‘Visit Palestine!’ –

_The Ongoing Struggle for Representation in the ‘Land of Milk and Honey’_

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**ABSTRACT** This article analyzes various historical and contemporary political discourses and visualizations of the notions of _Homeland, Nationhood_ and _Otherness_ within the sphere of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It discusses a resurgent set of historical Zionist posters that have recently surfaced within the circles of Palestinian grassroots activism – the most emblematic among them carrying the message to ‘Visit Palestine’. These images represent the latter group’s attempt to reclaim historical ‘existence’ by means of erecting an original, counter-discursive methodology of visual ‘resistance’, targeting Israel’s foundational myth of ‘Terra Nullius’ along with broadly challenging its relentless colonial epistemology. This study reasserts that Palestinian society is, hitherto, still engaged in a primarily colonial conflict in which it thus also has to intellectually engage with the romantic derivatives of European-colonial thought next to merely countering more manifest forms of oppression and exploitation. Hence, discussing the posters’ dialectic alternation by Palestinian activists over time – who apply similar ‘signs’ with different connotations for a divergent political aim (decolonization) – inevitably comes along with a comprehensive contextualization of the intellectual origins of such historical Zionist propaganda. Therefore, this article touches not only on the widely cited context of Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian-Arab migration and displacement flows, but furthermore engages in a more profound discussion of the ‘migration’ of such underlying ideas as _Nationhood_ and _Homeland_, which allow for socio-political exclusion to operate in the first place. Only via intellectual objectification does one detect the very similarity of doctrine within the fluid migration of regressive ideologies across the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries throughout both Europe and the Middle East. By means of critically tracing and decoding the altering semantic identity of such politicized posters, one is comprehensively alerted of both the key importance and the ongoing use of abstract power (discourse) within this ensuing Levantine conflict. In order to fully interpret the selected posters, as visual exponents of the contemporary sociology of power, one needs foremost to be acquainted with the interwoven ‘migration’ of populations, ideas, and praxes (colonial resonance) through both time and space.

**KEY WORDS** Settler-Colonialism, Migration, Nationalism, Discourse, Otherness, Zionism, ‘Palestine’

1. **Introduction: The Dialectic Origins of Zionist and Palestinian National Mythology**

It is absolutely necessary to first start by briefly highlighting the basic features of the national ideologies that are present in the Israeli-Palestinian topography. Only subsequent to gaining insight into the origins and intellectual blueprints of both Zionism and contemporary Palestinian nationalism, can one make sense of the actual constellation of conflict in the Southern Levant. Moreover, only thereafter is it deemed intellectually consistent to embark on a particular discussion thereto, treating a set of selected posters that are to be situated in the subaltern sphere of Palestinian visual resistance and which can freely be dubbed as the ‘Visit Palestine’ campaign. These politicized images, which have turned into popular sales items in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) ever since the late 2000s, have so far not been properly discussed or contextualized within the Palestinian population’s overall political engagement with Israel’s colonial design of a fragmented and ‘caged’ existence in segregated habitats.

Current day Israel and the oPt are the sceneries of ideological visions and their projections that are no mere abstractions, but which are rather manifest in the day-to-day reality of both the urban-rural space and its inhabitants. The Zionist movement in the Levant has ever since the early 19th century endeavored to establish a ‘Jewish State’. They have come to do so with effective vigor and outcome since the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, also referred to as the ‘War of Independence’ in the Zionist narrative and as the ‘Catastrophe’ (i.e. ‘Am-Nakba’) in Palestinian and Arab national discourse.1 The first substantial initiations of the ‘Aliyah’, or immigration movement of people who identified themselves or were persecuted as ‘Jews’, took place in the late 19th century through the establishment of agricultural enclaves in the Southern Levantine area of the Ottoman Empire. Most of the immigrants were seeking a safe-haven from anti-Semitic pogroms in Eastern Europe and Russia. At the time being, Zionism was only one of the ideologies that circulated amongst ‘global Jewry’, along with that of national assimilation (e.g. Stefan Zweig, Alfred Dreyfus etc.) and international socialism, for instance. Subsequent to World War I (WWI), the Hebrew term ‘Aliyah’ came to refer mainly to the newly established British Mandate for Palestine, which was dubbed as ‘Erez Israel’, or the ‘Land of Israel’, by the Zionist movement. Such terminology was introduced during one of the World Zionist Conferences in Europe to pinpoint a particular geography for ‘return’, which was furthermore encoded with a

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2 Self-identification is of course subjective and not be categorized quantitatively. Some famous intellectuals that are now actively linked to European Judaism were nationalists at their time, and some were not; others were concerned with the multiplicity of their ‘cultural identity’ and yet other found it irrelevant. Although there is a discussion concerning Kafka’s appreciation of Zionism, he can certainly be considered as an intellectual who was well ‘integrated’ into the intellectual and socio-economic fabric of a heterogeneous city as Prague – he actively formed part of his surrounding world(s), therefore it was also surely his. A posteriori classifications of people should clearly not be the aim of the discussion of historical ideologies.
mythological connotation. As a conservative association, which initially secular-based, the Zionist movement propagated ideas of a heterogeneous Jewish nation who’s unique faith of dispersion (‘Diaspora’) was said to immediately date back to the ‘Babylonian Exile’. The movement is utterly emblematic for Europe’s age of nationalist thought. Nationalist sentiment was further strengthened by particular elements of religious origin, hence disseminating a doctrine of both national and religious/biblical ‘continua’. This newly conceived ideology stipulated the given and exclusive right of the ‘Jewish nation’ to a particular geographical space. Such a political discourse that rests on the backbone of a delineated ‘landscape’ and a particular ‘nation’ clearly roots in the 19th century European tradition of romantic nationalism.\(^4\) When Britain obtained a League of Nations mandate\(^5\) over Palestine, Transjordan\(^6\) and Iraq subsequent to WWI and issued the Balfour Declaration outlining British support for a ‘Jewish national home’ in Mandate Palestine, Zionist aspirations gained a more feasible momentum and active dimension. This would over time only increase, especially after the Nazi horrors of World War II (WWII), thus altering European public opinion in favor of ‘Jewish’ self-determination. This would then revive Zionism, as a conservative ideology, from its rather marginalized position in the intellectual periphery. The influx of European Jews strongly related to the Levant’s geographical proximity to Europe and the US’s reluctance to accept large numbers of Jews onto its territory during the immediate aftermath of WWII. However, it was also the ideological attraction of a Jewish nation-state that made many victims of the War, traumatized by a lack of civic protection by their previous states, migrate to British Mandate Palestine to join the Zionist movement.\(^7\)

Similar to all national mythologies, Zionism propagates an imagined Golden Age (king David’s Levantine dynasty), a National Tragedy (destruction of the Temple & subsequent Diaspora), and a projected future of glorious National Resurrection (state of Israel). This national ideology was mainly linked to British Mandate Palestine due to its exploitative convenience of imbibing an emotional biblical connotation, a great mobilizing potential. However, the early Zionists who were predominantly secular-minded, in their pragmatism, also consider Uganda, for instance. The geographical choice has, however, clearly had its political consequences since that strip of land was of course inhabited, leaving the possibility for an imperial doctrine of ‘Terra Nullius’ (typically void). The myth of the ‘empty’ land was nevertheless a discursive strategy that was and still is applied, which will only become further untenable over time as has been the case in North America. Today, Zionism is still consciously embodied by the state of Israel, across its institutions, and it continues to exert active colonization strategies through 1) its network of subsidized settlements in the West Bank, 2) its consistent policy of land and resource\(^8\) grabbing, and 3) its ongoing endorsement of the ‘Law of Return’.\(^9\) Despite serious condemnation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and various UN organizations over 400,000 Israeli settlers are currently living in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Israeli construction of the so-called ‘Barrier’ - which clearly defies from the 1967 UN-demarcated Green Line- along with the Israeli settlement network were engineered by former Prime Minister Sharon\(^10\) as

\(^3\) Theodore Herzl resided in 19th century Europe (Budapest, Vienna, Paris), experienced and was influenced by the gradual re-emergence of anti-Semitism and narrow notions of nationalism in Europe -symbolized by the Dreyfus affair, for instance. He saw Europe’s liberal (‘Enlightened’) democracies as unfit for the protection of Jewry (persecution) and therefore advocated in his key work Der Judentaum that Jews create a state of their own. Cf. Avineri, 1981, pp 94 & Schindler, C., A History of Modern Israel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 10-37.


