creatively reinterpret and critique the application of the settler-colonialism concept while preserving some of its explanatory force. It argues that while Marxian elements are present in the theories of students of settler colonialism, this research field as a whole has shied away from more overtly Marxist interpretations of the settler-colonial phenomenon. This can be seen in the case of settler colonialism in Palestine/Israel. I argue that the model of settler-colonial societies, particularly in the context of Palestine/Israel, disregards one essential element for the interpretation of the conflict: the role of capitalist class development within colonial political economy. This essay maintains that the categories originating from the Marxist tradition have played an important part in creating the settler-colonial dynamics that have enabled both the depopulation Palestine's natives and the rise of the Jewish state. The main theoretical framework criticized in this essay is that advanced by Gershon Shafir in his seminal 1989 book *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* . The essay will be based on Marxist concepts—mainly class within a capitalist mode of production. These concepts will be used in conjunction with the literature that interprets the economic and social development of Palestine/Israel in order to show that within the logic of separatism—which has characterized Zionist settler colonialism—capitalism was constructed by both Palestinians and Jews. This capitalist development of the separate parts of Palestine's economy was characterized by the formation of both propertied and laboring classes.

It is my aim not to debunk settler colonialism as a way to frame the history of Palestine/Israel. I wish instead to reintroduce into the settler-colonial discourse Marxism as a historical point of reference and as an emancipatory force. This dual purpose is encapsulated well in the words of Rachel Busbridge (2017, 10), who writes that while

> Jamal Hilal's Marxist account of the conflict, for instance, engaged Palestinians and Jewish Israelis in terms of their relations to the means of production, Wolfe's account brings its own ontology: the bourgeoisie/proletariat distinction becomes that of settler/native and the class struggle the struggle [sic] between settler, who seeks to destroy and replace the native, and native, who can only ever push back. Indeed, if the settler colonial paradigm views history in similar teleological terms to the Marxist framework, it does not offer the same hopeful vision of a liberated future.

The purpose of this essay is to reclaim these Marxist categories into the settler-colonial model by reintroducing the potential for liberation that Marxism offers through class struggle. In order to

accomplish this twofold objective, the essay will briefly trace the Marxist origins of the settler-colonial model—mainly in the works of Maxime Rodinson and Jamil Hilal—as well as the Marxian elements of present-day scholars of settler colonialism.

Marx and Engels were the first to historicize class as part of the historical development of society. This element is seen most clearly in the opening of the *Communist Manifesto* : "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight" (Marx and Engels 2004, 3). In Palestine/Israel the rise of a capitalist society out of the ruins of the late Ottoman feudal system was accompanied by the formation of a type of class society and antagonism (Ben-Porat 1999). By 1948, both Palestinian and Jewish societies possessed working and bourgeoisie classes. While these classes developed differently, they engaged in struggles that at times had a binational anticolonial (i.e., anti-British) nature (Seikaly 2016; Lockman 1995). These histories of joint class action, seen from a Marxist point of view, carry with them the possibility of emancipation for both nationalities. At the same time—as this essay's survey of class history in Palestine/Israel will show—class development was deeply bifurcated along ethnonational lines. Separation benefited the Jewish working class, which preferred to push Palestinians outside the labor market over engaging in class solidarity (Shapira 1977).

This essay is constructed around two main focal points. First is a Marxist critique of leading settler-colonial scholars, most notably Gershon Shafir. The second uses existing social historiography in order to portray—in conjunction with settler-colonial theory—the way capitalism and class intertwined in the development of *Filaśtin* and Israel.

The timeframe of this essay surpasses that which underlines Shafir's work, which concentrates on the late Ottoman period. As he remarked by the time Britain took control of Palestine in the wake of World War I, the settler-colonial mechanisms of Zionism were in place. These were further institutionalized, in the Israeli state, after the 1948 war and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine (Shafir 1994). A comparable event is that of the development of capitalism in Palestine/Israel. It emerged from Palestine's late Ottoman feudal system with the start of relatively large-scale Zionist colonization, to be fully developed as a state capitalist economy after 1948.

Settler Colonialism: A Marxist Critical Engagement with Gershon Shafir

Settler colonialism developed out of late-1920s debates as a critical concept about white pioneering societies outside Europe and as a criticism of colonialism and imperialism. It reentered active discourse in the wake of decolonization in the 1960s and 1970s (Veracini 2013). Developed in the Australian context by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini, settler colonialism analyzes a category of distinct European expansion within other imperial and colonial projects. (Veracini 2011). It is defined by Veracini (2010) as an amalgamation of practices aimed at an economy of population—the replacement of the native by the settler and the extinction of his title to the land, entailing the creation of a sovereign settler nation and the construction of a settler consciousness and narrative. While Veracini outlined the main elements of settler colonialism and expanded on them, Wolfe brought into sharp relief the structural practices of settler colonialism. He stated that settler societies—predicated as they are on taking control of the land rather than the extraction of surplus value—are aimed at the "elimination of the native"

(Wolfe 2006, 387). He emphasized the embeddedness of the settler event in the colonizer society and state and indicated that "the colonizers came to stay—invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe 1999, 2). From these scholarly debates, settler colonialism arises as an interpretative concept that differentiates between imperial projects that sought to economically exploit colonies and white European settlements in the non-European world. In the latter cases, the white settlers attempted to eliminate the natives (not in all cases by physical annihilation) and to create a settler nation-state animated by the practice of invasion and removal of the native.

Settler-colonial theory is not without its critics. Corey Snelgrove, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel (2014, 7) have recognized the "important contributions, both theoretically and politically" that Veracini and Wolfe have made. However, they raise concerns about the field's greater concentration on the practices of the state and the centrality of the white settler experience than on the voices and experiences of the colonized. A more sweeping criticism is voiced by South Africa–based Israeli historical sociologist Ran Greenstein. In a series of articles, Greenstein (forthcoming, 2016, 2017)—a comparative scholar who has dealt extensively with the histories of settler societies in South Africa and Palestine/Israel—attacked the lack of specificity of the concept. In relation to Palestine/Israel, he characterizes it as "apartheid of a special type" (Greenstein, forthcoming, 9). This term is meant to encompass the peculiarities of the Israeli case, such as the conduct of ethnic cleansing as well as an ethnicity-based discriminatory regime. [1]

The same critical view is voiced by the Australian sociologist Rachel Busbridge (2017, 2, 18). She acknowledges that "settler colonialism as an interpretive paradigm holds powerful conceptual and pedagogical implications for reframing understandings of the conflict in Israel-Palestine." At the same time, like other critics she points to its "contextual point of origin flattening out important local historical and socio-political specificities." She finds the reason for this limited aspect of the paradigm in "the settler colonial paradigm's insistence on an ontology of absolute polarity of settler and Native." This rigidness of settler-colonial theory prevents it from fully acknowledging "the role of nationalism" in the dynamics of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

Like many of the scholars presented here, this essay acknowledges the value and validity of the settler-colonialism concept. At the same time, the broad brush with which it paints varied settler-colonial experiences is reinterpreted by this essay as a lack of understanding of the role that class and capital play in the case of Palestine/Israel.

To date, as far as I am aware, a Marxist critique of the settler-colonial concept has not been attempted. Marxian thinking is vaguely implicit in settler-colonial theories and in their application to Palestine/Israel. Lorenzo Veracini (2010, 1) finds one of the origins of settler-colonial discourse in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* , in "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' remark that the 'need of a constantly expanding market for its product chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe,' and that it 'must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.'" At the same time, Veracini and Wolfe argue against the presence of class conflicts and the extraction of value from the land when this is in itself a form of capital and a means of creating it that the settlers crave.

The Marxian element is evident in the origins of settler-colonial discourse on Zionism. As a way to describe Zionist settlements in Palestine, the concept of colonialism has long been used by Palestinian and Jewish anti-Zionist intellectuals. [2] However, one of the first manifestations of an understanding of the colonial logic of Zionism can be found in the work of the French Jewish Marxist Orientalist Maxime Rodinson (1973). He argues that European Jews that opted for

Zionism in the nineteenth century—motivated by escaping antisemitism—sought the help of the imperial powers (mainly Britain) in order to overcome Palestinian resistance and effect Zionist settlement. This Marxist explanation is for him the "one case where Marxist theorizing has come forward with the clearest response to the requirements of the 'implicit ideology' of the Third World" (27). Thus, for Rodinson the imperial-colonial nexus was only made explicit through Marxism. At the same time, Rodinson's portrayal does not include a detailed account of Zionist colonial practice—concerning land and labor—and mainly associates Zionism with Western imperialism. His rendition of the colonial process in Palestine/Israel does not include a depiction of class and capitalist dynamics within Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli societies.

Zionist settlement and disinheritance practices have also been the subject of analysis by Palestinian Marxist intellectuals. In his 1976 essay "Imperialism and Settler Colonialism in West Asia: Israel and the Arab Palestinian Struggle," Palestinian Marxist sociologist Jamil Hilal (1976, 52) starts from a similar point as Rodinson. Zionism is organically linked to the Western imperial project, and "since Zionism has no social base in Palestine, the Zionist movement had to ally itself with the imperialist powers. It approached and offered to serve the interests of the Ottoman rulers, German, French and British imperialism." However, in contrast to Rodinson, Hilal is more aware of the colonizing practices of Zionism: "Zionists strove not to exploit the indigenous Palestinian population but to displace it" (53). In contrast to the capitalist colonialism of South Africa and its seeking to exploit black labor, Zionism had no economic use for Palestinians. Despite the fact that Hilal allows elements that do not square with Marxist dogma, such as the absence of economic exploitation of native labor power, he keeps his perspective resolutely within the Marxist tradition. This element is obvious when he describes historical class formation. Zionism, he states, "pledged to create a fully-fledged class society of Jewish settlers (i.e., a Jewish working class)" (53). Palestinians developed a class society made from a mixture of peasants and the landlord class as well as a nascent bourgeoisie and a radicalized working class: "The nascent but thwarted Arab bourgeoisie, the landlords fearful of Zionist competition and expansion, the peasantry who were becoming increasingly pauperized, the radicalized working class (a strong Arab communist party emerged in Palestine with the emergence of a working class there, mostly employed in the ports and railways of Palestine)" (54).

A more explicit rendering of Zionist colonial logic is to be found in the seminal work of the Israeli critical sociologist Gershon Shafir. Justly regarded as one of the founders of settler-colonial studies, Shafir's (1989) groundbreaking *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* outlines a sophisticated theory on the link between Zionism and settler colonialism. The innovative nature of the work merits that we take a detailed critical look at it.

At the core of Shafir's work stands an original view of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and its origins. In addition to his arguments about the origins of the conflict, his work encapsulates a major theoretical breakthrough by utilizing comparative works on the United States and South Africa as he coins the concept of settler colonialism. Consequently, he is to be considered the founding father of this field of research as it is today, a comparative study of settler societies around the world. By classifying the Zionist project as colonial and at the same time accompanying this category with thorough historical research, Shafir gives credence to the works of anti-Zionist Jewish and Palestinian intellectuals who analyzed Zionism as a colonial movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Shafir's theories elucidate the origins of the *Yishuv* and the Israeli state not in the context of the Socialist utopia of the Jewish Eastern European *Halutzim* (pioneers) but in reaction to local

conditions in Palestine. The need to create an only Jewish settler society drove the Zionist settlers to enclose themselves in enclaves that were only Jewish. They created these territories by driving the Palestinian natives from the land and from the Jewish labor market. Shafir's theory is materialist, as it deals with land and labor markets. However, it is not overtly Marxist, as class and capitalism are almost completely absent from his account. A more nuanced analysis of his work shows where he is rooted in Marxist criticism and where he is diverging from it; to this study I turn now.

Shafir (1989, 8–9), using models developed by D. K. Fieldhouse and George Fredrickson, describes "a four-way typology: the *occupation* and *mixed* models worked out by Spain, the *plantation* model of Portugal, and the *pure settlement of* England." An occupation colony is defined as "the typical colonial state aimed at military and administrative control of a potentially strategic region," accompanied by economic exploitation of this area but without taking direct control over land and labor. The next three models are "based on settlement by Europeans." The plantation colonies were based on an "indigenous or unfree or indebted labor force," thus requiring only a small number of European settlers and labor. "By contrast, mixed and pure settlement colonies were based on substantial European settlement involving direct control of the land." While the mixed colony "required labor coercively elicited from the native population," the pure colony model was built on "an economy based on white labor" and the removal or destruction of the native populace, which enabled the settlers "to regain the sense of cultural or ethnic homogeneity identified with a European concept of nationality."

Adapting these models to late Ottoman Palestine, Shafir argues—following the Israeli critical sociologist Yonathan Shapiro (1975)—that the foundations of the Israeli state-formation process were laid by the elite who originated in the Second Aliyah. [3] Initially, the first wave of Eastern European Jewish colonizers in Palestine, known as the First Aliyah (1882–1903), attempted to establish a pure colony in Palestine. However, early failures in establishing agricultural colonies in Palestine compelled the colonizers to appeal to the Rothschild banking dynasty for help. A member of the French branch of the family, Edmond de Rothschild, subsequently financed the Jewish *moshavot* (farming colonies) in Palestine. Aided by French experts, Rothschild modeled the colonies on French colonization in North Africa that combined a monoculture agricultural economy—mainly around vineyards—and the use of local seasonal labor (Shafir 1989, 50–5). Thus, by a process of transition, the First Aliyah "inhibited pure settlement drive … and reconciled itself to a plantation type colony" (17). More specifically, the colonizers of the First Aliyah developed a type of ethnic plantation colony in Palestine in which a class of Jewish European landowners and overseers managed the work of a low-wage Arab labor force. The turning point in the move from pure to settlement colony came with the cessation of Rothschild's aid in 1900. Land purchases ended because the World Zionist Organization (WZO) was not interested in settling Palestine before achieving an international charter that would permit the transfer of Jews to Palestine. In fact, by the early twentieth century, the Zionist colonization of Palestine seemed to have stopped dead in its tracks.

This state of affairs changed with the arrival of the Second Aliyah (1903–1914) to Palestine. This Aliyah was composed of "young unmarried immigrants, devoid of any capital, with no profession and without living and production means other than their hands" (Shafir 1989, 17). Coming mostly from Russia, they brought with them militant Marxist as well as nationalist ideologies that practiced "aggressive orientations both within (class war) and towards their Arab surroundings." At first, the new immigrants sought to replace the Palestinian labor force of the *moshavot* by matching the pay and living standards of their Palestinian competitors. The failure

of this attempt endangered the very existence of the Jewish workers of the Second Aliyah; in order to prevent their undercutting and potential displacement, in 1905 a group of Jewish workers formed the Hapo'el Hatza'ir Party (the Young Workers Party; 58–9). The professed aim of the new party was the "conquest of labour" (*Kibush Ha'avoda*): in essence, the transformation of Jews into workers that would wrestle the labor market away from Palestinian labor. The brunt of the struggle for Hebrew labor (*Avoda Ivrit*) was against the Jewish colonial planters in the *moshavot* , who were required to hire Jewish workers and pay them European-level wages. The planters, for their part, resisted the pressures of the Jewish workers; although the latter managed to split the labor market, taking control over skilled jobs, they failed to take control over a substantial part of the labor market: "The inability by 1909 to take over the job market generated in the new *Yishuv* two alternative … paths of innovation. The first was the transformation of the plantation's labor force through the introduction of Jews from Yemen—their travel to Palestine arranged by Zionist activists with the Ottoman government. The second was the bypassing of the labor market altogether through various organizational innovations" (91). Exploiting the Yemenite Jews in order "to displace the unskilled Palestinian Arab labor force" meant that these Jews were "relegated to the same menial or unskilled work" done by Palestinians (103). In terms of wages, this group was placed in the middle: that is, between the well-paid, skilled Jewish European and cheap, unskilled Palestinian labor. Nevertheless, the hopes that these Yemenite Jews would replace the Palestinians were quickly dashed, since most of them were artisans rather than agricultural workers, and their inability to adapt to Palestine's harsh conditions of agricultural work relegated them to a marginalized place in the labor market. Thus, the attempt to construct a pure settlement colony based largely on Jewish labor was condemned to failure.

