

CHAPTER THREE

Retooling Peace Philosophy: A Critical Look at Israel's Separation Strategy

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“The significance of our disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process . . . It supplies the formaldehyde necessary so there is no political process with Palestinians. When you freeze the process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state . . . Effectively, this whole package called a Palestinian state, with all it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda.” (as cited in MacKinnon, 2004).

Dov Weisglass, aid to Ariel Sharon

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a source of enduring tension in the Middle East. Its resolution would go a long way in creating a semblance of stability in this volatile region. Pitting occupant against occupied, Israel, as the foremost military power, holds the key to such resolution. Therefore the focus of this analysis will be on Israeli strategic thinking and policy making with regard to the Palestinian question.

In response to a 1994 Palestinian suicide attack in Tel Aviv, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin expressed his opinion that Israel “will have to decide on separation [from the Palestinians] as a philosophy” (as cited in Makovsky, 2004, p. 52). There needed to be “a clear border,” as he put it (as cited in Cook, 2006, p. 145). Echoing this sentiment during his own tenure as prime minister, Ehud Barak also called for

“disengagement” from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)—and nearly every Israeli leader since then has supported ethnic separation in one form or another (Cook, 2006). Indeed, during the past decade, Israel has gradually moved away from the imposition of direct military control over the lives of the occupied Palestinian population to the implementation of policies inspired by a philosophy of separation. With the completion of the 2005 unilateral disengagement of Israel’s presence in the Gaza Strip, Israel has attempted to secure the safety of its citizens by physically separating them from Palestinian population centers and simultaneously increasing the level of military control—albeit from the periphery. This chapter argues that the philosophy of separation is a logical extension of Zionism’s exclusionary ideological history and that its implementation in the Gaza Strip has not reduced the level of violence against Israeli civilians. Instead, it has actually exacerbated Israel’s security crisis.

While the process of ethnic separation has taken many forms during Israel’s short history, we believe that the 2005 unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip and the subsequent military containment of that territory represent a new approach: the justification of separation as the basis for establishing peace. For this reason, our chapter focuses primarily on Israel’s policies in the Gaza Strip. Though we do reference the ongoing settler movement and Israel’s recent construction of the West Bank barrier (WBB) in the familiar context of separation, it is the situation in Gaza that most clearly demonstrates the dramatic shift in Israel’s approach. With this in mind, we have divided the chapter into two sections. The first addresses the ideological emergence of the philosophy of separation by linking it with the historic concept of “transfer” in Zionist thought.¹ Tracing the exclusionary elements of Zionism from before 1948, the beginning of the occupation in 1967, and the Greater Israel project up to the construction of the WBB, we argue that the philosophy of separation is simply the most recent incarnation of a long-held Zionist theme—albeit refocused as a potential path to peace. Our analysis reveals that in an effort to lower the intensity of violence against Israeli citizens while retaining control in Gaza, Israel has shifted the nature of its occupation in Gaza from direct military control and partial integration to indirect control and separation—or as Gordon (2008) succinctly writes, a shift “from colonization to separation” (p. 199). Armed with this background, the second section of the chapter reviews the contemporary implementation of Israel’s separation philosophy using the 2005 unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. This section addresses the security

implications of Israel's extensive military control in Gaza as permitted under the terms of disengagement. Finding no improvement, but rather an exacerbation of Israel's security crisis, we then address the economic and humanitarian consequences of disengagement for the Gazan population—both of which have been crippled by Israel's disengagement plan. Ultimately, we conclude that Israel's use of the philosophy of separation is counterproductive, especially with regard to its stated goal of peace. As implemented in Gaza, the philosophy of separation undermines basic conditions for peace in the long term by predicating Israeli security interests on disproportionate Palestinian suffering.

Before commencing, we need to be clear about what we mean by the philosophy of separation. By this we refer to the belief in the physical separation of Israelis and Palestinians as a means of curbing violence and promoting peace.² While the notion of ethnic separation has been a familiar theme throughout Israel's history, we focus here on Israel's specific implementation of this philosophy as a means of attempting to contain the violence in Gaza and of achieving peace. Given the historical context of the Israeli occupation, the wider Arab-Israeli conflict, and the elusive nature of peace in the Middle East, we believe it is prudent to consider the ramifications of any normative peace philosophy hailed as a solution (or even a path toward a solution). We acknowledge that this book has taken a special interest in decidedly positive examples of theory in action, but because Israel has specifically embraced separation as a philosophy of peace, we hope our contribution will widen the perspective of the discussion in general.

“Transfer” in Zionist Thought

The Ideological Roots of Separation

While the implementation of separation policies is a relatively recent phenomenon in Israel's history, the ideological roots of the philosophy enjoy a much longer history, hailing back to the earliest manifestations of Zionism. In 1994, when Yitzhak Rabin spoke of a “philosophy of separation,” he was surely aware of the parallels to an older variation of the concept: “transfer” of the Palestinian population. Because the animus for Israel's very creation sprang from Zionism's desire to establish “a publicly and legally secured home in Palestine for the Jewish people” (Morris, 1988, p. 1),³ it caused early Zionists great consternation to consider that a large number of people were already living in

the region they intended to constitute as the fledgling Jewish state.⁴ However much the ‘land without a people for a people without a land’ stoked the nationalist sentiments of post-WWII European Jewry. It was pure fantasy given the demographics of the time—and early Zionists were well aware of the fact. Thus, from the very roots of Zionist thought, beginning with the influential writings of Moses Hess, Judah Alkalai, and Zvi Hirsch Kalischer,⁵ and culminating with the publications of Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha’am, and Menahem Ussishkin, it was acknowledged that for a Jewish state to emerge in Palestine, the resident Palestinian population would have to become a minority or be removed altogether (Gorni, 1987, pp. 26–39).⁶ Fundamental to this belief was the perception that Jews and Palestinians could not live together and that in order to preserve the integrity of both communities they should be separated—if not willingly, then by force. Today’s emergence of the philosophy of separation is a logical offshoot of this historical assumption of the Zionist ideology, repackaged as a path to peace. This section reviews the concept of “transfer” in Zionist political thought from before 1948, during the expansion of Jewish settlements after 1967, and up to the construction of the WBB. We perceive the philosophy of separation as the latest in a series of Zionist attempts to separate Palestinians from Israelis, albeit retooled and justified as a peace philosophy.

In order to understand the importance of ethnic separation in the mainstream Zionist worldview, it would be prudent to review four central tenets of the ideology.⁷ The first principle of pre-1948 Zionism was the desire to establish a “territorial concentration of the Jewish people in Palestine” (Gorni, 1987, p. 2) based on the firm belief that the Jews are a “distinctive entity possessing attributes associated with the modern concept of nation, as well as attributes associated with religion” (Shimoni, 1995, p. 52). It is worth pointing out that prior to WWII and the Holocaust, the bulk of European Jewry was not receptive to the Zionist discourse, instead seeking salvation in emigration to the United States or through assimilation into European societies.⁸ The second principle of Zionism then sought to create a Jewish majority in Palestine. Without a majority of Jews, “Zionism would [have forfeited] its meaning” by allowing Jews to exist as a minority population in a land governed by an alien power (Gorni, 1987, p. 2). Such an outcome was unconscionable when placed against the backdrop of Jewish persecution across much of Europe. Indeed, Zionism was at least partly conceived in response to the vulnerability of European Jewry to anti-Semitism prior to and during the twentieth century. For the early

Zionists, the only possible way of securing a prosperous future for the Jews was to build a Jewish state on Jewish terms in the land of Palestine. The third most common principle of Zionism dealt with Jewish labor and the strongly nationalistic imagery of Jews tilling Jewish land; it was also believed that the practice of employing exclusively Jewish labor would aid Jewish economic independence. The fourth principle, driven by fears of cultural assimilation during the Diaspora, sought to promote a rebirth of Hebrew culture, which occurred later on.⁹ The first of these tenets is entirely dependent upon separation through the “transfer” of much of the Arab population; likewise, the third and fourth are more feasible with a Jewish majority.

The establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine necessitated a single outcome: the Arab majority needed to become a minority—preferably as small a minority as possible.¹⁰ In this way, the notion of “transfer” was married to Zionist thought almost from its inception. Nearly all echelons of the Zionist political sphere shared the desire that Palestinians should somehow be “spirited” across the border—that is, physically separated from the Jews.¹¹ The idea was by no means relegated to fringe politics; any debate on the matter was reserved for the practicalities of implementation rather than for the morality of the proposition itself. For example, many among the Zionist leadership, including David Ben-Gurion, cited the post-WWI Greco-Turkish population exchange as a positive paradigm for their own vision of a future Jewish state,¹² and later, the more violent Hindu-Muslim population exchange between India and Pakistan was viewed favorably (Schechtman, 1949).¹³ From Zionism’s earliest days in the late nineteenth century through Israel’s 1948 War of Independence, Zionist writers, intellectuals, and political figureheads, though frequently at odds on many other elements of the ideology, spoke with one voice on the question of separating the Palestinians from the Jews. Israel Zangwill, a prominent author and an especially outspoken early Zionist thinker, once stated “it is utter foolishness to allow [Palestine] to be the country of two peoples. This can only cause trouble. The Jews will suffer and so will their neighbors” (as cited in Gorni, 1987, p. 271).¹⁴ The persistence of these beliefs has contributed greatly to the emergence of Israel’s contemporary philosophy of separation.

It should be noted that it is not entirely clear how the “transfer” ideology translated into policy during the events of 1948 and the debate over incidental or intentional Palestinian expulsion continues.¹⁵ The classic Zionist narrative, as articulated at the time by Chaim Weizmann, argued that the events of 1948 resulted in a “miraculous clearing of the

land,” apparently orchestrated by the Palestinian leadership without Jewish pressure (Chaim Weizmann as cited in Masalha, 1992, p. 175). Such a perspective absolves Israel of responsibility and “leave[s] intact [Israel’s] untarnished image as the haven of a much persecuted people, a body politic more just, moral and deserving of the West’s sympathy and help than the surrounding sea of reactionary, semi-feudal, dictatorial Arab societies” (Morris, 1988, p. 1). Likewise, the Palestinian narrative traditionally attributes all blame for the refugee crisis squarely to Israel. Planned or not, most contemporary Zionist thinkers and historians agree that Israel benefited greatly from the sudden absence of Palestinian Arabs in 1948; indeed, the almost total realization of Zionism’s demographic goals ensured Israel’s very existence.

Yet even after the flight and removal of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, Israel’s demographic problems were not entirely solved, and numerous measures were hastily undertaken to ensure Israeli hegemony. The idea was to discourage United Nations insistence on a return to the 1947 partition borders by creating *fait accompli* “facts on the ground.” This tactic buttressed the concept of “transfer” by seeking to grant a degree of permanence and legitimacy to the immediate postwar situation. Following the Palestinian exodus, Ezra Danin, a member of the Yishuv’s¹⁶ Committee for Abandoned Arab Property, wrote, “if we do not seek to encourage the return of the Arabs... then they must be confronted with *fait accompli*” (as cited in Morris, 1988, p. 135). Such plans, according to Danin, included the destruction of Arab houses, the expedient resettling of Jews on the evacuated land, and the expropriation of Arab property (Morris, 1988). Danin later formed a self-appointed Transfer Committee with Yosef Weitz, the director of the Jewish National Fund’s Land Department. Together they issued a short memorandum, intended for Ben-Gurion’s approval, entitled “Retroactive Transfer” (Masalha, 1992; Morris, 1986). The scheme acknowledged that a postwar “Israel must be inhabited largely by Jews, so that there will be in it very few non-Jews” and that “the uprooting of the Arabs should be seen as the solution to the Arab question” (Morris, 2004, p. 313).

Although the temporary Transfer Committee was not permitted to operate officially as a branch of government, Ben-Gurion approved the plan (Morris, 1986; Morris, 2004). The Yishuv proceeded to carry out systematic village destruction followed by prompt Jewish settlement—a strategy complimented by an intense propaganda campaign against Palestinian hopes of return.¹⁷ Jewish forces destroyed hundreds of Palestinian villages between 1948 and 1949, and the Yishuv actively encouraged Jewish settlement, in most cases literally on top of

Palestinian ruins. Such tactics proved extremely useful in discouraging Palestinian hopes of return, but because the retroactive “transfer” policies began in June 1948 (after the majority of Palestinian refugees had already fled or been expelled), the politically opportunistic motives were clear. Despite the unsure status of the refugees and notwithstanding the rights of Israeli Arabs, Israel began to classify much Arab land as “absentee”—a condition under which the Israeli government was able to seize property even if the owner had merely left town for a single day on or after November 29, 1947. This practice (which continued during peacetime until 1950) served to provide housing for the massive influx of Jewish immigrants from Europe that Israel experienced during the late 1940s and further discouraged Palestinian hopes for return by removing thousands more Palestinians from their land (Pappé, 2006). When village destruction eventually became politically untenable, the Yishuv turned to purchasing land from Arab tenants. Despite concern that some of the money paid to Arab farmers might be used to finance the Arab war effort, Moshe Shertok (later Sharrett), a prominent member of the Yishuv and second prime minister of Israel concluded that “[t]he reasons for buying [Arab land] outweigh [the reasons against]” (as cited in Morris, 1986, p. 543).¹⁸ This perspective underscores the importance placed on removing the native Palestinian population, even considering the possible security risks that entailed. For Israel to exist, the Palestinian population could not have been allowed to remain in situ, and as scores of historical documentation has since revealed, the Yishuv encouraged the flight or directly forced 750,000 Palestinians (more than 80 percent of the population at the time) from their homeland in 1948 and destroyed 531 Palestinian villages.¹⁹ The only retrospective regret of this outcome was that Jewish forces had not managed to remove all of the Palestinian population.²⁰

From Colonization to Separation

During the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel quickly seized control of Gaza and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and expelled an additional 100,000 to 260,000 Palestinians (Chomsky, 1999; Morris, 1999; Kimmerling, 2003; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). With the beginning of the occupation and the colonial-settler movement, demography reemerged at the fore of Israeli politics virtually overnight (Masalha, 2000).²¹ For Israel to have simply absorbed the newly occupied Palestinian population as citizens was out of the question, as it would have diminished Israel’s Jewish majority. Many were concerned

about Yasser Arafat's ill-conceived boast of a "biological time bomb" and feared the high Palestinian birthrate as a threat to Israel's Jewish nature. The preoccupation with demography underscores Zionism's desire to separate Jews from Palestinians and, as Masalha (2000) has observed, simply "reinforc[es] the notion that an integralist Jewish state was and remains Zionism's aim" (p. 200). Thus, when Israel summarily declared the 1949 armistice borders to be invalid and assumed control of the territories, Israeli citizenship was denied to West Bank and Gaza residents (Smith, 2004). Within months of the Six-Day War, Israeli citizens began to settle in the West Bank, Gaza and even the captured Golan Heights "to 'create facts' to establish a Jewish presence that would become inalienable, thereby negating future calls for a compromise" (Smith, 2004, p. 295). This pattern of settlement has been ongoing ever since, a project linked with the uncertain awareness that Israel may one day be obliged to relinquish control over the land it conquered in 1967. However, the sheer longevity of the occupation has secured a significant foothold for many of the settlements, rendering an Israeli withdrawal all the more difficult and severely undermining Palestinian hope of regaining lost territory.²² The colonial-settler vision of a Greater Israel is especially important to consider when tracing the historical emergence of the philosophy of separation. At a minimum, it should be clear that "the vision of 'greater Israel' as Zionism's ultimate objective did not end with the 1948 war" (Morris, 1993, p. 11).