\(^5\) Granted through the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. This was, however, already decided upon through the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 between Britain, France and Russia –revealed to the public by the Bolsheviks, subsequent to the revolution.

\(^6\) Includes the territory of the West Bank (Israel) and contemporary the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on both sides of the river Jordan.


\(^8\) E.g. water wells, fertile plains & strategic hilltops (cf. Dolphin, 2006, pp. 74-8).

\(^9\) The law regulates that everyone able to ‘prove’ Jewish descent has a right to Israeli citizenship and to settle permanently in Israel and its IDF-controlled oPt (West Bank). Many critics have dubbed this policy as a ‘herrenvolk law’, which deliberately aims at ethnic discrimination and engineering demographic (‘racial’) supremacy. The same can be said of the discrimination with regard to ‘Arab’/Palestinian’ populations with Israeli IDs, highlighting Israel’s main parallel to Apartheid South Africa: “the same fundamentally racist vision of humanity”. It is hereby also worthy to highlight that although Israeli political discourse insists on defining Israel as a ‘Jewish nation’, it cannot ignore that demons, in terms of national citizenship, is not whatsoever equal to the imagined ‘ideal’ of Jewish ethnos in Israeli society. Insisting on the exact contrary is a critical feature of discursive Zionism and is in fact exactly what is legitimating the socio-legal discrimination of the ‘non-Jewish’ Israeli population. Cf. Amin, S., The People’s Spring: The Future of the Arab Revolution (Oxford: Panazuka Press, 2012), pp. 144-S; Ashcroft et al., 2001, pp. 46-51, 81-4; Dolphin, 2012, p. 17, 20, 23; Massad, J., ‘The Intellectual Life of Edward Said’, Journal of Palestine Studies (Vol. 33, No. 3, Spring, 2004), p. 14; Yiftachel et al., 2003, pp. 673-6.\(^10\) He famously stated in 1998: ‘Everybody has to move; run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements, because everything we take now will stay ours. Everything we don't grab will go to them.’ (cf. Khalihi, R., ’No Chance of Peace’, The New York
dual structures to rid Israel of its ‘native problem’. Due to this structure of fences and walls, a large segment of the Palestinian population is now effectively cut off from its main centers of socio-economic activity, where are increasingly situated on what the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) inventively dub ‘the Israeli side of the Barrier’. As a consequence, the Palestinian population in the oPt has ever since the early 2000s been confined in a minimum amount of space with a minimum sum of resources. As such, an undesired plebs is caged and ignored to the maximum. It is also worthy to mention that such ideological and territorial objectives are generally shared across the Israeli political spectrum, that is, from the Labor Party to the Right-wing Likud Party. Furthermore, this ensuing policy has systematically undermined Palestinian prospects for a mediated solution (UN Partition Resolution, Oslo Agreements, Road Map) towards meaningful Palestinian territorial continuity and political viability. Today, one can already speak of the fait accompli of what is dubbed as the ‘Bantustanization’ of the West Bank, subtly engineered as early as the Oslo Agreements – seen altogether as the point of capitulation by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to Israel’s colonial design by such scholars as the late Edward Said.12

Although its historical constellation differs from other colonization processes - for example, South Africa, French Algeria, which were based on direct labor exploitation-, Israel remains today one of the last of such physically active, colonizing nation-states. When speaking of post-1967 settlement activity, it is important not to minimize the role of the settler-colonial process to contemporary topographies such as the oPt and Gaza, but rather to contextualize them within Zionism’s structural continuities of socio-political discrimination within the entirety of British Mandate Palestine. This implies not interpreting the Palestinian polity, its populations and geographies, as a-priori fragmented units for analysis, for there would be no objective incentive to do so. Many contemporary, rather impressionistic analyses of popular (media) topics (‘Hamas’) prove that the colonial gaze is still overrepresented in mainstream scholarship and thus latently also demonstrates the vigor of a continuous Israeli system of political operation. Any sort of inquiry often tends to focus uniquely on micro-politics, void of any structural contextualization or ontological positioning, for that matter.13

Although regional Arab nationalism was certainly present in the Levant from the late 19th and early 20th century, in a dialectic relation to early Turkish nationalism14 of the Young Turk movement15 within the ‘ailing’ Ottoman Empire (‘The Sick Man of Europe’); the Levantine population of the early 20th century was a rather rural-based society, type by a sense of very localized forms of ‘identity’. In that exact region, they did hence not embody nor assert a nationalist vision that was comparable to that of the Zionist enterprise. In the countryside, however, an urban merchant class did exist and it was them who formed the backbone of the proto-Palestinian and Arab National movements that generated the Great Arab Revolt16 of 1936-39 during the Interbellum period in defiance of British rule and the systematic exclusion of Arab labor by the Histradut/Jewish Labor Federation. Preceding WWI, the independent emergence of this Palestinian urban class, without much incentive from Istanbul, related to the European merchants’ capitalist access to the Ottoman-Tanzimat reforms of 1839-76 that created coastal pockets of urban commerce. Although their interest was of local nature, hitherto, a sense of loyalty and Belonging related more to family (clan) and the city/village than the modernist notion of a delineated ‘nation’. In historical perspective, it can thus be argued that notions of ‘Palestinian identity’ of the Palestinian populations in British Mandate Palestine, as we see/hear them voiced today, would only take form from the second half of the 20th century onward, namely through the

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4 Equally influenced by European romantic nationalist doctrine.


7 Interestingly, the revolt was put down in a joint collaboration between the Ottoman colonial troops and Zionist militias, such as the Haganah (predecessor of the IDF). Proto Palestinian nationalist poetry from this period reads: “You who cherish the homeland, Revolt against the outright oppression, Liberate the homeland from the kings, Liberate it from the puppets. I thought we had kings who could lead the men behind them”; more on the deeper meaning of such poetic discourses can be found in section two of this paper. (cf. Rogan, 2009, p. 255).

