Epilogue

Collective identities constitute the most basic components of any social order and are products of culture, but they are not fixed social and political variables. They are flexible, oscillating, and changeable, sometimes dramatically and visibly, other times subtly and gradually. They include a wide range of different identities that individuals and collectivities hold simultaneously. The changes in the relative salience and ranking of these various identities may be the result of shifts in political reality or territorial boundaries, but they can also become the causes of social and political changes, including alterations of regimes, although not always in intended or predicted directions. Sociopolitical realities may be altered without changing either the origin of the collective identities or the weight given their different components. Even more interesting, rapid fluctuations in the identities may be because of situational changes. According to surveys, when Israeli Jews are not directly positioned in political conflict with the Arabs or Palestinians, most of them prefer an individualistic family identity. However, this volume deals almost only with the large collective identities of the Jews and Arabs, dealing with ethnicity and nationalism, but always understand-

ing that these identities are not the only or always the most central identities on the maps that construct individuals' social orders. They become so when the two sides meet on the sociopolitical battleground—which they do frequently.[1]

Thresholds of Collective Identities

Recently, the idea of collective identities has come under some conceptual and theoretical criticism. Brubaker and Cooper asserted that identity tends to means too much when understood in a stronger sense, too little when understood in a weak sense or nothing at all because of its sheer ambiguity: "'Identity' is a key term in the vernacular idiom of contemporary politics and social analysis must take account of this fact. But this does not require the use of 'identity' as a category of analysis or to conceptualize 'identities' as something that all people have, seek, construct and negotiate."[2] Just as one can analyze "nation-talk" and nationalist politics without positing the existence of "nations," or race-talk and race-oriented politics without positing the existence of "races," one can analyze "identity-talk" and identity politics without positing the existence of "identities.":

> Reification is a social process, not only an intellectual process . . . We should seek to explain how the political fiction of the "nation"—or of the "ethnic group" or "race" or other putative "identity"—can crystallize at a certain moment as a powerful compelling reality. But we should avoid unintentionally reproducing or reinforcing such reification by uncritically adopting categories of practice as category of analysis.[3]

Brubaker and Cooper accuse a long tradition within the social sciences—one that includes prominent scholars using many different paradigms in their research—of imposing ideological predispositions in favor of groupings on reality through the use of analytical tools.[4]

It is undeniable that all collective identities are socially constructed entities, but they are not necessarily created by social scientists. They may be constructed from the top by intellectuals, politicians, and entrepreneurs, from the bottom, or by rival outgroups and enemies. Whether such identities are partially or completely constructed, they are real social facts and can or must be conceptualized in theoretical and analytical frameworks.

In an interesting rebuttal of Brubaker and Cooper's approach, Craig Calhoun explains ethnic identity as follows:

> Identities and solidarities, thus, are neither simple not simply fluid, but may be more fixed or fluid under different circumstances. It is certainly true that many solidarities—and not least of all ethnic ones—have been produced partly to engage in new conflicts, not simply to foster a larger peace. It would be a mistake however to think that this is the only thing that ethnicity or community does for people. They provide networks of mutual support, capacities for communication, and frameworks of meaning. Crucially, differential resources give people differential capacities to reach beyond particular belongings to other social connections—including very broad ones like nations, civilizations, or humanity as a whole. Not only options but needs for solidarities [are] unequally distributed [between different people at different time]. And . . . the idea of escaping particularistic solidarities into a greater universality may look very different for elites and those with fewer resources.[5]

Calhoun's approach to collective identities is too soft for the issues presented and analyzed in this volume, perhaps because I deal with an acute, decades-long interethnic and national conflict usually perceived as an all or nothing, zero-sum game. But it is basically compatible with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and I adopted it, with some enlargements, changes, and additions, along with the analyses of most of the chapters included in the present book.

This concluding chapter analyzes how major occurrences in Palestinian and Israeli history (see the chronology) caused changes in each side's view of itself and the other, and how these different views changed patterns of behavior, within each society, between them, or both. At least four basic conundrums are in play. First, how is an ethnic collective identity created or imagined and what basic elements contribute to its emergence? The elements may be internal, encompassing religion, culture, language, and geography, or may be externally imposed through discrimination, persecution, marginalization, social, economic, or political inequality, politicide, or genocide. Second, what forces push an ethnic group to pass, in a progression that is not necessarily linear, from a familial orientation to local, religious, ethnic, and national conceptions, which ultimately lead to a demand for

self-determination in the framework of a nation-state within its own territory? During World War I, in the tenth of his Fourteen Points, President Woodrow Wilson promised self-determination for all peoples, and the Arabs and Jews each understood this promise in terms of their own claims and aspirations. Third, are the processes of ethnicization and nationalization of a human group reversible and under what conditions? Fourth, under what conditions do two major collective identities consider the relations among them as mutually exclusive, or as a complete or partial zero-sum game, materially, symbolically, or both?

Self-evidently, because this volume deals with only two interrelated societies and one case study, it is impossible to generalize about the above questions, which have kept social scientists, philosophers, intellectuals, and politicians busy for generations. However, the Jewish and Palestinian cases are so full of events, facts, and processes that no serious scholar of ethnicity and nationalism can ignore them and the evidence they provide, even if their interpretations, as presented in this volume, are not the only ones possible and represent only an exception in the field of scholarship.

There are two interlinked basic dimensions inherent in Jewish-Palestinian relations: the material and the symbolic or cultural. The material dimension is mainly territorial, but also symbolic and central for identity formation and transformation.[6] In every parcel of land settled by Jews, The Palestinians saw a theft of their own patrimony, a loss viewed first in local and communal terms and later in ethnic and national terms, or sometimes supranational pan-Arab terms, depending on their shifting collective identity, as analyzed in Chapter Three. The Jews perceived the land within its varying borders as belonging solely to them; it was their ancestral motherland, in religious, ethno-national, or mixed claims. With few exceptions, they constantly expanded their diverse patterns of control over the land, first by purchasing plots and later by acquiring them through military and political means, establishing facts on the ground with settlements.[7] Sometimes the Jewish territorial expansion was accompanied by changes in collective identity or by tensions among competing identities, as demonstrated mainly in Chapter One.

Zion: Territory and Identity

The symbolic dimension was crucial for the Jewish colonization of Palestine. Theodore Herzl, the founding father of political Zionism, initially did

not prefer establishing a Jewish state in the Middle East. As a secular, almost assimilated Jew, he understood that the Palestinian territory lacked natural resources, was nearly uncultivable, had an impossible climate, was inhabited by a people experiencing the first stirrings of ethno-national consciousness, and was controlled by the unstable and unfriendly Ottoman Empire. Herzl favored establishing a state in a rich, barely populated country, such as Argentina.[8] However, European Jews, who mostly originated from religious families and had been educated initially in traditional Jewish schools, were unenthusiastic about finding collective salvation in a region without sentimental, symbolic, or historical and mythical connections with their real or imagined past in Zion.[9] For millennia, Jews have prayed to return to the Land of Zion and Jerusalem, though they are fully aware of the ritualistic and utopian nature of this prayer. However, when establishing a Jewish state became a political issue in the nationalist and still-colonial European world, the idea appealed to some Jews, provided that Herzl could be convinced to establish the Jewish home in the Holy Land.