Since 1967, the Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank have cut to the very heart of Zionist thought; land expropriation, colonization, and the imposition of strict military law in the OPT paved the way for Israel's adoption of the contemporary philosophy of separation. Despite the settlers' comparatively small numbers, they possess immense political clout and serve as civilian proxies of Israel's occupation; as *The Economist* has reported, "[Jewish] settlers have subverted government decisions and co-opted local army commanders over the past 40 years, contriving to align the state's security interests with their own plan to populate the occupied territories" ("A Survey of Israel," 2008).²³ In direct contravention of international law, which forbids the settlement of occupied territory, the Israeli Interior Ministry officially recognizes and supports the settlements, granting settlers numerous incentives, including military protection, lucrative tax breaks, and housing subsidies.²⁴ Furthermore, to exercise control in the OPT, Israel has imposed separate legal regimes, which are applied according to ethnic and religious background. Because Palestinians in the OPT (excluding East Jerusalem) are ineligible for Israeli citizenship and are

barred from marrying Israeli citizens, Israel has created a veritable separation cum discrimination regime replete with “Israeli-only” bypass roads and other segregated public utilities.²⁵ According to the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem (n.d.):

Israel forbids Palestinians to enter and use these lands [occupied by settlers], and uses the settlements to justify numerous violations of Palestinian rights, such as the right to housing, to gain a living, and freedom of movement . . . The great effort Israel has expended in the settlement enterprise—financially, legally, and bureaucratically—has turned the settlements into civilian enclaves within an area under military rule and has given the settlers a preferred status. To perpetuate this unlawful situation, Israel has continuously violated the Palestinians’ human rights. (“Land Expropriation and Settlements”)

Such a categorical distinction between the occupied Palestinian population and Israeli settlers has led some to draw comparisons with South African apartheid, a parallel that has become increasingly justified as the Palestinian population in Israel and the OPT edge closer to exceeding Israel’s Jewish population.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Israeli government has vowed never to relinquish the largest of its settlement blocs including Ma’ale Adumim, Ariel and Gush Etzion—much of which has been built on private Palestinian land seized through tendentious or outright manipulative use of the law (Erlanger, 2007; “Legitimization of Land Theft,” 2007; Peace Now, 2006). For example, the Israeli government justifies the demolition of Palestinian homes as punishment for building without a permit, yet “Israeli officials enforce the rules in a discriminatory manner, strictly denying construction permits for Palestinian homes while allowing the construction of Israeli settlements to proceed” (World Refugee Survey, 2003, p. 159). In this vein, Gordon (2008) points out that Israel has frequently gone to great lengths to give its actions the appearance of legality, resorting to the use of Ottoman and British Mandatory laws as well as obscure regulations from the Jordanian and Egyptian legal regimes to confiscate Palestinian land. Through land expropriation, colonization, and the imposition of discriminatory laws, Israel’s embrace of the Greater Israel project has served to normalize the ethnic hierarchy between Israelis and Palestinians and to clearly separate the two.

In 1987, the ephemeral nature of this situation became clear as tensions boiled over and Israel witnessed the angry emergence of a

Palestinian generation born and raised under Israeli dominance. The violence of the first intifada ended with the initiation of a formal peace process—yet even then, Israel’s settlements continued to expand. Upon leaving office in 1992, Yitzhak Shamir explained that his purpose “was to drag out the talks on Palestinian self-rule for 10 years while attempting to settle hundreds of thousands of Jews in the occupied territories” (as cited in Hoffman, 1992). In this way, the peace process “gave the appearance of accommodation while working to ensure Israeli retention of the territories” (Smith, 2004, p. 419). The second (al-Aqsa) intifada was much the same, though it was far bloodier. The economic and humanitarian conditions in the occupied territories had declined sharply and the uprising itself was directed not only at Israel but also at the corrupt Palestinian leadership. Nevertheless, Ariel Sharon was ideologically sympathetic to the Greater Israel vision; under his watch, the settlements rapidly expanded in defiance of international and even American disapproval (Goldberg, 2001).²⁷ This kind of expansion continued during the construction of the WBB and under the post-disengagement containment of Ehud Olmert. Moreover, despite the much-touted American demands for a total settlement freeze, Benjamin Netanyahu’s government has so far not agreed to any meaningful halt to settlement activity and has defiantly approved the construction of hundreds more units (McCarthy, 2009).²⁸ At a minimum, it can be said that Israel’s incessant policy of establishing “facts on the ground” has been exceedingly effective at discouraging the return of Palestinian refugees and continuing the process of depopulating Palestinian territory—in effect, the forced separation of Palestinians from Israelis.

A Codified Philosophy

Neve Gordon (2008) has convincingly argued that the prosecution of Israel’s occupation gradually changed course during the first intifada from a straightforward, colonial-style exploitative relationship (what he calls the colonization principle) to a more apathetic system of control in which the occupying power loses nearly all consideration for the lives and welfare of the occupied population and focuses solely on exploitation (what he calls the separation principle). Whereas Israel formerly viewed the fate of the occupied population as tied to its own and took measures to improve the Palestinian economy, after the first intifada and especially after the Oslo period, with the creation of the Palestinian Authority, it no longer took any interest in their destiny. Thus, if the

colonization principle “reflect[ed] the logic of the occupation,” then the separation principle “offer[ed] a solution to the occupation,” at least in theory (Gordon, 2008, p. 200). This belief is clearly enshrined in the various Oslo agreements signed over the years, which succeeded in transferring responsibility for the occupied population’s welfare to newly formed Palestinian institutions while retaining control over the territory and continuing to colonize the West Bank. Increasingly, the methods of fervid settlement and land expropriation directed themselves toward isolation and intentional separation from the occupied population so as to limit virtually all contact with the occupied Palestinian population. Israel’s entire perception and prosecution of the occupation shifted to the philosophy of separation—the idea Israel should not only separate itself from the occupied population for reasons of security, but for the noble cause of peace in the face of unmitigated terror.

This new way of conceptualizing Israel’s occupation led to significant changes in its application of separation, which reached new heights in the aftermath of the first and second (al-Aqsa) intifada. This shift paved the way for the construction of barriers around both Gaza and, more recently, the West Bank.²⁹ As we have already discussed, Yitzhak Rabin declared the need for a “philosophy of separation” and presided over the construction of the Gaza barrier before his assassination in 1995. Similarly, Ariel Sharon pushed ahead with the construction of the West WBB in the midst of the second (al-Aqsa) intifada. Between the two barriers, however, there is a significant difference: the WBB is built on the Palestinian side of the Green Line and effectively annexes large swathes of Palestinian land in its attempt to include as many Jewish settlements as possible on the Israeli side of the barrier.³⁰ Widely viewed as a “land-grab,” the International Court of Justice (ICJ) unanimously condemned the border in a 2004 advisory opinion demanding that Israel immediately cease construction and dismantle the sections of the barrier that had already been completed (ICJ, 2004). The proportionality of the WBB’s justification to Palestinian human rights was found to heavily favor Israel at the peril of Palestinian self-determination, economic growth, and hopes for future peace. Moreover, the final advisory opinion noted that the route of the barrier, with all its topographical peculiarities, “gives expression in *loco* to the illegal measures taken by Israel with regard to Jerusalem and the settlements, as deplored by the Security Council” (ICJ, 2004, par. 122). Security arguments notwithstanding, the barrier effectively represents the physical reinforcement of Israel’s illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and an additional 10 percent of the West Bank that now lies on the western, Israeli side of the WBB

(Usher, 2005). The approximately 49,000 Palestinians on this land, caught between the WBB and the Green Line (the so-called ‘seam-line’), have either been forcibly removed or have been granted only temporary permission to remain on the land. Israel has not expressed any intention to assimilate these people into the Israeli population and it would seem that “through settlement expansion, restrictions on entry into Israel, and isolation from PA services, the likelihood is that these enclaves will wither away” (Usher, 2005, p. 35). Expressing his displeasure with the situation at the time, U.S. President George W. Bush commented that “I think the [WBB] is a problem, and I discussed this with Ariel Sharon. It is very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and Israel with a wall snaking through the West Bank” (White House, 2003). However, Bush did not press the issue further and acquiesced to Sharon’s determination to go ahead with the barrier’s construction. Under the new leadership of Barack Obama’s administration, the United States has taken a more rhetorically assertive approach toward the settlements but has so far declined to take a position on the WBB.³¹ Meanwhile, the settlements continued to expand in defiance of international law, Israel’s obligations under the U.S.-sponsored Roadmap to Peace, and the Obama Administration’s protestations.³²

Some Preliminary Observations

As the historical background evinces, there was an early understanding within Zionism that the Palestinians needed to be physically separated from Jews, and this understanding has been applied repeatedly throughout Israeli history. Indeed, just as “transfer” was widely hailed as a solution to the “Arab question” and led to the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 Jewish colonization was used to create “facts on the ground” after 1967 and to further depopulate vast swathes of Palestinian land. Today, after the first and second (al-Aqsa) intifada, demographic and security concerns have led Israeli policymakers to erect physical barriers separating Palestinians from Israelis, isolating and depopulating the land still further. Yet, while both the WBB and the disengagement plan were unilateral decisions on Israel’s behalf, and while the WBB physically embodies the concept of separation in a very incisive way, it was not carried out under the pretence of peace; rather, the WBB was justified merely as temporary method of protecting the security of Israeli citizens from Palestinian attacks, both in the major West Bank settlements and in Israel proper. As the ICJ ruled, however, the path of the barrier clearly takes demographic issues into consideration to

the extent that it surrounds entire Palestinian villages and separates Palestinian population centers from one another.³³ A specific version of this tactic has been directed today at the Gaza Strip, albeit repackaged as a philosophy of peace. It is this application of separation that we have identified specifically as the philosophy of separation, the application of which we explore in the next section.

