

SOLUTION 196-213 UNITED STATES OF PALESTINE-ISRAEL

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"The formulation of a question is its solution."
Karl Marx, *On The Jewish Question*, 1844

Introduction

United States of Palestine-Israel is a compilation of applicable solutions by contributors from the region. For the *Solution* series, authors are asked to develop compact ideas for a certain region. Unlike most of the previous books in the series, here we present an ensemble of contributors, mainly because it seems absurd to present a one-man master plan for Palestine-Israel. In many senses, such master plans (whether they take colonial, Zionist, or other meta-narrative leads) have been the mold of the top-down policy-making in the region for at least the last 150 years. Therefore, I decided to invite writers from the region to suggest specific and doable solutions for today.

When one brings to mind the fact that Theodor Herzl, the founding father of Zionism, was a romanticist playwright, it is easy to see Israel as a fantasy put on the stage of history. This was done through the building of a huge décor—which included the expulsion of local Palestinians, the import of Jews from around the world, and the building of a new environment that, among other tactics, was comprised of Potemkin-like settlements that resembled very much a theater set (the “Wall and Tower” settlements that were built during the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939).

This fiction has created a reality in which, as Salim Tamari, Director of the Institute for Jerusalem Studies, has shown, Palestinian civil society has evolved. This society emerged under Ottoman rule, the British Mandate administration, the 1948 and 1967 wars, and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since

1967. Each had a profound effect on the scope of civil actors, civil-society organizations, and political life in the Palestinian community.

What's the Problem?

"Solution" is a tricky term, especially in relation to the ongoing newspeak of the last two decades in Palestine-Israel. In their contribution to this book, Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman suggest revisiting the term "decolonization," "in order to maintain a distance from the current political terms of a 'solution' to the Palestinian conflict and its respective borders. The one-, two-, and now three-state solutions seem equally entrapped in a 'top-down' perspective, each with its own self-referential logic."

As the region is in dire need for change, it becomes clear that the scenarios that regard the Israeli settlements as a mere dismantable project are false. The settlements are actually embedded in the logic of the Israeli regime. It is also clear that the different negotiation schemes between Israelis and Palestinians need not only address issues of borders in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but also question the nature of the State of Israel. The State of Israel defines itself as a democratic Jewish state. Its sovereignty is underlain by Judaism as ethnicity, religious orthodoxy, and nationality. The subordination to the ethnic, religious, national, and security discourse blocks any attempt for civic and class discourses to happen. These discourses are actually able to open up new and varied alliances that transgress the national, ethnic, and religious conventions that dominate the political reality.

Slavoj Žižek sees a neurotic symptom in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

Everyone recognizes the way to get rid of the obstacle, yet, nonetheless, no one wants to remove it, as if there is some kind of pathological libidinal profit gained by persisting in the deadlock.

The obstacle being the Israeli occupation of course. He calls this "a symptomal knot" in which the standard roles are reversed: Israel, officially representing Western liberal modernity, actually legitimizes itself in terms of ethnic-religious identity (Holy Land, Land of Our Fathers, etc.), while the Palestinians, decried as pre-modern "fundamentalists," legitimize their demands in terms of secular citizenship (self-determination, civil and human rights).*

When I approached Yazan Khalili to contribute to this book, he explained to me that the solution should answer the complicated and yet simple question, What is the problem? For him, it was obvious: Israel is the problem. His contribution to the book confirms how even if we agree that Israel is the simple and obvious problem that needs attention, it would nevertheless be extremely hard to find simple and obvious solutions for it.

Generally speaking, if we take the solution used in South Africa after Apartheid, we can say that political rights were traded for property—blacks received voting rights in return for whites being able to hold on

* Slavoj Žižek, *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (London: Verso, 2004), 39.

to the property they accumulated and possessed during Apartheid. In Palestine-Israel, it is clear that any solution should address not only the question of political rights (equal representation and a state for all its citizens), but also the issue of property (namely, that of the refugees of 1948 and 1967).

Many agree that Zionism is on the verge of a big change. Neither Apartheid nor a multinational state was part of its original plan for Jewish self-determination. Due to a lack of imagination, when confronted with the wrongdoings of Zionism, most political solutions suggest two basic scenarios that revolve around the state—one state or two.

The solutions in this book operate within inhabited fictions and embodied narratives. They use speculation and invention as critical tactics for destabilizing the beaten, antagonistic identities while also suggesting new alliances and new horizons. Ariella Azoulay's solution-speech in this book is very true to this form of horizontal thinking that imagines a different reality (her last book is titled *Civil Imagination*). And so it seems we can no longer solely address the exsisting daily political practices in order to imagine solutions. Paradoxically, in this region that is overburdened with myths, new myths are called for, as Itzhak Benyamini suggests in his solution. Sari Hanafi's solution suggests a new nation-state model; Yael Bartana and Sebastian Cichocki propose a Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland; Noam Yuran imagines a Jewish state where everyone can be Muslim; Osama Zatar and Tal Adler open an embassy for the one-state; Yazan Khalili contemplates the different solutions he has heard; Raji