The attempt of the Second Aliyah to create a pure Jewish settlement colony in Palestine coincided with a change in the WZO's policies—a change from diplomacy, aimed at gaining international consent, to large-scale Jewish immigration and settlement, emphasizing the colonization of Palestine. The ineffectiveness of the Zionist movement's diplomatic efforts, coupled with Ottoman resistance to such efforts, compelled the Zionist movement to consider more gradual settlement work. "Thus the potential alliance between the second wave immigrants and World Zionist Organization was formed" (Kimmerling 2004, 70). The instrument that enabled the creation of this pure settlement colony was the *Kvutza* , or "group" in Hebrew. The first of these small agricultural communes was established in 1910 in the northern part of Palestine, in Degania, on the lands of the Arab village Um Djunni. The second was Kinneret in 1913. The *Kvutzot* , which became the *Kibbutzim* after War World I, were a joint venture of the WZO settlement organizations in Palestine and groups of workers of the Second Aliyah. The former (and mainly the Palestine Office) were staffed by German Jewish Zionists, the most notable of whom was Arthur Ruppin, [4] a German Jewish sociologist and Zionist leader. This group of Zionist colonization bureaucrats was impressed by the late nineteenth-century German settlement program in the Ostmark city of Posen (present-day Poznań, in Poland) where the Prussian government financed the transfer of German settlers in order to reduce the Polish majority in the region. [5] The meeting of the WZO and the Second Aliyah laid the foundation for an alliance between the Zionist middle class outside Palestine and the workers using cooperative settlement methods; together they created the *Yishuv* as a pure settlement colony from which Palestinians were excluded and in which Mizrahi Jews were relegated to a subordinate status. Thus, Shafir exposes the way the settler-colonial process of attempted separation of Jewish settlers from Palestinians in the spheres of labor and land laid the foundation for the ethnically

segmented, hierarchal order of present-day Israeli society.

By the 1920s, as the British took control over Palestine as a military colony, [6] the exclusionary institutions of the *Yishuv* were well in place. “The meaning of the creation of the pure settlement colony was the segmentation of the economy in Eretz-Israel. This strategy created a separate economy alongside the First *Aliyah* plantation economy and the Palestinian economy. This was the hotbed within which the future Jewish state had grown” (Shafir 1994, 113). In the years of British rule in Palestine, the main characteristics of Zionist settler colonialism become more pronounced. In 1948, a fully separated Zionist autonomy was ready to take control over the country and ethnically cleanse it.

Shafir’s work has been the subject of controversy and criticism since the late 1980s; however, it is not the aim of this essay to engage in a detailed portrayal of the arguments about the book between Zionist and post-Zionist scholars. Nonetheless, a short introduction to the basics of the disagreement will give a context to the argument of this essay. The book was the subject of a stormy controversy between Israeli “critical” and “established” sociologists, geographers, and historians. Such critics as Moshe Lissak (1996), Ran Aharonson (1996), and Avi Bareli (2001) attempted to disprove Shafir’s theories. While their arguments vary, they all share some common themes: the association of the colonial theories of Zionism with postmodernism, the accusation that the colonial theory is too focused on the cultural rather than on positivist concretized facts, and above all a reaffirmation—at times ill-tempered—of Zionist ideology. An interesting take on the debate is offered by Derek Penslar’s (2001, 84–98) sophisticated attempt to use the language of postcolonial studies to prove that Zionism is not a colonial movement. The “critical” scholars, for their part, reacted with a detailed account of the debate and a sharp rebuff of “established” argumentation (Piterberg, 2015). Shafir himself engaged with Lissak and others directly (1996c). In contrast to “established” scholars who looked at Israeli society while excluding the Palestinian-Zionist conflict, Shafir (1996a, 24) argues that “since Israeli state and society building was not solely an internal Jewish affair, it is necessary to intertwine the two plots and integrate the Arab-Israeli conflict into Israeli sociological thinking.”

In sharp contrast to the “established” scholars, this essay shares the critical sensibilities of Shafir. I do not argue here that Zionism is not a colonial movement. Indeed, arguing from a Marxist point of view, this essay attempts to reconnect the identification of Zionism and colonialism to their roots in anti-Zionist Marxism. To make this point clearer, what is presented here is not an attempt to debunk but rather to further nuance Shafir’s work. I do not argue here that the conflict did not arise from attempted Zionist control over labor and land but that this picture does not typically include the dynamics of class and capitalism within both Jewish and Palestinian sectors of the economy and beyond the ethnic divide.

The sources of Shafir’s theory are varied. His readings of Palestine/Israel move between the works of Israeli critical sociologists Yonathan Shapiro and Baruch Kimmerling [7] and to theories of race, caste, and imperialism. The materialist element in Shafir’s treatise was the subject of Zachary Lockman’s (2012) critique. He characterizes *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* as producing a “much more materialist analysis of the evolution of the early Zionist project” (11). While praising it as a “landmark book, a pathbreaking work of historical-sociological analysis” (13), he maintains that “there are aspects of Shafir’s arguments with which one can usefully take issue” (38). One of them—pertinent to this essay—is “the (overtly economistic) mode of analysis that he deployed,” which “tends to treat ideology, culture and politics as marginal” (38). In essence, Lockman criticizes Shafir for being a materialist—or more accurately, for being economistic and reductionist. This echoes the long-standing argument

between the reduction of Marxist concepts to the economic sphere and a broader view of Marxism that takes into account culture and ideology. My criticism differs markedly from Lockman's as I take issue not with Shafir's excessive materialism but rather with his failure to understand the capitalist (i.e., class-formation) dynamics that are at play within the settler-colonial context. I critique Shafir not for failing to include culture in his examination but for failing to count society (i.e., class) as within it. I argue that Shafir's understandings of the reality in Palestine/Israel do not take into account the rise of Jewish and Palestinian middle and laboring classes within a context of capitalist or protocapitalist economies.

What is the source of Shafir's restricted portrayal of the dynamics in Palestine/Israel, on account of which he asserts that "capitalist calculations" had only a "marginal role" in the formation of Zionist settler colonialism? This lacuna can be traced to the intellectual sources that underlie his theory. A look at three of the main sources of his work—George M. Fredrickson's (1984) *White Supremacy* , D. K. Fieldhouse's (1982) *The Colonial Empires* , and Edna Bonacich's (1972) theory of the split labor market (SLM)—reveals a scholarship that prefers categories of race, caste, and ethnicity over class. In *White Supremacy* —a formative work of comparative history on the development of racialized societies in South Africa and the American South, as well as a pioneering portrayal of the development of settler colonies by English settlers in Ireland and America—Fredrickson (1984, xx) argues that in "the debate over the relative significance of 'race' and 'class' … I have sought … to comprehend the interaction and inter-relationship of 'race' and 'class' … without assigning a necessary priority to either." Throughout the book, however, he refers to a wider concept of caste that, although it has social meaning, moves away from socioeconomic explanations. Using caste as the basic mechanism that moves the social-historical realty of colonial settlement in America and South Africa fails to give meaning to the process of capital accumulation and class formation. The rise of a South African mineral economy and a black working class or the economic dimensions of removing Native Americans in the United States in the nineteenth century are cases in point. They entail not just a removal of natives (in the American case) or the turning of pastoral societies into a lower caste but also the transfer of land as a means of production from natives to whites and the creation of capital accumulated in the hands of a bourgeois white class. This aversion to socioeconomic motivations carried over into Fredrickson's theorization of Zionist colonialism, where it translated into a lack of emphasis on the way Zionist colonization created a Jewish working class that worked in economic enterprises that were only Jewish. In turn, these economic assets were owned by a Jewish middle class. Parallel to that, a Palestinian bourgeoisie coming out of growing trade links employed a growing number of peasant workers—displaced by Zionist settler colonialism—in its own emerging capitalist economy.

D. K. Fieldhouse's detailed history of European expansion from the eighteenth century to the decolonization of the 1960s is part of a revision of the Leninist understanding of imperialism. [8] His work, with its conservative undertones, argues that European expansion to the New World, Asia, and Africa from before 1815 offered no economic advantage whatsoever. "One relevant consideration remains. Even if the expansion of Europe brought economic advantage to investors, traders, and exporters, these were private interests: it does not follow that European states as a whole benefited correspondingly" (Fieldhouse 1982, 392). The reasons why European states expanded overseas were military and geopolitical and concerned big-power politics. Fieldhouse's attack on the economic motivations for empire building disregards the wide disparity between rich former colonizers and poor colonized societies, a disparity that still exists. Even if one adheres to his understandings, he does not elucidate how the plunder of the non-

European world by private interests changed society in both the mother country and the colonies. There is no doubt that the typology of military colony, plantation, and pure colony, which pervades *The Colonial Empires* , is an important interpretive tool. In the hands of Shafir, it opens up rich vistas of meaning regarding Zionist settler colonialism in late Ottoman Palestine. Nonetheless, the inability to see any economic reasoning behind the Zionist colonial project originates with Fieldhouse's influence on Shafir.

A different contribution to Shafir's theories comes from Edna Bonacich's (1972) influential SLM theory. In her seminal essay "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," she argues that "the central hypothesis is that ethnic antagonism first germinates in a labor market split along ethnic lines. To be split, a labor market must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labor differs for the same work, or would differ if they did the same work" (549). There is no doubt that in Palestine/Israel an SLM has existed. However, Shafir implements this concept too rigidly in relation to the historical reality. Though limited in extent, the Palestinian and Jewish economies have interacted with each other. Zionist capital flows into Palestinian coffers in exchange for land. Goods, mainly agricultural, have been sold by Palestinians in Jewish markets; more importantly, Palestinians have worked in Jewish citrus orchards. Moreover, albeit at different levels of development, they have undergone a similar and integrated process of capitalist development.

Class and Capitalism in Palestine/Israel

Was the settler-colonial reality in pre-1948 Palestine and Israel shaped with no influence by market and capitalist development? An analysis of the historical development of the economy in Palestine/Israel from the late Ottoman era to the formative years of Israel may provide an answer to this question.

The social history of Palestine/Israel is deeply marked by the development of class. The nucleus of the Israeli bourgeoisie was formed by the First Aliyah peasants. The first wave of Jewish settlers from Eastern Europe to Palestine exhibited many bourgeois characteristics—primarily, private ownership of land. The society of these first Jewish settlers was in essence a feudal one (Ben-Porat 1999, 29) in which wealth was created from the land. However, the Jewish settlers-farmers did not become part of the landowning system that controlled the lives of Palestinian peasants; rather, they bought and owned the land of their *moshavot* , in effect demonstrating the first stage of capitalist society emerging out of feudalism, as Marx described. The Palestinian tenant farmers who were removed from these lands became—after the failed attempt by the settlers to work their lands by themselves—agricultural workers (29). Thus, the transformation into wage workers of those parts of the Palestinian peasantry that came into contact with the Jewish settlements introduced capitalist class relations into the late Ottoman Palestinian countryside. This development became intertwined with the colonial relations typical of the plantation colony, with class differences between the wage workers/colonized and employers/colonizers drawn along ethnic lines as well as class ones. Even when the capitalist structure of the Jewish colonies was severely challenged by the settler-colonial campaigns for *Avoda Ivrit*— which called for basing the labor in the citrus orchards on Jews only—this structure survived largely intact (Shapira 1977). The Jewish middle class continued to develop after the end of the Ottoman era and into the start of the British Mandate. Capital streamed into the country from the Zionist movement's national founders and was brought in by the immigrants themselves. The Fourth Aliyah (1924–31), which arrived from Poland and Eastern

Europe, and the Fifth Aliyah (1933–9), which arrived from Germany and Central Europe in the wake of the rise of Fascism in Europe, were mainly responsible for laying the foundation of an urban bourgeoisie (81–8). This new propertied stratum was based on a large group of small-business owners and small-scale factories. This new class of Jewish capitalists was the backbone of the industrialization of Palestine's Jewish economy during War World II (Lockman 1995). By 1948, the privately owned sector comprised 60 percent of the Israeli economy as compared to the Histadrut, the all-inclusive Jewish union, at 20 percent and the state-owned enterprises' other 20 percent (Ben-Porat 2011). The economic transition of the Israeli middle class was accompanied by the growth of bourgeois culture and political identity. The Israeli propertied classes took a turn from the religious Jewish culture of the First Aliyah to the more secular urban culture of coffee houses and nightclubs developed by the Fourth and Fifth Aliyahs of the 1920s and 1930s. Politically, the Israeli propertied class presents a more complicated process. Paradoxically, in the formative years of Israeli capitalism, political control rested in the hands of Social Democrats—in a historical irony they were the ones that enabled the transition of power to the capitalist class. As was eloquently phrased by Amir Ben-Porat (2011, 65), "In a paraphrase of Marx's positions in regard to the birth of capitalism, it is possible to say that Israeli capitalism was (also) shaped in the womb of the labour movement, first and foremost MAPAI, which considered itself a Socialist movement."

Class relations within the Zionist movement show a move from a class alliance between the Zionist institutions and Labor Zionism to the hegemony of the latter. The workers, mainly in the collective settlements, became the vanguard of Zionist colonization while the liberal bourgeoisie would foot the bill. When the settler-colonial enterprises of the workers' movements would become economically insolvent, the Zionist institutions—through capital solicited from middle-class Zionists outside Palestine—would keep them financially afloat. When the workers' parties became by the early 1930s the political hegemon in the Zionist movement and the *Yishuv* , and even more so from 1948 to the mid 1960s, MAPAI (the Eretz-Israel Workers Party, which was dominant) enjoyed the political subordination of the middle class. Parts of the Israeli bourgeoisie directly supported MAPAI electorally while the liberal parties supported its successive coalition governments. In return, the Labor Zionists accommodated the economic interests of the middle class, affording it capital and protective tariffs and thus ensuring the formation of Israel as a capitalist society.

For instance, in the wake of the 1952 elections, when MAPAI formed a coalition government with the liberal-bourgeois General Zionists Party, the "coalition agreement was clearly tilted towards the worldview of the latter. In this agreement it was decided upon … cutting expenses and 'balancing the budget' (meaning, cutting welfare), encouraging private enterprise (aiding the private sector), the annulment of favoritism towards economic organizations (in other words supporting the private sector), importing private capital from abroad and reducing the control over certain goods (assisting merchants)" (Ben-Porat 2011, 78). From the mid 1960s, as Israeli capitalism gained more political and economic power, this cooperation between labor and capital started to weaken. As middle-class professionals revolted against Histadrut's authority—with engineers threatening to organize outside the union, only coming back into the fold after the organization acknowledged their special status—and as the labor movement dismantled its educational system and its economic enterprises came to be run by capitalistically oriented managers, Israel's state capitalist system began showing signs of demise by the mid 1970s. Politically, this process was symbolized by the bulk of the bourgeois parties moving to consolidate with the right-wing Herut Party and by the breakup of MAPAI as David Ben-Gurion

and his followers formed Rafi (Israel Workers List), which represented the professional middle-class strata disillusioned with MAPAI (Ben-Porat 2011; Bareli 2007; Bareli and Cohen 2008).

Like its Jewish counterpart, the Palestinian bourgeoisie emerged in the late Ottoman era. As Ottoman Palestine was increasingly swept into the orbit of global commerce (Schölch 1981), primarily via exports of raw agricultural goods, an urban commercial class developed mainly in the coastal towns (Tamari 1982). Alongside the landowning elites, a group of capitalist entrepreneurs emerged. This "growing group of men working in commercial, and to a much lesser extent industrial, ventures," a group of men who "were accumulating capital and expertise in the early twentieth century," was part of an evolving Palestinian economy: out of 2,269 economic enterprises (commercial and manufacturing) that opened in Palestine in 1918–27, 60 percent were opened by Palestinians (Seikaly 2016, 13–4). This Palestinian bourgeoisie developed a vision of a capitalist utopia linked to pan-Arab nationalism, a school of thought expressed in *Al-Iqtisadiyyat al-árabiyya* (Arabic economic journal), where an elite modern man is described. He is distinguished by his business skills, as a committed capitalist entrepreneur, and by his commitment to the creation of a national economy. He is rational, progressive, and scientifically inclined. The social man of the Palestinian capitalist fantasy was expected to accumulate capital through his business dealings, but he was discouraged from engaging in extravagant consumerism and was encouraged to be frugal and prudent in manner and appearance (23–53)

However, the Palestinian bourgeoisie, like most of the Palestinian people, were swept away in the whirlwind of the 1948 Nakba—Arabic for "the disaster" and the Palestinian name for the 1948 war. In Israel, a Palestinian bourgeoisie would only emerge among the Palestinians in the wake of the 1967 war and after the entry of cheap Palestinian workers from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The development of the Palestinian and Jewish bourgeoisie took place along the settler-colonial divide that Shafir described. In cases, Jewish and Palestinian capitalists cooperated, most notably in the citrus industry (Kabha and Karlinsky 2017) and in Haifa (Bernstein 2000). However, in general these two classes developed in parallel. Their loyalty to their respective national movements superseded any joint class interests they might have shared. But the fact that class formation did take place lends nuance to the picture that Shafir has painted. Instead of two monolithic societies—settlers and the colonized—competing for labor and land, a more complicated picture emerges. In this historical reality, class and class interests (economic and cultural) played a part in shaping the Palestinian and Jewish societies. As Sherene Seikaly (2016) shows, the emerging Palestinian capitalist class reflected its economic interests in a discourse of social hierarchy. This discourse created subjects such as the bourgeois man and woman, the *Falaḥim* , the Bedouin, and the worker—all within what Seikaly clearly defines as a settler-colonial reality.

The Jewish working class in Palestine/Israel was formed in two main stages, both of which involved turning Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe or the Arab world with bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie backgrounds into workers. The first process of proletarianization took place from 1903 to 1948 and involved turning Eastern European Jews into wage workers. The second process, from the early 1950s, was the conversion of Jews from the Arab East into workers (De Vries 1994; Ben-Porat 1986, 1991, 1992; Bernstein 2000; Lockman 1995).

