

Beyond Israel Versus Palestine: A response to October 7, 2023 and its aftermath

‘Israelis and Palestinians both carry deep pain, complex histories, and legitimate claims’
*Realign For Palestine*¹

Introduction

On October 7, 2023, *Hamas* and Palestinian Islamic *Jihad* committed a series of depraved massacres and abductions in southern Israel. Twelve hundred people were murdered in a single day. Two hundred and fifty-one people were wrenched away as hostages to Gaza, including children. It was the worst atrocity inflicted on the Jewish people since the *Sho’ah*, the Holocaust. And then, a retaliatory war ensued, initiated by Israel against *Hamas*, with calamitous consequences for Gaza and its people. We have witnessed the devastation of that densely populated strip of land as it has been systematically turned to rubble, with mounting casualties, day after day, tens of thousands of people killed, many more left wounded and mutilated, and an entire population trapped, without access to sufficient aid or medical services. Despite ceasefire periods and partial hostage and prisoner releases, the carnage continued for two years because the Israeli government remained determined to destroy *Hamas* at all costs, even at the cost of the lives of the remaining hostages, and *Hamas* remained determined to save itself, even at the cost of the lives of Gaza’s civilian population. A ceasefire was finally agreed on 9 October 2025, and the remaining twenty live hostages subsequently released. The last of the twenty-eight deceased hostages, Ran Gvili, was eventually returned on 26 January 2026 amidst ongoing hostilities.

I have advocated for Israel *and* Palestine over several decades, and find inspiration in the courage and determination of Israelis and Palestinians on the ground to

challenge injustice, 'seek peace and pursue it'.² I continue to be inspired by all those who, since October 7, 2023, have continued to work together in a spirit of coexistence in defiance of the dominant narrative of perpetual conflict in which only one side can 'win'. In this essay, I explore an alternative to this prevailing binary mindset. The story of two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, can be read as an ongoing tale of competing rights to the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea demanding that we choose one 'side' over the other. In this essay, I probe aspects of the hinterland to the conflict that compel us to seek a more complex understanding.

In the quest to uncover this complexity as a Jew, now in my 70s, living in Britain, who has been engaged with the conflict for the whole of my adult life, my focus is on uncovering the plurality of perspectives on the Jewish 'side'. To begin, I present as a backdrop, the sharply contrasting Jewish interpretations of biblical texts about the land that persist to this day, and the differing Jewish reactions to political Zionism when it emerged in the late- nineteenth century. I go on to unravel the knot of 'Zionism' to reveal plural Zionisms, namely: socialist Zionism; cultural Zionism; revisionist Zionism; and bi-national Zionism. I then proceed to focus on bi-national Zionism, both, because it is the forgotten Zionism that lost out when the modern State of Israel was created in May 1948, and also because in the statements and actions of the bi-national Zionists of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, we can see the spiritual precursors of those Israelis today who are working with Palestinians in a spirit of bi-national endeavour for equality, justice, and peace.

After rehearsing, the familiar and tragic litany of milestones in the conflict between the State of Israel and the Palestinians from May 1948 onwards, in the concluding section of my study, I highlight five contemporary Israeli-Palestinian initiatives that are reviving notions of bi-national mutual cooperation and coexistence, and are contributing to the writing of a different life-affirming narrative. This essay is

dedicated to the justice-seekers and peace-makers among the Israelis, both Jewish and Palestinian, and among the Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, in Gaza and the West Bank, who want a different future in which both peoples can thrive and live in peace.

Biblical and liturgical ‘Zion’

‘Zionism’ has a backstory that has roots in the Bible, in texts which reference ‘Zion’ and the ‘land’. These texts continue to be read by Jews today in the communal context of the synagogue. In this section, I begin with the biblical backstory, and the radically different ways in which the biblical texts about the ‘land’ are interpreted by Jews today. I then go on to give examples of how biblical ‘Zion’ lives on in Jewish liturgy and in the annual cycle of Jewish sacred days. The purpose of starting with ‘Zion’ is that it helps us to understand that Zionism is not just another political nationalist ideology like the nationalist ideologies that arose in the nineteenth century and early-twentieth century in the context of empire.

In the biblical context, ‘Zion’ refers to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, to Jerusalem itself, to the habitation of God, as well as to the whole of the land.³ In contemporary Jewish debates in a religious context around ‘Zionism’, the biblical legacy concerning the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea is contested and fraught with binary interpretations. For fundamentalist Jewish settlers, focusing their readings of the Bible on certain passages in the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, the West Bank is biblical ‘Judea and Samaria’, the two kingdoms formed following the death of King Solomon,⁴ and was given by God to the Jewish people. For Jews whose perspective is shaped by the Bible’s ethical teachings, expressed, in particular, in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Micah, the land, which belongs only to God,⁵ is given on loan to the Jewish people, on condition that they keep God’s commandments. So, on the one hand, we read in

Deuteronomy (11.24), 'Every place where you place the sole of your foot shall be yours'; a proclamation echoed in Joshua 1.3. And, on the other hand, in passage after passage, in Deuteronomy, and also in Leviticus, litanies of 'blessings' and 'curses' make it clear that the 'blessings' of life on the land are dependent on righteous conduct, and that 'curses' will befall the people, including the curse of exile, if they 'choose' 'death and evil', rather than 'life and good' (Deut. 30.15-18).⁶ One passage summarises the message (Deut. 30.19-20):

I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you, life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life, that you may live, you and your descendants / to love the Eternal your God, to harken to His Voice and to cleave to Him; for that is your life, and the length of your days; so that you may dwell in the land that the Eternal swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, to give them.

Apart from generalised statements in the *Torah* about settlement in the land beyond the Jordan as a fulfilment of God's promise to the ancestors,⁷ the land provides the context for putting the people's covenantal obligations into practice, not least concerning the *Torah's* ethical prescriptions. For example (Leviticus 19.9-11):

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corner of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. / And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner. I am the Eternal your God.

Both 'the poor' and 'the sojourner' are vulnerable groups dependent on the ethical conduct of others. Elsewhere in the *Torah*, in particular, in Deuteronomy, the list of vulnerable groups is extended to include 'the orphan and the widow'.⁸ The reference to the 'sojourner' is particularly telling. There are thirty-six prescriptions concerning the just treatment of the sojourner in the *Torah*. Two verses further on in Leviticus 19 provide the rationale for this emphasis (19.33-34):

And if a sojourner sojourns with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. /
The sojourner who sojourns with you shall be like the home-born among you, and
you shall love them as yourself; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am
the Eternal your God.

Acknowledging that the biblical texts on Zion are read selectively by some Jews as Divine licence to claim the whole of the biblical land of Israel for the Jewish people, my reading emphasises the *Torah's* ethical teachings in relation to the land. The important point is that ancient representations of Zion and the land live on today in the lives and attitudes of Jews, which inform their approach to the political ideology of Zionism. The *Torah*, and the Bible more broadly, are not just books that lie on bookshelves. They are read in synagogues the world over, week after week, and year after year, as part of the liturgical cycle. Indeed, the reading of the *Torah* on a scroll is the central ritual of *Shabbat* and festival observance, reflecting and enacting the relationship of the Jewish people to the land, across time and place. In addition, Zion is also evoked in the daily and Sabbath liturgy itself. For example, in the first of the three concluding blessings of the *Amidah*, the central prayer of Jewish worship, recited thrice daily, there is a blessing, which in orthodox liturgy, not only calls on God to 'accept' the prayers of the people Israel, but also to restore the service to the inner sanctuary of God's house – a reference to the sacrifices offered in Temple times before the last Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Progressive versions of this blessing do not include reference to the restoration of the Temple on the understanding that the service of sacrifice has been permanently replaced by 'the service of the heart, that is, prayer',⁹ but some prayer books include in its place, hope for Zion. For example:¹⁰

Our living God [*YHWH Eloheinu*] be pleased with your people Israel and listen to their prayers. In your great mercy delight in us so that your presence may rest upon Zion. Our eyes look forward to your return to Zion in mercy! Blessed are You God [*YHWH*], ever restoring Your presence to Zion.

The theme of Zion is also a feature of the annual cycle of sacred days. Apart from the biblical calendar, which encompasses both early summer (*Shavuot*) and autumn (*Sukkot*) harvest festivals, reflecting the ancient agricultural life on the land,¹¹ post-biblical festivals instituted by the early rabbis, include the New Year for Trees (*Tu Bishvat*), enabling the estimation of the age of trees planted in the land,¹² and sacred days focused on mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem and, with it, King Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.¹³ In addition to the annual cycle, the *Torah* also includes teachings concerning the sabbatical year, when after six years of planting the land was to be left fallow in the seventh year,¹⁴ a practice that is still observed in Israel today.

As we have seen, the notion of 'Zion' and the land as the first locus of Jewish life not only features in the history and texts of the Jewish people, but is also woven into the consciousness of Jews to this day, as Jews, albeit from very different vantage points, continue to read the sacred texts from week to week and observe the annual calendar. 'Zionism', that is, a political movement that was forged at the end of the nineteenth century, was not conjured up in a vacuum. Zionism emerged against the backdrop of biblical and liturgical 'Zion'.

Zionism

Herzl and the rise of political Zionism

Zionism arose as a political movement in response to an upsurge in anti-Semitism in post-emancipation Europe. Following the French Revolution of 1789, and with it the destruction of the *ancien regime*, over the course of the next six decades, Jews had the opportunity to become citizens of the various central European countries in which they resided. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, a new wave of race theory anti-Semitism in central Europe made it clear that Jews could not take their

security and safety for granted.¹⁵ Political Zionism offered a solution to the Jews of Europe in the form of the creation of a Jewish nation-state in the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. Significantly, the quest for national sovereignty was put on the Jewish agenda at a time when minority peoples within the Austro-Hungarian Empire – in particular, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, and Slovaks – were seeking self-determination.¹⁶ In this sense, political Zionism, like other ‘nationalisms’ at the time, was a liberation movement. Although, the ‘Zionists’ were ‘Europeans’, they were not, in the mode of European colonialists, seeking to colonise *in order* to dominate, accumulate, and expropriate. Rather, they saw, in the reclamation of the ancient homeland of the Jewish people in which only a remnant of Jews continued to live,¹⁷ the redemption of the Jewish people from centuries of persecution, vilification, and murderous hatred in the diaspora.

In view of this, I challenge the view that Zionism fits into the ‘settler colonial’ analysis presented by contemporary anti-Zionists,¹⁸ not least because the geopolitical reality on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, that goes back more than three and a half thousand years, demonstrates by contrast that the land was constantly subjected to colonisation by other peoples. From 722 BCE through to the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948, the historic Kingdom of Israel, and subsequently, the Kingdom of Judah, were conquered by successive empires: Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Assyrian-Greek, Roman, Christian, and Ottoman. And then, after the collapse of Ottoman rule in 1919, the land was administered by the British in an arrangement known as the British Mandate.¹⁹ No matter how complex their connection with Zion, many Jews throughout the generations have proclaimed with the concluding words of the *Pesach* (Passover) Haggadah: ‘Next Year in Jerusalem!’ and lamented for millennia the loss of the land, just as the Palestinians do today. Indeed, there are only Jews in the diaspora because successive colonial invasions and deportations led to the establishment of Jewish communities in

Babylon (present day Iraq), Alexandria in Egypt, North Africa, Asia, the Iberian Peninsula, Britain, and across continental Europe.

For Theodor Herzl, the chief architect of political Zionism, the establishment of a Jewish state was the only solution to the revival of anti-Jewish persecution in central Europe in the nineteenth century, and the persistence of Jew-hatred in Russia and elsewhere in the world. In his introduction to *The Jewish State*, first published in 1895, two years before the first Zionist Congress was held in 1897, Herzl wrote:²⁰

No one can deny the gravity of the situation of the Jews. Wherever they live in perceptible numbers, they are more or less persecuted. Their equality before the law, granted by statute, has become practically a dead letter. They are debarred from filling even moderately high positions, either in the army, or in any public or private capacity. And attempts are made to thrust them out of business also: “Don’t buy from Jews!”

Attacks in Parliaments, in assemblies, in the press, in the pulpit, in the street, on journeys – for example, their exclusion from certain hotels – even in places of recreation, become daily more numerous. The forms of persecutions varying according to the countries and social circles in which they occur. In Russia, imposts are levied on Jewish villages; in Rumania, a few persons are put to death; in Germany, they get a good beating occasionally; in Austria, Anti-Semites exercise terrorism over all public life; in Algeria, there are travelling agitators; in Paris, the Jews are shut out of the so-called best social circles and excluded from clubs. Shades of anti-Jewish feeling are innumerable. But this is not to be an attempt to make out a doleful category of Jewish hardships...

Everything tends, in fact, to one and the same conclusion, which is clearly enunciated in that classic Berlin phrase: “*Juden Raus!*” (Out with the Jews!).

I shall now put the Question in the briefest possible form: Are we to “get out” now and where to?

Or, may we yet remain? And, how long?

Let us first settle the point of staying where we are. Can we hope for better days, can we possess our souls in patience, can we wait in pious resignation till the princes and peoples of this earth are more mercifully disposed towards us? I say that we cannot hope for a change in the current of feeling. And why not? Even

if we were as near to the hearts of princes as are their other subjects, they could not protect us. They would only feel popular hatred by showing us too much favour. By “too much,” I really mean less than is claimed as a right by every ordinary citizen, or by every race. The nations in whose midst Jews live are all either covertly or openly Anti-Semitic.

Anti-Zionist Jewish responses

For many Jews at the time, the case for a Jewish state presented by Herzl was compelling. Nevertheless, not all Jews in the last days of the nineteenth century agreed. Many Jews in eastern Europe, for example, rejected Jewish nationalism in favour of international socialism, and this led to the establishment of the *Bund* – shorthand for the ‘General Jewish Workers’ Union’ in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia.

²¹ Interestingly, it was at a May Day meeting in Vilna (Vilnius) in 1895, in the same year that *The Jewish State* was published, that the need for a Jewish workers’ organisation was first discussed, and the Bund was founded at a convention in Vilna in October 1897, just two months after the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel. Many Jewish socialists in eastern Europe, therefore, had a different agenda. They were actively anti-Zionist.

There were also religious anti-Zionist voices. Many orthodox groups opposed, and continue to oppose, Zionism because, for them, the redemption of Zion is dependent on the Divine Will and the coming of the Messiah, and should not have been forced by political intervention.²² Furthermore, until the establishment of the State of Israel, Progressive Judaism rejected Zionism from the diasporic standpoint that the people Israel best fulfils the prophetic vision of being ‘a light unto the nations’²³ by living amongst the nations.²⁴

Having presented a brief overview of the debate between Zionist Jews and anti-Zionist Jews at the time that Zionism emerged on the political scene, I now turn to

the different ways in which 'Zionism' was understood in the early years of the Zionist movement, beginning with the three Zionisms that continued to feature after the State of Israel was established in May 1948: socialist Zionism, cultural Zionism, and revisionist Zionism.