Bathish thinks beyond the right of return and the Law of Return; Norma Musih finds Hannah Farah-Kufr Bir'im to be a solution personified. Ingo Niermann proposes gay and lesbian Palestinian settlements, Israeli and Palestinian reservations, and an inversion of Palestine-Israel. Ruti Sela and Maayan Amir look for models of exterritoriality; Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizman think of possibilities for using the Jewish settlements; Asma Agbarieh-Zahalka proposes a Israeli-Palestinian working class alliance; I suggest general elections and, together with Ohad Meromi, propose to re-use the Kibbutzim carcasses.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Zionist ideologists in Palestine, such as A.D. Gordon, were able to articulate Jewish labor as a political nationalistic action. But now it is our task to do the political work of articulation. In recent years, the Israeli "Peace Camp," the "soft Left," has transformed into a fundamental Center (the former government party Kadima and the so-called Labour Party, for example). This fundamental Center is similar in many ways to certain tendencies in the Netherlands, France, Austria, Denmark, and so forth. It is anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-unions, antiwelfare. Characters such as Geert Wilders, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Heinz-Christian Strache, and Pia Merete Kjærsgaard can meet their counterparts in the Israeli cabinet: Tzipi Livni, Ehud Barak, Eli Yishai, and Avigdor Lieberman, to name a few. Under the reign of capital's technocratic fascism, we notice that politics is dominated hermetically by right-wing vocabulary. And so the question of politics is a question of articulation. For example, in Europe, women's rights are now being

articulated through xenophobia, and in Israel, home and homeland, land and family, and building and flag have for a very long time been articulated by the political Right. Therefore, the question we pose in the political realm should be, Who is able to articulate what and how?

Who's Against Who?

"The shot and reverse shot are the basics of cinema," says Jean-Luc Godard in his 2004 film *Notre musique*. He shows two frames from a film by Howard Hawks—one close-up of a man and another of a woman—and goes on to say, "You will see that this is actually the same shot twice." He continues by saying that truth has two faces, and to give an example, he shows a color photograph of people getting off boats on the coast: "In 1948, the Israelis walked in the water to reach the Promised Land." Continuing, he then shows a black-and-white photograph of people marching along the coast: "The Palestinians walked in the water to drown." He puts the photos on top of the other: "Shot and reverse shot. The Jewish people have become the stuff of fiction, the Palestinians, of documentary."

The creation of Israel is the displacement of Palestinians. This can be read as a classic example of shot/reverse-shot, a thesis of hope and an antithesis of pain, together creating a synthesis of history. The rivaling narratives of independence and *Nakba* (the Palestinian tragedy) focus on 1948. But it is actually the notion of separation, which was accepted by most parties in the region, that is at the core of the ongoing politics of exclusion. Beyond the separation plans lies a big "AND."

When Gilles Deleuze discussed Godard's cinema in an interview for *Cahiers du Cinéma* in November of 1976, he said:

*The AND is then no longer even a specific conjunction or relation, but implies all relations; there are as many relations as there are ANDs. The AND not only rocks all relations, it rocks being, the verb, and so on. The AND, "and... and... and..." is exactly the creative stammering, the foreign use of language, as opposed to its conforming and dominant use, based on the verb "to be." [...] Multiplicity is precisely in the AND, which does not have the same nature as the elements or the sets.***

AND is the sign on the ballot of Hadash—the Israeli Communist Party (the Hebrew letter "Vav": װ, in Arabic: و). As a Jewish-Arab party, it is the only party to reject ethnic separatism in the Israeli Parliament (all the rest of the parties are either "Jewish" or "Arab"). The AND of Hadash suggests that we all become more. Nevertheless, historically speaking, the different Communist parties in the region suggested different Communisms, each with its own particular internationalism.

Who's a Palestinian?

United States of Palestine-Israel brings together different solutions—some complimentary, or overlapping,

**"Trois questions sur *Six fois deux*," an interview with Gilles Deleuze, in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 271 (November 1976).

and others contradicting. On a certain level, many of the solutions in the book address the nature of the state, raising the question of representation, sovereignty, and citizenry. These solutions strive to go beyond the politics of "us" and "them," and towards a "we." Interestingly enough, some of the solutions here are actually being realized today. And as Norma Musih writes in her contribution: "Utopia is a form of concretization that requires detailed planning".

It is worth noting that Israelis get their name as a group from the state they come from. When regarding the Palestinians as Middle Eastern rather than Mediterranean, one must remember that they were pushed from the coast by the State of Israel. And so, while Israelis are people named after a state, Palestinians are people named after a place, even when they were moved from that place.

Christian Palestinians, Muslim Palestinians, Ethiopians, Russians and European Jews, Jews of Arabic descent, Muslim descendants of African slaves, Palestinian Jews, Seminomadic Bedouin tribes, Druze, Bahá'í, Circassians, immigrant workers from West Africa and Southeast Asia—while the place includes a variety of people and groups, the state excludes many of them.

Since 1967, the Israeli economy has enjoyed cheap labor from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but punitive measures restricting Palestinians' movement since the early 1990s have culminated with an ongoing blockade on Gaza (especially since Hamas came to power in the 2006 elections). This blockade has been aimed to cut off the lifeblood of Gazan livelihood. With

this cut from Palestinian labor, an urgent need was created for low-wage workers for Israel's agribusiness and construction industries. The Israeli government created an elaborate mechanism of human trafficking, bringing immigrant workers from West Africa and Southeast Asia to work in these fields, in addition to housekeeping and nursing the elderly. But, it did so only to later deport these people back to their countries of origin. After having started families in Israel their jobs have ended. The Israeli occupation has thus not only created a domino effect of evils (the labor issue being just one example), but this domino has uncovered the local problem with defining nativeness. Today, the number of immigrant workers in Israel is up to several hundred thousands. Their number exceeds that of Jewish settlers in the West Bank; their percentage in the overall population is similar to that of the Zionist community in Palestine in the time between the two world wars. In this respect, one can imagine today a Filipino underground opposition of male and female nurses fighting for self-determination, echoing the anti-British Zionist militias that operated prior to the establishment of the State of Israel (Hagana, Etzel, and Lehi).