If Jewish history led Zionists to see the establishment of Jewish communities in the Holy Land as a homecoming, Muslim history led Palestinians to see the project as another crusade. After all, the local Muslim population's first major encounter with hostile European powers was also the first European colonial adventure: the conquest of the Holy Land by the Crusaders and founding of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099. That conquest, which lasted approximately one hundred years, united the local population against the Christians and left them with a certain if undefined sense of collectivity. Saladin's victory over the Crusaders in 1187 imbued Jerusalem with a sense of Islamic holiness, making it a kind of capital of the country that did not yet have a separate name. Since the establishment of Israel, the Crusades have become a major reference point in the history and collective memory of the Palestinians, who perceive the Jews as modern-day Crusaders and wait for another Saladin to banish them from the land.

In 1790, the country was first unified, for a short period, within borders nearly similar to the modern ones under the rule of the Governor of Acre, Ahmad al-Jazzâr Pasha, a successful soldier of fortune and rebellious Ottoman vassal from Bosnia. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Holy Land but was defeated in Acre by an alliance of local fighters formed by extended peasant and merchants families supported by the Ottomans. In 1834, the local notables and peasantry rebelled against the Egyptian conquest of the territory by Muhammad Ali. The revolt, which encompassed the entire

territory of what would become Arab Palestine, was brutally suffocated (see Chapter Three). After the Ottomans retook the country, they tried to introduce agrarian and tax reforms (*tanzimat*) and strengthen the central rule. They also subdivided the country into different districts to blur the notion of a Holy Land, as they feared that various Christian powers wanted to conquer the territory. It is interesting to see the attempt to manipulate territorial identity by administrative means.

The Jewish immigrants and settlers in Palestine never regarded themselves as colonists or their movement as a part of the world colonial system. Rather, they saw themselves as a people returning to their homeland after two thousand years of forced exile. The Jews were confident of their historical and religious rights, entitling them to purchase the land and later conquer it militarily. Like other colonists in other places, they were convinced that their presence signaled material, social, and cultural progress and the liberation of the native inhabitants from ignorance. However, the local Arab population, as well as Arabs throughout the region, saw the Jews as strangers, Europeans, whites, and representatives of alien powers and foreign decadent cultures, a corrupting influence on their moral, traditional society and agents of the Western colonial world order.[10] Thus, while the Jews, Zionists or not, considered their return a solution to the so-called Jewish problem, the Arabs considered themselves victims, people who paid the price for injustices, especially the Holocaust, committed by Christian and secular Europeans.

The ancient Jewish ethno-religious identity has undergone many transformations, reinterpretations, and subdivisions among many streams during the past millennia, but not in such a way that would lead necessarily to a Zionist identity or solution. The ideological and lifestyle opportunities and options presented to Jews in the nineteenth century by the brave new world of sociopolitical emancipation and intercontinental mobility and migration were immense. Even the modern hope of humanity—nationalism—offered a new option for Jewish individuals and families, who could choose to adopt a new collective identity and become loyal solely to their French, German, Dutch, or English nations. Alternatively, they could choose to divide their identity between the private and public spheres, between religion and nationalism; they could be Jewish by religion at home and German by nationality in public. In the context of European nationalism, Zionism had no place. In addition, other ideologies captured the imagination and the public scene. As discussed in Chapter One, some Jews adopted the idea that redemption, brought about by radical revolutions of the entire world order based on so-

cialist, communist, or other universalistic ideologies, would also include personal or collective salvation for the Jews. Later, the prominent historian Simon Dubnow fused nationalism, internationalism, and secular Jewishness into a non-Zionist, non–territorially dependent cultural nationalism.

In 1881–1882, a wave of pogroms directed at Jews broke out along the western frontier of the Russian Empire. At the same time, the Romanian authorities drastically reduced many of the rights previously accorded to its Jewish subjects. Many of the Jews affected by these events immigrated to North America, while a much smaller percentage established associations to prepare for immigration and return to what Jews had always considered their utopian fatherland and patrimony—Palestine, or Eretz Israel. The most well known of these movements was a small group of high school students in Krakow know as the Bilu association, which was supported by a larger organization called the Lovers of Zion, established in Silesia in 1884. Envoys were sent to buy land and establish several agricultural colonies. There is a striking similarity between these immigrants' motives and those of the first Protestant immigrants to the Americas, who were also a people with strongly articulated religious convictions and a history of religious persecution. Later Zionist historiography expropriated this wave of immigration, considering it to be the first wave of Zionist immigration linked to subsequent waves, even though it was not politically driven and the newcomers lacked a coherent ideological vision of the Jewish state and nation building.

In 1897, Herzl called delegations from all European Jewish communities to attend a convention in Basel to found the World Zionist Organization. This convention, which became known as the First Zionist Congress, adopted a program to create a home for the Jewish people in Palestine, secured by public law. Today, Herzl is a Zionist icon, used and abused on festive occasions, a revered figurehead representing the more liberal and humanistic streams of Zionism.

The Formative Period

Although British colonial rule lasted a little less than thirty years, it is considered to be the formative period of both the Jewish-Zionist and Palestinian-Arab polities and identity constructions. The colonial government was a minimalist state, providing basic services for its subjects: law and order, justice through courts, an education system, some basic social and health care systems, a financial and monetary system, and infrastructure such as

roads, railroads, electricity, ports, and postal and broadcasting services. However, on the symbolic level, the British colonial state provided the most crucial contribution in distinguishing Palestine as a geopolitical, economic, social, and political entity distinct from the surrounding Arab lands and peoples. As a cause of the crystallization of Arab Palestinian identity, it was nearly as important as the existence of a direct enemy—the Jewish colonizers, with whom the Palestinians had very complex material and symbolic exchanges and interactions, as described in Chapter Four.

Israeli Jewish identity was also invented and began to be constructed during the colonial period. The political and cultural elites made a very interesting attempt to build a new collective identity promptly after the Israeli state was established. This was a secular statist identity, designed to homogenize the population of the new state following massive, nonselective Jewish immigration (Chapter Five). The ability to extend state power and control to new peripheries and cultural ethnic groups was of crucial importance, as Israel was rapidly turning into a country of new immigrants with political and cultural assumptions strikingly different from those of the pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine.[11] Additional groups were incorporated within the social boundaries of the state, but excluded from the power foci and marginalized. Such groups included about 150,000 Arabs who remained in the territory of the newly established state and the Jewish Orthodox, non-Zionist groups who did not recognize the secular Jewish state de jure.[12] At first glance, the state seemed successful in its aim of controlling the new peripheries and preserving the original distribution of power in society by creating a bureaucratized hegemony. Both the popular image of that early era in Israel's history and the findings of social science research studies indicate that the state appeared to control the process while maintaining a high level of autonomy regarding other actual and potential foci of power.[13] Israeli society became state centered after Ben-Gurion's call for *mamlachtut,* or statism. Few societal organizations took initiatives in areas such as health, education, or even tourism. However, over time, the initial Israeli identity gradually declined and was superseded by a locally invented version of Jewishness, as Chapter One describes.[14]

The Jewish National Fund

The most important organizations set up by the new Zionist movement were a bank established in 1899 and the Jewish National Fund (JNF), es-

tablished in 1901 with the aim of raising funds to purchase lands in Palestine and later subsidize settlers and settlements. The lands acquired by the JNF were considered inalienable Jewish public lands, never to be sold to or cultivated by non-Jews. Until 1948, the JNF was the major actor in the Jewish-Arab conflict over Palestine, converting money into nationalized lands. However, by 1948, the Jews succeeded in buying, either privately or through the JNF, only about 7 percent of the total land in Palestine, most of it on the coastal plain at the periphery of the ancient Jewish nation's core territories. Moreover, Zionism remained a fringe and unpopular movement for a long time, enjoying little support among Jews or in the world political arena. For decades, it could not recruit substantial political and financial support for its ideas and failed to attract enough immigrants to change the demographic composition of Palestine into a Jewish land, even after the British colonial power extended its political and military umbrella over the movement.[15]

However, Zionism's major victory was to restrict immigration to the United States in the late 1920s and 1930s as a result of the Great Depression. The new immigration policy was not directed against the Jews, but they suffered disproportionately from it because of their relative share of the immigrant population, the rise of fascism and Nazism, and the Holocaust. The only country gate that remained partially open to Jewish refugees was Palestine's. During and after World War II, the Jewish people's claims became much more vigorous as a result of the Holocaust, in which the German Nazis and their collaborators managed to systematically exterminate about six million European and North African Jews.