Socialist Zionism

Alongside the central European bourgeois version of Zionism exemplified by Theodore Herzl, tens of thousands of eastern European socialist Jews who did not become Bundists, responded to anti-Jewish persecution by immigrating to Palestine, in particular, in what became known as the 'Second Aliyah', the second wave of immigration, following the Tzarist Russian pogroms of 1905 through to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. The socialist Zionists were driven by the desire to realise Zionism, not only by *reclaiming* the ancient homeland, but by *re-creating* the Jewish people through the return to the land. According to socialist Zionist thinking, as a consequence of two thousand years of living as a despised minority in other people's lands, the existence of the Jewish people had become 'unhealthy'. Confined to a limited range of occupations, and excessively 'intellectual', Jews had been unable to realise their *full* human potential. Despite the emergence of a small working class in Russia in the late nineteenth century, the social structure of the Jewish people was *abnormal*. To become 'normal', the Jews had to return to the land where they would not only work the soil, but also work in all the other areas vital to the maintenance of a *total* society.²⁵ A.D. Gordon, who settled in Ottoman Palestine in 1904 at the age of 48 and founded *Hapoel Hatzair* ('The Young Worker') in 1905, expressed the spirit of the quest to re-create the Jewish people in his essay, 'Our Tasks Ahead':²⁶

The Jewish people has been completely cut off from nature and imprisoned within city walls for two thousand years. We have been accustomed to every form of life, except a life of labour – of labour done at our behalf and for its own sake. It will require the greatest effort of will for such a people to become normal again. We lack the principal ingredient for national life. We lack the habit of labour ...

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for it is labour which binds a people to its soil and to its national culture, which in its turn is an outgrowth of the people's toil and the people's labour.

The *socialism* of the socialist Zionists meant that they sought to create cooperative productive arrangements within which all work and all workers would be equal – hence the development of the *kibbutz* movement, which established 'collective' communities, rooted in agricultural labour. However, the imperative of their *Zionism* meant that these social structures would be exclusively Jewish. Socialist Zionists had no intention of exploiting Arab labour as their earlier bourgeois counterparts had done when they had translated their land purchases into private enterprises in the first wave of immigration.²⁷ The huge influx of additional eastern European immigrants, following the First World War – the Third Aliyah of 1919-20 – augmented the material implementation of the socialist Zionist project.²⁸ But the realisation of the ideal of creating a 'normal' Jewish nation came at a high price. The socialist Zionist policy of economic, social, and cultural self-sufficiency necessarily involved isolation from the Arab inhabitants, excluding the possibility of engaging in a cooperative endeavour with them.²⁹ Interestingly, contrary to this approach, and inspired by the biblical injunctions concerning the treatment of one's neighbour and the stranger,³⁰ shortly before he died in 1922, A.D. Gordon drew up statutes for labour settlements, which included a clause that, where new settlements were established, land should be assigned to Arabs to ensure their welfare. He wrote:³¹

Wherever settlements are founded, a specific share of the land must be assigned to the Arabs from the outset. The distribution of sites should be equitable so that not only the welfare of the Jewish settlers but equally that of the resident Arabs will be safe-guarded. The settlement has the moral obligation to assist the Arabs in any way it can. This is the only proper and fruitful way to establish good relations with the Arabs.

But socialist Zionism was ultimately a political movement, principally concerned with establishing a Jewish state. Practised on the ground in *kibbutzim*, collective settlements, it became the dominant ideology and political force of the *yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine before 1948. In 1930, David Ben-Gurion, the Zionist leader who later became the first Prime Minister of the modern State of Israel, co-founded and led *Mapai*, the acronym for *Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Yisrael*, the 'Workers Party of the Land of Israel'. *Mapai* remained in power until it merged in 1968 with smaller parties to become the Israeli Labour Party, *Mifleget Ha-Avodah Ha-Yisraelit*.³² The Labour Party ruled until the right-wing *Likud* party, led by Menachem Begin, won a landslide victory in 1977.³³

Socialist Zionism was the principal form of Zionism during the British Mandate.³⁴ But in that crucial period, it was challenged by two significant and very different Zionist voices: revisionist Zionism and bi-national Zionism. Before turning to socialist Zionism's political challengers, it is important to mention another Zionism: cultural Zionism.

Cultural Zionism

In contrast to the political stance of socialist Zionism, cultural Zionism – *Tziyonut Ruchanit*, 'Spiritual Zionism' in Hebrew – which developed in the early twentieth century, was concerned with creating in Palestine a secular Jewish cultural centre, which would be a spiritual focus for Jews in the diaspora. Its chief exponent, Asher Ginsberg, who called himself *Ahad Ha'am*, 'one of the people', wrote in his 1907 essay, entitled, 'A Spiritual Centre':³⁵

"A centre of our nationality" implies that there is a national *circumference*, which, like every circumference, is much larger than the centre. That is to say, the speaker sees the majority of his people, in the future as in the past, scattered over all the world, but no longer broken up into a number of disconnected parts, because one part – the one in Palestine – will be the centre for them all, and will reunite them

all into a single, complete circumference. When all the scattered limbs of the national body feel the beating of the national heart, restored to life in the home of its vitality, they too once again draw near one to another and welcome the inrush of living blood that will flow from the heart.

“Spiritual” means that this relation of centre to circumference between Palestine and the lands of the Diaspora will be limited of necessity to the spiritual side of life. The influence of the centre will strengthen the national consciousness in the Diaspora...

One of the ways in which Palestine would fulfil its role as the cultural centre of Jewish life was through the revival of the Hebrew language. The leading figure in this revival was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who arrived in Palestine in the First Aliyah in 1881, and became engaged in creating a modern language out of biblical Hebrew.³⁶ Through the efforts of Ben-Yehuda and his supporters, Hebrew became the official language of the Zionist movement, and learning Hebrew became a crucial way for Jewish immigrants from different countries to develop a shared cultural identity.

But what of the Arab inhabitants of the land? Ahad Ha’am travelled from his home in Odessa to Palestine for the first time in 1891.³⁷ Based on his observations during that visit, he wrote an essay, ‘Truth from Eretz Israel’, in which he argued that, for a host of practical reasons, including the resistance of the Arab population, the success of the Zionist movement was in question:³⁸

If the time comes when the life of people in Eretz Israel develops to the point of encroaching upon the native population, they will not easily yield their place.

For Ahad Ha’am, the only approach that could have a chance of success was for Jews to acknowledge the impact of Jewish immigration on the Arab population, and immigrate to Palestine gradually, during which time the land would become a cultural centre of Jewish life.

Before moving on to revisionist Zionism and bi-national Zionism, both of which entered the political stage, it is helpful to spell out, using the language of Ahad Ha'am, the essential difference between political Zionism, in all its varieties, and cultural Zionism. In his essay, *The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem*, published in 1897, the year in which the first Zionist Congress took place in Basel, Ahad Ha'am stressed that developing 'our national culture in Palestine' was essential to the possibility to establishing 'a state which will be a *Jewish State*, and not merely a State of Jews'. He wrote further:³⁹

"Zionism" ... begins its work with political propaganda; *Chibbath Zion* (*Chibbat Tziyon* – 'Love of Zion') begins with national culture, because only through the national culture and for its sake can a Jewish State be established in such a way as to correspond with the will and the needs of the Jewish people.

Revisionist Zionism

I now turn from cultural Zionism to a version of political Zionism in which establishing Jewish power in the land became the central motif. In 1923, Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, a member of the Zionist Executive in the *yishuv*, published a two-part essay, 'The Iron Wall', in which he argued that the Arabs would never cede the land to the Jews, and so a state could only be achieved by military means.⁴⁰ In the same year he also founded a youth movement, *Betar* (*B'rit Yoseph Trumpledor*) with the aim of cultivating a military, nationalistic spirit.⁴¹

The standpoint of David Ben-Gurion was very different. In his address to the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1925, he said:⁴²

Zionism means the building of a state ... This Zionist standpoint calls us to create first of all a Jewish majority.

Unlike Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion believed that any opposition to the Zionist project by the Arab population would be overwhelmed by the new facts of life which would

pertain when the Jews were in a majority. The gradual build-up of an economic and military base would establish Zionism as a *fait accompli*. Jabotinsky disagreed with the Executive's pragmatic approach. He also had a more radical vision: the immediate establishment of a Jewish state.⁴³ To promote this vision, Jabotinsky founded the Revisionist Zionist Alliance in April 1925.

When he left Palestine on a lecture tour in 1929, the British administration refused to allow Jabotinsky to re-enter the country, and, dying from a heart attack in 1940, he never returned. But his influence was powerful, even from afar. In 1931, breaking away from the *Haganah*, the main Zionist paramilitary organisation, the *Irgun Tzvai Leumi* was created as the military arm of Zionist revisionism, with Jabotinsky as commander. The *Irgun* engaged in terrorist activity in their determination to defeat the British. Their most notorious act of terrorism was the bombing of the King David Hotel on 22 July 1946.⁴⁴ Frustrated at the failure of the Executive to define the aim of Zionism as the establishment of a Jewish state, Jabotinsky resigned from the Zionist movement in 1935, and later founded in 1942 the NZO (New Zionist Organisation). Following the establishment of the state, the *Herut* ('Freedom') Party, created by Menachem Begin in June 1948, found its inspiration in revisionist Zionism. In 1988, *Herut* merged with the *Likud* party, established by Begin and Ariel Sharon in 1973 in an alliance with various small right-wing parties. *Likud*, (literally, 'Consolidation'), sharing the same revisionist Zionist philosophy, has been in government on and off since Begin's landslide victory in 1977.⁴⁵ Although in 1988, *Likud* became a unified party, it has continued to rely on right-wing parties to stay in power, as is the case to this day. Significantly, it was during the Labour administration in the 1990s that steps were taken to engage in a peace process with the Palestinian leadership.⁴⁶

The forgotten Zionism: A non-binary lesson from history

Socialist Zionism, cultural Zionism, and revisionist Zionism found their place in the State of Israel. Another Zionism did not survive. In fact, with the establishment of the state, it was confined to near-oblivion. In sharp contrast to both socialist Zionism and revisionist Zionism, bi-national Zionism called for the land to be shared. As I write, October 7, 2023 and its devastating aftermath remains an ongoing catastrophe. What might we learn from the story of bi-national Zionism in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s that might be helpful in the quest to move beyond Israel versus Palestine?

The Balfour Declaration, 1917, and a bi-national Zionist interpretation

As we shall see, in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, bi-national Zionism offered a radically different approach to the competing claims to the land on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean. Interestingly, four years before the formal establishment of a bi-national Zionist movement, Judah Magnes, an American progressive rabbi who became the first President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem,⁴⁷ expressed a bi-nationalist Zionist perspective on the Balfour Declaration. His response gets to the heart of the approach of bi-national Zionism. But before we turn to what Magnes thought of it, we need first to consider the Declaration itself.

Twenty years after the first Zionist Congress of 1897, Lord Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary, wrote a short letter to Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917 in the midst of the Great War. It subsequently became known as the ‘Balfour Declaration’.⁴⁸ Lord Rothschild, who had been buying land in Palestine and establishing vineyards there since the 1880s,⁴⁹ had approached the British government on behalf of the Zionist movement. This is the reply he received:

Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

"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".

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

The Balfour Declaration was understood by the mainstream Zionist movement as a clear expression of British support for the Zionist cause. But what did it actually say? What may be implied by the phrase '*a national home in Palestine*'? A 'national home' is not a state. And '*in Palestine*', suggests that the national home would not necessarily occupy the whole of Palestine. And then there is the very clear statement that the support of the British government was conditional: The Balfour Declaration states clearly that a Jewish 'national home' could not be established at the expense of 'existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. Moreover, the Declaration could not be used by other countries to justify persecution or expulsion of minority Jewish communities in their midst. As it happens, following the establishment of the modern State of Israel, 850,000 Jews were expelled from Arab lands, of which 580,000 fled to Israel.⁵⁰

It is possible to read the Balfour Declaration as a more complex statement than at first appears. Nevertheless, Judah Magnes, understood the power of such a

statement from the British government to provide legitimacy for the Zionist cause at the expense of the Arab inhabitants of the land. He expressed his response in a long letter, which was probably written to his friend and biographer, Norman Bentwich. Magnes wrote:⁵¹

Dear Friend,

You have your mandate for Palestine, and you seem very happy with it, and you ask me, whom you know to be a Zionist, why I am not able to share your rejoicing? ...

The rejoicing ... seems to me to lose sight of two fundamental factors; the one that the inner strength and freedom and the work of the Jewish people is vastly more important than any political decree or mandate even under the best circumstances; and the second, that the present circumstances are not the best, and that the economic imperialism of the British Empire is by no means to be relied on for a favourable interpretation of the Balfour Declaration ...

You speak of "the historic rights" of the Jews to offset the claim of the present-day Arab majority. I am aware of the way in which historic rights and strategic rights and economic rights have made short shrift of the principle of self-determination whenever this suited the needs of the conquerors. Yet I, too, believe in the "historic right" of the Jewish people ... "historic right" means for me: equal opportunities for Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Moslems, Christians to live their lives freely and in proportion to their labour of hand and brain, to achieve power and the direction of affairs ...

Under the Balfour Declaration, the Jews are that privileged class in Palestine – the recipients of political favour from Great Britain. It may appear on the surface to give the Jews a good head-start in their race for control of Palestine. But underneath it lays up for them the hatred and distrust of their neighbours and the liberal forces everywhere. You say that the Jews have had such a raw deal throughout the world and for so many centuries that their being favoured in Palestine ought not to count against them. But I answer that the Jewish people cannot suffer injustice to be done to others even as a compensation for injustice done to them. What the Jews can claim, and all they have a right to claim, is equal opportunity with others to live their Jewish life freely and to secure themselves in the land through labour, through sacrifice.

Understanding that the Balfour Declaration would be used to assert Jewish rights to the land over Arab rights, and so stir up hatred and division, Judah Magnes made the case, back in 1917, for a Zionism that would stand for 'equal opportunity' for both peoples.

Bi-national Zionism from a religious perspective

Before going on to relate the story of the development of bi-national Zionism in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, let us pause and consider another figure who made a significant contribution to the bi-national Zionist movement from an ethical religious perspective: Martin Buber.⁵² Just over twenty years after Judah Magnes wrote that letter in which he responded to the Balfour Declaration, Buber composed an Open Letter to Mahatma Gandhi in response to Gandhi's position that 'Palestine belongs to the Arabs'. A biblical scholar as well as a philosopher, drawing on the *Torah*, in his letter to Gandhi, Buber challenged the political sloganising at that time about the contest between Jews and Arabs, from a religious perspective. But first, he made the case for equality between the Jewish and Arab claims to the land. Buber wrote:⁵³

I belong to a group of people who from the time Britain conquered Palestine have not ceased to strive for the concluding of a genuine peace between Jew and Arab.

By a genuine peace we inferred and still infer that both peoples together should develop the land without the one imposing its will on the other... We considered it a fundamental point that in this case two vital claims are opposed to each other, two claims of a different nature and a different origin which cannot objectively be pitted against one another and between which no objective decision can be made as to which is just, which unjust...

... We considered and still consider it our duty to understand and to honor the claim which is opposed to ours and to endeavor to reconcile both claims.

Buber then tackled Gandhi's position that 'Palestine belongs to the Arabs'. Buber's examination of the assumption underlying Gandhi's statement gets to the heart of the conflict between these two competing claims to the land. He continued:

What do you mean by saying a land belongs to a population? Evidently you do not intend only to describe a state of affairs by your formula, but to declare a certain right. You obviously mean to say that a people, being settled on the land, has so absolute a claim to that land that whoever settles on it without the permission of this people has committed a robbery.

