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Title: The Future of the Israeli Arabs in Israel

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I confirm that the above-submitted dissertation is my own work and that all reference/sources are duly acknowledged.

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Introduction

I am profoundly aware of the sensitive nature of the questions analyzed in this dissertation. I was brought as a Palestinian reader and viewer of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its contemporary scenarios and consequences. Because of my upbringing, my emotional commitment to regional peace and conflict resolution, because deeply entrenched along with my knowledge of the painful and controversial issues surrounding the future of the Arab in Israel as a national minority. Admittedly, the study of this crucial question is very difficult for those who are Arabs and Jews, but the need for objectivity is paramount.

An assessment of the present and future relations between the Arabs and Jews inside Israel requires a thorough understanding of the historical problems of the Arab minority and the Jewish majority within the state of Israel an analysis, which classifies the basic issues, provides the essential facts to clear the various myths and sets up the constructive proposals for the future relations of the two communities.

The Palestinian Arab populations inside Israel were not only isolated by the Israeli military administration, and the segregation within the Israeli society, but they were ignored or undermined by the Arab World before 1967. In the aftermath of 1967 many Arab nationalists viewed the Palestinian (Arab) Israelis with admiration and respect, as the people who stayed rooted in their homeland despite all challenges. During the 1990s the Palestinian Arab population became more known to the outside world due to better information and communication facilities, as well as the rise or accessibility throughout the Arabic speaking world of a rich literature by Israeli Arabs, which because universally known as the poetry or literature of "resistance". It

became clear that the Arabs of Israel see themselves as part and parcel of the Palestinian people outside Israel and at one with the other Arab nations.

Today, the hardest question that exists in the minds of many Arabs living in Israel is, where will our future be? Is it fair to live subject to constant discrimination a second-class citizen, artificially displaced to minority status in their homeland? How can they continue to live as a segregated and isolated community under ethnic Jewish democratic rule? Most of them want to live in their homeland in dignity with respect towards their neighbors whether Israeli Jews, Arabs or Palestinians across the borders. A crucial issue is how the Arabs and Jews can live together respectfully side by side within Israeli society based on inter-group dialogue and communication and equality rather than the dominance of one group over the other.

Israel's justification for maintaining the status quo of segregation is that the Arabs in Israel constitute a security threat to the existence of the state; however, the Arabs when they were a majority could not defeat the Jewish minority before 1948. Therefore, how can they, now, as a minority threaten and defeat the power of the majority whose self-evident military superiority and development of all scopes of life is dubious. Many scholars classify this illogical reasoning as a political excuse in order not to remove the control system and release the Arabs from their segregation and to provide the essential needs to make the Arabs as equal as the Jews in Israel.

It is very hard to bring different ethnic backgrounds with seemingly distinct agendas and goals into dialogue. However, attempts to assist the citizens from the same country to communicate are considered an integral element in assisting in affecting a change in the nature of relations between communities such as the cases in Northern Ireland, the Balkan countries, and some countries in South East Asia. These initiatives play an important role in changing the predominance of the political and

economic structure of one group over the other. Fortunately, some of these initiatives have become institutionalized through community organizations, teachers, journalists, professional relationships and community leaders.

This dissertation deals with the Arab minority and Jewish majority relations in Israel and the alternatives to confrontation in an ethnically divided society. Case studies of Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Srilanka, Indonesia and Rwanda are the models of comparative analysis. These alternatives involve options such granting the Arabs non-territorial national cultural autonomy with legal status to run their institutions and maintain their cultural identity, or a truly liberal (and secular) democratic state for all citizens. Alternatives ensure either that the Arabs and Jews live side by side in co-existence within the state that emphasizes equal citizenship with equal rights. According to the results of heightened demands by the Arab respondents to many public polls since 1995, they prefer their annexation to the future Palestinian State rather than living discriminated in all life fields by the Jewish majority.

Chapter One

I. A Historical Overview of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

1.1 Introduction

Following the dream of Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism to establish a national home and sovereign state for the dispersed Jews in the Diaspora, he convened the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, in August 1897; Theodor Herzl brought the Zionist project to the forefront of the Jewish people. The World Zionist movement was organized to carry the religious, spiritual and cultural dimension to strengthen the establishment of the future Jewish state. Herzl. In his book, a *Jewish State*, published in 1896 wrote “the idea of which I have developed in this pamphlet is a very old one: it is the restoration of the Jewish state”, a year later the first meeting of the Zionist movement convened in Basle. The movement was inspired by two beliefs: the Jewish people would never be safe until they had a physical sovereign state and secondly, this state would be located in Palestine. ¹

The Zionist movement’s strategic goal to establish a home for the Jewish people’ in Palestine had not given any consideration for the indigenous population of 500,000 in 1895⁸. Of this population 47,000 were Jews who represented the indigenous inhabitants and a small group who immigrated to Palestine for purely religious reasons rather than for Zionist goals. Therefore, many Palestinian scholars and nationalists argue strongly

¹ D., Heater. and Berridge, *Introduction to International Politics*, (Harvester Wheatsheaf, N.Y and London, 1993) p.134

⁸ R., David, *Arabs and Israel for Beginners*, (Writers and Readers Publications Incorporate, New York, 1993) p. 94

that this population refutes the Zionist's slogan by Chaim Weizman, President of the World Zionist Congress "a country without people for a people without a country".

The father of the Zionist dream, Herzl, traveled tirelessly around the world seeking international recognition and diplomatic support for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine before his death in 1904. On his route to Sofia to meet the Sultan, he encountered Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews who hailed him as the "heart of Israel"³ Herzl's dream for a Jewish state in Palestine facilitated the founding of the Jewish National Fund and the World Zionist Organization which currently provide the main political and financial support for Israel.

In the wake of the Basle conference, a group of Jews inspired the ideology of Zionism to move and settle in Palestine. This wave of immigration sought independence by setting up agricultural settlements to support themselves in Palestine. This wave of immigration was called the first ALIYAH. Aliyaha is a Hebrew Terminology, which means ascend or go up to the land of Israel. Between 1882 and 1903, 25,000 Jews settled in Palestine.⁴

1.2 The British Mandate over Palestine

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War enabled the British to control Palestine. In November 1917, with the eye of sympathy and compassion to the Jewish people, the famous letter of the Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild which became later known as the Balfour Declaration, gave a promise by announcing its intention to facilitate establishing in Palestine "a national home for the Jewish people" rather than the creation of a 'Jewish state'. Zionist movement exploited the notoriously ambiguous statements of the famous letter to establish a Jewish state. In 1922, the League of Nations granted the British a Mandate over Palestine, which facilitated the

³ D., Sherbok, and D., El Alami, *The Palestine- Israel Conflict*, (OneWorld Publications, Oxford, 2002) p.11

⁴ Anti-Defamation League (*Records, the creation of Israel*): www.adl.org/Israel/Record/creation.html

immigration of the Jews from Europe into the shores of Palestine and encouraged Jewish settlement.

In spite of the steady efforts of the Zionist movement to increase the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine and establish agriculture settlements, diplomatic correspondences were exchanged between the Henry McMahon, the British Higher Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussain, the Emire of Mecca, in which the Sharif demanded 'the Independence of Arab countries', specifying in detail the territories under the Ottoman Empire including Palestine. Prior to the Balfour Declaration on 2nd November 1917, McMahon confirmed in the diplomatic correspondences in 1915-16 to the Sharif Hussain that "the Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca".