From the early stages of the process that turned young Eastern European Jewish settlers from lower-middle-class backgrounds into workers, these workers showed two main characteristics. The first was a propensity to organize, brought with them from industrializing Eastern Europe.

As a class, the Jewish workers—despite the ambivalent stance of the *Histadrut* —tended to strike in defense of their rights (De Vries 2015). While in most cases class militancy was not translated into interclass solidarity with Palestinian workers, the picture that Shafir paints does not capture all the nuances of labor and capital relations in Palestine/Israel. Certainly, the Zionist logic of colonial separation raised Jewish workers to the highest-paid positions in the labor market. In addition, the Zionist colonial separation of the Jewish economy protected Jewish workers from the inexhaustible pool of cheap Palestinian labor; adopting the Zionist ideology of *Avoda Ivrit* served the class interests of Jewish workers—protecting their relatively privileged place within the labor market and at times their very survival. Consider the campaign for using only Jewish labor in the *moshavot* citrus groves. While the work in the orchards did not attract Jewish workers in times of full employment, at times of economic crisis, working in the *moshavot* became one of the few options available to them. Consequently, the ideology of "Hebrew work" became a manifestation of their class interest (Shapira 1977).

While the bulk of the evidence supports Shafir's conclusions, he does not take account of the continued history of interclass cooperation. Before 1948, Palestine's economy was divided between predominantly Jewish and Arab sectors and a government-controlled sector. In contrast to Jewish-owned enterprises, the British colonial state did not prefer expensive Jewish labor. This gave rise to incidents that enabled Jewish and Palestinian workers to engage in joint union work. In two notable cases, Jewish and Arab workers organized together. In 1931, the Palestinian and Jewish bus drivers, motivated by the taxation policies of the government, went on strike together. Their action did not just "lead to a typical anti-colonial struggle against the British government, but it also undermined Jewish workers' and merchants' acquiescence in the Zionist strategy of nation-building imposed by Jewish labor organizations" (Grinberg 2003, 372). Lev Grinberg's analysis of the strike "criticizes the 'settler-society' approach developed by Baruch Kimmerling and Gershon Shafir, which focused only on the policies and strategies of organized Jewish labor, shaped by the structural conditions of colonization." Grinberg's approach suggests "a 'historical-constructionist' perspective that analyzes the mutual relations between Jews and Arabs of different social classes."

Another historical moment when Palestinian and Jewish workers bridged the settler-colonial divide was related to the government-owned railroads. Jews and Arabs—the largest and most advanced workforce in 1920s Palestine—worked together in the 1920s in an international Arab-Jewish union. Even after the emergence of separate Arab and Jewish unions, workers of both peoples organized together (Lockman 1995). Despite these historical moments of Arab-Jewish interclass supranational solidarity, they were not prevalent among the continued loyalty to one's national movement and the pressure from the Zionist labor movement that objected to joint organization, in keeping with the colonial logic of separation. There was a lack of an appealing ideology that would unite Palestinian and Jewish workers beyond their national identities—the Communist Party that preached such ideas was too small and marginal to be effective. This contributed to the small number of cases in which Palestinian and Jewish workers organized together.

The Palestinian working class emerged out of the Arab peasantry in Palestine. Growing indebtedness and the continued dispossession forced by Zionist colonization pushed Palestinian farmers into the coastal urban centers in search of work. This class was transitory and seasonal in nature. Palestinian workers retained close links with their villages and moved back to the land in times of economic distress (Lockman 1995; Tamari 1982). The 1948 war and its disastrous effect on Palestinian society also marked a turning point in the history of the Palestinian working class.

The mostly *falaḥim* that remained within Israel suffered an accelerated process of proletarianization as large-scale land confiscations by the Israeli state uprooted them from the land. By the late 1950s, as the Israeli economy boomed and absorbed the massive Aliyah of Arabian and European Jews, these workers entered the lower ranks of the Israeli industrial workforce as part of a new Israeli working class made up also of Mizrahi Jews as well as the privileged workers of the pre-1948 era (Ben-Porat 1992).

From the time of the Arab Rebellion (1936–9), Palestinian workers engaged in interclass struggle. In Haifa, shantytown migrant workers took over the rebellion, deposing the bourgeoisie and traditional leadership (Yazbak 2003). Consider the words of an unknown Palestinian Nazareth worker in a 1944 letter to the editor send to the Palestinian Communist newspaper *Al-Ittihad* (Arabic the Union):

> By publishing my words in *al-Ittihad* , I do not seek the sympathy of company owners, since they have proved their desire to *exploit* workers … and I do not seek the compassion of the legislative and executive government authorities, who have displayed their bankruptcy repeatedly with respect to our lives and interests. [Instead] I'd like to say to our Arab labor organizations and to Arab workers, to work hand in hand to establish a higher commission to represent them suitably and honestly reflecting their own interests and benefiting them. [9]

This short passage brings out the fact that, by the 1940s, a Palestinian working class unto itself had been formed, one that was aware of the rise of a class society with antagonistic relations with the national—that is, Palestinian—bourgeoisie.

The historical narrative that I have unfolded here shows that—along the lines of division that Zionist settler colonialism had drawn since the late nineteenth century—Palestinian and Jewish workers forged their own class struggles and organizations. As was the case with the Palestinian and Jewish bourgeoisie, the dividing lines were not as rigidly drawn as Shafir would have them. Alongside the history of conflict that settler colonialism engendered, Jewish and Palestinian workers engaged in interclass struggle against their respective exploiters—mainly the British colonial state.

Capitalism and Settler Colonialism in Palestine/Israel

Settler-colonial theory is a materialist theory with intellectual roots in the Marxist tradition. However, settler-colonial theorists' reconstruction of historical realities in settler societies tends to disregard the socially varied processes of class formation and the development of capitalist regimes. For settler-colonial scholars, the colonizer/colonized dichotomy overshadows the proletariat/bourgeoisie dichotomy.

This is evident in the pioneering work of Gershon Shafir. His rendition of the origins of Israeli society is based on a materialist view of the way Jewish workers effected the building of a pure colony. An analysis of the history of the formation of class among Palestinians and Jews alike shows that, while it did not comply with a Marxist-inspired European model, where labor confronted the political control of capital, the bourgeois class did evolve and to an extent engaged in antagonistic relations with the laboring class. These developments largely corresponded with the settler-colonial divide that Shafir portrays, meaning that Jewish workers and Arab workers as well as Jewish and Arab capitalists generally did not form any major interclass alliances beyond the national dividing lines. However, one cannot entirely dismiss the history of Palestinian and Jewish cooperation in the citrus groves and in the joint struggles of workers from both peoples in the governmental sector of Palestine's economy. While this may not have been the main tendency in a society that was shaped by a drive to categorize and

separate Arabs from Jews, it nonetheless lends nuance to the largely monochromatic picture that Shafir paints of the history of Palestine/Israel. The reclaiming of this counterhistory and the use of Marxism to interpret it within settler-colonial discourse serves to enhance and enrich our view of the history of Palestine/Israel.

This rewriting of the colonial history of the country also includes a reclaiming of the Marxist origins of settler-colonial theories. Apart from the Marxian elements that are to be found in the works of Wolfe and Veracini and the historicized materialism of Shafir, this essay has traced the Marxist "prehistory"—one might dare to say the unacknowledged origins—of settler colonialism in the works of Rodinson and Hilal, both committed Marxists.

Scholars have challenged settler colonialism from differing points of view, raising concerns about the validity of settler colonialism as a concept, its overemphasis on the colonizer experience, the economistic and materialist stress of Shafir's theories, and mainly the lack of specificity of applying the paradigm to local historical and social conditions. This essay takes on some of these critics—mainly regarding the myopic look at local circumstances. It attempts to include the history of the rise of capitalist class society within the settler-colonial history of Palestine/Israel.

The history of Palestine/Israel has been reconstructed from a neo-Marxist and various other sociological perspectives; however, this essay suggests a different theoretical meeting point. It suggests we should understand settler colonialism from less of a clear-cut vantage point that shows the cleavages of class in both the settler and the colonized societies and the social struggles they induce—struggles that at times blur and defy the colonial divide that nationalist establishments wish to reinforce and exploit. As the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians originating in late-nineteenth-century Zionism stands at a bloody impasse, we should seek its beginnings along the critique that Marxism offers. It must be said that beyond the analytical tools the Marxist tradition can afford us, its emancipatory content can give us hope.

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1 Comparable critiques to the one voiced in the text above can be found in Greenstein (2017).
2 See, e.g., Weinstock (1973, 49–63), Haddad (1974, 97–113), and Khalidi (1993, 30–47).
3 Aliyah is Hebrew for “ascent” and, in Zionist jargon, the name for each wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine/Israel.
4 For Ruppin’s biography and his interest in German *völkisch* -style race theories, see Piterberg (2008, 81–8).
5 For the development of the WZO’s pure settlement theories, see Shafir (1989, 154–60).
6 Palestine was officially a mandate to “guide” into independence given to the British by the League of Nations. However, in practice they ran the country as a Crown Colony directly governed from London. “Ertz-Israel was, generally, ran [sic] in the legal and organizational framework of a British Crown Colony” (Gross 1982, 154).
7 See Piterberg (2015) and Shafir (1996b).
8 See also Fieldhouse (1961) and Stokes (1969).
9 See *Al-Ittihad* , 27 August 1944.

The History of Political Melancholy as an Alternative History of Zionism

Nitzan Lebovic

Understanding political melancholy as central to the crisis of modernity and democracy implies a growing realization that melancholy teaches us something essential about different forms of political crisis and their affective modes. This essay contends that the relationship between political melancholy in Weimar Germany and its repurposing by German Jews for Zionist thought reveals how political melancholy was and remains at the heart of Zionism. The essay offers both a historical and theoretical consideration of political melancholy. Its purpose is to question how a political affect of melancholy helps us grasp Zionism, offering a new way to think through its failures. More specifically, the growing attention, both critical and affirmative, paid to "left-wing melancholy" is used to examine a general sense of loss and crisis in the West and the more concrete expression of this sense in the history of Zionism.

Our time proves susceptible to modes of political thought born in the 1920s, especially that of absolute crisis and its attendant melancholy. A broader consideration of the Weimar Republic as "the crisis of classical modernity" and its sense of "melancholy dialectics" have increasingly become a standard point of reference in both historical and contemporary political thought (Pensky 1993; Peukert 1992). Understanding political melancholy as central to the crisis of modernity and democracy implies a growing realization that melancholy teaches us something essential about different forms of political crisis and their affective modes. This essay contends that the relationship between political melancholy in Weimar Germany and its repurposing by German Jews for Zionist thought shows the way political melancholy was and remains at the heart of Zionism. The essay offers both a historical and theoretical consideration of political melancholy. My purpose is to question how a political affect of melancholy (defined below) helps us grasp Zionism, possibly offering a new way to think through its pathologies. I do so not by tracing the theoretical footprints of the "other" (e.g., Palestinians, Mizrahi women, or Marxist anti-Zionists), which may have turned this analysis into an affirmative reading of identity, but by depicting the discourse of left-wing Zionism and its failure.

In the following, I use the growing attention paid to "left -wing melancholy," both critical and affirmative, to examine a general sense of loss and crisis in the West and the more concrete expression of this sense in the history of Zionism. The roots of political melancholy lie in Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) short essay "Left-Wing Melancholy," written in 1931 In his critique of the social-democratic author Erich Kästner (1889–1974), the German Jewish theoretician characterized "left-wing melancholy" as "political meaning [that] exhausts itself in the reversal of all revolutionary reflexes" (Benjamin 1999, 424). Benjamin identified this reversal as a sign of caving to materialistic temptations, or that which "has been made available for consumption" (424). During the last decade of the twentieth century the political thinker Wendy Brown followed this early critical depiction of a self-serving Left and added another biting critique of her own. Brown (1999, 26) took Benjamin's depiction of "left-wing melancholy" from the 1920s and 1930s to characterize the Left of the present: "It is a Left that has become more attached to its impossibility than to its potential fruitfulness … [it is] caught in a structure of melancholic attachment to a strain of its own dead past." Benjamin's and Brown's hypotheses of an inherent melancholic failing at the heart of the liberal or social-democratic Left clarifies a key challenge confronting every project of radical political reform. [1]

* * *

Before the language of political melancholy arose, the idea of public melancholy had already begun among intellectuals reflecting on the aftermath of World War I. Sigmund Freud's essay "Trauer und Melancholie" ("Mourning and Melancholy"), written from 1915–7, defined this melancholy as a "reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an idea, and so on" (Freud 1957, 243). Of course, Freud did not invent melancholy as a symptom. As art historians Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl have shown, melancholy had been connected to physiological pathologies since ancient times: for example, to "black bile" and "the look of a mad dog"; to "the impression of the night" during the Middle Ages; to "divine madness" during the baroque period; and more recently, melancholy had been psychologized and personified (Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl 1964, 219). [2] In his postdoctoral thesis, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* , [3] Walter Benjamin (1998a) analyzed Panofsky and Saxl's 1923 *Dürers "Melencolia I"* as a foundation for the discussion of modern sovereignty and its self-presentation. As will be shown below, Benjamin's argument was a discursive and critical analysis of political melancholy; he used political melancholy as a critical weapon against all forms of affirmative communal association, including his own German Jewish identity. A discursive analysis of melancholy is necessary for the understanding of Zionism.

Among Jews, it was common to identify melancholy with the time of Jewish exile circa AD 70, with the destruction of the Second Temple and the forced exile. The rise of Zionist ideology gave this melancholy a distinctly negative political tone. As the late historian Boaz Neumann (2011, 76) has argued, "The [Jewish] exile is a space of endless, purposeless movement." [4] While exile implied a sense of loss and aimlessness, the *aliyah* emigration to Zion —"ascending"—was supposed to cure the settlers of all historical ills. Instead, many Zionist pioneers suffered from "chronic melancholy," and the suicide rate among Zionist pioneers was exceptionally high. Between 1910 and 1923, the suicide rate reached epidemic proportions, making up some 10 percent of all deaths among the pioneers (Rolnik 2012, 45). Melancholy could be used, then, to shed some light on the hidden core of the life and political consciousness of Zionist pioneers.

Interestingly, during the late 1910s and early 1920s, melancholy also arose as a topos among left-wing intellectuals who were engaged with Zionist ideology. In 1917, the same year as Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia," Gershom Scholem (2014) wrote "On Lament and Lamentation," an introduction to his translation of the book of Lamentations into German. Scholem's study prepared the ground for both "cultural Zionism" and emigration to Palestine. Scholem saw this move as a solution to exilic lament, which he came to identify with a cosmic "breaking of the vessels": "Nothing remains in its proper place. Everything is somewhere else. But a being that is not in its proper place is in exile … everything is in some way broken, everything has a flaw, everything is unfinished" (Scholem 1969, 112). [5] That is, until one moves back to Zion.

If Benjamin identified melancholy as an obstacle on the path to revolutionary politics, for Scholem melancholy was an obvious prerequisite to the fulfillment of messianic politics and thus was politically productive. If we follow this logic, melancholy was for Zionist pioneers a psychic and social—though not political—symptom of collective pressure that was supposed to have a political and cultural remedy in Zion. [6]

* * *

Despite their competing interpretations of melancholy, Benjamin, Scholem, and the Zionist pioneers were reacting to the same historical circumstances: the deep crisis of democracy and the attempt of social democrats to cope with the growing power of radical nationalism and anti-Semitism. Benjamin's and Scholem's arguments can thus serve as a historical and theoretical anchor next to three present approaches that understand melancholy as a voice of *discursive and political dissent* (melancholy as a *critique pour la critique*); as a call for *historical hope* (melancholy as a positive signifier of change); and as a form of *philosophical negation* (melancholy is close to the negation of community and hence is its only possible coming together).

First, however, a brief introduction to the idea of political melancholy.

What Is Political Melancholy?

Political melancholy is a seminal realization of collective loss that hinders a given group's ability to effect change. [7] As such, political melancholy is related to individual melancholy but concerns the larger political body, in relation not to the ego but to the sovereign. Hermeneutically and historically, political melancholy is a modern phenomenon; it was born of the realization that nineteenth-century universal ideals could not find correlates in reality. The death of God led, expectedly or unexpectedly, to a lacking sense of order and sovereignty in the world.

* * *

Freud's was the first depiction of melancholy as an integral part of the structure of the universal "self," a sentiment both related to and contrasted with therapeutic mourning. According to Freud, "The melancholic displays something … which is lacking in mourning—an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (Freud 1957, 246). Freud distinguished between imagined and real forms of loss. Melancholy is born of an imaginary loss characterized by a narcissistic identification with the lost object. It is experienced over a longer duration than mourning and is obsessive and unconscious (Moglen 2007, 13).