But by what means did the Arabs attain the right of ownership in Palestine? Surely by conquest, and in fact a conquest with intent to settle. You therefore admit that as a result their settlement gives them exclusive right of possession; whereas the subsequent conquests of the *Mamelukes* and the Turks, which were conquests with a view to domination, not to settlement, do not constitute such a right in your opinion, but leave the earlier conquerors in rightful ownership. Thus, settlement by conquest justifies for you a right of ownership of Palestine; whereas a settlement such as the Jewish — the methods of which, it is true, though not always doing full justice to Arab ways of life, were even in the most objectionable cases far removed from those of conquest — does not justify in your opinion any participation in this right of possession.

Buber reveals, as we can see, the myopia that frames any approach to the conflict between two equal claimants in terms of partiality for one claimant over the other. He then went on to expose the absurdity of such a position:

These are the consequences which result from your axiomatic statement that a land belongs to its population. In an epoch when nations are migrating, you would first support the right of ownership of the nation that is threatened with dispossession or extermination; but were this once achieved, you would be compelled, not at once, but after a suitable number of generations had elapsed, to admit that the land "belongs" to the usurper. . .

Finally, Buber placed the contest over the land in the context of a religious perspective that challenges the right of any people to lay claim to any 'portion of the earth':

It seems to me that God does not give any one portion of the earth away, so that the owner may say as God says in the Bible: “For all the earth is Mine” (Exodus 19:5). The conquered land is, in my opinion, only lent even to the conqueror who has settled on it – and God waits to see what he will make of it.

Buber not only makes a case for the just claims of both peoples to the strip of land on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, he also helps us to see what nonsense it is to speak of any people being the rightful owners of a piece of land – unless they genuinely originated in that land, and had not previously lived somewhere else. But more than this, Buber challenges the business of political, polemical argumentation in favour of Divine impartiality. The issue for Buber and the other bi-national Zionists was that ethical considerations demanded that both the Jewish and the Arab claims to the land had to be acknowledged and reconciled, and the only way this could be achieved justly and peacefully was for the land to be shared.

Palestinian nationalist aspirations and the rise of bi-national Zionism

In the story of bi-national Zionism, Magnes and Buber continued to be powerful advocates. But they were not the only ones speaking for an understanding of Zionism that included acknowledgement of the Arab inhabitants of the land. Importantly, by the mid-1920s, bi-national Zionism began to be articulated with a collective voice. Significantly, this did not happen in a vacuum, but rather was influenced by the Palestinian response to Jewish immigration.

Indeed, Palestinian resistance was evident much earlier than the 1920s. Ittay Flescher points out in his recent book, *The holy and the broken*, that Palestinian opposition to political Zionism was articulated from the outset. Flescher draws attention to the letter written by the Mayor of Jerusalem, Yusaf Diya al-Din Pasha al-Khalidi, to Theodore Herzl in 1899 in response to the publication of Herzl’s *The Jewish State*. In his letter, Mayor al-Khalidi, while acknowledging that Palestine was the ancient

homeland of the Jewish people, wrote: 'Palestine is now an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, and what is more serious, it is inhabited by people other than only Israelites'. He concluded: 'in the name of God, let Palestine be left alone'.⁵⁴

Writing twenty years before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Mayor al-Khalidi could not anticipate the rise of Palestinian nationalist aspirations in response. When an independent Kingdom ruled by Emir Faisal was established in Syria after the Paris Peace Conference meetings of 1919 and 1920 that followed the end of the Great War,⁵⁵ frustrated by Faisal's dealings, both with the British and with the Zionists, Palestinians became determined to fight their own cause. At the Third Palestinian Congress in Haifa in December 1920⁵⁶, self-determination and opposition to the idea of a Jewish national home were the main items on the agenda, and the delegation appointed to negotiate with the British government at the Fourth Congress (May 1921) were authorised to speak only on behalf of the Palestinians.⁵⁷

Significantly, while these moves were being made in the political arena, there were riots in Tel Hai, Metula, and Jerusalem in 1920, and, at the beginning of May 1921, seven days of rioting in Jaffa that began with a confrontation between groups of Jews, sparked anti-Jewish violence and then Jewish retaliation, resulting in one hundred deaths.⁵⁸ The 1921 Zionist Congress at Karlsbad responded to the conflict by proclaiming the desire of the Jewish people to 'live with other people in friendship and mutual respect, and together with them to develop the homeland coming to both into a flourishing community which would ensure to each peoples an undisturbed national development'.⁵⁹ However, no concrete attempts were made to enter into negotiation with the leaders of the Palestinian national movement.

It is in this context that the bi-national Zionists began to challenge directly the mainstream Zionist leadership. Martin Buber, for example, a delegate at the

Congress for the German socialist Zionist party, *Hitachdut* ('Union'), who became one of the leading bi-nationalists, criticised Chaim Weizmann for negotiating only with Faisal.⁶⁰ Buber also drafted a resolution on the Arab question which called on his fellow Zionists to adopt an alternative strategy, but it was amended out of all recognition.⁶¹ In his notes from the Congress, Buber wrote:⁶²

The land already contains a non-Jewish population without whose expressed or tacit agreement all our accords with a third-party are likely to encounter difficulties. We are therefore obliged immediately to begin direct negotiation with this population on social and economic issues, and, in so far as the matter depends on the nation which constitutes a decisive majority of that population, on general political issues as well.

During the quiet period which followed the 1920 to 1921 riots, Arthur Ruppin, a member of the Executive of the Zionist movement, who later initiated a bi-nationalist organisation, expressed similar concerns. He wrote in his diary on 31 December 1924:⁶³

What continually worries me is the relationship between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Superficially, it has improved, in as much as there is no danger of pogroms, but the two peoples have become more estranged in their thinking. Neither has any understanding of the other, and yet I have no doubt that Zionism will end in catastrophe if we do not succeed in finding a common platform.

For some time, Ruppin had been feeling less and less able 'to continue working for the Zionist movement' if it did not acknowledge the Arab inhabitants of the land and work together with the Arabs.⁶⁴ On 26 April 1925, Ruppin invited some like-minded people to his house, and the group which gathered became the founder members of *Brit Shalom*, the first Zionist organisation exclusively dedicated to a bi-national objective. The group included: Robert Weltsch (editor of *Judische Rundschau*, 'Jewish Review'), Felix Rosenblat (later, Pinhas Rosen, a cabinet minister), Jacob Thon (Ruppin's colleague at the Settlement Department), Sprinzak (a central figure

in *HaPoel HaTzair* – ‘The Young Worker’ – and later speaker in the Knesset), Kalvarisky (then Director of the Arab Department of the Palestine Zionist Executive), as well as some intellectuals from the Hebrew university: Hugo Bergmann, Ernst Simon, Gershom Scholem, and Hans Kohn.⁶⁵ Buber became a member of the German chapter.⁶⁶

After publishing its Statutes of Association, Ruppin made the objectives of *Brit Shalom* clear when he addressed the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna in August (18th-31st) 1925. He declared:⁶⁷

Palestine will be a state of two nations. Gentlemen, this is a fact, a fact which many of you have not yet sufficiently realised.

Assuming that Britain would not relinquish its control – which turned out to be an incorrect assumption – *Brit Shalom* envisaged the creation of a constitutional arrangement within the framework of the Mandate whereby both Jews and Arabs could enjoy political and civil equality. Weltsch expressed the implications of this bi-national plan, and the thinking which lay behind it, in an article he wrote in *Judische Rundschau* on 14 August 1925:⁶⁸

There may be a people without a country, but there is no country without a people. Palestine was not given to us as a national home but we are to build a national home in Palestine. Palestine has a population of 700,000 souls, a people who have lived in the country for centuries and rightfully consider this country their fatherland and homeland. That is a fact which you must take into account. Palestine will always be inhabited by two peoples, the Jewish and the Arab. Which of them represents 51% and which 49% is irrelevant. The future of Palestine, its peaceful development and welfare can only be maintained by giving it a political system in which both peoples may, with equal rights, live side-by-side, bound through the natural ties of communication, economic and cultural relations. We do not want a Jewish state, but a bi-national Palestinian community.

The impact of the 1929 Arab riots on the development of bi-national Zionism

The summer of 1929 saw a wave of violent Arab riots against twenty Jewish communities across Palestine, including a massacre of Jews in Hebron on 24 August 1929, which left sixty-seven dead, scores wounded, homes pillaged, and synagogues ransacked.⁶⁹ Apart from the general hostility of the Arab population towards Jewish immigration to Palestine, the particular trigger was a Jewish demonstration on 15 August 1929 at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, in protest against the restricted access of Jews to the surviving wall of the Jewish Temple that had been destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE.

The British government's investigation into the causes of the 1929 riots was two-fold. The Shaw Commission Report published in January 1930 found that the basic cause of the violence, 'without which in our opinion disturbances either would not have occurred or would have been little more than a local riot, is the Arab feeling of animosity and hostility towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political national aspirations and fear for the economic future', combined with fear of Jewish immigrants 'not only as a menace to their livelihoods but a possible overlord of the future'.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, the government's Hope Simpson Report addressed immigration, land settlement, and development issues that had been highlighted by the 1929 riots. These reports were followed by the Passfield White Paper on 20 October 1930, which stated that Britain's obligations to Jews and Arabs were of equal weight, that the economic development of the Arab population had been negatively impacted by Jewish immigration, and that a Legislative Council should be established to represent the Arab majority.⁷¹

In the end, the White Paper was unsuccessful. But nonetheless, it provided important testimony of the extent to which Britain's attitude to the future of Palestine had changed in response to its newfound awareness of the consequences of Zionist settlement for the Arab population.

The 1929 riots had a significant impact on *Brit Shalom*. While its members were united in their commitment to the bi-national *idea*, a fundamental disagreement emerged on the question of *action*. The disagreement came to a head over the British government's proposal of a Legislative Council in response to the riots. Although Ruppin, who chaired *Brit Shalom*, had formulated a constitutional programme for a bi-national state with an upper chamber consisting of equal numbers of Jews and Arabs,⁷² he did not feel, following the Arab riots, that the political climate was ripe for a practical policy, and did not think that *Brit Shalom* should 'enter the political arena' and 'break faith with the *yishuv*' by addressing the Arabs 'directly'.⁷³ Ruppin's view of the role of *Brit Shalom* did not prevail, and so he resigned his chairmanship.⁷⁴

While the August 1929 riots provoked a difference of opinion within *Brit Shalom*, they also deepened the division between the philosophies of revisionist Zionism and bi-national Zionism. In a speech he gave in Tel Aviv in December 1929, Jabotinsky declared that it was 'a dangerous fallacy to seek a solution to the Arab confrontation through a "rapprochement" with the Arabs' because it was 'an organic and historic impossibility'.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, after Ruppin's departure, *Brit Shalom* entered a new phase which included making public statements of their views, preparing memoranda for presentation to official bodies, and an attempt to organise a Jewish-Arab Workers Union, together with *Poale Zion Smol* ('Left-wing Zionist Workers'), a heterogeneous socialist party.⁷⁶ Adopting a bold socialist, bi-national slogan – 'from national separation to international unity! From the estrangement of nations to the fraternity of workers!' – unfortunately, the Jewish Arab Workers Union did not get off the ground. Although the Union's organisers found six hundred Jewish workers and one hundred Arab workers who were willing to join, their application for official registration made to the Governor of Jaffa on 24 April 1930 was turned down

for reasons of ‘internal security’ (the British authorities suspected *Poale Zion Smol* of being communists).⁷⁷

Brit Shalom was not the only source of bi-nationalist initiatives. In the aftermath of the 1929 riots, Judah Magnes devoted the opening speech of the academic year of the Hebrew University on 18 November to expressing his commitment to bi-nationalism. He also took the daring step of entering into negotiations with the Arab nationalist leadership in Damascus, who had put forward proposals for accommodation of British and Arab interests even before the riots.⁷⁸ Magnes promptly began a campaign to convince the Zionist leadership and the Jewish public to accept the proposals as a basis for negotiations and settlements.⁷⁹ Not surprisingly, the leadership did not take kindly to Magnes breaking with Zionist discipline by acting on his own initiative and entering into negotiations with Arab leaders. He was isolated and vilified, but nevertheless, he did not abandon his position, and 5 December 1930 saw the launch of a pamphlet, entitled, ‘Like All the Nations?’ in which he answered his critics.⁸⁰ In this pamphlet, Magnes made a clear distinction between mainstream Zionism and bi-nationalist Zionism – a Zionism which does not attempt to realise the needs of Jewish people for self-determination at the expense of other people’s right to self-determination. He wrote:⁸¹

What is Zionism? What does Palestine mean for us? ... I can answer for myself and almost in the same terms that I've been in the habit of using for many years:
Immigration
Settlement of the land.
Hebrew life and culture.

If you can guarantee these for me, I should be willing to yield the Jewish state and the Jewish majority; on the other hand, I would agree to a legislative assembly, together with a democratic political regime so carefully planned and worked out that the above three fundamentals could not be infringed. Indeed, I should be willing to pay almost any price for these, especially since this price would in my opinion also secure tranquility and mutual understanding.

What I am driving at is to distinguish between two policies. The one maintains that we can establish a Jewish home here through the suppression of the political aspirations of the Arabs, and therefore a home necessarily established on bayonets over a long period ... The other policy holds that we can establish a home here only if we are true to ourselves as democrats and internationalists, thus being just and helpful to others ... and intelligently and sincerely at work to find a *modus vivendi et operandi* with our neighbours.

Brit Shalom folded in 1933, but Magnes continued making his own particular contribution to finding a ‘*modus vivendi et operandi*’ with the Arabs, and his successful ventures included organising a number of meetings between Arab leaders and the Zionist leadership.⁸²

The impact of the 1936 Arab riots on bi-nationalist Zionist activity

April 1936 saw the outbreak of a full-scale Arab revolt, marked by an Arab General Strike from April to October 1936, and violent attacks against infrastructure and civilian targets, such as Jewish communities and agriculture. It was in the atmosphere of heightened urgency, that the initiatives of the bi-nationalists became increasingly important. In April 1936, following the outbreak of the Arab revolt, some former members of *Brit Shalom* founded a new group called *Kedma Mizracha* (‘Towards the East’). The main aim of *Kedma Mizracha* was to attempt to foster Jewish-Arab cooperation on the understanding that the two peoples represented ancient branches of the same family. Its principles were:⁸³

1. Political understanding and economic development as preconditions for the development of both peoples in Palestine;
2. Opposition to chauvinist propaganda on both sides;
3. Opposition to political or economic separation which obstructs constructive development of mutual understanding;
4. True peace to be based on a democratic-national basis regardless of numbers;
5. Friendly relations with all peoples;
6. The association to be non-political;

7. Readiness for cooperation with a Jewish Agency and National Executive.

Unfortunately, *Kedma Mizracha's* non-political line meant that it did not have any potential for realising its principles and it soon collapsed.⁸⁴ Only a month later, a group of five men, including Judah Magnes, who had not previously worked with others in pursuit of a national agreement between Jews and Arabs, got together with the specific objective of negotiating with Arab leaders.⁸⁵ In early June 1936, having developed proposals for peace and Arab-Jewish reconciliation, the Group of Five contacted the Jewish Agency for Palestine that had been established by the World Zionist Organisation in 1929 to encourage immigration of Jews to the *yishuv*.⁸⁶ They did not receive a response.⁸⁷ On 14 July 1936, the Five sent a memorandum to the Jewish Agency. Again, the Jewish Agency failed to respond.⁸⁸

A missive from Ben-Gurion to the Jewish Agency on 9 June suggests the reason for the silence. He wrote:⁸⁹

They will mislead the Arabs into thinking that the Jewish people will abandon Eretz Yisrael and thus intensify Arab intransigence. It is not in order to establish peace in the country that we need an agreement ... peace for us is a means. The end is the complete establishment of Zionism. Only for that we need an agreement. The Jewish people will never agree to, and dare not agree to, any agreement not designed for that purpose ... a comprehensive agreement is undoubtedly out of the question now. For only after total despair on the part of the Arabs, despair that will come not only from the failure of the disturbances and attempt at rebellion, but as a consequence of our growth in the country, may the Arabs finally acquiesce in a Jewish Eretz Yisrael.