In the postwar years, the international community felt a strong obligation to compensate the Jewish people for the horrors of the Nazi genocide and for the fact that the Allies did nothing to prevent or reduce the extermination of the Jews. However, the Palestinians regarded the fact that they had to pay for crimes committed by Europeans and Westerners as highly immoral. Nevertheless, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly accepted a Resolution 181 to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state, excluding an internationalized enclave area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The Jews accepted the plan while the Arabs rejected it, demanding the whole country because they were still the majority of its inhabitants and its indigenous people. At this point in time, the majority of Jews crossed the threshold from an ethno-religious or cultural identity to a national and territorial identity, even if they did not obey the basic Zionist imperative of making *aliya* (immigrating) to Palestine.

Following the UN decision, the Jews proclaimed an independent state on May 14, 1948, the day that the mandate was terminated, setting the date as Israeli Independence Day and a historical counterpoint to the Holocaust. A day later, troops from several Arab states—mainly Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, and Iraq—invaded Palestine attempting to nullify the partition resolution, rescue their Palestinian brethren, and commit politicide against the Jewish state. Politicide occurred, but in the reverse direction.

The Military Battle over Palestine

Even before Israeli independence, from December 1947 to May 1948, a bitter intercommunal war was fought between the Palestinian-Arab community and the Jewish community. Jews still made up only about 30 percent of the population, but because Jewish immigrants were disproportionately young and politically committed, they had a demographic advantage of about 1.5 to 1 over the Palestinian population in the decisive age-group for fighting—young men between twenty and forty-five years of age—and were far better organized.[16] The first stage of intercommunal war was marked by the initiative and relative superiority of local Palestinian forces, reinforced by volunteers mainly from Syria and Egypt.

The Jewish military forces operated according to so-called Plan D (see Chapter Seven), which aimed to ensure control over the territories that the United Nations had designated for the Jewish state, and to assure free movement between Jewish settlements on the roads controlled by Arab villages. The plan also considered the inability of Jews to spread their forces among hundreds of Arab villages, the logical consequence of which was to destroy almost all conquered Arab villages and expel their inhabitants from the presumed Jewish state. Jewish military forces often found the conquered Arab villages empty or half empty, as certain portions of the Arab population fled after hearing news and rumors of Jewish cruelty and atrocities.[17] Once most of the Arabs had left the country, they were not permitted to return.

Thus, a de facto ethnic cleansing was carried out. At the end of the 1948 war, the number of Palestinian refugees was estimated to be between 700,000 to 900,000.[18] Most of their villages, towns, and neighborhoods were destroyed or repopulated by Jewish residents, some of whom were long-term residents and others of whom were recent immigrants. Since then, the Palestinians' return to their homes and fields has become a central and irremovable political demand and a key component of the Palestinian identity

and constitutive myth. Many Palestinians families hold keys to their homes in Jaffa, Haifa, Ramalla, and hundreds of other destroyed or Israelized villages, as if time froze one day in 1948. The majority of the Jews perceive a full right of return (*al-awda*) in its literal meaning as a certain prescription for the destruction of Israel. However, many Palestinian and Israeli politicians and intellectuals gave a softer meaning to the return, claiming that it would be implemented by repatriation to the newly established Palestinian state, along with compensation and rehabilitation programs carried out by Israel and the international community. Israel would also be required to accept its moral responsibility for creating the situation, which few Israeli Jew are ready to fulfill.

Palestinians refer to the 1948 war and their subsequent exile as a *nakba*, a catastrophe; Israeli Jews regard the same period as a war of independence that has become a fundamental component of their identity and a symbolic compensation for the Holocaust. Both peoples have their own cosmic catastrophes, and both have strong collective memories of being the victims of a colossal injustice—either the Jewish experience of Nazi genocide or the Palestinian experience of politicide and ethnic cleansing.[19] The political behavior of both people is heavily influenced by these events.

The Internal Clash

The relationship between the Jewish state and its Jewish population and the Arab minority that remained within its enlarged borders was never easy. Although the Israeli government granted Israeli Arabs citizenship, they were always considered a security threat and experienced not only severe surveillance and control, but the xenophobia that has been built into the Jewish religion and political culture.[20] Until 1966, harsh military rule limited Israeli Arabs' freedom of movement within the country, enabling the government to confiscate most of their agricultural lands and prevent them from competing in the low-skill labor market with new immigrants. The Israeli government also imposed a curriculum on Arab schools that tried to instill a new ethnic collective identity based on traditional Arab and Muslim (or Christian or Circassian) history and a loyalty to the Jewish state that was completely detached from their Palestinian past and separate roots.[21]

In short, Israeli Arabs became a bilingual and bicultural people educated to obey Israeli democracy, but at the same time were systematically deprived of their land and access to most common social goods—welfare,

jobs, housing, and other subsidized merchandise. Except for small groups of Druze, Circassians, and Bedouin volunteers, Israeli Arabs were excluded from compulsory military service, then denied full citizenship rights on the grounds that they had not fully fulfilled their citizenship obligations.

From about 7 percent of the total population in 1949, Israeli Arabs have grown to approximately 20 percent of the population in the new Israeli boundaries as established by the armistice lines. For decades, any national or ethnic Arab political organization or protest movement was suffocated. Only the Israeli Communist Party managed to serve as a major access point to the center; it channeled Israeli Arab protests and fought for their rights as citizen within the Jewish state. The Communist Party was also an intellectual hothouse for a new Arab cultural elite that created an original, local counterculture almost completely isolated from cultural developments in other Arab countries. The party's newspapers, periodicals, and Arabic publishing house hosted and participated in creating opportunities for Israeli Arab poets, writers, thinkers, and journalists; in 1992, the late Emil Habibi, a product of this policy, won the prestigious Israel Prize for literature. Later, especially after Israel conquered the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Palestinians there came under Israel's unified control system, this cultural capital became part of a general cultural and political renaissance of the Palestinian people. Over time, the Arabs of Israel have accumulated not only cultural wealth, but also considerable material wealth and political power.

Ehud Barak's 1999 victory to become prime minister of Israel was due in no small part to the massive support he received from Arab citizens. However, as Barak was anxious to establish his political legitimacy—and because, practically speaking, Israeli leaders are not considered legitimate if their power depends on the Arab community—he excluded Arabs from the foci of power. Later, when a violent crisis erupted between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the so-called al-Aqsa intifada, Arab citizens expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian struggle through violent demonstrations. The Israeli police overreacted, killing thirteen Arabs with live ammunition and wounding several hundred others. The response deeply shocked the Arab population, and the events were categorized as another massacre committed by Jews against Arabs, like those that had occurred in the past in Deir Yassin (1948) and Kafar Qassam (1956). Arab anger and frustration only increased when, in the face of this violence, the Israeli authorities and most members of the Jewish public demonstrated indifference and a total lack of empathy. During the February 2001 election, most Israeli

Arabs citizens boycotted the polls, denying Labor party leader Barak their community's traditional support. For the first time, the Arab electorate acted independently from the rest of the Israeli electorate.