* * *

Judith Butler (1997, 172) has pointed out that, for Freud, melancholia signals the failure of the ego to find a substitute for the lost object it has mourned. This failure often results in a turn toward narcissism and fetishization, which "exposes the fault lines in its own tenuous foundations." Butler, with an eye to the political implications of melancholy, notes the function of melancholy as a discourse, or a "fabrication of conscience," that has enabled the "institutionalization" of melancholy. [8] In other words, Freud assumed that melancholia (along with mourning) helps to shape our normative sense of right and wrong. Butler interprets Freud's study as "a portrait of melancholia that continually blurs into his view of mourning," or as a "psychic articulation of ambivalence as 'a conflict between one part of the ego and the critical agency' … [in] the formation of the super-ego" (172, 174). As Butler shows, Freud's understanding of melancholy was grounded in both spatial and institutional terms: "Turning back

on itself … the ego itself is produced as a psychic object; in fact, the very articulation of this psychic space, sometimes figured as 'internal,' depends on this melancholic turn" (168). In contrast, she argues, Walter Benjamin insisted that melancholy is solely spatial due to its normative and fetishizing effect: According to her reading of Benjamin (quoted in Butler 1997, 168), "Melancholia spatializes" and "its effort to reverse or suspend time produces 'landscapes' as its signature effect." In short, if Freud's motivation is one of mapping the ego and its "psychic space"—including its relation to institutions and norms as part of its internal structure—Benjamin's political understanding of melancholy "turn[s] back on itself" for the sake of a critical examination of ego and/or its drive to communal and consensual self-fulfillment. Melancholy disturbs the idealist call for realization, be it personal or political. [9]

* * *

If Freud's position is built on a psychological and structural opposition between melancholy and mourning in the ego, Benjamin's interpretation of melancholy is grounded in a historico-political analysis that blurs the lines between therapeutic mourning and pathological melancholy, stressing temporality rather than spatiality, dissent rather than normativity, hybridity rather than a structural opposition.

As mentioned above, melancholy was a major political trope in Benjamin's 1928 habilitation on the baroque tragic drama (*Trauerspiel*) and in his critique of Kästner four years later. Indeed, melancholy is found throughout his oeuvre, from the early 1910s to his death in 1940, and it is always discussed in the context of a political crisis. Ilit Ferber (2013, 28) has argued that, for Benjamin, melancholy is a response to historical conditions such as "the loss of eschatological narrative … echoing Freud's mourner who sees the world as empty after experiencing the loss of a loved object." Such changes in the basic cosmology or metaphysics implies not only a change of human language and fundamental conditions of being and expression but also a new landscape and an opportunity for a new political order. Hence, Benjamin's discussions of the *Trauerspiel* , Kästner's prose and poetry, and melancholy in Proust, Baudelaire, Nietzsche, and Péguy, among others, always culminated in the language of critique, political dissent, and rebellion. Accordingly, melancholy signified to Benjamin a means of betrayal of normative and consensual ways of thinking. [10]

Why betrayal and not simply alteration or change? For Benjamin (1998a, 56) the only move forward was always from *within* an existing form—history, metaphysics, philosophy, or theology—turned against itself: "All essential decisions in relation to men can offend against loyalty; they are subject to higher laws." [11] In other words, for Benjamin, ideological or methodological loyalty is always an expression of affirmation and complacency. As a result, Benjamin recommends melancholy as a form of self-critique and autoimmunization; when used appropriately, melancholy is political and turned against the self. In the context of the left wing, it should be used to expose how the struggle against injustice has become "an object of consumption." [12] The ego of the critic is not a free and an independent entity but could easily turn to an affirmative weapon of (bourgeois) self-justification and feed a sense of self-grandeur. A "left-wing melancholy" is a particular kind of political melancholy; as Benjamin noted, it marks the form of a moderate and universalist critique that would not risk its own position in the hierarchy or power relation of the state.

* * *

The notion of discursive betrayal became Benjamin's guiding principle for all political analysis, whether on the sovereign in the baroque era or on the social democrats of the 1920s and 1930s, and melancholy was the discourse he used to get there. Discursive betrayal brought the principle of dissent to its logical end. The melancholic point of view aligned with a politics of the creaturely, the nonhuman, at the point where human speech betrays itself and its kind. In his habilitation Benjamin anchored his understanding of melancholy as the dissent drive par excellence in an analysis of the baroque, contrasting the melancholic *Trauerspiel* and its primordial obsession with loss from the stress on mourning in tragedy. If tragedy is the genre of humanism and the reasoning of the polis, melancholy returns to a Kafkaesque world of swamps and creatures: "The baroque … had a clear vision of the misery of mankind in its creaturely estate … melancholy emerges from the depths of the creaturely realm" (Benjamin 1998a, 146). Melancholy, with its inherent relation to the creaturely, is helpful in exposing the delusion of a never-ending growth of self and the illusion of a surrounding material world without gaps or class. A commitment to dissent and critique, Benjamin proposes, is a commitment to political melancholy, which he contrasts with a "left-wing melancholy." If we recall the gaze of the Angel of History, its back turned to the rising "pile of debris," it is the unnostalgic gaze of political melancholiacs who cannot (and will not) use melancholy to defend their positions of power, if only because that power is buried under the rubble, together with every other memorabilia of their pasts.

Three Comments about Political Melancholy: Brown (Critique), Traverso (Hope), and Esposito (Negative Philosophy)

The contrast between melancholia and mourning cannot be complete without an accompanying dialectical twist, so typical of Benjamin: in modern times, melancholy has become a useful attitude for good liberals who cannot admit to and mourn the loss of their ideal, universal, enlightened world. This illusion, "humanist" and "universalist," is the sin of the "left-wing melancholist." As Wendy Brown (1999, 19) explains it, "Left[-wing] melancholy is Benjamin's unambivalent epithet for the revolutionary hack who is, finally, attached more to a particular political analysis or idea—even to the failure of that idea—than to seizing possibilities for radical change in the present." A melancholic affect is thus both the ultimate language of dissent and the preferred method of expression of the moderate Left, apparently critical but ultimately self-centered or narcissistic. Politically speaking, the effect is the confusion of radical and moderate left-wing critique. Leaving the somewhat misleading language of "left-wing" behind, the actual confusion is between radical and transformative change on one hand and the consolidating affective language of the status quo presented in the idiom of transformation on the other.

* * *

Brown (2010, 21) reads Benjamin's plea for a dissenting Left as a commitment strong enough to move beyond an imagined (melancholic) loss. Her reading, whose conclusions she extends in her *Walled States* and *Undoing the Demos* , adapts Benjamin's critique of the bourgeois Left to a post-Marxist, post-Communist, transnational, post-Westphalian world. The only possible approach to our current neoliberal world, according to Brown, is to rebel against a world Benjamin did not know but anticipated. Following Benjamin, she uses political melancholy (the

Angel of History whose gaze is as melancholic as it is revolutionary) to examine the limits of social democracy and analyze its moving desire—that is, its relation to market forces: "The primary focus has been on the grammar and terms of this rationality and on the mechanisms of its dissemination and interpelletive power. Of course, these are buttressed by concrete policies that dismantle social infrastructure, privatize public goods, deregulate commerce, destroy social solidarities, and responsibilize subjects" (Brown 2015, 201).

In Brown, Benjamin's plea for an explicit discursive betrayal is not only updated for the needs of our time but is also transformed into the opposite of fetish, or what Rebecca Comay (2005, 92) calls the "mnemonic registration of a loss." Betraying one's own language and methods requires either opposing their affirmative ritualization or else a narcissistic positioning of objects in relation to the self. Accordingly, Benjamin's understanding of social-democratic complacency exposes the "structure of the fetish" (a double loss, in that forgetting why we mourn the person we once loved ultimately results in the fetishization of them, as Freud noted). Brown (2010, 126), like Benjamin, identifies this structure of the fetish with the forces of normalization or the defeatist stance of "I know they don't really work, but still, they satisfy." For Brown such rhetoric "poses the question of what desire the fetish is harboring" (114).

* * *

Brown is not the only contemporary theoretician to pay tribute to Benjamin's analysis of political melancholy or his critique of "left-wing melancholy." In his recent *Left-Wing Melancholia: Marxism, History and Memory* , Enzo Traverso (2017, xv) relies on Benjamin's interpretation of the phenomenon but transforms melancholy into a positive force: "Neither regressive nor impotent, this left-wing melancholia should not evade the burden of the past. It is a melancholy criticism that, while being open to the struggles in the present, does not avoid self-criticism about its own past failures; it is the melancholy criticism of a left that is not resigned to the world order sketched by neoliberalism but that cannot refurbish its intellectual armory without identifying empathetically with the vanquished of history."

Traverso's plea to return a utopian dimension to present politics relies on an alternative history of the Left that refuses to acknowledge its defeat by the neoliberal state after the fall of Communism. In that respect, left-wing melancholy "does not mean to abandon the idea of socialism or the hope for a better future; it means to rethink socialism in a time in which its memory is lost, hidden, and forgotten and needs to be redeemed" (Traverso 2016, 20).

* * *

While Traverso's reconstructive project aims to revitalize the Left via its melancholic means of expression, Roberto Esposito has a darker, more paradoxical vision. Esposito (2009, 45–6) interprets melancholy as a principle of "destructive passions" that "if left unchecked, risks leading men into civil war." Melancholy in this sense is not an "individual pathology" but "a sickness of the political body in its entirety." Like Traverso, Esposito (2013, 28) identifies melancholy primarily as a collective phenomenon rather than an individual, psychological one: it is "the originary melancholic, lacerated, and fractured character of community." And yet, like Benjamin, Esposito's melancholy extends the political framework beyond a simple individual-communal dichotomy and views both from the perspective of the creaturely: "For much of the interpretative tradition … melancholic man has been defined precisely by his *opposition to communal life* . He has been defined insofar as he is not in common: sick, abnormal, even

ingenious, but, because of this, outside of the community, if not against it. He may resemble a beast or a god … but resembles neither humankind in general nor the common generality of men" (27; emphasis added).

Esposito's negative emphasis on melancholy is not based on a historical discourse. Rather, it belongs to a posthumanist and post-Enlightenment era. In contrast to Traverso, melancholy enables him to see the present as a break rather than a continuity. The break is complete, but it is precisely the power of a thoroughgoing negativity that enables him to make a Nietzschean move: the self-harming thanato-political character of political melancholy enables it to move beyond the limitations of nineteenth-century universalism and idealism.

As will be shown below, the difference between these three thinkers is crucial to the understanding of left-wing melancholy in the Zionist context. It is not only a distinction in the understanding of past and present political crises—crises for which the German 1920s have become a primal traumatic moment—but also between different philosophies of history and visions of belongingness.

The History of (Leftist) Zionism

The state of Israel was established in 1948 by a social-democratic party with deep socialist roots. As Zeev Sternhell has shown, its declaration of independence—still the country's principle constitutional document—was grounded in Eastern and Central European national movements wherein labor and socialist movements were expected to align themselves with national interests. "The concept of the nation's primacy," Sternhell (1998, 147) writes, "was basic to the ideology of the labor movement." Sternhell shows that a careful history of the labor movement would demonstrate how socialism was used as "a myth that mobilized the masses" by "placing the universal values of socialism at the service of the particularistic values of nationalism" (147). That way, the individual was subordinated to the collective language of the nation and was required to accept the authority of the party.

In other words, the role that the Social Democratic Labor Party of the 1920s–40s played in the establishment of the state shows how socialism and universal values were used to unite the different parts of the nation around the party and its leader, David Ben-Gurion. [13] Sternhell's pioneering work pointed to the political mechanism which allowed "the Left" to become identified with "the state," but what Sternhell takes to be a simple form of ideological co-optation, others see as a deeper act of self-negation. David N. Myers (2008, 108) has written about Ben-Gurion's attempt "to set in place a collective memory that rested on Israel's position both as the center of Jewish life and as the logical culmination of Jewish history. In this emerging narrative, the State of Israel was … the antidote to the vulnerability of Jewish life in exile." Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin (2017, 394) has argued that the sources of Zionism are anchored by a fundamental attitude of loss, emptiness, and the negation of exile; for the key representatives of Zionism, exile "was in and of itself meaningless, a condition of deficient existence, partial and abnormal—a time in which the 'spirit of the nation' could not find expression due to the external bounds that prevented its realization. The Land itself did not know a meaningful history … an empty land." The gap between the promise and its realization was papered over by socialist, universalist, and nationalist rhetoric in the first generation of the state, but a deeper and more troubling state of emptiness could not be overcome.

* * *

Thinking about Zionism—as a national and left-wing movement—from the perspective of political melancholy begins with a reconsideration of the narrative of the Jewish settlement in Palestine as a failure. [14] Viewed with political melancholy in mind, Zionism is seen as a movement that started with the mindset of transformative change and the willingness to see an old past as a sad but inevitable "pile of debris" necessary to open new political horizons. However, in contrast to the triumphalist story, a left-wing melancholic reading would stumble on a broken narrative full of gaps—above all between the promise and its realization. What started with "political melancholy" ended up as a model for "left-wing melancholy": if a utopian narrative is based on the discovery of new lands, a left-wing melancholic story is more interested in the shipwrecks on the way there. [15] Several historians and political thinkers explore the dialectics of melancholy and utopia, the promise and the failure, in the context of the Zionist *Heilsgeschichte* . Without mentioning melancholy, they portray the mechanism of a melancholic myth that is particular to the Zionist story. Yael Zerubavel (1995) and Idith Zertal (2005, 167) focus on the coercive nationalist narrative of the Zionist story in which the creation of the modern state is connected with the heroic biblical times while skipping two thousand years of exilic history as well as more recent historical events that did not quite follow "the great narrative of Israeli redemption, until it became the narrative itself." Ron Kuzar (2001) writes on the coercive normalization of the Hebrew language in the 1940s–50s after its "revival"; Eyal Chowers (2012, 136) explains how Zionism forced a coercive temporality, or what "became a movement defined by continuous action, as if the lack of it threatened its identity"; during the late 1990s and early 2000s, Tom Segev (2000), Joseph Massad (2006), Joel Beinin (in Beinin and Stein 2006), and Anita Shapira (1992) wrote about how Zionist institutions espoused the myth of a Jewish nation while denying the existence of Palestinians or a national Palestinian movement. In another vein, David Biale's (1997, 4) *Eros and the Jews* interprets the story of modern Zionism as a failure of an erotic or sexual promise and revolution: "Zionism … is not just a political and cultural movement of liberation, it is also the sexual revolution of the Jewish people. Yet Portnoy cannot escape his Diaspora fate: the Promised Land brings not Eros, but impotence." [16]

* * *

Biale's interpretation touches on a particular strain that is crucial for the understanding of a melancholic Zionism. The sexual frustration he depicts puts its finger on the moment of failure not as a failure of big ideological schemes but as a failure to supply the male pioneers with the power to dominate "the female," whether an actual woman, other feminine men, or their own feminine tendencies. Still, it is interesting to note that the aforementioned critics and historians have not recognized melancholy as the core of the Zionist story. True, affect and actual politics do not always agree. However, a serious consideration of Zionist rhetoric has to pay close attention to questions of discourse, which are always questions of political melancholy for the generation of socialist immigrants; the cleavage that opens between the promise of revival and its realization opens most clearly as a question of ideology on the one hand and individual experience on the other. Yet individuals use the same rhetoric of the collective in order to reflect about their own individual experiences, which leads to a dissonance between the triumphant national rhetoric and individuals' experiences of failure.

Zerubavel, Zertal, Myers, Raz-Karkotzkin, and Biale chose cultural history as a method of analysis that brought the collective and the individual together. But melancholy, especially as a

left-wing melancholy, requires a discursive discussion. Though established through the revolutionary socialist rhetoric of the 1910s and 1920s, David Ben-Gurion's Labor Party gradually evolved into a centrist institutional power. With this evolution, a melancholic gap opened up between the Party's desire to erase the "dead past" of exilic Judaism and its attendant feminine Diasporic Jew, on the one hand, and its fetishization of the European "New Man," on the other. The relevance of political melancholy to the story of the state extends beyond the cultural history of a "return to the land" or the political establishment of the state.

* * *

Looking back at the history of Zionism as the history of "left-wing melancholia" exposes how misleading left-wing universalist claims were unable to admit their own past or translate a traumatic experience to present and future expectation. After all, the social-democratic Left supported the same revivalist language as the Right and, for the most part, similar demographic and territorialist conclusions. The moderate Zionist left wing followed the same melancholic structure as the right wing of negating exile with a revivalist discourse of the land of Zion. From this perspective—one that historians have missed for the most part—it is no coincidence that melancholia was co-opted by the 1967 generation, in the language of the young socialist Kibbutz movement, or by soldiers returning from the war.

In the next two sections I hope to show how the implicit melancholy of the 1948 generation led to the shaping of an institutional revivalist discourse shared by moderate and so-called "radical" left-wing Zionists and that, finally, this led to the explicit, militant melancholy of the post–Six-Day War generation, which, once again, was shared by left-wing melancholiacs.

The Discourse of Revival; or, What's the Difference Between Left and Right?

Zion stood in sharp contrast to Jewish exile; new life revolved around the figure of the New Man; a revival of the Hebrew language would be based on a return to the biblical idiom and rejection of the later rabbinic idiom. All of this seems clear enough when considering political Zionists or right-wing revisionism, but how relevant is it to the left wing?