The Philosophy of Separation Imposed

Israel's Disengagement from the Gaza Strip

In April 2004, apparently frustrated by what he termed the lack of a “partner of the other side with whom to conduct genuine dialog,” Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon presented the Knesset with a highly contentious plan to disengage Israel’s permanent presence from the Gaza Strip (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p. 36). In implementing the plan, Sharon hoped to bring about a situation in which “no permanent Israeli civilian or military presence” would remain in the evacuated areas and consequently there would “be no basis for the claim that the Gaza Strip is occupied territory” (Sharon, 2004). Yet, because Israel had never officially recognized its status as occupant in the Gaza Strip,³⁴ this phrasing was removed from the final version, leaving the definitive draft stating: “completion of the plan will serve to dispel the claims regarding Israel’s responsibility for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004, add. A1). Insofar as Israel’s historic policies of separation are concerned, the plan was significant in that it was depicted as a bold, unilateral move toward peace with the Palestinians and was duly framed in the context of Israel’s security. Separation from the Palestinians via disengagement, according to Israeli officials, would “[ensure] the future of Israel”; it was “good for Israel’s security” (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004) and constituted “the threshold of a new era” (Silvan Shalom, as cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p. 18). Expressed most explicitly, Ariel Sharon stated that “[t]he purpose of the Disengagement Plan is to reduce terror as much as possible, and grant Israeli citizens the maximum level of security. . . . [It] will help reduce friction between [Israel] and the Palestinians” (as cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p. 25).

After much debate, the Knesset eventually approved the disengagement plan, and in August 2005, eviction notices were served to the 9,000 Jewish settlers in Gaza (Wilson, 2005). The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) oversaw the settlers’ dramatic evacuation over the next

few days, and after a small ceremony on September 12, 2005, the last remaining Israeli soldiers exited Gaza. Later that day, Major-General Dan Harel signed a declaration nullifying the 1967 decree that had established Israeli military rule in the territory (“Israel Completes Gaza Withdrawal,” 2005). Because of Sharon’s focus on jump-starting the moribund peace process, it would be prudent to analyze the consequences of Israel’s disengagement from the Gaza Strip in terms of its immediate security implications. According to Sharon, “only security will lead to peace—and in that sequence” (as cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2005, p. 18). Thus, with the requisite security provided by Israel’s disengagement, unilateral action was “the only way [of attaining] the vision of two states living side-by-side in peace and tranquility” (as cited in Israel Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2005, p. 15). Indeed, Israel’s implementation of the disengagement plan was a watershed moment in the history of the occupation. While Israel has implemented other policies in line with ethnic separation, the disengagement plan is the first instance of such policies being explicitly justified on the basis of establishing peace. We have called this concept the philosophy of separation and in embracing this outlook, Israel has attempted to achieve peace by military containment and by imposing draconian restrictions over Gaza’s inhabitants.

The first part of this section offers a critical analysis of disengagement according to its expressed purpose: to ensure Israel’s security and move toward achieving peace with the Palestinians. Developing our argument that Israel’s philosophy of separation via disengagement has hindered prospects for peace, we also look at the economic and humanitarian consequences of disengagement—which constitute further means of exclusion and control. In both respects the results contradict Israel’s purported goal of peace. Moreover, while disengagement has not diminished Israel’s military dominance in Gaza, Israel’s general security situation has actually worsened, roughly commensurate with the plummeting humanitarian conditions in Gaza. As a manifestation of the philosophy of separation, Israel’s disengagement and the ongoing military containment of Gaza have been characterized by harsh restrictions that have failed to achieve the goals for which they were ostensibly imposed and have instead fostered the emergence of an abject and hostile population in Gaza. In short, the security benefits for Israel under the philosophy of separation have been negligible or counterproductive at the cost of wreaking humanitarian chaos in Gaza. Ultimately, acknowledging Israel’s historical record of exclusion as outlined in the previous section, we believe the disengagement and

subsequent isolation of Gaza under the philosophy of separation represents the latest incarnation of Zionism's long-standing process of isolation and ethnic separation.

Military Control

Under the philosophy of separation, Israel has attempted to remove itself physically from the Gaza Strip while ensuring peripheral military dominance. The text of the disengagement plan asserts that "Israel reserves its fundamental right to self-defense, both preventive and reactive," that "Israel will guard and monitor the external land perimeter of the Gaza Strip, will continue to maintain exclusive authority in Gaza air space, and will continue to exercise security activity in the sea off the coast of the Gaza Strip" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004, add. A3). In this way, Israeli ships fire on fisherman sailing too far from Gaza's coastline, Israeli aircraft patrol Gaza's airspace, and the IDF has bulldozed a 500-meter buffer zone along the heavily fortified border. Despite Israel's retention of military control in the postdisengagement period, however, there is no evidence to suggest that a more peaceful situation has resulted. Instead, it seems that Israeli civilians living near the Gaza Strip are now significantly more at risk of Palestinian attacks than before disengagement, while since disengagement, Palestinians have endured the bloodiest Israeli attacks in the history of the conflict. The alleged security benefits of disengagement for the Israelis are negligible at best—not to mention the terrible consequences for Gaza's civilian population—and this raises serious questions regarding the credibility of Israel's philosophy of separation.

Israel's current military dominance in Gaza relies primarily on maximizing peripheral control; this includes the continuation of air assaults and occasional military incursions into Gazan territory. With regard to air control, the Gazan skies are teeming with exclusively Israeli combat and intelligence-gathering aircraft, as permitted under the terms of the Oslo agreements and the disengagement plan.³⁵ As Major General Amos Yadlin has conceded, "Our vision of air control zeroes in on the notion of control. We're looking at how you control a city or a territory from the air when it's no longer legitimate to hold or occupy that territory on the ground" (as cited in Scobbie, 2006, p. 18). Indeed, Israel has proven itself quite capable of launching periodic large-scale military operations in Gaza, and such attacks have intensified since disengagement. In response to the cross-border abduction of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants in June 2006, Israel launched Operation Summer

Rains, reoccupying significant portions of Gazan territory and bombarding the region with aerial assaults (Fisher & Erlanger, 2006). In late December 2008, Israel pushed the carnage of the conflict to entirely new levels with Operation Cast Lead, a 22-day air assault and ground invasion, which together resulted in the deaths of between 1,200–1,400 Palestinians—the bloodiest Israeli attack in the history of Israel’s occupation. While Israel’s postdisengagement attacks have not always caused such extreme destruction, they have become a more frequent occurrence since withdrawal. According to the Palestinian human rights organization Al-Haq “both air and artillery shelling increased throughout the year after the withdrawal” (Al-Haq, 2006). During these attacks, international human rights organizations reported daily shellings, ground incursions, and air operations in densely populated residential areas. In Operation Cast Lead, Israel resorted to using weapons never previously wielded against the Gazan population, including white phosphorus and mortar shells.³⁶ The aerial use of white phosphorus against densely residential neighborhoods was especially criticized by human rights organizations, the “indiscriminate or disproportionate” use of which, alleges Human Rights Watch, “indicates the commission of war crimes” (Human Rights Watch, 2009, p. 65). In addition to its ability to launch overwhelming military power in Gaza, Israel has also used its control of the territory’s airspace for the purpose of harassment; the practice of intentionally causing powerful sonic booms by flying low-altitude sorties over Gazan neighborhoods continued periodically for one year after disengagement. According to erstwhile Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, “thousands of residents in southern Israel live in fear and discomfort, so I gave instructions that nobody will sleep at night in the meantime in Gaza” (B’Tselem, n.d., “Sonic Booms in the Skies Over Gaza”).

