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Palestine Alternative Perspective

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At the bottom of the page, the contributors are identified.

Coordination Committee

Mahmoud Abu-Qaoud
Ali Dahar
Bachar Elsolh
Mohamed Kamel
Abd-Alraouf Neifer

Media Committee

Yahya Abul Rahman
Mahmoud Abu-Qaoud
Salah Basalamah
Mohamed Kamel
Samer Majzoub

Bush thought he could further the cause of peace by cease-fire!

"..... History recognizes the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a territory. That cannot be overlooked. We must be clear on that. I say this now because I am sorry that in the positions that President Bush repeatedly took, he thought he could further the cause of peace simply by proposing a cease-fire. Let us not forget that for the Palestinians, the cease-fire meant ceasing to sacrifice their lives by blowing themselves up. The reasons behind this act of despair, which simultaneously kills other citizens, other people, are profound. They have to do with the belief in an inalienable right to a land. A cease-fire will not be achieved merely by talking about a cessation of hostilities without also talking about what is planned for the future....."

At the end of World War I, the land of Palestine was promised by the United Nations that it would become a state. There are resolutions saying so. Back then, there were 600,000 or so Arabs and approximately 60,000 Jews. This land was promised that it would become a state for Palestinians. We cannot go over the entire history, but Great Britain's declaration agreeing to make a homeland for the Jewish people in this region, to create an Israel, forced the League of Nations, and later on the United Nations, to meet an almost impossible objective. The sheer number of reports produced on this issue makes this clear. The League of Nations had an obligation and it turned over the protectorate to Great Britain to help the Palestinians achieve independence and, at the same time, to create a homeland for the Jews in the land of Israel. That is why I say that Palestine's inalienable right is borne out by history, as is that of Israel, a right which was added on because Great Britain recognized this obligation to create the State of Israel.



photo by: Reuters

Israel was created by a unilateral declaration of independence, on May 14, 1948. This was several months before the fall, when both the states of Palestine and Israel were to be created simultaneously.

One state, Israel, was recognized, although it took some time. It was eventually recognized by the two major powers at that time, and then later, in 1949, by the UN. The other part of the territory has not obtained this status, nor has it taken it upon itself for all manner of reasons I shall not go into here. So the saga we are now familiar with began. In 1967, Israel decided to expand its territory, doing so by occupying these former Palestinian areas. They did not become part of Israel but rather occupied territories..."

Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ) / Canadian House of Commons Debated Middle East



What did the UN do anyway?

"...In November 1947, the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into two independent states...In 1947 the UN had many fewer members than it does today. Most Third World nations were still colonies and thus not members. Nevertheless, the partition resolution passed only because the Soviet Union and its allies voted in favor and because many small states were subject to improper pressure. For example, members of the U.S. Congress told the Philippines that it would not get U.S. economic aid unless it voted for partition...."

Didn't Palestinians have a chance for a state of their own in 1947, but they rejected it by going to war with Israel?

"...In 1947 Jews were only one third of the population of Palestine and owned only 6% of the land. Yet the partition plan granted the Jewish state 55% of the total land area... If it was unjust to force Jews to be a 1/3 minority in an Arab state, it was no more just to force Arabs to be an almost 50% minority in a Jewish state..."

How were the Occupied Territories occupied?

"...In June 1967, Israel launched a war in which it seized all of Palestine (the West Bank including East Jerusalem from Jordan and the Gaza Strip from Egypt), along with the Sinai from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria... Israel immediately incorporated occupied East Jerusalem into Israel proper, announcing that Jerusalem was its united and eternal capital. It then began to establish settlements in the Occupied Territories in violation of the Geneva Conventions which prohibit a conquering power from settling its population on occupied territory. These settlements, placed in strategic locations throughout the West Bank and Gaza were intended to "create facts" on the ground to make the occupation irreversible..."

What caused the second Intifada?

"...On September 28, 2000 Ariel Sharon, then a member of Parliament, accompanied by a thousand-strong security force, paid a provocative visit approved by Barak to the site of the Al Aqsa mosque. The next day Barak sent another large force of police and soldiers to the area and, when the anticipated rock throwing by some Palestinians occurred, the heavily-augmented police responded with lethal fire, killing four and wounding hundreds. Thus began the second Intifada..."

