The Arabs and the confrontation with Israel: a contribution to crystallizing the interim goal and determining strategy

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Introduction

The Arab debate on the issue of the Arab–Israeli confrontation and the outlook for the conflict is treated in depth by two books published by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies (CAUS) in Beirut. These two titles are The Arabs and the Confrontation with Israel: Future Prospects (2000) and The One-State Solution to the Arab–Israeli Conflict: One Country for All its Citizens (2012) (Abu Lughod 2000; and Faris 2012 respectively). The strategy behind this debate is developed in a manner analogous to climbing a ladder using the capabilities and resources at hand; each consecutive step of the strategy is built on the preceding one and these steps accumulate over a specific period of time. The contributions and discussions published in Abu Lughod (2000), although not yet at the final stage of crystallizing this strategy, do constitute a significant stage on the path towards that. This strategy, according to Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, is characterized by ‘realism, compatibility and optimization’ (Abu Lughod 2000, 1723).

The term ‘realism’, as a characteristic of this plan, requires clarification in order to avoid any ambiguity. It is not used here in its usual sense in the context of Arab polemic where it means surrendering to the current reality and sneakily infiltrating any openings partially given to it. The term is also not used from the viewpoint of philosophical realism which its pioneers, such as Hans Morgenthau, John Mearsheimer and others, see as international relations, as pertaining to one state, that are fundamentally subservient to interests and power rather than morals and the will of the people. Rather, the meaning of realism as used in this context is described by Abdel-Fadil as ‘liable to application over a proposed time span’ (Abu Lughod 2000, 1723).

This liability to application is dependent on the available capabilities and resources, namely those that are accessible at the moment for the plan’s preparation. These comprise human resources (including human will as an important element of this) and material resources, in addition to the capabilities and resources that are expected to become accessible over this plan’s period of implementation. In this sense, the strategic plan becomes a ‘transformative action’ that aims at gradually accumulating achievements to build on one another. This is accomplished in a track that enhances what is available and leads ultimately to the ‘reverse’ and transformation of the existing reality, which leads in our case to achieving nationalist goals.
The goal of the strategy

The plentiful discussions in Abu Lughod (2000) contain much that may be built on to develop the Arab strategic plan in the confrontation with Israel. This book has defined the second goal of the strategy relating to Palestine as ‘establishing a democratic state in Palestine’ (1371). The interim goal is defined as ‘the liberation of all the 1967-occupied Arab lands according to a strategy of eliminating the traces of the aggression’ (1734). As for Faris (2012), this book decides that the remaining solution for the Arab–Israeli conflict is the one-state solution. In his introduction, Faris proposes that the one-state solution is not antithetical to the two-state solution: ‘Were Israel to withdraw to the borders of 1967, allow the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state and address the Palestinian right of return, then most of the Palestinian people, if not all of them, would support this settlement.’ Furthermore, he suggests that ‘a merger of the two states into one state is still possible in the future’ (24).

In this review, our discussion of the interim goal of the Arab strategy to confront Israel will be confined to the Palestinian sphere. That is because the clear definition of this goal will, firstly, result in a successful formulation of the plan. Secondly, and more importantly, that will achieve a result on the ground provided that one delves into other issues concerning the Arab strategy to confront Israel appearing in later articles and reviews.

Between the interim goal and the strategic goal

The interim goal is ‘the liberation of all the 1967-occupied Arab lands according to a strategy of eliminating the traces of the aggression’, as stated in Abu Lughod (2000, 1734). The realization of this goal for Palestine becomes obvious through ‘the level of independence, which is connected to the fight against the manifestations of the occupation, settlement and Judaization, and is for the sake of self-determination, establishing the independent Palestinian state and the right of return’ (1421). This is in comparison with the level of freedom that will subsequently lead to the end of the Zionist presence in Palestine. Therefore, if this describes the interim goal and its realization, is the Palestinian–Arab transformative action still able to make this interim goal achievable 15 years after Abu Lughod’s book first appeared?