Towards 'Partition' and the response of the bi-national Zionists

The 1936 Arab Revolt generated a new political reality. Despite Ben-Gurion's intransigent response to the efforts of the Group of Five, the mainstream Zionist movement was forced to begin to consider 'compromise' solutions. The revolt also provided the government with further evidence that the feelings of the Arab

population could not be ignored. The Peel Commission, set up immediately in response to the riots, reported in July 1937 with a proposal that Palestine be partitioned into three zones: an Arab state, a Jewish state, and a neutral territory containing the sacred sites.⁹⁰ Although the proposal was rejected by the government – mainly on the grounds that the concrete proposals for the division of the land were too complicated⁹¹ – the idea of partition did become a highly debated topic within the Zionist movement.⁹² Indeed, at the Twentieth Congress in Vienna in August, a resolution concerning partition formulated by Chaim Weizmann was put high on the agenda, and when it came to the vote, 300 delegates voted in favour with only 158 against. Of course, part of the urgency felt among delegates at the Congress, and their readiness to consider compromise proposals, had as much to do with the worsening situation of the Jews in Europe as it did with the hostility of the Palestinians as expressed in the 1936 revolt.⁹³ Not surprisingly, the bi-nationalists were dismayed by the partition proposals. At the Jewish Agency Council which met during the Congress, Judah Magnes made it clear that his primary concern was peace. He declared:⁹⁴

The proposal we are making is this: before taking any other step let us give the committee the holy task to try to reach a peaceful solution, by which Palestine will remain undivided and will be neither a Jewish nor an Arab state, but a Jewish-Arab state under the protection of the great state, Great Britain ... what is the state which is offered? It is a state that will bring according to my perception, war with the Arabs ... our proposal speaks of setting up a bi-national state with the agreement of the Arabs, the Jews and the British government – a state which will form a commonwealth in which the various nations will live in peace with one another.

The Woodhead Commission was appointed in the wake of the disturbances in February 1938 with the specific brief of investigating the possibilities of partition. Magnes prepared memoranda to the Woodhead Commission urging them to consider a bi-national solution.⁹⁵ Another White Paper followed, and the government

also announced that it would be holding a conference in London at which it hoped to bring together representatives of the Jewish Agency, and Arabs from among the Palestinians and from the neighbouring states, and then added the ominous warning that unless an agreement was reached the government would be obliged to impose a settlement'.⁹⁶ The 'Round Table' conference took place in London (7 February – 17 May 1939), but given that the government had to sit separately with the Jewish and Arab representatives, since the latter would not share a table with the former, it was not exactly a 'round table' discussion.⁹⁷

The White Paper published after the conference proposed the setting up of a Palestinian state in which Jews would remain a minority, and foresaw the eventual cessation of Jewish immigration and the severe reduction of land sales to Jews.⁹⁸ The reaction inside the Zionist movement was one of stunned amazement. A statement issued by the Jewish Agency indicated that no recognition whatsoever was being made by the Zionist movement of the role which mainstream Zionist policy had played in generating the conflict between Jews and Arabs that had culminated in Britain's abandonment of its support for the Zionist cause. The final paragraph declared:⁹⁹

It is in the darkest hour of Jewish history the British government proposes to deprive the Jews of their last hope and close the road back to their homeland. It is a cruel blow, doubly cruel because it comes from the government of a great nation which has extended a helping hand to the Jews and whose position must rest on foundations of moral authority and international good faith. This blow will not subdue the Jewish people. The historic bond between the Jewish people and the land of Israel cannot be broken. The Jews will never accept the closing to them of the gates of Palestine nor let their national home be converted into a ghetto. The Jewish Pioneers, who, during the past three generations have shown their strength in the upbuilding of a derelict country, will from now on display the same strength in defending Jewish immigration, the Jewish home, and Jewish freedom.

The failure of the London ‘Round Table’ conference in reaching agreement between Jews and Arabs had the effect of bringing together the members of the different groups which had supported bi-nationalism over the past fifteen years into one association: The League for Jewish Arab Rapprochement. The League included former *Brit Shalom* and *Kedma Mizracha* members, leaders of the socialist groups, *HaShomer HaTzair* (‘The Young Guard’), and *Poale Zion Smol* (‘Left-wing Zionist Workers’), members of *Aliyah Chadashah* (the ‘New Immigration’ political group whose membership was mostly German immigrants), individuals from the Zionist Labour Party, *Mapai*, and other unaffiliated Zionists.¹⁰⁰ Initially, the League focused on writing. In March 1939 the League published a pamphlet entitled, *Al Parashat Darkenu* (‘At the Crossing of Our Ways’), which included an article strongly critical both of the policy towards the Palestinians and of the attitude of the Jewish population.¹⁰¹ Buber, who played a prominent role in the founding of the League, contributed a Hebrew translation of his previous writings on the Arab question.¹⁰² On 1 and 15 April, a gathering of contributors and sympathisers met to discuss the issues raised in the pamphlet, and then after the publication of the White Paper, a second collection of articles appeared, *Darkenu* (‘Our Way’), which included a contribution from Nigib Yussaf, an Arab socialist.

But the League did not confine its activities to publishing. Committed to the aim of ‘economic advancement, freedom of national culture and social development of both nations together’, the League’s agenda included:¹⁰³

1. Carrying on investigations for concrete plans to materialise the aim;
2. Information and propaganda ...;
3. Explanation of the importance of studying Arabic in Jewish schools and Hebrew in Arab schools;
4. Organising lessons, seminars, lectures, etc., in order to get to know about the life of one nation by the other ...;

Beyond Israel Versus Palestine: A response to October 7, 2023 and its aftermath (Jan 2026)

A chapter from *Breaking Binaries – A progressive rabbi engages with contemporary issues* by Elli Tikvah Sarah

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5. Negotiating and getting in touch with various institutions and groups of both nations in order to awaken them to act in the direction of the aims of the League ...;
6. Encouragement and development of economic and cultural ties between Palestine and neighbouring countries.

With the publication of the White Paper, the mutual exclusivity of Arab and Jewish interests gained 'official' sanction, but the bi-nationalists did not give up working for reconciliation. By the request of the League, a meeting took place with the Jewish Agency on 25 October 1939 at which Dr Susan Hirsch, one of the League's leading members, put forward a proposal for a committee to be established to investigate the conflict.¹⁰⁴ The committee set up three weeks later had its first meeting on 16 January 1940. Of the seven members, four of them, including Magnes, were bi-nationalists. Initially, the committee was split, but in the end the bi-nationalist view prevailed. When the group made their report in August 1942, they advocated a bi-national solution to the 'political problem of Palestine'.¹⁰⁵

But this minor victory was short-lived. The committee's report had come too late and was shelved.¹⁰⁶ Three months earlier, with the news of the Nazis' 'final solution of the Jewish problem' just beginning to come out of Europe, the Extraordinary Zionist Congress meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in New York had passed a resolution demanding the creation of 'a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine'.¹⁰⁷ Although this had been the objective of the mainstream Zionist movement from its inception, the 'Biltmore programme', as it was called, was the first public declaration of the determination to achieve this goal. What is more, the terms of reference for establishing a Jewish homeland had changed dramatically. What previously had primarily been an issue of 'historical rights', had now also become one of *present* necessity – as the last words of the resolution made abundantly clear:¹⁰⁸

The conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; the Jewish agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of the unoccupied and uncultivated land; and Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world. Then and only then will the age-old wrong to the Jewish people be righted.

One of the immediate consequences of the Biltmore Programme was that all those committed to bi-nationalism across the political spectrum joined with the League to challenge what they saw as a new departure in official Zionist policy. On 23 June 1942, the bi-nationalists produced a document calling for 'a bi-national regime in Palestine' which would: guarantee autonomy to both Jews and Arabs; recognise 'the right of Jews to return to their historic homeland'; and ensure the 'non-domination of one people over the other regardless of numerical relationship between the two peoples in Palestine'. In addition, the document declared the League's intention 'to fight within the *yishuv* and the Zionist movement for a policy of rapprochement and cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs'.¹⁰⁹ In producing this document, the League had succeeded in formulating a programme which was an alternative, both, to the creation of an Arab state (as indicated by the White Paper) and to the demand for a Jewish state (as set out in the Biltmore Programme). Further, the bi-national option not only had the backing of independent bi-nationalists, it was endorsed by *HaShomer HaTzair* – which had considerable strength and prestige in the *yishuv* – and several small parties.¹¹⁰

The League benefited hugely from the friends and allies which had joined its ranks. At the same time, as entire parties had joined *en bloc*, it lost some of its political independence. To resolve this issue, Magnes took the initiative in the formation of a distinct bi-national political grouping. He convened a meeting of about one hundred people on 11 August 1942 at which a new party was established, *Ichud* ('Unity').

Apart from Magnes, the Executive Committee included Henrietta Szold and Martin Buber. *Ichud's* programme, which expressed the party's commitment to 'a government in Palestine based upon equal rights for the two peoples', was published on 3 September.¹¹¹

Not surprisingly, the devastating plight of the Jews of Europe made it impossible for *Ichud* to resist the pressure to conform with official Zionist policy and endorse the right of Jews to unhampered immigration. Indeed, the Inner General Council of the Zionist movement proposed that the members of *Ichud* be expelled from the movement if they did not give this endorsement. Although this proposal was rejected, *Ichud* was asked to clarify its position. It did so, releasing a statement on 5 October (which was published in the *Palestine Post* on 7 October), declaring that it was opposed to the 'fixation' of the Jews as a permanent minority in Palestine, and that *Ichud* favoured 'the creation of a political and economic situation enabling the absorption of the greatest possible number of immigrants into Palestine'.¹¹²

While both the League and *Ichud* continued to argue for a bi-national solution during the last years of the war, very few people were prepared to listen to their arguments.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the League and *Ichud* did not give up. When an Anglo-American Committee was set up in 1946 to study 'the Palestine situation and the problem of Jewish displaced persons in Europe', the bi-nationalists took their opportunity of putting their case before a new audience.¹¹⁴ Breaking Zionist discipline, three representatives of *Ichud* – Magnes, Buber, and Smilansky – appeared before the Committee in Jerusalem on 15 March 1946.¹¹⁵ Interestingly, in addition to this independent bi-national initiative, *Hashomer HaTzair* submitted a memorandum to the Committee, entitled: The case for a bi-national Palestine.¹¹⁶

When the *Ichud* delegation put the case for a bi-national state before the Anglo-American Committee, Buber began by explaining the bi-nationalists' understanding of 'the meaning of Zionism'.¹¹⁷ He declared:¹¹⁸

Independence of one's own must not be gained at the expense of another's independence. Jewish settlement must oust no Arab peasant, immigration must not cause the political status of the present inhabitants to deteriorate, and must continue to ameliorate their economic condition. The tradition of justice is directed towards the future of the country as a whole, as well as towards the future of the Jewish people. From it and from the historical circumstance that there are Arabs in Palestine springs a great, difficult and imperative task, the new form of the age-old task. A regenerated Jewish people in Palestine has not only to aim at living peacefully together with the Arab people, but also at a comprehensive cooperation with it in opening and developing the country. Such cooperation is an indispensable condition for the lasting success of the great work of the redemption of this land.

The basis of such cooperation offers ample space for including the fundamental rights of the Jewish people to acquire soil and to immigrate without any violation of the fundamental rights of the Arab people. As to the demand for autonomy, it does not, as a greater part of the Jewish people thinks today, necessarily lead to the demand for a 'Jewish State' or for a 'Jewish majority'. We need for this land as many Jews as possible economically to absorb, but not in order to establish a majority against a minority. We need them because great, very great forces are required to do the unprecedented work. We need for this land a solid, vigorous, autonomous community, but not in order that it should give its name to a state; we need it because we want to raise Israel and Eretz Yisrael to the highest level of productivity that it can be raised to ...

The bi-nationalists clearly had a considerable impact on the deliberations of the Committee: On 20 April, they gave their report proposing the establishment of a 'Trustee System in Palestine', which set out three recommendations:¹¹⁹

- I That Jew shall not dominate Arab and Arab shall not dominate Jew in Palestine.
- II That Palestine should be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state.

III That the form of Government, ultimately established, shall, under international guarantees, fully preserve the interests in the Holy Land of Christendom and of the Moslem and Jewish faiths.

Thus, Palestine must ultimately become a state which guards the rights and interests of Moslems, Jews and Christians alike; and accords the inhabitants as a whole, the fullest matter of self-government consistent with the three paramount principles set forth above.

Ichud was delighted with the Committee's endorsement of bi-nationalism,¹²⁰ although it regretted that the report did not make any concrete constitutional proposals,¹²¹ and in May the party convened a conference to work out its future activities in view of the new development.¹²² However, the British government disregarded the report's recommendations, including the only one endorsed by the Zionist movement, which called for the immediate admittance of 100,000 refugees into Palestine.¹²³

While the 'official' situation was in a state of deadlock (yet again), the bi-nationalists won a small – if short-lived – victory for their continued devotion to Arab-Jewish rapprochement against all odds, when the League managed to reach an agreement with an Arab organisation called *Falastin al-Jedida* ('The New Palestine'). The organiser of the group was Fauzi Darwish el-Husseni, a cousin of the Mufti who had long been committed to a bi-national solution.¹²⁴ On 11 November 1946, five members of *Falastin al-Jedida* – including el-Husseni – signed a document with the League in which they declared their support of one another, and *Falastin al-Jedida* expressed its commitment to:¹²⁵

work for a solution of its political problem to an Arab Jewish agreement on the basis of the principles: Full corporation between the two nations in all fields; political equality between the two nations in Palestine as a means of obtaining the independence of the country; immigration according to the absorptive capacity of

the country and the joining of the shared and independent Palestine in an alliance with the neighbouring countries in the future.