In addition to such dramatically expressed forms of control and containment, Israel has also continued with its controversial policy of targeted killing. Sustained by legal approval in Israeli courts, the policy has been used against suspected Palestinian militants, and many bystanders have been killed in the process.³⁷ The Israeli branch of Physicians for Human Rights has described these acts as “the deliberate and conscious killing of civilians” (Physicians for Human Rights, 2006, p. 12.) Moreover, Israel’s containment of Gaza has involved establishing a virtual “death zone” on the Gazan side of the border—an area of approximately 500 meters inside the Strip’s perimeter cleared by Israeli bulldozers. Since disengagement, over a dozen unarmed Palestinians have been killed in the vicinity of this area, none of whom had been

participating in hostilities at the time. Consequently, according to B'Tselem, they were victims of “‘indiscriminate firing,’ which is liable to constitute a war crime” (B'Tselem, n.d., “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip...”). On Gaza’s Mediterranean coastline, Israeli control is just as aggressive and is in some ways more restrictive; Palestinian fisherman must receive permission from Israel to use the sea, and if permission is granted, they are limited to a distance of only three nautical miles. Israeli sea vessels patrol the waters and occasionally open fire on Palestinian fisherman to enforce the coastal restrictions. Israel’s absolute military control in Gaza is aimed at one purpose, and that is the protection of Israeli civilians according to the philosophy of separation. Yet, despite the draconian restrictions and notwithstanding the devastating offensives that have been portrayed as justified retaliations for Palestinian attacks, Israel has been unable to stymie the most obvious threat emanating from the Gaza Strip: rocket fire.

Palestinian militants have fired rockets into Israel since 2001, and activity that has described by an Israeli research center as a “response to Israel’s military superiority” (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2007, p. 4). Launched indiscriminately over the border, approximately 45 percent of these rockets land in the vicinity of the Israeli town of Sderot, causing psychological trauma and occasional casualties.³⁸ The frequency of such attacks increased throughout the duration of the second (al-Aqsa) intifada, but until 2006, Palestinian groups lacked the capacity to launch more than fifty rockets a month. Since the implementation of disengagement plan, however, there has been a 500 percent increase in rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006; Gold, 2008). Moreover, there is evidence that militant groups have gained greater access to high-tech weaponry for use against Israel. In January 2008, a Katyusha rocket launched from Gaza struck the northern edge of the Israeli city of Ashkelon, demonstrating a much greater ability on behalf of Palestinian militants to strike Israeli population centers (Katz, Toameh, & Keinon, 2008; McCarthy, 2008). The increase in the rockets’ range and capacity for destruction has only emerged since Israel’s disengagement, and although we do not infer a direct correlation, this information certainly suggests that Israel’s military containment of Gaza under the philosophy of separation is contradictory. As one Israeli official put it, “Ashkelon has turned into a theater of terror [and] there are indications that Beersheba will be at risk of rocket strikes” (as cited in Keinon & Katz, 2008). With respect to its military policies, the disengagement plan was preoccupied with control—containing the Gazan threat was meant to secure peace for

Israel and thereby advance the overall cause of peace. From a security standpoint, this has failed abysmally, but we should also consider the dire economic consequences that have resulted from the philosophy of separation.

Economic Control

The philosophy of separation in Gaza has been characterized not only by physical separation and isolation but also by economic devastation brought on by the imposition of severe restrictions on the flow of goods and people—most notably Israel’s so-called closure policies. According to Harvard economist Sara Roy (1987), “[t]he lack of economic development inside the Gaza Strip has been a result of specific Israeli policies which have aimed to restrict and have, in effect, undermined the ability of the Gazan economy to create the necessary infrastructure required for sustained economic growth” (p. 83). Presciently, this assessment was published in 1987—prior to the two Palestinian uprisings, long before the grim economic deterioration of the post-Oslo period and the ongoing blockade. Since the implementation of the disengagement plan and the subsequent unabated use of closure policies, Gaza has plummeted to depths of poverty and despair that were unthinkable when Roy conducted her landmark study. The World Bank has described the Gazan economic crisis as “among the worst in modern history” (World Bank, 2004, p. i; Roy, 2006) and life there is now described as “intolerable, appalling and tragic” (as cited in Reuters, 2006). While Gaza’s economic deterioration should not have been an unavoidable consequence of disengagement, the restrictive measures imposed since that time are an extension of Israel’s policy of containment in Gaza, that is, the philosophy of separation.

As Israel was preparing to evacuate forces from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the World Bank issued a report predicting that the postdisengagement economic benefits for Gaza would be “very limited” without a change in Israel’s control over border regimes. The mild adjustments derived from increased freedom of movement within Gaza and the return of land formerly occupied by Israeli settlers, the Bank reported, “would not deliver significant economic benefits” to the Palestinians (World Bank, 2004, pp. 4–5). In comparison, the disengagement plan itself promised a “better security, political, economic and demographic situation” in declaring Israel’s support for “the improvement of the economy and welfare of the Palestinian residents” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004, add. A1). Paradoxically, the plan also states “the

economic arrangements currently in operation between the State of Israel and the Palestinians shall remain in force” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004, add. A1). These arrangements include “the entry and exit of goods,” “the monetary regime,” “tax and customs envelope arrangements,” and “the entry of workers into Israel” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2004, add. B10). Indeed, the only alteration of policy enshrined in the plan was the gradual cessation of employment for Gazan workers inside Israel. There is nothing at all to indicate a serious interest in pursuing Gazan economic recovery on Israel’s behalf.³⁹ To any objective viewer, it would seem that Israel had lost all interest in the lives and welfare of the people it had so long subjugated; separation was to be not only physical, but economic as well.

While Israel did little to boost economic recovery, it should be noted that serious *international* efforts were undertaken to ensure Gaza’s prosperity during the immediate postdisengagement period. The World Bank, leading a team of international economists, met with Palestinian and Israeli officials in 2004 to discuss the potential “modernization” of military checkpoints to better accommodate trade activity. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice appointed a Middle East Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement and, to help him initiate Palestinian economic growth, world leaders pledged an annual \$3 billion budget at the 2005 G-8 summit in Scotland. International businesses began to take interest in Gaza’s market potential—especially investment in land recently evacuated by Israeli settlers. Any possibility of economic recovery on Gaza’s behalf, according to the World Bank, was ultimately contingent upon two crucial factors: (1) the easing of Israeli closure policies by implementing technologically advanced border trade strategies and (2) unobstructed access to international markets (World Bank, 2004). Neither of these factors was discussed in the disengagement plan, and neither was implemented; rather, there is evidence to suggest that Israel actively worked against these factors.

Israel has maintained strict control over all border regimes in place prior to the disengagement.⁴⁰ The Rafah crossing on the Gazan/Egyptian border remains sealed, a U.S.-backed plan to ease restrictions on movement—especially between Gaza and the West Bank—went unimplemented, and Israel instead constructed a second barrier around Gaza (McGirk, 2005). In March 2006, adding to the depth of the economic crisis, Israel began to withhold tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority in protest of the recently elected Hamas government and halted much of the bilateral aid, grants, and loans provided by the IMF, World Bank, and other international institutions.⁴¹ Moreover, numerous

economic development projects have withered on the vine. Israeli bulldozers and Palestinian looters destroyed the remaining sections of the Erez Industrial Estate, which had previously earmarked for renovation, and Israel's prolonged closure policies caused the much-touted Palestinian greenhouse project to end in failure.⁴² In June 2005, just months prior to Israel's unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip, there were thirty-nine hundred factories operating in Gaza, employing thirty-five thousand people (Amnesty International et al., 2008). By December 2007, less than two hundred factories still had their doors open. The implications of this "man-made" economic implosion have been dire (Amnesty International et al., 2008). Standards in everything from primary education⁴³ to healthcare⁴⁴ have plummeted. In this way, Israel's containment policies have directly undermined many of the hopes for economic recovery in Gaza.