Faris (2012) was published 12 years after Abu Lughod. Some of the studies contained therein, such as that by Naseer Azuri, argue that the facts which Israel has left behind on the ground in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem have destroyed the two-state solution – the interim goal defined by this book (111–141). What this goal entails is the recognition of the other state, namely the state of Israel. That is contrary to the studies in Abu Lughod, most of which are inclined to the non-recognition of this other state.

In this framework, it is worth commenting that it is difficult to accept the logic that faces the realism built on force and the facts it imposes with an opposite realism that starts from the point of accepting the facts imposed as if they have become fixed and unchangeable truths. Consequently, this opposite realism adopts these imposed facts as the basis for demanding a change in the track. The facts Israel has created on the ground in 1967-occupied Palestine should not form the basis for the conclusion that the interim solution has arrived at the end of the road. These facts themselves are insufficient as a basis for a conclusion of this kind. Moreover, a proposal like this confuses the
imposed facts with the fixed truths. This is also especially the case as there are other global experiments and similar cases in which the imposed facts were changed to the benefit of the fixed truths. Perhaps the closest example to the case of Palestine is that of Algeria which experienced a settler colonialism that made it a part of France. Hence, the question will change and become: Why did the Algerian transformative action succeed in ending the French and European settler-colonialist project in that country, whereas the Arab-Palestinian project has so far failed to achieve similar success? Is this failure final and conclusive? Or will the subsequent Palestinian–Arab transformative action be able to surpass this and create a new track that will lead to realizing the interim solution?

The aim here is not to analyze the points of intersection and difference between the two cases of Algeria and Palestine. Rather, the intention is to illustrate concisely the element that is the ‘transformative agent’. This agent could still emerge in the Palestinian case, provoked by its issues, not least of which is maintaining the Palestinian people on their land and the issue of the Palestinian refugees. This problem continues to exist despite the time that has passed and the repeated catastrophes which these refugees have suffered since 1948 to the present day.

The difference in this framework is that France declared Algeria a part of France. So far, Israel has not annexed the West Bank legally (although in actuality it has joined extensive parts of the West Bank to Israeli territory). In this sense, the transformation in the case of Algeria was more difficult but the Algerian transformative action had the support of internal, Arab, international and French elements that led to reversing this track. This is also possible in the case of Palestine since Algeria reversed its track after undergoing 132 years of French imperialism, whereas Palestine, in its history, also put an end to foreign occupation after 200 years.

It must again be pointed out that there are no non-transformative facts, as these two examples demonstrate. Likewise, this is shown throughout world history as examples of the success of transformative action. The demolition of the Berlin Wall, the end of apartheid in South Africa and many other examples show that imposed facts are changeable, however long or short the time in which these facts exist. However, this is with the condition that the transformative agent is available and uses its resources and capabilities, employing them correctly for the sake of fulfilling the transformative goal.

**Dissecting the interim goal**

If re-dissecting the Arab interim goal for Palestine is inevitable, this does not stem from the facts imposed by Israel on the ground. Rather, it comes from two other spheres, the first of which is related to some of the gaps in the understanding of the Palestinian–Arab transformative action, and the second is related to the Israeli transformative action. The question is whether the latter’s ultimate desire is to establish a single Israeli state on all the land of historical Palestine which would comprise another *Nakba* through a new forced mass expulsion of the Palestinian people who still live on the land of their nation. Another question is: What are the strategies required of the Palestinians and Arabs to withstand this?

In the first sphere, one can briefly draw attention to the contradiction contained in the interim goal between the right to self-determination and the right to return. In the second sphere, one can discuss the results of the conflict between the existing and future Israeli
transformative action, as well as the regional and international records of it in confronting the Palestinian-Arab transformative action, and the international records for the latter.