It was a remarkable document: not only because of its signatories, but also because of the emphasis the agreement placed on the *independence* of the bi-national state – something which had not been characteristic of previous Jewish bi-nationalist proposals. However, events within less than a fortnight demonstrated that *Falastin al-Jedida* was as out of step with mainstream Arab feeling, as the League and *Ichud* were on the Jewish side: on 23 November 1946, Fauzi Darwish el-Husseni was murdered.¹²⁶

In the summer of 1946, as the deadlock continued, Buber travelled to London to take part in a 'Round Table' discussion on the Palestine problem. The meeting was chaired by Richard Crossman, a Labour MP who had been a member of the Anglo-American Committee. Edward Atiyah, a Lebanese Christian who had the Arab office in London, also participated.¹²⁷ But the discussion could do nothing to remedy a conflict beyond its power to control, and over the next few months the internal security situation in Palestine continued to deteriorate¹²⁸ to the extent that, in February 1947, the British government decided to make a request to the United Nations to relieve it of its mandate.¹²⁹

The United Nations responded to the request, and, on 15 May, the General Assembly approved the establishment of a committee of eleven, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), to investigate the Palestine problem and make proposals for a settlement.¹³⁰ Both *Ichud* and the League gave evidence to UNSCOP.¹³¹ Making his last appeal, Magnes said:¹³²

The question is what can be imposed with the least difficulty? That is the way I would like to formulate it. I think partition cannot be imposed. This is going to create war. The majority of the Arabs are against it. Large numbers of Jews, both

extremists and moderates, and among the religious group are against it. It is going to create irredeemable¹³³ and these outbursts. The national state, however, is here. We are a bi-national state. We do not have to draw any new boundaries... It would hardly have to be imposed. It will come into being ... There is no tabula rasa. We are here in this country with two peoples ... I say this, that as long as Palestine is inhabited by two peoples and as long as we have not had one or two generations of experience, and of experiment, of hit and miss, of working things out together – I say the Jewish people will have to do without a state as it has done without [a state] for many hundreds of years.

The bi-nationalists did not succeed in persuading UNSCOP to their point of view. The majority report that came out on 1 September 1947 opted for partition. The minority report signed by the Indian, Iranian, and Yugoslav members of UNSCOP, proposed a bi-national federal state, but with the express provision that Jews would remain a minority.¹³⁴ The majority report partition plan was officially adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 29 November 1947.¹³⁵ Although, the partition of Palestine amounted to only a minimum fulfilment of 'Biltmore', the mainstream Zionists were ecstatic.

Bi-nationalism seemed a lost cause. But the bi-nationalists did not fade into oblivion after the UN vote. Indeed, when virtual civil war broke out in response to the UN decision, it became clear that bi-nationalism still had a role to play. On 29 January, the daily *Haaretz* newspaper published an open letter written by Buber, Magnes, and D.W. Senator – an administrator of the Hebrew University and *Ichud* – appealing to their fellow Jews to refrain from violence.¹³⁶ *Ichud* also responded to Britain's announcement in mid-December that it would terminate its Mandate as early as 15 May 1948. Convinced that partition would mean certain war, *Ichud* attempted to warn the mainstream Zionist movement of the dangers of pursuing statehood, and on 1 April 1948, Buber published an article in *Be'ayot HaZeman* ('Problems of the

Time'), the organ of *Ichud*, in which he challenged the 'fundamental error' which saw Jewish statehood as in the interest of Zionism.¹³⁷

Needless to say, the warnings of the bi-nationalists were not heeded. Indeed, despite mounting pressure from the Western powers to postpone the creation of the state, with the lone exception of the bi-nationalists, all the disparate elements of the *yishuv* – including the ultra-orthodox *Agudat Yisrael* ('Union of Israel') – were united in their determination to declare independence,¹³⁸ and on 14 May 1948, on the eve of the end of the British mandate, Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel.

Although the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel meant the final defeat of the bi-national option, the bi-nationalists still saw a role for their version of Zionism in the new state. In the spring of 1949, Buber delivered a speech to an *Ichud* gathering, in which he concluded that, although the programme of bi-nationalism may have been rejected, the central cause of *Ichud* – to promote cooperation between Jews and Arabs – remained both valid and urgent.¹³⁹ Looking with dismay on the developments within the state during its first year, he declared:¹⁴⁰

We, for whom the phrase 'Zion shall be redeemed in Justice' (Isaiah 1:27) is not simply a poetic phrase, and not an idealistic exaggeration, but a prophecy of truth, we await the day, mid acute pain because of what has happened and continues to happen, and with renewed faith in our cause, for a new stage in our mission. It is difficult for us to speak – and I confess that it was even difficult for me to begin speaking to you this evening my friend – but we are forbidden to keep silent ...

The lessons of the bi-national Zionist movement

By any of the principal criteria by which success is generally measured, bi-national Zionism failed: it failed to win the active adherence of more than a minority of

Zionists, and it failed to achieve its main objective: the creation of a bi-national homeland for both Jews and Arabs. Reflecting on their efforts today, however, it is clear that their message remains relevant. The story of bi-national Zionism during the mandatory period teaches us that the quest for Zion may not be exclusive. The Zionists who worked for a bi-national homeland were not less passionately committed to Zionism than their mainstream colleagues, they simply could not help but acknowledge the presence of another people in the land, equally committed to realising its nationalist aspirations. Indeed, we might argue that the bi-nationalists were more committed Zionists – both more idealistic, and more pragmatic, too: after all, not only did they believe that ‘Zion shall be redeemed in Justice’, but they understood that, unless Zionists made every effort to reach an agreement with the Palestinians and recognise their claims to the land, the Jewish homeland would be doomed.

Israel versus Palestine? The bi-nationalist Zionists saw no such opposition. On the contrary. From the time that Judah Magnes reflected on the Balfour Declaration in 1917 through to the eve of the creation of the modern State of Israel thirty years later, bi-nationalist Zionism envisaged the return to Zion in the context of a shared Jewish-Arab bi-national homeland.

As we shall see in the final section of this chapter, a bi-national homeland has recently become a shared vision of Jewish and Palestinian Israelis who are working together to create a different reality beyond the conflict that has been continuous since the establishment of the State of Israel. Before we turn to consider the other Israel-Palestine of mutual cooperation and coexistence, let us recall, briefly, the major tragic milestones in the conflict, and the all-to-brief periods in which efforts were made to achieve a just peace.

Israel and the Palestinians: A continuous litany of conflict

The 1948-49 war and the Nakba

David Ben-Gurion made a formal Declaration establishing the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, a day before the British Mandate was due to expire. Given the context of the reality of continuing Arab opposition and the abandonment by the British, following their failure to forge an acceptable compromise, it was inevitable that war would ensue. And, so it was. Immediately following the establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt declared war, which began with an air attack on Tel Aviv. Twelve days later, on 26 May, Ben-Gurion transformed the paramilitary wing of the pre-State Zionist movement, the *Haganah*, into a conscript army: *Tzva Haganah l'Yisrael*, literally, the 'Army for the Defence of Israel', referred to in English as the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).¹⁴¹

Earlier, I quoted from Arthur Ruppin's diary entry of 31 December 1924, in which he commented on the 'estrangement' between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, and then wrote: 'I have no doubt that Zionism will end in catastrophe if we do not succeed in finding a common platform.'¹⁴² The word 'catastrophe' proved apt. From the perspective of the Arab inhabitants of the land, the establishment of the State of Israel was – and remains – a *nakba*, a 'catastrophe'. 'Some 750,000' people, approximately half the Arab population of Palestine, fled their homes or were expelled,¹⁴³ and during the 1948-49 war, 'hundreds' of Arab 'villages and urban neighbourhoods' were evacuated or destroyed.¹⁴⁴

Remembering Arthur Ruppin's grim prediction, I present here the ongoing conflict as a litany of 'catastrophe', and also as a call to heed the words of Ruppin, Magnes, and Buber, who expressed so clearly, both, the goals of bi-nationalist Zionism, and the perils of imposing an exclusively Jewish state at the expense of the Arab inhabitants of the land. It is impossible to be comprehensive, and I have only

included Palestinian attacks that elicited a direct military response. The details of the ‘milestones’ listed in the litany are drawn from multiple online sources in the knowledge that there is an ongoing contest over the ‘facts’ in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. My aim in setting out this litany is neither to be exhaustive, nor to make an argument, but rather to illustrate that, alongside peace agreements between Israel and Egypt in the late 1970s, and between Israel and Jordan in the mid-1990s, the incidence of violence has been continuous since 1948, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has yet to be resolved.

After the 1948-49 war: milestones in a litany of conflict (interspersed with efforts towards peace)¹⁴⁵

October-November 1956

The Suez Crisis conflict with Egypt, precipitated by Israel invading Egypt on 29 October in order to reopen the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba, blockaded by Egypt since the 1948-49 war.

5-10 June 1967

The Six-Day War between Israel, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, which began with a pre-emptive Israeli strike in response to a build-up of hostile forces on its borders. It ended with a victory for Israel, and the occupation of the Sinai and Gaza (Egypt), Golan Heights (Syria), and West Bank (Jordan), including the Old City of Jerusalem.

October 1973

A coalition of Arab countries, led by Egypt and Syria, launched a surprise attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, the most sacred day of the Jewish year.

March 1978

The ‘South Lebanon Conflict’ ensued. It is also known as the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and called ‘Operation Litani’ by Israel because it involved Israel occupying southern Lebanon up to the Litani River. It was in response to the ‘Coastal Road Massacre’ near Tel Aviv conducted by Palestinian militants from Lebanon.

17 September 1978

The 'Camp David Accords', two framework agreements, the first concerning Israel and Egypt, and the second concerning the Palestinian Territories, were signed at the White House by President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Menachem Begin (and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter), following twelve days of negotiations at the US President's retreat.

26 March 1979

The Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty was signed, involving withdrawal of Israel from Sinai (and the dismantling of Israeli settlements there).

June 1982

The second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in response to rocket attacks, followed by the occupation of southern Lebanon until 2000.

November 1987

The first Palestinian *intifada*, 'uprising', in the occupied territories.

July 1988

Jordan dropped its claim to the West Bank.

13 September 1993

The first Oslo Peace Accord was signed by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin (and witnessed by President Bill Clinton) in Washington.

26 October 1994

A Peace Treaty was signed between Israel and Jordan.

September 1995

The second Oslo Peace Accord was signed by Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin in Taba, Egypt, including the division of the occupied West Bank into three administrative zones: A and B (two levels of Palestinian control), and C (full Israeli control).

4 November 1995

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish Israeli extremist at a peace rally in Tel Aviv, effectively derailing the peace process.

9 April 1996

Hezbollah rocket attacks from south Lebanon against the cities of Galilee provoked IDF 'Operation Grapes of Wrath'.

28 September 2000

The second *intifada*, triggered by Israeli Prime Ministerial candidate, Ariel Sharon, walking on the Temple Mount, also known as *Al-Haram Al-Sharif*, which is sacred to both peoples, but which, by agreement, Jews may not visit. Israeli security forces responded with force to the uprising, which included a huge upsurge in terror attacks against civilian targets. The second *intifada* is known as '*Al Aqsa*', after the mosque on the site.

September 2000

The start of construction of the 'separation barrier' between Israel and the West Bank in response to terrorist attacks. The barrier was completed in February 2005.

August 2005

Unilateral withdrawal of Israel from Gaza, including the dismantlement of all Israeli settlements.

January 2006

After the *Hamas* victory in the Gaza 2006 election, a battle for power between rivals, *Hamas*, a Sunni Islamist Palestinian movement founded in 1987, and *Fatah*, the political wing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) (the party of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank) ensued, which *Hamas* won in June 2007.

July-September 2006

In response to *Hezbollah* rocket attacks, Israel went to war against *Hezbollah* in Lebanon. The rocket attacks continued. An estimated 130,000 rockets were launched from southern Lebanon into Israel between September 2006 and October 7, 2023.

28 June-26 November 2006

Prompted by the capture of Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, Israel launched 'Operation Summer Rains' against *Hamas* in Gaza.

June 2007

Israel and Egypt imposed an economic blockade on Gaza, and largely sealed off its borders, provoking rocket attacks from Gaza, and then Israeli airstrikes in retaliation.

June 2008

A six-month ceasefire between Israel and *Hamas*, brokered by Egypt, began on condition that border-crossings were opened for goods and supplies.

July-December 2008

Rocket attacks from Gaza continued, so Israel limited supplies to Gaza.

27 December 2008-18 January 2009

In response to continuing rocket attacks from Gaza, Israel launched 'Operation Cast Lead' against *Hamas* in Gaza.

14-22 November 2012

Israel launched 'Operation Pillar of Defence' in Gaza with the killing of Ahmed Jabari, Chief of the military wing of *Hamas*.

26 February 2013

A rocket was fired from Gaza into Israel, the first attack since a ceasefire signed on 22 November 2012.

30 April 2013

An Israeli strike on Gaza city killed Hitham Maskhal, a well-known Palestinian militant.

8 July-26 August 2014

Israel launched 'Operation Protective Edge' in response to *Hamas* rocket attacks and the kidnap and killing of three Israeli teenagers.

30 March 2018

Palestinian protests began at Gaza's fenced border with Israel. Between 30 March 2018 and 27 December 2019, 223 protesters were killed.

6-21 May 2021

An almost three-week long 'Israel-Palestine Crisis' was triggered by protests against the anticipated eviction of six families from the Sheik Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. During this period, 170 Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli security forces at the *Al Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem, *Hamas* and *Islamic Jihad* launched rockets from Gaza into Israel, and Israel retaliated with air strikes.

6-8 August 2022

A pre-emptive Israeli air strike targeting a senior commander in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Movement in Gaza (founded in 1981, when it split from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt), prompted three days of violence. In retaliation, the PIJ fired more than one thousand rockets into Israel, which were intercepted by its 'Iron Dome'.

6 April 2023

Two waves of rockets were fired from southern Lebanon into northern Israel, the largest attacks since the 2006 Lebanon War. Israel retaliated the next morning with airstrikes on Tyre.

6 July 2023

Israeli military vehicles patrolling near Ghajar in southern Lebanon were targeted with two anti-tank guided missiles.

7 October 2023

Hamas and the PIJ unleashed multiple attacks against southern Israel. Twelve hundred were massacred in one day and two hundred and fifty-one abducted to Gaza. Israel launched 'Operation Swords of Iron' in retaliation, resulting to date in tens of thousands of civilian Palestinian deaths.

8-24 November 2023

In addition to Israel's war against *Hamas* in Gaza, multiple *Hezbollah* rocket attacks against northern Israel precipitated retaliation from Israel and a war against *Hezbollah* in Lebanon until a ceasefire was agreed on 24 November.

24-28 November 2023

Exchanges of hostages continued until the 28th, with both Israel and *Hamas* accusing one another of violating the truce.

30 November 2023

A one-day extended truce allowed for the exchange of eight Israeli hostages for thirty Palestinian prisoners.

1 December 2023-27 November 2024

Hostilities between Israel and *Hezbollah* resumed, including Israel's targeted assassinations of *Hezbollah* leaders and *Hezbollah's* sponsor, Iran, via a strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus. This, in turn, provoked Iranian retaliation against Israel. A second ceasefire came into force on 27 November 2024. Meanwhile, the Israel-*Hamas* war in Gaza continued.

12 December 2024

The United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

2 January 2025

A *Hamas* police chief was killed along with eleven civilians in an Israeli strike on a refugee camp in *al-Mawassi* in Gaza. Meanwhile, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced that a delegation would go to Doha, Qatar for ceasefire talks.

8-9 January 2025

Israeli strikes continued across Gaza.

15 January 2025

Israel and *Hamas* reached a diplomatic agreement to initiate a ceasefire in Gaza, and to facilitate the exchange of hostages and prisoners.

17-19 January 2025

The Israeli cabinet approved the ceasefire deal on the 17th, which commenced on the 19th.

The first Israeli hostages were freed since the 2023 ceasefire, and the IDF recovered the body of soldier, Oron Shaul.

20-30 January 2025

Ninety Palestinian prisoners were released and returned to the West Bank. *Hamas* released four Israeli female soldiers and Israel released two hundred Palestinian prisoners, and then a further ninety hostages and one hundred and ten Palestinian prisoners were freed.

27 January 2025

Displaced Palestinians began to return to northern Gaza.