As we have in no way reached a postcolonial reality but are rather deep in a colonial order—in Israel or anywhere else for that matter—we need to redefine our identities. Under this order many sides are touched. We usually accept that Algerian is a kind of French (think of Zinedine Zidane, for example). It is obvious that Algeria changed with the French rule and also after it ended. But at the same time France of course changed, too, by occupying and holding Algeria; and it changed

again when it withdraw from it—the French changed their political system and formed the Fifth Republic because of Algeria. So we can also say that French is a kind of Algerian. Therefore, the question “Who is French?” changes to “Who is Algerian?” and Le Pen can be considered a self-hating Algerian.

When we think of a French-Jew, an American-Jew, and a Jew who lives in Palestine-Israel (an Israeli) as different kinds of Jews, we also think of Canadian-Palestinians, Palestinians in the West Bank, and Palestinian citizens of Israel as different kinds of Palestinians. But why can't we say that an Israeli is actually a Palestinian? He may be in denial of the fact that he is a kind of Palestinian, or he may not understand the fact that he is a Palestinian, but he nevertheless is Palestinian. In this respect, an anti-Palestinian in an anti-Israeli.

The idea of the *USPI* book is therefore to rethink the different antagonisms that structure our ways of resistance and compliance, rethink Semitism and 1948, rethink identity and territory, rethink resistance and memory, rethink democracy and state, rethink Zionism and decolonization, rethink refugee and property, rethink peace and peace process, rethink racism and military, rethink terror and state terror, rethink religion and solution.

I would like to thank the contributors for their imaginative solutions. The suggestions and comments made by my friends Hagai Boas, Roy Arad, and Roe Rosen, and by my wife, Elisheva Levy, were extremely helpful. A special thanks goes to Ingo Niermann, editor of this series, for his generous support and invitation to work on this book.

New Model for Nation-State

In the Bethlehem Fatah communiqué of December 2003, the authors refused to consider the Palestinian state as a substitute for the right of return: “If we must choose between the Palestinian state and the right of return, we will choose the latter.” But is there a solution that encompasses the right of return and a Palestinian state? There is no simple solution to the Palestinian refugees’ problem, only a creative one. The Palestinian negotiators often invoked questions revolving around rights or the number of eventual returnees or the technical, economic, and social capacity for absorption. They did not, however, point to the question of the nature of the Palestinian *and* the Israeli nation-states, the concept of state sovereignty and its inherent violence, or the inclusion/exclusion that the state exercises to determine who is a citizen. Nowadays, in the time of the quasi failure of a viable two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a democratic one-state solution seems equally unlikely in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the problem is about not only the feasibility of the two-state solution but also its normative stance. A creative solution should thus be envisaged.

The current nation-state model, which is based on the “trinity” of nation-state-territory, does not allow for a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. A new model of nation-state must be conceptualized, based on flexible borders, flexible citizenship, and

some kind of separation between nation and state, or what I will call the extraterritorial nation-state. This model of nation-state is structural and marks an intermediary between a territorial-based nation-state and a "de-territorialized" one. A rethinking of all traditional political/legal categories in the Middle East is necessary to resolve the problem of refugees in countries where they constitute sometimes one-third of the population. It is also important for tackling the question of the identity and mobility of a whole population.

I am thus arguing in favor of the model of two extraterritorial nation-states (Israeli and Palestinian). This model falls somewhere between the two-state solution—which, due to power inequities, is now leading instead to an apartheid system—and the relatively unpopular binational state solution. A sort of "confederation" may be more feasible: two extraterritorial nation-states, with Jerusalem as their shared capital, contemporaneously forming two different states without a territorial division.

This kind of state is territorialized in the manner of any other state, but distinguishes between citizenship and nationality. For instance, the rights and the duties of those who live in the Palestinian Territory/Israel would not be a function of their nationality (i.e., whether they are Palestinian or not.) At the same time, those who live abroad who are of Palestinian origin could also enjoy rights and duties, even though they do not reside permanently in the Palestinian Territory/Israel. Notably, however, such an arrangement will be possible only if the Palestinian and Israeli sovereigns are able to enter into special agreements with countries

that host Palestinian refugees to facilitate the attainment of full dual citizenship. Accordingly, Palestinian citizenship would be available even to people residing outside of Palestine. This could be an honorable solution for those who are not willing to return but who would, nevertheless, like to belong to a Palestinian nation and be involved in Palestinian public affairs.

This form of solution corresponds to political developments in other areas of the world. It no longer involves considering, in a traditional manner, that in the nation-state each citizen stands in a direct relation to the sovereign authority of the country. It does not reflect on the conditions of admission to citizenship that separate the "insiders" from the "outsiders." Neither does it extend this type of reflection, which uses citizenship as its foundation for the territory of the nation-state, by dealing with the case of a post-national citizenship, which has taken place, for example, in the new public European space.

The Middle East is far from being in a phase of postnationalism. It is important, however, to show that this model exists and might influence political developments in the Middle East, as either a backdrop for generating a peace process or as the outcome of a peace process. In this framework, I may propose the possibility of connecting Palestine and Israel to a European space as a carrot strategy to convince the belligerents of the fact that no matter what their national sovereign space is, its boundaries are geometrically variable, and that both national spaces are part of the European space's frontier. Frontier here is a useful geographical concept, as it means being in and being out,

and that the population dwelling there has special status. This could also be similar to the Cyprus case. Adhering to the EU has been a salient point in the ongoing peace process. Further research should explore new avenues for a solution and be based on the enlargement of the EU by incorporating Palestine/Israel, either physically or politically.