8 It is this fluid context that has emboldened former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir to state in 1969: “There is no such thing as a Palestinian people… It is not as if we came and threw them out and took their country. They didn’t exist.” (cf. Meir, G., quoted in
distinctive experience of forced migration and residence in refugee camps, brought about by the establishment to the state of Israel following the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. It can thus be argued that both Israeli Zionism and post-1948 Palestinian nationalism are intrinsically intertwined and can, intellectually speaking, generally be related to European nationalist thought of the 19th century due to their romanticized visions of landscape. Zionism, it is argued, can even be seen as a particular ideological extension or intensification of European settler-colonialism, hence interpreting Palestinian nationalism as a particular (causal) reaction to it, next to its mere localization within broader Arab nationalism. Hereby, it can furthermore be argued that this constellation of Israeli settler-colonialism is an ongoing one: Israeli society is no ‘post-Zionist’ one, Palestinians are not yet engaged in a proper post-colonial state-building phase under basal territorial sovereignty, and the substantial segment of Israeli citizens of Palestinian descent are not yet recognized as egalitarian minority with similar constitutional entitlements. On the contrary, hitherto the manifest colonization of the West Bank and the catastrophic blockade of Gaza by the Israeli authorities still constitute the daily reality in the region. Although it has been quite understated in scholarly work, the West Bank can be considered as any ‘semi-colony’ in this respect, wherein the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is seen to function mainly as a comprador client to co-manage certain colonial cages of Palestinian-Arab populations rather than actually representing its people in a meaningful, or even democratic, manner. It is thus within such a context of conflict that the self-declared Palestinian leadership in the West Bank (PNA) has resorted to merely inflating ideas of narrow Palestinian nationalism as a supposed solution for a shared calamity. Any other methodologies for socio-political progress, that are intellectually more comprehensive, have effectively been ignored by the Fatah patronage. The most pertinent one would amount to framing opposition to Zionist policies in civic terms, by means of proposing legal egalitarianism and civic disobedience when deemed necessary – as was the case during the bottom-up First Intifada. A status quo of caged communities that are high on nationalism in both the Southern Levant, and the broader Middle East for that matter, can hardly be attributed any sense of progressive political vision.

If Humanism and Liberalism are lacking in this persistent age of Middle Eastern micro-nationalism, then Machiavellian Realism is surely thriving in situ. In fact, ever since 1948 the entire political configuration of power in the region has been centered on this very geographical fragmentation and mental constellation via the gradual proliferation of Israeli military domination, backed by consecutive Western powers (Britain & France, US, EU) One could argue that it is only via an understanding of Israel’s structural, imperialist penetration and military supervision of the surrounding Arab, inter-state complex –hosting vast quantities of the world’s most precious resources and commodities (gas, and oil)– that one can make analytical sense of Zionism’s functional relationship with the transnational capital of the Western centers of power. When observing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the broader context of the Middle East’s geopolitical importance for the energy-based global economy, keen scholars of history would immediately notice that contemporary inflations of politicized ‘Jewish’ and ‘Muslim’ holiness of strips of land were only added and made important (revived) later, as additional and rather opportunistic dimensions of the two rather futile national projects, by the local political influence of both religious Zionists and Palestinian Islamists/conservative nationalists. Having provided a basic outline for framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict along materialist lines, this inquiry can now proceed with ontological ease to critically put sociological notions such as nationalism, landscape, power-discourse and, most importantly, their intertwining, central within a discussion of visual representations of such appreciative categories as Belonging, Homeland, the Self and Other in the Israeli-Palestinian topography of conflict.


21 Although tension between the Jewish settler population and the British authorities were not one-dimensional (e.g. Irgun, Stern Gang, British ‘Passfield White Paper’ etc.), there was a positive modus Vivendi, which significantly increased the Zionist movement’s capacity in favor of the native Arab population. This was certainly the case towards the end of the mandate period. A good example can be found in the fact that the British left all there military material to the disposal of the Zionist militias after their evacuation on May 14th 1948, just before the Arab-Israeli war; thus deconstructing the ‘David vs. Goliath’ myth present in Israeli military discourse. (cf. Pappe 1992, p. 57; Rogan, 2009, pp. 311-20, 322, 330-7, 369).


23 The role of Britain and France as primary actors and sponsors in the region would be substituted by the US subsequent to their 1956 military escape in coordination with the Israelis, known as the ‘Suez Crisis’ or ‘Tripartite Aggression’. The EU can be considered as an increasing influential actor due 1) its granting of preferential trade agreements with Israel, 2) unconditional German political support and delivery of major military hardware (submarines), and 3) provision of huge humanitarian and developmental budgets to the PNA –thus indirectly paying for the socio-economic cost of the Israeli occupation.

2. Discussion: Projecting National Identity, Landscape & History in the Southern Levant

2.1 ‘Palestine’: A ‘Floating’ Referent

It is interesting that from a contemporary legal perspective ‘Palestine’, as often applied by Palestinian activists or ignorant political commentators, does not exist. One should hence interpret this term as a projection of Palestinian national discourse aiming at self-determination. Moreover, up until this very day, people in a position of power in Israel often do not even recognize or acknowledge the legally regulated Palestinian territories, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in their speech. For instance, instead of using ‘West Bank’, many such politicians apply biblical denotations to describe it, namely ‘Judea and Samaria’. An interview extract of Ray Dolphin’s excellent study entitled The West Bank Wall: Unmaking Palestine illustrates this vividly:

[…] Ha'aretz: You gave up the Gaza strip in order to save the West Bank? Is the Gaza disengagement meant to allow Israel to continue controlling the majority of the West Bank?
Weigliss: Arik [Sharon] doesn’t see Gaza today as an area of national interest. He does see Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] as an area of national interest. He thinks rightly that we are still responsible there, very far from the time when we will be able to reach final-status settlements in Judea and Samaria. […]

Clearly, the application of such ideological terminology relates to the projection of hegemony: one tries to actively redefine space here, according to a particular political doctrine by means of speech. In the case of Israel, it is quite effective due to the very fact that it contains the dominant discourse. Through such a power-discourse a structured hierarchy of terms, categories and appreciations is thus put forth to shape mainstream perception amongst the passive ‘listeners’ within what has been theorized as the Kafkaesque ‘society of the spectacle’, which modern capitalist societies have so typically come impersonate.23 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) stipulates the entirety of the legal Palestinian entities under the umbrella-term of ‘Palestinian Occupied Territories’ or, more often, through its acronym ‘oPt’. However, the selective use of capital letters in the latter abbreviation highlights both an institutionalization of counter-discursive, affirmative action vis-à-vis Israeli parlance, as well as an internalization of diplomatic prudence by simultaneously downplaying the first letter of the acronym that might refer to a controversial political practice (colonization). Such UN jargon centers mainly on a basal recognition of the existence of Palestinian people and their legitimate rights to claim a dignified life.24

Recently, the Israeli authorities started further restricting the freedom of movement of foreign nationals between the oPt, East Jerusalem and Israel proper25. Israel’s lack of general transparency when issuing visas is widely documented, but in early 2013 Ha’aretz interestingly indicated that the Israeli authorities reinitiated stamps that read ‘Judea and Samaria only’, for foreigners residing in the oPt, thus restricting them from other facilities in metropolitan Jerusalem or Israel. As renowned journalist Amira Hass indicated, this visa format is not an entirely new phenomenon for it has some precedents. However, a surge in its use stems most probably from Netanyahu’s Right-wing coalition’s recent head-on engagement with the PNA, following the latter’s unilateral move in November 2012 to upgrade its legal status in the UN, in an ongoing tit for tat quarrel that lacks any progressive long-term, political vision. What is of specific importance for this inquiry, however, is how Major Guy Inbar, the coordinator of Israeli affairs in the Palestinian Territories, claimed in a Ha’aretz interview that notwithstanding apparent ambiguities, nothing had really changed in the last six months, except for “the language used on the stamp.”