The interim goal between the right to self-determination and the right of return

With regard to principle, there is no contradiction between the rights of self-determination and return if the sphere of practice for both of them is all the historical land of Palestine. However, the partial separation between the two rights happened with proposing the goal of the interim solution and describing it as a right to self-determination over the lands of 1967-occupied Palestine. However, that also includes the demand for the right to return and the sphere of practice for that is the right to determination for all of historical Palestine. That has led to the emergence of a state of contradiction within the proposed interim goal itself between the half for self-determination and the half for the right of return.

This contradiction results in various currents of thought for dealing with it. The supporters of the first tendency who talk of deciding a settlement with Israel think that the demand of the goal/interim solution should change to a final solution, namely the solution of the two states living side by side in peace and security. This would include the restriction on the right of return that is necessary in order for this solution to happen in the scope of a Palestinian state in the borders of 1967. Like the first current, the second proposes minor changes to that which include the demand for Israel to accept the return of a symbolic number of Palestinian refugees inside Israel until it is said that the right of return has been achieved. The third current believes that it is possible to fight to obtain the right of return as a first stage to the right of self-determination within the framework of an independent Palestinian state and that transition from that to full liberation, including the right of return, will take place at a later stage. Some in the fourth current consider that two equal states will eventually be established, each of which will include different levels of nationality and residency.

The first solution is unacceptable to the great majority of the Palestinian refugees and others in the Palestinian community. The second solution only modifies the first slightly. The third solution considers the view of Palestine as land that is an Islamic endowment (waqf) and that its liberation will take place in the long-term framework. This solution may accept ‘the fighter’s rest’ in the form of a truce or truces, be they long or short, between the divided lands of 1967-occupied Palestine and Israel, including decreasing the geographical sphere for the practice of the interim goal. Or it may fall into the trap of dividing the geographical sphere occupied in 1967 in a direction that may, in fact, entail Palestinian groups with differing demands between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. That is instead of maintaining the unity of the Palestinian people and the unity of their demands.

As for the fourth solution, this has several proposed forms. The clearest is perhaps that presented by a group of experts under the leadership of a former Swedish ambassador, Dr Mathias Mossberg (Mossberg and Grinberg 2009) and another presented by the Palestinian Professor Said Zeedani (Zeedani 2007). The starting point for this solution lies in the possible practical forms of the United Nations Resolutions 181 and 194, especially the view that one person can be a citizen in one state and reside in the other state. Thus, the Palestinian refugee, for example, can obtain the citizenship of a Palestinian state and at the same time live inside Israel. The wording of Resolution 181 also shows
this. An extreme formulation of this solution considers the inclusion of the Jewish settlers as Israeli citizens but living on the lands of the Palestinian state. This would mean, in the case of its application, the legitimization of the imposed facts on the Palestinian people with regard to seizing land and colonialist settlements.

In Zeedani’s opinion, this formulation is attempting to safeguard the attachments of both peoples to the land, including his attachment as a Palestinian bearing Israeli nationality. However, he does not want the two-state solution to put him completely on the Israeli side as this would completely separate the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. For Mossberg, this formulation is the form of a final solution: two states with open borders that permit their populations to live freely wherever they want in the sphere of the two states. Among the sources of this proposal, excluding the preceding resolutions, is the text of UN Resolution 194, which states the returning refugees must ‘live at peace with their neighbours’. Experts in international law have explained that it means these refugees must submit to the laws of the state to which they are returning, whether or not they obtain nationality or residency there (Babadji and Shumiliyya-Jandru 1996).

This fourth solution includes legal issues that require discussion. Will the Palestinian refugee return to his original house inside Israel, or to another house? Likewise, there are questions relating to compensation for the long years of refuge. The most important question relates to whether the party entitled to determination is permitted to return to inside Israel and according to any criteria. These are examples of the questions that make the application of this solution intractable without the availability of strong mechanisms to force Israel to accept and implement it.