But in fact the correspondences of the McMahon, the British Higher Commissioner in Egypt and the Sharif could not stop the letter of promise by the British Foreign Secretary to facilitate a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. However, the British Government, in a special message to Sherif Hussain in 1918, stated that ' the Entente powers are determined that the Arab race shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world. As far as Palestine is concerned, we are determined that no people shall be subject to another.'⁵

The Conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionist movement entered another crossroad after the end of the first World War, when large scale immigration of Jews moved towards Palestine from Europe under the coverage of the Balfour Declaration and Churchill Memorandum" which disclaimed " wholly Jewish Palestine" and the approval of the League of Nations the Historical connection of the Jewish people in Palestine in

⁵ Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations: History and Information, Important Events of the last 100 years.(www.Palestine-un.org/info/imp.html)

1922. Consequently, the frustration after the denial of the inherent right of Palestinian national self-determination and the colonization of their land by non-immigrants, Palestinian broke out into violence in the main cities of Palestine, particularly in Safad, Hebron with the crucial dispute in August 1929 over “Al Buraq” (the Wailing Wall) in the old City of Jerusalem. Hence, the power of religion began to contribute negatively to the conflict. Therefore, the adherents of two different faiths in this national conflict exploited religion to impose power on the future of the conflict.

The power and huge influx of the Jewish immigrants between 1926 and 1931, to a great extent, generated a de facto situation on the ground, as the Jewish population in Palestine increased from only 140,640 to 174,606. At the same time, the Arab population increased from 675,450 to 759,700. The Jewish population in 1939 numbered over 445,000 out of a total population of about 1.5 million, nearly 30% as compared to less than 10% twenty years earlier. Similarly, by 1939, Jewish Land holdings had risen by four times to almost 1.5 million dunums of the total area of 26 million dunums.⁶

Land has been the core issue of the conflict for a long period between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinian peasants and farmers soon became involved in resistance against the new settlers. The British mandate facilitated the confiscation of the land by Jewish immigrants. In the meantime land purchase swiftly continued as an official British report observed:

The result of the purchase of land by the Jewish National Fund has been that land has been extra-territorialized. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease

⁶ D., Sherbok and D., El Alami, *The Palestine- Israel Conflict*, (OneWorld Publications, Oxford, 2002) p.28

⁷ D., McDowall, *The Palestinians The Road to Nationhood*, (Minority Rights Publications, London, 1995) p.18

or cultivate, but also by stringent provisions of the lease of JNF he is deprived for ever from employment on that land.⁷

The British government was persuaded by the revolt and violence between the Jews and the Palestinian Arabs rather than by political vision to establish the Royal Committee (Peel) in 1937 to investigate the conflict on the ground and to recommend solutions. The committee's report admitted publicly for the first time the incompatibility of Britain's promises for both Jews and Arabs. In the light of such incompatibility, Britain felt bound to recommend the partition based on the exchange of territories to remove dissident minorities: 225,000 Arabs to leave the coastal plain as against 1,250 Jews from designated areas⁸. The Zionist leadership had been privately promoting the idea of exchange or "Transfer". However, the Palestinian Arabs rejected the proposal and the following recommendations of the White Paper in 1939 because they did not promise them national self-determination.

This de facto situation of holding the land by Jews promoted hatred and created the spiral of violence between the Palestinian and Jews by the active Jewish military groups of Stern, Haganah, Palmach and Irgun. These groups committed a series of politically motivated terrorist attacks against the Palestinian Arabs, as well as the international mediators and investigators delegated by their countries or the United Nations to Palestine in 1940s. The British High Commissioner escaped death in an ambush outside of Jerusalem. Three months later on 6 November 1944 in Cairo; the Stern assassinated the British Minister of State of the Middle East. However, the Zionist establishment condemned such actions and claimed commitment to full cooperation to curtail terrorism.

⁸ D., McDowall, *The Palestinians The Road to Nationhood*, (Minority Rights Publications, London, 1995) p.19

On the other hand, the establishment of important political parties such as the Palestinian Arab Party, National Defense Party, Al Istiklal (Independence), the Reform Party, and the National Bloc in 1934-35 contributed to the Palestinian national resistance movements under the leadership of Al Haj Amin Al Husseini⁹. The unity of these political movements aimed at attaining national self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs in Palestine which continued to break into a major popular Intifada “General Strike” targeted at British and Jewish posts and troops which virtually ended with the outbreak of World War II.

The question of Palestine has been on top the agenda of foreign policies of the Western and Arab states. However, the Jewish lobby exerted pressure on the American Congress and President Harry Truman called upon the British government to open up the gate for an additional 100,000 homeless Jews from Europe. This American diplomatic pressure on the British government in 1940s to a great extent helped setting up the American foreign policy later in the Middle East and facilitated its impact on the current Palestinian Israeli-conflict.

The American pressure on the British led to the Anglo- American Inquiry Committee to Palestine for three months in 1946. The outcome of the Committee concluded with clear denial of the national right to self-determination for the indigenous people of Palestine whether unified or partitioned. The committee recommended allowing the immigration to Palestine, which the British government could not accept immediately.

The killing of 86 British officers and soldiers in the attacks on British troops at the King David Hotel by the Jewish paramilitary groups, in addition to the Palestinian attacks and the huge pressure exerted by the American Administration and Zionist World Agency

⁹ D., Rubinstein, The New Palestinian elite, (Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo= 181484&contrassID=2&30/06/2002

led the British government to hand over the question of Palestine to the United Nations after the rejection of by the Arab and Jewish populations of its proposal of partition into two provinces in 1947.¹⁰ Rejection developed to violence and the use of fierce power by the Israeli forces against the Palestinian people.

1.3 The Question of Palestine in the United Nations

The termination of the British Mandate over Palestine brought the question of Palestine on the United Nations Agenda. A special session upheld the request of the British government by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 28, April 1947 to study this question. Hence, the General Assembly established the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to investigate all questions relevant to Palestine and to recommend the resolutions to be considered by the regular session in September 1947 to settle the conflict. During three months investigation by the Committee, the Arab leaders decided not to participate and cooperate with the committee because the United Nations had refused to address independence and to separate the issue of the Jewish refugees in Europe from the question of Palestine. Meanwhile, the Jewish Organization for Palestine cooperated with the committee in its investigations.

On November 29, 1947, the Europeans and Americans made up the majority of the UN General Assembly members, which enabled them to adopt the partition resolution 181 which: Palestine into two states: one Arab and the other Jewish. The partition plan of partitioned divided Palestine into eight parts: 3 parts were allotted to the Jewish State, and three parts to the Arab State; the seven, the town of Jaffa, was to form an Arab enclave within the Jewish territories; and Jerusalem as a corpus separatum under an

¹⁰ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine(domino.un.org/unispal.nsf)
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/UNISPAL.htm>

international regime to be administrated by the United Nations. The Jewish state was given up 53% of the land and the Palestinians, who accounted for 70% of the population, were allocated 47% of the country.

The Jewish leadership accepted the resolution because it provided for the international recognition of a sovereign Jewish State. The partition infuriated the Arabs who were at that time the majority and owned 94 % of the total portion of the land. They said that the General Assembly endorsed the Plan under circumstances unworthy of the United Nations that and the Arabs would oppose any scheme, which provided for segregation or partition of their country.¹¹

1.4 1948 War and Establishment of Israel

The adoption of resolution 181 was followed by escalation of violence in Palestine. On April 17, 1948, the Security Council called for cessation of all military and paramilitary activities. Hence, the Security Council, on 23 April 1948 established a committee to help maintain a cease-fire and restore security and order in Palestine. On the other hand, after the end of the Second World War, Britain found itself too exhausted economically and politically to face the Zionist movement, US pressure and the psychological impact of the Holocaust. Britain decided to relinquish its Mandate over Palestine and disengage its forces on 14 May 1948. On the same day, the Jewish Agency led by Ben Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel.