As the four images in the enclosed annex demonstrate, the term ‘Palestine’ has been used denotatively across the 20th and 21st centuries. This has occurred, however, with very diverging connotative meanings, signaling a diachronic alternation of usage. These posters were initially issued in the first half of the 20th century by the proto-Zionist movement, namely by the Jewish Agency for Palestine. This was done in order to spread and advertise the idea of Jewish immigration to the British Mandate for Palestine. Today, however, Palestinian activists once again advertise these pictures as a guerilla strategy to mobilize sympathy for their own cause as a marginalized plebs. At present, one can easily find them displayed in various formal and informal tourist shops in the old city of Jerusalem—especially the case for figure IV.25 The term ‘Palestine’ hence used to refer to British Mandate Palestine in the Zionist narrative and is now applied in the Palestinian national discourse to propagate and realize a political Homeland. Both ideological projections thus use, or used, similar terminology for different reasons, hence altering the code or ‘myth’ associated with a particular, literal term. This contemporary Palestinian counter-discourse can be seen as an intervention of ‘trans-coding’, i.e. the re-appropriation of new meanings to old Zionist terminology and imagery. This is ultimately done to try and alter the contemporary reality within its geographical referent, in which the term ‘Palestine’ has come to signify Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Palestinian activists also

25 Cf. UNRWA’s webpage: http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=47 (accessed on 15-09-2012); this jargon is legitimized through reference to the UN Partition Plan of 1948 which was adopted by the General Assembly as Resolution 181 (II): http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/70d2f2be8976e969785256c330961f8243 (accessed on 15-09-2012).
26 A subjective category, since Israel has not stipulated its official border, but anyone that has been on the ground would adhere to the fact that the internal security regime seems to distinguish certain blocks that gives one a sense of distinguished regulation.
28 This observation is based on my stay in Israel and the oPt in 2010 and 2012 when I resided in both Ramallah and Jerusalem for respectively academic studies at Birzeit University and for a research internship with UNRWA’s BMU.
use such Zionist representations as a manner of implicitly highlighting the historical strategies of the Zionist movement that continue to resonate in contemporary Israeli political doctrine, not least of that of the virgin ‘Terra Nullius’\(^\text{30}\) thesis that propagated the existence of a promised, uninhabited land. This myth was present in various colonial discourses, which were often deconstructed by critical scrutiny, or by the manifest struggles of various indigenous populations looking for inclusive recognition and civic equality, for example, Native Americans, Aboriginals, and Amazon Indians.\(^\text{31}\) Moreover, such informative levels within the counter-discursive effort are combined with what could critically be dubbed as ‘semiotic intransigence’, or a state of semiotic defiance, whereby Zionist ideology is made redundant via the simply usage of a ‘defiant sign’. Such a thoughtful re-application of historical Zionist propaganda intrinsically sheds light not only on a causal status quo, but furthermore rejects the persistence of the colonial ‘gaze’ that reduces ‘Palestine’ as merely constituting the Bantuans inside the West Bank and the cage of Gaza. Instead, the diffuse character of the posters inevitably appropriates the entire contemporary topography of the historical British Mandate for Palestine along with the whole of the Palestinian-Arab and Jewish-Israeli populations, as cognitively relevant spaces and actors within the context of conflict. Indeed, it urges one to reflect and apply historical context for the comprehension of contemporary political affairs.\(^\text{32}\)

Understanding the disadvantaged position of the Palestinian society when it comes to advocacy, resulting from the absence of a proper state and comprehensive representative government on a local and international level, segments of the Palestinian national movement have today resorted to strategies that are both cheap as well as effective. The poster campaign underscores the strength of images in the contemporary consumer world; we live in the age of visual imagery and no longer in one that is dominated by text. Such an increase in images with a minimum of accompanying text inherently implies an increase in connotations, both synchronically and diachronically speaking, which are effectively present in the fluid societal reception thereto. Meaning clearly alters over time or acquires divergent connotations in different contemporary settings. The strength of images is found in the fact that they can make us believe that a particular connotative meaning is de facto denotive (universal) and therefore objective or supposedly fixed, when this in fact is a delusive myth. The aforementioned Zionist posters were of course anchored with words, which were back then necessary to transform or ‘encode’ the visuals into a particular ‘story’, thus narrowing down the possibility of connotative meanings. Today, the Palestinian movement seems to favor using those Zionist posters that are most ambiguous and ‘amendable’. Figure IV, for instance, reads ‘Visit Palestine’ and includes a panorama of Old Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, including both the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Western ‘Wailing’ Wall from the point of view of the Mount of Olives. The conscious application of such historical, visual material in the contemporary Palestinian struggle highlights its vibrant nature, that is, if one is studious enough to look beyond the face of formal Palestinian politics. In the tradition of the First Intifada, which was a culmination of broad grassroots organization from below, such imagery suggests a modest re-emergence of dialectic intellectual and popular participation in the resistance process. This has gradually been dying out subsequent to broad societal disillusionment and alienation after the PNA’s total capitalization on power and political discourse following the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s. These rather subtle signals of visual resistance alert the keen observer of the readiness of the Palestinian public to keep on engaging with Israel’s discursive machinery that often dominates mainstream perception, in a ‘war of position’. From a post-modern point of view it is interesting to note that such intellectual engagement is currently taking place independently from PNA patronage. One could argue that such dynamics will over time only further expose the latter’s irrelevance to the people it seeks to control rather than to represent.\(^\text{33}\)

It is important to point out that the use of the term ‘Palestine’ was abandoned altogether by the Zionist movement after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, implying an intrinsic contestation of connotations. The fact that most of the contemporary Israeli public would not even understand the relevance of the term ‘Palestine’ within a Zionist discourse implies that the cultural and cognitive citizenship of the term ‘Palestine’ has effectively shifted. A new dialogic process has been established in relation thereto, which pertains today to the sphere of Palestinian liberation activism. This furthermore reinforces the aforementioned statement that ‘meaning’ is ultimately fluid throughout both space and time. This also implies that notions of meaning are intrinsically subjective, socially constructed, and thus contestable. Therefore, such widely accepted notions as ‘the objectivity of reality’, as a supposed consistent and immutable quality, are simultaneously disputed as widely contentious. Moreover, as various critical scholars have endeavored to point out, human beings—be it individuals or specific interest groups—actively construct what is ‘known’ and ‘how’ it is known. This fluidity of both ‘meaning’ and receptive ‘understanding’ is also quite evident in the case of the selected Zionist posters. Thinking otherwise, that is, stating a particular ‘norm’ or static ‘truth’ with regard to our cognitive ability to objectively make sense of our social surroundings as human beings, highlights foremost a process of unconscious internalization as ‘normal’ according to one’s very specific historical, societal, and personal constellation within that order. Whilst interpreting the world, we thus often ignorantly exert or reproduce an implicit system of shared societal rules and convictions next to merely embodying them. These set of socio-cognitive codes format, or at least affect, the cognitive framework of all units of a particular society on a daily basis. Hence comes forth the power of ‘discourse’ for its impact, which is articulated mostly via speech and/or imagery.

\(^{30}\) Referring to the Dury Yasin Massacre, which generated a mass exodus of Arab-Palestinians, often makes an important counter-argument. (cf. Rogan, 2009, p. 326-7)


is subtle but nevertheless profound in the construction of our worldview, and influential in the regulation of our social emotions and actions. One is hereby also alerted of the very ‘power’, often called privilege, which is derived from the mere possibility to narrate publicly (a particular concern). In fact, power is often a prerequisite to do so; power thus often generates more power. It is such a concentration of discursive potential that enacts hegemony to sustain a particular perception in the public sphere. To wield influence on the flow of information and even on its total form is precious in the world of politics for its not only regulates ‘consciousness’ but consequently also popular mobilization and pacification in the face of a projected idea – ‘action’ often paradoxically implies inaction in the face of manifest oppression or exploitation, when the public regime is characterized by fear. Clearly, both public opinion and singular connotations, as the chained sequences of ‘meaning’, are fluid in the minds of men precisely because there is such a large and intrinsic margin for external influence.