From this survey, it may be inferred that the interim goal/solution has changed for the two groups to the formulation of the final solution. That means invalidating the right of the refugees to return. Among a third group, it has changed to a formulation to divide the interim solution geographically and politically while continuing to raise the slogan of liberation. Between these two groups comes the fourth proposed formulation which starts with internationally accepted human rights as a way to allow the practice of the right of return within the framework of establishing, and consequently, concentrating the Palestinian presence inside Israel itself on the one hand. On the other hand, it aims to keep the link between the Palestinians in Israel and between their community in 1967-occupied Palestine and outside Palestine. The resulting impetus that may be created from these interactions could push them in the direction of establishing one state with the highest possible democratic character. However, this solution requires a change in the balance of power to enable the Palestinian people and the Arabs to impose it on Israel as before.

Therefore, the interim goal clearly deserves a reformulation of its components that go beyond elevating the right of self-determination above the right of return and makes the interim solution a final solution. Moreover, it must go beyond dividing the interim solution with the pretext that the battle for liberation is long and the ‘fighters’ rest’ may be obtained on the way. Perhaps the fourth formulation offers the basis to achieve the right to self-determination with preserving the right to return and the rights of the Palestinian people in the homeland, the diaspora and 1948-occupied Palestine. Furthermore, there will be opportunities to prepare for the unification of the two states into one state to the furthest extent as a result of the interactions which will emerge between the Palestinians who are growing in number and influence and between the Israelis, including the
Jewish Arabs and the movement ‘Peace Now’ and the ‘new historians’. These are the
groups with whom there can be cooperation, just as Magdi Hammad proposes (Abu
Lughod 2000).

The goal of the Israeli transformative action

The Israeli transformative action relies on the right of force, reinforced by absolute Amer-
ican support. In contrast, the Palestinian-Arab transformative action is centred on the
force of right, reinforced by the support of the Arab people, the Muslim community,
and the forces of freedom, peace and justice all over the world.

Abu Lughd (2000) deals with in-depth and thoroughly the reasons for the victory of the
Israeli transformative action over the Arab transformative action up to now. Moreover, the
same book deals with the factors that began changing the reality of this victory, especially
the role of the constant resistance and steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their land,
whether inside Israel or in the lands of 1967-occupied Palestine, and the perseverance
of the cause of the Palestinian refugees and their right of return.

Therefore, a discussion of the issue remains extremely important from the viewpoint of
deciding the Palestinian-Arab strategy to confront the present and the future Israeli trans-
formative action on Palestinian land. Some feel that since the world is more developed and
civilized, this makes it impossible for the Israeli transformative action to turn towards a
repeat of 1948. They also think that the awareness of the Palestinian people has grown
since 1948 as they will never leave their country again. Moreover, the Arab countries
are no longer open as they were in 1948 for another new push of Palestinian migration.

In this respect, the paper will show that the goal of expulsion of those Palestinian people
remaining on their land still remains the deepest goal of the state of Israel. It is described
here as a continuation of the Zionist movement that uses the same tools. In this frame-
work, notice the resemblances that exist between the trends in the actions of the Zionist
movement before 1948 and the trends in the actions of the Israeli state’s movement
against the Palestinian people after the war of 1967 up to now. These similarities can be
generally summed up as follows:

- In both historical stages, the Zionist movement and then the Israeli state attempted to
  extend their control over the land by gradually gnawing away at it, using seizure and
  control as essential means.
- In both historical stages, the Palestinians were treated like groups of temporary people
  without rights, waiting for the suitable time internationally and regionally to later
  uproot them.
- In both stages, gradual methods of Judaization were used for the land as well as the
  gradual Israelization of institutions, uprooting and forced migration. This in contrast
  with the settling of Zionist groups in place of those uprooted Palestinians who were
  then separated from those Palestinians who remained on their land, in scattered
  pockets separate from one another and subservient to varying policies.