Some analysts interpreted the boycott as signaling the withdrawal of Israeli Arab citizens from the state, their Israeliness, and the political arena. However, the meaning of this collective act was quite the contrary: The boycott aimed to indicate to the Israeli state, and especially the political left—namely, the Labor and Meretz parties—that Arab support of leftist Zionist parties could no longer be taken for granted and that the Arab voter demanded an equal voice in the Israeli polity's critical decision making.

Following the second intifada, relations between the Israeli Arabs and and the Jewish state again became strained. The state tended to emphasize its Jewish character and introduced more legal obstacles and other discriminatory measures against the Arabs, including the attempt to formulate a constititution that excluded any collective rights for Arabs. The Arabs indicated that they would no longer be satisfied with their original demand to make Israel a "state of all its citizens" instead of an exclusively Jewish state, and demanded full ethno-cultural and regional autonomy.[22] These heightened separatist demands increased Jewish anxiety, resulting in increased Arabophobia and demands for more oppressive measures.

Types of Interaction

Most of the encounters between any two partners in a conflict can be divided into two types: concrete interaction and model interaction. The concrete interactions are the systems of exchange, competition, cooperation, and conflict that exist between the two sides in different spheres. One sphere may contain individuals fulfilling social roles while another sphere is concerned with groups or social strata in each community. A third sphere may involve formulating policies for the entire polity. The model interaction—positive or negative—derives from the attitude of one side toward the very existence of the other side in the interaction over its image, its perception, its essence, and its activities, as described in Chapter Two.

Thus, for different parts of the community, the other side can become a positive or negative reference group, either in its entirety or in differential spheres of action. As it becomes a reference group, the other collectivity may also become a partial or complete model to be imitated or rejected. Completely or partially imitating a perceived model is not to be interpreted

as adopting a positive attitude or unconfrontational attitude toward it.[23] Earlier Jewish immigrants in the 1910s and 1920s perceived the local indigenous Arab society, and mainly the Bedouin one, as similar to the ancient Jewish society exiled two thousand years ago from the land, tried to imitate it, and partially made them a positive reference group.

Unlike the Jews, the Palestinians are a new people, created like many others in Asia and Africa following the colonization and decolonization process. However, following their military and political defeat by the immigrant-settler society created during the colonial period, they remained stateless, often in exile or consigned to refugee camps. Between 1948 and 1967, they seemed to have vanished. When they reappeared, they were fragmented more or less according to their territorial dispersal and divisions. Even when Palestinians have been reunified under Israeli rule since 1967, there have been significant differences between Israeli Palestinians (the Arab citizens of Israel, or the so-called Arabs of 1948), the inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza, and the Palestinians of Jordan or the *gurba* (exile or Diaspora).[24]

Above all, the territorial reunification of three Palestinian areas in 1967—the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel itself—under a common government, albeit one controlled by Jews, led to a revival of Palestinianism, even though the collective identity was fragmented. The so-called Palestinian issue, defined from 1949 to 1967 as a refugee settlement and humanitarian problem, was redefined by both the Palestinians and most of the international community as an ethnic or national self-determination issue. In large measure, the situation was analogous to the struggle against British colonial rule and oppression, like the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–39, but this time against the Israelis.

For the Israelis, the 1967 war meant that they had captured the heartland of their mythical ancestral homeland, which propelled Israel's identity more and more toward its primordial components, as analyzed in Chapter One. Only recently did the country partially awaken from its messianic dreams and move toward emphasizing its civil components. However, giving up the Eretz Israel identity was a gradual and painful process connected to the reactions of the Palestinians.

The results of the war also introduced Palestinian workers from the occupied territories into the Israeli labor market. The influx caused rapid economic growth in Israel and was closely linked to the movement of all extant Israeli groups into higher positions within the ethnic hierarchy. Furthermore, when more than one ethnic group stood to benefit from the entry

and growth of a lower group, those at the top benefited more than others from the change in the ethnic composition of the labor market.[25] Thus, the Ashkenazi Jews were the major beneficiaries of the ethnic recomposition of the labor market—more so than the Mizrahim, though both were pushed upward from the bottom and enjoyed occupational and social mobility. Israeli Arab citizens also experienced some occupational mobility as noncitizen workers entered the system, but still far less than did the Jewish ethnic groups; the economic and social gaps between Israeli Arabs and other Jewish groups were enlarged.[26] An additional benefit for the entire system was the opening up of a vast export market for diverse Israeli products, such as textiles and electronic appliances, to the inhabitants of the occupied territories, and from there, many times to the whole Arab world, even though it officially boycotted Israeli products.[27]

The Jewish State

Israel was transformed into a de facto binational Jewish-Arab political entity, even though all political power in the state—political rights, citizenship, human rights, access to resources, and the right to define the collective identity—has been possessed by one ethno-national segment, namely, the Jews. The hegemonic situation marks the difference between a de jure and a de facto binational state. After 1967, Israeli's veteran Arab citizens who had been there in 1948 received limited access to material resources provided by the state (See Chapters Eight and Ten) but were never granted a share in the symbolic resources of participation as equal citizens, despite possessing formal citizenship.[28] The identity of the state was constructed as Jewish by means of various symbols and codes.[29] The country's history, flag, national anthem,[30] and official days of celebration and commemoration all emphasize the Jewish character of the state, as does the entire calendar.[31]

The right to belong to the Israeli state was extended to Jews all over the world, which by definition includes them in the Israeli collectivity even if they never intended to immigrate to Israel. However, basic human rights were mostly nonexistent for the Palestinian residents of the occupied territories, a situation described as an ethnocracy.[32] Most of the discrimination was imposed by legislative measures, such as immigration and citizenship laws, and political institutions that had no official links to the state but operated as organs of the Jewish nation, such as the Jewish Agency and the JNF,[33] which possess large amount of lands and other material resources,

but unlike the government, are not required to distribute them according
to universal criteria (see Chapters Eight and Ten).

After 1967

Between 1967 and 1987, before the first intifada erupted, the Israeli occupa-
tion of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the resulting colonization
project provided economic benefits at almost no cost and enabled the move
toward a primordial Jewish identity. The occupied territories became a fron-
tier for Jewish colonization, with Israel and the settlers not having to pay
directly for the land. The workers commuting from the occupied territories
became the cheapest migrant workers in the world, usually returning to
their homes in refugee camps and villages without additionally burdening
the Israeli state. Most worked without receiving any of the benefits usually
accorded to workers in modern society. Thus, the material benefits and the
increasing primordial identities reinforced one another.

This cost-benefit ratio depended on the submissiveness and good be-
havior of the Palestinians. However, as Palestinian anger mounted at their
exploitation and humiliation, the gradual reduction in their living space
created by Israeli colonization projects, and the inability of their own lead-
ership to ameliorate their hardships or help them realize their national as-
pirations, they rebelled.