With regard to the four posters in the enclosed annex, one should make note of the use of inter-textuality in the Zionists historical representations of ‘Palestine’ or ‘Erez Israel’. Especially bibical and historical terms can be associated to biblical mythology, for example, “See Ancient Beauty Revived”, “The Land of the Bible”. The connotative ‘meta-message’ here, or what has been conceptualized as the ‘signified’ along the lines of Roland Barthes post-structuralist linguistic renderings, attempts in this case to disseminate an ideology that mobilizes individuals to settle in a particular sanctified region in order to ‘revive’ the faith of their nation. Such ethos based advocacy is strongly intertwined with romantic concepts of land and even, to the surprise of some, with Leftist notions of and labor (fertility, agriculture, collectivity, empowerment etc). In the Zionist narrative ‘Palestine’ was often compared to an empty, ‘barren desert’, waiting to be made fertile by its biblical heirs. It is hereby worthy to mention that cartography has long been deconstructed as often integral to colonial projects on the level discursive projections of dominance and hierarchy, next to its mere navigational functionality or esthetic value of expression. From the point of view of aesthetic philosophy, one could extrapolate such settler-colonial tendency on figure II that is enclosed in the annex, being an utterly ‘staged’ poster that displays the Levant’s geography and reads “Visit Erez Israel”. It can be termed as being a ‘mythological map’: a graphic practice of colonial fantasy, embedded in religious mythology. Many post-colonial scholars have successfully indicated that the colonial knowledge production of ‘The Orient’ incorporated a subtle set of preconceived hierarchies, which were then conveyed to audiences in order to generate and reinforce ‘common beliefs’ in colonial societies about both the colonized plebs and the colonized space. The relevant Zionist posters clearly carry strong myths and active silences, not least in relation to the local population. Such ‘silences’ function not alongside discourse, as its limitative boundary, but rather form integral part of the projected regime of ‘truth’. Only by means of critically contemplating on the deeper ideological meaning of such historical representations within the entire context of the settler-colonial sequence, can one make sense of the specific political resonance and intellectual weight that lay behind their contemporary reappraisal in the subaltern space of Palestinian resistance.

2.2 A Monologue of the Violent Other: Palestinian ‘Terrorists’ in ‘Judea & Samaria’

In order to further elaborate on the Israeli construction of the Self, one should shed light on the ongoing Israeli discourse of geography. A scrutiny of the website of the Jewish Agency, an organization that was founded in 1929 at the 16th World Zionist Conference serving as the representative body for the Jewish population in British Mandate Palestine before the establishment of the state of Israel, together with those of UN organizations active in the oPt, such as that of UNOCHA, alerts attentive scholars of the great disparities in the production of maps of the West Bank. Interestingly, the aforementioned markers ‘Judea and Samaria’, as Israeli geographies for the West Bank, are even accompanied by missiles on the website of the Jewish Agency, conveniently implying the acute need for Israel to further colonize the area from a ‘national security’ perspective. On their website this picture is accompanied by the following text: “Missile and Artillery Ranges: This map illustrates Israel’s vulnerability to attack from Judea and Samaria. The range of artillery covers all of Israel’s main population centers.”. Today, the Jewish Agency is still an official organization, linked to the Israeli government and it


facilitates the ongoing ‘call’ for ‘Jews’ worldwide to immigrate to Israel. This should alert scholars of the links between political interest and visual knowledge production. Violent imagery with regard to Palestinians is often linked to emotional referents, not least to existential genocide (Holocaust). This powermongering exploitation of historical human suffering is not only despicable, but, moreover, inconsistent within the constellation of conflict in the Middle East. As Noam Chomsky has indicated, the political status quo in the Levant is not merely reducible nor excusable via reference to Jewish suffering in WWII; such a pseudo-rationalise is intentionally superficial and incoherent.29 As Samir Amin has laid out in his recent publicaion dealing with the ‘Arab Spring’, notwithstanding the euphemistic and apologetic discourse of the Israeli state, the reality remains strongly reactionary: “In the territories conquered in 1967, Israel therefore instituted an apartheid system inspired by that of South Africa. Whenever it is accused of racism –which is absolutely obvious– Zionism responds, as usual, by speciously blackmailing its critics with accusations of anti-Semitism and exploitation of the Holocaust, as analyzed by Norman Finkelstein.”30

Next to merely mystifying historical sequences, one needs to raise awareness of the fact that it is often the specific (fascist) phantoms of European political history that are applied in the Zionist narrative in order to discredit any resistance vis-à-vis its colonial, and by extent imperial, design for the Middle East.31 In his illuminating article entitled ‘The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political “Backwardness” in Historical Perspective’, Ian Lustick has, for instance, keenly indicated that scholarly comparisons between the Middle East and Europe are often not only a-historical but more so hyper-subjective and thus ideological: “ [...] these comparisons use Hitler and Mussolini, not Bismarck and Cavour, as referents; thus, Nasser was a ‘thin-horn Hitler’, a ‘Mussolini by the Nile’.32 This ideological operation has ever since 9/11 proliferated flagrantly with less and less apologetic delusion. Analytically speaking, it is therefore no real surprise that the projection of power of both the United States and its main military ally in the Middle East have come along with attributing rather fantastical characteristics that relate in the first place to the cognitive realm of any or most of their own populations. It is the acquisition of the latter’s consent and not that of those who are actually being oppressed that is of importance to the propaganda machinery.33 The most difficult task within scholarship thus amounts to detecting and discredititing the discursive elements of such power projections. The same can be said for taking an intellectual stance with regards to such operations, especially within Western academia. This reality highlights academia’s complex relationship with the state and power in the abstract sense: as a key institution, it is often intrinsically embedded and intertwined with the state’s production of dominant narratives. Having said that, academia often also provides a specific space for sporadic counter-discursive action, stemming from the concentration of knowledge and critical thinking therein. However, scientific production and intellectual integrity are hitherto still two divergent matters in the world of academic scrutiny. It goes without saying that key elements of academia have consistently complied with the political class’s demand for intellectual albis, even in the case of the most reactionary of scenarios. This is as much the case for American and European34 academic circles, as it is for the Israeli intelligentsia –scholars like Ilan Pape, famous for his study entitled The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, are not even accepted in the country’s scientific margin.35

While not seeking to debate the technical (military) precision of the above-mentioned statement of the Jewish Agency, it suffices to state that the inclusion of violent symbols into such a geographical depiction relates to a core feature of Israeli political discourse, which stereotypically characterizes Palestinians as inherently violent and aggressive. This ‘fact’ is of course reflexive because it reinforces the propagation that Israel, the only nuclear power in the entire Middle East, is a supposed beacon of enlightenment and democracy, next being existentially threatened. The prism of ‘national security’, together with the image, or rather stereotype of the ‘violent’ Palestinian-Arab ‘terrorist’ has, from the moment of the establishment of the state of Israel, consistently been applied as a binary to dually construct the Israeli Self. Such a twisted methodology presents Israel as a staunch but rather altruistic peace-seeking nation under constant threat36 by the ‘uncivilized barbarians at gate’. In the wake of 9/11, the former has often been portrayed as deprived of any ‘serious’, that is, ‘rational’ negotiation partner. I would argue that such systematic representations of the entire Palestinian population as a violent, homogeneous Other are by themselves violent acts in the form of aggressive ideological categorizations. Various scholars have emphasized the words of David Ben Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin and current prime minister Netanyahu to illustrate this dual Self-construction vis-à-vis the Other in extremis.37 As migration scholar Robin Cohen has pointed out, such a logic runs along the regressive premises, or rather illusory slogan, that “we know who we are by who we reject”, or indeed relevant in Israel’s case “we know who we are by who we eject”.38

