

## The Madrid Conference: Translating the One-State Slogan into Research and Political Action Agendas

Omar Jabary Salamanca

*Middle East and North Africa Research Group (MENARG), Gent University, Belgium*

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This text report on a meeting that took place during the first week of July 2007, within the framework of the annual summer courses organized by the Universidad Complutense at El Escorial, Spain. The course, presented under the title “Israel–Palestine: One Country, One State,” was organized by Universidad Nómada and the Fundación Europa de los Ciudadanos in cooperation with Ali Abunimah, Omar Barghouti, and Virginia Tilley.

### First Day

The first day of the seminar deals essentially with the approaches and prisms (not necessarily new ones) that must be used in order to re-imagine the conflict in ways that can lay the foundations for a true historical perspective that helps to build an ethical, authentic, and just solution.

#### *Panel I – The construction of “new histories” around the Palestine-Israeli conflict: Zionism, Nakbe and the origins of the Jewish State*

Within the first panel, an analysis of the origins, developments, and narratives of the Zionist project reveals its colonial and racist character and the ways in which it continually overshadows the roots and true nature (past and present) of the sad and painful realities faced by Palestinians. The decolonization or de-Zionization of the Jewish community thus becomes a fundamental issue if we are to advance toward an ethically and morally sound one-state solution. Zionism, says **Steven Friedman**, was a rebellion against the traditional and wide range of understandings of the Jewish religion (e. g., the views of Neturei Karta were mainstream until the 1940s). Thus, it is very important that Zionism, as the leading force of the essentialization process that has taken place within Jewish identity, be undone and deconstructed, in order to erase its structural and fundamental characteristics (colonialist, separatist, and

racist), which are indeed the main obstacles to a just and long-term solution in the region (or elsewhere). It is important to challenge both the essence and the various tools and means of Zionism—for instance, as **Joseph Massad** points out, the perverse nature of an anti-Semitism that targets both Jews and Palestinians. This necessary stage does not exclude efforts to feel and understand each other's trauma, however; as long as Israelis do not understand the Nakba and Palestinians do not understand the Holocaust, no definitive solution will be reached. Friedman argues, that, indeed the Shoah and the Nakba must be tackled as similar terms: the “Nakba continues the Shoah, it does not finish it, and it is the role of Jews to end it.”

*Panel II - Palestinian nationalism paths and future: class, parties, generations, gender and identity under a political-historical perspective*

Islah Jad introduces the panel referring to the responsibility of the British Mandate inducing various structural changes in Palestine reminiscent of the formation of an urban-rural class divide or of the reinforcement of a submissive role and a backward image of women within society. Moreover, Jad argues that not only the British Mandate but also the State of Israel and the Palestinian leadership, during the different stages of the conflict, have managed and contributed to shape and manipulate their role within the resistance movement. During the panel continual references are made to the character of a State of Israeli that, today, still reflects and mirrors British Mandate policy. *Urbicide* (the destruction of the built environment) and *politicide* (the destruction and fragmentation of political and tribal/clan cohesion and leadership) are described by **Gemma Martín Muñoz** as the axis of Israeli policy in Palestine but also of the imperial project within the Middle East. Both are elements that contribute to “erase the object (what is to be negotiated) and the subject (with whom are

we going to negotiate)”—in other words, to the role of the international community in shaping and manufacturing “the wanted” (standardized and legitimate actors) while erasing “the unwanted.” **Martín Muñoz** notes that without the re-foundation of the PLO it will be very difficult to advance the peace process. A last and relevant point added within this panel refers to the need to contextualize Palestine historically in its specific framework, that of the (Near and) Middle East. As **Pedro Martínez Montavez** puts it, “how should we combine Palestine, Arabism and Islamism by taking into consideration and properly using a fecund cultural legacy that should not by any means be used as a political tool?”

*Round Table*

The round table serves to discuss ways of constructing new collective narratives that help to implement and disseminate long-term solutions. **Oren Ben-Dor**, the first to speak, represents with his intervention the fear of confronting Zionism as an anti-Jewish exercise. Aware of the dangers of connecting the agenda of anti-Zionism with that of anti-Semitism, Ben-Dor claims that “a One State under equality of citizenship cannot happen until we challenge the idea of Judaism”; he refers to this fundamental process as one of “mirroring.” Only then, he continues, “we can achieve and accomplish a solution and go over the notions of separation so embedded in Jews’ thinking.” **Leila Farsakh** replies to Ben-Dor, arguing that “we are already in the process of mirroring, the question now is, when will the mirror break? Or maybe is already breaking?” Suggesting a need to tackle the practical realities of constructing a new narrative (in contrast to Ben-Dor’s more theoretical–philosophical approach), Farsakh mentions three main issues and challenges to be dealt with: the economic reality, the territorial reality, and the political protagonists of the different groups: “who represents who and what do they represent.” **Jonathan Cook**

draws a critical and pessimistic picture of the Israeli Zionist “left,” emphasizing the difficulties faced when dealing with the Israeli public. He argues that there is an urgent need to deconstruct Jewish narratives and the Jewish imaginary. Extracting lessons from other ethnic-colonial conflicts is an important issue for **Ali Abunimah**, who, indeed, will use several times during the seminar the example of Northern Ireland. A preliminary conclusion drawn by Farsakh is that there is a clear need to build a new frame for the One State in order to deal with the various actors and challenges ahead.

#### *Question-and-Answer Session*

The Q&A raises some interesting points, many asserting ideas previously mentioned during the day. Massad (to Ben-Dor) insists on the fact that the essentialization of Jewish identity is the problem and that “Jew” is not a unitary identity, pointing out the existence of different identities within Israel (e.g., Mizrahi, Ashkenazi). Haim (to Ben-Dor) argues that the need for separation is a problem: “Zionism and anti-Semitism are agreeing with one worrying thing, and that is the fact that Jews want to ‘separate’ themselves, not Palestinians or others.” Virginia Tilley expresses her views, assuring (in view of the South African example) that separation is about land as much as it is about power. A member of the audience, referring to the Tunisian writer Albert Memmi and his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, argues that “without privilege and advantage, the colonizer sinks”; thus, “if we do not deconstruct the Israeli historical exceptionalism, there will be no advance in a solution.” So, in fact, what we need is to deconstruct existing power relations. He continues, “this must be done ‘by force’ [*sic*] as it happened in the paradigmatic case of South-Africa.” Leila Farsakh argues that “once we observe the political realities on the ground, the possible solutions are two: (a) an apartheid state or (b) a new form of state, or, better, a new conceptualiza-

tion of citizenship.” She notes how today Palestinians are far more concerned about daily life (i.e., crossing checkpoints) than about whether they are Hamas or Fatah. The issue is therefore about citizenship. The question for Palestinians is no longer one state versus two states but how to maintain a civic citizenship, and this requires a thorough reinvention of the concept.

#### **Second Day**

During this second day some ideas discussed previously (e.g., the colonial and racist character of the Zionist project and the need to rearticulate the concept of citizenship) reappear supported by new and reinforcing arguments.

#### *Panel I – The ‘facts on the ground’: limits and possibilities of the solutions in favour of the one or two states in Palestine-Israel*

In the first panel, the absence of geographer Ghazi-Walid Falah (due to political reasons) reflects an unbalanced shift in the topic that leaves aside the more spatial aspects of the geographies of colonial occupation to focus on the notions and realities of the nation-state. **Virginia Tilley**, substituting for Falah, begins by highlighting the fact that “this conference is not only an academic exercise but a profoundly political result of the urgency of the situation. It is a program of action, which is somehow difficult within the academic environment.” However, she continues, “it is time to pull knowledge in the right direction.” Tilley declares that Palestinian geography has been frozen—in the spatial, diplomatic, and demographic sense—and emphasizes the idea of the irreversibility of the urban facts on the ground (e.g., urban colonies, infrastructures, and the Wall of Separation), which she describes politically, economically, and ideologically as “immovable objects.”

**Omar Barghouti** addresses the idea of Zionism as a regime based in oppression. This oppression, Barghouti argues, has taken place

and manifest itself in the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian refugees, the past and present occupation, and the system of racial apartheid. He also insists on clarifying the nature of the Israeli occupation, as an asymmetric conflict in which there is a colonial oppressor and an oppressed.