“So when his Minister of Justice designated suggested in May that Israel’s declaration of independence should specify the borders of the new state”, Ben Gurion kept his options open: Anything is possible. If we decide here

¹¹ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine(domino.un.org/unispal.nsf) <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/UNISPAL.htm>

that there's to be no mention of borders, then we won't mention them.
Nothing is a priori.¹²

The Jewish forces exploited the termination of the Mandate over Palestine to move to occupy territories allotted to the Arab State. They destroyed 37 out of 41 Palestinian villages west of Jerusalem, which were supposed to be under the United Nations administration according to the UN resolution 181. More than 80,000 villagers and inhabitants were driven out or fled from this western area of Jerusalem because they were targeted by the Jewish groups and or the Israeli Army.¹³

On 15 July 1948, the Security Council ordered a cease-fire because the situation in Palestine threatened security and was a breach of the peace that required enforcement measurements according to the Charter IIV. In the meantime, Israel continued its control of the allotted territories to the Arab State to make up 78 % of the historical Map of Palestine. Hence, Jordan brought the West Bank and East Jerusalem under its jurisdiction and Egypt put the Gaza Strip under its administration in 1950.¹⁴

More than 725,000 Palestinians were driven out by the Israelis or fled from the fierce hostilities in 1948-9 to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The United Nations attempted to tackle the question of those refugees by setting up a special agency (UNRWA) to care them in their different locations. Until today their problem remains unsolved because Israel rejects the United Nation Resolution 149 to allow them to return back to their homes.

¹² D., McDowall, *The Palestinians The Road to Nationhood*, (Minority Rights Publications, London, 1995) p.24

¹³ Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations: History and Information, Important Events of the last 100 years.(www.Palestine-un.org/info/imp.html)

¹⁴ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine(domino.un.org/unispal.nsf)
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/UNISPAL.htm>

The Israeli leadership had already decided against allowing any back, and on 16 June 1948 the Israeli Cabinet adopted this position formally. In the words of Moshe Sharett, Israeli Foreign Minister: "They will not return. That is our policy. They are not returning".¹⁵

However, the United Nations bore the responsibility for partitioning Palestine and thus it laid down the conditional right of Palestine's indigenous people to return to their homes. Thus, Israel is held responsibility to facilitate their practical return at the earliest dates according to 194 resolutions. This resolution says clearly that Israel must admit the Palestinian refugees who were driven out to return back home. However, this resolution linked the international recognition of the UN to Israel by allowing the refugees to return back home.

In short, the Arabs, who were the majority before the establishment of Israel, are now the minority. They were fragmented along three geographic areas in the north, the east and the south after extensive internal displacement. Their economic situations are extremely desperate; their immediate concerns were the integrity of their property and the safety and the unification of their families across the borders in the refugee camps. They were under the control system of the military administration from the establishment of Israel until 1966. They were segregated from the Israeli Jewish majority for several political reasons and have suffered discrimination as second-class citizens ever since.

For instance, they could not travel out the country unless they got permission from the Israeli military administration. In addition, thousands of dunums were confiscated for military reasons. At the same time, the Jewish residents were not suffered the

¹⁵ D., McDowall, *The Palestinians The Road to Nationhood*, (Minority Rights Publications, London, 1995) p.27

confiscation policy and its consequences and impacts on their economic and social life.

Chapter Two

The Israeli Arabs in the Jewish State: Promises and Problems

2.1 The Arabs Inside Israel After the 1948 War.

The new state adopted a clear policy of driving and transferring the Palestinians out first from the allotted territories to the Jewish State. However, when the armistice was signed in 1949 there were 160,000 Palestinian Arabs or about 12.5 percent of the Israeli population. After the establishment of Israel, It became common to identify or call them Israeli Arabs in Israeli politics. Most of them lived in the northern part of the country, with 90,000 in the central and western Galilee. The Other 31, 000 were concentrated in the Little Triangle and 13,000, mostly Bedouin, in the Negev desert in the south. The rest were scattered in Jaffa, West Jerusalem, Haifa, Ramla, Lod and Acre. ¹⁶

Regardless of the Israeli constitution that maintained the rights of minorities, the Arabs inside the border of the Jewish state were placed under tightened military administration by the Israeli government until 1966. The system imposed "severe restrictions on the Israeli Arabs' freedom of movement and economic opportunities, and placed them under surveillance and military law".¹⁷ However, between 1949 and 1966, they were allowed to participate in the Israeli elections. The political parties were allowed, under certain conditions, to ensure that the political parties were not against the Zionist ideology. On the other hand, their locations were physically surrounded by the presence of Jewish settlements. Therefore, the Custodian of Absentee Property confiscated much of the Arab lands for military purposes, and to enlarge the agricultural settlements, to provide living space and resources for the Jewish immigrants. Haidar's description of the way of

¹⁶ I., Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*, (University of Texas press, Austin, 1980) p. 49

¹⁷ G., Shafir, and Y., Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, (Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 2002) p. 112

confiscating the land of the Taibeh village reveals the dynamics implemented in the country henceforth.

All the areas west of the Israeli Jordanian cease fire line before the village was transferred to Israeli Jurisdiction in 1949 were immediately expropriated by the Israeli government. All the land belonging to refugees was also confiscated, even when their relatives had remained in the village. Also expropriated were all lands were closed off for military purposes or annexed to near by Jewish settlements. In addition to lose by expropriation, the village forfeited all its eastern border as determined by the 1949 Rhodes Agreement. Taibe's land area was again diminished with the expropriation of an additional 1,080 dunams between 1974 and 1978. Under pressure from the inhabitants which expressed itself in an accelerated burst of building on the newly confiscated lands, about 700 dunams were returned to villagers".¹⁸

Most of the Arabs live in the territories which were allocated to the Arab State under the UN partition plan in 1947. Thus, the policy of confiscation is still implemented until today by the Israel Land Authority. Because of land confiscation legal confrontation and clashes between Israeli forces and the inhabitants took place continuously. The most recent clashes took place in 1998 in EL Roha village nearby Um Lfahm city in which all its citizens are Arabs. Shortly later, an agreement was reached between the village representatives and the Israeli Army to allow them entering their lands for agricultural purposes only.

60,000 out of the total Palestinian Arabs populations, who had remained in the Israeli territories, were granted the Israeli citizenship. The rest were only entitled to it when they met certain conditions according to the Nationality Law 1952. These conditions

¹⁸ A., Haidar, *On The Margins: The Arab Population in the Israeli Economy*, (Hurst and Co, London, 1995) p.140

of the Nationality law prevented the rest of the Palestinian Arabs from getting the Israeli citizenship until the amendment of the Nationality law in 1980. In spite of their Israeli citizenship, they were always under the threat of the land confiscation policy, which contributed, to a great extent, negatively to the low economic and social living standards of the Palestinian Arabs. Different clauses under the Absentee Property Law legitimized most of the land expropriations. Israel also confiscated the Waqf endowment and property including lands, shops, urban estates, houses and business, which was now at the disposal of the Jewish community.¹⁹

2.2 Political and Legal Status

Israel's Arab citizens today constitute 18.5 % of the total population²⁰ of Israel, and one seventh of the Palestinian Arab population in the Diaspora. They still live in the shock of the sudden shift of being a minority after they were the majority²¹. They exist on the margin of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. However, they are considered a potential decisive and a crucial factor as they live within the Jewish state itself. They remain a part of the Palestinian Arab people's culture and identity. At the same time, they see their future tied and linked to the Israeli society. They have adopted the Hebrew language as a second and a main language to integrate within the Israeli society as a whole. They desperately need a higher degree of participation in the society and development of their villages and towns as equal to the Jewish towns and villages next door to theirs.

