

**Impressum**

Klaus Bung: The Rape of Palestine in Eighteen Bullet Points

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Compiled by Klaus Bung from easily accessible sources

**This file is still Work in Progress.**

**Klaus Bung:  
The Rape of Palestine  
in Eighteen Bullet Points -  
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An Anthology

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

OPT: Occupied Palestinian Territory  
PA: Palestinian Authority  
PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization  
PNA: Palestinian National Authority  
POW: Prisoner of War

**EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION**

The texts assembled here are taken from publications by honest Jewish and non-Jewish historians who can be trusted to be objective. The honest Jewish historians are sometimes referred to as "the new historians" (See Note at the end of this file) as opposed to Jewish historians who were fiercely supportive Israel and sometimes hid or beautified Israeli crimes. I have not marked the quoted passages as trustworthy or otherwise. Something can be learnt from all of them. The reader has to make up his own mind about trustworthiness but sometimes it helps to look up the biography of an author in other places, e.g. in Wikipedia to start with. If a Jewish scholar criticises Israel, then what he says can be taken quite seriously.

### TECHNICAL NOTE

This file contains many long quotations, from Wikipedia and from printed books. To make make sure that the reader always knows, with certainty, which passages, or sentences, introductions or summaries are by the editor (Klaus Bung) and which are quotations from the literature, the quotations begin with "**Quote §01:**" &c, and the texts by Klaus Bung begin with "KB:". The quotes have been numbered for ease of reference.

The source is given at the end of each quote. Contrary to academic custom, the names of the author and the titles are given here in full, for the benefit of non-academic readers. I want to stimulate their curiosity and appetite, make them aware that such interesting books exist and hope that they perhaps read some of them. In the Bibliography, all books are listed in the customary alphabetic style.

There are **18 events** (dates) of which I want to make the reader aware. Having these listed as bullet points on one page, and perhaps remembering them, makes it easier for readers of newspapers and relevant literature, or during discussions, to know what is implied, when she is told "Ever since 1948 ...", or "After 1967", &c. This file will help in such situations.

For some of the 18 bullet points, when the facts are generally known, easily accessible or undisputed, apart from the dates and the headlines, very little information is given.

More information is given in the form of "Quotes" when I have found some detail that may new to some readers. In one case, "the Oslo accords" (two-state solution), there are so many different opinions (pro and contra), so many different evaluations, and changes over time, that I have provided 30 pages of extracts from different books, from which the reader can then form a realistic picture. Giving just a summary of the events and opinions (my own opinion) would not be sufficient. Seeing the same issue tackled from different angles, in different contexts, by different authors, gives a more vivid impression.

If readers detect any mistakes, as no doubt they will, I should be grateful to be notified by e-mail and will happily correct them.

# **Klaus Bung: The Rape of Palestine in Eighteen Bullet Points - compiled from easily accessible sources**

An Anthology

## **THE EIGHTEEN BULLETS IN A NUTSHELL**

1. 1896: Theodor Herzl: "Der Judenstaat" (The State of Jews)
2. 1897: 29-31 August: First Zionist Congress in Basel
- 1897: 7 October: "General Jewish Labour Bund" founded in Vilna
3. 1917: Balfour Declaration
4. 1945: The USA become the main sponsor of the Zionists
5. 1947: United Nations partition plan
6. 1947-1948: Nakba: Ethnic cleansing of Palestine
7. 1948: 14 May: British Mandate expires
8. 1948: 14 May: Israel Declaration of Independence
9. 1948: 14 May: The USA recognises the state of Israel
10. 1948: 5 November 1948: Ethnic cleansing of Ashkelon
11. 1956: Suez Crisis: Israel, Britain and France attack Egypt
12. 1964: Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is created
13. 1967: 5 to 10 June 1967: The Six-Day War
14. 1993: 13 September 1993: Oslo Accords signed
15. 2005: Israel removes all Jewish settlements in Gaza Strip
16. 2007: 14 June 2007: Hamas rule in Gaza starts
17. 2007: Intensified blockade of Gaza
18. 2023: 7 Oct: Hamas break the blockade, Israel responds

## THE EVENTS IN MORE DETAIL

### (1) 1896: Theodor Herzl publishes "Der Judenstaat" (The Jewish State)

**Quote §01:** "But in private Herzl sang a different tune - one of displacement and transfer of Arabs, albeit with full financial compensation. In 1895 he wrote in his diary: "We must expropriate gently. ... We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our country. ... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly. (Benny Morris (1999): Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001)

### (2) 1897: 29-31 August, 1897

First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland

**Quote §02:** "At the conclusion of the Basle Congress, Herzl wrote in his diary: "If I were to sum up the Basle Congress in one word - which I shall not do openly - it would be this: at Basle I founded the Jewish State." (Source: Fayez A. Sayegh (1965): Zionist Colonialism in Palestine)

#### 1897: 7 October 1897:

KB: "General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland and Russia," aka "The Bund", founded in Vilna (Vilnius, Lithuania).

The ideology of the Bund is diametrically opposed to that of the Zionists. The Bund says: Jews should campaign for civil rights and respectful treatment in whichever country they now live as a minority rather than set up a purely Jewish state by depriving another race (the Arabs) of their inherited land.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General\\_Jewish\\_Labour\\_Bund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Jewish_Labour_Bund)

This file deals with the crimes committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians. **The existence of the Bund and its successor organisations shows:**

- Not all Jews are Zionists,
- not all Jews are genocidal,
- not all Jews approve of the actions of the Israeli government and the Israeli military,
- not all Jews approve of the existence of a purely Jewish state on Palestinian soil.
- A Jewish anti-Zionist movement exists.

For more information about the Bund, see:

- Jewish Socialists' Group (2025) (eds): The Jewish Workers' Bund, Past, present and Future. Downloaded from: <https://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/resources/other> (accessed February 2025), or print edition, only 27 pp

KB: Jewish left-wingers, socialists, like the Bund, tend to be more fair than the racist Zionists towards the Palestinians or towards any non-Jewish people. They opposed the creation of the alien state of Israel on Palestinian soil, long before it became a reality. They opposed it "in embryo". What they desire for Jews is not a racist state for Jews only, but:

**Rights and Justice  
for Jews everywhere  
without wrongs and injustice  
to other people anywhere.**

(Emanuel Scherer, 1901-1977,  
a Polish-born member of the Bund)

The infamous Balfour Declaration contained a similar condition (restriction) but it has been stubbornly (or smartly) ignored by Israel and its supporters:

#### The Balfour Declaration

His Majesty's Government view with favour  
the establishment in Palestine  
of a national home for the Jewish people,  
  
and will use their best endeavours  
to facilitate the achievement of this object,  
  
it being clearly understood that

**nothing shall be done which may prejudice  
the civil and religious rights  
of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,**

or the rights and political status  
enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

**Quote §03:** Birnbaum ... was a legitimate founder of Zionism (and the man who literally coined the name of the movement - "Zionism") some thirteen years before Theodor Herzl appeared as a Jewish nationalist. (Source: Jess Olson (2013): Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy)

#### **BIRTH OF "THE BUND" IN VILNIUS IN 1897**

**Quote §04:** The Bund (Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland) was founded in Vilnius in 1897. A diffuse agitation had developed since the 1870s among workers in the small workshops and early factories, essentially in Lithuania and Byelorussia. New forms of organization then made their appearance; radical intellectuals organized circles designed to promote socialist ideas among these workers. By the

early 1890s, while anti-Semitism was steadily growing, and combining with the ambient misery to trigger an ever more massive emigration, the inspirers of these 'circles' active in the Jewish working-class milieu considered that conditions were ripe to pass to 'mass agitation'. The Yiddish language was adopted in this spirit as a privileged means of communication and propaganda. At the same time, the radical intellectuals who laid the foundations of this movement considered that the struggle of the Jewish proletariat had to be linked by 'indissoluble bonds' to that of the Russian workers' movement in general. The movement spread in the main industrial centres of the Pale of Settlement, notably marked by the rise of hundreds of kassy (mutual aid funds). (Source: Alain Brossat and Sylvia Klingberg (2016): Revolutionary Yiddishland: A History of Jewish Radicalism)

**Quote §05:** In 1897, several Jewish socialist groups gathered to form the Bund as a secret revolutionary organization of Jewish radical intellectuals and workers to struggle for socialism and promote civil rights for Jews within the territories controlled by the Russian czar. The political philosophies of its constituent groups varied widely. Some groups formed under a strictly pragmatic survival-oriented framework, arming for self-defense. Others argued for a form of international socialism and regarded the existence of so many different ethnic cultures in the Russian Empire as enfeebling resistance to the czar. /.../

From the beginnings of the Russian Bund in 1897 and the founding of the Workmen's Circle a few years later in the United States, advocates for competing ideological tendencies argued about perpetuating Yiddish as the cultural medium for working-class Jews. (Source: Daniel Katz (2013): All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism)

### **(3) 1917: 2 November 1917, the Balfour Declaration**

KB: The British have a vested interest in inserting an alien body among the Arab states to protect their interest in the Suez Canal. The British (and the French) are the main sponsors of the Zionists and allow Palestine to be flooded by Jewish immigrants.

### **(4) 1945: "In the mid-forties the USA become the main sponsor of Zionists"**

KB: When the end of the war came (1945), Britain was exhausted, deeply in debt to the USA, could no longer control Zionist terrorist groups in Palestine (who were by then fighting not only against the Arab inhabitants but also again the British, who should have protected the Arabs). Britain therefore ceased to be a sponsor of the Zionists and handed Palestine over to the United Nations and to the USA.

**Quote §06:** At 09.00 one morning in February 1947, the UK ambassador in Washington, Lord Inverchapel, walked into the State Department to hand the US Secretary of State, George Marshall, two diplomatic messages printed on blue paper to emphasise their importance: one on Greece, the other on Turkey.

Exhausted, broke and heavily in debt to the United States, Britain told the US that it could no longer continue its support for the Greek

government forces that were fighting an armed Communist insurgency. Britain had already announced plans to pull out of Palestine and India and to wind down its presence in Egypt.

The United States saw immediately that there was now a real danger that Greece would fall to the Communists and, by extension, to Soviet control. And if Greece went, the United States feared that Turkey could be next, giving Moscow control of the Eastern Mediterranean including, potentially, the Suez Canal, a vital global trade route.

Almost overnight, the United States stepped into the vacuum left by the departing British.

"It must be a policy of the United States," President Harry Truman announced, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure." Source: BBC Analysis – Allan Little – Trump has blown up the world order – <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c2er9j83x0zo> (Accessed 2025-03-26)

#### **(5) 1947: 29 November 1947: United Nations partition plan:**

KB: Passed. Supported by white countries and South Africa, rejected by most African and Asian countries.

Contents: A two-state solution,  
Arab State: 43% of Mandate Territory  
Jewish State: 56% of Mandate Territory

#### **(6) 1947–1948: Nakba: Ethnic cleansing of Palestine**

The Zionist actions are summarised by Wikipedia:

**Quote §07:** "About 750,000 Palestinians – over 80% of the population in what would become the State of Israel – were expelled or fled from their homes and became refugees. Eleven Arab urban neighborhoods and over 500 villages were destroyed or depopulated. Thousands of Palestinians were killed in dozens of massacres. About a dozen rapes of Palestinians by regular and irregular Israeli military forces have been documented, and more are suspected. Israelis used psychological warfare tactics to frighten Palestinians into flight, including targeted violence, whispering campaigns, radio broadcasts, and loudspeaker vans. Looting by Israeli soldiers and civilians of Palestinian homes, business, farms, artwork, books, and archives was widespread. (Source: Wikipedia: Nakba)

KB: The details can be found in Ilan Pappé (2006): "The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine". See further:

**Quote §08:** 1948 saw ... the establishment of a settler-colonialist state on nearly 80 per cent of Mandatory Palestine ...

... the infamous Plan Dalet, a prime objective of which was the destruction of Palestinian towns and villages ... was accompanied by a series of atrocities, of which the massacre of Dayr Yasin in April 1948 is the most notorious. From the territory occupied by Israel ... in 1948–49, about 90 per cent of the Palestinians were driven out – many by psychological warfare and/or military pressure and a large number at gunpoint. ...

The Israeli state first took over the land of the 750,000 refugees, who were barred from returning; Jewish immigrants were settled in homes and

neighbourhoods belonging to Palestinian refugees. In order to present European colonialism as a continuation of an ancient Jewish ownership of the land, the historic Arabic names of geographical sites were replaced by newly coined modern Hebrew names, some of which resembled biblical names. ...

The Nakba is the turning point in the modern history of Palestine - that year over 500 villages and towns and a whole country and its people disappeared from international maps and dictionaries. ...

As a result of the Nakba only a small minority of 160,000 out of 900,000 Palestinians remained in the part of Palestine upon which Israel was established. ... The JNF played a key role in the mass expulsion of 1948 and the state-organised memoricide of the Nakba ... After 1948 it planted forests in the depopulated villages to 'conceal' Palestinian existence. ... After 1948 the Palestinians inside Israel had to endure eighteen years of military administration, which restricted their movements, controlled almost every aspect of their life and acted as an instrument for the expropriation of the bulk of their lands. (Source: Nur Masalha (2012): The Palestine Nakba)

**Quote §09:** [The Nakba] a seminal event in Palestinian history, as refracted through the experiences of the 120,000 Palestinians who managed to remain in Israel after over 750,000 of their compatriots were forced to leave their homes. (Source: Adel Manna (2022): Nakba and Survival: The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948-1956 [A personal account])

#### EDWARD SAID

**Quote §10:** In 1948 Israel took over what was historical or Mandatory Palestine (destroying and depopulating 531 Arab villages in the process. Two-thirds of the population were driven out: they are the 4 million refugees of today) (Source: Edward Said (2005): From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map (Essays))

#### **(7) 1948: 14 May: British Mandate expired on 14 May 1948**

No comment.

#### **(8) 1948: 14 May: The Zionists declare the establishment of the State of Israel** (Declaration of Independence)

No comment

#### **(9) 1948: 14 May: The USA immediately recognised the new state:**

KB: Israel is their client state, their "**colony**" and their "**military base**" against the forces of "communism" in the midst of restive Muslim countries where the USA want to have an outpost. This explains the huge amount of money and arms the USA have poured into Israel, unconditionally, and regardless of Israel's genocidal and illegal activities since 1948 and continuing until 2025 and perhaps further (written in 2025). The Israelis are the



**storm troopers** of the USA doing the dirty work of their racist masters (cf Hitler's SA: Sturm-Abteilung).

**Quote §11:** "The United States was the first country to recognize Israel as an independent state on May 14, 1948, when President Harry Truman issued a statement of recognition following Israel's proclamation of independence **on the same date**. Diplomatic Relations were established when U.S. Ambassador James Grover McDonald presented his credentials on March 28, 1949." (Source: <https://il.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/>)

### **MONEY TALKS: FAKE NEWS?**

**Quote §12:** Sometime in the late 1950s, that world-class gossip and occasional historian, John F. Kennedy, told me how, in 1948, Harry S. Truman had been pretty much abandoned by everyone when he came to run for president. Then an American Zionist brought him two million dollars in cash, in a suitcase, aboard his whistle-stop campaign train. 'That's why our recognition of Israel was rushed through so fast.' As neither Jack nor I was an antisemite (unlike his father and my grandfather) we took this to be just another funny story about Truman and the serene corruption of American politics.

Unfortunately, the **hurried recognition of Israel** as a state has resulted in forty-five years of murderous confusion, and the destruction of what Zionist fellow travellers thought would be a pluralistic state – home to its native population of Muslims, Christians and Jews, as well as a future home to peaceful European and American Jewish immigrants, even the ones who affected to believe that the great realtor in the sky had given them, in perpetuity, the lands of Judea and Samaria. Since many of the immigrants were good socialists in Europe, we assumed that they would not allow the new state to become a theocracy, and that the native Palestinians could live with them as equals. This was not meant to be. I shall not rehearse the wars and alarms of that unhappy region. But I will say that the hasty invention of Israel has poisoned the political and intellectual life of the USA, Israel's unlikely patron. (Source: Gore Vidal in introduction to: Israel Shahak: Jewish History, Jewish Religion, the Weight of 3000 Years)

### **(10) 1948: 5 November 1948: The ethnic cleansing of Ashkelon**

**Quote §13:** Its many Arab citizens were expelled and became refugees in Gaza, where many of their descendants were again displaced or killed by the 2023–2025 genocidal campaigns. Wikipedia summarises: "Its inhabitants had been exclusively Muslims and Christians and the area had been allocated to the Arab state in the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine; on the eve of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War the inhabitants numbered 10,000 and in October 1948, the city accommodated thousands more Palestinian refugees from nearby villages. The town was conquered by Israeli forces on 5 November 1948, by which time much of the Arab population had fled, leaving some 2,700 inhabitants, of whom 500 were deported by Israeli soldiers in December 1948 and most of the rest were deported by 1950. Today, the city's population is almost entirely Jewish." (Source: Wikipedia: Ashkelon) It has been successfully cleansed.