**Leila Farsakh** discusses two mechanisms—similar to those used in apartheid South Africa—that are used by Israel to squeeze and undermine Palestinian economic sovereignty and viability. The first is a strict policy of separation (especially after the Oslo accords) between the Palestinian and Israeli economies; the second is a system of closures and territorial fragmentation of Palestinian geography that creates a series of economic enclaves or Bantustans. This dystopian economic reality has been fixed, Farsakh argues, by subcontracting the economic viability of Palestine to the international community. **Virginia Tilley**, during the Q&A, reiterates that, when dealing and seeking for a just solution, we are already assuming that the reality existing on the ground today is that of One State, one that is governed, managed, and controlled by Israel and that needs to be transformed from a racist and undemocratic state into one where every citizen has equal rights, independently of his or her ethnic or religious background.

*Panel II – Political groups in a shared state:  
religion, ethnicity and Diaspora*

The second panel deals with the interplay of religion, ethnicity, politics, identity, and rights and how understanding these factors is essential in reframing the new narratives of the One State. **Ali Abunimah**'s main contribution is that of rethinking what a new citizenship looks like in a post-colonial context. Abunimah says that "Palestinian identity today is not unique or exceptional, but it is different from other forms of national identity, and in a sense it has become de-territorialized (i.e., you could be or feel Palestinian with out ever have been there)." He continues,

"we have thus to think beyond the classical territorial notion of nationality and national belonging." Abunimah reminds us that even though Palestinians should be the leading actors in developing a project with a vision, this should be accompanied by external international pressure. **Steven Friedman**, however, notes that international pressure cannot be accepted until the problem is morally reframed. The moral balance of power needs to be changed, and Palestinians should take advantage of the "morality of the cause" as their most powerful tool. We need to move beyond talking about an abstract "one-state solution" to frame the problem as one that is about democracy, rights, and justice if we want to be able to capture the moral imagination. Friedman highlights the fact that because Judaism has a very special theme of separation and separateness, it will have difficulty in readjusting to a new reality. Like Abunimah, he points to the South African case (in which white people considered themselves the chosen ones) as an example of how "this process can possibly be overcome by rethinking citizenship and identity in a way that does not include the demanding of the land as part of the identity." When asked if it is necessary for a shared society to reconcile, Friedman argues that "there is a minimum requirement for reconciliation, but expecting societies to fully reconcile and share is quite unrealistic"; thus, "the idea is to see coexistence with justice, by accepting an unpleasant reality."

**Islah Jad** introduces to the debate the idea that a new concept of citizenship is not neutral but power ridden, and that reaching it will take a long and painful path. Another interesting point made by Jad is that the "secular class" cannot impose unilateral solutions without dealing profoundly, courageously, and in egalitarian terms with the different identities and religious movements. **Leila Farsakh** completes this idea during the Q&A, arguing that there are three levels that need to be dealt with in order to redefine citizenship. The first level is that of Palestinians

themselves, both at home and in Diaspora, who need to continue to redefine their identity. The second level is the necessary dialogue that needs to be established with Israelis (preferably by their own initiative); however, right now might not be the best moment to do so. The third level is the negotiation between the two.

*Round Table – Possibilities and main challenges to develop a new political geography in Palestine-Israel*

**Haim Bresheeth** starts the panel by outlining several remarks to be taken into consideration while thinking about possibilities and challenges around the one state: (a) We should not take anti-Semitism for granted, and, furthermore, we should not forget that there is no tradition of anti-Semitism in the Arab world. Jews, Muslims, and Christians have an illustrious history of coexistence, so when we make references to the possibility of coexistence, this is not something new or utopian; (b) Both national groups have been formed and constituted by trauma; (c) The intention to Europeanization of Zionism within the different trends of Judaism has not been accomplished; (d) The whole (Western) Orientalizing project in the Middle East involves making links and connecting the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict to the solving of the Middle East crisis; (e) Israeli society has been weakened, perhaps not financially but in other relevant ways; (f) Last but not least, the existence of Hamas as a new partner in peace, untouched by politics or economic corruption, must be accepted.

**Jonathan Cook** considers it more relevant to discuss and analyze the Israeli blueprint for Palestinian fragmentation, and he does so by analyzing three spheres: (a) identity, (b) governance, and (c) physical connection. The common factor to all, Cook indicates, is a clear extrapolation of military governmental and law into the civil administration ruling the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). **Nadim Rouhana** declares

that “we are in a time of paradigm shift”; he insists on the fact that the one state has been around for a long time, but warns that “the two-state solution is the one that brought a breakdown of the Palestinian society (i.e., see those intellectuals that waited for the elites to grasp and understand the relevance of the one-state solution).” Rouhana also emphasizes that Israeli society is in crisis and refers to the failure of the Iron Wall policy described by Ze’ev Jabotinsky. A last point made by Rouhana is the need for a vision that is framed, not necessarily in terms of one state or two states, but in terms of a democratic state, as in the Haifa declaration.

**Ilan Pappé** concludes the round table by mentioning four points related to the one-state solution that need to be re-articulated: (a) The need to reframe and re-contextualize both sides (Israel and Palestine) in the context of the Arab world, without forgetting that Israel does not belong to the Western family; (b) the destructive paradigm of the two-state solution and the legitimacy of the struggle as a national liberation movement; (c) the clear link between the two-state solution and the historic betrayal of the political elites (see also the role and contribution of academics); and (d), borrowing a term from Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, the need for a “change of regime” in Israel. Pappé matches these various points to an academic and political action agenda. In the political dimension, he proposes (a) the need to legitimize the one-state solution and introduce it as a possibility for discussions; (b) extending and refining the inclusion axis (i.e., refugees) and the exclusion axis (e.g., certain Orthodox Jews or Zionists) for this debate; and (c) defining ways to engage with those we can engage with (e.g., civil society) and not with those we cannot (e.g., political spheres, not forgetting that the best “targets” are “ex”-politicians). When defining an academic agenda, he suggests (a) talking about the meaning of getting “there” academically and not politically and (b) filling in the academic gaps related to the various models of one state

(maybe we need to invent one?) without discussing it on political grounds.

#### *Question-and-Answer Session*

Some issues discussed during the round table are clarified in the Q&A session. The point raised by Rouhana, arguing that Israelis are (or are in the process of becoming) a nation (in contrast to the traditional understanding of Jews defining themselves as a nation), is repeatedly contested throughout the seminar. So is the issue of the (un-)definition of Israel's borders, and who fits in, when suggesting the need to abolish the Israeli "law of return." Another important question raised is: "If there is a need to incorporate non-Zionist Jews into the process of reforming the PLO?" Pappé uses his turn to highlight various interesting ideas. First, the fact that there is a need to relocate the Palestinian polity within the problems of the Middle East (e.g., new visions of Islam). Second, a reminder for us to understand that we are dealing with a solution based in multiculturalism and, thus, it is very important that we deal with utopia without fear or shame. Third, that culture must not be seen as a superstructure, as within Marxism; we need to overcome these traditional limitations. And, fourth, that we should not forget the obstacle embodied in the collective definition of Jews that is strictly equated with anti-Arabism (even if there are variations). A last issue mentioned is the need for Hamas to develop a vision and a project (in short, a strategy) for all Palestinians.

#### **Third Day**

The third day deals with Israeli and international law and the issues at stake that we need to understand, face, and use in order to arrive at a just solution.