The suggested model of allowing the possession of dual, or multiple, citizenship, which was previously considered a threat to the international order and to nation-states, has become accepted and even protected under international law. Based on this and the framework of the extraterritorial nation-state, one may follow Amnon Raz's thought on two binational states: one Palestinian state with Palestinians and Jews (the settlers) and the other a binational Israeli state with Jews and Arab Palestinians. Said Zidan has proposed another model that is a political separation without physical separations.

Currently, the model of extraterritorial states is found all over the world. In Europe, for instance, any French citizen is also a European one, who can go to the European court to sue his government or any group located in his country. Since the Dayton Agreement of 1995, the majority of Bosnian refugees have enjoyed resident status, or are even naturalized, in a Western European country while still possessing Bosnian nationality, as they have the right of return. Some might argue that this model has been applied only in developed countries, where economic factors play a determining role, but we also find informal or formal flexibility in many developing countries in Asia

(the relationship between China and Hong Kong) and Africa (very permeable borders between different African states).

Two possibilities can potentially resolve the Palestinian refugee problem: one that follows the model of the rigid two-state solution, and another that follows the model of extraterritorial nation-states. If the current solution has been based on the assumption that the return of refugees is a matter of demographic and political stability, in the new framework, I argue that the debate should shift to other issues at stake, like citizenship and circular mobility. This solution differentiates between citizenship and actual residency. While all refugees should benefit from multiple nationalities, this will not necessarily translate into a mass movement of populations.

There are three prerequisites for a solution based on a model of extraterritorial nation-states: the ability to hold three nationalities, one of the current host country (or a third country), Palestine, and Israel; Israel must hold full responsibility for the creation and plight of the Palestinian refugees; and any restriction of these advantages must be subject to a bilateral, or multilateral, agreement between concerned states. One example to use as guidance is the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UNHCR's joint effort to harmonize citizenship and residency standards in the countries of the Community of Independent States. Lack of harmonization could engender forced migration across the region and lead to instability and/or conflict where one state's citizenship or residency laws—in the context of unresolved

displacement or new flows—could be regarded by another state as a threat. Any solution, in other words, must be regional, otherwise the lack of coordination between host countries and the country of origin could end up sending refugees in a perpetual orbit between nations because they are denied residence status.

What I am suggesting could constitute one of the possible and just solutions to the refugee problem, while nation-states in the region would prefer solutions that utilize less of a rights-based approach. For instance, other constitutional arrangements based on residency and not on citizenship may be feasible, and allow refugees to have multiple residencies instead of multiple nationalities. However, this is likely to generate conflict rather than resolve it, because traditionally the countries of the region are quick to expel non citizens in case of potential social or political conflict. Another possibility, which is worse, could be based on circular migration, managed and regulated by the states in the region to determine the quotas of admitted refugees so that they match labor needs in specific economic sectors.

“Palestinian women, Palestinian men...”

A speech

Imagine a Polish intellectual leveling his eyes at the camera and turning to the Jews—the living, not the dead—in an appeal to return to his land, their land. “We need you,” he says in chilling simplicity. “Since the night you left, we have been haunted by nightmares,” he reveals to his listeners. “What’s the point?” he asks and, answering himself, continues: “We’re tired of seeing faces only similar to our own. Now we know we cannot live alone. We need the other, and we have no other closer than you. Come. Let us live together, let us be different but not harm each other.” In his speech he expresses the simple need to receive recognition from the other as a condition for self-awareness.

This speech, full of pathos, is not a figment of my imagination. Yael Bartana—an Israeli artist of Jewish origin—initiated it in a video work she made, titled *Mary Koszmary (Nightmares)*, 2007. Ever since I heard it, this speech has haunted me relentlessly. It kept resounding in my head for a while, until one day it emerged in my language, your language, civil language. I went walking in the city square on the morning of Israel’s Independence Day, enjoying the stillness that my imagination then amplified. In this stillness I could savor every word against my palate before speaking it to you. I dwelled on every single syllable so my

thought it was a horrible, dark scheme, since they wanted to go back to Palestine, even if most residents of the camp had never seen it with their own eyes. What must be even more horrible, though, is that they are in reality simply not wanted anywhere. So it is perfectly conceivable that many would agree to resettle in an extraterritorial Palestinian reservation if they were also given Palestinian passports and granted freedom of travel.

The Inversion of Palestine-Israel

If the technology of land reclamation had made enough progress, Palestine-Israel could simply be duplicated off its own coast. In this duplicate, the Palestinians would be entitled to all areas held by the Israelis in the original state, and vice versa. If Israel is unwilling to relinquish sovereignty over Israel and Palestine, the Palestinians could become the leading nation in the replica.

But perhaps an existing state is prepared to cede a piece of land of adequate size. This might give Germany an opportunity to finally live up to its historic responsibility. As a whole, the country is densely populated; but on the territory of the former GDR, which is roughly four times the size of Israel and Palestine, it suffers from massive depopulation. Since its reunification in 1990, Germany has invested hundreds of billions of euros in modern infrastructure. Nonetheless, jobs are scarce, and entire neighborhoods are threatened by demolition because of large numbers of vacancies. The reservationization of Israel and Palestine, including beyond their current borders, could be an important step in overcoming the nation-state toward a world state, setting an example to be emulated all over the world.*

* See also the chapters "Newly Divided" in *Solution 1-10: Umbauland* (2008/2009), and "Theme Communities" and "Dubai Düsseldorf" in *Solution 186-195: Dubai Democracy* (2010), where I champion additional conceptions of subnational autonomy.