Israeli historian Bresheeth-Zabner formulates it like this:

**Quote §14:** "Israel, projecting a racialized ideological dimension onto infiltration and using this excuse, had expelled whole towns and villages after the war ended, such as the town of Majdal (Ashkelon) where "the bulk of the town's population fled to Gaza in 1948, and in

the course of 1950 its remaining Arab inhabitants were transferred to the Strip." (Source: Haim Bresheeth-Zabner (2020): An Army Like No Other: How the Israel Defense Force Made a Nation)

### **(11) 1956: "The 1956 War", aka Suez Crisis,**

Second Arab-Israeli War and Sinai War

KB: At that time, the Gaza strip and the Sinai peninsula, were part of Egypt.

- 29 October 1956: Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt.
- 7 November 1956: Invading forces had to withdraw from Egypt after one week because of USA and USSR pressure.

Results of the war: Israel had to withdraw from Sinai but kept the Gaza Strip (occupied territory).

### **BEN-GURION: MESSIANIC PASSION**

**Quote §15:** In Ben-Gurion's imagination the new Israel was the kingdom of Third Temple, and when the Israeli armed forces captured the entire Sinai peninsula in the 1956 war and reached Sharm el-Sheikh, he addressed the victorious troops with messianic passion:

We can once more sing the song of Moses and the Children of Ancient Israel ... With the mighty impetus of all the IDF divisions you have extended a hand to King Solomon, who developed Eilat as the first Israelite port three thousand years ago ... And Yotvata, called Tiran, which until fourteen hundred years ago was an independent Hebrew state, will become a part of the third kingdom of Israel.

(Source: Shlomo Sand (2009): The Invention of the Jewish People)

KB: Note that Hitler imagined his state as "the **Third Reich**", the Third Empire. He expected it to last a thousand years. In the event it lasted from 1933 to 1945, 12 years. Sic transit gloria mundi.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-was-nazi-germany-called-the-third-reich>

### **BENNY MORRIS**

**Quote §16:** The 1956 war resulted in a significant reduction of Egyptian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli border tensions. Egypt refrained from reactivating the fedayeen, and the security forces of Egypt and Jordan made great efforts to curb infiltration. The Arab armies, bearing in mind what had happened in Sinai, took great care not to provoke the Israeli tiger. Moreover, the Egypt-Israel border was patrolled by buffering UN troops.

Paradoxically the political outcome of the war was a clear and substantial radicalization of the conflict. Nasser and other Arab leaders began to speak openly of the need for a "third round," in which Israel would be destroyed. In a letter to Hussein on March 13, 1961,

Nasser wrote: "On ... Israel, we believe that the evil introduced into the heart of the Arab world must be uprooted."

If the destruction of Israel was not Arab policy before, after 1956 it most certainly was. (Source: Benny Morris (1999): Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001)

### **HAIM BRESHEETH-ZABNER**

**Quote §17:** Thus, despite the painful gap between the swift victory over the Egyptian army, enabled by tripartite air power, and the humiliating retreat from the newly occupied territory, the war of 1956 resulted in long-term benefits for Israel, ones that would be built upon and improved in future conflicts. The Suez War clarified and intensified tendencies established in 1948 and, in turn, led inexorably to the 1967 war.

After 1956, there could be no doubt about Israel's long-term commitment to the Western neocolonial project in the Middle East and its positioning against regional modernization and democratization. Israel's commitment to the aims of Western power brokers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France had been established, as was its opposition to Arab progressive governments. The foundations had been laid for both Israeli nuclear arms and its military-industrial complex. This positioning has remained intact for six decades, and it is not likely to change anytime soon. In that sense, the 1956 war was the foundational, formative event in the lifecycle of militarized Zionism. /.../

One aspect of the 1956 war that remained relatively unknown was the clear intention to annex the Sinai and Gaza Strip to Israel, just as the battles were ending in Sinai. This fascinating aspect was revealed through the gradual release of archive materials ... /.../

If the 1956 war in Sinai had all the hallmarks of international intrigue and neocolonial folly, the conflict of 1967 bore a very different parentage. (Source: Haim Bresheeth-Zabner (2020): An Army Like No Other - How the Israel Defense Force Made a Nation)

### **(12) 1964: Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is created.**

KB: Yasser Arafat was its Chairman from 1969 to 2004). The PLO was based in Lebanon from 1969 to 1982 and regarded by Israel and others as a "terrorist organisation". Its aim was to abolition of the state of Israel. The invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli army forced the PLO to move its headquarters to Tunisia where (distant from Palestine) it had to remain for eleven years.

### **WIKIPEDIA**

**Quote §18:** Founded in 1964, it initially sought to establish an Arab state over the entire territory of the former Mandatory Palestine, advocating the elimination of Israel. Mediated talks between the Israeli government and the PLO in 1993 (the Oslo I Accord) resulted in the PLO recognizing Israel's legitimacy and accepting United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which mandated Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories, while Israel recognized the PLO as a legitimate authority representing the Palestinian people. (Source: Wikipedia: Palestine Liberation Organisation)

**FAYEZ A SAYEGH**

**Quote §19:** The people of Palestine, notwithstanding all its travails and misfortunes, still has undiminished faith in its future. And the people of Palestine knows that the pathway to that future is the liberation of its homeland.

It was in this belief that the Palestinian people - after sixteen years of dispersion and exile, during which it had reposed its faith in its return to its country in world conscience and international public opinion, in the United Nations, and/or in the Arab states - chose at last to seize the initiative. In 1964, it reasserted its corporate personality by creating the Palestine Liberation Organization. Only in the liberation of Palestine, spearheaded by Palestinians prepared to pay the price, can the supreme sacrifices of past generations of Palestinians be vindicated and the visions and hopes of living Palestinians be transformed into reality. (Source: Fayez A Sayegh (1965): Zionist Colonialism in Palestine)

**(13) 1967: 5 to 10 June 1967: The Six-Day War**

KB: Israel occupied the Golan Heights belonging to Syria, the West Bank of the River Jordan (belonging to the Kingdom of Jordan) and the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula belonging to Egypt. The Sinai Peninsula was later returned to Egypt.

Israel started building illegal Jewish settlements in occupied Gaza and on the West Bank and systematically expanding them over the years, while harassing and trying to drive away the Arabs.

**WIKIPEDIA**

**Quote §20:** "The displacement of civilian populations as a result of the Six-Day War would have long-term consequences, as around 280,000 to 325,000 Palestinians and 100,000 Syrians fled or were expelled from the West Bank and the Golan Heights, respectively." (Wikipedia: Six-Day War)

## 1993: Oslo Accords

### (14) 1993: 13 September 1993 Oslo Accords signed

KB: The Oslo Accords are so famous (or infamous) and so often positively referred to, that I am presenting assessments here in greater detail than for the other bullet points.

#### The structure is as follows:

##### General considerations

- (a) War to eliminate the competing group
  - Destroy Gaza, expel all Arabis, kill those few who remain
- (b) A one-state solution
  - Views about the one-state solution
  - Donald Trump: Choose what both parties like
  - Netanyahu: No agreement possible
  - Avi Shlaim: One non-racist state
  - Ilan Pappé
  - Apartheid State
  - One-state, but not equal rights
  - Obstacles to one-state solution
  - Shimon Peres: Tragic dilemma: stay Jewish or stay democratic

##### (c) The two-state solution

##### Oslo at first glance

- Wikipedia
- Oslo Accord established
- Handshake but no hug
- Amnesty International
- The big surprise
- Netanyahu
- The whole world approves: Extreme rabbits and Hamas object
- Edward Said's critique
- Oslo a disaster: Praise for Edward Said
- Autonomy as in a POW camp (Noam Chomsky)
- Trojan horse (Thomas Suárez)

##### General criticism of Oslo

- Oslo result in a nutshell
- Palestinians hope Oslo will lead to two-state solution
- Fatah has to suppress Palestinian anti-Israel activities
- Locations of Palestinian self-rule limited: Gaza, Jericho
- Was Arafat sincere?
- Carter squeezed Israel
- Obama's friendship with Palestinian activists
- Palestinian Authority in Ramallah is a sham
- Oslo: Arafat gives all: Rabin gives nothing

Israeli intellectuals: "Peace Now" movement: Oslo ignores the Nakba

Oslo ignores the Palestinians living in "Israel"

Incompetence of Palestinian negotiators in Oslo: Hamas rejects Oslo

Incompetence of Palestinian negotiators

Palestinian negotiators ill prepared

Hard opposition to Oslo

Hamas objects

Hamas rejects the Oslo Accords

Hamas opposition to Oslo justified

Why Hamas opposes Oslo

Failure of Oslo = Armed struggle has to continue (Hamas)

Israeli fundamentalists object to Oslo

Israeli opposition to Oslo Co-existence

Israeli Right-wing extremists oppose Oslo Accords and assassinate Yitzhak Rabin

Netanyahu's view of Oslo and his condemnation of the Palestinians

Conservative "right-wing" rabbis oppose Oslo

Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

Israelis undermine the intentions of Oslo and increase their oppression

Settlements

More settlements

Israel undermines Oslo intentions: West Bank = 165 islands of limited self-government

Oslo's journey into irrelevance

Initial enthusiasm turns into profound disappointment

Oslo collapses

PLO shrunk after Oslo and creation of PNA

Arafat loses his reputation

Oslo process destroys confidence

Improved relations with neighbouring states

Shimon Peres - An Israeli perspective: disappointment

## **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **(a) War to eliminate the competing group**

KB: War to eliminate the competing group. This has been the status-quo prior to the Oslo Accords.

The Palestinians try to expel the Israeli invaders (would-be colonists) from their territory. But the invaders, supported by their western backers (now the USA), are so strong that this is difficult to achieve.

The Zionist invaders try to remove the rightful inhabitants of Palestine, the Arabs, from their native land by killing them or driving them out. They have been successful in-as-far as huge numbers of Palestinians have been killed or now live as refugees in other countries, but several millions of Arabs still live in the land which the racist Zionists want exclusively for Jews. As one Israeli journalist laments:

### **DESTROY GAZA, EXPEL ALL ARABS, KILL THOSE FEW WHO REMAIN**

**Quote §21:** At the end, we will do it [remove every Arab from the Palestinian territory]. What alternative is left? What did we not try? We besieged, barred and blockaded, starved and darkened – this is it, we have reached the end of the scale. We ran out of ideas and they are still there. We won, but what kind of victory is this? A victory is not a "regularisation." A victory is not real if there are no heads rolling on sidewalks, no blood in the streets. Therefore, Gaza needs destroying, leaving not a single stone, expelling, then killing anyone left. (my emphasis) Source: Koby Niv, "From Talk to Action. From Regularisation to Extermination," Haaretz, November 28, 2018 (Hebrew). (Source: Haim Bresheeth-Zabner (2020): An Army Like No Other – How the Israel Defense Force Made a Nation)

### **(b) A one-state solution**

KB: A one-state solution: A single state in which Arabs and Jews peacefully live together with equal rights. This would not satisfy the extreme Zionists because they, from Herzl (1896) onwards, want a racist state exclusively for Jews on Palestinian land.

## **VIEWS ABOUT THE ONE-STATE SOLUTION**

### **DONALD TRUMP: CHOOSE WHAT BOTH PARTIES LIKE**

**Quote §22:** After his election, Trump had called a peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians "the ultimate deal" and said that "as a deal maker," he wanted to seal "the deal that can't be made. And do it for humanity's sake." But it quickly became clear that he had no

idea how to go about doing it. On February 15, 2017, Netanyahu arrived in Washington for his first White House meeting with a Republican president. At their joint press conference, Trump was asked for his opinion on the two-state solution. Abandoning nearly two decades of American foreign policy, Trump answered, "I'm looking at two-state and at one-state and I like the one that both parties like." (Source: Anshel Pfeffer (2018): Bibi: The Turbulent Life and Times of Benjamin Netanyahu)

Netanyahu in conversation with President Trump, during Trump's first term in office:

**NETANYAHU:  
NO AGREEMENT POSSIBLE**

**Quote §23:** PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I read yesterday that an American official said that if you ask five people what two states would look like, you'd get eight different answers. Mr. President, if you ask five Israelis, you'd get twelve different answers. (Laughter) (Source: Benjamin Netanyahu (2022): Bibi: My Story)

**AVI SHLAIM: ONE NON-RACIST STATE**

**Quote §24:** The outcome I have come to favour is one democratic state between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea with equal rights for all its citizens regardless of ethnicity or religion. This is the democratic one-state solution. Initially, the one-state idea appealed only to a small group of intellectuals; gradually, however, it gained a growing number of adherents on the Palestinian side. As hopes of independence faded, the emphasis shifted to the quest for equal rights under Israeli-Palestinian rule. On the Israeli side, support for the one-state idea is still confined to a tiny left-wing fringe. If forced to choose between keeping Israel as Jewish state or a democratic state, the majority of Israelis would opt for the former. Such an outcome would be a tragedy for all concerned. My preference is to replace the politics of separation and supremacy with the politics of solidarity and equality for all. (Source: Avi Shlaim (2023): Three Worlds: Memoirs of an Arab-Jew)

**ILAN PAPPÉ**

**Quote §25:** The chronology of key events between February 1947 and May 1948 is worth recapping at this point. ... First, in February 1947, the decision was made by the British Cabinet to pull out of Mandatory Palestine and leave it to the UN to solve the question of its future. The UN took nine months to deliberate the issue, and then adopted the idea of partitioning the country. This was accepted by the Zionist leadership who, after all, championed partition, but was rejected by the Arab world and the Palestinian leadership, who instead suggested keeping Palestine a unitary state and who wanted to solve the situation through a much longer process of negotiation. The Partition Resolution was adopted on 29 November 1947, and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began in early December 1947 ... (Source: Ilan Pappé (2006): The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine)



### APARTHEID STATE

**Quote §26:** Much of Palestinian agony is not about reducing unemployment a few percentage points or raising GDP growth. Instead, the questions are existential. As it becomes clear that a two-state solution is not possible, a new discourse on a one-state solution is now emerging, but most Palestinian political forces do not support it yet. The framing of Israel as an apartheid state by Amnesty International focused the attention on the nature of the Israeli state rather than on geographical arrangements. (Source: Ilan Pappé (2023): The Middle East and South Asia)

### ONE-STATE, BUT NOT EQUAL RIGHTS

**Quote §27:** For two decades, the notion that peace may come in the near future has excused taking little more than minimal and inadequate steps to lessen the hardships imposed by occupation today. Had Israel and the United States demanded that a peace treaty precede a withdrawal from Gaza or southern Lebanon, the IDF might still be in both places. In point of fact, the United States' earnest and patient search for peace serves to entrench a one-state reality: Israeli Arabs deepen their ties to Palestinians in the West Bank; settlements spread; outposts are legalized; and annexationist Israelis grow in power. New roads and parks cut through Arab East Jerusalem and make any reasonable division of the city untenable. Palestinian residents of an intended future capital are surrounded by settlements, threatened with the loss of their residency, or compelled to move to the other side of the separation wall. All the while, a series of fruitless negotiations helps to discredit the two-state model and confirm the depth of the chasm between the two sides. (Source: Nathan Thrall (2017): The Only Language They Understand: Forcing Compromise in Israel and Palestine)

### OBSTACLES TO ONE-STATE SOLUTION

**Quote §28:** Meanwhile, the prospect of a just one-state solution, increasingly being discussed in some quarters, appears even more distant, given the attachment of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to having a state of their own, and the difficulties of bringing these antagonists not just to make peace but to live together within the same polity. (Source: Rashid Khalidi (1997): Palestinian Identity)

### SHIMON PERES: TRAGIC DILEMMA STAY JEWISH OR STAY DEMOCRATIC

**Quote §29:** The future of the Zionist project depends on our embrace of the two-state solution. The danger, if Israel abandons this goal, is that the Palestinians will eventually accept a one-state solution. Because of demographics, this will leave us with a choice: stay Jewish or stay democratic. But it really isn't a choice at all. To lose our Jewish majority is to lose our Jewish character. To give up on democracy is to abandon our Jewish values. (Source: Shimon Peres (2017): No Room for Small Dreams)

### SEE ALSO

**Quote §30:** See also: Rashid Khalidi (2006): "The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood". Its detailed discussions are too complex to summarise here.

### (c) The two-state solution

KB: The two-state solution: Divide the territory of Palestine between the two groups: one state for the Arabs, one state for the Jews, as envisaged by the 1947 United Nations partition plan.