Co-existence and full integration between the Arabs and the Jews are hindered by deep-rooted differences in religion, language, culture, and political beliefs. Both Arabs and Jews are self-segregated in separated locations and even the mixed cities like Lod and

¹⁹ G., Shafir, and Y., Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, (Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 2002) p. 110

²⁰ O., Nir, Anti-Arab Policy Bias Worsens (Report, Ha'aretz Newspaper, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=174547&contrassID=1&SUB

²¹ M., Abu Nimer, *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*, SUNY Press, New York, 1999) p.29

Ramle have been facing difficulties in integration and full participation. While the groups are separated by official policies, the discrimination in budgeting and allocations of development, economic and education are reflected on the intergroup relations within society. Meanwhile, the political situations and events in the Middle East between the Israelis and Palestinians affect, to a great extent, on the stability and integration between the Jews and the Arabs in the Israeli society. However, there is a sort of dialogue and acknowledgement of a desperate need to change for equality and co-existence between the groups.

Despite the de facto Arabs' right to participation in the Israeli politics with the right to elect their municipal and parliament representatives through their own political parties or the mixed Jewish - Arab parties according to the call up of the Israeli Declaration of Independence; "to participate in the building up of the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship"; the Arabs' influence on the Israeli politics and state structure is very limited. The Arabs are scattered among different Arab and Jewish political parties. Therefore, the Jewish majority exploited democracy and its impact on the state structure to leave them to live on the margin of the society lacking much of primary needs to develop and reconstruct their villages and towns. Meanwhile, the Israeli policy aims to control the Arab community, Lustick describes on his book, the Arab Majority in the Jewish State, the Israeli succession to control the Arabs community by establishing controlling system that has three main components: segmentation, dependence, and cooperation.²²

²² L. Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority*, (University of Texas press, Austin, 1980) p. 78

This system is based on segmenting the Arab inside Israel in an isolated community. This community depends completely on the Jewish economy. Therefore, the Israeli government is forcing the Arab to cooperate with its laws and policies.

Such a control system has largely affected integration and equality and has resulted in unequal and discriminatory laws against the Arabs on all levels of life economically, legally and politically. Kretzmer listed three different types of direct and indirect discrimination against the Arabs in Israel.²³ The main source of discrimination is reflected the Jewish character of Israel in its anthem, flag, and celebrations. Otherwise Israel neglected the Arabic language as a second language until 2000, when Yosei Sarid, the Minister of Education decided teaching the Arabic language in the Jewish schools as a second main language. On the other hand, since the establishment of Israel, the Arabs have had to study in their schools about the Zionist history, religion and Hebrew language.

Legal Situations

There are some laws which ensure the Jewishness of Israel. The *law of return* grants the Israeli citizenship for any Jewish immigrants. In the meantime the Arabs who were driven out or and fled in 1948 are not eligible subject for this law. *The law of land* guarantees the transferred and sold land to Jews. Non-Jews are not eligible because the lands belong to the Jewish organization Keren Kiemit²⁴ . In March 1976 the Arabs' anger and frustration over continuation of the land expropriation erupted into violence against the Israeli police and since then, the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip commemorate the "Day of Land" on 30th of March every year.

²³ D., Kretzmer, *The legal Status of Israel's Arab Citizens*, (Paper presented at the Leonard Davis Institute Conference, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1991)

²⁴ M., Abu Nimer, *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*, (SUNY Press, New Yourk, 1999) p.3

However, the Arabs' demand to liberalize their citizenship status as individuals has received encouragement from the High Court of Justice, when it ruled on the long pending case between Qaadan family who prevented to lease a flat in the community settlement of Katzir and its Local Council²⁵. The strong position of the High Court of Justice is that there is no difference between the Arabs and the Jews in Israel. However, the Israeli government's ratification of the law to disqualify the non-Jews to purchase the lands, on 8 July 2002, challenges the decision of the High Court of Justice regarding the case of Gaadan family and the Arabs in Israel in general.²⁶

Israel defines itself as “the state of the Jewish people”. Otherwise, one million and two hundred thousand- that is to say one seventh -of the population is, of Arab Palestinian origin, either Christian or Muslim. This is in paradox to the Israel's Declaration of Independence in which it committed itself to “maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all citizens, without distinction of creed, race or sex”.

The status of the Arab citizens makes Israel, according to Smooha, an “ ethnic democracy”, a “ third-rate” democracy to be distinguished from the majoritarian and consociational models. An ethnic democracy combines “ the extension of political and civil rights to individuals and certain collective rights to minorities with institutionalized dominance over the state by one of the ethnic groups”²⁷ Until today, Israel lives in a State of Emergency according to defense laws which had existed during the British Mandate over Palestine; these laws are incompatible with the principles of a democratic state and the *article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* “ All

25 G., Shafir, and Y., Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, (Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 2002) p. 132

²⁶ Aljazeera Satellite Channel: Israel ratified a law to ban the Arabs purchasing the lands (News Europe and Israel, 2002), www.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2002/7/7-8-4.htm

persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the legal protection of the law. In this respect the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any grounds such as race, colour, sex language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

The Arab Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) member Dr. Ahmed Tibi noted on 20 June, 2002 in a public meeting that took place in London in solidarity with the Palestinian people and regarding the future of the Middle East conflict that “Israel is a democratic state, but in fact it is for the Jewish citizens rather than for the Arabs citizens”. The Israeli Parliament banned Ahmed Tibi from visiting Gaza and the West Bank, because he described the events of Jenine Refugee Camp in the West Bank as a war crime; However, Dr. Tibi argues strongly that his duty as a MP in the Israeli Knesset allows him immunity to find out the facts everywhere. The Israeli Parliament is the only official and platform to represent the Arab citizens, even though their political weight in the Israeli legislation establishment is incompatible with the Jewish majority in the Parliament.

2.4 Voices of Quality for the Arabs

On the other hand, there are an increasing number of Jewish elites who strongly support the equality within the Israeli society rather than divisiveness and discord among the different communities. Negative social and political discrimination target the Arab minority exclusively. Roman Bronfman, in his article, "how to build a left", calls for reorganizing the Israeli society based on social equality, affirmative action to bridge the gap and bring about a just peace.

“There are tens of thousands of Arab Israelis who have not give up on the struggle for civil equality, who have not stopped seeing themselves as

²⁷ S., Smootha, *Minority Status in an Ethnic Democracy: The Status of the Arab Minority in Israel* (Ethnic and Racial Studies 1990) p.391

partners of their fellow Jewish citizens in the political arena, as well, despite the crisis in relations between the two communities ... The reorganizing has to embrace Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, immigrants and veterans, Ashkenazim and Sephardim- all of whom must be full and equal partners.²⁸

On the other hand, there has been a clear change in the policy towards the political leaders and the Arab parties who were democratically elected representatives of the Arab minority in Israel for the last two years. For example, Israeli security imposed restrictions and regulations on the Islamic movement's organizations and sealed off some of them in the Arab towns and banned some of their leaders from traveling abroad. Israeli security and political elites argue that the Islamic movement supports the Islamic organizations in Gaza and the West Bank. The Islamic movements' representatives are the mayors of five Arab towns in Israel including Um El Faham, the vast Arab majority population near the West Bank cities Jenine, Qalgylia and Tul Karm. However, the Islamic Movement elites argue that movement's organizations are legally registered as humanitarian organizations, support only the orphans and well-off people in Gaza and the West Bank.