THE INVERSION OF PALESTINE-ISRAEL

Western Europeans, for example, already complain about being overrun by foreigners, even when Muslims account for no more than 5 percent of the total population. Given the differences in birthrates, the native population may in fact find itself marginalized over the medium term. It doesn't help that, over the past decade, Germany has raised subsidies for procreation faster than those for anything else. Nor does ghettoizing the future majority help, which will only radicalize it and drive its birthrate up even further. If the Germans absolutely want to preserve themselves as an ethnic group, they should in due time provide themselves, too, with one or more reservations within Germany.

Translated from the German by Gerrit Jackson



Palestine-Israel II within depopulated East Germany
Credit: Jana Schnell/Ingo Niermann

ODA: Reveille for the Working Class

The solution to the conflict in the Middle East will not be found within the current array of forces. On the one side, there is American hegemony (somewhat shaken), Israeli refusal, an internal Palestinian schism, and dictatorial Arab regimes. On the other side is extremist Islamic fundamentalism. Those who have sought a solution under these conditions have reaped intifada, blockade, the separation barrier, and war. The negotiations taking place under the auspices of the Obama administration will not undo the stalemate. A real solution will not be possible except as part of an international social, political, and economic change, affecting not just Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab world, but also the Western industrial nations that are today at the heart of the capitalist order.

We are not proposing utopia. The economic crisis afflicting the centers of capitalism today threatens that system with collapse. It puts into question not just the fates of millions who are faced with loss of job and home, but also the fates of those who have led the system. People are far from internalizing the fact that the rules of the game are going to change, but they will, and the big question will be: What are the alternatives? We have grown accustomed to the notion that the natural option in a crisis is war. We can see the seeds of a new fascism sprouting in several countries, including the United States with its Tea Party. But the same situation can and



must serve as a wake-up call to *the Left* as well, to pull itself together and organize the workers—who make up the biggest social force, after all. This can be done. It is essential, for the alternative is not to be borne.

The Oslo Accords, at the start of the 1990s, came about amid the weakening of leftist forces. The fall of the Soviet Union and the imposition of a new world order under exclusive US leadership led frequently to chaos. America promised peace and prosperity, but instead have come poverty and bloodshed. Peace will not dawn from an America that wages war elsewhere.

Today, seventeen years after Oslo, it is a battered US that comes to the table. The economic crisis has hit it full force. It is stuck in Afghanistan and will likely remain stuck in Iraq. This is not a neutral country coming as mediator. It is an integral part of the conflict, and it needs the Israelis and Palestinians in order to save its dwindling status.

As an agreement with the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) replaced the PLO as part of the transition to the putative new world order. The PA easily adapted itself to the new codes. Its identification with the Left had always been by default alone. In essence, the Palestinian national movement had always belonged to the bourgeois camp. As soon as it opened itself, it compromised, agreeing to a limited administrative function in the Palestinian Territories, cushioned by Western money.

Oslo did not work. The Palestinian people got an agreement that emasculated their future state, canceled the right to sovereignty, and hitched their lot

to Israel's security demands. The settlements have gone on expanding, with the result that they now preclude the possibility of a territorially continuous Palestinian state. To dismantle them, an Israeli government would have to be willing to face a war with the settlers. No such government is conceivable.

The Oslo Accords led to the second intifada, starting in the year 2000, and to the growth of Hamas as an alternative to Fatah. Strangely enough, the Islamist resistance won support from the Left in the Arab and Western worlds. It has failed, however, because it allows no compromise short of Israel's disappearance, while deepening the rift within the Palestinian ranks.

Today both Palestinian sides have failed. Both have lost the capacity for making independent decisions. They are pawns of greater powers—be these the members of the radical axis (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah) or the “moderate” regimes that are subject to the US (Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia).

The Palestinian Left long ago ceased to believe in revolutionary change. Thus it missed a rare opportunity to present itself as an alternative, winding up instead as a partner in Salam Fayyad's PA.

In Israel, too, the Left has all but disappeared. What is the “leftist” alternative people are looking to? Kadima, a hybrid of Likud and Labor.

DA'AM (English: ODA—Organization for Democratic Action), founded in 1995, is a workers' party. We believe in the need to build a leadership different from those that have failed. We are doing this through grassroots operations, organizing a workers'

movement of Jews and Arabs, one that will be capable of gathering momentum. We seek to be part of an international workers' movement that will support popular struggles for political and economic freedom throughout the world, offering democratic socialism as the means for conducting human society.

Socialist Responsibility

Capitalism has reached a phase where the greed for profits has overcome the real economy, replacing it with a casino. It has become incapable of doing what any economy must minimally do: provide for people's needs. The result shows today's stagnation and dwindling ability to buy. In the evolution of society, when a system fails, a better one needs to replace it. *Needs to*, but not necessarily *must*. Here lies our responsibility.

What Can Be Done?

Israel takes pride in the fact that the economic crisis has passed over it so far without injury, but on a closer look we see that the seeds of destruction are sown here too. Ever since the country began privatizing itself to death in the 1980s, the wealth has concentrated in the hands of a few. Some sixteen families own 20 percent of the top 500 companies. There is a middle class consisting of people in high-tech (based on military tech), as well as services and cartels, which lives a life of comfort. Beside it, however, is another Israel, trudging along without a voice (for now): the class of exploited wage laborers.

For nearly half the Israeli labor force, the legal minimum wage is the maximum they can hope to earn. Along with them, subsidizing the country's

profitability, are hundreds of thousands of migrant workers, whose low wages keep a brake on the wages of all. The lower middle class (teachers, office workers) is also being eroded, but some have begun to struggle.

This situation has brought back terms that were long thought passé, like "socialism" and "social agenda." Social forces and new labor unions are beginning to sprout, making our vision more relevant than ever.