The theorist Jacqueline Rose made a courageous attempt to answer this question by separating political Zionism from cultural Zionism. In *The Question of Zion* , she revives the first peacenik organization, Brit Shalom (1925–32), as an alternative to a centrist and nationalist form of Zionism. Tracing the 1920s–30s history of German Jewish intellectuals who emigrated to Palestine, including Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber, Rose (2005, 70) sees their cultural Zionism as a missed opportunity for a binational Zionism whose failure has led to increasing melancholy over the years: "Imagine how hard it must have been to pull against the drift, to have been anything other than euphoric in 1948. Today [that position] is the still resonant, melancholic counternarrative to the birth of a nation-state." In contrast to the secularized political messianism of Ben-Gurion and Haim Weizmann, Gershom Scholem and his comrades in Brit Shalom distanced themselves from "the messianic phraseology of Zionism" and its unconcsious Sabbateanism in favor of a spiritual revivalist tone (41). [17]

Rose's nostalgia for cultural Zionism is shared by many leading scholars. Judith Butler is more careful than Rose in distinguishing a variety of positions within Brit Shalom, pointing out Scholem's willingness to cooperate with Ben-Gurion's political Zionism, for instance, or Martin Buber's growing revulsion at the need to align academic appointments and political loyalties.

Yet even Butler expresses clear nostalgia for the days when binationalism was considered a legitimate topic of discussion, while ignoring the revivalist discourse that supported it. As Larisa Reznik (2015, 385) points out, "Butler offers no sites of institutional inscription for her ethics," especially where it concerns the institutional inscription of the "melancholy [that] keeps Jews attached to a certain symbolization and narration of loss (exile, shoah, anti-Semitism, and other experiences of victimization) … [a narration that] keeps Jews unable to admit to that loss and thus to make the negativity productive—a space for imagining a future rather than constant recurrence to a now fetishized violence and subordination of the past."

* * *

Simply put, the political divisions between Right and Left, or between political Zionism and Brit Shalom's left-wing binationalism, do not suffice from a discursive perspective. The key focus should be on supporters and critics of the revivalist discourse itself and its institutional realization.

Let me explain: Historians and theoreticians have largely overlooked the discursive contribution by melancholy to all those of the right and left wing, to labor centrists, and to critical binationalists, and how close melancholy has brought them to their supposed political rivals. Take, for example, Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), great uncle to Amos Oz and a bitter rival of Gershom Scholem and Brit Shalom at the Hebrew University. Klausner immigrated to Palestine in 1919; there he developed a theory of Hebrew not only as a historical and literary language but also as a messianic one. A self-declared supporter of the revisionist right wing, fiercely anti-Arab, and in favor of Zionist political messianism, Klausner called for a profoundly political-theological movement. According to Klausner, modern secular Zionism was a realization of "the messianic idea in Israel." This was also the title of his dissertation, submitted at the University of Heidelberg in 1902 and published in 1908. He continued to develop this utopian text until its publication in Hebrew in 1950, by which time it had become a full-fledged manifesto that moved messianic time from the vague future to its immediate realization in political power. Despite deep political disagreement, the heart of Klausner's (messianic) argument on the Hebrew language was shared by his ideological rivals in Brit Shalom. Both believed, as Klausner (1940, 291) put it, that "the politico-spiritual Messianic ideal of Israel will be realized in all its fullness, and the Jewish people will dwell in the land historically theirs, and will speak the language historically theirs, and Judaism in the form of ethico-prophetic monotheism will spread over all the world."

Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem's enthusiastic predictions during the 1920s were not much different. The difference was mostly one of style: where Scholem saw danger, Klausner saw potential. Where Scholem (along with Buber and Magnes) strove for a conciliatory, peaceful, scholarly realization of communal ideals, Klausner and his close friend Uri-Zvi Greenberg saw a powerful push toward the end time. [18] Klausner's new edition of *The Messianic Idea in Israel* in 1950 was a demand for militant realization of political messianism and an occupation of the land as described in the Bible. Klausner placed messianism at the heart of political Judaism across history and identified the core of Zionist ideology with the notion of an end-of-time return to Palestine.

Concurring with Carl Schmitt's (1922) *Political Theology* , Klausner held that modern sovereignty depended on the secularization of theological concepts. He believed that the secular aspects of messianism naturally promoted a national ideal, and he ignored any evidence to the contrary: "How is it possible to explain this wonderful phenomenon: the marvelous development

of the Messianic idea in the midst of a unique people, Israel, to such a degree that there is nothing like it in any other nation? The answer to this question is to be sought in the ancient history of the Israelite people. The Messianic expectation is the *Golden Age in the future* " (Klausner 1940, 11).

If, in Hannan Hever's (1994, 148) words, Klausner and Greenberg proposed "a messianic-mystical solution" to the issue of revival and return, then "the aspiration to establish a Jewish state became for them an irrational hope to revive the kingdom of Israel in the present," and the legacy of this vision could still be seen in the post-1967 settlers' movement. This form of decisionist messianism is the opposite of Benjamin's view of melancholy as a form of antidecisionism. If revivalists of the Hebrew language—a group that included patriots from both Klausner's and Scholem's ends of the political map—argued in favor of a fetishized relation to a lost language and its land of origin, Benjamin's call for "discursive betrayal" requires a more skeptical approach to one's own words, to the relationship between language and borders and the way both shape our world.

Klausner's book was dedicated to the memory of his rival, the first president of the Hebrew University, Yehuda Leib (Leon) Magnes (1877–1948), one of the leaders of cultural Zionism alongside Scholem and Buber.

* * *

In contrast to Ben-Gurion's political Zionism and Klausner's reactionary revisionism, Scholem, Buber, and Magnes thought nothing more detestable than a literal political-theological application of messianism. For them, following Ahad Ha'am's (see Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927) stress on the spiritual mission of Judaism went hand in hand with Judaism's revival as a people in Zion. [19] Seeking an alternative to the happy, messianic, and future-oriented nationalist discourse, left-wing intellectuals like Scholem foregrounded expressive modes such as melancholy and depression and collective forms of "Klage" (lament). As Moshe Idel (2011, 91) observes, "All roads now led—so Scholem declared in 1933—to 'Melancholy' rather than to God." This leads Idel to warn his readers to

> pay particular attention to the substitution of God with Scholem's "Melancholy," coming as it does from the pen of one of the most acute observers of all things to do with Judaism and its theology. Such a radical statement about melancholy as a form of hypostasis is, at the same time, a melancholic statement in itself. However, as towering a figure as Scholem undoubtedly was … he was not alone in his sharp discernment of the reign of melancholy at that time. In fact, a variety of other creative geniuses among the Jews in that period were also interested in melancholy, or considered themselves as Saturnine and as belonging to the realm of the profane. (91)

Idel's reading, as Vivian Liska (2017, 117) has shown, is a conservative critique of cultural Zionism. Yet Idel is not mistaken in his understanding of Scholem, Benjamin, Magnes, and Bergmann as "melancholics" or as "saturnine." What Idel reads from a conservative perspective —and therefore without separating every melancholy from a left-wing melancholy—I would like to read from a progressive one: while Idel (2011, 105) believed the cultural Zionists' melancholy saw history as "a constant failure," I would like to identify this melancholic affect as the recognition of a gap between the revivalist promise and its realization. [20] In a poem Scholem (2007, 68–9) wrote in his diary in 1926, translated as "Melancholy Redemption" (Traurige Erlösung), he gave voice to this melancholic gap:

> The Light of Zion is seen no more,
> The real now has won the day:
> Will its still untarnished ray

Attain the world's inmost core?

But rather than following his doubts, as he did in his theoretical work, he ended the poem with the possibility of redemption: in a sentiment for which Scholem would have rebuked Klausner, he writes

God never comes closer
Than when despair bursts into shards:
In Zion's self-engulfing light.

* * *

As David Myers (1995) has shown, Scholem and other figures of cultural Zionism had been ideological and institutional rivals of Klausner since the early days of the Hebrew University. [21] Scholem was among those who mocked Klausner's "publicist" style and his overt messianism. [22] Scholem did his best to undermine Klausner's nomination for a professorship at the university in the history department, but his nomination was rescued by an unexpected source: Scholem's colleague at the Hebrew University and fellow cultural Zionist, Yehuda Magnes, along with one of the fathers of the Labor Party, Menahem Ussishkin; both supported Klausner's application to the literature department at the Hebrew University (Engel 2017, 122–3).

But the ideological differences between the camps did not prevent them from cooperating along similar discursive and institutional lines. In time, Scholem came to cooperate with and even rely on Klausner as a close colleague. As the historian of education Uri Cohen (2002, 363) has shown, the "negation of exile" and the revival of Hebrew stood at the heart of the Hebrew University's mission: "The directors of the university kept stressing that the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was the only university that the Jewish people established for itself." [23] The two political camps were united by a shared understanding of territory, stressing the unity of land and language; they cooperated to form a coherent discourse of revival and political control in spite of their differences in style. In more general terms that echo the positions of Brown, Traverso, and Esposito discussed above, an affirmative approach to melancholy—identified here with "left-wing melancholy"—overcame the negative or critical understanding identified with "political melancholy" in this essay.

The Afterlife of Left-Wing Melancholia

The internal conflicts of the Hebrew University, or those between revisionists, labor centrists, and cultural Zionists, would have been nothing more than a historical footnote had these conflicts not persisted in Zionist historiography since 1948. Amos Oz (2005, 14) described the ideological situation of his family during his childhood:

> My parents were attracted to the intelligentsia of Rehavia, but the pacifist ideals of Martin Buber's Brit Shalom—sentimental kinship between Jews and Arabs, total abandonment of the dream of a Hebrew state so that the Arabs would take pity on us and kindly allow us to live here at their feet—such ideals appeared to my parents as spineless appeasement, craven defeatism of the type that had characterized the centuries of Jewish Diaspora life.

In contrast, Oz depicts "Uncle Joseph" (Klausner) in carefully ironic terms that reflect the "bold pioneer of the renewal of the Hebrew spirit" (242), distancing Klausner from actual melancholy in favor of the sheer imposition of authority: "A framed photograph of Uncle Joseph, looking authoritative and magnificent, almost prophetic … [represented] the historical condition of the

Jewish nation or the hopes of generations" (121). Distaste for Uncle Joseph's messianic enthusiasm, on the one hand, and the Arab-loving pacifists of Hebrew University, on the other, left only one option: Ben-Gurion's socialist, nationalist party. But of course, as Oz explains through the voice of his father, reality on the ground was more complicated than any ideological choices: "Here, in Jerusalem, everything was ambiguous. Not topsy-turvy, like in communist Russia, but simply ambiguous" (15). Oz does not frame the issue in terms of melancholia, but the sense of melancholy gradually overtakes his whole autobiographical story. It is therefore unsurprising to find him—the best-known voice of the post–Six-Days War generation—identifying his own moral, political, and intellectual voice with a left-wing melancholy. [24] As Itzhak Laor (2006) depicts it, Oz's critique of his nationalist uncle, Joseph Klausner, came to be identified either with an idiomatic "shooting and crying"—a left-wing melancholy—or with a "narcissistic back and forth with its own sublimation: Creating an Ideal Self." Oz and his generation came to call their version of melancholy *Siach Lochamim* (the discourse of combatants), which is, as Alon Gan (2008, 285) explains, a kind of "stutter" that shows the *as-if* difficulty of telling the hard truth while ignoring the fetish of the self and obsession with the revived and reviving language.

* * *

Viewing the story of Zionism from the perspective of left-wing melancholy reveals how political melancholy was utilized against itself for the sake of furthering the national language. A negation of exile and a revivalist mode became political melancholy's modus vivendi, a symptom of "the sickness of the political body," as Esposito called it. From this perspective, a sad and troubling line connects the early signs of melancholy discussed by Scholem already in 1917, the post-1948 implicit "melancholy of sovereignty," [25] and the melancholy that became identified with the Israeli colonialist regime in the West Bank since 1967.

* * *

The internal conflict in Zionist ideology and in academic institutions as described above reveals a continuity from the prestate days to the present, centered on the utopian discourse of revival and the New Man. But utopia's dark side of the moon is melancholy. This hope for saving the Jews from their own feminized, exilic selves entailed a high cost in melancholic (self-)alienation as the pioneers were forced to erase their own sense of the past and reject any trace of their own background. Utopia, in other words, was coupled with melancholy, depression, and even death. The result was an unacknowledged incorporation of loss into the structure of the national ego, or what Freud called an "incorporation [that] both extends the ego's narcissism and is the site of a 'painful wound'" (Freud 1961, 28). [26]

* * *

Looking at the history of Zionism from the perspective of 1920s political melancholy implies a need to acknowledge the loss "of the tradition of the moment upon which is superimposed the recognition of loss" (Meltzer 1996, 148). It is the loss of the Jewish exilic past; a loss of innocence after two millennia of Jewish existence that knew no forceful occupation of others; the loss of the prestate hope for a socialist society; the loss of hope for a peaceful and unbloodied solution to the Jewish-Arab problem; a loss of the ethical grounds by which the pre-1967

generation of Ashkenazi Jews justified the settlement in Palestine; and finally, the loss of melancholy itself for the sake of a fetishized and reactionary celebration of power. The messianism of "Uncle Joseph" occupied the central stage of Zionist rhetoric and was enabled by left-wing melancholy. It is only when the loss of earlier hopes is acknowledged that the Left can admit its responsibility and offer new ground for sustainable social and political transformation.

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1. Benjamin and Brown share much of Rosa Luxemburg's Marxist critique of social-democratic rhetoric, but they stress the affective melancholic mode. See Luxemburg (1969).
2. See also the classic works of Burton (1989), Starobinski (1963), and Lepenies (1969).
3. The study was rejected by Benjamin's committee at Frankfurt University in 1925, destroying any chance for an academic career, though it was finally published in 1928. See Benjamin (1991).
4. Neumann confirms the imaginary figure of the pioneer, with his desire and reality.
5. As Paula Schwebel mentions, following this observation by Scholem: "It is noteworthy that Benjamin and Scholem discussed the meaning of the Shekhina and its exile following Benjamin's completion of 'On Language as Such.'" See Schwebel (2014, 296).
6. I owe this phrasing to Larisa Reznik.
7. Melancholy is often mentioned as a modifier that describes the reaction to situations of political crisis, catastrophe, destruction,

or defeat. However, it is rarely discussed in a precise manner that explains what it is that makes melancholy the relevant modifier of the political. When mentioned at all, "political melancholy" is discussed in a general way that makes it clear that "melancholic" functions as an adjective, a mode of political reaction or a popular affect of a sort. In that context, Lieven de Cauter (2016, 101) contrasts "political melancholy" with Michael Löwy's "melancholic politics."

8. According to Butler (1997, 172), Freud proposed a view of conscience as an agency and "institution" produced and maintained by melancholy.

9. Should we add: personal, political, and academic? A discussion of the latter belongs to a different context. Many of the critics I mention in this essay ignore the key positioning of their own egos and their senses of power while analyzing these as abstract terms or forces.

10. Samuel Weber (2008, 81) shows that, for Benjamin, "The history of translation is marked by a tension between two inseparable and incompatible motifs: fidelity and betrayal. Both result from the split relationship of translation to its own history, which is to say, to its 'origin.'"

11. Benjamin (1998a, 56) limits "loyalty" only to the nondiscursive existence of "things": "Loyalty is completely appropriate only to the relationship of man to the world of things."

12. Benjamin returned to his critique of left-wing melancholy in a lecture for the Institute for the Study of Fascism in Paris, on 27 April 1934. See "The Author as Producer" (Benjamin 1998b, 96).

13. See Lebovic (2015) for more about Ben-Gurion's étatisme/statism. For a recent, detailed reading of the internal politics of the Labor Party and those more or less committed to the Marxist and socialist factions, see Aronoff (2015).

14. As Esposito (2008, 76, 126) puts it, "When Foucault notes that the failure of modern political theories is owed neither to theory nor to politics but to a rationality that forces itself to integrate individuals within the totality of the state, he touches on the heart of the question." For that reason, Esposito turns to "thanapolitics" as a story of the melancholiac, the degenerate, the exile, the creature, or the Jew who "belongs to the world of the 'non'—no longer alive, he is still and above all 'undead.'"

15. I am alluding here to Hans Blumenberg's (1997) beautiful *Shipwreck with Spectator* .

16. I am omitting from this discussion the New Historians in Israel, some of whom the historians and theoreticians mentioned above criticize. However, there is little doubt that the 1990s and early 2000s saw a critical turn among historians of Zionism and Israel. For a general discussion of the New Historians, see Silberstein (1999).

17. "For Weizmann, apparently blind to the messianic strand of his own discourse, what mattered was the slow, incremental labor of Zionism, its organic relation both to the soil and to itself" (Rose 2005, 55).

18. Scholem, Buber, Bergmann, and Magnes were among the founders of Brit Shalom, together with Ernst Simon, Hans Kohn, and others. For an excellent recent history, see Adi Gordon's (2017) biography of Hans Kohn in *Toward Nationalism's End* .