#### *Panel I – The Israeli legal framework: basic law, group rights and democracy in the State of Israel*

During the main interventions of the first panel **Nadim Rouhana** and **Jonathan Cook** describe, in a very complementary way, the legal framework that supports and sustains the racist nature of the ethnocentric State of Israel. The realities on the ground described by both highlight one very important fact that we should not forget: Israel does not recognize Arabs as a national group; only one group is recognized within the Jewish state, and that is not Israeli Jews but all Jews inside and outside Israel. This fact reflects the realities of a state without delimited physical borders for the land it uses/occupies or for the more abstract frontier that defines who belongs to it, the Israeli nationality. The negation of recognition of the collective or individual rights of Palestinian Arabs is described by Rouhana as the "politics of denial"; this includes, among other tangible issues, the hindering of any possibility for the development of an Arab-Palestinian economy; a process of legal expropriation of Arab lands; an education system fully controlled by Israel; the problem of unrecognized villages and the failure to provide services to both urban and rural Arab areas; and the prohibition of marriages between Palestinians from Israel and those from the Occupied Territories. Rouhana argues that Palestinians, in their attempt to establish themselves as a minority with rights by reviving their history, culture, and traditions, are facing continual repression and denial. Cook describes these processes as a form of "legal and political apartheid" whereby, contrary to what is often described as Palestinians' being granted second-class citizenship (which is indeed a very misleading label, hiding the realities on the ground), what is really at stake in Israel is not simple discrimination against Palestinians but the creation of another class of citizenship or, more accurately, a non-citizenship. Cook gets into the details of how this

legal and political apartheid in Israel is manifested within four domains of law. Civil law, personal status law, emergency regulations, and military law respectively come under different authorities: the civil courts, the religious courts, the Shin Bet (internal security service), and the army. Civil law (which defines the permanent un-definition of Israel nationality) and personal status law (aimed at strengthening Jewish citizens' attachment to their nation-state) are responsible for the *de facto* negation of Palestinian individual and collective rights, on the one hand, and for alienating Palestinians from both the nation and the state, on the other. Emergency regulations (which allow security services to deal with Palestinian citizens with little or no legal restriction) and military law (which furthers discriminates, since it does not respond to territorial criteria but to nationality, differentiating between Jews and Palestinians) are responsible for setting up a comprehensive and sophisticated system of military controls and for imposing a state of exceptionality that authorizes the continual breaking of the law under the banner of security.

**Antonio Vercher Noguera**, after describing the flexible character of Israeli legislation (which perfectly combines Ottoman, Islamic-French, and Anglo-Saxon laws), deals, from an urban and environmental perspective, with new and relevant ways of facing the occupation under the framework of European and international law. He focus on the notion of "rights of rebound" as one of the legal concepts that could help to articulate successful legal cases against Israel around urban destruction/construction and the harming of the environment. To finalize, **Oren Ben-Dor** argues that we need to connect basic law, democracy, and justice to a certain vision of liberty and equality, and that we must start from that vision by introducing the notion of equality of stake (whereby a political community belongs equally to, or is owned equally by, all the people who participate in that community, and all are responsible for and benefit from it) as the concept that could

articulate a constitution for whichever form of state is finally adopted.

*Panel II – International Law and justice: diplomacy, security and region dynamics*

The second panel deals essentially with the barriers, challenges, and opportunities that the Palestinians face when dealing with international law and diplomatic negotiations. **Michael Tarazi**, former legal adviser to the PLO, exposes some of the Palestinian failures in dealing with diplomatic missions and offers alternatives to better understand how Occidental politics works and thus face it more professionally. After noting that "having the law on your side is not enough" and that "the law only applies to those strong enough to have it applied," he describes why Israel has been so successful in accomplishing the shift from villain to victim. Tarazi illustrates the phenomenal distortion of terminology in the mass media and in public-private discourse (i.e., settlements are "neighbourhoods," colonies are "implantations," the Occupied Territories are "disputed territories") and the ways in which a beneficial international-law context has been removed (with Oslo as the fundamental instrument), transforming the situation in a context of contested or disputed land among two equal groups and conditioning the Palestinian side in order to progress toward peace. The Hague resolution about the Wall of Separation, he notes, was the moment that restored international law to some extent, recognizing that both parties are not in equal conditions. Tarazi criticizes the Palestinian leadership, describing it as incompetent and noting that it has seriously internalized a weakness that makes it completely submissive to the Americans and Israelis. In a pragmatically oriented conclusion, he highlights the need for a Palestinian critical mass and explains how, by means of a professional marketing and lobbying campaign, we could use various tools (the same tools that Israel uses?) to convey to the international community and the general

public the realities on the ground in Palestine.

**Virginia Tilley** endorses the idea that a new approach is needed to understand how international law applies to this situation. She refers to the latest report by John Dugard (UN Special Rapporteur on Palestine), who asks whether the international community and the International Court of Justice should consider whether, after 40 years, occupation has changed into something else – into colonialism and apartheid. Tilley believes that this observation is critically important and that, thus, to change the traditional discourse and imaginary from a model based on the occupation to one based on the captured realities of a colonial and apartheid regime implies moving from a two-state to a one-state model. She believes that Dugard was very conscious in framing this legal shift as a transfer of the Palestinian question from one of occupation, denial of sovereignty, and self-determination to one of the denial of political, social, and cultural rights under the applicable UN framework (see apartheid). Tilley's proposal is thus to redefine the conflict, arguing that Palestinians are being denied citizenship in the country of their birth rather than claiming their right to create their own state. She finishes her intervention quoting a paragraph by **Naseer Aruri** (who was not able to attend the meeting) about the nature of the peace process and the international community:

The peace process has enabled Israel to escape its obligations vis-a-vis the Palestinians under International law. Instead these obligations have been effectively replaced by Israeli decrease presented as American Peace initiatives. Not only has the USA succeeded in regularizing this 40 years occupation but it also engaged in diplomatic outsourcing thus consigning part of the diplomatic façade to the EU, to the Russian Republic or to the UN. And so a new term is added to the diplomatic vocabulary, "the quartet," which is Washington to enlist others in support to the US-Israeli position. This new façade is given the name "International Community." Thus the Zionist movement's

designs are Americanized and later internationalized. The International Community which declares the 1967 occupation illegal has now become an accomplice of Washington and Tel Aviv in supporting "politicide."

**Rafael Escudero**, professor of political philosophy at Carlos III University, insists that even if the question of Palestine is framed in political terms, this should not be an impediment to resolution (see Irish case). He notes that we must urgently clarify to the international community that the lack of a Palestinian partner for negotiations is a false idea and that the international legal framework used to create the State of Israel in 1948 should be the same one that resolves this question. This cannot be done, he adds, without introducing new means and tools that correct the existing inequalities and clarify who is the occupier and who the occupied. Escudero proposes to use the existing EU legal frame (see Mediterranean Accords of 1995) or other measures such as a boycott, disinvestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign to put pressure on Israel so that it acknowledges and complies with international law.

*Round Table – Dialectics of local and international tensions: possibilities and risks*

**Steven Friedman** begins the panel shedding some light into the jettisoned international law, arguing that it "creates a potential instrument which could be realized if political pressure and support is achieved successfully." However, he notes, "unless we frame the demands and objectives we are aiming for in broad democratic terms, we might not reach the political momentum and support that we need to achieve this." He continues by noting how necessary and revolutionary it will be to demand universal rights as individual liberal rights for the region and reminds us that "the most important weapon which Palestinians have is the moral claim for recognition of all people's rights." Referring to what

happened in the case of South Africa, Friedman questions the relevance of thinking at this point about what the state will look like. "There is a long way to go through, and the question of what the state will look like is somehow less interesting than how the way to get there looks like." However, he argues that there is a need for an attractive vision of a new society if we are to mobilize people behind this project. There is "a fundamental requirement... and that is to have a balance while drawing a vision and a set of principles and objectives." They need to be "specific enough to unite and mobilize people but general enough to ensure that we do not to fully close the door to other debates and options about the precise forms that the State should have" The Freedom Charter written in 1955 in South Africa is described as a good example for achieving this balance and as a powerful tool to mobilize people around. Contrary to the general belief, this document was prepared "by a very small group of dedicated intellectuals around a kitchen table." Friedman concludes arguing that some lessons can thus be extracted. First of all, we need to mobilize people around a new vision that defines what a democratic Palestine will look like, and, in order to do so, we need to think about what it should look like—but also about who will be capable of drafting it and what sort of political pressures will be needed to ensure that this charter begins to mobilize not only Palestinians but people in the international community who will hopefully be able to change the power balance in this conflict.