18 March 2025

Israel broke the ceasefire and launched 'Operation Might and Sword'.

19-20 March 2025

Israeli ground forces invaded southern and central Gaza, retaking the Netzarim Corridor.

2 April 2025

The Israeli Defence Minister authorised expanded land occupation in Gaza.

18 May 2025

The IDF launched a broader offensive to control more land, involving the further displacement of civilians.

8 June 2025

The IDF launched 'Operation Arnon', a rescue mission, freeing four Israeli hostages from *Nuseirat*, which resulted in the death of two hundred and seventy Palestinians, as well as Israeli officer, Arnon Zamora.

10 June 2025

The UN Security Council passed resolution 2735, demanding a ceasefire, hostage release, humanitarian access, and Israeli withdrawal. The US supported the resolution.

2 July 2025

Preparing for another military operation, the IDF ordered new evacuations in *Khan Younis* and *Rafah*.

9 July 2025

Forty thousand Palestinians were displaced in Israeli raids in *Tulkarm* and *Nur Shams* in the West Bank. Meanwhile, *Hamas* agreed to release ten hostages in return for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

20 August 2025

The Israeli security cabinet, having approved a plan in early August to occupy Gaza City, began the first stages of its offensive, calling up sixty thousand reservists for the beginning of September.

9 September 2025

Israel ordered the full evacuation of Gaza City.

9 September 2025

The IDF conducted an airstrike targeting the *Hamas* leadership, as it met in a government residential complex in Qatar to discuss the US peace proposal. Qatari security officials and civilians were killed, along with *Hamas* members, but according to *Hamas*, their senior leadership were not killed.

9 October 2025

Two days after the second anniversary of October 7, 2023, President Trump brokered a ceasefire agreement between Israel and *Hamas*, involving the return of the twenty remaining live hostages, and the twenty-eight who were no longer alive.

26 January 2026

After over three months of continuing hostilities, despite the ceasefire, the remains of the last of the deceased hostages, Ran Gvili, were finally recovered. Meanwhile, in the context of ongoing siege conditions on the West Bank, settler violence continued.

Lessons of the litany of conflict

Taking a wider view: For Palestinians today, who live in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon, and for the descendants of those who fled or were expelled, who live in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, the *nakba* continues – and will continue – until the occupation ends and a sovereign State of Palestine is established.

The awareness of plural Zionisms, and the reality of the many faces of Israel, Palestine, Israel and Palestine, Israel-Palestine, and Israel/Palestine¹⁴⁶ is almost completely absent in the binary pro-Zionism-versus-anti-Zionism pro-Israel-versus-pro-Palestine litany of conflict, war, and the war of words. Binary perceptions have predominated since the establishment of the modern State of Israel divided onlookers and have been reinforced with each successive war and wave of violence. The most recent and most terrible iteration of the ongoing conflict, in the form of the depraved *Hamas*-orchestrated massacres and abductions in southern Israel of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent devastatingly destructive retaliatory war prosecuted by the Israel Defence Forces at the behest of the ultra-right Israeli government, has only served to deepen the gulf between those who take sides. It seems as impossible to break binary judgements as it is to break the cycle of perpetual bloodshed.

But of course, there is the possibility that, if we confront the binary assumptions at work in apprehensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, pathways towards resolving it may be found. This is not to imply that Israelis and Palestinians share

equal responsibility. The unilateral establishment of the modern State of Israel in May 1948 precipitated a *nakba*, a ‘catastrophe’ for the Palestinians, which was extended when Israel occupied on a permanent basis the West Bank and Gaza, captured by the IDF during the 1967 Six-Day War. The only equitable long-overdue solution is for Palestinians, with the support of the international community, to establish an independent sovereign State of Palestine alongside Israel. Of course, there are many different understandings of, and plans for, how this solution might be implemented.¹⁴⁷ My aim here is not to present a solution, but rather to confront binary thinking by exploring the other Israel-Palestine that already exists; one that is rooted in an awareness, first articulated by the bi-nationalist Zionists, that the land is home to both peoples, and that both peoples can only thrive in the land if it is shared, however that sharing is worked out on the ground.

The other Israel-Palestine of mutual cooperation and coexistence

By way of illustrating this philosophy of a homeland for two peoples in action, this section highlights five projects in which Israelis, both Palestinian and Jewish, and Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, work together. The five projects are:

- *Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom* (‘Oasis of Peace’), a village established in no-one’s-land equidistant between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in 1970¹⁴⁸
- Parents Circle Families Forum (PCFF), a joint Israeli-Palestinian organisation founded in 1995, which brings together bereaved Palestinians and Israelis to listen to one another’s stories¹⁴⁹
- Combatants for Peace, founded in 2006, encompassing former Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants, ‘who work together to end the occupation and bring peace, equality, and freedom to our homeland’¹⁵⁰
- Roots, founded in 2014, a ‘bi-national initiative’ for Palestinians and Israelis living in the West Bank which engages in educational and dialogue activities, with a view to building trust between the two peoples¹⁵¹

- Standing Together, founded in 2015, a grassroots movement of Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, who are working on the ground to build peace, equality, and justice.¹⁵²

Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom: An ‘Oasis of Peace’

Populated by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish citizens of Israel, with its dual Arabic and Hebrew names *Wahat al-Salam / Neve Shalom*, this ‘Oasis of Peace’ was set up consciously as ‘a model of equality, mutual respect and partnership that challenges existing patterns of racism and discrimination as well as the continued conflict.’¹⁵³ In 1979, the community established a ‘School for Peace’, which conducts ‘courses and seminars for Arab and Jewish youth and adults in Israel and the Palestinian Authority’. The school’s ‘first venture into the field of conflict transformation’ was the Youth Encounter Programme, which ‘has been developed as a residential workshop for up to sixty high school students, thirty from a Jewish school and thirty from a Palestinian Arab school’. The programme has run for over thirty years, involving students from all over Israel.¹⁵⁴ The community has also pioneered an educational system providing bilingual and multicultural schooling for children from the village and the surrounding area, and a Youth Club, as well as a Pluralistic Spiritual Centre that hosts spiritual and cultural activities and is ‘a meeting place for learning, observing and searching for peace’.¹⁵⁵

The village of *Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom* cannot on its own change the geopolitical realities for the Palestinians, but it certainly fulfils its mission to be a model of justice and peace in action, and to contribute to changing hearts and minds so that peace and justice become more achievable goals. The village is also a wonderful example of the commitment and dedication required to listen to and to learn from one another and acknowledge differences as well as commonalities.

The Parents Circle Families Forum

Founded in 1995 by a bereaved father and a group of Israeli families, the first joint meeting with Palestinian families in Gaza was held in 1998. Unfortunately, contact with Gaza ended after the outbreak of the second *intifada* in 2000, but then from 2001, connections were forged with Palestinian families from the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and currently, the PCFF encompasses eight hundred members. The primary purpose of the PCFF is to provide 'a safe and transformative space for Israelis and Palestinians to share their personal stories, understand each other's narratives, and recognise the humanity of the "other"'.¹⁵⁶ In addition to facilitating encounters to fulfil these aims, PCFF also organises educational and public programmes with a view to fostering 'empathy, critical thinking, and emotional openness'.

The PCFF is very clear about its overall objectives; that through their activities they are 'laying the groundwork for mutual recognition, the end of the occupation and a just political resolution'. Those involved hope that, as encounters between bereaved Israelis and Palestinians 'break cycles of fear, violence, dehumanisation', it will be possible to realise their 'vision', which is of 'a future where both nations live side-by-side in freedom, dignity, security, and where human connection paves the way for political agreements and lasting peace'.

The success of the PCFF is demonstrated by its longevity, and the persistence of its work, even during times of extremity, as has been the case since October 7, 2023. For an insight into the transformational impact of encounters between bereaved Palestinian and Israeli families, the testimonies of the co-directors of the project, Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan, both of whom have lost daughters to the conflict, is captured in Irish writer, Colum McCann's powerful novel, *Apeirogon*,

published in 2020,¹⁵⁷ which includes transcripts of his interviews with Bassam and Rami, who have formed a powerful friendship that strengthens them both.

Combatants for Peace

Just as the Palestinian and Israeli members of the Parents Circle Families Forum have experienced directly the horrors of the ongoing conflict, the former combatants of Combatants for Peace have endured the emotional devastation of ongoing violence at first-hand, but with one significant difference. In their case, as former IDF soldiers and Palestinian militants, they have actually played a part in perpetuating that violence.

Like the PCFF, Combatants for Peace is, consciously, a 'bi-national movement'. It also shares with the PCFF, the understanding that 'personal transformation' is essential in the struggle for 'collective' change on a societal level. Founded in 2006, CfP has demonstrated its fidelity to non-violence despite the ongoing violence. Its broader philosophy also demonstrates an understanding of what it takes to achieve peace:¹⁵⁸

Non-violence is not just the absence of violence but a form of peaceful creative resistance that has the power to transform both ourselves and our reality. Even when faced with violence – both direct and systematic – we always choose non-violence, trusting that it will guide us toward a long-lasting peace rooted in justice and equality.

Acknowledging 'the difference in power dynamics between the Israelis and Palestinians' and the need for the Israelis involved to 'leverage' their 'privileges in working together to co-resist', Combatants for Peace are committed to 'collective liberation' on the understanding that 'the struggle for peace, security and dignity for Palestinians and Israelis is interconnected', that 'both communities are impacted by the systems of oppression, and that a true peace can only be achieved when all

parties are free from the chains of occupation, discrimination, and inequality'. By 'true peace', CfP means 'building a reality based on justice and equality, not simply an end to conflict or accepting the status quo', and that building that reality also demands recognising 'shared humanity', 'the pain and human suffering of both Palestinians and Israelis'.¹⁵⁹

We refrain from comparing or competing about "who is suffering more" because we know that pain is not a contest – every human life is valuable ... It is not "us" or "them", but "us and them". Both peoples have a past and a future in this land, and both are deserving of dignity, security, and peace. We commit to rejecting narratives that dehumanise the other and stand together in solidarity with the shared belief that no one should be exposed to violence, oppression, or injustice... we believe in resisting the one-sided narrative that dictates violence is a necessity and an inevitability. We believe that change is possible – that people can change themselves in the reality they live in. This is one of the main foundations of our movement founded by former Israeli and Palestinian combatants who have undergone this personal transformation from enemies to allies.

As we can see from these three examples of Israelis and Palestinians working together, in the process of engaging with one another they are all building the foundations of peaceful coexistence.

Roots: A Local Palestinian-Israeli Initiative for Understanding, Non-violence and Transformation¹⁶⁰

One of the binaries bound up with the conflict that is most difficult to challenge is that between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the occupied territories. Given the ongoing and increasing hatred and violence visited on Palestinians in the West Bank by extremist settlers, thinking of the two groups in oppositional terms seems completely appropriate. But one of the problems with binaries is that thinking in binary terms tends to homogenise the groups on either side. The reality is that Palestinians are not one homogenous entity. Palestinians encompass Christians and

Muslims, city-dwellers and Bedouin tribes, those who live in Israel, the West Bank and in Gaza, those who support *Fatah* and those who support *Hamas*. Israelis are equally diverse. Israelis are divided, politically, between different parties, culturally, between those who are Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi ('Eastern'), and Ethiopian, religiously, between those who are secular and those who are observant. Further, religious Israelis encompass those who are Orthodox, Conservative and Progressive, those who live in Israel and those who live in the occupied territories: the West Bank and the Golan – the area north east of the sea of Galilee, which was seized by Israel from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and subsequently occupied.

Even the settlers are not homogenous. In January 2014, Palestinian, Ali Abu Awad, and Israeli settler, Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger, originally from the United States, who settled in the West Bank over forty years ago, founded Roots, also known by its Arabic and Hebrew names: *Judar – Shorashim*.¹⁶¹ Like the other groups I have mentioned, Roots is also conceived as a 'bi-national initiative'. Comprising 'a network of Israeli residents of the Gush Etsion area and Palestinians from neighbouring towns and villages who have come to see each other as the partners both need to make changes in their conflict', the 'mission' of Roots 'is to enhance dialogue, transformation and bridge-building ... based on a mutual recognition of each people's connection to the Land'.¹⁶²

'A grassroots and local model for making change – from the bottom up', the work of Roots, 'is aimed at challenging the assumptions' that Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank hold about each other, 'building trust and creating a new discourse around the conflict' in Palestinian and Israeli society, respectively.¹⁶³ Their joint community activities, including youth holiday camps and shared gatherings, having been severely curtailed by curfews and restrictions on freedom of movement in the aftermath of October 7, 2023, Roots has made connections that go way beyond the West Bank. Their June 2025 'B8 of Hope' newsletter,¹⁶⁴ testifies to the extent to which

even an initiative representing a local network of Palestinians and Israelis, is part of a wider peace and coexistence movement. And so, the newsletter includes paragraphs on a range of events: the Twentieth Joint Combatants for Peace and Parents Circle Families Forum Memorial Ceremony (first held in 2006); the Sixth Combatants for Peace Nakba Remembrance Ceremony; the People's Peace Summit of May 2025, which brought together eight thousand Israelis and Palestinians calling for an end to the war. It also includes a section on 'Civil Society Rising: Israelis and Palestinians mobilising to end war', which cites the protest at the Gaza border by CfP, the PCFF, Women Wage Peace and Standing Together, and a section on Guarding Aid and Civilian Life, focusing on Standing Together's Humanitarian Guard, the 'Enough campaign'. The 'Final Words' section of the newsletter speaks volumes:

In the face of ongoing war and immense suffering, the courage and resilience of these individuals and organisations offer a vital reminder: peace is not simply the absence of violence, but the presence of justice, dignity, and shared humanity. At B8 of Hope, we stand with those who refuse to surrender to despair. Together, through steadfast commitment and collective action, we can nurture the seeds of hope and help build a future where all can live with safety, equality, and respect. Thank you for joining us in this journey.

***Standing Together – Omdim Beyachad – Naqif Ma'an:
Palestinian and Jewish Israelis working together***

As we have seen, the Roots 'B8 of Hope' June newsletter reports on the activities of Standing Together. In contrast to Roots, based in the West Bank, Standing Together is a grassroots movement of Palestinian and Jewish Israelis living in Israel, who are working together for peace, equality, and justice.¹⁶⁵ Founded after the Gaza war of 2014, Standing Together believes that 'to build peace, quality, and social and climate justice, we need a mass movement', and that 'Standing Together is this movement'. This is not rhetoric. In the first six months following October 7, 2023, Standing Together tripled in size to encompass eight local chapters across Israel, twelve

student chapters on university campuses, and a nationwide ‘climate chapter’. In addition to building support on the ground day by day, Standing Together continues to work together with all the other Israel-Palestine organisations dedicated to peace and justice and a better future for all.¹⁶⁶

The movement is very clear about its goals: ‘We are building a shared home for all of us. We won't erase our differences, but rather believe in building a true partnership based on shared interests. This is the meaning of Standing Together’. And their vision of the future that Standing Together is trying to build is not grandiose:¹⁶⁷

We envision a society that serves all of us and treats every person with dignity. A society that chooses peace, justice, independence for Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs. A society in which all enjoy real security, adequate housing, quality education, good healthcare, a liveable climate, a decent salary, and ability to age with dignity.

Such a society is possible – we're already building it.