More recently, the economic crisis has sunk to drastic levels. Following Gaza's internecine fighting that ended in June 2007, leaving Hamas with unopposed control of the Gaza Strip, Israel placed Gaza under total closure—sealing it off completely by halting virtually all freedom of movement and limiting the shipment of food and humanitarian supplies. Between May and June 2007, wheat flour, infant formula, and rice became scarce in Gaza, and prices rose 34 percent, 30 percent, and 21.5 percent, respectively (Amnesty International et al., 2008). This shortage has occurred primarily because the number of supply trucks delivering commercial and humanitarian supplies has dwindled under the conditions of Israel's closure of the Strip; whereas 250 trucks entered Gaza daily prior to the 2005 disengagement, the crossing is only able to deal with a maximum of forty-five today—and most days, not even this number is reached (Amnesty International et al., 2008). In September 2007, Israel declared Gaza a "hostile entity," thereby justifying further cuts in supplies, including energy resources (Urquhart, 2007). The results have been harsh and dramatic. Gaza now receives the highest ratio of food aid to population size in the world, and approximately 80 percent of the population is reliant on handouts from the World Food Program (WFP) to survive—a tenfold increase in the last decade alone and an increase of 17 percent since 2006. The recipients of this aid "would literally starve without food aid from international agencies" (B'Tselem, n.d., "Tightened Siege ...").

The economic and humanitarian consequences of disengagement for the Gaza Strip have been devastating, literally strangling the population with Israel's strict military containment of the territory. Yet, as we have described, this policy has contributed to greater suffering

on both sides of the conflict, leading to an increase in bloodshed all around and entirely contradicting its justification as a path to peace. Not only has Israel's implementation of disengagement according to the philosophy of separation undermined hope for peace by making life excessively difficult for the Gazan population, it has rendered that population more hostile and abject, while exposing its own population to increased Palestinian attacks—a tragic outcome that is beneficial for neither side.

Conclusion: A (Not So) New Approach

In itself, the disengagement of Israel's presence in the Gaza Strip can be seen as a positive step. It has significantly improved the freedom of movement for Palestinians within the Gaza Strip and has granted them a degree of autonomy where before there was none. Yet Israel did not disengage with any illusions of ceding power in Gaza. Its military control merely shifted to the periphery, where it has remained ever since. Israel's treatment of Gaza in this way is nothing new (Zionism's historic record of exclusion and control clearly illustrates the point) but the retooling of separation as a peace philosophy is wholly unprecedented in the history of the conflict and we have analyzed Israel's actions in this context. If it has brought about any changes besides an intensified security crisis and a dramatic plunge in Gaza's already intolerable conditions, Israel's use of the philosophy of separation has altered the *conceptual* relationship between occupant and occupied by replacing the colonization principle with the application of the philosophy of separation (Gordon, 2008). This has been a change of justification, but not of practice. The specific use of disengagement in this case provided Israel with the guise of peacemaker—of a country exercising considerable restraint and making painful concessions for the sake of peace. But this observation largely ignores Israel's history of brutally enforcing control in the OPT and makes the crude assumption that partial compliance with international law constitutes a sacrifice, rather than a delayed and insufficient fulfillment of numerous United Nations resolutions calling a full withdrawal from the OPT.

Israel unquestionably remains the dominant military power in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and as we wrote in the introduction to this chapter, it holds the key to the conflict's resolution. Yet even if the Israeli political establishment must inevitably accommodate any future resolution; simply acknowledging the massive imbalance of power between

occupant and occupied does not imply that a resolution to the conflict must germinate from within the Israeli political establishment. Our analysis has taken a rather dim view of Israeli policy-making in this regard, but it should be clear that there are alternatives to Israel's misleading justification of ethnic separation as peace philosophy. Despite the overwhelming international consensus on the illegality of Israel's occupation and the ongoing expansion of Jewish settlements, very little progress has been made over the years toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Rather, as we have discussed throughout this chapter, Israel has consistently gone to great lengths to conceal extreme policies under a veil of legitimacy. Given the grim picture we have outlined, it seems appropriate to now look at a potential alternative to the status quo. Thus, as we close this chapter, we wish to discuss the past application and future potential of nonviolent civil resistance toward achieving a just and lasting peace to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁴⁵

Nonviolent resistance is nothing new to Palestinians.⁴⁶ The first intifada was by and large a nonviolent grassroots movement aimed at overthrowing the apparatuses of control Israel had for so long enforced in the Palestinian territories (Dajani, 1995). As one academic put it at the time, "nonviolent forms of struggle" made up "perhaps 85 percent of the total resistance" with stone throwing constituting the remaining 15 percent of violent activities (Sharp, 1989, p. 3). Using a multifaceted strategy of symbolic nonviolence (including the waving of Palestinian flags and political demonstrations), noncooperation (including labor strikes, economic/social boycotts, and the resignation of tax collectors), and nonviolent intervention (including the creation of an independent civil society and en masse violations of Israeli-imposed restrictions, such as curfews) the Palestinian national movement during the first intifada demonstrated impressive restraint in the face of harsh repression from the Israeli military (Sharp, 1989). Israel's brutal response to the uprising evoked international outrage and testified to the serious potential for nonviolent resistance as a valid approach to peacefully resolving the conflict. It is widely accepted that the Israeli military was unprepared to react to nonviolent struggle and preferred instead to counter Palestinian violence, which was far more easily justifiable as retaliation (Sharp, 1989).⁴⁷ Given Israel's intimidation and disarray in the face of the Palestinian uprising, why did the intifada fail to bring about lasting change? Among many others, academic and activist Norman Finkelstein (2009) has argued that Yassir Arafat stifled the momentum of the intifada by subordinating it to a "dead-end diplomatic game" (p. 26) and by entering into the Oslo Accords process, thereby contributing to

the establishment of a Palestinian pseudo-government that was inferior to the Israeli authorities—the Palestine National Authority (PNA)—effectively allowing the occupation and expansion of settlements to continue. This argument is compelling, and there is no way to know what difference could have been made had the Palestinians embraced 100 percent nonviolence. Still, it is unfair to dismiss the nonviolence of the first intifada as a failure. True, it ultimately failed to bring about Palestinian independence but at a minimum, the first intifada demonstrated the power and relevance of nonviolent struggle to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by forcing Israel to substantially reorganize the prosecution of its occupation—Gordon’s (2008) shift from the colonization principle to the separation principle.

If we attempt to reapply the doctrine of nonviolent civil resistance to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today, we must understand the factors that determine the efficacy of nonviolence as a strategic choice.⁴⁸ In order to be effective, any form of resistance—nonviolent or otherwise—must be part of a larger strategy aimed at achieving explicit goals. These goals must be recognized as valid, at least to some degree. As Finkelstein (2009) writes, “it is not suffering alone that touches but suffering in the pursuit of a legitimate goal” (p. 17)—a goal that is already, latently or blatantly, recognized as legitimate. In the Palestinian case, the goals were and remain uncontroversial in the eyes of the international community: an end to the occupation and the implementation of a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, negotiation over East Jerusalem, and negotiation over the return of refugees. And in Israel, while debate over Jerusalem and the refugees remain sticking points, if Palestinians regained the impetus of the first intifada with 100 percent nonviolence, the renewed movement would be less “likely to arouse Israeli fear and rage (and hence brutality)” by “[removing] the ‘justification’ for Israeli repression” (Sharp, 1989, p. 13). Furthermore, during and since the first intifada, we have witnessed how the Palestinians’ gradual shift to more and more violent tactics diminished Israeli sympathy for their domestic peace movement (Kaminer, 1996). The more violent the Palestinian resistance has become—especially during the waves of suicide attacks during the second intifada—the weaker Israeli sympathy has become, and the legitimacy of Palestinian goals has consequently received secondary consideration to the Jewish collective memory of pogroms and mass persecution. This has also severely diminished the clout of the Israeli peace camp when compared to the first intifada’s outpouring of solidarity and sympathy for the Palestinian cause.