The occupation as a social order started to collapse only after the first
Palestinian uprising began on December 9, 1987. It was crushed completely
during the second uprising and the ascendancy of the Islamic movement.
It always takes some time for the Israeli and Palestinian people and their
leadership to decipher and react to changing situations. During the first in-
tifada, the Israeli political economy adapted and began a kind of disengage-
ment by importing foreign migrant workers mainly from Eastern Europe
to replace Palestinian workers, which was disastrous for the Palestinian
economy.[34] The foreign workers did not threaten public safety, as Palestinian
workers were perceived to do. But they were more expensive, and because
they were more permanent than Palestinian laborers who lived outside of
Israel proper, they were viewed as a possible threat to the future Jewish iden-
tity of the society.[35]

Connected to the economic interest in the territories was another com-
plication that arose after the 1967 war—the desire of Israeli society as a
whole, both left and right, to annex the historic heartland of the Jewish

people in the West Bank but without annexing its Arab residents. Formal annexation would mean that Israel would no longer have a Jewish majority. Demographic changes would destroy the Jewish character and identity of the state even if the Palestinians were not granted full citizenship, as presented in Chapter Twelve. This contradiction created a built-in crisis, leaving the Israeli state and society unable to make the important political decisions that were necessary to resolve both the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as domestic social issues. As time passed, the crisis became more explicit. Contradictory interests became aligned with political parties and were absorbed into personal, group, and even religious identities, creating cleavages such as hawks versus doves, right versus left, religious versus secular, or Zionists versus post-Zionists.[36]

In 1977, when the right wing nationalist bloc headed by the Likud Party came to power, it was expected immediately to annex the entire West Bank—often called by the Biblical names of Judea and Samaria—and the Gaza Strip, both of which are regarded as part of the Land of Israel. Such annexation never occurred, except for East Jerusalem and the Syrian (Golan) Heights. The reason for not annexing the Palestinian occupied territories is explained in Chapter Twelve.

Even after the Israelis had begun to digest the high economic, social, and political costs of the colonization project, it was politically impossible to halt it. By the end of 2006, about 420,000 settlers, including those in East Jerusalem and its metropolitan area, settled there. However, as time passed, the colonization project raised a deep and bitter controversy within Israeli society, involving fundamental questions of identity and the meaning of a Jewish state and being Jewish, as opposed to being Israeli.[37]

Oslo

The Israeli response to the first intifada was to negotiate the so-called Oslo agreements with Fatah, the mainstream Palestinian leadership. The agreements were a real breakthrough, resulting in each side recognizing the other's right to exist. For the first time, the legitimate representative Palestinian political body, the Palestinian Authority, was granted partial autonomy and self-control over densely populated areas and allowed to form militias.[38] But the accords were vague and ambiguous, and the most problematic issues—borders, water rights, control over East Jerusalem, and the right of return of refugees and settlements—were left unresolved.[39]

One of the main flaws of the Oslo accords was the assumption that the Palestinian Authority would be a subcontractor regime, working to maintain Israel's security while all other issues would be subject to endless rounds of negotiations, with every concession depending on Israeli generosity. There was also to be a long period of trust building that, history has shown, created mainly distrust and offered plenty of opportunities for rejectionist forces to sabotage the agreement.

Even after Fatah and the Israeli government ratified the Oslo accords, settlements continued to expand. Established settlements doubled their number of settlers and, it is estimated, 120 so-called unauthorized settlements were constructed after 1996.[40] Such unauthorized settlements vary in size, but many of them were populated by more than twenty families, had permanent building structures, and were connected to electricity and water and linked by paved roads. These settlements never would have persisted as they did without tacit approval from the civilian authorities and protection from the military.[41]

Obviously, not all of the Israeli Jews and Palestinians were happy with the Oslo accords. For many Israelis, the accords meant the repartition of the Land of Israel. For many Palestinians, the accords waived their rights to most of their homeland, and were therefore treasonous. Palestinian Islamist organizations resumed attacks against Israeli targets and the newly established Palestinian Authority could not prevent them from doing so. The attacks began even before the 1994 massacre by Baruch Goldstein, who killed 29 Palestinians and injured 125 more at the Patriarch's Cave—a common holy site for both Jews and Muslims—and transformed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a battle of national liberation into a religious war (*jihad*). After the traditional Islamic forty days of mourning, Islamist extremists began a revenge campaign, and dozens of suicide bombers hit the streets of major Israel cities, detonating their bombs mainly in buses and coffee houses.

Ehud Barak and the Collapse of the Israeli Peace-Oriented Camp

The Israeli streets were filled with massive demonstrations against the agreements and political extremists engaged in wild incitement against the government, which they accused of treason. There was an atmosphere of impending civil war. On November 4, 1995, a religious right wing activist assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. In May 1996, the head of the right wing Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu, was elected prime minister

in his place. After his election, Netanyahu declared his commitment to fulfill all of Israel's previous agreements and negotiated the Wye River Accord with Yasir Arafat. Although this agreement resulted in a minor Israeli withdrawal, after a long delay, from Hebron, Netanyahu basically stalled the peace process and refused to implement the steps agreed to in the Oslo Accords.[42] In 1996, Ehud Olmert, than mayor of Jerusalem, decided to open an exit for the Western Wall tunnel under the Haram al-Sharif. This provoked major Palestinian riots, resulting in the deaths of about a dozen Israelis and a hundred Palestinians.

After the Netanyahu years, Ehud Barak's election as prime minister under the Labor Party in 1999 kindled real hope among certain sectors of the Israeli population and profound anxieties among others, namely, the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories and the ultra-Orthodox, who were alarmed by Barak's campaign promise to "separate religion from politics." However, his victory was warmly welcomed among Israeli Arabs, more than 90 percent of whom voted for him; Palestinians; leaders of the Arab states; and the rest of what is known as the Western world. Barak, however, had an agenda and priorities of his own. He would have preferred to form a government with Likud, headed by Ariel Sharon, for whom he entertained a great admiration following their joint military endeavors. From the outset, the support of the Jewish parliamentary majority was more important to Barak than that of the Israeli Arabs. He acknowledged the latter's distress and pledged to strive for their full equality, but would only seek it after a final settlement with the Palestinians had been reached.

The distinction between Barak's and Rabin's approaches was demonstrated by Barak's decision to freeze the implementation of all interim agreements with the Palestinians arising from the Oslo-Wye accords—among them a partial redeployment of Israeli troops on the West Bank, Palestinian control over three villages near Jerusalem, and the release of pre-1993 prisoners—in favor of a comprehensive, permanent-status agreement. Instead, Barak chose to make an agreement with Syria his first priority, for two reasons. First, such an accord looked relatively simple compared to the emotionally loaded negotiations with the Palestinians. Second, Barak foresaw that isolating the Palestinian leadership through a separate agreement with Syria might force the Palestinians to agree to sign a final settlement on his terms. When the Shepherdstown talks with Syria foundered over a few meters of land along the edge of the Sea of Galilee that were due for demilitarization in any case—Barak's hesitation here was probably caused

by anxiety over Syrian access to Lake Kinneret, Israel's main water reservoir—Barak decided to withdraw from Lebanon without an agreement. The withdrawal was considered Barak's only achievement, but because the Israeli-Lebanese border was unsecured, the local Shiite militia, Hezbollah, could launch hundreds of missiles over northern Israel during the so-called Second Lebanese war. Only in the summer of 2000, when the end of President William Clinton's tenure and (retrospectively) his own drew near, did Barak finally find time to hold talks with the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership had been begging for concessions—especially the release of prisoners, the most painful issue for their people—to ease the pressure on it from below. On the one hand, the Palestinian Authority was expected to prevent the creation of parallel and competing Palestinian militias, to behave "like Ben-Gurion" in the "Altalena affair," when he ordered an Ezel Revisionist ship loaded with smuggled weapons to be sunk in 1948, a command that caused uproar among the Jewish population. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority was unable to provide its people with any sign of success as an incentive to supporting it over rival armed groups. As Israeli intelligence services warned that the Palestinian Authority's control was weakening and Hamas and the Islamic Jihad gaining strength, Barak insisted that there would be no release of prisoners "with blood on their hands" or territorial concessions until a final status agreement had been reached.[43]