19. For Scholem's ambivalent relation to messianism, see the introduction and individual chapters in Morgan and Weitzman (2015) and Noam Zadoff's (2017) recent biography of Scholem.

20. Liska (2017, 117) writes about this characterization: "Idel rejects the desolates' pessimism because they do not recognize the promise of Zionism and its potential for a revival of Judaism. Idel's critique of Scholem's view of the demonic must undoubtedly be seen in this light."

21. According to Myers (1995, 94), Scholem and his fellow cultural Zionists viewed Klausner as "more a publicist and an activist than a scholar."

22. In a recent biography of Scholem, Amir Engel (2017, 122–3) reads the origins of Scholem's work on Sabbateanism as a counter-Klausnerian interpretation of messianism in conjunction with the "personal frustration that Scholem himself felt upon immigrating to Palestine. In his study, Scholem tells the story of a promise that was never fulfilled."

23. According to Cohen (2002), this mission was used by the directors to justify their resistance to the establishment of a second university in Tel-Aviv.

24. For a provocative albeit brief reading of Oz's antirevolutionary rhetoric of the "fundamentalists of both sides," see Benite (2008).

25. As the literary scholar Michael Gluzman dubbed it. For a fascinating analysis of melancholy in Hebrew literature shortly before and after 1948, see Gluzman (2012).

26. Amy Hollywood (2006, 399) has shown that Freud's harsh critique of melancholy from 1917 transformed into "melancholic identification and incorporations" in his 1923 "Ego and the Id." What Freud had "first viewed as primarily if not solely pathological, are crucial to the development of the superego," or what Hollywood identifies with the politics and ethics of the other. Extending her reading of Freud and of Melanie Klein into contemporary political philosophy, Hollywood claims that "to disavow our losses and our grief" means "to deny our responsibility to the others within … The very grounds of sociality from which our ethical and political projects emerge. The trick is to find ways to sustain ourselves in and through our losses, rather than in their disavowal."

After the Fall: Palestinian Communist Journalism in the Post–Cold War World

Orayb Aref Najjar

This study examines how the Palestinian Communist Party, renamed the People's Party in 1991, conceptualized its new role in Palestinian politics in its documents and its press based on its perceptions of its own strengths and weaknesses after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the weakening of Arab unity, the rise of the Islamic Movement, the entry of the Palestine Liberation Organization into the West Bank and Gaza in 1994, and the success of Hamas at the expense of Fateh in the 2006 Legislative Council elections. The study concludes that the party fares better when it does not deny its Marxist roots, and describes how the party is in the process of reclaiming its Marxist heritage, even after Palestinians elected Hamas to the Palestinian Legislative Council.

No one was more surprised than Hamas [1] when the results that combined proportional and district votes for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections of January 2006 gave the Change and Reform Party (Hamas) 74 out of 132 seats to Fateh's 45 seats. [2] Fateh was beset by accusations of corruption, and hobbled by its inability to end the Israeli occupation after ten years of fruitless negotiations.

Leftist and independent parties got 13 out of 132 votes. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, [3] more militant than its other leftist rivals, netted three seats; while the Alternative Coalition, which consists of the Palestinian People's Party, [4] the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, [5] Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA), [6] and independents, jointly netted only two seats, [7] one of which will be occupied by the secretary general of the People's Party, Bassam al-Salihi. Mustapha Barghouthi and the Palestinian National Initiative got two seats (Palestinian People's Party 2005b). [8] Analyst Mohammad Masharkah wrote that the former Communist Party did badly because it strayed away from its Marxist roots and neglected the championing of workers and peasants. What hurt it most, he said, was its alliance with Fateh, making people regard it as a small appendage to a corrupt ruling party when it should have been in the opposition (Masharkah 2006, 1). That analysis dovetails with the way many People's Party members see themselves as they urge the party to return to the Marxist roots it partly abandoned after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Third Way (Salam al-Fayed, former minister of finance, legislator Hanan Ashrawi and others) got two seats, while Independents and others got four seats.

Among the 132 elected representatives are six Christians who have a reserved quota of six seats, and 17 women who represent 13 percent of the total number of legislators. The women come from the right and left of the Palestinian ideological spectrum (Central Elections Commission–Palestine 2006). Hamas's attempt to extend its hand to other groups, including the leftists among them, was initially unsuccessful after intense coalition talks ending 17 March 2006. Fateh wants Hamas to accept all its agreements with Israel while Hamas and others think that agreements that allowed Israel to continue building settlements, confiscating land, and imprisoning Palestinians within a wall, unilaterally, are not in the national interest. By March 17, 2007, the People's Party, Fateh, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and independents had joined the cabinet, but The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was the only holdout (Wikipedia 2007). A PFLP leader explained that the political program of Hamas did not include a fundamental point for the PFLP: that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The PFLP became the last Palestinian faction to turn down Hamas's offer to form a coalition

government (Gulf Times 2006). Analysts note that independents could have amassed more votes had they entered the elections united. Many Palestinians who did not want to fritter away their votes on small parties would have voted for them as a block (al-Masri 2006, 2). So how did Hamas come to dominate the Palestinian political scene in 2006 when the party did not come into being until the end of 1987? What role did the Communist Party play in Palestinian political life and how did that role change over time, especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union? What is the projected role of the former Communist Party in Palestinian politics now that Hamas is in charge?

This study examines how the Palestinian Communist Party conceptualized and played out its new role in Palestinian politics with the knowledge that it could not depend on the three pillars that supported Palestinian aspirations and policies in the past (the local Palestinian, the Arab, and the international pillars). The paper describes how the Palestinian Communist Party, which gained some legitimacy in Palestinian politics from having a world-class power on its side, dealt with the fall of its former ally, the Soviet Union, and how it coped with the rise of Islamists and their formal entry into government for the first time. [9]

After a historical introduction on the role played by the Communist Party and other leftist Palestinian organizations in an earlier era, I describe the changes in the People's Party's program and practice by examining the Party's documents and its press. I comment on changes in party structure and ideology as discussed in the weekly newspaper *Attalia* (The Forward), established in 1978, then follow the same discussion on-line in *Sawt al-Wattan* magazine (Voice of the Homeland), in 2001–6, to update my information on party politics. I chose those publications because they are the only two remaining communist or former Communist Party publications after the demise of the Party's literary and political journal, *al-Kateb* (The Writer) in the mid-1990s.

The late Bashir Bargouthi, founder of the Palestinian Communist Party in the West Bank in 1982, [10] told Birzeit University students that the Palestinian question has always rested on three pillars of support: the international pillar, the Arab pillar, and the local Palestinian pillar. He added that despite the "great and stormy changes" that have shaken those pillars, "some of us are still addressing the world using the political language that still rests on the existence of the pillars in their previous effectiveness, powers and potential. Reality has changed" (Attalia 1994d). Indeed it had. Bargouthi's speech represented the Communist Party's attempt to acknowledge and face a reality that left Palestinians weaker than they had been in years. Furthermore, the new reality left the Communist Party without allies in the face of the changing international power balance in favor of the United States.

The fall of the Soviet Union was not the only historical development that weakened the Palestinians, and especially the former Communist Party. The local Palestinian pillar was weakened during the first uprising against Israel in late 1987 when Yasser Arafat's organization, Fateh, was challenged by the rising power of the Islamic movement. The local pillar was shaken when some Palestinian groups created "the Rejection Front" to oppose the Oslo Accords he negotiated with Israel in 1993, fracturing the Left and leading to international pressure on Palestinians. [11] The local pillar was further weakened when, with the acquiescence of the People's Party (the former Communist Party), the Palestinian National Authority [12] marginalized the PLO [13] by accepting the appointment of Yasser Arafat as president of the Authority as well as the PLO, creating a concentration of power that prevented Palestinians from forming strong institutions at a later date (Hamdan 2005).

The Arab pillar of support was shaken by the 1990–1 Gulf War divisions in which Syria,

Egypt, and the Gulf States fought alongside the United States to free Kuwait, while Arafat was photographed kissing Saddam Hussein on both cheeks before the war started. Approximately 350,000 Palestinians working in Kuwait and sending remittances to their relatives in the West Bank or Jordan were deported from Kuwait, weakening Palestinians politically and financially (BESA Publications 1997).

The international pillar that supported Palestinians fell after the breakup of the Soviet Union. It was not so much the financial support to the Palestinians that was important, [14] but the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the paralysis of the nonaligned countries turned the international pillar from a source of support for Palestinians to a source of pressure on them due to the enhanced role of the United States in international politics. The Communist newspaper *Attalia* feared that U.S. domination of the United Nations would adversely affect resolutions on the occupied territories now that the Soviet Union no longer functioned as a counterweight to the United States in that international body (Bargouthi 1994).

Methodology

I use a text by Stuart Hall (1975), 11–24), written for a project published as *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change 1935–1965*, as a template for this study because he describes methods designed to "catch the press responding to new, complicated social forces" (13). In a similar vein, I examine how two Palestinian publications interpreted social change in the West Bank and Gaza after the demise of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Islamic movement. Stuart Hall observes that the working hypothesis of *Paper Voices* research was that "every significant stylistic, visual, linguistic, presentational, rhetorical feature was a sort of silent witness, a 'meaningful disguised communication,' about how the 'messages' (items) should be understood." Similarly, he says, "every shift in tone and rhetoric, every change in the balance of content, every move in the implied logic in the newspaper signified something more than a mere stylistic shift" (24). Put another way, every newspaper "is a *discourse"* (17).

The methodology used by *Paper Voices* reversed the traditional emphasis of research on making "inventories of content or overt appeals, opinions and biases" (16). It concentrated instead on "issues given less prominence in Berelson's paradigm which studies manifest content [15] : why-the-content-is-like-that." The researchers wanted to know "what image of the readers the newspaper was taking for granted when it assumed it could write in that way about politics and society" (16). As Hall explained, "Matters of presentation are forms of address to an audience, requiring reciprocal confirmation, and continually underwritten by a structure of informed and informal assumptions" (22–3).

Every single issue of the weekly *Attalia* published in the period from 22 August 1991 to 23 March 1995 was examined. [16] Both news items and editorials were included because news items are rarely presented without an open evaluation of the event being discussed. [17] The study also pays attention to the Party's relations with the Islamic movement as these are reflected in the Party's publications.

In my analysis, I identify the issues that were prominently displayed in both publications; I search for topics that were repeatedly brought up by the columnists and register changes in content and language use. I pay attention to the absence or presence of ads as well as to discussions of and changes in paper size and quality, believing that those changes signal deeper changes in the outlook of the party, as *Paper Voices* contends. Where appropriate, I count the number of times the paper discussed democracy in a given time period. This type of counting

falls under what *Paper Voices* finds useful for research that does not suffer from social science envy (16). I examine People's Party documents posted on the Internet in preparation for the Fourth Conference because the suggestions of various members on how to strengthen the party through redefining its political program and mission sheds light on areas of discontent with some of the changes made after the fall of the Soviet Union. Finally, I evaluate the prospects of the Communist Party in a government controlled by Hamas.

Below, I provide the historical background to the Communist Party and other Palestinian groups in order to place the role of the party in the Palestinian political context over time and to show that it was influential in Palestinian life despite its size.

The Communist Party in Palestine and Jordan

From the beginning, Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism exerted a strong influence on Palestinian-Israeli politics. Both continue to play a role in the political programs of Israelis and Palestinians. The Communist Party of Palestine was established by Russian Jews in 1922. Its anti-Zionist stance weakened it and led to splits within the party. The Comintern pressured the party into recruiting Arabs in 1930s, but tension over Zionism split the party in two in 1943. The Arab branch was called the National Liberation League (Usbat Attahrir al-Watani) while the Jewish branch was called The Communist Party of Palestine. Arabs and Jews gave coexistence another try and united under Makai (Communist Party of Israel) on 22 October 1948, after the establishment of the new state (Gresh and Vidal 1988, 72).

The experience of communists in Arab countries was different. The 1948 population of the East Bank of Jordan was about 340,000. The 1950 Jordanian annexation of the West Bank to the East Bank of Jordan, unsuccessfully resisted by communists, increased Jordan's population by about 900,000. This increase included about 450,000 refugees from those areas of Palestine that became Israel in 1948 (Rinehart et al. 1980). Communists were now ruled by and were subject to the laws of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, whose regime was hostile to the Soviet Union.

The refugees from Palestine established the Jordanian Communist Party in 1951 in cooperation with Jordanian communists. The Palestinian Communist Party was established in 1953 in Gaza, then ruled by Egypt.

Initially, the Communist Party was viewed with suspicion because the Soviet Union had been an early supporter of Israel due to left-wing Zionist influence on Soviet policy (Krammer 1973, 107). Arab communists, however, had accepted the Soviet position that the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had to come from "international legitimacy," defined as respect for United Nations resolutions that recognized Israel but gave Palestinians the right of compensation or return. The Communist Party was the only Palestinian party that accepted UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947, which partitioned Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish (Al-Ashhab 2000, 1). Other Palestinians at that time considered the partition an act of treason.

During the Cold War, however, communists gained credibility when they, along with Arab nationalists, were at the forefront of resisting what they considered British and American designs on the Middle East. Communists and others organized against a British-Jordanian treaty that allowed the continued presence of British troops in Jordan after formal British rule ended. They thwarted the "Baghdad Pact" of 1955 by making it impossible for Jordan and Syria to join Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan in a pro-Western alliance whose goal was to weaken the Soviet Union (Butt 2003).

The Jordanian regime rejected communist ideology and tied its fortunes to the United States.

In 1953, the Jordanian government enacted the “Law to Combat Communism No. 91 (1953)” that curbed the communist press in the East and West Banks of Jordan. Despite those restrictions and the imprisonment of many Communist Party cadres, journalists, and leaders, communists in 1956 won three out of forty parliament seats in Jordan (Middle East Journal 1956).

The PLO Takes Center Stage in Palestinian Politics

In comparison to the organizations founded by communists and Arab nationalists, the PLO was a latecomer on the political scene. The 1967 Arab defeat discredited both Arab regimes and the old Palestinian guard who led the PLO because their verbal excesses on what they would do to Israel did not match their passive actions (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 50). In 1969, Yasser Arafat forged an agreement that gave commandos half the seats in a new 100-seat National Council (Hamid 1975). He became chairman of the PLO in 1969. In that same year, the Palestine National Council, dubbed the Palestinian parliament in exile, declared that its goal was the establishment of a democratic state in all of Palestine, free from all forms of discrimination.

In the 1960s, younger members of political organizations found leftist ways of organizing society attractive. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, established as an offshoot of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), had an internal struggle among its members. The majority of the members of the administrative committee called for adoption of Marxism-Leninism as the guiding theoretical and practical doctrine for Arab revolutionaries. On the organizational level, they preached democratic centralism. Eventually, the Marxists split and formed their own group, the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) in 1969 (Kazziha 1975, 70, 87).

The Effect of Various Leftist Ideas on the PLO and the National Movement

Secularism developed in the Palestinian political revolutionary culture as a deliberate and conscious policy, in part as a reaction to some leaders of the Zionist movement’s invoking Jewish Biblical ties to ancient Israel, [18] and later, to some Israeli leaders’ tying modern political land claims to religious Biblical claims, [19] or, as sociologist Hilal put it, they “elevated religious identity to bolster their claim to Palestine” (1992, 2). Initially, Palestinian demands for the right of self-determination, the right of return, and the right to an independent state (formulated by the PLO) remained separate from any religious or mythical bent (2) but was grounded in secular nationalism.

The PLO strategy was influenced by various leftist groups and by contacts with the Soviet Union and China. In 1965, China was the first major power to accord diplomatic recognition and aid to the PLO (Harris 1977, 133). Until the October 1973 war, Soviet aid was described by Palestinians as “half-hearted” (130). In fact, while the Chinese promoted people’s revolutionary war, they did not interfere in how that slogan was played out in daily Palestinian life, “in contrast to the regular consultations between Palestinians and the representatives of the Soviet Union” (125).

The publication of a document clearly not intended for publication illustrates the extent to which the Soviet theoreticians and politicians were involved in editing documents describing the policy of the Syrian Communist Party on Palestine (Special Document 1972, 187–212). It is clear from the notes written in the margins that the Soviet Union, like the Communist Party of

the West Bank, wanted a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem, wanted it approached in the spirit of internationalism, and wanted the communist parties to pay more attention to class inequalities. One statement reads, “The exclusive concern of communists with the problems of the world liberation movement does not exempt them from concern with the local, national and class problems of their people, and cannot justify their neglect of these problems, and their failure to participate seriously in attempts to find the correct solutions for them” (210).

Palestinian leaders used a nationalist secular idiom rather than a religious idiom in calling for revolution. Observers have pointed to the similarity of revolutionary language between some Palestinian and Chinese slogans, to demonstrate similar beliefs or profound Chinese influence (Harris 1977, 127–8). An examination of a collection of Palestinian revolutionary posters (Radwan 1992, 308–80) reveals that captions called for revolution not in the name of the holy places, although those were sometimes depicted in the background, but with a heavy reliance on the folkloric symbolism expressed in the flower embroidery on women’s national dresses [20] or with a stress on the connectedness to the land through the imagery of farming. For example, one poster shows a commando holding a giant wheat stalk the way one holds an upright gun (326).