The trial of MP Azmi Bishara exemplifies also another real discrimination against the representatives of the Arab leadership inside Israel for allegedly supporting terror by publicizing words and sympathy and encouragement for act of violence and supporting terrorist organization” according to Ha’aretz Newspaper. According to the Israeli law, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment while Bishara indicates it is a “political persecution”²⁹

²⁸ R., Bronfman: How to build a left, (Ha’aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/page/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=182182&contrastID=..... 02/07/2002

²⁹ J., Bana, MK Bishara’s Trial for Allegedly Supporting Terror Groups Resumes, (Ha’aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 200) www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/page/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=174519&contrastID=1&sub

Some analysts argue that Azmi belongs to the movement of Abna Al Balad “the sons of the land” which emerged in the mid 1970s and strengthened in 1980s and explicitly rejects the legitimacy of Israel and its loyalists believe in one democratic state in the historical Palestine for Jews and Arabs. On the other hand, some believe that he is very close to the Syrian regime. Many Arab politicians believe that the trial of Dr. Bishara is the beginning to ban his party “Tajammu” (new Ballad) as the Israeli law disqualified the Socialist List in 1965 from participating in the Knesset elections for ideological reasons.³⁰ Yiftachel describes on his article, *The Shrinking Space of Citizens: Ethnocratic Politics in Israel*:

Two bills did pass into law in May 2002, restricting Palestinian Arabs, political activity. The first amends Israel’s electoral law by prohibiting the candidacy of any party or individual who “supports (in action or speech) the armed struggle of enemy states or terror organizations.” The second is the “law against incitement for violence,” which specifies hard measures, including five years prison sentence for supporting anti Israel violence. Explicitly justified as measures to halt the “subversive” political activity, these laws make it far easier to disqualify Palestinian Arab and critical Jewish from running for the Israeli Parliament.³¹

There are margins in Arab politics in Israel, who see that the Committee of the heads of Arab Local Councils is one of the most significant instruments in mobilizing and campaigning for local and national issues based on better services and equal right. Some Arabs are not interested in participating in the Israeli politics for many reasons including mistrust in the abilities of the Arab leaders to achieve anything for the Arabs inside Israel.

³⁰ E., Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A study in Internal Colonialism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979) p.172

³¹ O., Yiftachel , *The Shrinking Space of Citizens: Ethnocratic Politics in Israel* (Barrier to Peace, Middle East Report, 2002) www.merip.org/mer/mer223/223_yiftachel.html

On the other hand, Israelis in general and the leftists in particular who support, to some extent, the equality and civil rights of the Arabs in Israel express their anger, frustration and disappointment towards the Israeli Arabs because of their public support for the Palestinian case in Gaza and the West Bank. However, the defenders of the new Arab nationalist movement argue that all these manifestations belong to the category of “freedom of expression” because the lack of equality in the field of civil rights. In Yediot Aharanot, on May 5th, 2000, senior political correspondent and former editor of Koteret Rashit (weekly journal associated with the peace camp), Nahum Barne’a, describes the Arabs political leadership as a conduct of “the hostility that grows in them towards Israel is dangerous. ... Israel, which exhorts the PA to prevent incitement in its media allows the incitement to flourish in her own back yard amongst Israeli Arabs”.³²

However, there is no evidence that the Arab leadership publicly supports killing of Jews. In the meantime there are extensive evidences that Jewish extremists groups call publicly to transfer the Arabs from Israel. In addition, they shout in their demonstrations “the death for Arabs”. These attitudes and positions are not restricted to public opinion, but there are many elites and ministers who represent the Israeli constituencies, and officially believe and work on according to the Israeli law and through the Israeli political parties. In fact, no Arab ever dares to express freely the same as the Jewish extremists who support “transfer” and “death”. Furthermore, the discriminatory treatment towards the Arab leaders became conspicuous when the General Attorney failed to charge against the Jewish leaders who expressed more inciting statements.

For example, MK Michael Kleniner claimed that leaders such as Bishara who speak against their state, “are routinely put in front of a firing squad in most countries”. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leaders and political authority of large Orthodox Shas movement, declared in July 2001 that Israel should “bomb the Arab with missiles,

³² N., Barne’a, *the Political Conduct of the Israeli Arabs Leadership*, (Yediot Aharanot Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2000) Hebrew

through, and through,” and on another occasion, that “most people know the Arabs are snakes.... and snakes should be dealt with like snakes”.³³

The Arab leadership in Israel struggles peacefully and legally through parliamentary diplomacy. They seek equality with Israeli Jews, and recognition as a national minority rather than as second-class citizens.

2.5 Economic and Social Conditions

The Israeli system of control has been to maintain the Arabs segmented and separated in certain locations rather than developing mechanisms to integrate them fully into Israeli society based on equal opportunities and non-discriminatory regulations. The underlying policy of segmentation is tailored to make the Arabs more dependent on the Israeli economy rather than building an independent economy of their own. Israel’s fear was that independence and geographical integrity might bring the Arabs to demand the UN partition resolution 181 for autonomy or a state as Oz says on his article: in the land of Israel:

If they give back territories, the Arabs will stop to come to work, and then there will put us back into the dead-end jobs, like before. If for no other reason, we won’t let you give back those territories.... Look at my daughter: she works in a bank now, and every evening an Arab comes to clean the building. All you want is to dump her from the bank into some textile factory, or have her wash the floors instead of the Arabs.³⁴

The expropriation policy aims at forcing the Arabs to abandon the agricultural sector to work as unskilled and cheap labours in the Jewish economy mainly in the construction, agriculture and industry services. Otherwise, the Galilee is the location of the Arab majority and their economy in Israel. Therefore, Israel aims at populating it by Jewish

³³ O., Yiftachel, *The Shrinking Space of Citizens: Ethnocratic Politics in Israel (Barriers to Peace, Middle East Report, 2002)* www.merip.org/mer/mer223/223_yiftachel.html

³⁴ A., Oz, *In the land of Israel*, (Vintage, New York, 1984) P. 36

immigrants by expropriation or by military power. In other words, the official policy is to “Judaize the Galilee”. The policy, for example, includes not supplying the farmers with adequate irrigation water, funds and loans as equal to the Jewish farmers by targeting negatively the Arab economy and social development since the establishment of Israel. Arabs are also not entitled to long term lease as the Jews who are capable of leasing for thirty or forty years with financial support.

As since the beginning of Jewish settlement in Israel in the late nineteenth century, the Galilee was considered a frontier by the Jewish collective. However, given its decisive Arab majority, it did not receive exceptional attention among the Jewish public until independence. Since then, however, the Galilee has received the status of an “internal frontiers”, endowing Jewish settlement in the region with the total Jewish consensus, legitimacy and status.³⁵

Arab citizens are discriminated in different ways according to Israeli laws. It is illustrated by the fact that the Arab minority live in a community of "third world" countries while the Jewish majority lives according to the developed world standards controlling the natural resources and political structure. For instance, over 80 per cent of the lands owned by Arabs have been confiscated without compensation by the state. Israeli Arabs who were farmers and now landless labourers. 42 % of Israeli Arabs live below the poverty line, while the Jewish majority enjoys high standards of living comparable with any country in Western Europe.³⁶

³⁵ O., Yiftachel., *Nation Building or Ethnic Fragmentation? Frontiers Settlement and Collective Identities in Israel*, (Working group no. 17, The Lewis Centre for Regional Policy Studies, 1996)p. xiii

³⁶ *Why Palestine*, (A Palestinian Solidarity Campaign Pamphlet, 2002) p.20

On 14 February, 2002, the Israeli minister responsible for land management, Avigador Lieberman sent several planes to spray 12,000 dunams of crops in the southern Negev with poison he stated:

We must stop their illegal invasion of state land by all means possible. The Bedounis have no regard for our laws; in the process we are losing the last resources of state land. One of my main missions is to return to the power of the land Authority in dealing with the non-Jewish threat to our lands.³⁷

This attitude is a newly adopted policy to change the facts on the ground by force to deprive the Arab citizens of their right to grow and use their lands in order to live as full citizens in the state.