Edward Said’s main contribution within political philosophy came about via his key contribution entitled Orientalism, which mainly highlighted the epistemic functions that lay behind the erection of a superior Self within the colonial and post-
colonial centers of political power. Moreover, contemporary critics like Hamid Dabashi claim that knowledge production with regard to the Middle East, especially in relation to hyped such conflicts as the Israeli-Palestinian one, still runs along such condescending lines, which represent more of an ideological monologue than sincere scientific attempts to critically assess dynamics in situ. Although many impressionistic scholars seem to think that subsequent to the work of intellectual pioneers like Said post-colonial scholarship had once and for all ended its objectifying and paternalistic scholarship in exchange for a positivistic revision of an ‘error’ -i.e. to supposedly portray the real Orient ‘truthfully’- reality evidently proves them wrong. Today the ranks of conservative scholarship have often merely opened up to ‘native informers’, but it has not altered the fabrication and reproduction of stereotypes and shallow symbolism that is easily capable of installing fear amongst the domestic public. Although it is today seldom articulated, much of the academic output treating Middle Eastern politics is highly ideological. To be clear, applying an ideological frame to analyze is not the mere issue here, it is the pretense of not doing so, which is commonplace and thus provoking. The main paradox is that many a scholar seems to be convinced of producing more objective knowledge than the previous generation, while in fact similarly patronizing meta-discourses are still consistently fabricated about, or rather projected onto, dehumanized subjects. Said’s comprehensive critique made him keenly wary of scholarly re-embedding into such hierarchic constellations of neo-colonial knowledge production within mainstream academia. He emblematically never consciously accepted the prescribed position and role of a ‘native informer’ for the sake of mere individual careerism.69

It is highly regrettable that Israeli political commentators continue to actively reduce the Palestinians’ humanity to a particular ‘essence’ that is either violent or unwanted within the societal fabric that is envisioned. The fact that Israeli political discourse articulates demography in a ‘racialized’ sense is detectable in the comments of Shimon Peres –the so-called ‘peace dove’- on the Israeli disengagement of Gaza: “Politics is a matter of demography, not geography.” 50 Although it might sound like a ‘technical’ comment, it is in fact quite an ideological one that is very illustrative for the ideological orientation and sinister realism of the Zionist enterprise. During whatever sort of reduction process, the ordinary Palestinian citizen and his voice is completely absent in Zionist description, for he does not fit into the pre-designed category of what it means to be ‘Palestinian’. They are thus trapped in the deep binary structure of the negative stereotype, as opposed to the cultivated, democratic Israeli Self. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, one can relate such discursive strategies to what the keen Slavoj Zizek has dubbed as the active ‘culturalization of politics’ by those in power, depleting actors of their human dimension and conflicts of their (often) material basis.51 Especially following the end of the Cold War and the marginalization of historical-materialist critique, the cultural prism has up until this very moment known a booming success in various analytical disciplines.52 However, attentive scholars have been repositioning themselves by advocating for analytical schemes that are based less on imaginative differentiation and more on egalitarian parameters. Only in relation to more structural analytics, can accompanying Humanist philosophy be adequately incorporated in daily governance:

“Until future research proves otherwise, we ought to take for granted only two basic human entities: individuals and all humanity. All entities between these two, save a mother and a newborn child, are arbitrary formations created by our perception of ourselves vis-à-vis others. … Various unifying factors, such as language, religion, and colour (sic.) of skin, seem ‘natural’. I propose that none is. Language, culture, a real or assumed historical origin, and religion, form identities for an ‘us’ in our minds, and only so long as they exist in our minds as unifying factors do the entities of ‘us’ persist.”53

2.3 Palestinian Nationalism: The ‘Authentic’ Self & the Lack of Auto-Criticism

When inquiring Palestinian Self-representation, one swiftly notes that it has also constructed itself through a polarized binary opposition with a marginalized Other, which is often entirely excluded from visual projections of the notions of Homeland and Belonging. A projected map found on Palestinian activist blogs that was issued in the oPt during the ‘Arab Spring’ in 2011, which reads in Arabic “The people want the end of the division”44, serves as a good contemporary example of this practice. This slogan alludes explicitly to intra-Palestinian political divisions, and implicitly to the ethnic segregation in the region between Israelis and the confined Palestinian populations in Gaza and the West Bank. However, when looking at the map in more detail, it only includes Arabic denotations for ancient Palestinians towns, villages and political movements (‘Palestine’, West Bank, Gaza, Hamas, Fatah, PFLP, DFLP etc.), thus radically excluding the Israeli reality, which is today a material fact. It could be argued that anti-colonial struggles against Zionism need not per se exclude the ordinary Israeli worker and citizen from a future vision, but rather effort to incorporate them into one based on equal rights and obligations. One can argue so due to the fact that it will most probably require the effort of substantial segments of both societies in order to overthrow the repressive contemporary constellation of fear and oppression.

Then there is of course the frequent image of the Palestinian female-farmer as a symbol for ‘authenticity’. Such imagery was often used by the PFLP during the Cold War era and is today often re-used by Palestinian activists and

71 Zizek, 2008, p. 660
73 Blommaert & Verschueren, quoted in Maly, 2001, section 1.3.4.
The Spivak Reader: reflecting on democratic egalitarianism still one understanding is based on limited historical knowledge and interprets the contemporary occupation of the West Bank and romantic nationalist doctrine progress legitimate. scholars who have been pointed out that even amongst post-colonial scholarship that is rather concerned with the ‘Palestinian cause’, many have tended to shy away from posing structural questions, i.e. falling short of challenging colonization and occupation processes as intertwined phenomena. Today, many critical voices seem in fact latent willing to accommodate Zionism’s structural claim that is inherently and rightfully ‘Jewish’. This is apologetically justified by simultaneous support for the Palestinians’ effort to erect their own Homeland along side Israel. The same dynamic has been present amongst Israeli scholars who have been fairly critical of Israeli Right-wing policies, but have nevertheless retained that Zionism is in itself legitimate. However, both on the practical and analytical level this by now conventional logic is flawed and will render progress void for it overlooks Zionism’s basic colonial parameters and modern genealogy –enshrined within European romantic nationalist doctrine, with a co-opted flair of religious sentiment to arouse stronger ideological appeal. Such a faulty understanding is based on limited historical knowledge and interprets the contemporary occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem along with the blockade of Gaza as mere temporary side effects of Israel’s ‘security policy’ rather than as integral to its very foundational state ideology, which justifies such arbitrary regulations of both people and territory under ‘Jewish’ control in the first place. As Zionism is hitherto still the guiding ideology of the state of Israel, and as the latter is still one of the main protagonists of Middle Eastern politics, its political philosophy should surely be taken into account in any discussion pertaining to it. Instead of ignoring the issue, which would amount to intellectual capitulation, one could address it and furthermore advocate for constitutional egalitarianism across the various communitarian cages (‘Israelis’, ‘Palestinians’, ‘Jews’, ‘Muslims’, ‘Christians’, ‘Arabs’ etc.) as a lens for conflict assessment and possible resolution. Such an egalitarian strategy does not stand by itself as a mere sterile reference to abstract ‘human rights’ under a thin guise of naïve altruism, but should rather go hand in hand with comprehensively tackling Israel’s colonialist and discriminatory ideological parameters altogether. Such an approach is in fact intellectually sounder than calling for Palestinian micro nationalism, which is today often proposed by the ranks of conservative neo-colonial scholarship or even impressionistic activism, for that matter. Such reactionary derives of thought and action, be it deliberate or rather unconscious, are detrimental to interests of the general population in the Southern Levant and merely seem to increase the legitimacy of the PNA, which has hitherto at least partly functioned as a compensatory elite that co-maintained the Levantean toponomy without any democratic legitimacy. Questions of legitimacy, representation, governance, and nationalism clearly converge when reflecting on both the Palestinian and Israeli status quo. The diligent wordings of Frantz Fanon’s 1961’s Les Damnés de la Terre, or The Wretched of the Earth, still resonate as highly relevant and applicable today: "A bourgeoisie that provides nationalism alone as food for the masses fails in its mission and gets caught up in a whole series of mishaps. But if nationalism is not made explicit and deepened by a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words into humanism, it leads up a blind mishaps. But if nationalism is not madeenzie’s, 1975, pp. 91-104.