Next to participate is **Isaías Barreñada** from the Arab House in Madrid, who tries to decode the complex matrix of internal, external, state, and non-state actors that take part in, influence, and shape "the game." He reviews the history and genealogy of the two-state project in order to understand when and how the Palestinian community assumed the two-state project and how the international community came to assume it as the Palestinian national project. As far as the

internal actors are concerned, the two-state project, we are told, was developed by Nabil Shad and other intellectuals within Fatah and finally assumed officially by Palestinians after the Council of Argel in 1988. Oslo meant, on the one hand, the materialization of the two-state project and, on the other, its end, as it became clear that Israel was no longer interested as demonstrated with its unilateral political and negotiation action agenda. Also interesting is the way external actors during the 1990s assumed the logic of "land for peace" renouncing the existing international legal framework and substituting a pragmatic *modus operandi*. Israeli discourse and strategic political action (e.g., the impossibility of going back to the 1967 borders) was internalized by the different actors of the international community. This exercise in pragmatic realism, Barreñada argues, has led within the international community to the normalization of the exceptionality of Israel as the only democracy in the Middle East (which, indeed, creates a situation of impunity) and to the trivialization of its responsibilities, turning perpetrator into victim and victim into perpetrator (see Dugard's reports). Barreñada concludes by suggesting an interesting list of things to be done: (a) Re-imagine and question again the legitimacy of the Zionist project (e.g., reinstate the UN resolution condemning Zionism as a racist project); (b) recover the capacity of denunciation by losing the fear to question the legitimacy of certain acts and discourses; (c) reintroduce the legitimization, obligation, and necessity of using pressure as not only acceptable, morally necessary, and politically responsible but a legal obligation (for states); and (d) introduce a shift in the debate from the old objective of liberating a territory to build a state into a new strategic objective that implicates both Israelis and Palestinians and argues for regime change rather than for the liberation of a space.

**George Bisharat** deals sequentially with the morning's interventions in order to tackle the different issues he wants to mention.

Responding to Tarazi's scepticism about international law as a tool for the powerless, Bisharat argues that it is a means of discourse and that, "even if we do not want to use this language, others are using it and will continue to use it"; thus "it does have currency, and it has efficacy in certain kinds of circles, and if we leave the field open to them, they will define things imprecisely the way we want and we will be left voiceless." Bisharat declares that we do not have the choice or the luxury of ignoring this particular field and that we must enter it with imagination and courage. Moreover, he highlights "Israel's responses to the initiatives that have been lunched thus far in this field" as "an indication on how potentially powerful this form of discourse can be." He uses the example of the immediate response of the State of Israel—directing diplomatic and media faxes all over the world about their position—to the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Wall of Separation. Responding again to Tarazi on the issue of the crisis and incompetence of the Palestinian leadership, Bisharat argues that it is true that they have failed but also that it is important to have them on our side, since "they command key strategic resources, in concrete, their legal recognition and their role of official representatives of the Palestinians in the international arena." Referring to Tilley's proposal, Bisharat is highly dubious about and critical of a shift from the paradigm of occupation and international humanitarian law to that of the UN convention on apartheid. His fears arise from the fact that "it might strip off the protections afforded by international humanitarian law, which is the law supposed to govern populations in times of war and belligerent occupation" (e.g., in Gaza and the West Bank). Bisharat proposes that if the ICJ is to be approached soon, it should be with Resolution 194 (on the right of return), which "has more destabilizing implications to the *status quo* without the dangers of Dugard's approach." He also encourages to questioning and contesting the image of other resolutions

like the 181 or the 242. Bisharat concludes his intervention by responding to Escudero and asserting that "there will be no single state by negotiations any time in the coming decades." Instead, he proposes to adopt an agenda driven by an enforcement approach and based on political action with initiatives such as BDS and attacks on Israel's image abroad, since Israel seems to be susceptible to certain kinds of pressures and embarrassments.

**Joseph Massad** is last to intervene, and does so by addressing, first, how "relying on liberal and philosophical notions (of rights and politics) to analyze a colonial context like Palestine has led and leads us to many mistakes that have been institutionalized by media, Israeli discourse, and, since Oslo, by the Palestinian co-opted leadership." He refers, for instance, to the use of liberal notions while talking about Palestine in Israel as the introduction of parity: two national groups, two peoples in one land, two contending religions ... This, Massad argues, "establishes parity in between two contending groups that have equal access to power or discourse," when the reality is that "there is a power differential that needs to be brought up constantly." Responding to Tarazi's intervention, he rejects the use of culture as the explanatory factor in the failure of negotiations with the United States and Israel. Massad argues that this is a structural question fully inserted within the material nature of power relationships that we know as colonial or imperial relations. He exemplifies this by arguing that if any Palestinian leadership enters into negotiations, it is because they are not authorized to say no; if they do so, they will be eliminated. Again responding to Tarazi, he also notes how, even though Israel was very interested in revoking every UN resolution issued against it, only the resolution equating Zionism with racism was in fact successfully revoked. This means that "every other resolution and law is still valid and constitutes the legal framework to address the Palestinian question." Unfortunately, "Palestinian leadership cannot lead this task, since,

as we mentioned already, as soon as it enters negotiations it is co-opted.” Massad also contests other claims about the Palestinian leadership, arguing that “Palestinians have indeed had various national leaders, but they have had an amazingly powerful enemy that has been able to destroy them physically or co-opt them (i.e., Arafat).” Referring to the International Solidarity movement and to the question of Hamas as the new leadership, Massad asserts that “Hamas has been elected today as the new leadership, and those within the International Solidarity need not to support every aspect in the Hamas program; it can support Hamas on the issue of resistance to the occupation or upholding Palestinian democracy, which does not mean IS commits to its religious or social program.” He goes on to argue that “Palestinians are facing a homogeneous enemy population very uniform in its ideological stance which is a truly phenomenal obstacle.” Finally, and contrary to the statements of Edward Said, Massad maintains that “it is not that Palestinians have not tried to recruit Israeli Jews or Jews for the struggle; they have actually done it since 1948 (inside or outside Palestine-Israel), but mostly unsuccessfully.” He concludes that “maybe individually there have been some contributions, but historically or at present, never an Israeli movement with a meaningful number has opposed the racial supremacy of Israel.”

#### *Question-and-Answer Session*

An interesting contribution to the third day’s Q&A is that of **Carlos Prieto**, who asserts that we need to “insert this discussion within the global context of anti-systemic or anti-globalization movements and the re-structuring of the global politics.” If we do not take into consideration the context of American hegemony and the capitalist crisis, he argues, we may be working with a failed strategy from the very beginning. **Leila Farsakh** asks in what ways should we decolonize in our context; she also speculates on what is supposed to be done with the Palestinian lead-

ership: Should we replace them? Help to replace them? Or use some kind of pressure? **Omar Barghouti** asks **Isaías Barreñada** about the state of the BDS campaign in Spain and why is it not working as elsewhere. A member of the audience asks whether it would not be a better strategy to frame the occupation from a legal point of view as ethnic cleansing or apartheid. **George Bisharat** replies that a melting pot of terms and concepts might be suitable in order to target different audiences.

#### **Fourth Day**

The fourth day becomes the most interesting, in terms of content and discussion, of the whole seminar. Like the third day, it is quite effective at introducing new visions, concepts, and ideas that lead to dynamic debates at the end of the various panels.

#### *Panel I: The politics of unification: unitary state, binationalism, consocialism or other models*

The previous days’ discussions have shown clearly enough that the two-state solution is breaking apart; however, **Nadim Rouhana** argues that more research is needed in this field in order to confirm to what extent this is a true reality, and the one state an appealing project, now that the option of an Islamic state may be advancing among Palestinians. Rouhana states that we are building a real democratic solution and that this should not frighten us; however, he notes, “we need to talk about minimalist and maximalist definitions or notions of democracy” and “set the menu we want to pick up from: liberal, confessional, or multicultural democracy.” He proceeds to describe briefly the characteristics of the different models, noting that the major intellectual exercise is to think about “to what extent the realities and entrenched identities would limit the implementation of one model;” he continues, “what model would provide justice, stability, and equality.”