2.6 Education

The Arab educational system is similar to other sectors in the Arab community in Israel. The official state policy and the Jewish majority within the Ministry of Education control the system. The role of education in the Arab community is based on building peaceful individuals. The goal of the Jewish education, however, focuses on and stresses the development of national identity for the Jewish students. There are paradoxical dimensions in the educational system in Israel, where the students learn the culture of Israel as a state for the Jewish people historically and politically. Today, the Arabs have no institutions for higher education. Such goals neglect and avoid the national culture and identity of the Arabs.³⁸

³⁷ O., Yiftachel, *The Shrinking Space of Citizens: Ethnocratic Politics in Israel* (Barrier to Peace, Middle East Report, 2002) www.merip.org/mer/mer223/223_yiftachel.html

³⁸ M., Abu Nimer, *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*, SUNY Press, New Yourk, 1999) p.35

In other words, Jacob Landau, in his book, *The Arab Minority in Israel*, describes the unbalance requirements in the segregated education system of the Arabs and Jews relating to the national subjects such as language, culture and history:

While in the Jewish schools a minimum of Arab history and literature is studied, only a limited amount of Arabic is compulsory, pupils in Arab schools learn Hebrew, certain chapters of Hebrew literature (including chapters from the Bible), and the Jewish history (including the basics of Zionist history).³⁹

Arab teachers always feel under threat because of the nature of the Arab educational system and the development of the Israeli Arab conflict. Officials in the Ministry of Education appoint Arab teachers after they pass a tight security inspection. These factors complicate the duty of the teachers who cannot assume the role of model leaders to their students.

2.7 Social Development

The Arab municipal and rural councils have been facing crucial and decisive problems to develop their inhabitants' locations while they have been awaiting the very slow process of approving the outlined plans by the Israeli Regional Planning Authorities, which are predominately controlled by the Jews. The process of delay and carelessness by the Jewish Regional Planning Authority created terrible problems for development action plans of the Arab towns. More dangerously, the Arab municipal and rural councils have no sufficient funds, which are extremely essential to the development of infrastructure in the Arab towns and villages.

While the financial allocations are legally under the authorization of the Ministry of Interior in full coordination with the Ministry of Finance, the Arab councils face

difficulties to get their allocations. Meanwhile, the Jewish municipal and rural councils are eligible to regularly funds. The different social and economic standards between the Jewish and the Arab communities are incomparable. The Arabs are discriminated against in term of funds to their locations because they do not serve in the Israeli Army. Thus, Ha'aretz in its report on June 9, 2002 highlights the anti Arab policy bias:

Discrimination in the public policy towards Israel's minority sector goes on, according to the findings of the annual report of the Association of the Advancement of Equal Opportunities. While the development and infrastructure needs Arab towns and villages far exceed those of the Jewish communities, development budgets allocated to the Arab locales are much smaller than those conferred to Jewish cities and towns.⁴⁰

Despite the fact that Israel defines itself as democratic, the Arabs are still, to a great extent, segregated from the Israeli society; they are deprived of infrastructure, economic and social development subsidies and allocations. Some Arab elites call for economic and cultural autonomy. However there is no real viability for such a suggestion. Because of certain Israeli policies, they have no independent institutions, establishment or even enterprises such as those enjoyed by the Jewish community.

As a result of segregation up-rooted differences between the two communities, the Arab community also lacks many social and health services, such as , the children daycare centre. Ruth Sinai, Ha'aretz Correspondent, reported on June 16, 2002 that only 2% out of 50, 000 Arab children go to the daycare centres in Israel while 60 % out of 135,000 Jewish children of the same age. In the year 2000, the labour and social affairs Ministry channeled more than six million shekels for the development of 64 daycare centres, 17 of

³⁹ J., Landu, *The Arab Minority in Israel* (Oxford University Press, New York 1993). p.64

⁴⁰ O. Nir, Anti-Arab Policy Bias Worsens (Report, Tel Aviv, Ha'aretz Newspaper, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=174547&contrassID=1&SUB

which were located in the settlements. Not even one of the centres was in an Arab village, despite the fact that almost 30% of the children who are in the daycare centre age in Israel are Arabs. The entire Arab community has a total 18 day centres as opposed to some 1,650 Jewish ones⁴¹ .

The Arab women need their children to be brought up by professional social worker. However, an official of the Israeli Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs argues that these centres are for the women who work but the Arab women do not work. In the Meantime building such these centres in the Arab community will contribute to reducing the poverty and high level of unemployment among the Arabs women who can then work in the day care centres. More aggravating, the Arab community's health allocation is 1.6 million out of 277 million for rest of the Israeli society in 1999.

Arab towns are entitled in all cases on the top jobless lists according to the statistics of the Israeli Central Bureau. A Ha'aretz report on February 18th, 2002, reveals that 21 towns with the highest unemployment levels are Arab. At the top of these Arabs towns is Kfar Manda, in the Galilee, where 22 % of the work forces are unemployed. In other words, the unemployment in the Arab sector is 35 percent higher than in the Jewish one. Fifteen to twenty Arab towns and villages regularly lead the table of Israel's top unemployment locales, which is published, on monthly basics. The Jewish town with the highest unemployment rate is Ashkelon where it stands at 10 percent⁴² .

One of the most prominent decisions was taken by the Government of Ehud Barak which allocated in October 2000, 4 billion new Israeli Shekels (approximately 1 billion US

⁴¹ R., Sinai, Background/Only 2% of Arab Children Go to The Day Centers, (In-depth, Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=171654&displayTypeCd=1&6/16/02

⁴² M., Bassok, and Sinai, R., Jobless Figures at Record Level; Rate Rises 19.7% in 2001 (Report, Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002)
www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=171654&displayTypeCd=1&SUB

dollars) for 2001-4 to meet the challenge of closing the huge gap between the Arab and the Jewish communities. However, the Ha'aretz's daily report "*Anti Arab Policy Bias Worsens*" on June 9, 2002 discovered that the annual report of the Association for the advancement of Equal Opportunities "Sikkuy" shows that:

During the first four months of 2002, a year in which the government was supposed to be implementing the four year development plan for the Arab sector, government ministry allocations for development in the Arab villages and towns actually dropped.⁴³

To conclude, it is a clear policy that aggravated the gap between the Arabs and the Jews in Israeli society, and the refusal of the government to commit to decisions that are hardly implemented for the sake of the Arab community as equal as the Jewish one which benefits from welfare and progress. Shalom Dichter, co-director of Sikkuy Association says, "The government is endangering its citizens, all of its citizens" "the price paid by the government for this structural gap is endangering its very existence".⁴⁴

⁴³ O., Nir, Anti-Arab Policy Bias Worsens (Report, Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002) www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=174547&contrassID=1&SUB

⁴⁴ O., Nir, Anti-Arab Policy Bias Worsens (Report, Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002) www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNO=174547&contrassID=1&SUB

Chapter three

Alternatives to Confrontation

3.1 Introduction

Arabs in Israel, since the establishment of Israel in 1948, have attempted to adapt themselves to the control of the Jewish community over the economy and politics of the state. Arabs struggle peacefully in accordance with Israeli law, “citizen diplomacy” and the “parliament diplomacy” through public organizations, and political parties. Their leaders articulated the reason for restraint exercised, generally by Arabs citizens. As Nadim Rouhana has put it, “the Arab leadership made it clear that the Arabs in Israel would act only within the law”⁴⁵. Yet, there were some violent clashes between the Arab minority and the Israeli police on certain occasions that indicated a dangerous trend in the majority-minority relation.