In the gulf separating the two peoples, DA'AM has chosen to build a bridge of understanding and hope. We initiated the establishment of MA'AN, a representative workers' organization uniting Jews and Arabs from a variety of industries: truck drivers, stonecutters, workers for personnel agencies or subcontractors, farm workers, college lecturers, construction workers, restaurant and hotel workers. MA'AN helps people organize themselves into workers' committees. It accompanies these in negotiations with the employers toward the signing of legally binding collective agreements. Its legal staff provides counsel and aid in the courts.

We believe that apart from the fence that separates Jews and Arabs, there is a very different kind of fence. This new fence positions on one side all workers of the world, the victims of neoliberal economics: Arabs, Jews, Americans, Greeks, Spaniards, Egyptians, Iranians, Indians, Chinese, and more. On the other side stand the wealthy of all nations, backed by their governments, who exploit, oppress, and make profits. Here is a large space for action, because the forces that unify are stronger than those that divide. Recently we have begun to visit the homes of the truck drivers. On the walls of some we see pictures of Baba Sali, a saint-like

Jewish figure, while on the walls of others we see verses from the Quran. But all unite in condemning the ways in which the transport industry exploits them, forcing them to work long hours beyond the legal limit, resulting in death on the roads.

The aim of DA'AM is to build anew the working class and provide it with values of solidarity, despite national and religious differences. We do the same in our work with different groups of youth and women. All the social frameworks we create are common to Arabs and Jews. This class can form the basis for a new Left, opposing religious and nationalist agendas.

The task is not easy. The hatred is abysmal, and each side clings to its narrative. Such division is influenced by the atmosphere of religious and nationalist extremism in both camps. But the common denominator is bigger. The Jewish worker is beginning to grasp the fact that he or she is being transformed into an "Arab"—that is, one who has no privileges in the Jewish State, which itself has become a State for the Rich. This new reality confronts Jewish workers with a major challenge: Will they go on risking their lives in Israel's wars—for the sake of sixteen families?

But there is also a challenge for Arab workers. Will they realize at last that the national-religious agenda leads to ruin, and that the only way out is to find their class partners on the other side?

Amid the present crisis, the building of a new social Left, both here and worldwide, is a necessary condition for getting a better system. The astonishing opposition movement in Iran is a source of inspiration to us. So is the brave resistance—against

their employers and the government—demonstrated by tens of thousands of Egyptian workers in the textile plants at Mahalla al-Kubra. Similar movements throughout the world will enable the Palestinians, the Iraqis, the Afghans, and all oppressed peoples to shake off their chains and have their say.

Within such a framework, one can begin to seek partners for change and social justice, and also for peace: not a counterfeit peace of occupation regimes and dictatorships, but a peace of workers, a peace of democratic societies, a peace without walls, a peace that will enable human beings to earn their living with dignity.

Translated from the Hebrew by Stephen Langfur

Decolonizing Architecture

In 2007, after a few years of engaging in spatial research and theory, taking the conflict over Palestine as our main case study, we have decided to shift the mode of our engagement and establish an architectural institute based around a studio/residency program in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem. Decolonizing Architecture institute (DAi) seeks to use spatial practice as a form of political intervention and narration. The work of the residency is based around a network of local affiliations and the historical archives we have gathered in our previous work. Our practice has to continuously engage with a complex set of architectural problems centered around one of the most difficult dilemmas of political practice: how to act both propositionally and critically within an environment in which the political force field, as complex as it may be, is so dramatically skewed. Is intervention at all possible? How could spatial practice within the “here and now” of the conflict negotiate the existence of institutions and legal and spatial realities without becoming complicit with the unequal reality they produce? How to find an “autonomy of practice” that is both critical and transformative?

We started by experimenting with a series of interventions that attempt to cast new contents, meaning, and agency to the term “decolonization.” We suggest revisiting this largely discredited term in order to maintain a distance from the current political

language of a “solution” to the Palestinian conflict and its respective borders. The one-, two-, and now three-state solutions seem equally entrapped in their respective “top-down” expert perspective, each with its own self-referential logic. Decolonization, on the contrary, assumes a process of transformation and reuse of the existing dominant structure—financial, military, and legal—which was conceived for the benefit of a single national-ethnic group, and engages a struggle for equality). It is sometimes confrontational, another cunning approach to the reality of occupation and dispossession.

Historical processes of decolonization often reused the buildings and infrastructure left behind in the same way they were designed for, a way that left colonial territorial hierarchies intact. In this sense, past processes of decolonization never truly did away with the power of colonial domination. Profanation, an analogous concept proposed by Giorgio Agamben in relation to the domain of the “sacred,” is a “neutralization of that which it profanes.” “To profane does not simply mean to abolish or cancel separations, but to learn to make new uses of them.” Decolonization is the counter apparatus that seeks to restore to common use what the colonial order had separated and divided. The goal of decolonization is the construction of counter apparatuses that find new uses for the abandoned structures of domination. These uses are sometimes pragmatic for other ironic provocative challenges. As such, “decolonization” is never achieved, but is an ongoing practice of deactivation and reorientation, understood both in its presentness and in its endlessness.

The issues we are dealing with lead us to assume that a viable approach is to be found not only in the professional language of architecture and planning, but also in inaugurating a collaborative “arena of speculation” that incorporates varied cultural and political perspectives through the incorporation into the project of a multiplicity of individuals and organizations. An open and collaborative architectural-residency program had to thus replace established modes of architectural production.

By combining discourse, spatial intervention, education, collective learning, public meetings, and legal challenges, we attempt to open up the discipline and praxis of “architecture”—understood as the production of rarefied buildings and urban structures—into a shifting network of “spatial practices” that includes various other forms of intervention.