**Ilan Pappé** senses that the main tension on this debate is identifying the nature of the colonizer, on the one hand, and the solution, on the other. He claims that for decades slogans have replaced analysis and that “‘one-state solution’ is still a slogan, not a paradigm or analysis; it is a deconstructive tool at best, and we have not yet used it as a reconstructive means to push it forward.” Pappé highlights two important points related to the politics of unification. First, “the various models should be very tentative, particularly the one-state solution, since it is a project in progress and because there is real danger of falling into unnecessary political and theoretical divisions among intellectuals.” He notes how important is to study “what is today the popular notion of one state in Palestine compare to what is in the popular notion of one state in this workshop in Madrid,” and recognizes that “there is obviously an ethical, moral, cultural, and political gap between the two notions but that it is possible to bridge this gap without trying to square circles.” In order to do so, Pappé proposes to use existing models of one state or to build a hybrid model out of them, since “we might need to invent the wheel here because of the particularities of this context.” He goes further, noting that here is where the model of South Africa starts to fade, since “white South Africans had neither Holocaust behind them nor the extraordinary power exercised by Jews in the United States.” On this line he argues that “any suggestion, political or academic, for the future of Palestine touches upon the future of Judaism in general, and this is a heavy load but one that cannot be overlooked.” His second point is that building the one state should continue to be an academic and professional exercise and that we have to extend our historical comparative research beyond South Africa, since there are many more examples. Thus, he warns that to “focus on one model ... is very dangerous and not very constructive.” Pappé highlights the fact that the theoretical frameworks through which we should analyze the one-state solution are not yet paradigms but theoretical

spans. He defines three spans. One is between nationalism and post-nationalism, and it needs to deal with emotions and self-identification on the ground, on the one hand, and the very cold analysis of the academic, on the other. A second theoretical span is between colonialism and post-colonialism. There are many issues that need to be resolved, including the following: “Can there be in Palestine a state that is different from the rest of the Arab states? How will we ensure that? How will we deal with the intellectuals in the Arab world if we do not want to adopt the political culture in which they live?” What are the limits of this debate? For Pappé, these questions are very relevant, since “this is a post-conflict project that needs contemporary theoretical and intellectual elaboration ... if not, it will lead too easily to the substitution of one evil with another.” The third span is between multiculturalism and liberalism. Pappé notes that there is more than one multicultural model and that he does not think there is only multiculturalism that emanates from the liberal and democratic discourse. He continues,

If I would in one sentence identify the differences between multicultural liberalism and the other multicultural models, it is that in the liberal the dialogue between the various components of the society leads to a solution. You need to work out an accepted basis, otherwise the state can not function. In the other multicultural model the dialogue itself is the solution. There is a constant dialogue that ... does not solve any of the moral tension between a feminist movement and an Islamic fundamentalist perception of gender relations, for instances. You do not solve this problem, you live and let live them, you do not amend or suss the contradictions to the point that you fight out what is the best way of moving forward.

To conclude his presentation, Pappé explains how the various politics of unification need to be also an activist agenda, not just a tentative intellectual project, and that this requires a lot of exercise and implementation in mini-models: “There is a need to try to

exercise them on yourself, your friends, on the group of activists that want to push forward the idea.” He continues, “we have to find the little workshops of life to try and play with the idea of one state before we sell it to any one”; for this, “we have to find the right spaces in which to discuss these issues in a way which is not just intellectual but experimental.” This is important and necessary “before anyone of us has the vanity and the confidence of telling 12 to 17 millions (including all the refugees and exiled communities): We have something to offer you as a political solution for the future.”

**Omar Barghouti** starts its presentation by reminding the audience of the dangers of using the concept of binationalism. He argues that this is a tool created by the Zionist left, laying equal claims for both communities in the land of Palestine. Barghouti’s concern is that “agreeing to the recognition of the right to self-determination of Israeli Jews in Palestine in any future unified state would by necessity lead to agreeing or recognizing the right to self-determination of the Israeli Jews’ nation in Palestine, which can lead to separation in a national state (this is how it works under UN principles).” Thus, he continues, “I do not think that a settler colonial community should ever have the right to separate in a national state into a colonized land. Every other collective right they should get, except that right.” Moreover, he highlights two issues with respect to previous comments during the panel. He notes that Israeli Jews do not define themselves as a nation and that, even if we recognize them as such, this does not mean that they define themselves as such. Neither do the Palestinians, since we are part of an Arab nation. Having clarified these two issues, Barghouti proposes working on a secular and democratic one-state solution that “entails simultaneously developing a vision and a corresponding strategy of resistance aim at ending all forms of Zionist oppressions while creating fertile grounds for future reconciliation and peaceful coexistence based on unmitigated equality and justice.”

This is what he calls an ethical de-Zionization or decolonization of Palestine, “a process of de-dichotomization of the two groups’ identity involved in this colonial conflict, the settlers and the natives, in the domains of reflection and action,” as proposed by the Brazilian Paulo Freire. Within this strategy, the boycott, disinvestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign has a central role as “time proving forms of civil resistance that have every potential to push such a process forward.” In order to achieve this, Barghouti claims, there is a fundamental and urgent need to constitute a progressive movement among the three Palestinian segments (Palestinians in Israel, those in the OPT, and Palestinian refugees in exile) that are deceived by the two-state solution and seem to be supportive of this option, as reflected in recent polls such as that conducted by Birzeit University. Decolonization, on the action level, requires two fundamental events to take place. First, “we need the reunification of the three segregated segments of the Palestinian people and the reimagination and reinvention of the PLO as the embodiment of this unity.” The PLO “must be resuscitated and remodelled to embody the claims, re-created energies, and national frameworks of the three main segments of the Palestinian people, with all their political parties.” Barghouti notes how “the PLO’s grassroots organizations need to be revived from the bottom up with mass participation, governed by unfettered democracy and upholding the principle of proportional representation. We have done it before, we can do it again.” The second condition in this resistance strategy is to address all three forms of Israeli oppression (racist and discriminatory laws, occupation, and the rights of refugees), not just to end the Israeli occupation. In this strategy “we do not need to invent new legal tools to fight the struggle; rather we need to research and reuse the existing ones.” As mentioned before, the BDS campaign is the proper tool to push forward the resistance, and “the indisputable Palestinian claim to equal humanity should

become the primary slogan-phrase in the BDS campaign, because it places the proper moral and political foundation for effectively addressing the myriad injustices against all three segments of the Palestinian people.” Moreover, Barghouti reminds us of two pertinent issues. First, “the strategies need to be guided by the principles of inclusion, diversity, gradual implementation, and sustainability, and their non-violent nature needs to be stressed”; “they must be flexibly designed to reflect the realities of the diverse contexts where they are applied.” The second issue is that, although the West remains the main battleground for civil resistance, we should not ignore the rest of the world. Barghouti finally invites us to join this strategy by “coupling a vision of coexistence free of oppression with a strategy based on concrete steps towards realizing that vision through ... de-Zionisation or ethical decolonization of Palestine as the only way forward for all people of conscious commitment to peace and justice in this area.”

*Panel II – Strategies to overcome the  
Palestinian-Israeli conflict's trauma and  
the search of reconciliation models*

**Ali Abunimah** reminds us that what Israeli culture is today (an inherent part is based on a racist ideology) may well not be what we have to work with tomorrow, and we should consider this if we are to deal with it in a decolonized space. Going back to the case of Northern Ireland, he refers to it as a partial decolonization exercise that has practical consequences from which we can extract some lessons. Abunimah highlights the civil services, in this case, in order to understand the transformation process whereby the interests of a colonizing group become the interests of all the citizens who constitute a democratic decolonized state. Using the reconstitution of the police forces and initiatives to integrate segregated school systems, he casts some light on real measures that could contribute to a one-state vision.

Abunimah notes, however, that “there is still little evidence that it is the content or ethos of these integrated programs that has the decisive impact; simply the contact itself is likely producing new forms of citizenships.” The other area mentioned is that of the reinterpretation of identity. Here Abunimah studies various items such as the flag, wall murals, and Orange marches as examples of how traditional symbols deeply rooted in a conflict can be reinterpreted and reused to push forward a reconciliation process. They are, he says, “symbolic gestures, and it is important not to exaggerate them. We do not know what the impact could be or if they will be successful, and at the ground level there remain significant hostilities, but the indicators of how these processes begin to occur can give indications on how to transcend trauma and hint towards reconciliation.”