These clashes raised several questions by the Israeli society from both the left and right wing. In particular, with regard to the latest events in October 2000, in which 13 Arabs were killed by the Israeli police and one Israeli was killed. These clashes widened fragmentation, and threatened the coexistence between the two communities. Therefore, observers and Arab leaders attacked the Israeli police that used live bullets against citizens of the state defending their right to protest and demonstrate peacefully. In an attempt to calm down the situation in Israel after the events, an agreement was reached between the Arab leaders and the Israeli government, which led to form a State Commission of Inquiry headed by the Supreme Court of Justice named “Or Committee” to investigate the clashes and the murder of the thirteen Arabs. The committee continues with its investigation at the time of writing.

⁴⁵ N., Rouhana, *The Political Transformation of the Palestinians in Israel* (Journal of Palestinian Studies, 1989)p. 47

Significantly, because of the recent developments of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, these events, in addition to the Arabs existence as a second class for more than fifty-four years have brought about scenarios that point to the possible to future of the Arab minority in Israel. Most of those scenarios could be alternatives to future confrontation between the minority and the majority. There are those who believe that Israel will transfer some Arab populations near the Green Line to the future Palestinian State. On the other hand, there are those who support the suggestion to have non-territorial autonomy of cultural affairs for the Israeli Arabs. There are also a few who support a bi-national state idea to have the Palestinians and the Israelis live side by side in one state. Finally, there are also those who still believe in the two communities, coexistence based on equality, respect majority and minority relations.

3.2 Annexation to Future Palestinian State

Despite the neglect of the Arab minority by both the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Israeli government in their negotiations process since Madrid and Oslo to Camp David II and Taba, their future is still ambiguous. In other words, Israeli Arabs inside Israel issue had not put on Agenda of negotiation in all cases. Whether they will continue to live inside the Israeli territories or join the future Palestinian state is still an important question. The annexation scenario to the future Palestinian state comes to the minds of many Israeli officials who have recently mentioned publicly that the possibility of annexation of some of Arab locations to the future Palestinian state is imperative to Israeli security. One of the Israeli defenders of this idea is the current Minister of Transportation, Avrim Sini, the former deputy of the Minister of Defence and mainly a dove who believes that the Arabs have the choice to be Israeli citizens or Palestinians. He continues to argue that the increasingly tied relations between the Arab community and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank is very worrying and a threat to the Israeli security.

From the Israeli hawkish perspective, the former Minister of Defence and the current General Secretary of the far right party Likud Moshe Arens, sees that the Arabs inside Israel were in times of both war and peace, supporters of Israel. He sees that the fence around the West Bank will prevent the Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians from building cooperative relations:

For many years, the great majority of Israel's Arab population demonstrated loyalty in times of war and in times of peace, gradually undergoing a process of integration into Israeli society and assimilating the western norms prevalent in Israel. This process has been reversed by the Oslo Accords that brought frequent contacts between Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as well as legitimizing support for the PLO. Continuation of this process bodes ill for Jews and Arabs alike in Israel. The fence, when constructed, may halt this process, if so it will be an important, even if unintended, benefit.⁴⁶

The vast majority of the Arabs inside Israel see themselves as indigenous Palestinian living in Israel. Their relation, across the border with their relatives and extended families in Gaza and the West Bank as many other nationalities have across the borders all over the world. As Muhammad Kanaan, one of the Israeli Parliament's 10 Arab deputies, said shortly after the "Aqksa Intifada" has erupted "*We are integral part of the Palestinian Arab people and we cannot remain motionless when faced with the deaths of children and other horrors that are taking place in the Occupies Territories*"⁴⁷

⁴⁶ M., Arens, Bad Neighbors, (Ha'aretz Newspaper, Tel Aviv, 2002)
www.ha'aretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=179768&contrassID=2&25/06/2002

⁴⁷ M., Schattner, Violence in Israel Further Isolates Arab Minority, (Middle East Times, Jerusalem, 2000) www.metimes.com/2k/issue2000-40/reg/violence_in_israel.htm

The Israeli Arabs believe that it is their right “the freedom of expression” to criticize the policy of the government. There are also a good number of Jews inside Israel who support the rights of and equality with the Arabs in Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

Indeed, some Arab elites have rejected the idea of annexation strongly because the annexation to the Palestinians Territories will cut up more of the Arabs’ lands and properties inside Israel. Significantly, in 2001 about two thirds of the Arab respondents to a public poll agreed to transfer the areas near to the Green Line to the Palestinian future State⁴⁸. On the other hand, some Israeli elites see that the Arabs reject annexation to the Palestinian Administration due to the lack of democracy, and the deteriorated economic situations that they are not used to living with inside Israeli society.

More importantly, from Camp David II until today, no one Palestinian official has commented on the possibility of annexation of Israeli Arabs to a future Palestinian state. However, there were some rumors during the negotiation at Camp David II that the annexation of the “Triangle” (the towns of Tiba, Um El Faham and other villages) was on the Palestinian Israeli negotiating table in Camp David II under the margin of “Swap of the Lands”. These towns are densely populated and very supportive of the Islamic movement in Israel.

3.3 Non- Territorial Autonomy (Cultural affaires)

According to Shafir and Peled, since 1992-6 all the Arab parties have been calling for fundamental change in the nature of the Israeli state from being an ethno-national Jewish state to be a liberal state for all its citizens where the Arabs could be recognized as a national minority. However, there is a national consensus among Israeli Jews on the Jewish character of the state between the right and the left, radicals and seculars. Since

the last decade, the Israeli constituencies have focused strongly on the Jewish character through the tightening of the legislation and laws such as the law of return, and possession of the lands.

Indeed, Arab power has increased in Israeli politics since the Oslo Agreement created a sharp division in the Israeli Knesset between the right and the left. The Arab deputies' votes enabled Yitzhak Rabin to pass the Oslo agreement in the Knesset in 1993. However, the assassination of Rabin in November 1995 was a blow and a shock that killed much of the hope for peace in the Middle East and for the equality of Arabs in Israel. In 1996, the decision of Dr. Azmi Bishar to run as the first ever Arab candidate for the post of Israel's prime minister created a shock in Israeli internal politics, even though all analysts, on the Arab streets, Jews and Azmi himself were convinced that the prime minister will always be an Israeli Jew. The initiative itself indicated a transformation in the attitudes and positions of the Arabs in Israel to struggle for a bi-national state.

Therefore, Dr. Bishara who is one of the main advocates of the idea bi national state and non territorial autonomy introduced a series of proposals in July 1997, aimed at instituting several measures of cultural autonomy for Arab citizens. All the Arab deputies of all political parties supported these proposals.⁴⁹ Bishara argues that “the individual integration offered the Palestinians citizens in Israel is a false integration that involves giving up their collective identity”. The liberal quality is the basic for cultural autonomy.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ A., Ghanem, and S., Smoocha, *Press Release*, (Givat Haviva, the Centre for Peace Research 2001).

⁴⁹ G., Shafir, and Y., Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, (Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 2002) p. 132

⁵⁰ A., Bishara, *On the question of the Palestinian Minority in Israel* (Teorya u-vikoret, 1993) p. 16

Israel, in fact, will not give up its control system over the Arab education and cultural system in Israel by allowing the Arabs to have non-territorial national-cultural autonomy. This autonomy will help the Arabs to remove the official and unofficial restrictions on the Arab education system, allowing them to run their institutions effectively and set up a new curriculum for their children. Such a curriculum will focus on education, the children, the national culture, and history rather than only the Jewish culture.

Israel will see and interpret this progress as an incitement that threatens its existence and security. Furthermore, Israel will not provide another Palestinian entity within the Jewish state that grants the Arabs separate legal status like the autonomy offered to the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Sami Smooha identifies the positions of both the Israelis and the Arabs regarding cultural autonomy as the following:

The Arabs demand non-territorial institutional autonomy: control over their educational system: state recognition of Arab national organizations... the freedom to form nationalist Arab parties, the right to establish a university, and proportional share of the national resources. Israel rejects this drive for autonomous institutions because it appears as impinging on its Jewish-Zionist character and engendering secessionist sentiments. It grants Arabs and ethnic (religious, cultural, linguistic) minority status while they pursue a Palestinian national minority status.⁵¹

The problem is that the Israeli society is controlled, to a great extent, by religious ideologies and radical leaders who still believe that the Land of Israel belongs only to the Jews. They consider that the land of Israel is incompatible with the Arab existence.