The Oslo accords were an attempt to end the hostilities between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Palestinians were represented by Yasser Arafat and the Israelis by their Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. When previously it had been the objective of each side to exterminate the other, in Oslo they agreed that **both had a right to exist** and that they would negotiate on how to live together. The Palestinians, and the world, generally hoped that a two-state solution would result. Meanwhile the Israelis agreed to grant the Palestinians limited self-rule in the occupied territories and to do nothing that might future creation of a Palestinian state.

The negotiations were conducted in secret because objections were expected from many sides, and when the agreement was made public many important people were taken by surprise.

#### OSLO AT FIRST GLANCE

##### WIKIPEDIA

**Quote §31:** In the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995, sponsored by Norway and the USA, Yasser Arafat agreed to recognise Israel and to **negotiate a two-state solution**. Israel recognised the PLO as the Palestinian National Authority, which was given limited self-governance in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Wikipedia).

#### OSLO ACCORD ESTABLISHED

**Quote §32:** About that time, Israel and Yasser Arafat entered into secret negotiations, which resulted in the 1993 Oslo Accords. On September 9, Arafat wrote a letter to Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in which he officially recognized "the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security" and renounced "the use of terrorism and other acts of violence." Rabin then formally recognized the PLO as "the representative of the Palestinian people," and President Bill Clinton lifted the ban on American contact with the organization. On September 13, the world stared in amazement at a **photograph of Arafat and Rabin shaking hands at the White House**. A poll at that time showed that the vast majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza supported the terms of the Accords, also known as the Declaration of Principles (DOP).

/.../

During the Gulf War, Yasser Arafat had supported Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which alienated him from both the United States and the Arab states that supported the American-led coalition. Because of that, those states then started shifting their financial support from the PLO to Hamas.

Following the success of the Oslo Accords, however, Arafat was on top again. And the next year, he shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Israeli

prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Israeli minister of foreign affairs Shimon Peres.

The Oslo Accords required Arafat to establish the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. So on July 1, 1994, he approached Egypt's Rafah border, crossed into Gaza, and settled in. (Source: Mosab Hassan Yousef (2010): Son of Hamas: A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices)

### HANDSHAKE BUT NO HUG

**Quote §33:** There are also photos that Netanyahu would like to forget. For example, pictures showing him chumming up to Arafat. Netanyahu wasn't the first Prime Minister to flinch at having his photograph taken with Arafat. A moment before signing the Oslo Accords on the White House lawn, Yitzhak Rabin was seized with panic. He had agreed to a handshake, but with the condition: **No hug**. President Clinton promised to honor this compromise, and later on he recounted how he stood between Rabin and Arafat, applauding, but ready to step forward in an instant to serve as a physical barrier if necessary and prevent any attempt on Arafat's part to draw close to Rabin. (Source: Kave Shafraan: Master of Influence: Benjamin Netanyahu's 10 Secrets of Power, Rhetoric and Charisma)

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

**Quote §34:** After a five-year-long popular uprising against Israel's occupation that started in Gaza in 1993, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel signed agreements known as the Oslo Accords. These agreements granted Palestinians in the OPT [Occupied Palestinian Territory] limited self-governance but did not alter the status of the OPT as an occupied territory under international law. Instead, they transferred limited responsibility over some Palestinian civil affairs in urban centres from Israel to the newly created Palestinian Authority and recognized Israel's overall control over the territory and security matters. They also entrenched the OPT's economic dependence on Israel by establishing a customs union that ties it to Israeli trade policies and allows Israel to impose its own currency. (Source: Amnesty International (2024): Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza)

### THE BIG SURPRISE

#### NETANYAHU

**Quote §35:** Netanyahu was as surprised as anyone. None of his contacts in Jerusalem or Washington had informed him that such a breathtaking reversal of Israeli policy was in the offing. He lost little time **lambasting the Oslo Agreement**. "Israel faces an unprecedented threat to its security. The government is allowing the PLO to carry out its plan to destroy Israel," he declared in the Knesset. But the leader of the opposition was, for now, an irrelevant figure on the margins. ... The world's eyes were on Rabin on September 10 as he signed the letter recognizing the PLO. Three days later, the first Oslo Agreement was signed on the White House Lawn, a beaming President Bill Clinton urging a reluctant Rabin to awkwardly shake Arafat's hand. (Source: Anshel Pfeffer (2018): Bibi: The Turbulent Life and Times of Benjamin Netanyahu)

**THE WHOLE WORLD APPROVES:  
EXTREME RABBIS AND HAMAS OBJECT**

**Quote §36:** And then, from out of nowhere, came the Oslo Accords, a barely conceivable historic peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. The interim agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization was reached after secret negotiations in the Norwegian capital.

When the news of the agreement broke, Bibi was on a fund-raising tour in Europe. He dropped everything and flew home. Eyal Arad met him at the airport. Both men looked shaken and pale. Their grand strategic plan had crumbled and become irrelevant. They stopped for urgent preliminary consultations at a gas station behind the airport, and their first decision was to halt the campaign, parts of which had already hit billboards across the country. Under the new circumstances their slogan, "Elections Now," could be catastrophic. Rabin would eat Bibi for breakfast. With the momentum moved to the Labor Party they knew they'd need to go underground. They needed to lower their profile.

The news occasioned euphoria in Israel; the whole world reacting with approval. Rabin, Peres, and Yasser Arafat became heroes. Everyone was hugging everyone else, shaking hands and fantasizing about a peaceful and flourishing new Middle East. Israelis were picturing themselves eating hummus in Mecca and swimming along the Mediterranean coast to Lebanon. The stock exchange hit a new high; foreign investors began to storm Israel's economy; things looked rosy. The media decided to go with the flow. For people on the right, especially Bibi [Netanyahu], it was hard to get a word in edgewise. Netanyahu's people fell into the political equivalent of a deep depression. "It's all over," they told him. "We won't be returning to power for decades."

Bibi said nothing. He didn't agree with this prognosis. For him, nothing was ever lost.

/.../

During those days of Oslo euphoria, Bibi was not swayed by public opinion, and did not agree with the opinions of his advisors. When they were poring over maps and trying to figure out different territory scenarios, Netanyahu told them it was not the way he would be elected next prime minister. "It is against my concepts and my conscience," he added. He completely ruled out pathetic pleas for an alternative Likud plan in response to the Oslo Accords. He told the parable of the diver that he first heard in Sayeret Matkal. When the sea is stormy, the wisest thing to do is dive under the water. That's where it is quiet and peaceful. We'll take a dive and prepare Likud's response and present it when the moment is ripe, he said.

And that moment will come, added Bibi: "I have no doubt the Oslo Accords will collapse; this peace won't last. And then, we'll resurface and show ourselves at the right moment."

/.../

But the worst was still to come: the "This Is Our Country" Zionist Camp movement, which organized many anti-Oslo activities, flooding the nation with demonstrations. The ideological cover for all this activity was supplied by extreme rabbies, mostly from the West Bank, who issued various halachic rulings that demanded the masses defend the Land of Israel. At one point, nine extremist rabbies issued a din rodef, which in halachic terms sentenced Yitzhak Rabin to death. ... dozens of his supporters from standing outside the prime minister's home in Tel Aviv every Friday afternoon, chanting,

"Rabin is a traitor,  
Rabin is a murderer,  
with blood and fire,  
Rabin shall expire!"

With the vote on Oslo B approaching, he led an infamous demonstration in Jerusalem's Zion Square where huge simulated photographs of Rabin in an SS Nazi uniform were raised high. Crazy demonstrators set fire to Rabin's picture. It was reminiscent of anti-Israel demonstrations in Teheran. Bibi stood there on the balcony, at the head of the right-wing camp. The saner, more pragmatic right-wing leaders had stayed away from the event. Dan Meridor was not there; nor were Roni Milo, Benny Begin, or David Levy. Others, such as Reuven "Ruvi" Rivlin, saw where things were leading and left the balcony. Not **Bibi. He stayed to the very end.** He watched hundreds of children screaming "death to Rabin," and said nothing.

One month later, Rabin would be murdered in the center of Tel Aviv, by a yarmulke-wearing extreme right-winger from Herzliya, deeply influenced by extremist rabbis. (Source: Ben Caspit - The Netanyahu Years)

KB: Edward Said was among the first to provide an incisive critique of the agreement: that Arafat had been cheated. He had yielded a lot to the Israelis but received virtually in return. Some people called it a Trojan horse.

#### EDWARD SAID'S CRITIQUE

**Quote §37:** When the initial Declaration was signed in 1993 there were just 32,750 Jewish housing units in settlements on the West Bank and in Gaza. By October 2001 there were 53,121—a 62 percent increase, with more to come. From 1992 to 1996, under the Labor governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, the settler population of the West Bank grew by 48 percent, that of Gaza by 61 percent. To put it no stronger, this steady Israeli takeover of Palestinian land and resources hardly conformed to the spirit of the Oslo Declaration, whose Article 31 (Clause 7) explicitly states that "Neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations." /.../

When this important commentator happened in late October to find himself trapped in Ramallah, besieged and bombed by the Israeli army, he suddenly woke up for the first time, in more than seven years of columns praising the Oslo peace process, to the fact that "Israeli propaganda that the Palestinians mostly rule themselves in the West Bank is fatuous nonsense. Sure, the Palestinians control their own towns, but the Israelis control all the roads connecting these towns and therefore all their movements. Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land for more settlements is going on to this day—seven years into Oslo." /.../

UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which stipulate unequivocally that land acquired by Israel through the war of 1967 must be given back in return for peace. The Oslo peace process began by trampling all over those resolutions, practically consigning them to the rubbish bin. /.../

Lead, Mr. Arafat, lead your people, and if you can't or don't want to, please say so truthfully. But what you have been doing since Oslo began has been to mislead, to dodge, to make secret deals that have profited a few of the many corrupt politicians who surround you but have made our general situation worse, much worse. The Al-Aqsa Intifada is an intifada against Oslo and against the people who constructed it, not only Dennis

Ross and Ehud Barak but a small irresponsible coterie of Palestinian officials. /.../

Our first duty as Palestinians is to close this Oslo chapter as expeditiously as possible and return to our main task, which is to provide ourselves with a strategy of liberation that is clear in its goals and well defined in its practice. For this we must at some point have the partnership of like-minded Israelis and diaspora Jews who understand that you cannot have occupation and dispossession as well as peace with the Palestinian people. South African apartheid was defeated only because blacks as well as whites fought it. /.../

The other principles are fairly straightforward. Self-determination for both peoples. Equal rights for both. No occupation, no discrimination, no settlements. Everyone is included. Whatever negotiations are entered into must be on that basis, which must clearly be stated at the outset, and not left unsaid or implied as they were in the U.S.-sponsored Oslo process. The UN has to be the framework. /.../

One of the gravest flaws in Oslo was for the PLO leadership (i.e., Yasir Arafat) to have ignored what Israel had done as an occupying force, and even to have ignored the fact of occupation itself; one can't make a deal with occupation, which is like cancer in that it continues to expand, unless it is identified, surrounded, and then attacked. /.../

What puzzles me is that even after eight years of deception and betrayal, the official Palestinian mind finds itself incapable of saying what a disaster Oslo was and instead wants it brought back. That's like asking the executioner if he wouldn't mind sharpening his axe a little before having another go. /.../

Since 1967 leaders have been jailed and deported by the Israeli occupation regime, small businesses and farms made unviable by confiscation and sheer destruction, students prevented from studying, universities closed. (In the mid-1980s Palestinian universities on the West Bank were closed for four years.) No Palestinian farmer or business can export to any Arab country directly; their products must pass through Israel. Taxes are paid to Israel. Even after the Oslo peace process began in 1993, the occupation was simply repackaged, only 18 percent of the land given to the corrupt Vichy-like Authority of Yasir Arafat, whose mandate seems to have been only to police and tax his people for Israel's sake. After eight fruitless immiserating years of the Oslo negotiations, masterminded by an American team of former Israeli lobby staffers like Martin Indyk and Dennis Ross, Israel was still in control, the occupation packaged more efficiently, and the phrase "peace process" given a consecrated halo that allowed more abuses, more settlements, more imprisonments, more Palestinian suffering to go on than before. (Source: Edward Said (2005): From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map (Essays))

#### **OSLO A DISASTER: PRAISE FOR EDWARD SAID**

**Quote §38:** The intifada delivered a deep shock to Israeli society, waking it from a daydream about the "success of the liberal occupation," as it was considered by both the left and the right. With the pretence of liberal occupation shattered, new methods of control and oppression were required and quickly developed. The great cost of such methods, both financially and socially, pushed Israel into the Oslo process, which provided a solution that would be safer for IDF personnel and attract less international animosity toward Israel and its occupation. Outsourcing security in the OPT to the PLO/Palestinian Authority was an ingenious solution: the cost of the system would be borne by the European Union and the United States, freeing Israel to further reinforce the settlement grid.

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Ever since 1979, things seemed to be going Israel's way: the Begin-Sadat peace treaty, the destruction of the Iraqi reactor in 1981, the expulsion of the PLO in 1982, control of South Lebanon, the defeat of the first intifada, not to mention the signing of the Oslo accord without granting the Palestinians a single concession. The occupation running costs were now covered by the European Union and the United States.

/../

After the rigmarole and fanfare of the Oslo Accords and the US ceremonies were over, with excitement around the world rising as the "most intractable conflict" was about to be resolved, the veteran Palestinian academic and activist, Edward Said, world famous for his work on orientalism and cultural imperialism, had been the first to properly examine and analyze the accords from a Palestinian perspective. In a London Review of Books article he proved to be the most far-sighted of all commentators on the peace accords, exposing them for what they were:

--- inner quote starts ---

First of all let us call the agreement by its real name: an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles. What makes it worse is that for at least the past fifteen years the PLO could have negotiated a better arrangement than this modified Allon Plan, one not requiring so many unilateral concessions to Israel. For reasons best known to the leadership it refused all previous overtures.

--- inner quote ends ---

Reading Said today is a stirring experience. His insight and clear thinking are astounding, in the face of the prevailing nonsensical commentary at the time and since. Said refused to join the choir of those who shunned reality and praised Oslo without confronting it as the disaster it was:

--- inner quote starts ---

In order to advance towards Palestinian self-determination—which has a meaning only if freedom, sovereignty and equality, rather than perpetual subservience to Israel, are its goal—we need an honest acknowledgment of where we are, now that the interim agreement is about to be negotiated. What is particularly mystifying is how so many Palestinian leaders and their intellectuals can persist in speaking of the agreement as a "victory." Nabil Shaath has called it one of "complete parity" between Israelis and Palestinians. The fact is that Israel has conceded nothing, as former Secretary of State James Baker said in a TV interview, except, blandly, the existence of "the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people." Or as the Israeli "dove" Amos Oz reportedly put it in the course of a BBC interview, "this is the second biggest victory in the history of Zionism."

--- inner quote ends ---

Such stark truths are denied by some even today; that Said was clear about them at the time and was considered a traitor to the Palestinian cause by many for pointing it out, is indeed tragic. (Source: Haim Bresheeth-Zabner: An Army Like No Other: How the Israel Defense Force Made a Nation)

### AUTONOMY AS IN A POW CAMP (NOAM CHOMSKY)

**Quote §39:** The status of the Palestinians has been even lower than that of other worthless people; their value is not zero, but negative, in that their plight has had a disruptive effect in the Arab world, thus interfering with U.S. goals. They must therefore be marginalized somehow, perhaps under a form of "autonomy" that leaves them to manage their own affairs under Israeli supervision. ... one of Israel's most knowledgeable and acute observers of the territories, journalist Danny Rubinstein, wrote that the U.S. and Israel were proposing "autonomy as in a POW camp, where the prisoners are 'autonomous' to cook their meals without interference and to organize cultural events."