**Haim Bresheeth** observes that “in the complex task we have to undertake, we need to work with ideas that are going to be open to criticisms and even ridiculed, but the only criticisms that it should not be done to us is that of being utopian.” He argues that “any future reworking of Palestine will by definition be utopian, because of the size of the problem, but that is not a reason not to use them in such a task of social and political engineering.” Bresheeth gives what he describes as an impressionistic list of future headaches, or a tentative mapping of those headaches. The list includes theoretical and practical issues and ideas that should be taken into consideration when thinking about the one-state solution. The list includes the dismantling of Zionism, which is the basis for “a racist colonial settler society organized as an ethnic theocracy denying citizens rights to the very people it has displaced and disposed”; moreover, “such a society not only dehumanizes its colonial subjects but also the colonizer which is the machinery of control and subjugation. Like all colonial settler societies, it becomes pathologized by its *modus operandi* and cannot longer undo its methods or free itself from the process.” In order for

such dismantling to take place, Bresheeth suggests, “it cannot be either voluntary or left to the colonizer to undertake if they so wish”; “the expectation that Palestinians should provide an agenda for post-colonial, post-Zionist Israeli readjustment is also unjust and unwise,” but “not to provide some picture of such a future of living together in a de-Zionized, decolonized entity would also be a great error.” Bresheeth also proposes, on the one hand, to “fully grasp the Israeli opposition to the one-state solution in order to ... undermine such opposition in Israel and abroad” and, on the other, to understand their fears and clarify what we mean by decolonizing and de-Zionizing; “not to do so will cause apprehension on most Israelis, and probably to Europeans and others, because of getting the wrong ideas about the process or being unnecessarily suspicious about its aims and scope. To not do that may persuade opponents that what we wish to eradicate is Jews and Israeli identity rather than colonization itself.” Finally, he suggests dismantling or de-Zionizing the policies and personnel of every sectarian organization and institution, transforming them into normative civil society collectives, and forbidding the financing of any religious organization or party.

The last to intervene is **Steven Friedman**, who does a great and really encouraging job of outlining the South African apartheid context in order to extract some lessons that are applicable to this context. For Friedman, the notion that post-apartheid South Africa is some kind of continuation of the colonial experience under a democratic regime is inaccurate, and he explains that there has been an empowerment of the people and other relevant improvements that would otherwise have been impossible. He argues that it is necessary to acknowledge that there are no models, and points out that the South African experience is an invaluable tool to look at because of the similarities we can find. Friedman argues that “in both cases there is a situation where a formerly oppressed or discriminated against

group chooses to try to escape from its oppression and discrimination by oppressing and discriminating against another group, and it does so by setting up a state which it insists is the only way in which it can escape from its oppression.” Moreover, he notes that “those who are not familiar with the South African experience might not be aware of the extent, admittedly on a smaller scale, to which the white Afrikaners’ experience mirrors that of the Jews.” Another reason to see similarities between the Palestinian and South African contexts is the range of arguments advanced against a single democratic state: the issue of why the world should pick on them and not on others, the notion that the divisions are too great for a common society to be possible, the idea that the culture of the dominated people is too anti-democratic and not sufficiently attuned to modern democracy, and the great military power differential of the oppressor are some of these arguments. Although, as Friedman suggests, we should not fall into the trap of “idealizing the South African experience by looking at how it ended up without looking at how it began.” To explain the ways in which the apartheid regime fell, it is necessary to understand two things. The first is that “at a particular stage of the apartheid system, and I have no doubt that this will happen to Zionism if it has not happened already, it encounters what we might call objective constraints” and needs to reform itself. “Objective constraints” could be defined as the natural structural obstacles that emerge at a certain point in the process of trying to achieve this kind of racist and colonializing project. However, “objective problems for an oppressive system are not enough; there has to be subjective action.” That is, “if you simply have a situation where the system runs into trouble, nothing much changes, things simply get worse, unless human beings have the power to change things.” In the South African context, there were two types of subjective human actions that made a difference. The first “had on the surface very little to do with politics or political organizations.

People simply, as the cliché of the time says, ‘voted with their feet’ and behaved as if oppression did not exist, not because they were doing a political statement, but simply because it made their life so miserable that they had no option but to ignore and defy the restriction, not because they were doing a political statement, but simply because it made their life so miserable that they had no option but to ignore and defy the restriction.” The second, which was fundamental for this to become possible, was an organized political resistance by the victims of the system. Essentially, what happen in the South African case “was that the dominant group realized that the system was going to come under pressure,” and so they started to think about “how do we change the system in a way that enables us to hold the power.” This led to reforms that were indeed a retreat from the oppressive power, creating a strategic opportunity: “it put the system on a backed foot, and once the system started to concede ground, it carried on conceding ground.” In this scenario, “the range of what was a marginalized issue become wider and the range of what was a core issue become smaller. So by the time we reached the negotiation process, what was left was a question of white political domination, which then became the area of content.” Friedman says that there is an important lesson to be learned here, and that is “that there is nothing more dangerous for the place of a government than when it starts to reform.” The second point to be made is that in the South African experience “we cannot find a time where reform has created situations where negotiation was not longer an effective instrument of oppression; negotiation has become in itself a concession, and that changed as the process changed.” Friedman notes again that “reform is never an opportunity, negotiations is never a way forward, unless the appropriate political conditions exist, unless the appropriate level of organization among the oppressed people exists.” He concludes by recapturing the Palestinian context and arguing that “as

Zionism continues to run into trouble, it will try to reform itself, and when these attempts come they will need to be met by an effective political organization led by the Palestinian people; this could lead to a creative and favourable political situation.” However, “negotiations at this time will mean a victory for Zionism; there is a need to wait for the proper timing.” The challenge is, therefore, what he calls the three Ps: (a) a *program*, that is, the strategy we want to achieve; (b) *politics* as the political option and path to be followed (noting that the military is probably not the best option); and (c) *people* as the absolutely essential ingredient to link popular movements with organic intellectuals.

*Round Table – The integration of the new nation-state: the art of the possible*

**George Bisharat** begins by outlining some ideas for discussion. He refers to the necessity of looking into some legal aspects of the conflict by revisiting the various resolutions (e.g., Resolution 181, as proposed by Pappé in his latest intervention) and also looking at the question of the status of Jewish Israelis (whether they constitute a nation or not, and what are the potential implications of this). In the area of political action, he proposes two questions. First, how do we relate with “two-staters,” that is, “members of our community who are still engaged with this option and whether their efforts are really undermining and obscuring ours and if we need to devote resources and time to win these people over? Or maybe we can go ahead without being concern and hope that they will eventually be on our perspective?” The second question is, “How do we develop effective messaging *vis-à-vis* the U.S. public in general?”

**Michael Tarazi** wonders which kind of groups we should try to ally or engage with. He agrees that it is important to engage the Jewish community but also highlights the relevance of targeting other communities across the political spectrum (especially in the United States) that could be supportive of

the one-state solution, such as the black, gay, Irish-American, and Hollywood-artist communities. **Oren Ben-Dor** defends the necessity of looking at Israeli fears and connecting with them by considering these issues from an Israeli Jewish perspective, trying to find ways without compromising the moral case. He proposes to be bold in our message and, since “we are calling about the end of Israel as we know it, we should present it as a moderate inclusive voice.” **Islah Jad** proposes to give Palestinians, once and for all, a sense of strength and empowerment to instead of the usual feeling of powerlessness. She suggests the use of ‘active citizenship’ as “a useful concept that could transcend the traditional limitations of its liberal counterpart notion. Active citizenship gives agency to the people, individually or collectively, basically through activism, not by acquiring it passively, without dealing with existing power relations.” In this sense, “active citizenship is a continuous evolving construction, not a static passive notion of rights, dealing with the issue of power.” Jad uses the case of the woman who marched into a mosque in Beit Hanoun to protect 73 Palestinian men to show the importance of people’s power and the importance of “the material physical bodies to neutralize the most relevant military power of the region.”

**Joseph Massad** suggests a campaign to revoke every Israeli law that discriminates and grants differential rights and privileges to Jews over Palestinians, instead of advocating for the destruction of the State of Israel as we know it, which can indeed take place in this legal arena. He understands the articulation of the story as follows: “if we see Jews’ supremacy institutionalized in the Israeli law as the fundamental question,” and if we can achieve a situation whereby “Israel is no longer a state that consecrates Jewish supremacy juridically,” then “the reasons for oppressing the Palestinian citizens of Israel will immediately disappear, since Jewishness is no longer the criteria by which the state exists.” Moreover, “the reasons given for the

occupation, the colonization, and the ban on the law of return will no longer exist, because there will be no democratic concern, since there is no commitment to racism.” Responding to Ben-Dor, Massad argues that a lot of research has already been done by Palestinians, Israelis, and other parties about the racist and colonialist nature of Zionism, and thus there is no need to do more. In deed, he says, “I still hold to the point that Israel can be seen as normative with other colonial settlement states and that is the racial privileges and the law that makes them comfortable.” Zionist claims, he explains, have existed for the purposes of achieving two roles: one is to safeguard the Jews’ culture from the threat of assimilation and two, to provide refuge for Jews against the forces of anti-Semitism. Massad contends that Zionism has failed in both: “on the one hand it has not protected any Diaspora Jews’ culture but actively destroyed them and created a new culture and new language unknown to Diaspora Jews in history and therefore did not protect it but, indeed, created a new kind of assimilation. As for the protection of Jews, Israel is today the most dangerous place for Jews to live as Jews. Therefore it has failed to achieve its main tasks.” In relation to the renovation of the PLO, Massad points to the dangers of NGO-ization of the Palestinian struggle and thus of all financing, whether through oil money, foreign NGO money, or whatever it may be: “we should be very careful, since this is not our goal; our goal is to have a mass popular support in the U.S. or in the Arab countries.”