By the summer of 2000, the seeds of mutual mistrust between Arafat and Barak had already been sown. Central negotiations conducted at Camp David were preceded by innumerable talks at all levels, but they were unproductive. Arafat was opposed a priori to Barak's approach of freezing the third, more extensive troop withdrawal and other previous Israeli commitments, and moving to talks on the conditions for a final comprehensive settlement. But he still had nothing to show to an increasingly restive Palestinian populace as the fruit of the Oslo accords. All the cards were in Israel's hands, and Arafat had no alternative but to agree to take part in the Camp David talks.

The Camp David Talks

The initial Israeli proposal transmitted to Clinton was quite detailed. The Palestinians were to be offered an 80:20 division of territory: 80 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be under the control and sovereignty

of the Palestinian state and 20 percent annexed to Israel. Israel's 20 percent included seven settlement blocs comprising around 80 percent of the Jewish settler population. Additionally, a viaduct would be built to link the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Earlier, the possibility of Israel holding a long-term lease on an additional 10 percent of the West Bank along the Jordan Valley, for security reasons, had also been discussed. The right of return would be recognized only with respect to the Palestinian state. Israel would help to rehabilitate the refugees, but it would not accept any moral or legal responsibility for creating the refugee problem.

The municipal boundaries of Jerusalem would be expanded, apparently annexing Abu Dis, Azariya, and a few other villages and townlets, so there would be, nominally, something to share. The intention was to leave most of the current area of the city under Israeli sovereignty, selling the additional territory to the Palestinians as their Jerusalem. A bypass road would then be paved around East Jerusalem to allow worshippers to reach the holy shrine of Haram al-Sharif, the Islamic Noble Sanctuary and Jewish Temple Mount.

The Palestinians, from their perspective, had already made the ultimate concession by recognizing Israel's legitimate right to exist and thus were without bargaining chips.[44] After the additional concessions, many Palestinians, mostly outside the country, accused Arafat and Fatah of treason.[45] In the Oslo agreements, the Palestinian delegation had recognized Israel's right to exist in 78 percent of historical Palestine in the hope that, following the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and on the basis of the Arab interpretation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, they might recover the remainder with minor border adjustments. However, even though there was a certain slackening of Israeli demands, talks continued concerning annexing another 12 percent or so of the West Bank to create three settlement blocs, dividing the Palestinian state into separate cantons with very problematic connections between them.

Arafat, who was aware of the coordinated American-Israeli position, came unwillingly to the summit. The Palestinians felt that they were being dragged to the verdant hills of Maryland to be jointly pressured by an Israeli prime minister and an American president who, because of their separate political timetables and concerns about their legacies, had a personal sense of urgency.[46] The Americans repeatedly told the Palestinians that the Israeli leader's coalition was unstable; after a while, they said, the goal of the summit meeting seemed to be as much about rescuing Barak as making peace.

Thus, most of the Palestinian delegation decided in advance to adopt a futile bunker strategy of automatically refusing any proposal.

Arafat's suspicions were confirmed when the short-fused Clinton launched a crude attack on him, impugning his honor.[47] In his account of the Camp David meetings, Barak's foreign minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami, has remarked that the episode reflected the extent to which Arafat was a prisoner of his own myths. What the incident really shows is the extent to which each side was sunk in myths of its own. This is apparently the chief reason why the talks ultimately fell apart over the status of the Temple Mount, even though the Palestinians had already agreed to divide the city and Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall in exchange for control over the land containing the mosques and the city's Arab neighborhoods.

During the talks, Barak agreed to be flexible about Israeli proposals on various issues and was close to conceding over 92 percent of the West Bank's territory. However, each proposal and each issue was discussed individually, and it was stressed that until everything had been agreed upon, nothing was agreed. Thus, the Palestinians were made discrete offers in many different areas, mainly out of the certainty that all would be rejected outright regardless, while the Palestinians—or so it was reported at the time—made no counter-proposals. Afterward, Barak could group together all of the separate instances and claim that he had made an incomparably generous offer to the Palestinians.

When the summit failed and the remnants of his government fell to pieces, Barak made his fateful declaration that there was "no partner" on the Palestinian side of peace talks. Clinton—also out of a decidedly personal interest—was true to his promise and backed him up. There were further so-called non-talks and non-papers in Taba, where, according to some sources, the parties came closer to agreement than ever before. As far as Barak and Arafat were concerned, however, the game at Camp David was over. After Taba, it was only a matter of time before armed conflict erupted.

The Roadmap

After seven years of futile negotiations failed to advance significantly the Palestinian cause and the Jewish colonization process in the occupied Palestinian territories intensified, the question was not whether but when anger and violence would erupt, and in what form. The Palestinians were aware of the asymmetry in the power relations with Israel, but they changed

the paradigm. From an attempt to end the occupation and achieve independence that relied upon diplomatic efforts and depended on the kindness of the Jews and Americans, they moved on to a war for independence. Fueled in part by religious emotions, the struggle became one in which the people were prepared to pay a high personal and collective price to achieve what they saw as a paramount objective.

In this respect, Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount in 2000 was only the match that ignited the stores of fuel that Peres, Netanyahu, and Barak had amassed. Barak had paved the way for Sharon's victory in February 2001 with an unprecedented 52 percent of the vote. The shift was historically reinforced by the general election of January 2003, in which the right wing bloc secured 69 out of 120 Knesset seats and Sharon became the first Israeli prime minister to win a second term since Menachem Begin had done so in 1981.

As Chapter Twelve describes, Israel under Sharon became oriented towards one major goal: the politicide of the Palestinian people. Politicide covers a wide range of social, psychological, political, and military activities designed to destroy the political and national viability of an entire community of people. Its ultimate aim is to destroy a certain people's prospects—indeed, their very will—for legitimate self-determination and sovereignty over land they consider their homeland. It is a reversal of the process suggested by Woodrow Wilson at the end of World War I and since then accepted as a standard international principle. The most commonly used techniques of politicide are expropriation and colonization of land; restrictions on spatial mobility, such as curfews, closures, and roadblocks; murder; mass detentions; the division or elimination of leaders and elite groups; hindrance of regular education and schooling and reeducation; physical destruction of public institutions, infrastructure, private homes, and property; starvation; and social and political isolation. Typically, such actions are taken in the name of law and order; a key aim in the struggle is to acquire the power to define one's own side as enforcing the law and the other as criminals and terrorists. An alternative goal may be to establish a puppet regime that is completely obedient but provides an illusion of self-determination to the oppressed ethnic community.