These policies were applied before 1948 and are the same being applied today in 1967-
occupied Palestine. The West Bank was separated from the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem was se-
parated from the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank was torn into various scattered units to
facilitate Zionist control over it. Israeli policies treated the Palestinian West Bank as ‘contested territory’, meaning that Israel gave itself the right to expand its settler colonialism there while destroying Palestinian civilization and development. Today, Israel has colonized 40% of the Palestinian West Bank in the form of residential buildings, agricultural land, economic and military installations, and water reservoirs, and planted 650,000 settlers there and in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Israel treats the Palestinians in the West Bank as Palestinians living on so-called ‘contested land’.1

This reality has grown gradually and is preparing now for the rise of voices in Israel calling for the legal (de jure) annexation to Israel of the area that represents two-thirds of the Palestinian West Bank while this area has been under actual (de facto) Israeli annexation. Israel carries this out under the cover of all measures to expand, annex and change reality on the ground, especially in the area of the Jordan Valley and the Palestinian mountain range neighbouring Israel. Moreover, Israel has in fact annexed 11% of the lands of the West Bank as a result of putting this land on the Israeli side when building the separation wall. As for the remaining 36% of the West Bank, the Palestinian towns and villages controlled by the Palestinian Authority are experiencing a state of isolation from the towns inside Israel. Israel has military controls over their villages and Israeli forces have besieged the cities from the outside, completely controlling movement to and from them, particularly the movement from one city to another through Area C that is under total Israeli control.

With regard to Jerusalem, its Palestinian citizens have been separated from their land from the start since Israel seized the lands of Jerusalem. Israel then considered these Palestinians as Jordanian citizens living on Israeli lands. This definition also continued until after the Oslo Accords and today the city witnesses a situation in which a Jewish majority has come to be living in 1967-occupied Jerusalem.

The Gaza Strip itself has been considered as land under the Palestinian Authority from the time of the Oslo Accords. Israel had offered the takeover of the Gaza Strip to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and then presented that to the Palestinians during the secret Oslo negotiations. In 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon withdrew Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip as well as destroying the Israeli settlements that had been there as well as demolishing Israeli settlements in the Jenin region of the West Bank.

As a conclusion to the preceding section, Israeli policy has annexed extensive parts of Jerusalem at the expense of the West Bank.2 Moreover, Israel has turned to join Area C of the Palestinian West Bank to its territory. This means that the one state of Israel is being formed on the historical land of Palestine with what seems to be the exception of Gaza and Jenin and perhaps Jericho (according to the Gaza–Jericho agreement of 1994). Consequently, these latter regions will be the divided and scattered areas of the Palestinian state and this is what Palestinians have called the ‘state of remnants’.

However, the developments of recent years have come to show that this ‘state of remnants’ was only a temporary Israeli proposal. After 2006, the success of Hamas in the Palestinian elections translated the Israeli proposal for the Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip into a proposal that gave Israel complete control over the exits to the Gaza Strip and cut off its connections to the Palestinian West Bank. This created isolated regions in the areas bordering Israel and controlled the entry and exit of goods to and from the Gaza Strip. In other words, this created an autonomous authority inside the Gaza Strip
that Israel controlled completely from the outside and prevented from having any semblance of sovereignty.

As for the city of Jenin, the settlers who were moved from their settlements began repeated attempts to return to those settlements while there was no longer anyone in Israel proposing the issue of Palestinian sovereignty over the city of Jericho. Hence, Israeli policy has been directed gradually to swallowing up all the Palestinian West Bank into Israel. Furthermore, Israeli proposals for the Gaza Strip will change for the worse as the Palestinian-Arab situation remains in a state of paralysis without changing its course.