**Haim Bresheeth** suggests that we “look at the legality of the boycott within different countries” through comparative research into the different obstacles faced within different countries while campaigning against apartheid. This, he says, “is specially relevant at a moment when the campaigns are starting to picking up in the U.S. or the U.K.” and persons such as Alan Dershowitz are threatening to bankrupt everybody who joins in.

Thus, “if we want the BDS campaign to flourish, we need to clear up this threat if we want people not worried and on our side.”

**Steven Friedman** clarifies an earlier point, arguing that while “we should not get involved in constitutional nicety, the broad constitutional future vision is very important,” since “the way in which we see the in-process and what kind of democracy are we aiming for really influences the political strategy”; thus this is a major issue to research. Another point made by Friedman, in reply to Bresheeth and others who touched upon the issue, is that we should not forget that even if “99% of this gathering might be secular, this is not the reality among the people that engage in this conflict,” and thus to “assume this about the people on the ground is inappropriate.” He suggests considering “the idea of meeting scholars and democrats from the major monotheistic religions involved in the process and trying to conceptualize a democratic and humane version of religion.” A last point is the need “to ‘mainstream’ the demands of the Palestinian people into the international democratization debate” and “challenge liberals and liberal democrats to explain why their ideology applies to everybody except to the Palestinian people.”

**Ali Abunimah** emphasizes that “the slogan ‘end occupation’ has become an obstacle to peoples’ understandings and for reaching a resolution.” He argues that the slogan was adopted by right-wing Zionist racist groups such as Peace Now and that it allows for the perpetuation of Jewish supremacy. Thus, the message to be stressed is that “the occupation is just one manifestation/aspect of the Israeli racism and colonialism.” Moreover, Abunimah claims that dismantling and fighting this slogan is easier than one would think, at a moment when its validity is clearly fading on this side of the “peace camp.” He suggests strongly pushing forward the one-state solution among people (mainly in the United States), given that, at this point, it is still not so clear to them which is the most suitable option.

**Omar Barghouti** advocates ‘targeting’ the representatives of the Palestinian refugees, taking into consideration that they are (of the three Palestinian sectors) the most well represented within organizational structures all over the world. Thus he argues that “tapping into this huge community, the majority of Palestinians can turn this project from a very nice dream to the first step towards realizing it.” For Barghouti, this option “is a revolutionary thing, and if we can convince the representatives of the refugee communities (and I am involved in this and I can see it happen) about the one-state solution, we can turn this into a path of realization.” **Leila Farsakh** builds on Barghouti’s point and warns that we need to differentiate clearly between political mobilization and political organization. She argues that “the refugee group is a very good mobilization group so far but that it lacks political organization, which is our fundamental problem.” Insisting on the importance of renovating and reinventing the PLO as a fundamental step toward the realization of our objectives, Farsakh suggests a research agenda that focuses on comparative studies of how groups such as the African National Congress transformed themselves into new political movements. On the political level, she returns to the issue of how to transform and tear down old structures and figures, questioning who are the necessary people to do so and how it should be done, since we seem to be able only to mobilize and publicize.

**Nadim Rouhana** suggests two things. The first is to organize a workshop that deals exclusively with the different models of democracy that need to be discussed and investigated. The second is to elaborate an empirical study by conducting well-planned survey research into the acceptability of the one-state solution among the various Palestinian communities around the world and within Israel and the OPT. **Ilan Pappé** warns about “the existing tension between the sense of urgency of things to happen on the ground and the very long-term how-to project

we are involved in.” He proposes two ideas. On the one hand, he suggests that the research projects we undertake be linked to end products that go beyond the standard books and paper (e.g., developing research on education systems that ends by proposing a curriculum for joint schools in our context). On the other hand, he proposes to tackle research agendas and ideas from unexpected and innovative angles (e.g., a group of Palestinian scholars dealing with the question, *Who is a Jew?*, considering that usually it is the other way around). Pappé ends his intervention by emphasizing Farsakh’s point about our role and our limits at this stage. He mentions that “this year we should concentrate and organize in writing, which is what we know how to do better.”

**Michael Tarazi**, picking up on Rouhana’s proposal, strongly supports the idea and suggests that before any public opinion polls and message targeting are carried out, we need to understand and know our market in order to be successful. **Joseph Massad** replies once again to Oren Ben-Dor about the need to address the fears and concerns of Israeli Jews with regard to losing their supremacy privileges. Massad argues that “there is no role for us to go and expose ... the crimes of their constitution or what they have done ... This has been done already by Israelis and Palestinians.” **Omar Barghouti** suggests that we keep thinking about known issues, such as the right of return and the one-state idea, addressing the injustice ethically and legally without creating more injustices. Like Farsakh, Barghouti notes that the only way to achieve our goals is to recreate the PLO as an “all-inclusive mass mobilization from the bottom up, grassroots up.” He also points out that even though this is a task to be accomplished by Palestinians, at some point we could think about including Jewish Israelis anti-Zionists (JIAZ) in the PLO. Finally, he considers making a good film about the one-state idea as an important tool to put the issue on the map.

**Haim Bresheeth** refers to the need,

“based on research, to attack the fact that ‘the Quartet’ exists at all, a group that is not reporting to anybody anywhere and that does not depend on any elected body whatsoever from any country.” **Islah Jad** emphasizes the need to renovate the PLO “from the bottom up, mobilizing and organizing the existing bodies that can elect their representatives and that can ask for a national assembly to re-elect a new leadership.” **Ali Abunimah** insists that Massad is right when he argues that we need to be clear about the aims of the project, that is, “to remove all racial, religious, and ethnic privileges of Israeli Jews and institute, for the first time in modern history of Palestine, democracy.” The other point mentioned by Abunimah is that, as suggested by Friedman, there is a political project to describe what life is like in a decolonized state, since “one of the successes of the two-state industry is to create the false impression that it is realistic and practical and that it answers people’s daily concerns.” **Virginia Tilley** proposes to work out a networking agenda that redefines solidarity without “remaining isolated and becoming just a bunch of intellectuals.”

### Fifth Day

The fifth and final day of the seminar raises the concerns highlighted along the conference in order to translate them into political and action agendas.

#### *Panel I – Initiatives in favour of a unitary state: social movements, economy and labour forces, political parties and diplomacy*

The economic dimension and the international community are the topics chosen by **Leila Farsakh** to introduce the way forward toward a one-state solution. Farsakh expands the economic dimension touched on in her previous intervention by depicting the situation of Israel’s economy today. She describes the growing crisis of the Palestinian economy—“a strong and independent economy

that has been growing good despite contradictions since September 11, if not since the second Intifada.” Contrary to the South African context where the Afrikaners were strongly dependent on black labour, Israel does not rely on Palestinians more than 3 % of its labour force which makes it very difficult to undermine and cause serious problems to their economy. Moreover, Farsakh describes how the Oslo agreement opened Israel to new and huge markets such as China and India, transforming it into an economy that is very diversified, globalized, and completely or quasi-independent of the Palestinians. Thus, she continues, “you can endanger the Israeli economy politically, for to far destabilize it from the model it has economically it is very difficult and it needs some further considerations about the nature of the globalized economy of Israel today.” This brings in Farsakh’s second point, which is the international community. She claims that a “globalized system is both remedy and source of some of our malaise; it is a key factor that can help us see how we can deal with the reality that Israel seems to be quasi-independent economically of the Palestinian factor.” Along these lines, she reminds us that there is not only a single factor that brings down a colonial structure and that, if BDS is an important one, we should not neglect investing our efforts and aims in other possible lines of action as well. For Farsakh, the role of the international community is very important thus she proposes to focus on and target the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, because “they have become very important on preventing the Palestinian economy from collapsing but also because they have become important interlocutors between the Palestinians and the Israelis.” Agreeing on the limited role that these two actors have played, she recognizes that in the Palestinian case the problem is that the international community is “helping to develop a militia and a public sector that is completely inefficient and that replaces the role of the market, instead of investing in the private

sector; thus the international community has accepted to take the role of financing the occupation.” Farsakh worries that if we do not target and care about these international organizations, they will completely shift their position and discourse, as has already happened in many cases, assuming and internalizing Israeli propaganda and discourse. The question thus is, How do we counter this situation that is trivializing the concept of the Palestinian state, and how do we recover such an important tool? Since the international community both finances the Palestinian economy and sustains Israeli prosperity, Farsakh proposes a campaign that targets diplomats in order to explain both how “the two-state solution that they are adopting is actually corrupt, and it’s squandering Europeans taxpayer money,” and how it is in “EU’s interest to put pressure or adopt the model of the one-state solution as a better way to deal with the poverty and the catastrophe of the Palestinian economy, which in itself will have serious economic and political impact on the Israeli economy in the long term.”