The subtle normative regime of ‘methodological nationalism’ in the social sciences, along with the global political climate –dubbed as ‘post-politics’ by scholars such as Slavoj Zizek- have generated an overall context in which the vigorous
analytical paradigm of settler-colonial studies has remained strikingly undervalued. Moreover, applying such a prism would also enable scholars to look into the broader structural context of the broader region. This is important because the very geostrategic position and relevance of the militarized state of Israel cannot fully be understood through mere reference to such local markers as the PLO, PNA, or the historical British Mandate for Palestine, for that matter. These are mere superficial denotations that hardly serve as a proper structural antithesis; they do not whatsoever rationalize Israeli marriage to the global capital and its solid integration into the global political complex. In fact, due to the Greater Middle East’s (GME) key geostrategic position within the commodity driven global economy—one that is still largely based on fossil fuels, and dominated by capital-abundant advanced industries such as the US, Japan and the EU—the broader specificities of the region need to be kept in mind when analyzing socio-political dynamics in one of its pockets. Without controversy, Samir Amin’s sober but structural understanding can be abided to: “To carry on with its project, Israel requires an Arab world weakened as much as possible at all levels.” Furthermore, this regional constellation of fragmented conflict is stipulated and incentivized by a military-industrial complex headed formally by the US government to secure the control and steady flow of fossil fuels to such advanced markets for the benefit of consumer viability, large scale profitability and capital accumulation therein.

Not all is oblivious, there have been comprehensive and appealing attempts in the activist field, such as the law-based ‘Call for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions’ (BDS) movement, which has also activated some segments of local Palestinian and global academia to declare an ‘academic boycott’ of non-cooperation with Israeli universities. Claiming equal rights, and targeting the Israeli project along settler-colonial analytics does require some adequate will to position oneself intellectually, along with a great deal of self-criticism and reflection. It often requires intellectual ‘exile’ from academic normative conventions, individual departure from internalized nationalist conceptions, and principled examination to any manifest overconsumption and misuse of authority or power. Such an altered state of consciousness and bottom-up counter-discourse is obligatory from both the Arab-Palestinian as well as the inherently diverse Israeli public, if the Kafkaesque nature of the entire conflict is to be unveiled for the benefit of moving beyond the instigated play of ‘nations’ and angst. Scholars like Noam Chomsky and Edward Said have since long understood that social justice and the easing of suffering can only be comprehensively be overcome through reconciliatory projects of ‘bi-directional’ solidarity, or ‘egalitarian bi-national socialism’ across the various constituencies. In the meantime, however, the current status quo of encroaching colonialism in the Southern Levant is often flagrantly presented under the mere euphemism of a ‘political deadlock’ within a stalled ‘peace process’. The discrepancy between rhetoric and dynamics on the ground could in fact not be more surreal. One can legitimately highlight the appolling inconsistencies within the discourses that speak of so-called US-mediated ‘peace’ initiatives, when taking into account the latter’s Machiavellian projection of power in the GME from the mid 1950s onward. Countering such a distorted portrayal of events does not only amount to unveiling and discrediting it, while trying to re-identify more accurate sequences and factors that brought about and continue to reproduce the contemporary constellation of conflict in the region, but, more importantly, to possibly theorizing, advocating, and activating progressive departure from the reactionary status quo. On the one hand, structural factors of political economy do not whatsoever constitute the entirety of social ‘reality’; one can simultaneously apply unlinked postmodern paradigms that unveil and endeavor to grasp divergent, social, cultural, psychological, and subaltern realities, for instance. Yet, on the other hand, parameters of political economy should not a-priori be left out of analyses deliberately, i.e. ideologically, unless rationally substantiated due to a particular research design.

In order to depart from this reactionary status quo, the passive and ‘caged’ constituents on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian ‘spectacle’ would need sensitization and mobilization—not least via auto-criticism- since the socio-political configuration of either society is in this case intrinsically linked to that of the other. Palestinian emancipation movements should be wary of Zionism’s basic ideological operation of transposing its modes of thinking onto the entirety of agents that it manifestly or latently regulates: hyper-nationalism, racism, segregation and civic discrimination should not be the corner stones for forthcoming Palestinian liberation. A more comprehensive approach would constitute basal calls for full-fledged civic inclusion and participation, along with constitutional egalitarianism (for various minorities), in a shared polity. To be clear, against any ambiguity here, this not a call for abstract ‘multiculturalism’—an amalgamated conception and corner-stone of various (divergent) ideological (neo-conservative, social-democratic) discourses that is by now inherently problematic or even bankrupt altogether— but rather one for social justice based on a clear set of humanitarian ideals that can be translated into specific legalistic documents, material institutions and top-down (incorporative) policies. How would the large minority of Palestinian-Arabs with Israeli IDs benefit from an ‘independent’ micro-state in the West Bank or even in

62 ibid., p. 40.
66 Said, 1975, 104.
68 Ibid., 2005, pp. 38-49.
Gaza -one that might as well grow out to be as authoritarian as almost any other Arab state in the region? In fact, rigid nationalism avoids the core call for comprehensive civic rights that many of the Palestinian public ultimately long for, whether living in Israel proper or elsewhere the topography under Israeli military and economic control. In the end various segments of Palestinian descent are confronted with limitations and infringements on their basic rights to attain equal treatment and footing in legislative terms; the solution to these problematique should hence be adequate. If not, then what is to be proposed: ‘population transfers’, further division of land, and even stricter forms of physical segregation along supposedly truly ‘homogeneous’ groups on each side? The use of mere narrow ‘identity-based’ intellectual paradigms and political discourses are quite extent today, but not whatsoever satisfactory. Amin Maalouf, a renown French-Lebanese, psychoanalyst and writer, conveyed his intellectual aversion and personal agitation for this particular rationale and contemporary social mentality quite eloquently in his study entitled In the Name of Identity, by uttering: “What makes me myself rather than anyone else is the very fact that I am poised between two countries, two or three languages, and several cultural traditions. It is precisely this that defines my identity. Would I exist more authentically if I cut off a part of myself?”72

The late Edward Said was one of the few who applied self-criticism to such an extent that it became a prerequisite for Palestinian liberation, even during widely celebrated ‘spectacles’ such as the 1993 Oslo Accords. He saw the presence of reflexive criticim as a necessary duality for the politics of comprehensive emancipation. One cannot claim to confine ‘solidarity’ to nationalism —under the auspices of ‘political pragmatism’— without infringing on critical faculties. As a secular critic, Said managed to consistently negate methodological nationalism in a manner that few have managed to emulate.73 Samir Amin has furthermore pointed out that the bias of latent nationalism in (even critical) scholarship has nevertheless been dominant within reality in the entire Arab political sphere, as Arab public opinion has hitherto generally remained confined to either populist nationalism or political conservatism (‘political Islam’), without managing to comprehensively challenge nor transcend this primary intellectual calamity.74 The selective and apolitical application of criticism within such scholarship has come to the fore in the form of the ‘Occidentalism’ trap, widely occurring when reviewing Orientalist scholarship in equally essentializing and patronizing manners. In such cases, intellectual inconsistency inevitably leads to the reproduction of repressive bias. It is in this very manner that ‘theory travels’: nationalist ideology and its derived reactionary practices are clearly not ‘people’ nor time specific, and, alas, certainly well-represented in the Palestinian national endeavor.75

If global disinformation campaigns that manufacture consent for both Israel and the PNA’s projects of division and identity politics are to be halted, then it is up to those who occupy intellectual positions in society to mark the lack of ethics therein and to conceive of new methodologies that could enact comprehensive change for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the Israeli-Palestinian topography.76 As French critic Guy Debord tried to stipulate in his key study entitled The Society of the Spectacle, intellectual labor, political embedding, and social action are not to be separated artificially as their inherent interdependence would inevitably lead to manifest contradictions in both intellectual narrative and socio-political action alike:

“In the language of contradiction, the critique of culture is a unified critique, in that it dominates the whole of society as well as its poetry—and in that it no longer separates itself from the critique of the social totality. This unified theoretical critique is on its way to meet unified social practice.”77

Intellectual consistence and progressive political vision is needed if Israel’s settler-colonial project is to be exposed, and if Zionism’s intellectual operation of generating global consent for its undertaking, in the name of identity and on account of imperial authority, is to be tackled comprehensively. The intellectual remedy for settler-colonialism should not amount to a paradoxical reflex of mere caged Palestinian nationalism, but rather to gradual cross-national solidarity that advocates for basal constitutional egalitarianism.78 Indeed, a critique of historical Zionist posters of propaganda and their dialectic alternation over time has inevitably led to one of ‘culture’ and its wider politico-discursive manifestations in both contemporary Israeli and Palestinian society.