Cont. Stephen R. Shalom Background to the Israel-Palestine Crisis

It is not possible to have peace and occupation?!

About 11% of Palestinian students were prevented from continuing their education as a result of the Israeli imposed closure. 66% reported that their children have suffered or still suffering from trauma and stress due to measures undertaken by the Israeli army or settlers; 75% in Gaza and 61% in the West Bank. 78% report that school-age children are unable to focus on (or complete) their homework as result of the current situation. 66% report an increase in the level of violence among children and young people as a result of the current situation. 67% are facing additional difficulties in accessing health services as result of the imposed closures. 42% of Palestinian wives had to sell their jewelry ("gold gifts-savings from dowry") to help their families cope with the rising poverty rates...

The situation can only improve if Israel ends the thirty-five year old Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. **It is not possible to have peace and occupation at the same time.**

The Palestinian Authority has recognized Israel on 78% of historic Palestine. It is Israel that refuses to acknowledge Palestine's right to exist on the remaining 22% of land occupied in 1967. The constant enlargement of illegal Israel settlements in the West Bank and Gaza will continue to be a great obstacle to peace. These 250,000 settlers demand the protection of the Israeli army on Palestinian territory that constantly flares up the violence. America's position for Arafat to "stop the violence" falls short of addressing the root causes of that violence: denial of Palestinian freedom. Following Israeli's intense efforts to humiliate and weaken President Yasser Arafat, he continues to hold a symbolic importance as the patriarch of Palestine.

Dr. Maria C. Khoury, *The Current Situation in Palestine*, June 05, 2002, <http://www.hcef.org/news/news/index.cfm/dsp/newsview/itemid/721.htm>
Statistics for this article were specifically collected from:
B'Tselem Israeli Information Center for Human Right in the Occupied Territories, *The Jerusalem Times*, and Birzeit University Media Center



Photos: www.palestine-info.com

South Africanization of Palestine

"...In real terms, Sharon's vision is to divide the West Bank into eight self-governing Palestinian cantons, each marginally autonomous but disconnected by the growing network of settlements, bypass roads, and military installations. Checkpoints such as Qalandia would become permanent border crossings between Palestinian populated areas. With no control over their land or natural growth expansion, these statelets would become strikingly similar to the Bantustans that the white government in South Africa attempted to establish for the majority blacks as a unilateral solution to Apartheid. By divulging the oppressed majority into "autonomous" zones, the minority can exhale its heavy burden of oppression. The result is urban incarceration of a population economically addicted to the controlling power and third party benevolence, and a canton system that is easily tempered at the whim of Israel's military might..."

Richard Johnson in Ramallah - May 29, 2002

Balance of Blood and Terror

"...What is the infrastructure of terrorism if not the occupation, the despair and the hatred?... The nation wanted war, and it got what it wanted. Within a few days we succeeded in sowing hate in the heart of every Palestinian and it will not soon fade. The tens of thousands of Palestinians who are imprisoned in their homes after an unbearable year and a half, who are frightened by the sounds of gunfire and the rumbling of the tanks; the bodies that continue to be brought to the hospitals without letup; the mass arrests and the general destruction - these are now generating fierce resentment against us. The world, with the exception of the United States in the meantime, is again treating us like lepers, and public opinion in the Arab states is threatening to push their leaders into an all-out war. This is the balance of blood and terror of this operation..."

Israeli writer Gideon Levy, Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz

Imagine living inside the walls of a refugee camp for 50 years

"...Those of us who have visited refugee camps know what they are like, know what the working conditions are and know that there is absolutely no hope for the people who have been there for 50 years. That has created anger, hatred and desperation which lead people to do desperate things. Let us imagine living inside the walls of a refugee camp for 50 years, raising children there and those children raising their children there with no hope, with no right to own property, with no right to work in some of the camps, particularly one I visited in Lebanon. We would be desperate too and would perhaps take desperate actions. Those are perhaps some of the reasons for some of the anger and hatred and the source of some of the terrorism..."

Bill Casey (Cumberland-Colchester, PC)
Canadian House of Commons Debated Middle East