Moreover, for any nonviolent movement to succeed, there is also a geopolitical aspect to the conflict that cannot be ignored. Just as a revitalized Palestinian movement must aim itself at shifting Israeli policies, it must also struggle for the goodwill of international public opinion. In the present case, the United States has played a particularly influential role, and the Obama administration has signalled a new approach toward its relationship with Israel that may yet lead to positive change on the ground. Nevertheless, in the battle for the hearts and minds of world public opinion, Israel has historically been well poised to gain acceptance of (or acquiescence to) its policies, while sympathy and understanding for the Palestinian cause has been negligible—especially in the West. In more recent years, the Israeli political class has hijacked the American-initiated concept of “war on terrorism” as the rationale for its attempts to preclude Palestinian national aspirations.⁴⁹ In this vein, the demand that Palestinians renounce violent resistance without similar reciprocation from Israel has echoed positively in the foreign ministries of Western countries. Indeed, this crisis of Palestinian legitimacy in the eyes of Israel and the international community now colors the very discourse of peace talks. As Sara Roy observed during the aftermath of Israel’s 2005 withdrawal from Gaza,

Palestinian powerlessness is arguably more acute now (with Gaza disengagement) than before (with Oslo)...[T]he Palestinians’ continued dispossession is regarded as the price of peace, not as a reason for conflict. So defined, Palestinian legitimacy, at least for parts of the international community, no longer derives from the justice and morality of its cause but from Palestinian willingness to concede to terms largely if not entirely imposed by Israel. (Roy, 2005, pp. 71–72)

So how can it be nonviolently demonstrated with that Palestinian legitimacy derives “from the justice and morality of its cause”? Sharp (1989) has argued convincingly that for a Palestinian nonviolent movement to be effective at accentuating the legitimacy of its goals in the eyes of Israeli society, then it must appeal to the Jewish national sense of victimization. This seems reasonable, for we should also not forget the extreme imbalance in military power and the devastating effect of Israeli military strikes “justified” by Palestinian violence. This imbalance must somehow be reconciled by any serious attempt at a just peace. Polls regularly indicate widespread support for peace among Israelis and Palestinians; this is beyond question.

Indeed, we must remember the distinction between peace and justice. “It is worth recalling,” writes Chomsky (personal communication, July 28, 2009) “that everyone wants peace, even Hitler. The question always is: on what terms?” If there is to be true peace in the Middle East based on principles of justice, it cannot be defined merely by an end to hostilities. For example, as this paper has argued, Israel’s unilateral withdrawal and military containment of Gaza is not a valid peace philosophy because it seeks no deeper goal than military containment. With regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, “there [isn’t] anything that merits the term ‘[peace] philosophy’” Chomsky (personal communication, July 28, 2009) continues, “and the only lessons of history are the maxim of Thucydides: the strong do as they wish, and the weak suffer as they must. Of course, that’s not an iron law, and it can be overturned by dedicated popular activism.” Today, some would argue that the crisis of Palestinian legitimacy has returned us to a previous phase of the conflict, when the international community implicitly accepted Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories as a marginal issue. Thus, the dilemma for the Palestinian national movement today is that a “back to the future” strategy is problematic to the extent that the gains achieved during the first intifada neither led to the creation of a viable Palestinian state nor to a substantial increase in Western goodwill toward Palestinian legitimacy. Still, it is evident that nonviolence was used to a powerful effect by courageous Palestinian and Israeli activists at the time, and there is no reason to believe that a renewed mass movement of dedicated nonviolence would not at least provide a compelling alternative to the destructive policies of the status quo. Yet, any movement aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace must be buttressed by expanding the Israeli and international perception of Palestinian legitimacy “from the justice and morality of its cause.” How this can be achieved is not for us to say, but is surely limited only by the creativity of those willing to work tirelessly and sincerely toward bringing an end to this dark chapter in human history.

Notes

1. This discussion enjoys a very robust and active debate, much of which addresses the paradox of Israeli democracy and the struggle to maintain a Jewish ethnic identity. For more on this ongoing debate, see Al Haj, 1995; Gavison, 1999; Ghanem, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1998; Kretzmer, 1990; Lustick, 1980; Rabinowitz, 1997; Rouhana, 1997; Rouhana & Sultany, 2003; Smooha, 1997; Yiftachel, 1997; Yiftachel, 1998; Yiftachel, 2006.

2. This philosophy commonly envisions separation from the occupied Palestinian population as a worthy objective, but there are some who would like to see separation extend also to Israeli Arabs, who constitute approximately 20 percent of the Israeli population and are technically entitled to all rights as full citizens of the state. This chapter focuses solely on separation from the occupied Palestinian population, for while some reactionary politicians within Israel have called for the deportation of Israeli Arabs, there is no serious intention of doing, so as far as we are aware.
3. Morris's seminal work is credited with precipitating the Israeli 'new historian' or 're-visionist' movement, enabled by the declassification of Israeli military archives in the 1980s. Although his own work often relies heavily on military records, his research has helped to dispel a great many of the myths regarding the events of 1948 and challenged the guiltlessness of Israel's entrenched national narrative. Other influential scholars belonging to the "new historian" movement include Ilan Pappé, Avi Shlaim, and Tom Segev among others.
4. Theodor Herzl, revered in Israel as the father of modern Zionism, wrote his famous book *Der Judenstaat* in 1896 (Herzl, 1997). It should be noted that throughout his life, Herzl never believed that the specific geographical entity of Palestine should be the only consideration for a Jewish state; however, he clearly understood that other lands, such as Argentina or parts of Uganda, did not inspire comparable national zeal when compared to Palestine. In his own words, "you must have a flag and an idea. You cannot make those things only with money... With money you cannot make a general movement of a great mass of people. You must give them an ideal" (as cited in Gilbert, 1998, p. 21). All prospects other than Palestine died with Herzl in 1904, at which point Zionism was essentially synonymous with establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine exclusively (Pappé, 2006, p. 10).
5. For more on the activism of these proto-Zionists, see Hess, 1995; Ravitzky, 1996; Shimoni, 1995; Waxman, 1987.
6. The most common solution proposed for to this question was the "transfer" of Palestinians (a euphemism for forced expulsion) outside the borders of Mandatory Palestine. For an excellent overview of "transfer" in Zionist thought, see Masalha, 1992.
7. It is beyond the scope of this paper to thoroughly review the politico-historical emergence of Zionism and we limit the discussion here to the aspects of Zionism most relevant to our central argument: that exclusionary elements within the ideology have contributed to the contemporary emergence and implementation of the philosophy of separation.
8. Zionism was a fringe movement at the time and did not inspire significant levels of support throughout much of Europe or the United States. For an overview of Zionism's influence on European and American Jews during this period see Berkowitz, 1997.
9. Perhaps the most obvious example was the successful revival of the Hebrew language spearheaded by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. See Fellman, 1973; Rabin, 1963; St. John, 1972.
10. As Morris has written, "the logic of a transfer solution to the 'Arab problem' [was] ineluctable; without some sort of massive displacement of Arabs from the area of the Jewish state-to-be, there could [have been] no 'Jewish' state" (Morris, 2004, p. 43).
11. We refer to the oft-quoted passage from Theodor Herzl's diaries: "We shall try to spirit the penniless [Palestinian] population across the border... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly" (Herzl, 1960, p. 88). It should be noted that Herzl rarely raised the issue of "transfer" and this short citation constitutes his only diary entry on the matter. Morris attributes this to a tactful awareness that public discussion of the matter would cause unrest and antagonism among the Palestinian Arab population (Morris, 2004).
12. Expressing his opinion on the matter, Ben-Gurion wrote that "the possibility of a large scale transfer of a population by force was demonstrated, when the Greeks were transferred [after World War I]. In the present war the idea of transferring a population is gaining more