Alongside daily demonstrations since October 7, 2023 calling for a ceasefire and the release of the remaining hostages, Standing Together focuses on practical activities that can make a difference, such as collecting aid for Gaza and being a ‘humanitarian guard’ in respect of its delivery, and participating in the ‘protective presence’ for Palestinians in the West Bank. During the twelve-day June 2025 Israel-Iran war, Standing Together undertook a fundraising campaign to install mobile bomb shelters in Bedouin communities.¹⁶⁸ Arranging national and local campaigns and fighting for ‘influence in the public sphere’, Standing Together also holds regular ‘workshops and seminars building power and community organizing’.

A ‘grassroots movement rooted in inclusivity and pluralism’,¹⁶⁹ Standing Together has a very particular ‘theory of change’. Speaking in the name of all who live in

Israel, both Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, Standing Together's theory of change centres on building a broad coalition of people from diverse backgrounds and communities engaged in campaigns aimed at achieving practical, social justice outcomes, with the long-term goal of complete social and political transformation. In a document entitled, *Change Together. Standing Together's Theory of Change*, the penultimate paragraph declares:¹⁷⁰

The existing order is based on three defining factors: on the division of the majority, on passivity and indifference, and on the belief that there is no alternative. Our activism is centred on addressing three measures: connecting people from different communities despite the differences between them, driving people from indifference to activity, and offering a hopeful alternative. Standing Together's approach to political activism is demonstrated by its adoption of the colour purple, which has long been associated with feminism and is shared across the globe by other 'new Leftist movements'. Importantly, in the context of Israel-Palestine, purple is a 'depoliticized colour' far removed from the distinct colours of the Israeli and Palestinian flags. The 'goal' of Standing Together 'is both simple and challenging: to build a new majority within Israeli society that supports peace, equality, and social and environmental justice'.¹⁷¹

Apart from its growing influence in Israel-Palestine, Standing Together has also put considerable effort into building a global community of 'Friends', which, in addition to promoting the messages and activities of Standing Together, also fund-raise on its behalf. In the UK, for example, the UK Friends of Standing Together is now active across the country, with local groups forming all the time.¹⁷²

Conclusion: Beyond the litany of catastrophe and destruction

Since the establishment of the modern State of Israel in May 1948, Israelis and Palestinians have been caught in a vortex of mutually exclusive narratives and ongoing bloodshed, with devastating consequences for both peoples. In the

aftermath of the victory of Israel against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan in the June 1967 Six-Day War, the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the continuous increase in Israeli settlements, despite the Oslo Accords, have served to erode any prospect of a just and peaceful resolution in the form of a sovereign and secure State of Palestine alongside a sovereign and secure State of Israel.

Nevertheless, while the political contours of the ongoing conflict and the state of perpetual war both militate against change and reinforce binary perceptions and realities, as I hope I have demonstrated, there are other constituencies within Israel, amongst Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, on the West Bank, involving Jews and Palestinians, and across the Israel-Palestine divide, that are speaking and acting out of a very different narrative of mutual cooperation and coexistence. As they do so, they are demonstrating that it is possible to move beyond Israel versus Palestine, not least because these groups are having an impact on ‘public opinion’ amongst both Israelis and Palestinians. For example, growing numbers of Jewish Israelis are beginning to acknowledge the *nakba*, and for the past six years, a joint commemoration, organised by Combatants for Peace has been held in Jerusalem and the West Bank.¹⁷³ Meanwhile, since 2006, a joint memorial service has been held on *Yom Ha-Zikaron*, the day set aside in the Israeli calendar for remembrance of Israeli soldiers and civilians who have died during the ongoing conflict. By contrast with Israel's official ceremony, the joint memorial is organised by Combatants for Peace and the Parents Circle Families Forum and acknowledges the losses of both peoples.¹⁷⁴

The efforts of those Israelis and Palestinians who work together are generating a new consciousness in which the narratives of both Israelis and Palestinians are being acknowledged by Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, and also by Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim. An Instagram post on 30 June 2025 from the Palestinian

initiative, 'Realign for Palestine', declared: 'Israelis and Palestinians both carry deep pain, complex histories, and legitimate claims'. It is that acknowledgement amongst both Palestinians and Israelis that carries the hope that a different future of justice, equality, and peace is possible; a hope that is close to the vision of the bi-nationalist Zionists who were active in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. As we have seen, Arthur Ruppin, one of the *Brit Shalom* founders, spoke of a 'state of two nations' when he addressed the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna in August 1925.¹⁷⁵ Whatever solution is eventually implemented on the ground that meets the needs of both peoples for peace and security, it must be one that has at its core a commitment to justice and equality for Israelis and Palestinians on the basis that the land is, as the bi-national Zionists argued a century ago, home to both peoples.

¹ Realign for Palestine Instagram post, 30 June 2025.

² Psalm 34.14. I have also been inspired by the work of Tony Klug, who has been a dedicated advocate for a two-state solution since he worked on his doctoral thesis on the Middle East conflict, which formed the basis of his Young Fabian pamphlet (No. 32), 'A Tale of Two Peoples', published in January 1973. In an opinion piece published fifty years on from the publication of the Young Fabian pamphlet, Tony Klug reflected on the continuing relevance of his original two-state solution proposal: Klug, Tony. (2023). 'The Long Goodbye', Fabian Society, 31.01.23. <https://fabians.org.uk/the-long-goodbye/> Tony Klug continues to publish widely. See, e.g., Klug, Tony. (2024). 'Israel/Palestine: Is a Two-State Solution Still possible, and If So, How?' *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, 29(1/2), pp.121-128.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/3149773557?pq-origsite=primo&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>

³ For example, in the books of Psalms and Isaiah: Psalms 20.2; 48.2;11-12; 50.2; 51.3; 5.18; 74.2; 78.68; 84.1-7; 87.2-5; 102.13; 125.1; 128.5; 132.13; 137.1; 149.2; Isaiah 2.3; Is. 3.16-17; Is. 4:5; Is. 31:9; Is. 33:14; Is. 33.20; Is. 34.8; Is. 35.10; Is. 37.32; Is. 51.3; Is. 51.11; Is. 51.16; Is. 52.1-2; Is. 59.20; Is. 60.14; Is. 62.1. Also, in narrative texts, e.g., 2 Samuel 5.6-9; 1 Kings: 8.1; 1 Chronicles 11.5-7; 2 Chronicles 5.2.

⁴ Rehoboam, a son of Solomon, became king of Judah in the south (1 Kings 11.43). Jeroboam, one of Solomon's former officials from the tribe of Ephraim, became the king of Israel in the north (1 Kings 11.26).

⁵ Leviticus 25.23.

⁶ For example: Deuteronomy 4.25-27; 11.16-17; 28.15-68.

⁷ The promise is first made to Abraham: Genesis 12.1-3; 6-7.

⁸ The laws concerning responsibility towards the marginal and vulnerable in Deuteronomy 24 mention the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow together (24.17-22).

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⁹ 'What is service [*avodah*] that is in the heart [*ba-leiv*]? You must say, this is prayer [*t'fillah*] (Babylonian *Talmud Ta'anit* 2a).

¹⁰ Movement for Reform Judaism. (2008). *Forms of Prayer, Vol. 1. Daily, Sabbath and Occasional Prayers*. London: MRJ, pp. 229, 231. Eighth edition.

¹¹ See the biblical calendar festivals in Leviticus 23 (which includes the Sabbath). Numbers 28.9-31; 29.1-39 lists the offerings that were to be brought (in Temple times) on Sabbaths and festivals.

¹² See *Mishnah Rosh Ha-Shanah* 1:1.

¹³ Three days mark, respectively, the beginning of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, the breaching of the city walls, and the destruction of the city and the Temple: 10th *Tevet*, 17th *Tammuz*, and *Tishah B'Av* (9th Av).

¹⁴ Leviticus 25.2-7.

¹⁵ Rose, Paul Lawrence. (2012). 'Renan versus Gobineau: Semitism and Antisemitism, Ancient Races and Modern Liberal Nations', *History of European Ideas*, 39(4), pp.528-540.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2012.724549>. In this article, Rose explores the contrast between French nineteenth century thinkers, Ernest Renan and Arthur de Gobineau, and demonstrates that although Renan repudiated biological concepts of race articulated by de Gobineau and others, his typology of 'Semite' and 'Aryan' combined with these biological concepts in what became the concepts of 'Semitism' and 'Antisemitism'.

¹⁶ Monticone, Ronald C. (1968). 'Nationalities Problems in the Austrian Hungarian Empire', *The Polish Review*, 13(4), pp. 110–25. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25776814>. (Accessed 31 July 2025).

¹⁷ For discussions of the Jewish population in Palestine in the nineteenth century, see Kessler, Daniel. (2016). 'The Jewish community in nineteenth century Palestine: evidence from the Montefiore censuses'. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 52(6), pp.996–1010. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2016.1198323>; Schölch, Alexander. (1985). 'The Demographic Development of Palestine, 1850-1882'. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 17(4), pp. 485–505. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/163415> (Accessed 3 November 2025).

¹⁸ See for example: Rodinson, Maxime. (1973). *Israel. A Colonial Settler State?* Atlanta, Georgia: Pathfinder Press; Khalidi, Rashid. (2020). *The Hundred Years War on Palestine. A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017*. London: Picador/Pan Macmillan.

¹⁹ Banko, Lauren. (2019). 'Historiography and Approaches to the British Mandate in Palestine: new questions and frameworks', *Contemporary Levant*, 4(1), pp.1-7.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20581831.2019.1594618>

²⁰ Herzl, Theodore. (2010). *The Jewish State (Der Judenstaat)*. First published in 1896. London: Penguin Books, p.18, p.19. Originally translated by Sylvie d'Avigdor for the first English 1896 edition.

²¹ https://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/files/Bund_pamphlet_JSG_2023.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

²² See, for example: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ultra-orthodox-anti-zionist/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

²³ Isaiah 47.6.

²⁴ For example, the non-Zionist stance of early Progressive Judaism is expressed in paragraph 5 of 'The Pittsburgh Platform' of 1885: 'We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel a great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state. <http://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/platforms/declaration-principles/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

For an overview of Jewish anti-Zionism in the UK, see Finlay, Joseph. (2025). 'Jewish anti-Zionism in the UK: A historic overview of strong and varied movements'. Britain Palestine Project. Posted on 13 June 2025 (re-printed from *Torat Albion*, 21 May 2025).

<https://britainpalestineproject.org/jewish-anti-zionism-in-the-uk-a-historic-overview-of-strong-and-varied-movements/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

²⁵ See: Laqueur, Walter. (1972). *A History of Zionism*. New York: Schocken Books, chapter 6. For two classic statements of socialist Zionist ideology, see: Syrkin, Nachman. (1898). 'The Jewish Problem and the Jewish State' in Hertzberg, Arthur. Ed. (1981). *The Zionist Idea*. New York: Atheneum, pp.333-350.

<https://www.posenlibrary.com/entry/jewish-problem-and-socialist-jewish-state> (Accessed: 3 November 2025); Borochoy, Ber. (1905). 'The National Question and the Class Struggle' in Hertzberg, Arthur. Ed. (1981). *The Zionist Idea*. New York: Atheneum, pp.355-360. <https://www.posenlibrary.com/entry/national-question-and-class-struggle> (Accessed: 3 November 2025). For some classic statements of socialist ideology, see: Kaplan,

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Jonathan. (1983). *The Zionist Movement. Vol. 1. Selected Ideological Sources*. Hebrew University of Jerusalem/World Zionist Organisation.

²⁶ Gordon, A.D. [Aaron David]. (1981). 'Our Tasks Ahead' in Hertzberg, Arthur. Ed. (1981). *The Zionist Idea*. New York: Atheneum, pp.379-393.

²⁷ Weizman, Chaim. (1949). *Trial and Error*. London: Hamish Hamilton, p.162; Laqueur, Walter, 1972, pp. 218-219, 227-228.

²⁸ Laqueur, 1972, pp. 304-314.

²⁹ Flapan, Simha. (1979). *Zionism and the Palestinians*. London: Croom Helm, pp.194-235; Laqueur, 1972, pp.270-337.

³⁰ See, for example, Leviticus 19.18 (concerning love of one's neighbour) and Leviticus 19.33-34 (concerning love of the stranger and the prohibition against oppressing the stranger).

³¹ The quotation is from 'Mibachutz' in A.D. Gordon's *Collected Works*, 1952, Vol.1, p. 478, quoted in Bergman, Samuel Hugo. (1963). *Faith and Reason: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought*. New York: Schocken Books, p. 116. (First published in 1961 by B'nai Brith Hillel Foundations).

³² <https://judaism.encyclopedia.com/12980/MAPA> (Accessed 3 November 2025).

³³ Elmaliach, Tal. (2017). 'The Decline of the Israeli Labor Movement: Mapam as a Test Case, 1954–77', *Jewish Social Studies*, 22(3), 68–97. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jewisocistud.22.3.03>.

³⁴ The British Mandate was established on 24 July 1922. The British set 15 May 1948 as a date for pulling out. Anticipating the departure, David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel on the evening before, 14th May. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/829707?v=pdf#files> (Accessed 3 November 2025).

³⁵ Ha'am, Ahad. (2018a). 'A Spiritual Centre'. *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*. Translated by Leon Simon. 'Digitally restored' by GoForBooksUK, pp.81-86 (p.80). (First published in 1922 by Routledge). Available to download from <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67667> (Accessed: 7 November 2025).

³⁶ Ayturk, Ilker. (2010). 'Revisiting the language factor in Zionism: The Hebrew Language Council from 1904 to 1914', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 73(1), pp. 45-64. https://www.academia.edu/1488458/Revisiting_the_language_factor_in_Zionism_The_Hebrew_Language_Council_from_1904_to_1914 (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

³⁷ Ginsberg, Shai. (2009). 'Politics and letters: On the Rhetoric of the Nation in Pinsker and Ahad Ha'am', *Prooftexts* 29(2), pp.173-205. <https://doi.org/10.2979/pft.2009.29.2.173>

³⁸ Dowty, Alan. (2000). 'Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha'am's "Truth from Eretz Yisrael"', *Zionism, and the Arabs*, *Israel Studies*, 5(2), pp.154-181. *Project MUSE*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/is.2000.0027>

³⁹ Ha'am, Ahad. (2018b). 'The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem'. *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*. Translated by Leon Simon. 'Digitally restored' by GoForBooksUK, pp.30-43 (p.37, p.39). (First published in 1922 by Routledge). Available to download from <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67667> (Accessed: 7 November 2025).

⁴⁰ 'The Iron Wall' was first published in Russian: Jabotinsky, Vladimir. (1923). 'The Iron Wall', *Razsvet*, 4.11.1923. <https://en.jabotinsky.org/media/9747/the-iron-wall.pdf> (Accessed: 31 December 2025). See Laqueur, 1972, pp.338-383, and Flapan, 1979, pp.96-120, for accounts of the emergence and development of the Revisionist movement. See also Kaplan, Jonathan. (1983). *The Zionist Movement: Vol. 1. Selected Ideological Sources; and Vol.2. Selected Organisational and Political Documents*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem/The World Zionist Organisation.

⁴¹ For an account of Jabotinsky and Revisionism, see Laqueur, 1972, chapter 7.

⁴² Quoted in Hattis, Susan Lee. (1970). *The Bi-National Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times*. Haifa: Shikmona Publications, p.83.