We believe that
if the geography
of occupation
is to be liberated,
its potential
must be turned
against itself.



Greenhouse



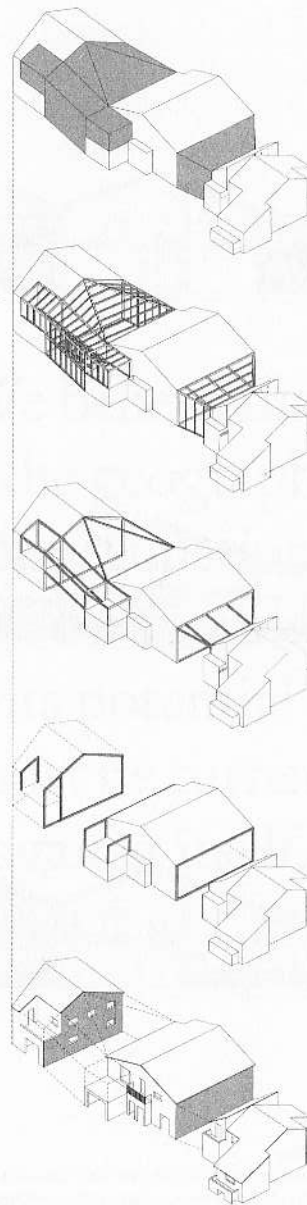
Kindergarten



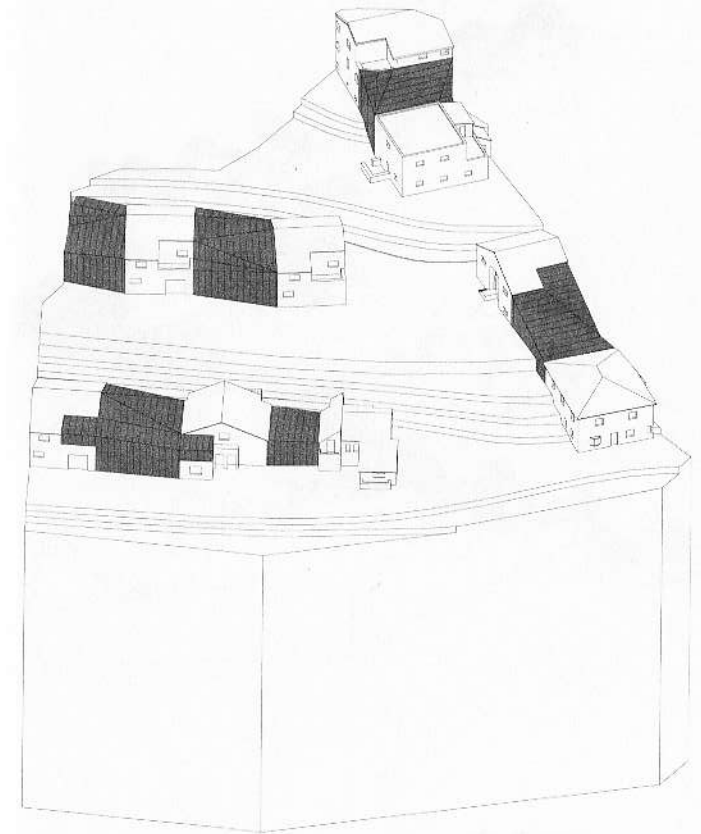
Recreative Center

Unhoming

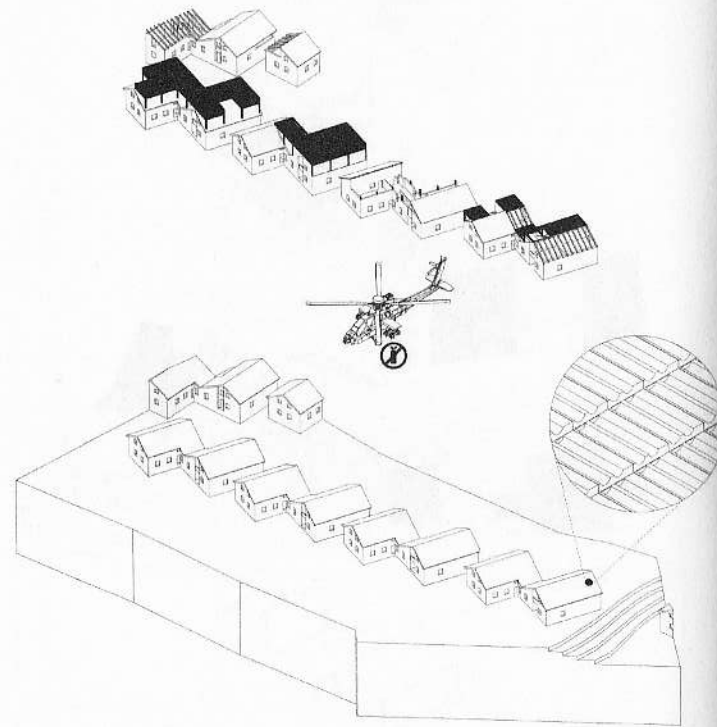
We spatialize a set of different functions into the repetitive domestic shells of evacuated settlement homes..