However, the hard facts are that a Palestinian people exists and it will be almost impossible to commit politicide against it without fatal consequences for Israel. That said, Israel is not only an established presence in the region, but also, in local terms, a military, economic, and technological

superpower. Like many other immigrant-settler societies, it was born in sin, on the ruins of another culture that had suffered politicide and partial ethnic cleansing—although the Zionist state did not succeed in annihilating the rival indigenous culture, as many other immigrant-settler societies have done. In 1948, it lacked the power to do so, and the strength of postcolonial sentiment at the time made such actions less internationally acceptable. Unlike the indigenous peoples in Algeria, Zambia, or South Africa, however, the Palestinians were unable to overthrow their colonizers. The Jewish state in the Middle East succeeded in proving its viability and developing its own vital society and culture. Its long-term development and internal normalcy depend, however, on its recognition as a legitimate entity by the other peoples of the region. The peace accord signed with Egypt was, in this sense, Zionism's second greatest victory. Its greatest was the Oslo agreement, in which the Zionist movement's primary victim and adversary recognized the right of a Jewish state to exist in Palestine. Just as Sadat's treaty with Begin was a delayed result of Israeli victory in the 1967 and 1973 wars, the revolutionary change in mainstream Palestinian political thought occurred in the aftermath of American victory in the Gulf War of 1991.[48]

Similarly, the George W. Bush administration issued its new roadmap for Israel in the run-up to its invasion of Iraq. Its goal was to close down all armed resistance to Israel in exchange for the establishment, within temporary borders, of an entity described as a Palestinian state by the end of 2003.[49] This was to be followed by the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian Authority territories and elections for a new Palestinian Council, leading to negotiations with Israel on a permanent agreement to be reached by 2005. The so-called quartet of the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia was supposed to supervise the plan's implementation, leaving all of the matters in dispute—the borders, refugees, and status of Jerusalem, among others—open. This strategy fit well with Sharon's tactic of buying time to continue his politicidal policy, a tactic that rests on the assumption that Palestinian terrorist attacks will continue, drawing forth a correspondingly savage Israeli military response.

The opinions of both communities during this period were attested to by a public opinion poll conducted in early December 2002. More than seven out of ten Palestinians and Israelis indicated that they were ready to undertake a settlement process based on the Palestinians refraining from violence and the Israelis agreeing to a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. Less than one in five Palestinians and Israelis—in both cases the per-

centages were remarkably similar—were committed to the idea of regaining historic Palestine or holding on to the occupied territories. However, a large proportion of both the Palestinian and Israeli majorities expressed no confidence in the readiness of the other side to give up violence or make the necessary concessions. Thus, the bulk of Palestinians continued to support using violent methods in the intifada, while a similar proportion of Israelis continued to favor a violent crackdown by the Israeli military.

An able map reader, Sharon found the new Bush plan very convenient. In a speech on July 4, 2002, he outlined a clear vision of how he thought the conflict should be managed. By implementing the roadmap, Israel could create a contiguous area of territory in the West Bank, which, through a combination of tunnels and bridges, would allow Palestinians to travel from Jenin to Hebron without passing through any Israeli roadblocks or checkpoints. Israel would undertake measures such as "creating territorial continuity between Palestinian population centers"—that is, withdrawing from cities such as Jenin, Nablus and Hebron—as long as the Palestinians remained engaged in making a "sincere and real effort to stop terror." Then, after the required reforms in the Palestinian Authority had been completed, the next phase of the Bush plan would come into effect: establishing a Palestinian state within "provisional" borders.

The intention was obvious. The Palestinian state, formed by four enclaves around Jenin, Nablus, Hebron, and the Gaza Strip, would lack territorial contiguity. The plan to connect the enclaves with tunnels and bridges meant that a strong Israeli presence would exist in most other areas of the West Bank. To drive the point home, Sharon added:

> This Palestinian state will be completely demilitarized. It will be allowed to maintain lightly armed police and internal forces to ensure civil order. Israel will continue to control all movement in and out of the Palestinian state, will command its airspace, and not allow it to form alliances with Israel's enemies.[50]

Sharon knew very well that it would be virtually impossible for a Palestinian leader to end the conflict in exchange for such limited sovereignty and territory. However, the very mention of the code words "Palestinian state"—taboo in the right wing lexicon—endowed him with an image of moderation abroad and positioned him at the center of the domestic political spectrum. Such gestures also won him an almost unlimited amount of

time to continue his program of politicide. It is not clear how much of Sharon's political legacy will survive his departure from public life, especially as his successors lack his charisma, and leadership crises have hindered their ability to implement his agenda.

Palestinian Leadership Crisis

Arafat's death on November 11, 2004 and the election on January 10, 2005 of Mahmoud Abbas as his successor does not alter any basic Middle Eastern realities. Abbas cannot give up the principles framed by Arafat, the Palestinian National Council, and the consensus that demanded a Palestinian state within the borders existing prior to the 1967 war. By calling for a state within these borders, the Palestinian leadership has signaled its willingness to relinquish its claims to all of historic Palestine and settle for 22 percent of the original territory. In addition to a state with East Jerusalem as its capital, the Palestinians demand the release of all prisoners from Israeli jails and detention camps and the right of return, at least in principle, for Palestinian refugees who fled or were uprooted from the territories under Israeli sovereignty since 1948.

In the aftermath of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq and the glaring failure to find any weapons of mass destruction, Washington attempted to burnish its image as a peace maker by pushing its roadmap again. The Western media has turned its attention to the *hudna,* or truce agreement, by the leaders of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Palestinian Authority, but few have remarked on the precise wording of Israel's May 26, 2003 statement regarding the plan, which declared: "the Government of Israel resolves that all of Israel's comments, as addressed in the [Bush] Administration's statement, will be implemented in full during the implementation phase of the Road Map." In other words, Israel did not accept the map itself, but the fourteen conditions and reservations, each quite separate from the content of the original document. This allowed Sharon to say that he adopted his own version of the roadmap, giving Bush the chance to issue a statement about a "positive step" and come to the Aqaba summit for a photo opportunity.

The Israeli conditions, however, were based on an incorrect perception of the causality and logic of the conflict: the presumption that the root of the violence lies in Palestinian terrorism, rather than in Israel's generation-long occupation and illegal colonization of Palestinian lands and its exploitation and harassment of an entire people. Thus, the initial Israeli condition

stated: "'In the first phase of the plan and as a condition for progress to the second phase, the Palestinians will complete the dismantling of terrorist organizations and their infrastructure, collect all illegal weapons and transfer them to a third party." Were the document's framers to adopt a more accurate perspective on the historical and political causalities, they would propose the prompt termination of occupation and withdrawal of Israeli military forces to the pre-1967 borders as the first rather than the last phase of the process. Under such conditions, it would then make sense to demand that the sovereign Palestinian state cease its resistance against a nonexistent occupation and act, gradually but forcefully, against terrorist organizations that might endanger its own authority or stability.

Finally, Bush's roadmap includes two contradictory demands on the Palestinians as preconditions for a settlement. They are to establish an authoritarian regime to fight dissident terror organizations, but they also must democratize their polity. Again, the understanding of the causality needs to be reversed if the plan is not to be simply a hypocritical pretext for avoiding any agreement. A settlement itself, with popular backing, might be the best means to accelerate the democratization of all parties involved. Without such adaptations, the roadmap merely points the way to the continued politicide of the Palestinian people under the umbrella of a Pax Americana.