3. Conclusion: Caged Politics of Identity as the Dialectic Pedigree of a Settler-Colonial Conflict

Through reference to various historical and contemporary examples, this paper has effectively alerted the reader of the ensuing ‘politics of representation’ pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many of the projected layers of exclusive ‘differences’ therein, whether formulated historically by ‘race’ or contemporarily by ‘ethnicity’, ‘religion’, and ‘culture’, can be traced back to romantic doctrines of national Belonging and mere appreciative categories of supposed superiority. Such categorizations are hence no pointe markers to structure the reality of conflict in situ, but constitute rather the ideological jargon of conflict itself. These notions of ‘difference’ are furthermore no mere abstractions in contemporary Israel and the oPt since they are actively legalized in the daily reality of two opposing political projects. In effect, the cited ‘Visit Palestine’ posters, which have travelled through time and acquired different cognitive coding from contemporary circles of Palestinian grassroot activists, form integral part of a much wider collision of political and epistemic contestation. Albeit using formally similar imagery and being rather asymmetrical within the equation, such advocacy constitutes opposition to the ensuing settler-

74 Amin, 2012, p. 142.
colonial project in the southern Levant. It forms part of a visual culture of emancipatory resistance by intelligently exposing the very colonial nature of the Zionist project. The reassertion of such historical Zionist propaganda demonstrates altogether the understated function and ongoing importance of the discursive dimensions of conflict. The keen effort of Palestinian activists to sell and expose these Orientalist looking posters to both conscious and unconscious publics (tourists) in the oPt alerts one of the advanced political strategies that are present in contemporary Palestinian society’s intellectual engagement with the Zionist epistemic machinery that has become so dominant within global mainstream discourse.

It has long been pointed out that Israeli mythology culminates around distortive ideas of rigid ‘Jewish homogeneity’ and biblical entitlement of what has ideologically been delineated as ‘Erez Israel’. The democratic Self that Israel has so come to acclaim has ever since 1948 been constructed in opposition to any convenient Arab-Palestinian binary, preferably inherently violent and irrational. Yet, it less often pointed out that elements of Palestinian national discourse often tend to overstrenth into equally romantic notions and imageries of radical and exclusive ‘authenticity’ along with conservative claims of a-priori entitlement to (‘holy’) land. For the sake of retaining to an accurate and progressive debate, such self-centered inflations need strict analytical separation from more legitimate politico-material claims and initiatives of Palestinian-Arab emancipation that target the very foundations and ongoing proliferation of the Israeli settler-colonial project in the historical British Mandate for Palestine (West Bank, Gaza & Israel). It can be argued that the mythological fabrications within Palestinian nationalism, along with political discourses that solely focus on the creation of separate Palestinian state, pay latent tribute to the settler-colonial legacy of Zionism, and its intellectual romantic imagery, as a shared dialectic pedigree. Having said that, however, the material reality in this political topography of the Southern Levant still amounts more to a scheme of colonial exploitation than a political conflict of mere competing forms of nationalism. In effect, Zionism is still the dominant and empowered ideology in situ. Moreover, it is the very state ideology of the overarching structure of power, which has been legalized and militarized in every inch of the former British Mandate for Palestine. Indeed, the latter configuration continues to have vast legal implications for its ‘minorities’, which it continues to manifestly and latently segregate and discriminate within the deliberately fragmented territory under its control (voting, civic participation, land titles etc.).

A comprehensive reading of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a settler-colonial one affects any further discussion concerning more specific socio-political dynamics in the region, for it would propose decolonization, anti-colonial emancipation, and egalitarian (constitutional) liberation -along the lines of a political confederation-as solutions to generate social change, and not deliberately euphemistic and ambiguous recipes such as mere political ‘settlement’ or abstract ‘peace’. The latter analytical assumption is thus a basal one that ties in with scholarly ontology. Debating micro-political matters whilst shying away from structure ammounts often to intellectual capitulation to dominant Zionist rationale, for within the entirety of the intellectual-discursive equation in academia it will contribute to apologetically freeing the settler-colonial project from assuming any actual responsibility for its destructive operation. Such evasive scholarship often forms part of the top-down manufacturing of reactionary consent. The topic of Israel-Palestine has been widely debated, but seldomly does one encounter sound, profound and consistent argumentation. The few distinct but more comprehensive intellectual efforts have instead chosen to target the exploitative class structures and the misleading nationalist rhetoric present within both societies. The latter inclusive approach envisions the sort of integrative progress that is based on a methodology focusing on shared rights rather than on a vilified Other. Advocating for tightly segregated Homelands as a recipe for progress ignores the fact that the persistence of Zionism, to whomever public confined, will continue to dictate colonial repression, segregation and exploitation by ideological nature; certainly so in view of its acquired military empowerment. Instead of erecting more boundaries, both physical and psychological ones, one could advocate for their abolishment for the benefit of all relevant inhabitants. While the latter are hitherto still trapped in anxious behavior and neurotic political submission, innumerable commentators contradict 1) to manufacture consent for the ongoing colonization of the West Bank by the Israeli authorities, 2) to understate the subtle collaboration scheme of the PNA as a comprador client to co-manage certain colonial cages of Palestinian-Arab populations, or for that matter, 3) to avoid addressing Israel’s structural, imperial penetration and (military) supervision of the surrounding Arab, inter-state complex in the Middle East, hosting vast quantities of some of the world’s most precious primary resources and commodities (fossil fuels).

By example of the ‘Visit Palestine’ campaign, one is visually alerted of the fact that both people and ideology have travelled through both space and time in the Euro-Mediterranean topography, cynically generating and reproducing nefarious lines of thought and political practices in a dialectical manner. However, these actions and proliferating constellations have also ignited more comprehensive humanitarian calls and ideas among various segments of regional and global society, along with sparking genuinely creative initiatives in the subaltern culture of contemporary Palestinian resistance to the settler-colonial design in the Southern Levant.

**B. E-Articles & E-Books**


**C. Media Sources**


15
List of Abbreviations:

BMU          Barrier Monitoring Unit
BDS          Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions
DFLP         Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
EFTA         European Free Trade Association
EU           European Union
GME          Greater Middle East
ICJ          International Court of Justice
IDF          Israeli Defense Forces
ID           Identity Document
oPt          Occupied Palestinian Territory
PACBI        Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel
PFLP         Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO          Palestinian Liberation Organization
PNA          Palestinian National Authority
PR           Public Relations
UNISPAL      United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine
UNOCHA       United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA        United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US           United States
WWI          World War I
WWII         World War II
Annex:79

Fig. I

Fig. II

Fig. III

Fig. IV