Palestinians are to be granted little more than control over local services, he wrote, adding that even advocates of Greater Israel never call for literal annexation of the territories, which would require Israel to provide the "restricted services" available to Israel's second-class Arab citizens, at enormous cost. (Source: Noam Chomsky (1999): *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*)

### TROJAN HORSE (THOMAS SUÁREZ)

**Quote §40:** The settler state's crowning achievement was the Trojan horse known as the Oslo Accords, which effectively gave official sanction to everything it had imposed by force. ... With well over ten thousand Palestinians killed by Israel since the Oslo Accords, the US media religiously confine the discourse to two options: Most pundits, and the US Congress, offer unqualified support for Israeli attacks, while dissenting commentators suggest that Israel's actions might have been 'disproportionate' – justified, yes, but perhaps a bit too much 'defence'. The spectrum of permissible debate lies entirely in the realm of narrative; what is actually happening remains unspoken. 'Self-defence' is never questioned: Israel invokes it to block the rebuilding of the homes it bombs and the sewage plants it destroys, to keep out the doctors who care for its victims, to stifle access to food and potable water (95% of which in Gaza is now undrinkable), and above all to squash any form of Palestinian self-sufficiency or achievement. (Source: Thomas Suárez – *State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel* (2016))

### GENERAL CRITICISM OF OSLO

#### OSLO RESULT IN A NUTSHELL

**Quote §41:** The First Intifada resulted in the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, which received European and American support and therefore helped decrease the Israeli cost of the occupation but did nothing to slow colonization. Indeed, since the signing of the accords in 1993, the settler population has increased almost threefold. /.../

It should be noted that in the Oslo Accords, in exchange for the Palestinian delegation's agreement to disavow terrorism and violence, Israel did not agree to stop settlement. In a speech to the Knesset on October 6, 1995, Rabin laid out the principles guiding him in the process: the unity of Jerusalem (including Ma'ale Adumim); a Palestinian entity that would be less than a state; no return to the pre-1967 borders; and a security border that would run through the Jordan Valley. (Source: Shlomo Sand (2012): *The Invention of the Land of Israel: From Holy Land to Homeland*)



Summary of what Rabin will not do  
(i.e. what the Palestinians will not get

- the unity of Jerusalem: Palestinians will not get East Jerusalem as their capital
- a Palestinian entity that would be less than a state: Palestinians will not get full statehood
- no return to the pre-1967 borders: Arabs will not get the land back which Israel conquered in 1967
- and a security border that would run through the Jordan Valley: (implications for the West Bank = ???).

#### PALESTINIANS HOPE OSLO WILL LEAD TO TWO-STATE SOLUTION

- **Quote §42:** The two-state solution enjoyed and continues to enjoy broad international support. By signing the Oslo Accord in 1993, the PLO explicitly accepted this solution. Its leaders hoped that in return for giving up their claim to 78 per cent of mandatory Palestine, they would get a small independent state alongside Israel. But it was not to be. Israel used the Oslo Accord not to end but to repackage the occupation. At no time since Oslo has Israel stopped expanding its settlements on the West Bank. (Source: Avi Shlaim (2023): Three Worlds - Memoirs of an Arab-Jew)

#### FATAH HAS TO SUPPRESS PALESTINIAN ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVITIES

- **Quote §43:** The logic of the Oslo agreements, in addition to separation, was to continue the strategic control over the territory but to grant the Palestinians the political, economic, and symbolic satisfactions of having a state and exchanging the policing over them by the Jewish military with policing by their own Fatah militias. (Source: Baruch Kimmerling (2008): Clash of Identities: Explorations in Israeli and Palestinian Societies)

#### LOCATIONS OF PALESTINIAN SELF-RULE LIMITED: GAZA, JERICHO ...

- **Quote §44:** The first phase of Oslo allowed conditional Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and gradually in cities and towns in the West Bank, beginning with sleepy Jericho in the Jordan Valley. Arafat made a triumphant return from exile to preside over a new headquarters in Gaza. /.../ Palestinians in militant Islamist movements set about trying to wreck the Oslo Process by sending suicide bombers to kill Israeli civilians. /.../ Rabin's decision to back the Oslo agreement had made him a target for fierce political attacks from right-wingers who believed he was giving away not just their security, but their birthright as Jews. He faced daily abuse and accusations of treachery, and was portrayed on posters in Nazi uniform. /.../ When the Oslo peace process was inaugurated in the 1990s, Gaza was the first place that was turned over to Palestinian self-rule, along with Jericho in the Jordan Valley. /.../ Not long before the assassination of Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995, Haydar 'Abd al-Shafi declared that Oslo had already failed, due to Israeli violations: 'By now it is obvious that Israel is determined to maintain its presence, its control over the territories, the settlements. In fact, what has gone unnoticed is that Israel has never given up its claim to the occupied territories in its entirety, in keeping with the Zionist programme.' /.../ The Oslo agreements deepened the rift between Fatah, Yasser Arafat's faction, and its biggest rival,

Hamas, whose name is an acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement. /.../ Netanyahu had sworn to reverse the Oslo accords; /.../ (Source: Jeremy Bowen (2022): The Making of the Modern Middle East: A Personal History)

### WAS ARAFAT SINCERE?

**Quote §45:** Arafat at first refused to sign the appended maps (he thought the Jericho area allotted to the PA was too small) but eventually was **persuaded by his aides and the Americans and Russians**. He remained unhappy with the Palestinian concessions and on May 11 called (in a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa) for a jihad to recover Jerusalem, comparing the accords he had signed to Muhammad's agreement of A.D. 628 with the Jewish Qurayish tribe, which had been a tactical move and which was unilaterally abrogated by the Muslims ten years later. Israeli opponents of Oslo argued that Arafat was, in effect, saying he would go back on the agreements the moment it suited him. However, Rabin and Peres, also unhappy, argued that what counted were Arafat's deeds, not his words. (Source: Benny Morris (1999): Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001)

### CARTER SQUEEZED ISRAEL

**Quote §46:** Carter squeezed Israel harder on the Palestinian issue than any American president before or since. He believed Israel would make peace only if forced to by the United States, and he saw the denial of Palestinian self-determination as immoral.

/.../

Oslo allowed Israel not to end the occupation but repackage it, from direct to indirect control. The agreement permitted Israeli forces to redeploy from populated Palestinian city centers to rural areas, where resistance was more difficult to organize and easier to contain. In the cities, the costs of Israel's rule were greatly lessened, as Palestinians took responsibility for the suppression of protests and violence.

/.../

After Prime Minister Netanyahu formed a government in June 1996, he initially refused to honor the commitments of past governments to large parts of the Oslo agreements. This changed abruptly in late September, when he made a **catastrophic decision** that would lead to Palestinian violence and Israeli concessions to quell the unrest.

That month, Israel blasted open an exit to a Jerusalem archaeological tunnel that ran alongside the edge of the holy site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary or al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Palestinians had opposed opening the tunnel for ten years. The new exit was in the heart of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, in territory Israel had occupied since 1967. Netanyahu claimed the tunnel had been opened merely to ease the flow of visitors to the site, but he later admitted that the act "expresses our sovereignty over Jerusalem." Several days of riots and bloody clashes ensued, leaving fifteen Israeli soldiers and some eighty Palestinians dead. It was the worst violence since the height of the intifada, perhaps since the occupation began. Palestinians referred to it as the **"tunnel uprising."**

/.../

The objection of these critics, many of them leading advocates of accommodation with Israel, was not that Oslo restricted the Palestinians to only 22 percent of their homeland. It was that the deal had not

provided even that. By failing to obtain Israeli agreement just to the mere possibility of eventually establishing a Palestinian state, the PLO had consented to what risked becoming indefinite occupation.

/.../

On the other hand, Oslo's proponents argued, what had the Palestinians really conceded? The PLO had already accepted a state on 22 percent of the homeland in 1988, and by the time of Oslo the organization was a spent force, with little ability to procure better terms. By signing Oslo, the PLO acquired, for the first time, recognition from Israel and the large boost in international legitimacy that went with it; return from exile; and, in the eyes of Arafat, at least the prospect of a Palestinian state. It also gave the PLO a government based in part of its homeland, the transfer of authority from Israel's military to the Palestinians, limited Israeli withdrawals, and a major step toward partitioning Mandatory Palestine, all without renouncing the claim to a sovereign state. Though this was less than full independence, it was more than Israel had previously been willing to give. Critics maligned the modest gains of Oslo, but there was little reason to believe that refusal of it would have brought full independence within grasp.

/.../

More important than what **Oslo** modified was what both it and the Camp David Accords left out. Neither one offered any guarantee that the interim period would finish after five years; neither demanded a removal of settlements nor even a halt in their expansion; neither stated that Palestinians would have a capital in any part of Jerusalem; neither suggested how the refugee problem would be resolved; neither described what Israel's borders would be or whether there would be a withdrawal to something close to the pre-1967 lines; neither indicated that the Palestinians would eventually achieve self-determination; and, most critically, neither specified what would happen if negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza did not successfully conclude.

/.../

### **OBAMA'S FRIENDSHIP WITH PALESTINIAN ACTIVISTS**

In a 2003 toast to Rashid Khalidi, the Palestinian American historian of the University of Chicago and later Columbia University, Obama reminisced about meals prepared by Khalidi's wife, Mona, and the many talks that had been "consistent reminders to me of my own blind spots and my own biases." He had dined with and attended lectures by such figures as Edward Said, the most famous and eloquent Palestinian critic of the Oslo Accords, and he had offered words of encouragement to Ali Abunimah, the Palestinian American activist, writer, cofounder of the Electronic Intifada, and leading advocate of a one-state solution.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Palestinians looked to Obama as a potentially historic figure capable of ending their occupation. For the first time, they had the prospect of an American president who was not only sympathetic to their plight and motivated to resolve it but could connect to it viscerally. (Source: Nathan Thrall (2017): The Only Language They Understand: Forcing Compromise in Israel and Palestine)

### **PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY IN RAMALLAH IS A SHAM**

**Quote §47:** The situation is made much worse by the delusions fostered by the fiction of the PA established by the Oslo accords. This is in effect a virtual body that does not have sovereignty, jurisdiction, or ultimate control. In other words, it is an authority that has no real authority over anything—certainly not over the territories it claims in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Only within the artificial bubble

of the PA "capital" of Ramallah can the PA be said to have any semblance of reality. Ramallah is largely shielded from the worst depredations of the occupation and is gorged with money pouring in from foreign governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). Everywhere else the brutal reality of the strengthening of the occupation and unceasing land seizure and alienation, and the near impotence of the PA, are undeniable. The PA has become a sort of subcontractor for Israel and has thus served in part to mask the reality of an Israeli military occupation whose full security control over all these territories, and total domination over land and all other resources, is now in its forty-second year. (Source: Rashid Khalidi (1997): Palestinian Identity)

### OSLO: ARAFAT GIVES ALL: RABIN GIVES NOTHING

**Quote §48:** On September 9, 1993, Yasser Arafat met one of Israel's longest-standing demands. In a letter to then-Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, the PLO chairman wrote, "The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security." Rabin responded the same day with a single sentence informing Arafat that, in light of his letter, "the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process."

This exchange of letters was hardly reciprocal. Arafat had recognized Israel's "right to exist," promised to amend founding PLO documents, "renounce[d] the use of terrorism and other acts of violence," and pledged to "discipline violators." Rabin, by contrast, offered no recognition of any Palestinian rights whatsoever, only that Israel would talk to the PLO. Four days later, the two men signed the Oslo Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn.

Arafat, once Israel's nemesis, had granted legitimacy and a right to exist to the state that had expelled his people from their homeland and refused to allow them to return. He thereby transformed the Palestine Liberation Organization into a subcontractor and enforcer for the occupying power from which Palestinians were seeking liberation. But Israel was dissatisfied with its gains and began to set the bar even higher with the demand that Palestinians recognize it as an explicitly "Jewish state," meaning, in practice, a state with an overwhelming Jewish majority in which Jews could always monopolize political power. Arafat obliged, effectively conceding this demand in a New York Times op-ed in 2002: "We understand Israel's demographic concerns and understand that the right of return of Palestinian refugees, a right guaranteed under international law and United Nations Resolution 194, must be implemented in a way that takes into account such concerns." In other words, Arafat was all too ready to subordinate Palestinian refugee rights to Israel's demand for Jewish supremacy. (Source: Ali Abunimah: The Battle for Justice in Palestine)

### ISRAELI INTELLECTUALS: "PEACE NOW" MOVEMENT: OSLO IGNORES THE NAKBA

**Quote §49:** At the centre of Rabin's peace efforts stood the Oslo Accords that began rolling in September 1993. Again, the concept behind this process was a Zionist one: the Nakba was totally absent. The architects of the Oslo formula were Israeli intellectuals who, of course, belonged to Israel's 'peace camp' and who ever since 1967 had played an important role in the Israeli public scene. Institutionalised in an ex-parliamentary movement called Peace Now, they had several political parties on their side. But Peace Now has always evaded the 1948 issue and sidelined the refugee question. When they did the same in 1993, they seemed to have found a Palestinian partner in Yassir Arafat for a peace that buried 1948 and its victims. The false hopes Israel raised with

Oslo were to have dire consequences for the Palestinian people, all the more as Arafat fell into the trap Oslo set for him. (Source: Ilan Pappé: The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2006))

#### OSLO IGNORES THE PALESTINIANS LIVING IN "ISRAEL"

**Quote §50:** As always it was the writer Anton Shammas, inspired by Milan Kundera's famous novel, who found the right way of expressing the problem, talking about the 'Unbearable Lightness of the Arab Citizen in the Jewish State'. The total disregard by both Israel and the PLO of the Palestinians in Israel during the Oslo Accords process drove home strongly his encapsulation of the predicament of the Palestinians in the Jewish state.

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All these new insights and actions were crystallized when Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish terrorist in November 1995. In many ways this announced the end of the Oslo process. By the time the process died it was deemed irrelevant by the Israelis, and disastrous by many Palestinians. Instead of bringing healing to the torn country, the peace efforts led it into yet another wave of bloodshed by the end of the century. As early as 1995, most Palestinians had labelled the Oslo process as yet another form of occupation, and most Israelis felt it had failed to safeguard their personal security. (Source: Ilan Pappé: The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel (2011))

#### INCOMPETENCE OF PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATORS IN OSLO HAMAS REJECTS OSLO

KB: The incompetence of the Palestinian negotiators has been criticised. Arafat, the leader of the PLO, had been driven out of Lebanon, the location of his previous Headquarters, by the Israelis and had been living in, and working from, Tunis for years, out of touch with the situation in the occupied territories. His negotiators had been badly chosen.

**Quote §51:** It was there that the Declaration of Principles, which came to be called Oslo I, was worked out and where the details of the agreement between the two sides were tied up. The problem with the agreement was that the devil is in the details, and the personnel the PLO sent to Oslo were not strong on details. Indeed, they did not have the linguistic or legal or other expertise necessary to comprehend exactly what the Israelis were doing. After initial rounds of exploratory discussions led on the Israeli side by two academics, the Palestinians then found themselves up against a formidable and expert Israeli negotiating team including individuals with vast international legal experience such as Joel Singer (another former colonel in the Israeli military).

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The deteriorating situation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories after Oslo since the mid-1990s has been in large measure the result of the choice of envoys whose performance at Oslo was inept, and of 'Arafat and his colleagues' willingness to sign the defective agreements they drew up.

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The persistent, hazy glow of Oslo had blinded most observers, whether in Israel, the United States, or Europe, and especially within liberal Zionist circles. The myth of Oslo's beneficence continued to preclude clear-eyed analysis, even after the eruption of violence in 2000.

But to the PLO's vigorous new rival, **Hamas**, the evidence that Oslo was not what its Palestinian advocates had made it out to be was grist for its mill. Founded at the outset of the First Intifada in December 1987, Hamas had grown quickly, capitalizing on the currents of popular discontent with the PLO that had emerged for a variety of reasons. During the intifada, Hamas had insisted on maintaining a separate identity, refusing to join the Unified National Command. It promoted itself as a more militant Islamist alternative to the PLO, denouncing the abandonment of armed struggle... Only the use of force could lead to the liberation of Palestine, Hamas argued, reasserting the claim to the entirety of Palestine, not just the areas occupied by Israel in 1967. (Source: Rashid Khalidi (2020) - The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017)

### INCOMPETENCE OF PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATORS

**Quote §52:** Instead, the negotiations were now carried out in secret, mainly at Oslo, by a group of PLO officials apparently chosen primarily for their loyalty to Arafat and his colleagues in the PLO leadership, with limited knowledge of English (the language of the negotiations), no legal background, no firsthand knowledge of the situation in the occupied territories, no negotiating experience with Israelis, and no direct knowledge of how the twenty months of Madrid and Washington discussions had gone.