- sympathy as [a solution to] . . . the dangerous and painful problem of national minorities” (as cited in Masalha, 1992, p. 128). Also see Morris, 2004, pp. 42–43.
13. Schechtman positively cites the India/Pakistan case to justify his own support for a retroactive Jewish-Arab population exchange in Palestine.
 14. At a 1905 talk in England, Zangwill stated that “[We] must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the [Arab] tribes in possession as our grandfathers did or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us” (Zangwill, 1937, p. 210). Masalha (1992) has pointed out that Zangwill was unusually outspoken in his support for the expulsion of the Palestinians compared to his contemporaries; most Zionists at the time “expressed the same ideas in euphemistic, discreetly formulated terms, stressing the peaceful nature of the operation that would be initiated by Zionist land acquisition and economic incentives” (p. 10).
 15. Even among the “new historians,” there is substantial debate. Morris (2004), for example, does not find evidence to support that “transfer” proposals translated into a policy or “master-plan of expulsion” during 1948. “But,” he continues, “transfer was inevitable and built into Zionism” (p. 60). Nur Masalha (1991) and Norman Finkelstein (1991) have criticized Morris for what they perceived as his tendency to reach conclusions incompatible with his research—a charge against which Morris (1991) has vehemently defended himself. More recently, Ilan Pappé (2006) has accused Morris of largely ignoring Arab sources and oral histories in his research, thereby preventing him from grasping “the systematic planning behind the expulsion of the Palestinians in 1948” (p. xv).
 16. The term *Yishuv* refers to the Jewish political leadership in Palestine during the British Mandate period. Upon statehood in 1948, it became the functional government of the state of Israel.
 17. Interestingly, the United States issued a strong message to Israel in May 1949 demanding that repatriation of the Palestinians be a precondition for peace and even withheld a loan when Israel refused to agree (Pappé, 2006).
 18. It should be noted that his colleagues labeled Shertok a so-called Arab appeaser for his perceived sympathy regarding the Palestinians’ fate.
 19. Because of a difference in definitions concerning what constituted a Palestinian village, Pappé (2006) lists 531 villages destroyed by the *Yishuv*, while Khalidi (1992) reports 418. For a more in depth look at the events of 1948, also see Benvenisti, 2000; Masalha, 1992; Morris, 2004.
 20. Expressing this perspective, Benny Morris has controversially argued that “if [David Ben-Gurion] had carried out a full expulsion—rather than a partial one—he would have stabilized the State of Israel for generations . . . when one has to deal with a serial killer, it’s not so important to discover why he became a serial killer. What’s important is to imprison the murderer or to execute him” (Shavit, 2004). Addressing the feasibility of expelling Arab citizens of Israel, Morris claimed that “The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb . . . If the threat to Israel is existential, expulsion will be justified” (Shavit, 2004).
 21. Masalha (2000) writes, “Since the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, with their solid Palestinian population, demography and the so-called Arab ‘demographic threat’ has obsessed leaders in Israel . . . [T]he demographic concern remained an ever-present subject in public debates and political speeches” (pp. 200–202).
 22. For example, toward the end of his term in office, President Bill Clinton began referring to East Jerusalem as “disputed” rather than illegally annexed—an almost complete reversal of previous U.S. discourse—in consideration of the now decades-old Israeli settlements around the city’s periphery (Smith, 2004). More recently, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter assured residents of the Gush Etzion settlement bloc that he did not believe Israel would withdraw. “This is part of the close settlements to the 1967 line that I think will be here forever” (Ha’aretz Service & News Agencies, 2009).

23. Several members of the government live in the settlements themselves, including the hard-right Israeli foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman.
24. The Fourth Geneva convention states that an occupying power “shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” Yet, since 1967, the Israeli government has recognized 120 so-called communities in the West Bank (B’Tselem, n.d., “Land Expropriation and Settlements”).
25. Many restrictions also apply to Israel’s Arab population (“A Survey of Israel,” 2008; Schocken, 2008).
26. Jimmy Carter’s (2007) book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, precipitated a furious reaction in some circles for his use of the term “apartheid” and led to allegations of anti-Semitism and bigotry, despite the fact that Carter presented an overall argument that was more sympathetic to the Israeli position than that of many mainstream scholars (Bosman, 2006). Several prominent South Africans have drawn the apartheid comparison (long before Carter discovered the term), including erstwhile Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights John Dugard, Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu, and former South African Minister for Intelligence Services Ronnie Kasrils (McCarthy, 2007; Tutu, 2002; Tutu & Urbina, 2003). Furthermore, many Israelis have themselves used the term, including the historian Ilan Pappé, former Attorney General Michael Ben Yair, deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti, and peace activist Uri Avnery among others (Barat, 2008; Lelyveld, 2007; Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).
27. It is interesting to note that Israel has never constitutionally defined its borders, “since doing so would necessarily place limits on them” and effectively preclude the ambitions of the Greater Israel movement (Whitbeck, 2007). Moreover, as Israel continues to colonize the West Bank, the demographic implications of a negotiated settlement potentially threaten the Jewish nature of the state. For this reason, much has been made of Israel’s “right to exist” and the Palestinian acceptance or refusal of this “right,” despite the ambiguity of what this actually acknowledges. More recently, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has demanded the Palestinians not only recognize Israel’s right to exist but also recognize Israel as a specifically Jewish state (Keinon, 2009). This is controversial because it would preclude discussions over the right of return for the 1948 refugees and because it trivializes the existence of a large Arab minority in Israel.
28. At the time this paper was drafted, it remained to be seen how far the Obama Administration was willing to push the issue.
29. The Gaza barrier was erected in 1994, while construction of the WBB began in mid-2002 and continues today.
30. For a detailed map of the WBB, visit http://www.btselem.org/download/separation_barrier_map_eng.pdf
31. In a 2009 speech, Obama said “[t]he United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop” (White House, 2009).
32. For the text of the Roadmap to Peace see Department of State, 2003.
33. For example, the Israeli Defense Ministry decided to include the Israeli settlement of Alfei Menashe within the barrier’s domain, thereby physically preventing the Palestinian town of Qalqiliya and the village Halba from growing into one another. The decision was especially devastating for Qalqiliya, which now finds itself entirely surrounded by the WBB, sealed off from the rest of the West Bank apart from a single military checkpoint. Consequently, 600 of Qalqiliya’s businesses have closed and 20 percent of the population has left the city (United Nations, 2004).
34. Historically, Israel has preferred to refer to the territory as “administered” and not “occupied”. For an excellent look at Israel’s legalistic history in the occupied territories, see Kretzmer, 2002.
35. There is a small airport in Gaza, but it was only functional for a few years before it was bombed by Israel during the second (al-Aqsa) intifada.

36. Mortar shells are far less accurate than regular artillery and in a densely populated territory like the Gaza Strip, are likely to cause more civilian casualties. According to one Israeli officer, "I don't recall when we ever fired mortar shells in Gaza before" (as cited in B'Tselem, 2009, p. 7).
37. The practice of targeted killing by the IDF, also known as extrajudicial assassination, was granted legal approval by the High Court of Israel in 2006, though the Court has recently added stipulations requiring an investigation into each specific case. See, respectively, Izenberg, 2006; Segal, 2008.
38. As of January 17, 2009 (the end of Operation Cast Lead), nineteen Israelis have been killed by Palestinian rocket/mortar fire, and over 400 have been wounded (B'Tselem, n.d., "Rocket and Mortar Fire Into Israel").
39. Samhouri ascribes Gaza's economic collapse, among other causes, to "the very restrictive terms of the Israeli disengagement plan" (Samhouri, 2006, p. 1).
40. There remain Israeli video monitoring systems at the Rafah crossing and the IDF works closely with the Egyptians to ensure the border does not open without Israeli approval. There have been controversial exceptions to this, however—most notably the bombing of the Gazan border wall which resulted in an open border between Gaza and Egypt for a period of 11 days before being resealed.
41. After the failed coup in Gaza and Hamas's subsequent seizure of control, Israel resumed distribution of this money to the Palestinian Authority leadership in the West Bank.
42. The project had originally promised to create 3,000 new jobs and raise \$50 million annually (Office of the Special Envoy for Disengagement, 2005).
43. Gaza primary schools now cope with an 80 percent failure rate from grades four through nine and a 90 percent failure rate in mathematics specifically. Moreover, Gazan schools have begun to cancel high energy-consumption classes such as Physical Education and Science Labs because the children are too malnourished (Amnesty International et al., 2008).
44. The closure has also restricted access to basic medical supplies. Gazan hospitals now barely carry 80 percent of the World Health Organization's recommended 437 essential medications. Vital immunization services have halted in more than three of Gaza's districts and sometimes children must be immunized with adult sized syringes due to a lack of supplies.
45. Historically, the Palestinian version of nonviolent struggle has modeled itself after Mahatma Gandhi's thought but has often stressed values common to Abrahamic religious tradition, such as respect for human dignity and concern for the weak and downtrodden.
46. See the first chapter of Dajani, 1995, for a good discussion of the roots of Palestinian non-violence, going back to the British Mandate period.
47. At the time and to this day, Israel placed restrictions on the travel of human rights activists and proponents of nonviolence.
48. By using the term "reapply" we do not wish to ignore or trivialize the brave actions undertaken by Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists engaged in various forms of nonviolent resistance. Nevertheless, while these actions are praiseworthy, they are minor when compared to the massive public participation during the first intifada and do not constitute a coherent peace strategy.
49. The late Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling coined the neologism "politicide" to define a series of Israeli actions he perceived as intended to preclude the emergence of a feasible Palestinian political structure (Kimmerling, 2003).

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