⁵¹ S., Smooha, *Arabs and Jews in Israel: change and Continuity in Mutual Tolerance* (Vol. II, Boulder: Westview 1992) p.266

There are some parties, for instance, the party of the assassinated the Israeli Minister Rahbam Za'vi, whose slogan is “the Transfer of the Arab from Israel as their main principle and vision to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

On the other hand, in 1976, Sami Smooha found out that only 36 percent of the Arab respondents had supported the idea of cultural autonomy. In 1980, 48.3 percent of the Arab respondents supported the liberal democratic option “achievement of equality and integration with Jews”. In 1995, 81.5 percent of the respondents supported this option. In fact, it is a significant development among the Arabs to support non -territorial autonomy. It reflects the depth of separation and segmentation between the Arabs and the Jews in the Israeli society.⁵²

Equal Citizens Approach

Equality and democracy are the slogans of the liberal world today. The Israeli Arabs, however, feel and believe that as a minority the Israeli official and unofficial policy discriminates against them. Their main concern is that they seek equality as first class rather than second class citizens in their own homeland. Discrimination and disintegration generate *a de facto* situation of hatred, frustration and anger, which generate clashes and intolerance. Many Arabs consider themselves as Israeli Arabs who belong to Palestinian people culturally and ethnically. They would live side by side with the Jews but only in equality and mutual respect. Salem Jubran, a writer and an intellectual who lives in a village in the Galilee says:

My hope for Israel is that the leaders of the Arab minority and the Jewish majority political, intellectual, and religious will search together for a formula which gives all Israeli citizens the deep feeling that this society is theirs ... I want the Israeli society to be a garden with flowers of different

⁵² G., Shafir, and Y., Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, (Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 2002) p. 136

colors. When this happens, Israel will be a richer society, a more beautiful society, and a more just society, and the Arabs in Israel will be happy to live in such a society.⁵³

There are mixed cities in Israel, where Arabs and Jews live side by side, but there are huge differences in the ways of living standards and communications towards understanding and co-existence. However, there have been different programs were since the establishment of Israel, to promote and enhance better understanding and coexistence between the Jews and Arabs. One of those programs is the Wahet El Salam.” Peace Oasis” in Jerusalem in which 50 Jewish and Arab families live together. On the other hand, many scholars criticize such these programs and projects. For example Mohammed Abu Nimer argues that these programs provide a false image about the co-existence between the majority and minority. The potential aim of those programs is to measure the reality of the Arab loyalty to the state. Further, the Jewish participants feel free to express their belief rather than the Arab participants who fear to do so because they are being treated as second-class citizens.

Abu Nimer also argues that these programs do not bring any fundamental transformation to the Arab Israeli situation in any respect. In other words, these programs do not enable the participants to lobby for political issues or contribute to the process of change within the Israeli society towards real equality and democracy for all citizens. As Muhammad Abu Nimer recommended to the Arab Jewish encounter Programs in his book, *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution, Change: Arab Jewish encounters In Israel:*

The main goal of intervention ethics must be the empowerment of both parties. Empowering the Arab participants can be achieved by recognizing the fact that they oppressed and that they, as other citizens in the state,

should receive and demand equal rights. Empowerment of the Arab participants means increasing their ability to criticize their environment and issues in their internal community and their relations to Jewish community. Empowering the Jewish group means increasing their awareness of and involvement in the state and governmental policies and raising more awareness of political and social responsibility.⁵⁴

Thus, the opponents of such programs believe that these contribute to the enhancement of the control system over the Arab minority through cooperation, rather than understanding the real need for reinforcing the cultural identity of the Arabs. Furthermore, these programs adopt the governmental policy to divide the Arabs into communities based on faith rather than collective identity.

To conclude, equality and understanding between the majority and minority will be impossible unless the government freezes or modifies the current official policy towards the Arabs. The de facto of division and segregation in the Israeli society threaten the stability not only inside Israel, but also in the region. As long as the Palestinian question is not settled, and the inequality of the Arabs with Jews inside Israel; peace will remain impossible. For this, the peaceful alternatives are the realistic way of tackling the conflict to live in equality and mutual respects based on the religious understanding and adherence to human rights laws and convention.

⁵³ S., Jubran, *Reflection on Arab Jewish Coexistence* (National Conference Report of Abraham Fund and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council 1995)

⁵⁴ M., Abu Nimer, *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*, SUNY Press, New York, 1999) p.166-7

Conclusion

Arabs in Israel still live the shock of transformation of the political, social and economic life after 1948, which damaged the Arab society in historical Palestine. Since the establishment of Israel, they have lived on the margin of Israeli society suffering economic deterioration after they had lost their resources including the main source of agriculture, land and water. However, they are recognized as citizen of Israel, but they believe that they are an integral part of the Palestinian people in Diaspora.

Israeli Arabs are affected by the impact of the Palestinian Israeli conflict whether in the time of peace or war. For example, the Oslo Agreement enabled the Arabs in Israel to communicate and integrate with the Palestinian people and the Arab world. In other words, they are part of the conflict although they are Israeli citizens. The Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank struggle for statehood, but they do so in order to gain equality and a national identity as a minority living in their own lands. Both the Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are bound to the same fate, but with slightly different factors and influences.

Today, the Palestinian question faces a crucial and decisive historical crossroads. The Arabs inside Israel are not excluded from this for many reasons. They are linked to the Palestinian culture and identity with the Palestinian people in the Diaspora. They are at the peak of the diplomatic confrontation at the internal level with Israel to liberalize their identity in a democratic state rather than ethnic state. They will have to tackle diplomatically their problems in the international arena including the United Nations according to the law of minorities. The Arab question in Israel has already taken

different dimensions. In particular, the Arab leadership inside Israel exploits strongly the Palestinian situations in the Palestinian Territories to expose whose suffering and their need as a minority seeking legitimate rights according to international law.

Despite the fact of the dramatic transformation of the Arab-Israeli situation after the current developments of the Palestinian Israeli conflict, its impact on the Arabs inside Israel after the bloody clashes between the Arabs and Jews in October 2000. In addition to the exploitation of the Israeli government of the Arab demography as a threat to the Jewish character of Israel, the Arabs continue to struggle peacefully within the Israeli parliament and community organisations to liberalise their identity as a national minority and have a state for all citizens rather than for the ethnic majority.

However, the short-term practical approach to bring peace to Palestine-Israel is to have a two states solution based on the UN partition resolution on 29 November 1947 (look to chapter one); an Arab Palestinian state includes all the Arabs inside Israel, and the Palestinian Territories under its jurisdictions; the other is a Jewish state that bring all Jews under its jurisdictions with free access between the two societies without any barriers and obstacles of movement. Open borders between the two states ensure the free movement of two ethnic communities; keep individuals property rights, mutual cooperation in all fields of life. The two states solution allows every side its own cultural and national identity regardless of any other considerations. The two states solution gives each individual the right to participate in free elections within their own state jurisdiction. This approach will also help in reunifying many families lost their homes and properties after the war to return back to their homes. This approach may not find agreement from the Israeli side because they control everything.

This ideal and practical approach brings all alternatives for confrontation together rather than focusing on one and leaving the other aside. It achieves all ambitions and

inspiration of the two nations within two open societies. Hence, the coexistence and dialogue programs will be applied to promote and enhance peace and stability of the two states.

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