These weaknesses of the Palestinian negotiating team were reflected in the disappointing terms for the Palestinians of the resulting Oslo accords. These accords were the basis for the Israeli- PLO Declaration of Principles signed on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, in the presence of Yasir Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin, and President Clinton. (Source: Rashid Khalidi: Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East)

### INCOMPETENCE OF PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATORS

**Quote §53:** You can't improve a bad situation that is largely due to the technical incompetence of the PLO, which negotiated in complete secrecy and in English, a language that neither Arafat nor his emissary in Oslo know, with no legal adviser (the PLO's two main legal negotiators resigned in protest sometime earlier; Arafat and his three or four subordinates alone faced an entire corps of Israeli Foreign Ministry experts), until on the technical level at least you involve people who can think for themselves and are not mere instruments of a by-now single Palestinian authority. (Source: Edward Said (1995): The Politics of Dispossession)

### PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATORS ILL PREPARED

**Quote §54:** Where the struggle over land has been concerned there has been a net loss, as Israel through belligerent as well as pacific means has asserted its actual hold on more and more of Palestinian land. I speak here of course of sovereignty, military power, actual settlement. I contrast that with what I shall call Palestinian symptoms of response, such as the multiple rhetorical attempts to assert the existence of a Palestinian state, to bargain with Israel over conditions of Israeli

(and not Palestinian) security, and the general untidiness, sloppiness, and carelessness – absence of preparations, maps, files, facts, and figures among Palestinian negotiators in the Oslo process – that have characterized what can only be called a lack of ultimate seriousness in dealing with the real, as opposed to the rhetorical, conditions of dispossession. These, as I said earlier, multiply the distortions stemming from the original condition of loss and dispossession: rather than rectifications they offer additional dislocations and the reproduction of distortions whose widening effects extend the whole range, from war, to increasing numbers of refugees, more property abandoned and taken, more frustration, more anger, more humiliation, and so on. (Source: Eugene L Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds) (2008): The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948)

KB: One may call the above "weak criticisms" (or general criticism) of the Oslo accords: the Palestinians yielded a lot (the right fight the Israelis) but received nothing substantial in return and were still open to increased oppression by the Israelis.

But in addition there were strong objections. Right-wing Israelis felt that Rabin had given the Palestinians too much, namely the right to a continued existence (perhaps even a state of their own), that Rabin was a traitor to the Zionist cause (the whole of Palestine for a state consisting only of Jews). Militant Palestinians were aware of the weaknesses of the Oslo Accords, felt that the Israeli invaders had no right to occupy any part of Palestine and that the fight for Palestinian liberation should continue and Israel be exterminated. These two groups then favoured the "one-state solution" described above, i.e. "one state (racial)" for only one group.

Opposed to "one state (racial)" is "one state (democratic)". In "one state (democratic)" both groups live together with equal rights and in harmony. This model was, and is, inconceivable to the Zionists, who founded the state of Israel and dominate Israeli politics. It is favoured by "the Bund", who strongly disapprove of the foundation and existence of Israel. A Bundist writes:

**Quote §55:** If Israel doesn't want to be labelled an apartheid state, it can repeal the Nation State law and Law of Return, dismantle discrimination, confiscate arms from illegal settlers, make Jewish-only roads available to all. It could enact laws to ensure that Israel/Palestine is a state for all its citizens equally, whether in one state or two. (Source: David Rosenberg (2025): Jewish Self-Determination in the Diaspora. In: Jewish Socialists' Group (2025) (eds): The Jewish Workers' Bund, Past, present and Future. Downloaded from: <https://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/resources/other> (accessed February 2025))

KB: One of the objecting groups was Hamas, which later became the government of Gaza.

The other objecting group were right-wing Israeli parties, often inspired by religious notions and extremist rabies. Their intransigence is documented, and explained, in: Israel Shahak (1994 and 2008): Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years)

## HAMAS OBJECTS

### HAMAS REJECTS THE OSLO ACCORDS

**Quote §56:** The PLO adapted yet again by renouncing violence and explicitly accepting the two-state solution, believing diplomacy to be a strategy and tactic of state building. By accepting the conditions of the USA, a key superpower and international player, the PLO indeed became an official political player as the recognised governing authority in the occupied Palestinian territories. The PLO agreed to the two-state solution as a policy, which meant sharing historical Palestine with Israel. It shifted officially from a resistance movement into a governing authority whose legitimate coercive force was used to fight other resistance groups that might spoil the peace process, based on the Oslo agreement of 13 September 1993. This stage characterised the PLO's efforts of state building (Dayton and Louis Kriesberg, 2009).

This political development of the PLO was fiercely opposed by other national secular factions; by those represented within the PLO, and those not represented. It was also challenged by Hamas and by the Islamic Jihad movement. This also led to discrepancies within the national movement, and to fragmentation abroad. However, by the summer of 2000, the PLO's peaceful transition policies had been undermined by the failure of the peace process between Israel and the PLO. This led to the outbreak of the second uprising, which witnessed the powerful re-emergence of Islamic forces, and of Hamas in particular.

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I also witnessed the advent of the Palestinian Authority and its measures to crackdown on Hamas after the movement rejected the Oslo agreement, and the efforts made by the PA to hinder Hamas' progress in implementing its programmes.

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As a result of the Oslo agreement, the PLO's security apparatus and most of its political structures were moved from exile into the Gaza Strip, to lay the foundation for the Palestinian Authority in 1994. The new Palestinian political structure represented by PLO's forces and the Palestinian Authority constituted a serious threat to Hamas. Hamas tried to hinder the progress of the Oslo agreement by challenging and weakening the newly established PA at political and military levels.

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At the political level, Hamas formed an alliance with other Islamist and secular groups based in Damascus to oppose the establishment of the PA and the Oslo peace process. Hamas and its allies launched political and media campaigns in mosques, universities, and syndicates to mobilise Palestinian society against the PA and the Oslo agreement. It attempted to de-legitimise the PA and accused it of cracking down on Hamas as Israel's precondition for any further negotiations on the peace process (Kumaraswamy, 2001). According to the Oslo agreement, a central function of the PA was to maintain the rule of law and to prosecute those accused of armed attacks against Israeli targets. However, Hamas and its allies



declared that they would engage in 'open holy Jihad against the occupier until the liberation of all Palestine' (Mishael & Sele, 2000: 67).

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When Hamas refused to participate in the first legislative and presidential elections, which took place in 1996, it argued that its participation would legitimise the Oslo process and thus implicitly recognise Israel. (Source: Ibrahim Natil (2015): Hamas Transformation: Opportunities and Challenges)

### HAMAS OPPOSITION TO OSLO JUSTIFIED

**Quote §57:** These alternatives may appear unrealistic to a Western observer, including, as they do, the rejection of Israel, which Hamas inserted into its own infamous charter of 1988 that called for Israel's destruction, the suicide attacks on Israeli cities, and the launch of Qassam rockets in 2007-2008, all of which smack of total confrontation. But from a Palestinian standpoint, Hamas has provided not only these kinds of answers: from its political stances during the First Intifada at least up until the electoral victory of 2006, it also highlighted the fragility of Fatah and of the PNA, and ultimately of the PLO itself. This is particularly clear with respect to the question of peace with Israel, which was not achieved through the Oslo Accords. And indeed, far from contributing to peace, many now point at the Oslo process as having led down a dead end, legitimizing the Israeli policy of establishing "facts on the ground" regarding settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, just as it legitimized Israeli control of water resources and of the economy.

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Osama Hamdan explains that "Fatah was asking us not only to take part in the elections, but also to put an end to the resistance. We, on the other hand, argued that it was necessary for another Palestinian group to say no, that Oslo would not have worked. The Israelis had not recognized the Palestinians as a nation, but only as a people present on the land. As though we were renting an apartment." (Source: Paola Caridi: Hamas: From Resistance to Regime)

### WHY HAMAS OPPOSES OSLO

**Quote §58:** Because Hamas viewed the Oslo Accord and Cairo Agreement as existential threats, it was unwilling to abandon armed struggle against Israel (and would defend it as a form of self-defense against Israel; as a way to avenge the murder of Palestinians; and as a form of pressure on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank), although the attendant risks were clear: economic and military retaliation by Israel and the PNA, internecine conflict, and eroding public support. (Source: Sara Roy: Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza - Engaging the Islamist Social Sector)

### FAILURE OF OSLO = ARMED STRUGGLE HAS TO CONTINUE (HAMAS)

**Quote §59:** Since the most divisive issues had been left out of the agreements, there was an expectation that the Oslo Accords would fall short of their aspirations. Tragically for Palestinians, this was indeed the case as a permanent solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was meant to follow the interim period of the Oslo process was never secured. Instead, during this extended interim period the Palestinian Authority has become ever less sovereign, the Israeli settlement movement has seen an exponential increase, Palestinians have

been unable to access the natural resources of the Palestinian territories, and there has been a rapid economic downturn. Since sovereignty, access to land and resources, and economic viability are key to the process of state building, the Oslo Accords' most evident failure has been their inability to secure a Palestinian state. As a result, for Palestinians, the Accords often serve as a reminder of the persistence of Israel's settler colonial rule and emphasize the need to persist with the anticolonial struggle. (Source: Somdeep Sen: Decolonizing Palestine: Hamas between the Anticolonial and the Postcolonial)

### **ISRAELI FUNDAMENTALISTS OBJECT TO OSLO**

KB: Israeli fundamentalists felt so strongly betrayed by Oslo and felt so hostile to the Palestinian that one of them assassinated Yitzhak Rabin.

### **ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO OSLO CO-EXISTENCE**

- **Quote §60:** Limor Livnat, Sharon's education minister, launched an all-out offensive against the new history, post-Zionism, and all other manifestations of what she viewed as the defeatism and appeasement that paved the way to the Oslo accords. In the Jerusalem Post, on 26 January 2001, she published an article, or rather an electoral manifesto, under the title "Back to the Iron Wall." (Source: Avi Shlaim - The Iron Wall - Israel and the Arab World (2000))
- **Quote §61:** The ideology underlying Oslo was the direct opposite of the 'Iron Wall' strategy, which had guided the policy of Israel's leaders since the establishment of the state. Jabotinsky only stated the obvious when he claimed that the Arabs will never willingly accept the existence of a Jewish state in their midst, but that only an 'Iron Wall' of deterrence and military strength would lower their aspiration to destroy Israel. (Source: Avi Shlaim - The War of the Israeli Historians, 2004)

### **ISRAELI RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS OPPOSE OSLO ACCORDS AND ASSASSINATE YITZHAK RABIN**

KB: In the weeks before the Oslo accounts were announced, Benjamin Netanyahu (nickname: Bibi) had been preparing for a big poster campaign calling for immediate elections, which he, then in opposition, expected to win.

### **NETANYAHU'S VIEW OF OSLO AND HIS CONDEMNATION OF THE PALESTINIANS**

**Quote §62:** Our defeat had left Likud in shambles. As often happens in these circumstances, despair joined recrimination.

Labor was seen as invincible. Rabin was a popular leader with solid security credentials. His promise not to veer too far to the left with territorial concessions reassured many. He promised that he, and he alone, would "navigate" the government's course.

He did not know that as he was uttering those words, Shimon Peres and some of his young associates had begun secret contacts with the PLO. These secret contacts would soon lead to the Oslo Accords, which would implant Yasser Arafat and his cohorts around Jerusalem and in the hills above Tel Aviv. I didn't know this either. My first task was to win the Likud leadership. /.../

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The Oslo agreement was approved by the Knesset by a hair-thin margin of one vote, that of a Knesset member who later achieved lasting notoriety by selling his vote for a deputy minister's Mitsubishi.

The Oslo agreement, actually a series of agreements interchangeably referred to as the Oslo Accords, was meant to give the Palestinians a gradually expanding autonomous authority. It was widely understood that this agreement would ultimately evolve into a full-fledged state. Would this lead to peace? On May 10, 1994, a few months after signing the Oslo Accords, Arafat spoke candidly in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"In my eyes," he said, "this agreement has no more value than the one signed by the Prophet Muhammad with the Kureish Tribe."

Muslim audiences immediately understood what he meant. The Kureish were a formidable Jewish tribe in Arabia. Unable to defeat them, Muhammad signed a peace deal with them. Once his force was strong enough, he abandoned the deal and destroyed the Jewish tribe.

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On September 13, 1993, the day he signed the Oslo Accords, Arafat used more oblique language in explaining to a Palestinian audience that the agreement was nothing more than the PLO's "Phased Plan." This plan, calling for the destruction of Israel in stages, had been adopted by the PLO in 1964 and was well familiar to Palestinians.

The unchanging and thinly disguised PLO strategy of destroying Israel in stages completely contradicted Oslo's ostensible message of peace and reconciliation. So did the post-Oslo flood of official Palestinian exhortations dehumanizing Jews as pigs and teaching schoolchildren to glorify Palestinian suicide bombers.

As usual, little of this entered the international discourse or caused governments to rethink the much-vaunted Oslo Accords. There was supposedly a honeymoon between the PLO and Israel under Prime Minister Rabin; Arafat and Rabin were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 "for their efforts to create peace in the Middle East." It was inconceivable that the prizewinning Arafat could be swindling the entire world. (Source: Benjamin Netanyahu: Bibi: My Story)

### CONSERVATIVE "RIGHT-WING" RABBIS OPPOSE OSLO

**Quote §63:** Rabbi Yitzhak Levy was born in 1947 in Casablanca, Morocco, and immigrated to Israel in 1957. He served as leader of the NRP and is currently chairman of the same party. In the period 1996–2008, Levy served as minister of transport; minister of education and culture; minister of religious affairs; minister of housing and construction; minister without portfolio; minister of tourism; deputy minister in the prime minister's office; a deputy speaker of the Knesset. According to the daily Haaretz of 25 February 1998, Levy – who had previously made clear his opposition to allowing Israeli Arab Knesset members the right to vote on the Oslo Accords of 1993 – was reputed to have supported "exiling Arabs" in the occupied territories to other Arab states (Jones, 1999: 19). More recently, in June 2007, Levy urged the blocking of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza – in effect, starving the population –

until captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit would be released. Rabbi Levy is also known to be close to former Sephardic chief rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, another advocate of Greater Israel, who has called for the rehabilitation of Yigal Amir, Yitzhak Rabin's assassin (Jones, 1999: 19). In 1983, while serving as Sephardi chief rabbi, Eliyahu sponsored a conference with Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva on the rebuilding of the Third Temple on the site of the Muslim shrines in east Jerusalem. He believes that the Third Temple would descend from heaven amid flames of fire – at that point the Muslim shrines, the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque, would be burnt and the Third Temple built in their place (Ronel, 1984: 12).

Yitzhak Levy does not represent a small group of fanatics on the margins of Israeli society. In 1989, Times magazine reported the findings of a public opinion poll which indicated that some 18 per cent of Jewish Israelis supported the replacement of the Muslim shrines with the Third Temple in Jerusalem. By 1996 this proportion had risen to 58 per cent, according to a Gallup poll sponsored by the Israeli Temple Mount Faithful group (Sizer, 2007: 117). These figures followed closely the rise of messianic Jewish fundamentalism in Israel and the growth of radical settler Jewish activities in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Israeli journalists, who have covered east Jerusalem and the West Bank for over three decades, provide some of the best accounts of the ideology of the settlers' movement and its dehumanizing concepts (Grossman, 1988).

In his work on Gush Emunim, Danny Rubinstein concludes that the majority of the Gush Emunim settlers are in favour of expelling the Arab population, describes the anti-Arab feelings that permeate the Gush Emunim meetings and provides excerpts from the settler movement's pamphlets and bulletins and their debates on the Palestinians as "the Amalekites of today" (Rubinstein, 1982: 90-93 and 151; also Aronson, 1990: 289).

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Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, using and abusing Maimonides, justified the campaign of the Jewish Underground terrorist organizations, implying that the killing of a Palestinian was not murder ... (Source: Nur Masalha: The Zionist Bible – Biblical Precedent, Colonialism and the Erasure of Memory)

### ASSASSINATION OF YITZHAK RABIN

KB: Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel from 1974 to 1977 and from 1992 to 1995, was assassinated on 4 November 1995.

**Quote §64:** Rabin died for signing a peace accord with Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). That agreement held out the prospect of a Palestinian state eventually arising alongside Israel, thus bringing the century-old conflict over Palestine to an equitable end. (Source: David Landau (2014): Arik: The Life of Ariel Sharon)

### ISRAELIS UNDERMINE THE INTENTIONS OF OSLO AND INCREASE THEIR OPPRESSION

KB: Because of Oslo the Palestinian Authority is now defenceless. They cannot fight back. The Israelis build more and more illegal (!) settlements in the occupied territories, restrict the movement of the Palestinians in their own territory, even within their own privately held land. They want to ensure that it will

practically impossible for there ever to exist a Palestinian state occupied by the Palestinians.

The agreement has been castigated as a trap (Trojan Horse) into which Yasser Arafat fell, conceding much and gaining virtually nothing from the Israelis.

The Zionists started immediately building illegal settlements in the West Bank and in Gaza.