Therefore, it is clear the goal of establishing a Palestinian state on the lands of 1967-occupied Palestine are not and never will be in Israel’s intentions and plans. Rather, some Israeli circles have proposed it in a tactical manner during some of the stages of the conflict as preparation for going beyond this at a later stage on the way to realizing the Zionist goal of swallowing up all Palestine. Based on this conclusion, one can disapprove of Magdi Hammad’s proposition that ‘it is more likely that the Palestinian state will announce its independence and self-sovereignty’ (Abu Lughod 2000, 1446).

The conflict between Palestinian-Arab action and Israeli action: results and consequences

Palestinian-Arab action towards the issue of Palestine has wavered between armed action, negotiations, popular resistance, and the strategy of development and strengthening Palestinians’ presence. While the armed struggle represented by the action of the Palestinian fighters (fedayeen) put Palestine on the world map, the popular Palestinian resistance of the first intifada established the birth of the Palestinian National Authority on the ground in Palestine. Moreover, it strengthened the civil rights of the 1948 Palestinians inside the state of Israel as the result of their popular struggle towards that.

The consequences of the negotiations were bitter. As explained by Abu Lughod (2000), they established the birth of an authority for the Palestinian population without it having any control over the land which continued to be plundered by Zionist control. This brought about the strategy of development and strengthening Palestinians’ presence to rein force the survival of the Palestinian people on the ground, whether inside 1948-occupied Palestine, in the West Bank or in Jerusalem.

In this context, the issue of the Palestinian refugees has regressed since the decline of the actions of the Palestinian fighters. In contrast, a popular campaign of resistance in the form of connected journeys towards the borders has not been launched to elevate the right of return. The journeys of 2011 from the Syrian–Lebanese borders towards Palestine were a one-off event that did not result in a successive and accumulative course of action. This is at a time when the struggle for the right to return remains high on the level of rights due to the activities of specialist institutions and trade unions and also the conferences of various ‘return committees’, especially in Europe and some other countries.

Since the emergence of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the fundamental effort towards the cause of Palestine has changed to become a Palestinian effort. This demands that this viewpoint be dealt with by returning Palestine to the Arabs and
returning the Arabs to Palestine. Abu Lughod (2000) contains important strategic proposals for this path.

The current situation for the balance of powers is characterized by the Palestinian-Arab side’s possession of the force of deterrence towards Israel from the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon and by the preservation of the 1948 Palestinians over their survival and identity despite the successive attacks on their rights. In contrast to that, the situation in the West Bank warns of dangers surrounding a new transfer (forced expulsion) of the Palestinian people from the West Bank if the situation there continues as it is. This is seen especially in the example of the intensifying conflict over Jerusalem, its current title and control over the Al-Aqsa compound. Likewise, there is a warning of the outbreak of a full conflict in the climate between the Jewish settlers and the Palestinians of the West Bank, particularly in the light of the increasing attacks by settlers which numbered 11,000 attacks between 2004 and 2015.3

The Palestinian situation also warns of the possibilities of the outbreak of another Israeli attack on Gaza at any time, aimed at beginning to realize the erosion of the element of Palestinian deterrence there. This is aside from the constant deterioration in the situation of the Palestinian refugees as a result of the absence of a connected struggle for the sake of their right to return.

Prospects

The Palestinian situation is a warning of a probable greater escalation. This is especially so since negotiations have reached a standstill and shown those calling for a settlement on the Palestinian side that the prospects for a political situation are not to be found. This situation demands a strengthening of the strategies for action mentioned in Abu Lughod (2000) and their crystallization into a more tangible and defined form which may benefit further thinking in this respect.

Firstly, the Palestinians should promote civil resistance to the occupation and make it a practice that is political, economic, combative, cultural and social. That is by focusing it on the diplomatic resistance of promoting Palestine in international organizations, raising issues against Israel in the international courts and working for change, especially in the American and European spheres. This should also focus on resistance as development through building Palestinian facts and realities on the ground, particularly in Jerusalem and Area C, and reconstructing the Gaza Strip. There is also the field struggle resistance that should be made a continuing resistance of creative and ongoing activities that go beyond seasonality and fragmentation.