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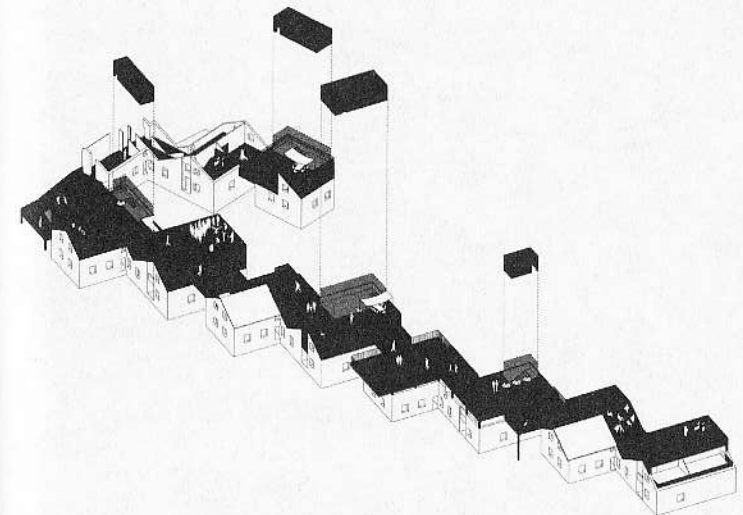


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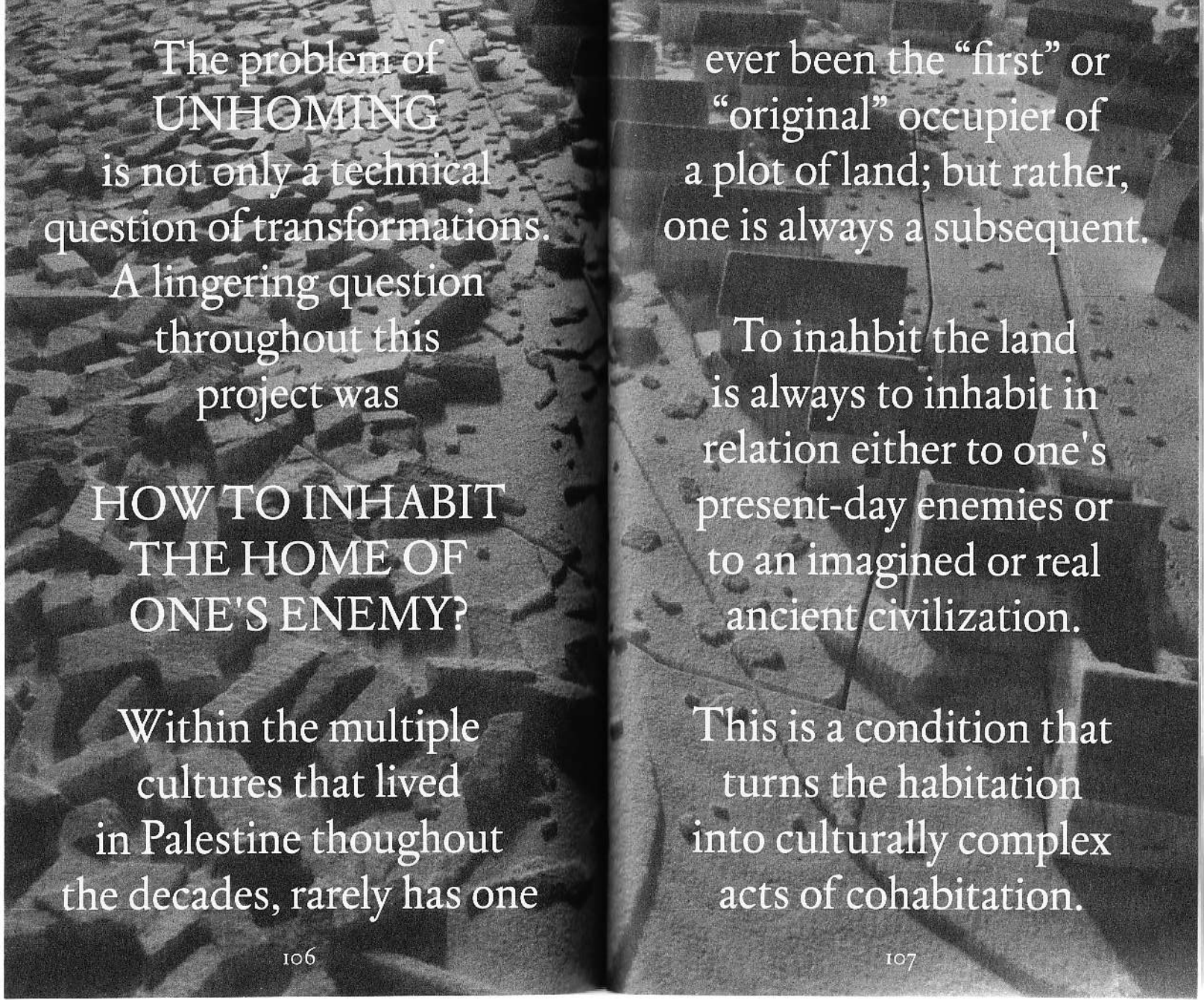
From the sky

This common architectural practice was formalized when, in 1980s, the military recommended that settlement councils impose the construction of red-tiled roofs as part of the settlement planning by law. Besides allowing the settlers to orient themselves within the landscape, the roofs aid the military to better navigate and identify 'friend from foe', from both ground and air.



Recycling

The wooden elements, recycled from the demolition of the covering layer, can be reused to construct structures for accessing the new collective space.



The problem of
UNHOMING
is not only a technical
question of transformations.

A lingering question
throughout this
project was

HOW TO INHABIT
THE HOME OF
ONE'S ENEMY?

Within the multiple
cultures that lived
in Palestine throughout
the decades, rarely has one

ever been the “first” or
“original” occupier of
a plot of land; but rather,
one is always a subsequent.

To inhabit the land
is always to inhabit in
relation either to one's
present-day enemies or
to an imagined or real
ancient civilization.

This is a condition that
turns the habitation
into culturally complex
acts of cohabitation.