### SETTLEMENTS

**Quote §65:** Neither Arafat nor any of his Palestinian partners who met the Israelis in Oslo has ever seen an Israeli settlement. There are now over two hundred of them, principally on hills, promontories and strategic points throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Many will probably shrivel and die, but the largest are designed for permanence. An independent system of roads connects them to Israel, and creates a disabling discontinuity between the main centres of Palestinian population. The actual land taken by these settlements, plus the land designated for expropriation, amounts – it is guessed – to over 55 per cent of the total land area of the Occupied Territories. Greater Jerusalem alone, annexed by Israel, comprises a huge tranche of virtually stolen land, at least 25 per cent of the total amount. In Gaza settlements in the north (three), the middle (two) and the south, along the coast from the Egyptian border past Khan Yunis (12), constitute at least 30 per cent of the Strip. In addition, Israel has tapped into every aquifer on the West Bank, and now uses about 80 per cent of the water there for the settlements and for Israel proper. (Source: Edward Said (1993): The Morning After (condemnation of Oslo accord). London Review of Books, 1993-10-21)

### MORE SETTLEMENTS

**Quote §66:** Contrary to popular belief, the later Oslo Accord was not a game changer in this respect. The accord, even during its more optimistic phase, introduced only minor changes to this Israeli spatial control. A new wave of energetic decrees followed the 'peace process', continuing the settlement expansion. What was new was the addition of dozens of bypasses and roads for Jewish use only – for which private land was expropriated, as all the public land had already been taken. (Source: Ilan Pappé: The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories)

### ISRAEL UNDERMINES OSLO INTENTIONS: WEST BANK = 165 ISLANDS OF LIMITED SELF-GOVERNMENT

**Quote §67:** The threat to Abed and the other employees with green IDs was in fact part of a larger process of cutting Palestinians off from greater Jerusalem. The Oslo Accords were purportedly for an interim period of five years that was supposed to conclude with negotiations over all the major issues, including the status of Jerusalem. In advance of those negotiations, Israel had every motivation to weaken the Palestinians' claims to the city—to diminish their presence, increase Jewish settlement, and make East Jerusalem's absorption into Israel an irrefutable fact. Building permits for Palestinians were withheld, homes were demolished, green ID holders were evicted, more checkpoints sprung up overnight, and entrance permits to the city became especially restrictive. Thousands of Palestinians who lived in the annexed parts of

Jerusalem and held blue ID cards—which afforded far greater freedom of movement—had their residency revoked.

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More broadly, the intifada was the culmination of years of frustration with the Oslo process, which hadn't given Palestinians freedom, independence, or an end to occupation. Nor had it put a stop to the expansion of the settlements, whose population had ballooned by more than 70 percent in the years since the first agreements were signed.

In fact, Oslo had furthered Israel's goal of holding on to maximal land with minimal Palestinians on it. The agreements had fractured the West Bank into 165 islands of limited self-government, each one surrounded by a sea of Israeli control.

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They arrived in September 1995, a year before Israel halted entry of PLO personnel. Huda gave birth to their fourth child the following year, naming the girl Lujain, which meant "silver" and came from the opening line of one of her favorite Fairuz songs. It was the peak of what was called the peace process. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had just concluded the second Oslo Accord, known as Oslo II, which delineated all the islands of limited Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories. Huda felt it was meaningless.

Rabin was emphatic that there would be no Palestinian state, no capital in Jerusalem, more settlements annexed to Jerusalem, more settlement blocs in the West Bank, and that Israel would never return to the boundaries it had prior to the 1967 war, even though they comprised a full 78 percent of historic Palestine. Somewhere within the West Bank and Gaza, the remaining 22 percent—or the part of it that Israel hadn't settled, annexed, or set aside for permanent military control—the Palestinians would be granted "less than a state," as Rabin called it. But even these crumbs were too much for some Israelis: Rabin was assassinated by an Orthodox Jewish nationalist a little over a month after Huda and Ismail and their children crossed into the West Bank. Hearing the news at his home in Gaza, Yasser Arafat wept. (Source: Nathan Thrall: A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy)

## OSLO'S JOURNEY INTO IRRELEVANCE

### INITIAL ENTHUSIASM TURNS INTO PROFOUND DISAPPOINTMENT

KB: The reputation of Arafat, of the Palestinian Authority and respect for Oslo gradually declines

### OSLO COLLAPSES

**Quote §68:** Likud's nominee was the party leader, General Ariel Sharon. Sharon's aggressive career had contributed to the deaths of many Arab civilians, and his recent visit to the Haram al-Sharif, asserting that the Temple Mount was not negotiable, set ablaze already heated passions. A new intifada broke out, this one much more violent. Without a proposed peace agreement, the election failed to offer voters a referendum on peace. Instead, it focused on personalities and approaches. Sharon won in a landslide and formed a government of national unity, including Labor leaders in sensitive positions.

The new intifada brought the Oslo peace process to collapse, and violence escalated on both sides.

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Palestinians unite around a common Arab-Palestinian culture and a love of their ancestral homeland between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. More than two decades ago, the Oslo Accords created the Palestinian Authority (PA), intended to be the foundation of an eventual Palestinian state, complete with a legislature and presidential executive. However, sovereignty and the gold standard of international recognition—full membership at the United Nations—still elude the long-suffering Palestinians. The PA has always lacked access to its self-proclaimed capital, Jerusalem. It controls no borders, governs only a fraction of the West Bank territory, and survives on foreign assistance. Yet Palestine boasts a flag, a government, and police. It has also been recognized as a state on a bilateral basis by a majority of the world's countries, and the number of countries that recognize it as such grows almost annually. These advances toward statehood merit the inclusion of Palestine among the formally independent states of this volume. That said, the nation-state of Palestine is not an accomplished fact. Israel rules over most territory the Palestinians claim in the West Bank and continues to hold enormous influence over Gaza, despite its withdrawal of settlers from that small strip of land in 2005.

/.../

While the Oslo Accords won wide support in the world's press, many Palestinian groups condemned them, both on the left (the Popular Front and the Democratic Front) and the religious right (Islamic Jihad and Hamas). These groups considered two disconnected parcels of land under limited self-rule far too small a reward for ending the struggle to replace Israel with a Palestinian state. Opposition also arose within the Palestinian leadership. Calls grew for democracy, and Hanan Ashrawi chose to serve on a human rights group rather than on the administrative council. (Source: Ilan Pappé (2024): The Middle East and South Asia (The World Today Series, 56th edition))

#### **PLO SHRUNK AFTER OSLO AND CREATION OF PNA**

**Quote §69:** The revolutionary politics of the PLO experienced sharp decline after the departure of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982. Since then the PLO and its national institutions have become largely marginalised after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, and especially since the creation of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. However, the historic legacy, revolutionary politics and symbolic value of the PLO as a Palestinian national liberation movement, based on popular representation and enjoying significant support among anti-colonial movements in the Third World, go far beyond its current weak and dysfunctional organisational structures and virtual political paralysis. (Source: Nur Masalha – Palestine – A Four Thousand Year History)

#### **ARAFAT LOSES HIS REPUTATION**

**Quote §70:** But 'Arafat's isolation, and his increasing loss of focus, left the Palestinian polity drifting like a rudderless ship, without any recognizable strategy at a time of supreme crisis, as the intifada ground on with devastating effects for the Palestinians. The Oslo period (1991–2000), adjudged in retrospect to have been disastrous by most Palestinians, was fully identified with 'Arafat. It was followed by four years of the second intifada, which 'Arafat had ambiguously embraced, and which exhausted and debilitated Palestinian society.

Not surprisingly, the passing of this figure, who had inspired strong positive and negative feelings among his people, elicited both intense mourning and veiled relief among Palestinians. There was a sense of anxiety at the disappearance of the only leader most of them had ever known, combined with a sense that change was imperative after a long period of aimlessness and lack of direction. /../

### **OSLO PROCESS DESTROYS CONFIDENCE**

The Oslo Accords were a foretaste of what was to come in every Palestinian-Israeli negotiation over the following few years. During the 1990s, one unsatisfactory and unbalanced partial accord governing relatively minor matters succeeded another. All the while, the truly weighty matters, the so-called final status issues (Palestinian sovereignty and statehood, the status of Jerusalem, the refugee issue, Israeli settlements, and water) were kept off the table by the negotiating framework imposed by the United States at the insistence of Israel at the beginning of the process. The supposed logic of this procedure, that partial, interim accords would "build confidence" between the two sides, was proven false by subsequent events. The result of the entire Oslo process was a steep decline in mutual confidence, particularly when one considers the expansive possibilities that beckoned in the euphoria affecting both sides that was attendant on the Madrid Peace Conference and the signing of the Oslo Accords. In fact, the real logic of the partial interim approach was that it was intended by its Israeli and American architects to relieve Israel of having to make any \*\*\*hard decisions on ending the occupation and settlement of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem\*\*\*. Instead, Israeli occupation and settlement were massively reinforced during the period of negotiations. (Source: Rashid Khalidi: The Iron Cage – The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood)

### **IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES**

**Quote §71:** Despite mixed success with Palestinians, the Oslo Accords brought welcome progress towards peace with some Arab states. Morocco established diplomatic relations. More dramatically, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, after settling its demands for water rights and a small occupied territory of 145 square miles (375 square kilometers) along the border.

Visionaries predicted broad trade and development links, as well as hydroelectric and desalination schemes at the Dead Sea. Peace with Syria proved more difficult, given the domestically hazardous issue of the Golan Heights. Syria continues to demand return of the entire territory. Repeated negotiations have accomplished nothing—but occasionally provided a distraction when a prime minister needs relief from domestic pressures.

In 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump declared that "the United States recognizes that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel," making the United States the first and only country to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the annexed region. Other countries have not followed suit. /../

### **SHIMON PERES – AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE: DISAPPOINTMENT**

**Quote §72:** The march toward peace continued. We held several follow-up negotiations with the Palestinians, as prescribed in the Declaration of Principles. In May 1994, we signed the Gaza-Jericho agreement, which, among other things, established the Palestinian Authority. Within two



months, Arafat returned to Gaza, where he was elected the Palestinian Authority's first president. In September 1995, we signed an interim agreement with the Palestinians, known as Oslo II, which expanded Palestinian self-government in the West Bank, while setting May 1996 as the latest date at which negotiations over a permanent solution would begin. But in spite of our progress, the mood had darkened throughout Israel. In its willingness to seek a peace agreement with the Israelis, the Palestinian Authority had made enemies of radical terrorist organizations that rejected any peace negotiation with Israel as illegitimate. Hamas and Islamic Jihad, whose leadership was furious at the prospect of any Israeli-Palestinian agreement, attempted to undermine the peace process through continual acts of unspeakable violence, including sending suicide bombers onto buses and into crowded neighborhoods and big cities, directly targeting civilians. The Palestinian leadership didn't put a stop to the attacks. In some cases, they even helped coordinate them. There were bombings in April 1994 and then again in October and November, and then again in January 1995 and April and August. A growing coalition of Israelis, having abandoned hope for peace, had starting calling instead for a military response. There were protests and demonstrations, chants of "Death to Arabs" and "Death to Arafat" echoing through the streets, and demands not only for small-scale retribution but for war itself.

These conditions created an enormous leadership challenge for Rabin and me. The hope that sprang from Oslo was increasingly hidden from view, receding among some, dying among others. (Source: Shimon Peres (2017): No Room for Small Dreams )

#### **(15) 2005: September 2005: Disengagement from Gaza = Israel removes all Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip**

KB: The Israelis decided to close all settlements in Gaza and order the settlers to leave. There was a fair amount of resistance from the settlers and some had to be removed by force. This process is officially known as "disengagement from Gaza". It was initially welcomed by Palestinians and international opinion because the settlements had been illegal, and the disengagement process returned Palestinian lands to their rightful owners, Palestinians. It made Gaza a Palestinian territory again.

#### **WIKIPEDIA**

**Quote §73:** In 2005, Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip by dismantling all 21 Israeli settlements there. As part of this process, four Israeli settlements in the West Bank were dismantled as well. The disengagement was executed unilaterally by Israel and without coordination with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Since then, the United Nations, many other international humanitarian and legal organizations, and most academic commentators have continued to regard the Gaza Strip as being under Israeli occupation due to Israel's active control over the territory's external affairs, as affirmed by the 2024 International Court of Justice advisory opinion. Historically, according to Article 42 of the Hague Regulations and precedent in international law, it has been generally understood that a territory remains effectively occupied so long as a belligerent's authority is established and exercised over it, even if said belligerent does not have ground forces deployed in the area. (Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli\\_disengagement\\_from\\_the\\_Gaza\\_Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_disengagement_from_the_Gaza_Strip) )

**Quote §74:** '**Disengagement**' is, of course, **Zionist newspeak**, and was invented to circumvent the use of such terms as 'end of occupation' and to sidestep the obligations incumbent upon Israel, according to international law, as the occupying power in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (Source: Ilan Pappé (2006): The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine)

**Quote §75:** In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew its ground troops from Gaza, dismantling its 21 settlements and removing some 8,000 Israeli settlers who had been living there, as part of a policy it termed "disengagement" from Gaza. It retained, however, key aspects of authority over Gaza, including the sole control over its territorial waters and air space and movement of people or goods in and out of Gaza via land, air and sea, including by preventing the reconstruction of Gaza's airport and the construction of a seaport. Except for Gaza's short border with Egypt, Israel maintained control of all land crossings, thus controlling all movements in and out of Gaza into Israel and, therefore, to the rest of the OPT. (Source: Amnesty International (2024): Israel commits genocide in Gaza/Amnesty International: Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza)

**Quote §76:** Sharon's response was a bombshell: he announced Israel's unilateral disengagement from all of the Gaza Strip and from a part of the northern West Bank. All the settlements in these areas would be dismantled. All the soldiers stationed there would be withdrawn. Everyone spoke of it as a bombshell, and yet, strangely, everyone claimed to have seen it coming. And they were right: it was clearly discernible in Sharon's public statements over a period of months. He did not seek to hide it and then suddenly spring it on the public. On the contrary, he deliberately "floated balloons" with the words "unilateral" and "disengagement" emblazoned on them, to gauge, presumably, how people would react. And yet, however much they had, or should have, anticipated or feared or hoped for the unilateral disengagement, depending on their views, when Sharon finally announced it, everyone was stunned. Peaceniks were stunned and ecstatic. Settlers were stunned and distraught. Most important for Sharon, the broad mainstream was stunned and supportive. The polls never wavered on that, from the day the disengagement was announced till the day it was carried out, eighteen months later. (Source: David Landau (2014): Arik: The Life of Ariel Sharon)

**Quote §77:** Sharon said that his plan was designed to improve Israel's security and international status in the absence of political negotiations to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. About nine thousand Israeli residents within Gaza were instructed to leave the area or face eviction by the night of Tuesday, **August 16, 2005**. Settlers were offered compensation to move voluntarily, which about two-thirds accepted. (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli\\_disengagement\\_from\\_the\\_Gaza\\_Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_disengagement_from_the_Gaza_Strip))

**Quote §78:** In spite of the disengagement, the United Nations, international human rights organizations, many legal scholars, and a "majority of academic commentators" regard the Gaza Strip to still be under military occupation by Israel. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) reaffirmed this position on the basis of Israel's continued control of the Gaza Strip. /.../ The motivation behind the disengagement was described by Sharon's top aide as a means of isolating Gaza and avoiding international pressure on Israel to reach a political settlement with the Palestinians. /.../ The year of the disengagement would see the **removal of 8,475 settlers from Gaza**, while in that same year the number of new settlers in the West Bank increased by 15,000.

(Source:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli\\_disengagement\\_from\\_the\\_Gaza\\_Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_disengagement_from_the_Gaza_Strip))

**Quote §79:** Ariel Sharon, the hard-line ex-general who had been elected prime minister in 2001 to crush the Palestinians' intifada, now proposed to dismantle Jewish settlements and withdraw Israeli troops from parts of the occupied territories. To the settlers and their supporters – his erstwhile political constituency – that was heresy, a denial both of Judaism and of Zionism. To the peace camp at home and to governments and public opinion around the world, Sharon's dramatic turnabout was a hugely hopeful change. It meant the beginning, at last, of a repartition of Palestine between the two nations vying for it. Sharon found himself suddenly praised where he had previously been loathed and feared. (Source: David Landau: Arik: The Life of Ariel Sharon (2014))

**Quote §80:** During the January 2003 election campaign, the Labor leader Amram Mitzna proposed the construction of a wall in the West Bank and unilateral disengagement from Gaza. This idea did not fit in with Likud's ideology, which claimed the right of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel. Building a wall implied giving up the claim to the territory beyond it. Popular demands for protection against suicide bombers, however, gradually eroded opposition to the idea of a wall. /.../

At home Sharon was thrown on the defensive. ... His single-minded focus on repression failed to achieve his overarching aim: a Palestinian surrender. Having failed to engage the Palestinian moderates or to cow the Islamic Jihad militants into submission, he began to think about other options. Strategic stalemate led him in the direction of unilateralism and disengagement. One specific idea he began to explore was a unilateral Israeli pullout from Gaza. /.../

To Sharon it seemed that the greatest threat facing the country was the road map that ultimately required Israel to withdraw from most, if not all, the settlements in both Gaza and the West Bank and make way for an independent Palestinian state by the end of 2005. This was Sharon's nightmare. Moreover, his reading of domestic politics led him to conclude that the road map stood no chance of being accepted: the Israeli public would not allow any prime minister to implement a plan in which the border between Israel and "the state of the suicide bombers" would be within the range of a mortar. The purpose of the disengagement from Gaza plan was to "kill" the road map. (Source: Avi Shlaim (2000): The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World)

KB: The "road map" was intended to lead to a two-state solution.