All that demands the strengthening of Palestinian national unity and agreement on a unified programme for the Palestinian struggle and the integration of 1948 Palestinians into supporting Jerusalem and the steadfastness of their community in the West Bank. Last but not least, the economic, social and cultural resistance should be carried out through the boycott of Zionist products and the creation of alternative products, Palestinian divestment from the Israeli economy, the ending and prohibition of Palestinians working in settlements and the severing of social relations with Zionist sectors that are against Palestinian human rights. This is in addition to immunizing Palestinians against the spread of a culture of despair and adaptation to the reality of the occupation, especially among the ranks of the Palestinian youth.
Secondly, the Arabs must open the borders to facilitate connected border journeys and demand the right of return. They should participate in the economic boycott of Israel, the divestment from its economy and activation of the Arab boycott of companies that work with Israel. They should once again propose the Arab Peace Initiative from the starting point of force, describing it as an offer that is inapplicable unless Israel withdraws from all the 1967-occupied Arab lands. They should also work towards an organized campaign to create a region free of nuclear weapons and forcefully put the subject of nuclear weapons on the agenda as well as working in all international bodies to support the victory of Palestine and launching the abilities and possibilities of the Arab people to contribute to Palestine and the cause of Jerusalem.

Thirdly, Israel should follow the suggestions of Abu Lughod (2000) and turn to the sectors of Israeli society to influence them, such as the Jewish Arabs, the new historians and the ‘Peace Now’ movement, using the efforts of the 1948 Palestinians to help towards that. In this framework, it should distinguish between the imposed normalization and the political struggle across the political orientation of some sectors of Israeli society by describing the latter as a national and moral obligation and a part of the process of the fight and conflict with Israel. Some of them are fighting in the field; others with their tongues and pens. Consequently, this would open the way for a struggle in these various forms, instead of confining it to one limited aspect.

Fourthly, there should be focus internationally on the work in the American and European arenas for the sake of change and to establish an international coalition to support Palestine from all the nations of the 138 that recognize Palestine and voted for that in the UN General Assembly in 2012. The focus should also turn to the peoples of the world, the forces of freedom and the churches for the sake of raising their voices and initiating activities to end the Israeli occupation of the 1967-occupied Palestinian and Arab lands.

Conclusions

This article may contribute to clarifying the Palestinian-Arab interim goal regarding the issue of Palestine and reduce its ambiguities. This is a goal that cannot use the erosion of time and the facts that Israel has created on the ground as excuses to say the goal has come to an end. The history of the world and current experiences in it demonstrate that there are no unchangeable events given the availability of a capable transformative agent and a clear and gradual plan in this direction.

Palestine has seen a violent conflict between the Israeli action, on the one hand, and the Palestinian-Arab action, on the other hand. The results of this conflict will determine the fate of 1967-occupied Palestine. This will either put Palestine on the global map due to the success of the Palestinian-Arab transformative action, or it will give rise to a greater Israel and achieve a new expulsion of the Palestinian people if the other transformative action succeeds.

The discussions in Abu Lughod (2000) constitute thoughts and plans in the direction of strengthening the ability of this Palestinian-Arab transformative element. In this framework, the book represents a specific movement in Arab thought from polemical thinking to the thinking of planning and transformative action that formulates strategies and policies. That is an addition that must be expanded towards crystallizing the detailed and defined strategies which determine roles clearly and are, thus, applicable before it is too late.
Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. Before Oslo, these Palestinians in the West Bank were considered as ‘Jordanian citizens living on land run by Israel’.
2. This was 6 km² in 1967, but today it is 72 km² as Israel includes extensive lands from the West Bank.
3. The data are taken from the statement made by Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator, on 31 January 2015 after the murder of Ali Dawabsheh in his family home in the Palestinian village of Duma in the governorate of Nablus.

References