⁴³ Review by Evan Daniel of Kaplan, Eran. (2005). *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionists Zionism and its Ideological Legacy*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press. https://www.dissentmagazine.org/wp-content/files_mf/1391450256d7daniels1.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

https://knesset.gov.il/vip/jabotinsky/eng/Revisionist_frame_eng.html (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁴⁴ Hoffman, Bruce. (2020). 'The bombing of The King David Hotel, July 1946', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 31(3), pp.594–611. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2020.1726575> (Accessed: 30 December 2025).

⁴⁵ See Shindler, Colin. (2008). *A History of Modern Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapters 6 and 7, for the rise of the right.

⁴⁶ It was during the Labour administration (1992-1996) that the Oslo Accords were signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO party Chairman Yasser Arafat on 13 September 1993. The Accords collapsed in

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the period following the assassination of Rabin on 4 November 1995. *Likud* won the 1996 General Election. See Shindler, 2008, chapters 10, 11, and 12.

⁴⁷ For a study of Judah Magnes, see Barak-Gorodetsky, David. (2021). *Judah Magnes: The Prophetic Politics of a Religious Binationalist*. Translated by Merav Datan. Lincoln NE: Jewish Publication Society, University of Nebraska Press.

⁴⁸ https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_Balfour_Declaration (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁴⁹ <https://archive.org/details/two-rothschilds-and-the-land-of-israel-by-simon-schama/page/n15/mode/2up> (Accessed: 3 November 2025). Aharonson, Ran. (2000). *Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonisation in Palestine*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

⁵⁰ <https://www.martingilbert.com/blog/the-establishment-of-the-state-of-israel-and-the-arab-response/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁵¹ Goren, Arthur A. Ed. (1982). *Dissenter In Zion. From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p.189. See also p.183; pp.185-186; p.187; pp.188-190. Magnes published parts of the letter in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 26 August 1921, and also in his pamphlet, *Like All Nations?* (pp.55-56).

⁵² For further insight into Buber's bi-national Zionism, see Mendes-Flohr, Paul R. (1983). *A Land of Two Peoples, Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁵³ Buber, Martin. (1981). 'From an Open Letter to Mahatma Gandhi' (February 24, 1939) in Hertzberg, Arthur. Ed. (1981), pp.463-465.

⁵⁴ Flescher, Ittay. (2025). *The holy and the broken. A cry for Israeli-Palestinian peace from a land that must be shared*. Sydney: HarperCollins Publishers, pp. 78-79. Interestingly, Palestinian nationalist aspirations were also evident in the newspaper, *Falastin*, which was first published in Jaffa in 1911, and flourished during the first decade of the British Mandate (1921-31) – see Khalaf, Noha Tadros. (2011). 'Falastin versus the British Mandate and Zionism (1921-1931): Between a Rock and a Hard Place'. *Institute for Palestine Studies*, 45 (Spring).

https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/jq-articles/45_falastin_2_0.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025). Also see Lawson, Fred H. (2021). 'Falastin: An experiment in Promoting Palestinian Nationalism through the English-language Press' in Gorman, Anthony and Monciaud, Didier. Eds. (2021). *The Press in the Middle East in North Africa, 1850-1950. Politics, Social History and Culture*. Published online by Cambridge University Press: 04 May 2021.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/press-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-18501950/falastin-an-experiment-in-promoting-palestinian-nationalism-through-the-englishlanguage-press/20E05A9A41BAD9D24A013C49B1F43473> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁵⁵ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20250103-remembering-the-1919-faisal-weizmann-agreement/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁵⁶ <https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1656561> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁵⁷ Flapan, 1979, p.60.

⁵⁸ Ingram, Doreen. Ed. (1972). *Palestine Papers 1917 -1922. Seeds of Conflict*. London: John Murray, p.121.

⁵⁹ Laqueur, 1972, p.242.

⁶⁰ The 'parent' party of *Hitachdut* in Palestine was *Hapoel Hatzair*. See Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.58.

⁶¹ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, pp.60-63.

⁶² Quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.66.

⁶³ Bein, Alex. Ed. (1971). *Arthur Ruppin: Memoirs, Diaries, Letters*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, pp.215-216. Translated from the German by Karen Gershon.

⁶⁴ Bein, 1971, p.211.

⁶⁵ Flapan, 1979, p.168. See Hattis, 1970, pp.39-46, for biographical details of the founding members of *Brit Shalom*.

⁶⁶ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.73. Also see the 'Statutes' of *Brit Shalom* (pp.74-75).

⁶⁷ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.73.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Hattis, 1970, pp.4-5.

⁶⁹ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210819-the-massacre-of-jews-in-1929-hebron-is-a-microcosm-of-the-conflict/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁷⁰ https://britainpalestineproject.org/bp/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/shaw-commission-reducedpdf_compressed-1.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁷¹ <https://britainpalestineproject.org/reports-and-white-papers/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

See also Laqueur, 1972, pp.490-492.

⁷² Bein, 1971, p.244.

⁷³ Bein, 1971, pp.237-238.

⁷⁴ Hattis, 1970, p.51.

⁷⁵ Flapan, 1979, p.96.

⁷⁶ Hattis, 1970, p.51, p.56.

⁷⁷ Hattis, 1970, pp.56-57.

⁷⁸ Hattis, 1970, pp.66-71; Flapan, 1979, pp.175-178.

⁷⁹ Flapan, 1979, p.177.

⁸⁰ Hattis, 1970, p.66.

⁸¹ Quoted in Flapan, 1979, pp.175-176.

⁸² Flapan, 1979, p.178.

⁸³ Flapan, 1979, p.174.

⁸⁴ Flapan, 1979, p.174.

⁸⁵ Hattis, 1970, pp.144-145.

⁸⁶ Following the establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, the full title of the Jewish Agency became the Jewish Agency for Israel. https://www.wzo.org.il/page/37-congress/the_jewish_agency_congress37/en (Accessed: 3 November 2025). For an insight into the work of the Jewish Agency, see Dortort, Alysa and Daniel Judah Elazar. Eds. (1984). *Understanding the Jewish Agency: A Handbook*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. Digitalised: 26 August 2008. https://www.wzo.org.il/page/37-congress/the_jewish_agency_congress37/en (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁸⁷ Hattis, 1970, pp.148-149.

⁸⁸ Hattis, 1970, p.152.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Flapan, 1979, p.143.

⁹⁰ <https://britainpalestineproject.org/peel-commission/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

<https://palquest.palestine-studies.org/en/highlight/16013/peel-commission-1936%E2%80%931937> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

⁹¹ Laqueur, 1972, p.517.

⁹² Flapan, 1979, pp.239-259.

⁹³ Laqueur, 1972, p.518.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Hattis, 1970, pp.169-170.

⁹⁵ Hattis, 1970, pp.198-199.

⁹⁶ Laqueur, 1972, p.522.

⁹⁷ Hattis, 1970, p.201.

⁹⁸ Hattis, 1970, p.201.

⁹⁹ Laqueur, Walter and Rubin, Barry. Eds. (1984). *The Israeli-Arab Reader. A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p.77.

¹⁰⁰ Hattis, 1970, p.212.

¹⁰¹ Hattis, 1970, p.215.

¹⁰² Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.135.

¹⁰³ Hattis, 1970, pp.221-222.

¹⁰⁴ Hattis, 1970, p.222.

¹⁰⁵ Hattis, 1970, p.241-249.

¹⁰⁶ Hattis, 1970, p.249.

¹⁰⁷ Laqueur and Rubin, 1984, pp.77-79.

¹⁰⁸ Laqueur and Rubin, 1984, p.79.

¹⁰⁹ Hattis, 1970, pp.257-258.

¹¹⁰ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.148.

¹¹¹ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.148; Hattis, 1970, pp.258-271. For the *Ichud* programme, see Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.149. *Ichud* adopted the monthly *Be'ayot HaYom* as its organ, since its editors had joined the group. It was renamed *Be'ayot* when it reappeared in April 1944 (Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.148).

¹¹² Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.152.

¹¹³ Hattis, 1970, p.279.

¹¹⁴ Hattis, 1970, p.285.

¹¹⁵ Hattis, 1970, p.287; Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.179-184.

¹¹⁶ Hattis, 1970, p.293.

¹¹⁷ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, pp.179-184.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1983, pp.183-184.

¹¹⁹ Hattis, 1970, p.298; Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.185. For a detailed study of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, see Dinnerstein, Leonard. (1980). 'America, Britain, and Palestine: The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and the Displaced Persons, 1945–46', *Diplomatic History*, 4(3), pp. 283–301. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24911262> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹²⁰ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.185.

¹²¹ Hattis, 1970, p.299.

¹²² Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.185.

¹²³ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.189

¹²⁴ Hattis, 1970, p.303.

¹²⁵ Hattis, 1970, pp.304-305.

¹²⁶ Hattis, 1970, p.305.

¹²⁷ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.203. See pp.203-6 for excerpts of the 'round table' discussion that were published in the London *Picture Post*.

¹²⁸ Hattis, 1970, p.307.

¹²⁹ Laqueur, 1972, p.577; Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.215.

¹³⁰ Laqueur, 1972, p.579.

¹³¹ Hattis, 1970, p.308.

¹³² Quoted in Hattis, 1970, p.311.

¹³³ Irredenta (noun): 'a territory historically or ethnically related to one political unit but under the political control of another'. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/irredenta> (Accessed: 30 November 2025).

¹³⁴ Laqueur, 1972, p.580; Hattis,1970, p.315.

¹³⁵ Hattis, 1970, p.317; Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.215.

¹³⁶ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.215.

¹³⁷ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.217-219.

¹³⁸ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.217.

¹³⁹ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, pp.245-252.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1983, pp.251-252.

¹⁴¹ Brower, Kenneth. (2018). 'The Israel Defense Force, 1948-2017' (PDF), *Mid-East Security and Policy Studies*, 150. Tel Aviv: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar Ilan University. <https://besacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/150-MONOGRAPH-Brower-IDF-1948-2017-WEB.pdf> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁴² Bein, 1971, p.216.

¹⁴³ Bashir, Bashir and Goldberg, Amos. Eds. (2018). *The Holocaust and the Nakba. A New Grammar of Trauma and History*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.7.

¹⁴⁴ Bashir and Goldberg, 2018, p.1.

¹⁴⁵ I have gleaned information from a number of different online sources about the key dates regarding wars, violence, and the peace treaties since the Declaration of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948. For example:

<https://education.cfr.org/learn/timeline/israeli-palestinian-conflict-timeline> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

<https://www.thefirstwrite.com/israeli-palestinian-conflict-timeline/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

<https://www.un.org/unispal/timeline/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Israeli%E2%80%93Palestinian_conflict (Accessed: 3 November 2025). The list that follows in this section represents my abbreviation of the details.

¹⁴⁶ Israel, Palestine, Israel and Palestine, Israel-Palestine, Israel/Palestine: The nomenclature is determined by the lens through which we view the land on the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean.

¹⁴⁷ For the proposal of 'A Land for All – Two States One Homeland' (<https://www.alandforall.org/english-vision/?d=ltr>), see e.g., Dajani, Omar and Scheindlin, Dahlia. (2023). 'Stuck Together. Can a Two-State Confederation End the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?' From Part III - Decentralization and Self-determination, in Bali, Asli U. and Dajani, Omar M. Eds. (2023). *Federalism and Decentralization in the Contemporary Middle Eastern North Africa*. Published online by Cambridge University Press: 15 January 2023.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/federalism-and-decentralization-in-the-contemporary-middle-east-and-north-africa/stuck-together/E03080586ED32C3602E560E6A49EEC18> (Accessed: 3 November 2025)

See also Godwin, Matthew K. (2019). 'Confederation as a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?', *Israel affairs*.https://www.academia.edu/38734308/Confederation_as_a_solution_to_the_Palestinian_Israeli_conflict (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

Beyond Israel Versus Palestine: A response to October 7, 2023 and its aftermath (Jan 2026)

A chapter from *Breaking Binaries – A progressive rabbi engages with contemporary issues* by Elli Tikvah Sarah

(forthcoming: Unusual Publications, March 2026)

¹⁴⁸ <https://wasns.org/> <https://wasns.org/about/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/homepage-en/> https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/about_eng-2/ (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.cfpeace.org/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵¹ <https://b8ofhope.org/roots/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵² <https://www.standing-together.org/en> <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵³ <https://wasns.org/> <https://wasns.org/about/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.oasisofpeace.org.uk/school-for-peace-and-conflict-transformation> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁵ <https://wasns.org/category/institutions/primary-education/> <https://wasns.org/category/institutions/nadi-youth-club/> <https://wasns.org/category/institutions/pluralistic-spiritual-community-center/> (Accessed: 27 November 2025).

¹⁵⁶ The quotations are taken from the PCFF 'About' page: https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/about_eng-2/ (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁷ McCann, Colum. (2020). *Apeirogon. A Novel*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. McCann's novel is based on his conversations with the two protagonists, bereaved fathers, Rami Elhanan (an Israeli), and Bassam Aramin (a Palestinian), whose young daughters were both killed in the conflict. Rami, a former IDF soldier, and Bassam, a former militant who was imprisoned for long periods, co-founded the Parents Circle Families Forum, and remain the Co-Directors of the organisation. I have attended a number of online events at which they have spoken. See, for example: <https://parentscirclefriends.org/encounter/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025). See also, this account of their stories on the UK Friends of the PCFF website: <https://www.familiesforum.co.uk/case-studies> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.cfpeace.org/combatants-for-peace> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.cfpeace.org/combatants-for-peace> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶⁰ Roots' June 2025 e-newsletter, headed, 'Curricular Radical Reconciliation, 30.06.25 info@friendsofroots.net (Accessed: 30 June 2025).

¹⁶¹ <https://b8ofhope.org/roots/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶² These quotations are from the home-page: <https://b8ofhope.org/roots/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶³ These quotations are from the home-page: <https://b8ofhope.org/roots/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶⁴ https://b8ofhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/June-2025-Newsletter_anchor.pdf (Accessed: 3 November 2025). Further news is reported in Roots' June e-newsletter, headed, 'Curricular Radical Reconciliation', 30.06.25 info@friendsofroots.net

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶⁶ Israeli and Palestinian Human Rights and coexistence organisations include (in alphabetical order): A Land For All – Two States, One Homeland; Association for Civil Rights in Israel; B'Tselem; Bimkom – Planners for Planning Rights; Breaking the Silence; Combatants for Peace; Comet-ME; Emek Shaveh; HaMoked: Centre for the Defence of the Individual; Haqel – In Defence of Human Rights; Itach-Maaki – Women Lawyers for Social Justice; Ir Amim; Jordan Valley Activists; Kerem Navot; Machshom Watch; Other Voice; Parents Against Child Detention; Parents Circle Bereaved Families Forum; Physicians for Human Rights; Psychoactive; Rabbis for Human Rights; Re'acha Kamocha; Roots/Shorashim/Jadur; Social Workers for Welfare and Peace; The School for Peace (in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim village, Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom, 'Oasis of Peace'); Standing Together/Omdim Beyachad/*Naqif Ma'an*; Torat Tzedek; Women Wage Peace; Yesh Din; Zazim – Community Action; Zochrot.

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLQV2pmtK1/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁶⁹ Note <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en>

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en> See p.23

¹⁷¹ Note <https://www.standing-together.org/en/about-en>

¹⁷² I am part of the organising group of Brighton Friends of Standing Together which formed in 2024.

¹⁷³ <https://www.cfpeace.org/nakba-ceremony> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁷⁴ <https://parentscirclefriends.org/2025memorial/> (Accessed: 3 November 2025).

¹⁷⁵ Mendes-Flohr, 1983, p.73.