Communist internationalism provided a link between Palestinian communists of the West Bank and Gaza and Israeli communists. The first meeting between Arafat and leaders of the Israeli Communist Party in the 1970s was arranged by West Bank communists who had good relations with their Israeli counterparts, thanks to Moscow. The meetings, however, were kept secret for years (Amirah 2003). When the PLO called for the establishment of a secular, democratic state in Palestine in the 1970s, that call was influenced by its contacts with the Communist Party and other leftist organizations—namely, the Democratic Front of the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Communists were leaders in organizing the Palestinian National Front (PNF) in the West Bank in the 1970s, a move that shifted the location of Palestinian power to the occupied territories from the Diaspora. The nation-building activities they encouraged were designed to make the occupied West Bank less dependent on services provided by Israel or Jordan (Matthews 1998, 21). Communists helped engineer the 1974 shift of power from Jordan to the PLO. The latter was recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at the Rabat conference in Morocco in 1974 (Toubasi 2000). Nationalist figures put up by the PNF for the municipal elections of 1976 won even though Israel extended registration for twelve days to persuade pro-Jordanian figures to run, and deported the Communist candidate for mayor of Hebron two weeks before the elections. A combination of factors weakened the PNF, among them the weakening Soviet position in the Arab world in the face of a more assertive American regional diplomacy since 1973, and Arab states’ pressure during the Fourteenth Palestinian National Council to remove leftists from key PLO posts in order to win U.S. recognition of the PLO (Asshab 1979, 57–9). PNF activist and communist Abd al-Jawad Salih charged that Arafat miscalculated by gambling on the American government (MERIP Reports 1983, 27). Furthermore, Israeli settlers planted bombs in the cars of three newly elected Palestinian mayors in 1980, maiming two (Matthews 1998). Despite their treatment by a PLO intent on gaining American recognition, leftists were behind two important shifts in Palestinian society; the first dealt with who represents Palestinians—Jordan or the emerging PLO; and the second dealt with whether to settle the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through negotiations or armed struggle.

The name change from the Jordanian to the Palestinian Communist Party in 1982 was long overdue and signaled both the start of a separation from Jordan and the “creative combination

between class struggle and national struggle," as Naim Nasser put it (2004). Translation: nationalism was at work. Some members thought the party concentrated too much on class struggle and labor issues and not enough on the national struggle, and they wanted to rectify the balance in keeping up with what other groups were doing. [21] The nationalist issue plagued the discussions of the role of the party then and still haunts it today every time the party tries to redefine itself. The Gaza Palestinian Party joined the West Bank Party in 1983. Yet, at the same time, the Communist Party remained independent from the PLO, especially in its insistence on keeping what it liked to call its "realistic policy on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict," which later became the policy of the PLO. The Communist Party finally joined the PLO in 1987. The secular and leftist nature of political slogans of the period, however, should not obscure the fact that Palestinian society, which was mostly agrarian and rural, tended to be more religious than its leaders (Palestinian Center for Public Opinion 2005). [22] When religious alternatives to organizing society came along in the late 1980s, recruiters found a fertile ground for spreading their message.

Graham Fuller, former vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council at the CIA, predicted that after the demise of the Soviet Union, the "new ideological claimants" who emerged would seek to fill the vacuum that appeared along a permanent ideological spectrum. The "next" ideology, he said, is likely to represent an amalgam of opposition to Western values and institutions (Fuller 1995, 145–6). The next ideology was not liberal secular, but Muslim.

The Idea of Jihad Takes Hold in Palestinian Society

An examination of the rise and weakening or fall of various Palestinian groups suggests that the willingness physically to fight for Palestine was the way to gain instant legitimacy on the political scene. Some members of the Communist Party outside the West Bank established an armed wing in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan like other Palestinian groups. Armed struggle had little success in the occupied territories, despite some attempts that led to the arrest of "tens" of its members in 1974 (Nasser 2004, 7). Under the leadership of *Attalia* editor-in-chief Bashir Bargouthi, however, the Communist Party discussed whether to engage in armed struggle by studying the examples of various armed struggles. [23] Members concluded that armed struggle, "despite the halo accorded to it," was not the best way to deal with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (Hamdan 2003, 1–5).

Until 1987, the Islamic movement was not involved in the national struggle but was working on strengthening Islamic thought at various institutions, chief among them universities. Burson (2006) reminds Israeli readers shocked at the success of Hamas in the Legislative Council elections that it was "the diligent efforts of a generation of Israeli military and political officials that fostered the rise of Hamas in the first place," when the Israeli "Civil Administration" and intelligence services in the 1970s and 1980s aided the Hamas precursor, the Muslim Brotherhood, as a hoped-for, apolitical counterweight to what the Israelis considered the radical Popular Front, Democratic Front, and militias of Arafat's Fateh.

After Hamas joined the uprising against the Israeli occupation in 1987, its resistance to occupation combined with its well-funded social work enabled it to challenge Fateh. In contrast to the secular nationalist discourse that considered the liberation of Palestine a nationalist political issue, the Islamic discourse of Hamas in its founding document of August 1988 considers the liberation of Palestine "a religious duty," and sees the land of Palestine as a "Muslim Trust" whose liberation is "obligatory" (Hamas Charter, in Hroub 2000, 273, 276). This

rhetoric is identical to the Jewish fundamentalist discourse of settlers. In fact, Hamas's charter chides Fateh for its "secularist line" and attributes that lapse to "the ideological invasion which has swept the Arab world since the defeat of the Crusades and the ongoing consolidation of orientalism, missionary work, and imperialism" (Hroub 2000, 284). One of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, Abdallah Azzam, admitted that his organization "had fallen short in putting off jihad, which made it possible for secular, nationalist, and communist organizations to get ahead of it … it was the absence of the Islamic movement from the field that allowed revolutionary organizations to outstrip it" (31). But the fall of the Soviet Union weakened the Communist Party, which despite its protestations to the contrary, became defensive about its previous association with the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party in Transition: A New Name, a New Mission

The former Communist Party changed its name to the "People's Party" in 1991, and declared that it had placed itself on the path of renewal. The party relaxed conditions for membership, and deemed it adequate to abide by the broad guidelines of the party's program (Palestinian People's Party 2005). It no longer exacted blind obedience from its members, and started electing its leaders through secret ballots. The structural changes it introduced have increased its membership (Shukayr 1994), which grew by 18 percent in 1992–3 and 24 percent by 1993. That growth, however, came at a price. The party had attracted people with less firm commitment to the party's principles, and the desire to keep them made it overlook their deficiencies, including absences from meetings and lack of serious commitment to the party (Amirah 1999, 81). Polls showed that support for the People's Party declined from 7.3 percent in 1994 to 1.4 in 1998 (Hilal 1998, 231).

The demise of the Soviet Union and the apparent distancing of the People's Party from it generated some discussion in the party press on what the Soviet Union had done for Palestinians. A reader railed against those who removed Lenin's tomb from Red Square and reminded readers that before the October Revolution, only the Palestinian bourgeoisie graduated as doctors and engineers, but because of the Soviet Union, scholarships had been provided to the poor even in villages and refugee camps (Shkwara 1993). No one knows if the Soviet Union directly funded communist publications in the West Bank. The staff of *Attalia* made little money and was proud to note that everyone, including the editor-in-chief, was paid the same salary. [24]

Graham Fuller observed that the essential Western vision that dominates the world almost unchallenged rests on three fundamental principles: capitalism and the free market, human rights and secular liberal democracy, and the nation-state framework of international relations (1995, 145). After the PLO opted for a peaceful settlement, the nation-state framework for Palestinians seemed farther away than ever. The Oslo Accords, according to Kimmerling and Migdal, "frontloaded benefits for Israel and backloaded them for Palestinians," and did not create incentives for Israelis to arrive at a settlement quickly (2003, 361). But there were plenty of incentives for capitalism. Private sector monopolies were given the right to operate unopposed. The 1995 Law for the Encouragement of Investment required no taxes from companies that invested in any activity of importance to the Palestinian economy provided that the company invested at least a half-million dollars. That meant that people with capital were given preference over people who could do the job more cheaply (al-Naquib 1997, 88, 91).

Ironically, the torch for secular liberal democracy was not carried by the ruling party, Fateh, but by the People's Party, whose members had a large number of people running or working for

NGOs and human rights organizations. *Attalia* embraced the human rights and democracy movement in the occupied territories with enthusiasm (Attalia 1993b). As secretary general of the party, Bashir Bargouthi explained, "We need a common language with the world without which our situation becomes more difficult" (Attalia 1994c, 1, 7). The common language Bargouthi identified as necessary for communicating with the world was respect for international agreements and commitment to democracy and pluralism. Attalia covered human rights issues discussed in seminars, lectures, and teach-ins about democracy. A textual analysis of *Attalia* columns reveals, however, that the paper was at its best when it contrasted official Palestinian declarations about democracy with their daily practice (Mansur 1994a, 15), and monitored how the new authority dealt with freedom of the press (Mansur 1994b). An editorial in *Attalia* defended the right of a pro-Jordanian paper to publish when others remained silent. *Attalia* wrote, "Protection of the Palestinian Freedom of the Press is a holy right that should not be abridged by any quarter. We call with the top of our voices … stop those practices!" (Attalia 1994d, 3, 7). Jamil Salhut's column summed up the paper's attitude toward democracy: "Our people in the homeland and the Diaspora suffered from tyranny. We attributed that condition to the absence of a national authority that is supposed to respect rights and personal freedoms. No authority will be accepted, no matter what nationalist garb it puts on, if it does not respect those rights and freedoms" (1994, 10).

Hall suggests that in periods of rapid social change, the press "performs a significant role as a social educator. Through selection, emphasis, treatment and presentation, it actively interprets events for its readers" (1975, 11). A textual analysis of every instance of *Attalia'* s discussion of democracy reveals that it performed a didactic function akin to a teach-in on what democracy is and is not. The most sustained discussion of democracy came in a column called "Democracy, Welcome," published thirty-three times between 23 June 1994 and 23 February 1995. Dr. Walid Mustapha lamented that "the role of the color khaki in the Palestinian Authority has begun to spread, not just in dress, but also in mentality" (1994, 8). He was referring to the lawlessness of uniformed, armed groups who settled personal disputes with the guns they carried and intimidated critics by their display of arms. Today, controlling those armed groups remains a major problem in the West Bank and Gaza.

Relations between the People's Party and Hamas

The type of journalism described above was remarkable because it flourished while other publications were publishing fawning paid ads that featured Arafat's photos. Ads were placed by people attempting to curry favor with the new authority, most of whose members had returned to the West Bank from their Tunisian exile in 1994.

Attalia was wary of getting into open conflict with fundamentalists, but it defended them when it felt a larger issue was at stake. When the Israeli government deported 415 Hamas activists to Lebanon on 17 December 1992, *Attalia,* unlike the Western media, refused to refer to the deportees as "Hamas" or "Islamic Jihad" activists, but insisted on calling them the "deportees," "415 citizens," "Palestinian citizens," or "415 Palestinians." It chose to stress the general principle that Israelis have no right to deport Palestinians from their homeland or turn them into refugees. By adopting the position that the deportation of Palestinians was unacceptable to all political groups, the paper placed nationalist concerns above its disagreement with Islamic groups on the efficacy and advisability of resorting to armed struggle in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Attalia was at the forefront of fighting for a pluralistic society that respects religion, but is not dominated by it. One article criticized Islamist attempts to control the social life of Gaza. For example, *Attalia* quoted a sympathetic Muslim cleric who criticized the harassment of couples by letting air out of the tires of parked cars and explained that going to the beach and singing are not against religion (Attalia 1994b). When Islamists held their first art exhibition ever in Gaza, *Attalia* called it a "qualitative leap in the thinking of the religious movement in Gaza by rethinking the point of view that places art in opposition to religion" (Attalia 1993a, 18).

Form and Content: The Redesign of *Attalia*

Paper Voices tackled the important issue of how a publication "maintains through time something like a collective identity," a persona achieved through appearance (Hall 1975, 21).

The fall of the Soviet Union and the resultant changes in the party structure created an opening for those who wanted to adopt the capitalist model of journalism that the former Communist Party frowned on. Those supporting the change argued that the revenue from ads coupled with lively content would draw noncommunist readers and enlarge the party's readership base. The opportunity came when editor-in-chief Bargouthi urged Mahmoud Shukayr, a respected writer who had just returned from an eighteen-year Israeli deportation for nonviolent resistance to the occupation, to take over the paper (Shukayr 1994). What followed was a burst of color and a variety of opinion.

The paper experimented heavily with size, style, and content. It went from a sober black, with an occasional red headline, in a twelve-page paper (12×16-1/2 inches) in 1991, to full color printed on polished paper (13-3/4×19 inches) in its September 1993 issue. Between December 1993 and April 1994, the paper with few commercial ads suddenly appeared with three-quarters of its January 1994 front page devoted to ads for CompuServe, electronic appliances, a restaurant, and a "Madonna Jewelry" store. Full-page ads began to appear in its twenty color pages.

Attalia also attempted to involve others in varying its contents when it solicited the Islamist view on the fall of the Soviet Union. Sheikh Bassam Jarrar told the paper that the Islamic movement understood the futility of betting on the Soviet Union or the United States and was consistent in depending on the Islamic civilization (Attalia 1994, 2, 16).

Paper Voices researchers wanted to know "why-the-content-is-like-that," and "what image of the readers the newspaper was taking for granted when it assumed it could write in that way about politics and society" (Hall 1975, 16). The changes in *Attalia* tell a great deal about its conception of its identity during that period. After the changes it introduced, *Attalia* ended up with a curious mix of its usual serious staples and fluff. For example, the 21–7 April 1994 issue listed forty-five names of female Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails on page fifteen, but published on the opposite page an item about a woman who left her fiancé because he bought her a falafel sandwich. At the same time, the paper could not resist devoting a half-page to an article about Derrida (Sharif 1994a, 9), and two-thirds of a page to Samuel Huntington (Sharif 1994b, 4). Silvester Stallone shared the 24 February 1994 issue with Noam Chomsky, but the article on Chomsky's linguistics was given a half-page while Stallone was given only a few inches. In short, *Attalia* became as schizophrenic about its identify as the People's Party was about its new identity. The paper continued to address an elite audience by publishing philosophical articles, a fact that guaranteed it would not become the *National Enquirer* of the Arab World. At the same time, it added some light items in the hope of attracting an audience from outside its ranks—an

audience that never materialized. The fact that the new color version cost three times as much as the modest original, starting 24 February 1994, did not get it the type of readers *Attalia* was hoping would take a second look at its content.

Hall suggests that newspaper styles and identities are chosen and maintained with continual reference to some notion of who the readers are, what they will understand, what their social position is, what their state of knowledge is, and so on (1975, 23). Some of *Attalia'* s regular readers did not see themselves reflected in those changes and wrote that they were "repelled by" the color sections. By late 1994, the paper had reduced its size to the smallest it had ever been, and published only eight pages at its original price. Few ads remained, and the entertainment section disappeared for ideological and financial reasons.

The financial crisis of 1994 and 1995 forced the People's Party to slash its budget in half, let go the paid staff members of *Attalia,* and cancel the printed version of the magazine, *Sawt al-Wattan* (Amirah 1999, 76). [25] Thus, at a time when it most needed to confront the power of the well-funded Hamas, the People's Party's had too small a budget to spend on information.

The party did not fare better at the ballot box. All twenty-six People's Party candidates who ran for the eighty-eight Legislative Council seats in 1996 lost. All candidates *together* netted only 2.9 percent of votes of the West Bank and Gaza combined, forcing the party to admit in its 1996 self-evaluation meeting that it had overestimated its own strength (Amirah 1999, 77). Hamas did not run in that election, so no one knew its real political strength on the ground.

Unable to do it alone because of its small membership and poor finances, the People's Party in 2003 joined the Democratic Coalition "for those who refuse to sit on the sidewalk waiting for things to turn their way" (Dagher 2004, 15). Membership is individual or collective. But that alliance of like-minded leftist and independent people did not result in the formation of a strong political force mainly because of their small number, and their estrangement from other leftists like the more militant Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Joel Beinin also explains, "Most Arab Marxists embraced a strategy of stages: first the nationalist, anti-imperialist struggle, then the struggle for social progress and socialism." But when the Soviet Union embraced the officers that overthrew the British and French colonial rulers of the Middle East "despite their refusal to adopt 'scientific socialism,' the Marxists reluctantly embraced them," and submerged their Communist identity by accepting to defer class and labor issues to a later stage (Beinin 2001, 141).