Sharon had two aims in the talks over the roadmap. The first aim was the de facto (and later de jure) expansion of Israeli borders by annexing the major settlement blocs and the hinterlands in their vicinity. The second aim was to fragment the remaining territory populated by the Palestinians to prevent the creation of a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel—this time under the umbrella of peaceful steps ("to end the occupation") while gaining support from the international community and mainly the United States. In May 2004, the prime minister managed to keep his plans on track by gaining support from the Labor party and other, smaller parties, under the guise of maintaining Israel's identity as a Jewish state and avoiding the creation of a de facto binational entity. Labor supported this aspect of Sharon's policy when it was both inside and outside the government coalition.

Sharon's approach was a real strategic change. Until then, the view that prevailed in pragmatic circles, both dovish and hawkish, was that determining Israeli and Palestinian borders would be part of the final phase of agreements that ended the conflict, as happened when Israel concluded peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan. Sharon's approach, which apparently won the support of the majority of Israeli Jews, conveniently separated

reaching a peace agreement from establishing final borders, even an illusion of established, final borders. The policy has worked for three reasons: Israeli despair over achieving a peace agreement in the near future; the subjective perception that the separation—that is, the fence—increases security; and the desire to achieve the functional equivalent of the desired ethnic cleansing, or transfer, in Israeli parlance, by separating Israel from the Arabs.

This approach smashed to smithereens the ideology of Greater Israel and knocked the Eretz Israel ideological and political infrastructure out from under the feet of Jewish fundamentalism. This in itself has merit, although Jewish fundamentalists have not yet had their final say. However, there is no doubt that a unilateral and coerced determination of borders, even with the support of the United States, will lead to the escalation and deepening of the conflict. The Palestinians, led either by Fatah or Hamas, will become even more frustrated by such land grabbing and increasingly motivated to fight Israel. Such fenced borders would not improve the security of Israeli citizens.

Hamas

Palestine's new leading political party, Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded in 1978 and is closely related to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. It seeks to establish an Islamic state in the entire area of historic Palestine and rejects any Jewish claim whatsoever to the land of Palestine. To create an Islamic state, Hamas claimed the right to conduct an armed struggle, or holy war (*jihad*), against the Jewish state established on holy Islamic lands (*waqf*). Hamas is considered a terrorist group by most of the Western world and, naturally, Israel. Its indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians and other human rights violations have been condemned by nearly all human right organizations. During the al-Aqsa intifada, Hamas took responsibility for the majority of the suicide bombings in Israel and later for the Qassam rockets that targeted localities in southern Israel. These attacks began even before the massacre in the Patriarchs' Cave.[51]

The movement is popular in part because it provides welfare and social services to the Palestinian poor—it is involved in building community centers, nurseries, schools, and hospitals, and fighting drug dealers—but mainly because it continues its struggle against Israel and argues that Fatah's accommodation with Israel was a betrayal. Hamas is well funded and known to make generous payments to the families of holy martyrs (*shahids*)

and suicide bombers. It is also popular because its leadership is not thought to be as corrupt as Fatah's.[52]

Hamas has demonstrated some pragmatism in the past. On January 26, 2004, it offered a ten-year truce (*hudna*) conditioned on Israel's complete withdrawal from the territories captured in the 1967 war and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin stated that the group could accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Abdel Aziz Rantissi confirmed that Hamas had concluded that it would accept a phased liberation because it could not liberate all of what it considered to be its land. Israel responded by assassinating Yassin and Rantissi in 2004. These assassinations and others only strengthened the image of Hamas as a hero of the Palestinian resistance and liberation movement. It is perhaps ironic that Israeli secret services helped establish Hamas as a counterweight to Fatah, believing that a religious movement was more convenient for Israel than a national one. At any rate, the possible transformation of Hamas from a terror group to a ruling political party will be lengthy, both because internal differences need to be resolved and because there will no doubt be a power struggle with Fatah, which will not relinquish control easily.

Concluding Words

A conflict is an integral system in which at least two interdependent actors participate, with additional indirect partners in concentric circles around the core partners, including in many cases players from the entire world system. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, these outlying players in the conflict, with different involvement and influence, are the United States and European Union, the Arab states, the Islamic world—including Iran, with its imperial aspirations—Russia, American Jewry, the Palestinian Diaspora, and others.[53] Neither the two core players nor the other involved parties are homogeneous entities, as they consist of many groups with different identities and contradictory interests.

New Palestinian identities and sub-identities have been created since 1967, both in Palestine and abroad. These identities have passed through several forms, which have varied from place to place, in a relatively short time. The return of the Palestinian leadership, which had been in exile from the territory since 1938, provided hope and pride, but was accompanied by the painful renunciation of more than 78 percent of the initially desired territory. Ceding this territory was followed by a harsh controversy within the

global Palestinian society over whether this was just a tactical surrender or a historical compromise. It created a deep schism within Palestinian society, a division between some versions of Western modernism (represented by the city of Ramallah), traditionalism, relatively moderate Islam (as represented by the ancient towns of al-Khallil and Hebron), and fundamentalist Islam (mainly in the Gaza Strip). As the disappointment with the relatively modernist and secularist nationalist model deepened, the Palestinians moved toward an Islamist collective identity. These internal conflicts were worsened by the Fatah leadership's incompetence, corruption, use of excessive power in internal matters, and ideological divisions between the old guard imported from Tunis and the local new guard that led the first intifada and is most connected to the local inhabitants.

Under Arafat, Fatah failed to transform itself from a guerrilla movement to a sociopolitical ruling party operating according to the minimal rules of the democratic game. Fatah's constituency aspired to build a regime close to that of the Israeli open society, possessing the various human and civil rights they enviously perceived it as having.[54] Of course, wishing to adopt the Israeli model rather than the Arab states' despotic and authoritarian models did not ameliorate the enmity they felt toward the Israeli state.

The Israeli collective identity continues to oscillate between its primordial and civil components, and as a result, violent riots—close to a limited civil war—erupt from time to time. The Israeli legislative system tried to bridge the gap between the two basic contradictory models of identities by defining Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, which is an oxymoron when Judaism is mainly regarded as a religion or an ethno-religious term.[55] The Jewish character of the state is exhibited by Israeli marriage laws, which are administered exclusively by Jewish religious authorities, and courts that operate under different values from those adopted by any other modern state, violating basic principles of democracy and equality. For some religious authorities, democracy is not a Jewish value, but a disgraceful Hellenistic, anti-Jewish, Western concept, although it may be used if it serves the authorities' interests.

However, for most Israelis, democracy, or at least a partial and formal democracy, is a very important component of the collective identity. Many Palestinian elite groups desire it as well, regardless of their attitudes toward Israel. The term "democracy" has neither a conclusive theoretical definition nor an agreed-upon set of empirical manifestations.[56] According to all existing definitions, no actual political regime can be classified as a complete

or pure democracy, but rather is located on a continuum between the two poles of democracy and authoritarianism. Multiple paths to democracy exist, but the protracted conflict with the Palestinians is moving the Israeli immigrant-settler state farther away from any ideal type of democratic state.

Israel's forty-year occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip created deep changes in both Israeli and Palestinian collective or national identities, as well as in the very content and political behavior and culture of both polities. The geographical proximity of the land and people being occupied, as well as the intimate yet asymmetrical interactions between members of the two groups, have also shaped the identities of both peoples and the internal structures of their societies.

The conflict presented in this volume has many facets, including identities and symbols, prestige, territories, and economic issues within and between the societies. Both the Israelis and Palestinians have passed through several critical historical phases and thresholds within a relatively short period of time, and each group's societal developments have shaped not only its own side but the other as well, although the counter-partner's reaction was either delayed or not immediately visible.