**Quote §81:** [Sharon] ... wanted to pull out of the cauldron in Gaza to gain the freedom to consolidate Israel's grip on the West Bank. In numerous interviews he made it clear that this was a one-off move. But he needed a swift and orderly withdrawal from Gaza in order to silence his domestic critics. Moreover, unilateral disengagement from Gaza fitted well with his plan of weakening the Palestinians by separating Gaza from the West Bank and by dividing up the West Bank into a series of enclaves without territorial contiguity. /.../

The key figure was Weissglas, who had been Sharon's lawyer and now served as the director of his office, troubleshooter, and principal channel to the Bush administration. ... He ... developed the theory that disengagement from Gaza, with American agreement and wide popular support, would reduce the pressure on Israel to move forward toward a

permanent peace settlement with the Palestinians for many years to come. While different reasons were given to different audiences in support of disengagement, this was the key idea behind it. (Source: Avi Shlaim (2000): The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World)

KB: To make this absolutely clear: The Israelis did not want a peace settlement because it would have led to a Palestinian state, i.e. to a permanent presence, legally agreed, of Palestinians on Palestinian soil, an intolerable situation in Israeli eyes. Keeping the conflict open, almost forever, would enable Israel to pursue its long-stated objective to remove all Palestinians from Palestinian soil, however long this might take. All Israeli actions must be interpreted in this light.

**Quote §82:** [Condoleezza] Rice remained concerned that the United States would be accused of complicity in an Israeli trick to pull out of Gaza and then to park itself indefinitely on the West Bank. She therefore made it clear that the administration would regard disengagement from Gaza as a political breakthrough only if it was accompanied by some withdrawal from the West Bank. /.../

At the meeting at the White House on 14 April 2004, the president granted his guest everything he had asked for and more. ... Publicly hailing Sharon's plan as "a bold and historic initiative" and as a true contribution to building peace in the region, Bush proceeded to give Sharon two specific assurances. First, he promised American support for Israel's retention of main settlement blocs on the West Bank in the final settlement. Second, he denied the right of return of the 1948 Palestinian refugees and said that in future they and their families should immigrate to the prospective Palestinian state, not to Israel. Sharon had asked for these assurances in writing, and he received them in writing during his visit. (Source: Avi Shlaim (2000): The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World)

**Quote §83:** Like Sharon's "disengagement" plan from Gaza in 2005, Begin's unspoken aim was to hold on to most of the territories by emphasizing the part that he would give away. /.../ (Source: Avi Shilon (2012): Menachem Begin, a life)

**Quote §84:** Prime Minister Sharon was many things - self-centered, obstinate, and wary of compromise; he was a bull in the china shop who, with his hefty girth, trampled anything and any opponent in his path. But he was a general, a hero of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and many other encounters with the enemy, and the worst of the intifada was in the past. He knew how to take risks, and, in the summer of 2005, he ordered a unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip: Israel dismantled the twenty-one Gush Katif communities that had been established, by Sharon himself, inside the area after the 1967 Six-Day War. Gaza had become a quagmire for Israel, a never-ending battlefield, and Sharon surmised it was prudent to let the Palestinian Authority fend for the two million inhabitants. /.../

At the 2005 AIPAC convention in Washington, DC, I sat at the hotel bar with a leading Likud minister, Meir Sheetrit, and spoke about the pending disengagement. "What's going to happen when Hamas starts shooting rockets into Israel?" I asked. He laughed at me, mockingly. "Don't you know who Sharon is? One rocket and he will obliterate them." (Source: Ari Harow (2024): My Brother's Keeper: Netanyahu, Obama, and the Year of Terror and Conflict that Changed the Middle East Forever)

**Quote §85:** Despite fears of violent clashes between Israeli settlers and the Israeli security forces evicting them, disengagement from Gaza was over with few casualties in eight days in August 2005. Most Israelis were relieved. For Likudniks, however, it was the deepest crisis in the history of the Revisionist movement. A Likud government had voluntarily, without international pressure and without receiving anything in return, relinquished part of the Land of Israel and uprooted Jewish communities. (Source: Anshel Pfeffer (2018): Bibi: The Turbulent Life and Times of Benjamin Netanyahu)

**Quote §86:** In August of that year, Israel carried out its "disengagement" from Gaza, voluntarily withdrawing thousands of settlers and soldiers and completely ending the Israeli presence there. The hope was that Palestinians would use the end of Israeli occupation to build Gaza's economy and prepare it for political independence, along with the West Bank, as part of a Palestinian state. Private donors stepped in to buy the Israeli greenhouses that had been left behind, and hand them over to the Palestinian Authority. James Wolfenson, the former head of the World Bank, contributed \$500,000 of his own money to the purchase. But almost immediately after the disengagement, Hamas and other terror organizations renewed their rocket fire, launching a barrage of rockets at the Israeli towns of Sderot and Ashqelon. (Source: Alan M Dershowitz (2023): War Against the Jews: How to End Hamas Barbarism)

**Quote §87:** Sharon, however, saw advantages in separation or "disengagement," a tactical initiative that included not only building the security barrier in the West Bank, but also withdrawing troops and dismantling settlements in the Gaza Strip as part of a supposed master plan. This plan amounted to nothing less than the politicide of the Palestinian people: a combined military, political, diplomatic, and psychological process with the ultimate goal of dissolving the Palestinians' existence as a legitimate, viable, and independent entity, socially, politically, and economically. (Source: Baruch Kimmerling (2008): Clash of Identities: Explorations in Israeli and Palestinian Societies)

**Quote §88:** To fully understand the process of disengagement, we must analyze a phenomenon that was itself completely unexpected: why and how significant sections of the mainstream, on both the left and the right, could support – or at least not vehemently oppose – Sharon's "disengagement plan." ... Alongside the pragmatic right and the center, there existed two approaches that may have justified Sharon's moves as they were presented – in part openly and in part covertly – with a wink to the broad population that elected the Likud under Sharon's leadership. These populations understood quite some time ago that it is not possible in our generation to implement the idea of a Greater Israel that is free of Arabs. Thus a formula had to be developed whereby there would be Palestinians but they would remain under indirect Israeli rule, greatly reducing the cost of the occupation. Indeed, it is impossible to return to the late 1960s or to the merry 1970s, but perhaps it is possible to pacify and police the Palestinians through the services of sub-contractors along with payments in the form of some minor material assets together with some symbolic incentives. (Source: Baruch Kimmerling (2012): Marginal At the Center – The Life Story of a Public Sociologist)

**Quote §89:** The left saw Sharon's withdrawal from Gaza as the first step to a full withdrawal from Judea and Samaria, especially since he let out

that he was also considering withdrawing from four settlements in Northern Samaria as part of the Gaza Disengagement Plan.

My immediate thought after hearing his intention was, Who will take over Gaza if we leave? What does Israel get out of this?

"For every step we take," I said in response to this move, "we should get something in return," echoing the reciprocity policy I espoused as prime minister.

This made absolutely no impression on anyone. We were in a political earthquake. The ground had shifted, and here I was talking about the outdated concepts of reciprocity and security when we were being led to a rosy future by a resolute leader.

Two weeks later, Sharon formally announced his plan to vacate a total of twenty-five communities – twenty-one Israeli communities in the Gaza Strip and four in Northern Samaria. Two weeks after that, he invited me to a meeting to try to mollify me.

"When Israel withdraws unilaterally," I said, "we know what Israel gives, but what does Israel get?"

Specifically I raised the troubling likelihood that Hamas would take over the areas we vacated and use them to attack Israel.

Sharon waved that aside. "We'll respond forcefully to the very first missile," he said.

"Once you establish the principle that you withdraw to escape terrorism, terrorism will chase you," I countered.

/../

Twelve days later, Sharon convened the government for the final vote on disengagement. Once approved, there was no going back. Eight thousand people would be evicted from their homes and Gaza would be handed over to the Palestinians, and to eventual Hamas control.

Time had run out.

After voting against disengagement, I handed Sharon a letter of resignation. It was factual and firm. I reminded Sharon:

--- inner quote starts ---

We resolved that we would make the final decision of eviction based on developments on the ground. To my regret, the government is ignoring reality. Just as I warned, Hamas is growing even stronger. Terror continues, mortar and rocket fire on the communities adjoining Gaza continues, and the terrorists proclaim that they will fire the rockets that expelled us from Gaza until the "final liberation of all of Palestine." Just as I warned in 1993 that the Oslo agreements will bring terror attacks from Judaea and Samaria and rocket attacks from Gaza, I am equally convinced today that the disengagement will bring a growth in terrorism and not its decline.

What do we get for uprooting families and children, homes and graves? We will get an Islamist terrorist base.

--- inner quote ends ---

(Source: Benjamin Netanyahu(2022): Bibi: My Story)

**Quote §90:** Much more importantly, Hamas' decision to participate in the national elections received a further boost after the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip on 12 September 2005, under the 'disengagement plan'. Hamas repeatedly claimed that the withdrawal was a victory for its resistance, and as such reinforced the belief that Hamas was the major resistance movement responsible for expelling the Israelis from the coastal strip, compared to the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, which had not resisted and instead had merely coordinated with the Israelis. Thus, Hamas claimed the Israeli disengagement as its own victory and frequently referred to this in its political speeches and programmes. However, the Gaza Strip remained under occupation by Israel. Gaza's borders, airspace, territorial waters, and the movement of goods and people from and into the Gaza Strip remained under Israeli control. (Source: Ibrahim Natil (2015): Hamas Transformation: Opportunities and Challenges)

**Quote §91:** The militarization of the Israeli policy towards the Gaza strip began in 2005. That year Gaza became an official military target from the Israeli point of view, as if it were a huge enemy base rather than a place of civilian habitation. Gaza is a city like any other in the world, and yet for the Israelis it became a dummy city for soldiers to experiment with the most recent and advanced weapons.

This policy was enabled by the Israeli government's decision to evict the Jewish settlers who had colonized the Gaza Strip since 1967. The settlers were allegedly moved as part of what the government described as a unilateral policy of disengagement, the argument being that since there was no progress in the peace talks with the Palestinians, it was up to Israel to determine how its borders with the Palestinian areas would ultimately look. In essence, Prime Minister Sharon was willing to turn the Strip into a West Bank Area A and in turn strengthen Israel's grip on the West Bank (and in evicting the Gazan settlers against their will, it would create an alleged trauma that would absolve Israel from ever repeating it again). (Source: Ilan Pappé (2017): The Biggest Prison on Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories)

**Quote §92:** The significance of the disengagement plan [from Gaza] is the freezing of the peace process. And when you freeze that process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda. All with [US] presidential blessings and the ratification of both houses of Congress. -- Dov Weissglas, spokesperson for Ariel Sharon, Ha'aretz, 6 October 2004 (Source: Ilan Pappé (2006): The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine)

**Quote §93:** The Jews came, but the Palestinians did not leave, so a third wave of Judaization began in 2001. This time the Judaizer of the past, Shimon Peres, now a minister for developing the Galilee and the Negev, joined Ariel Sharon, the Judaizer of the West Bank. This was also not very successful; Jews, for all their sins, preferred to live in Tel Aviv. In 2002, Prime Minister Sharon declared: 'If we don't settle the Galilee, someone else would do it.'

It was in such a speech that the plans for the most recent wave of Judaization in the Galilee, Wadi Ara and the Negev were announced in 2005. (It is not a coincidence that this was the same year of the disengagement from Gaza: a seemingly dovish move in the occupied territories had to be 'compensated' by a hawkish move inside Israel.)

Worried Palestinian heads of councils met in the village of Kafr Manda to oppose a plan for expanding territorially more than one hundred

Jewish settlements at the expense of land belonging to Arab landowners. The other side of the plan (not stated openly, but presumed by the participants in the Kafr Manda meeting) involved disallowing the expansion of Palestinian villages. (Source: Ilan Pappé (2011): The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel)

**Quote §94:** Withdrawing from Gaza meant dismantling that complex machinery of occupation that had controlled the Strip ever since 1967, despite the installment of the PNA in 1994. The Israeli settlements, which had appeared in strategically important locations to split the Strip into three sections, had allowed the government in Tel Aviv to justify its military presence in order to defend the inhabitants of the settlements. But government support for the colonial enterprise in Gaza had not paid off the way it had in the West Bank. In Gaza, the settlements' populations had never reached significant numbers, but were limited to barely a few thousand people around whom a costly security machinery had been erected, one that included military outposts, soldiers, and no-man's-lands. Within that machinery rested pleasant compounds with villas, flowerbeds, and swimming pools, all of these surrounded by a Palestinian population that was growing exponentially, reaching by 2008 an estimated 1.5 million, with all of them confined to refugee camps and overcrowded cities. (Source: Paola Caridi (2023): Hamas: From Resistance to Regime)

**Quote §95:** In an interview with Ari Shavit in Haaretz magazine, October, 8, 2004, Weisglass stated: "The disengagement is actually formaldehyde. It supplies the amount of formaldehyde that's necessary so that there will not be a political process with the Palestinians." Later, Shavit asked: "From your point of view, then, your major achievement is to have frozen the political process legitimately?" Weisglass's response was: "That is exactly what happened. You know, the term 'political process' is a bundle of concepts and commitments. The political process is the establishment of a Palestinian state with all the security risks that entails. The political process is the evacuation of settlements, it's the return of refugees, it's the partition of Jerusalem. And all that has now been frozen." (Source: Rashid Khalidi (2006): The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood)

**Quote §96:** The promise of Israeli disengagement from Gaza generated considerable internal activity, including an eighteen-point plan for Gaza known as the Barghouti document aimed at facilitating the transition of power in the Gaza Strip following Israel's withdrawal. Authored by the jailed leader of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Marwan Barghouti, who long had a political channel open to Hamas, the plan proposed a role for the Islamists, in cooperation with the PNA, in running Gaza. Although the PNA was to be the effective governing authority, all other groups were to have real input into the administration of Gaza through their membership in a monitoring committee. In exchange, the Islamists were to cease all attacks on Israel launched from the Gaza Strip (but not West Bank). Apparently, both Hamas and Islamic Jihad responded positively in principle although not officially. /.../

In this regard Hamas also argued that Israel's August 2005 disengagement from the Gaza Strip was a forced withdrawal due to Hamas's continued resistance, for which the organization also won public support. /.../

With the withdrawal of Israeli settlers from Gaza in August 2005 during Israel's disengagement, the political separation of the two territories was effectively sealed and the foundation for a Palestinian state effectively destroyed. Yet Israel retained total control, both direct and indirect, of Palestinian "land, borders, resources, water,



population registry, economics, construction, education, health and medical services," in both Gaza and the West Bank. This state of affairs not only thwarted Palestinian political and economic cohesion; it also weakened the sense of national unity or community among Palestinians (where identity is now constructed by geography), and has been a critical factor in allowing Israel to isolate and control the Gaza Strip and to consolidate its control over the West Bank. (Source: Sara Roy (2011): Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector)

**Quote §97:** During our tour, Bahaa recounted his own life under the occupation. He reminisced about growing up in close proximity to Israeli settlements. He recalled celebrating on the streets of Rafah following the news of Israel's unilateral "disengagement" from Gaza in August 2005. But it was what Bahaa said next that stood out:

--- inner quote starts ---

After completing high school, I decided to come home and visit my parents in Gaza. When I reached the border by Rafah, the conflict between Hamas and Fatah was on the rise. Hamas had won the elections, and it was in the process of gaining complete control of Gaza. The Egyptians and Israelis decided to close the border. The European monitors of the Rafah border were not allowed to come across from Israel, and so the border remained closed. But when they closed the borders, all Palestinians trying to enter the Gaza Strip on that day were stuck in the passport hall of the Egyptian terminal, and we remained there for two weeks. Israel said that some could get into a bus and drive around to an Israeli checkpoint. Some decided to do this, but they would spend six hours in a bus and then wouldn't be let in. There were some Hamas activists among the travelers, and they didn't get into the bus because they knew that they would disappear forever.

--- inner quote ends ---

(Source: Somdeep Sen (2020): Decolonizing Palestine: Hamas between the Anticolonial and the Postcolonial)

**Quote §98:** Sharon's speech in Herzliya left little room for doubt regarding his impetus for disengagement from Gaza. The prime minister stated explicitly his plan to withdraw eight thousand Jewish settlers residing in the Gaza Strip as a precursor to strengthen Israel's grip over areas that "constitute an inseparable part of the State of Israel," namely the West Bank. In the year after Israel withdrew its eight thousand settlers from Gaza and small outposts in the West Bank, twelve thousand Israelis settled elsewhere in the West Bank. The Palestinian West Bank is ideologically more vital for Israel than the Gaza Strip, as it has several Jewish holy sites, including the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Israeli politicians, particularly right-wing leaders such as Ariel Sharon who opposed the notion of a Palestinian state, often refer to the West Bank by its biblical name, "Judea and Samaria," reinforcing Israel's religious and nationalistic attachment to these territories.