This tactic did not serve the party well. The fear of coming out openly as communist due to repression made the party reluctant to claim some of its most progressive activities under its own name. The former Communist Party cadres pioneered the establishment of volunteer committees all over the occupied territories, the most important of which were the Agricultural Relief Committees and the Medical Relief Committees. The party assigned Mustapha Bargouthi, M.D., the task of running the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) in 1979, both because of his medical expertise and because the party wanted to disguise the fact that he was hiding the party's printing press (Hamdan 2004b). [26] But Bargouthi and the medical professionals he worked with turned the organization into a powerhouse. The UPMRC revolutionized medical care in the West Bank by favoring preventative medicine located in villages over services located in city hospitals. Volunteers and professionals introduced dental, vision, and hearing screening for schoolchildren and pap smears for village women for the first time (Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees 1994). None of those services, however, were offered in the name of the Communist Party or the People's Party even when Mustapha Bargouthi M.D. was a member of the executive committee of the latter. Furthermore, Bargouthi

differed with the party on the extent of its supervision of NGO donor identity as well as on whether to restrict hiring to party members, which he rejected (Hamdan 2004b). In 2002, Bargouthi resigned from the party and established al-Mubadarah al-Wataniyyah (The Nationalist Initiative) with another veteran communist, Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi of Gaza, and with Columbia University professor Edward Said. When Bargouthi ran for president in 2005, he ran as an independent. The general population rewarded him for his services with 20 percent of the vote while only 1 percent of the People's Party members voted for him (Birzeit University 2005; CEC 2005). [27] The results of the elections illustrate two things. First, the party was hurt by not advertising its achievements as part of the philosophy of the People's Party. Second, the inability of the Left to unite behind one candidate, despite entering negotiations to do so, continues to hurt leftists in national elections. On the other hand, while all leftists agree on labor and social issues, they disagree on policies toward Israel, which puts the People's Party and others closer to Fateh and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine closer to Hamas.

The Party Attempts to Redefine Itself

In response to a 29 December 1993 critical article by leftist journalist Ali al-Khalili, columnist Mahmoud Shukayr, who became editor-in-chief of *Attalia* on 24 March 1994, wrote that the party did not change its name from the Communist Party to the People's Party because it was ashamed of communism. After all, many sacrifices for the country occurred under the banner of the Palestinian Communist Party. Shukayr wrote, however, that the inertia and intellectual calcification that affected the international communist movement in the 1970s mandated the reexamination of all ideas critically. Over time, he said, Marxism-Leninism had changed "into what resembles religious dogma that had a ready explanation for everything." The party in the West Bank and Gaza had to be restructured to make it more responsive to spontaneous popular initiatives and to find ways in which to organize them in a democratic manner (Shukayr 2004).

By 2004, however, the party was ready to reassess the way it had restructured itself after the fall of the Soviet Union. Abdel Majid Hamdan, a member of the executive committee of the People's Party, traced the development of the party's ideology and noted that in its first conference as the Palestinian Communist Party in 1982, the party was proud of being internationalist and of defending the interests of the working classes. Yet even then, says Hamdan, "The struggle against the occupation was considered to be the main contradiction, and we placed class issues right behind it" (Hamdan 2004c). When the second conference was held in 1991, the party was no longer defined as the party of the downtrodden classes and their interests, but as the party that defended *all classes* against the measures that result from the occupation. Under that definition, it became forbidden to publicly rail against the bourgeoisie on any level, commercial, agricultural or industrial. As a result, the party lost its social identity (Hamdan 2004c, 2).

Even though the party's publications continued to discuss the social issues they had discussed in the past (such as workers' rights and teachers' strikes), they did not utilize a class analysis the way communists of the 1950s and 1960s did. In contrast, Hamas opened schools and provided healthcare under its own name and advertised its accomplishments.

Then, very shyly, the People's Party reintroduced socialism but did not define it, perhaps as a way of distancing itself from the way socialism had been applied in the Eastern bloc. Hamdan explains, "We said it was a socialism that was in keeping with the traditions of the Palestinian people, and because that goal was in the very, very distant horizon, where liberation from

occupation … lies, we did not stop and shed some light on what kind of socialism it was" (2004c, 2).

At the Third Conference in 1998, the party identified itself as an extension of the history of the Communist Party in Palestine, without actually identifying what that thought was. The ideological and intellectual content of the party was still shrouded in mystery. With the passage of time, with the absence of Marxist literature and Arab nationalist literature from the windows of bookstores, and in the absence of the study circles that had been prevalent in the past, whatever books were popular in the street replaced Marxist literature (Hamdan 2004a). Religious observance was also on the rise (Shaoul 2002). [28] Hamdan noticed that "fundamentalist religious thought that was current started to seep into the party, and that strange concoction is reflected in the conduct of individuals and their relations with others" (2004a, 2). The party no longer had a uniform ideology. Furthermore, democratic centralism, as practiced in the past, was suitable for conditions of secrecy under occupation and had the advantage of spreading ideology; the loosening of that practice meant that party decisions were nothing more than verbal niceties that could be rejected without any consequences (4). To Hamdan, it appeared that the goal of building a socialist stage "had receded a great deal, and even more so the move to communism." He called for rebuilding a special ideology that would return the party to its ideological coherence and unity. He concluded, "The party was wrong in abandoning the philosophy of dialectical materialism, and I think that Marxism is still intact … holding on to both would have meant holding on to our ideological as well as social identity" (5).

The People's Party did much better on the local level than the national. Its candidates won forty seats in twenty-five local municipal councils (People's Party 2005a). Those numbers have energized the demoralized party. Even though the party's program, by its own admission, is unclear on what type of socialist state it wants, the party's contributions (under whatever name) have left their mark on Palestinian society.

The minister of labor in 2004 for the Palestinian National Authority, Dr. Ghassan al-Khatib, is a member of the People's Party. Dr. al-Khatib, a former Birzeit University professor, was appointed minister of planning in the Mahmoud Abbas government in 2005. Dr. Khatib has progressive views on labor as well as on education and media.

By far the most interesting development can be seen in the documents on the party's Web site in preparation for the fourth conference to be held in September 2007. Collectively, the various suggestions by party members represent an attempt to return the party to its Marxist roots by redefining its mission and its political program, and making its identity distinct from other political groups on the political scene.

Hamas Wins Palestinian Elections: What It All Means

Hamas has tried to break the siege imposed on it by the United States by visiting Saudi Arabia and Iran. Both pledged financial support because neither wants the other to be the main influence in the area (Agence France Presse 2006; BBC 2006; Hageer 2006). Russia, which has not declared Hamas a terrorist organization the way the United States has, invited Hamas representatives to Moscow and tried to convince them to recognize Israel (Pravda 2006c). Analysts believe that Russia is attempting to regain the influence it used to have in the Middle East (Page 2006). China expressed a willingness to consider giving aid to Hamas, if asked (Pravda 2006b). It has gone farther than that. It invited the Palestinian foreign minister, Mahmoud Zahar, to visit China as the first stop of a swing through Asia. Zahar announced the

trip at a press conference along with the Chinese representative to the Palestinians, Yang Wei Guo (Haaretz 2006). These developments follow a historical pattern in which both Russia and China adapt themselves to Middle East power politics more easily than the United States, whose main tactic remains nonrecognition and boycott instead of constructive engagement.

Anti-U.S. sentiments make for strange bedfellows. Venezuela said it would welcome Hamas (Pravda 2006a). In the meantime, the United States, the European Union, and Israel are trying to undermine Hamas politically and financially. Yet internally, Palestinian groups are trying to find a way to live with it. A year after Hamas came to power, and after some hesitation and intense negotiations, the People's Party has joined Hamas's cabinet after finding itself in the role of peace maker between Hamas and Fateh. The head of the former Communist Party, Bassam Salihi is minister of culture in a Hamas government, while a Hamas official is Minister of education; a strange alliance, if there is one (Palestinian government, 2007).

The victory of Hamas promises to galvanize all other groups to work more diligently to regain the trust of the Palestinian people, lost, in part, by letting Israel disrespect Palestinians on a daily basis without fearing any political consequences, and by neglecting daily Palestinian needs.

An interview with Nayef Hawatmeh [29] finds him railing against the ravages of "savage capitalism" disguised as "neo-liberalism." Hawatmeh praises French and Scandinavian calls for "humanizing global capitalism." After proudly enumerating the contributions of the Left, especially the DFLP, to Palestinian political thought, Hawatmeh asserts that the current situation in the occupied territories will act as a catalyst that will energize Palestinians "to reinvent themselves and reproduce progressivism" (Hawatmeh 2006).

That appears to be the case in a 43-page article placed on the Internet on May 12, 2007 by the secretary general of the People's Party for discussion. Al-Salihi calls for the renewal of the Palestinian Left by describing it as being suited to Palestinians needs. The Left, he said, is modern, progressive, and democratic with its desire to separate religion from the state, while respecting the right of people to be religious. The Left wants to be active on behalf of women's rights, education, and the labor movement. The People's Party wants to tackle those issues both by asserting its independence on the one hand, and by cementing its alliances with local and international Leftist parties on the other (Al-Salihi, 2007). Several of those alliances were obvious when The Palestinian and Israeli Communist Parties issued a joint communiqué against American hegemony and continued Israeli occupation and called for peace (Joint Communiqué, 2007).

An important visitor, the Chinese ambassador to the Palestinian authority, paid a visit to the People's Party headquarters in April 2007 and donated a number of computers to the party (Chinese Ambassador, 2007). So in some respects, the verbal and physical conflict between Hamas and Fateh has indirectly helped the former communist party. The party is now ready for joining the political arena. Al-Salihi admits that the Left was so busy with liberation it neglected dealing with the problems of the masses; it did not recruit them in sufficient numbers, and it did not defend their economic interests or deal with bread and olive oil issues, leading Palestinians to look for alternatives in the handouts and coupons of foreign donors, or by protest-voting for Hamas because neither Fateh nor the Left tackled the day-to-day problems of Palestinians under occupation. In that 43-page article, al-Salihi called for the creation of "an intellectual third political space" (p. 27) that is neither Fateh, with its ties to liberalism, individualism and exploitative practices, nor Hamas, with its ideology of political Islam, but a progressive third way that respects the separation of powers and believes in human rights. That is the type of Left

the document is intent on revitalizing during the long-overdue conference of September 2007.

To succeed, the Left must understand that it cannot build its programs piecemeal, but needs to formulate and communicate a solid coherent revolutionary ideology without which change is impossible. Says al-Salihi, “A clear, courageous, modern Palestinian Left is up to the task” (al-Salihi, 2007, p. 34) and that task is to formulate “a clear Leftist vision” inspired by developments in Latin America, and expressed by “a leadership that firmly believes in it, and a progressive party able to create the mechanisms for building a new future based on that vision” (p. 43).

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1. Hamas is the acronymn of Harkat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah, the Islamic resistance movement, whose ideological origin can be traced to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. The word Hamas also means "zeal" in Arabic.
2. Fateh is the largest of the Palestinian commando organizations. Its members started meeting in 1955 and started publishing their views publicly in 1959, although not under their own names. They distinguished themselves from other groups by wanting Palestinians, rather than other Arabs, to take charge of "the liberation of Palestine" (Quandt, Jabber and Lesch 1974).
3. PFLP was founded "to learn from the lessons of the 1967 defeat and has its roots in the Arab nationalist movement," according to its Web site, http://www.pflp.net/showcat.php?CatID&cid=1 (accessed 3 March 2006).
4. The Communist Party was renamed "The People's Party" in 1991.
5. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) split from the PFLP because of the latter's preoccupation with the military struggle. The PDFLP soon gained a reputation as the most intellectual of the Palestinian commando groups, and drew heavily on Marxist-Lenenist theory to explain the situation in the Middle East. It allied itself with Fateh and the Communist Party in calling for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli problem. In 1974, PDFLP changed its name to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Front_for_the_Liberation_of_Palestine.
6. Established in March 1990 as a split faction of the DFLP. It advocates democratization in the Palestinian arena, focuses on a party system that reflects political pluralism and democracy, and supports the Oslo Accords. The Palestinian National Authority Web site is http://www.pna.gov.ps/Government/gov/FIDA.asp.
7. A joint list.
8. Established 17 June 2002.
9. It is hard to document direct financial support to the Palestinian Communist Party other than via scholarships to Soviet universities and invitations to Moscow. The Soviet Union, however, did support Arab governments and, according to the Chinese, "The Soviet Union until recently provided all its aid to the Palestinians more diplomatically through the governments of Syria and Egypt" (Harris 1977, 147).
10. Also secretary general of the Communist and later People's Party, and *Attalia* editor 1978–1994.

11. The Communist Party supported Oslo but later had reservations, which grew when it saw how the Palestinian Authority let Israel interpret the Accords. One of the negotiators of Oslo was a Communist, and Bashir Barghouthi knew about the negotiations.
12. The Palestinian National Authority was established in 1994, as part of the stipulations of the Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel as a five-year transitional body, during which final status negotiations between the two parties were to take place. According to the Accords, the Palestinian Authority was designated to have control over both security-related and civilian issues in Palestinian urban areas, and only civilian control over Palestinian rural areas. The remainder of the territories (including Israeli settlements, the Jordan Valley region, and bypass roads between Palestinian communities) were to remain under exclusive Israeli control (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_National_Authority). Yasser Arafat was elected as its first president in 1996 after winning against Samiha Khalil, head of a Palestinian women's organization, *In'ash El-Usra El-Usra* . Mrs. Khalil, who got about 12 percent of the vote, did not want Mr. Arafat to run unopposed.
13. The Palestine Liberation Organization was initially established in 1964 by Palestinians and the Arab League, mostly Egypt. The organization was recognized as the official representative of the Palestinian people, in part to curb smaller commando groups who had conducted operations hoping to start a conflict between Arab states and Israel (Quandt, Jabber, and Lesch 1973, 50). The second person to head the PLO was communist attorney Yahya Hammoudeh. He was forced to flee Jordan and take refuge in Syria after being sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for his communist activities. The third person to head the PLO was Yasser Arafat.
14. The Chinese liked to point out that while they provided aid to guerilla organizations, the Soviet Union had a preference for providing aid through Arab governments (Harris 1977, 146–7). This Soviet practice continued.
15. Berelson's most famous work is in content analysis, which he defines as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1952, 18).
16. The starting date was chosen because it marked a period in which Mikhail Gorbachev's hold on power was starting to weaken.
17. Articles without the authors' names are unsigned columns, editorials, or short news items without an author.
18. This is not to suggest that all early Jewish claims to Palestine were formulated solely in religious terms, but only to note that even Zionist leaders known for their secularism sometimes used religion in their bid for Palestine. For example, after Herzl, a nonreligious Jew, decided that he did not have enough support to establish a Jewish national home in Uganda, he ended his address to the 1903 Sixth Zionist National Congress with the declaration from the Psalms: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning" (in Stahl, 1997).
19. Israel Shahak relates how disappointed he was in David Ben Gurion, who, "(in spite of being an atheist, proud of his disregard of the commandments of Jewish religion) pronounced in the Knesset on the third day of the [1956] war [with Egypt] that the real reason for it is 'the restoration of the kingdom of David and Solomon' to its Biblical borders" (Shahak 1994, 8–9). Those were the types of pronouncements PLO leaders were responding to in the 1950s and 1960.
20. For example, pages 329–32 have sixteen posters, fourteen of which show women in the national dress as the poster's primary symbol.
21. The Communist Party in Jordan in the 1950s was a leader in introducing labor reforms. Its publications stressed class struggle and labor rights.
22. Various polls confirm that, in general, Palestinians consider themselves religious. The latest such poll of a representative sample of nine thousand Palestinians asked how they identified themselves, to which 4.7 answered that they were secular, 63.8 religious, 29.2 traditional, and 2.3 saw themselves as religious activist (Palestinian Center for Public Opinion 2005).
23. They examined how armed struggle fared against Nazi and Japanese occupations in World War II, against French imperialism in Vietnam and British imperialism in India and America, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish imperialism, as well as class struggles in Russia, Nicaragua, Spain, China, and Cuba.
24. Conversation with *Attalia* journalists in the summer of 1989.
25. The financial crisis was shared by all Palestinian groups and is partly the result of the loss of the remittances as well as aid from Kuwait and other Gulf countries.
26. Mustapha Barghuti, M.D, MSc., studied medicine in the Soviet Union, but also has a degree from Stanford University in business administration and management.
27. Al-Mubadara contributed 16 percent to his votes; independents gave him 30 percent, Hamas 19 percent, Fateh 15 percent, the PFLP 12 percent, and Islamic Jihad 3 percent. In contrast, only 1 percent of members of the People's Party voted for him while 49 percent voted for Bassam al-Salihi, the Party's own candidate. Mahmoud Abbas received 62.52 percent of the overall vote while Bargouthi received 19.48 percent of the overall vote. Tayseer Khaled (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) received 3.35 percent, and Bassam al-Salhi of the People's Party received 2.67 percent. PFLP did not run a candidate and advised its members to vote for the People's Party.
28. The number of mosques in the Gaza Strip tripled from 200 to 600 between 1967 and 1987, while the number of worshippers doubled. In the West Bank, the number of mosques went from 400 to 750 in the same period (Shaoul 2002).
29. He is secretary-general of the Marxist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine since it split from the PFLP in 1969. He is Christian by birth, but secular by choice.

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Note: Page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.