/.../

Israel's disengagement from Gaza instantly began shaping the Israeli public's opinion regarding the removal of settlements. The withdrawal came to be seen as a litmus test: if Palestinians were able to build a developed city-state in Gaza, akin to a Singapore on the Mediterranean, then that would allegedly pave the way for further withdrawals elsewhere, leading to renewed efforts at Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. Significant plans had been drawn up by the Quartet behind the scenes to consider economic initiatives or development prospects

that could underpin Gaza's growth. Yet despite much promise and hope, these blueprints remained stillborn. Citing security concerns, Israel almost immediately began imposing a suffocating system of closures that severely restricted the movement of goods and persons between the Gaza Strip and Israel or the West Bank. After having razed thousands of Palestinian homes between Gaza and Egypt, on the Rafah border, Israel built a seven-meter-high wall that caged Palestinians in. Despite the signing of the "Rafah Border Agreement," which coordinated the Palestinian Authority's administration of Gaza's borders with Israel, in practice Israel maintained full authority over access into the coastal enclave. Given that the Israeli and West Bank markets were central to Gaza's economy, the closure policies nipped in the bud any prospects for growth or development within the Gaza Strip. By the end of Israel's withdrawal, rather than promoting Gaza's economic development, Israel had reconfigured its occupation to take the form of a stifling, externally imposed structure of control.

/../

After Israel's disengagement from Gaza and as policies aimed at isolating Hamas gathered force, the economic value of the tunnels increased even before the movement's electoral victory. With the blockade and the absence of any official trade channels, tunnels became Gaza's economic lifeline. From twenty tunnels in mid-2007, the number began expanding soon after Hamas's takeover as all basic supplies and goods, as well as weapons, were transported into the Gaza Strip via tunnels. (Source: Tareq Baconi (2018): Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance)

**Quote §99:** From an interview with Ariel Sharon

**Question:** Given the chaos reigning in the Gaza Strip, exemplified by the assassination on September 7 of Mussa Arafat, Yasser Arafat's nephew, what do you expect from the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas?

**Answer:** Given the chaos reigning in the Gaza Strip, exemplified by the assassination on September 7 of Mussa Arafat, Yasser Arafat's nephew, what do you expect from the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas? I can say what he should do, not what I expect of him, because in our region declarations, speeches, promises and even written agreements count for nothing. Only their implementation matters. In order to start negotiations based on the Road Map, Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) must put an end to terrorism, violence and incitement. He must dismantle terrorist organizations and confiscate their weapons. He must completely reorganize the security services, which are also terrorist devices. They are all implicated in terrorism. Drastic reforms are necessary: the security forces need to be trained in peace. Abu Mazen is certainly conscious of the dangers lying in wait for him. Though he does not belong to a Zionist organization, he is aware that the Palestinians' suffering – impossible to ignore – is the result of terrorism, of a policy and strategy of terror. He understands it, and I'm sure that he wants terrorism to be eradicated. But he binds himself, so to speak. (Source: Uri Dan (2006): Ariel Sharon: An Intimate Portrait

**Quote §100:** On July 12, 2006, almost a year before the Syrian reactor was discovered, Ehud Olmert arrived at his office in Jerusalem early in the morning for another day of political and military battles. It was a short ride from the prime minister's official government residence in the upscale neighborhood of Talbiya in West Jerusalem where he lived with his wife, Aliza. What waited for him, he never could have imagined.

He had a busy morning. The IDF was operating on the ground in the Gaza Strip for the first time since Israel unilaterally pulled its

settlements and military positions out in the summer of 2005 in a plan known as the Disengagement.

Two and a half weeks earlier, Gilad Shalit, an IDF soldier, had been abducted by Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist organization that was the true ruler of the Gaza Strip. Hamas terrorists, shortly after dawn, had crossed into Israel through a tunnel, attacked a nearby IDF Merkava tank, killed two soldiers and dragged Shalit, who had been lightly wounded, back into Gaza. Most of the tank crew was asleep and never saw the Hamas terrorists coming. (Source: Yaakov Katz (2019): Shadow Strike: Inside Israel's Secret Mission to Eliminate Syrian Nuclear Power)

## (16) 2007: 14 June 2007: Hamas rule in Gaza starts

### WIKIPEDIA

**Quote §101:** Hamas has governed the Gaza Strip in Palestine since its takeover of the territory from the rival Fatah-ruled Palestinian Authority (PA) on 14 June 2007. (Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza\\_Strip\\_under\\_Hamas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip_under_Hamas) - Accessed 2025-02-28)

### HAMAS TAKES POWER:

**Quote §102:** After Hamas gunmen gained control of Gaza in 2007, the territory provided a base for missile and other attacks on Israel but lacked a government willing to negotiate with Israel, or one that Israel recognized. The simple, home-made Qassam missiles fired by Hamas and Islamic Jihad at the closest town, Sderot, and the city of Ashkelon did not constitute a strategic threat, but they inflicted casualties. They also posed the eventual risk of longer-range missiles with larger warheads. Ariel Sharon's entire policy of disengagement/unilateral withdrawal collapsed.

In response, the Olmert cabinet declared the Gaza Strip a "hostile entity." In order to force Hamas to halt the attacks, it restricted deliveries of fuel, electricity, and almost all supplies, eventually including food. This effectively crushed the territory's economic life. Virtually the entire population came to subsist on international assistance (see Palestine: history). A truce negotiated in mid-2008 reduced the rocket fire significantly, but the border blockade remained. The truce broke down in response to an Israeli attack on an alleged tunnel from Gaza into Israel. (Source: Ilan Pappé (2023): The Middle East and South Asia (The World Today Series, 56th edition, 2023-2024))

**Quote §103:** During our tour, Bahaa recounted his own life under the occupation. He reminisced about growing up in close proximity to Israeli settlements. He recalled celebrating on the streets of Rafah following the news of Israel's unilateral "disengagement" from Gaza in August 2005. But it was what Bahaa said next that stood out:

--- inner quote starts ---

After completing high school, I decided to come home and visit my parents in Gaza. When I reached the border by Rafah, the conflict between Hamas and Fatah was on the rise. Hamas had won the elections, and it was in the process of gaining complete control of Gaza. The Egyptians and Israelis decided to close the border. The European monitors of the Rafah border were not allowed to come across from Israel, and so the border remained closed. But when they closed the borders, all Palestinians trying to enter the Gaza Strip on that day were stuck in the passport hall of the Egyptian

**terminal**, and we remained there **for two weeks**. Israel said that some could get into a bus and drive around to an Israeli checkpoint. Some decided to do this, but they would spend six hours in a bus and then wouldn't be let in. There were some Hamas activists among the travelers, and they didn't get into the bus because they knew that they would disappear forever.

--- inner quote ends ---

(Source: Somdeep Sen (2020): Decolonizing Palestine: Hamas between the Anticolonial and the Postcolonial)

**Quote §104:** Abbas was the candidate favored to win by the United States, given his support of the Roadmap for Peace and his stance on armed struggle. Expectedly, shortly after the elections, Abbas underscored his conviction that Israel's disengagement from Gaza must proceed within the framework of the roadmap, ensuring Sharon could no longer claim the absence of a committed counterpart. As incoming president, Abbas faced three obstacles: disunity within his party; Sharon's refusal to deal with Palestinians as political counterparts; and Hamas's power. Hamas's strong grassroots support was not lost on the incoming president given his tenuous hold on the political establishment. His commitment to diplomacy and his denunciation of resistance-as-terrorism against the backdrop of Sharon's intransigence were seen as treasonous by Hamas. -- (Source: Tareq Baconi - Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance (2018).pdf

**Quote §105:** ... it took but a few months before Hamas murdered nearly all of the Fatah leadership in Gaza and took control of the strip in a bloody coup that ultimately led to the Islamic terror group firing mortars and rockets at Israel (Ari Harow - My Brother's Keeper - Netanyahu, Obama, and the Year of Terror and Conflict that Changed the Middle East Forever (2024).pdf)

#### **HAMAS ROCKETS AFTER "DISENGAGEMENT":**

**Quote §106:** In August of that year, Israel carried out its "disengagement" from Gaza, voluntarily withdrawing thousands of settlers and soldiers and completely ending the Israeli presence there. The hope was that Palestinians would use the end of Israeli occupation to build Gaza's economy and prepare it for political independence, along with the West Bank, as part of a Palestinian state. Private donors stepped in to buy the Israeli greenhouses that had been left behind, and hand them over to the Palestinian Authority. James Wolfenson, the former head of the World Bank, contributed \$500,000 of his own money to the purchase. 5 But almost immediately after the disengagement, Hamas and other terror organizations renewed their rocket fire, launching a barrage of rockets at the Israeli towns of Sderot and Ashqelon. ((Source: : Alan M Dershowitz - War Against the Jews - How to End Hamas Barbarism (2023)

**Quote §107:** But things did not turn out as expected. The eviction of the settlers was followed by a Hamas takeover, first in democratic elections, then in a pre-emptive coup staged to avert an American-backed seizure by Fatah. The immediate Israeli response was to impose an economic blockade on the Gaza Strip, to which Hamas retaliated by firing missiles at the nearest town to the Strip, Sderot. This gave Israel the pretext to use its air force, artillery and gunships. Israel claimed it was firing at the launching areas of the missiles, but in practice this meant anywhere and everywhere in the Strip. (Pappe, biggest prison on

earth) source: Ilan Pappé – The Biggest Prison on Earth – A History of the Occupied Territories (2017).pdf

**Quote §108:** the second Intifada, Israel's 2005 "disengagement" from Gaza, Hamas's 2006 electoral victory, the subsequent international boycott of the Hamas-led government, and Hamas's June 2007 military takeover of Gaza. sss: Sara Roy (2011): Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector

### (17) 2007: Intensified blockade of Gaza (The "Gaza Ghetto")

#### WIKIPEDIA

**Quote §109:** The blockade of the Gaza Strip is a system of restrictions on movement and goods in Gaza imposed by Israel since the early 1990s. After Hamas took over in 2007, Israel significantly intensified existing movement restrictions and imposed a complete blockade on the movement of goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip. In the same year, Egypt closed the Rafah crossing point. The blockade's current stated aim is to prevent the smuggling of weapons into Gaza; previously stated motivations have included exerting economic pressure on Hamas. Human rights groups have called the blockade illegal and a form of collective punishment, as it restricts the flow of essential goods, contributes to economic hardship, and limits Gazans' freedom of movement. The blockade and its effects have led to the territory being called an "open-air prison". (Source: Wikipedia: Blockade of the Gaza Strip – [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockade\\_of\\_the\\_Gaza\\_Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockade_of_the_Gaza_Strip))

**Quote §110:** In June 2007, following the military takeover of Gaza by Hamas, the Israeli authorities significantly intensified existing movement restrictions, virtually isolating the Gaza Strip from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), and the world. (Source: Unicef: Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impact of 15 Years of the Blockade (2022) <https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022>)

**(18) 2023: 7 Oct: Hamas break the blockade, Israel responds  
Gaza strikes back****WIKIPEDIA**

**Quote §110:** On October 7, 2023, Hamas and several other Palestinian militant groups launched coordinated armed incursions from the Gaza Strip into the Gaza Envelope of southern Israel, the first invasion of Israeli territory since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The attacks, which coincided with the Jewish religious holiday Simchat Torah, initiated the ongoing Gaza war. /.../ In total, 1,139 people were killed [on the Israeli side]. /.../ About 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers were taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip. (Source: Wikipedia: October 7 Hamas-led attack on Israel - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October\\_7\\_Hamas-led\\_attack\\_on\\_Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_7_Hamas-led_attack_on_Israel))

KB: Israel retaliated by intensifying its long-standing genocidal activities, in defiance of the biblical injunction "[No more than] An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:24). The death-toll is (state of 2025-08-16): over 60,000. Exchange rate: 60 Palestinian teeth for one Israeli tooth, 60 Palestinian corpses for each Israeli corpse.

**Quote §111:** As of 25 February 2025, over 50,000 people - **48,903** Palestinian and 1,706 Israeli - have been reported killed in the Gaza war according to the official figures of the Gaza Health Ministry, as well as 166 journalists and media workers, 120 academics, and over 224 humanitarian aid workers, a number that includes 179 employees of UNRWA. Scholars have estimated 80% of Palestinians killed are civilians. A study by OHCHR, that verified fatalities from three independent sources, found that 70% of the Palestinian killed in residential buildings or similar housing were women and children. (Source: Wikipedia: Casualties of the Gaza war - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties\\_of\\_the\\_Gaza\\_war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_Gaza_war) )

Alan M Dershowitz - War Against the Jews - How to End Hamas Barbarism (2023) - **covers 7 Oct 2023.pdf**

## Hamas

Outline history of Hamas to be inserted here

s/a Hamas

Date: Fatah accepts Oslo, takes over in West Bank

Date: Hamas rejects Oslo, takes over in Gaza

## **Hamas in title: Books concentrating on Hamas**

These books have yet to be analysed.

1. Alan M Dershowitz - War Against the Jews - How to End Hamas Barbarism (2023) - covers 7 Oct 2023.pdf
2. Anon - The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas - A Document of General Principals and Policies.pdf
3. Ibrahim Natil - Hamas Transformation - Opportunities and Challenges.pdf
4. Paola Caridi - Hamas - From Resistance to Regime.pdf
5. Sara Roy - Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza - Engaging the Islamist Social Sector.pdf
6. Somdeep Sen - Decolonizing Palestine Hamas between the Anticolonial and the Postcolonial.pdf
7. Tareq Baconi - Hamas Contained The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance.pdf
8. Yousef, Mosab Hassan (2010) - Son of Hamas - A Gripping Account of Terror, Betrayal, Political Intrigue, and Unthinkable Choices (A memoir, Autobiography).pdf

New York Times - 7 Oct 2023 Hamas warning - Jericho Walls - Mk2.html

### **NOTE: THE NEW HISTORIANS**

The "New Historians" are referred to as such in the following publications:

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Historians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Historians)

Avi Shlaim - The Iron Wall - Israel and the Arab World (2000).pdf

Avi Shlaim - The War of the Israeli Historians.txt

Avi Shlaim - Three Worlds - Memoirs of an Arab-Jew (2023) - (autobiography).pdf

Baruch Kimmerling - Marginal At the Center - The Life Story of a Public Sociologist (2012).pdf

Bresheeth-Žabner, Haim (2020): An Army Like No Other: How the Israel Defense Force Made a Nation - orig.pdf

Daniel Martin Varisco: Reading Orientalism Said and the Unsaid.pdf

Finkelstein, Norman G (2000): The Holocaust Industry - bibl ref.pdf



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Finkelstein, Norman G (2003): Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict.pdf

Gordis, Daniel (2014): Menachem Begin: The Battle for Israel's Soul.pdf

Jacob Golomb (2004) - Nietzsche and Zion.pdf

Khalidi, Rashid (2006): The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood.pdf

Kimmerling, Baruch, and Migdal, Joel S (2003): The Palestinian People: A History.pdf

Masalha, Nur (2012): The Palestine Nakba, Zed Books Ltd, London, 298 pp.pdf

Masalha, Nur (2013): The Zionist Bible: Biblical Precedent, Colonialism and the Erasure of Memory - orig.pdf

Masalha, Nur (2018): Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History.pdf

Michael Stanislawski (2017)\_ Zionism\_ a very short introduction, 150 pp.pdf

Noam Chomsky - Gaza in Crisis - Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2010.pdf

Noam Chomsky - Propaganda and the Public Mind.pdf

Pappé, Ilan (2006): The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine - orig.pdf

Pappé, Ilan (2011): The Forgotten Palestinians. A History of the Palestinians in Israel.pdf

Pappé, Ilan (2014): The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge.pdf

Rogan, Eugene L, and Shlaim, Avi (eds) (2008): The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948.pdf

Sand, Shlomo (2009): The Invention of the Jewish People.pdf

Sand, Shlomo (2012): The Invention of the Land of Israel - From Holy Land to Homeland.pdf

Suárez, Thomas (2016): State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel.pdf

Thrall, Nathan (2017): The Only Language They Understand: Forcing Compromise in Israel and Palestine.pdf

Tom Segev - 1949\_ The First Israelis.pdf

Tom Segev - One Palestine, Complete\_ Jews and Arabs Under the  
British Mandate.pdf

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Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001

Sayegh, Fayez A (1965): Zionist Colonialism in Palestine

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