**Joseph Massad** provocatively evokes in his intervention how Israel habitually presents itself and how we should present it. Massad believes this is important, since, “after all, the Palestinian struggle is ultimately also a struggle over interpretation”; it is important, he argues, “that we are able to provide an interpretation that is persuasive, convincing, and resonates with different audiences and at the same time undoes the rubric of the Israeli attempt trying to present itself as a country beleaguered and as a refuge for Jews while claiming that it combats anti-Semitism.” In his exposition he defines a threefold rationale of the claims that explain why Israel and Zionism need to ensure that Israel remains a racist state by law and why it deserves to have that right. The first claim is that “Jews are always in danger out in the world, and only in a state that privileges them racially and religiously can they be save from gentile oppression and can prosper.” The second is that “Israel has transformed itself

into a non-racist state, and its Arab population will undermine the commitment to Western civilization and its defence of the West's economic and political interest and might perhaps transform Jews themselves into a Levantine barbaric population." Massad reminds us that "there has... been no discernible change in this racist attitudes at all" and that "it is important to note that at the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of Zionism, the commitment to this racist schema continues." The last claim is that "God has given this land to the Jews and told them to safeguard themselves against gentiles who hate them"; thus, "to make Israel a non-Jewish state would run the risk of challenging God himself." Ultimately, to Massad, "accepting any of this Israeli line will mean immediately to fall into this kind of rhetoric, and thus the only possible way of exiting from it is to insist on constantly deconstructing all of Israel's claims as claims about racialism, about Jews' supremacy and privilege." To conclude, Massad argues that "we should always make sure that, in our attempt to mobilize solidarity groups, the key opening to undoing the Israeli claims, at least at the level of politics, rhetoric, and law, is by entering through the question of race, the question of racist laws, the question of racist claims of exceptionalism." Short of that, he continues, "we will very much lose both the media/political campaign and the moral high ground."

**Michael Tarazi**, building on **Steven Friedman's** proposed three Ps (program, politics, and people), adds a fourth P, that of publicity. Apologizing for adopting the language of the capitalist business world, he argues that "creating a product and having a good product is not enough to see it sold. Israelis, knowing they have a very bad product, ... have invest heavily in its marketing, and even though the Palestinians have a very good product they invest very little if anything at all in its marketing." He insists that we should not make the same mistake with respect to framing the debate when it

comes to one state. Tarazi outlines, throughout his intervention, different suggestions that should be considered when framing and casting the one-state "product." First, he reminds us that "we have to remember, when discussing this question, that we are not the target audience" and, thus, that talking to others who are not familiar with our thoughts and ideas is not the same as talking to one another. So in order to have a sort of massive appeal "we must find different ways and terminology and entirely new discourse." Second, Tarazi proposes to use certain buzzwords and winning arguments such as equal rights, discrimination, citizenship, diversity, multiethnic society ... Those all, he argues, "tap into the Western liberal ideology that allows peoples living in those countries, which are major power groupers for better or worst, to really mobilize and galvanize around this issue." Third, he emphasizes the idea of keeping the message simple. Using the example of an invitation to an apartheid rally that he received while in college, he describes the importance of simplifying the message: "I knew all I needed it to know: there were white people that were denying black people the right to vote because they were black." Fourth, Tazari proposes to show that "we really have an answer, we are looking to the future, and we have thought this through." He uses the case of the Geneva Initiative to show how the people involved in this proposal came with a comprehensive and complete package that included all that was needed, even if the product itself was not a good one. The fifth suggestion is to focus on different issues with different target groups, using different messaging. Here he highlights the fact that now is a good time to address this issue in Israel–Palestine, after the fever of the war on terror and 9/11. The next controversial suggestion made by Tarazi is that "the focus on the past is a real pitfall that is not necessarily unifying and has a very potential alienating effect." He continues by arguing that "it does so because people disagreeing on how you characterize the past, whether or not

Israel is a colonial enterprise is nothing everybody agrees on, I do not agree on that” and that “the beauty of this is that we do not have agree on that.” Therefore, “I believe that we are better off focusing on what our vision is for the future and not whether or not we agree on the past.” Tarazi’s seventh point is that “we will be very naïve if we think that we can make this effort work without making a serious crack in Israeli society.” He argues that “we need to get some key players within Israel, and I do not think is a very logical argument to go to them and say, ‘We think that you have less of a moral right to be here, but we are promoting equality.’ We have to say, ‘You have an equal right to be here, this is not about taking things away from you, but it is affirming our equal rights.’” The last suggestion is that we should not assume that everyone who supports the one-state solution does so under the same political philosophy. He proposes “not to adopt terminology that alienates with people that might not agree with you philosophically. We agree on one state, keep the message simple, on equality, on equal citizenship.” Furthermore, he asserts that this also gives a lot of ammunition to our detractors, and that we have to make sure that we do not allow the terminology we use to dismiss us.

#### *Question-and-Answer Session*

During the Q&A, **George Bisharat** adds that it is very relevant to talk about the issue of the “war on terror.” **Steven Friedman** raises again the issue of whether or not Zionists should really be included or not in these first stages; he claims that we need to frame the question as a struggle for democracy and that there is nothing to be dismantled, since one state is the reality of the moment: the point to be made is that we want it to be a true democratic state. **Joseph Massad**, addressing Tarazi’s idea of leaving aside the past, asserts that the past is not a matter of opinion but of facts, that the Zionists have used history in a very powerful way, and that this approach works. So packaging and messaging might be

a good strategy, but using historical facts.

#### *Round Table – Create a new future for Palestine and Israel: a democratic and non confessional (secular?) state for all its citizens*

**Leila Farsakh** introduces the round table and draws by far the most complete outline of the issues that have been raised and discussed during the whole seminar. She identifies two major steps to move forward the idea of one-state solution: a research agenda and a political strategic agenda. Within the research agenda, Farsakh identifies five areas that need to be further analysed and carefully thought through in order to better understand the issues: What is the one state that we want? What shape? How can we make a case for it? What is preventing it? And what needs to be worked on? On the research agenda, and addressing **Ilan Pappé**’s proposal, Farsakh suggests three grids that need to be considered at the theoretical level: (a) nationalism versus post-nationalism, (b) colonialism versus decolonization, and (c) liberalism versus multiculturalism. These are three theoretical grids, Farsakh argues, “that will accompany us as we go above and do these other five theoretical dimensions which are central to the one state.” Along these lines she draws the issues that need to be discussed and further analysed. The first research question proposed is that of the Jewish Question. She claims that this issue is still very present and that we need to decide whether it is a debate that needs to take place among Jews or among Palestinians. “What we ... concluded is that the Jews’ question (and the Zionist question, but as separate from the Zionist question) is still current, and it’s a peculiar issue that we need to understand how does it become de-essentialized and how does it become a non-Jews’ question?” The second research question is the form of the state. Farsakh argues that

we touched on it, we all agree is going to be one state, but we still do not know if it is going to be

binational, secular-democratic, we did not solve the question of what do we mean by democratic, what form of democracy, how do bring in the peculiarity of the colonial settler division we have in Israel–Palestine to move into a new form of democratization, what is the new form of citizenship we need, how do we think about it, should we go into the debate, do we go into the debate of liberal democracy and the right of stakes or go into a new form of decolonization that we need to think about within the specificity of the Palestinian–Israeli context. We also had a debate on citizenship, democratization, and the constitution, but the constitution will follow about revealing the new form and nature of the democracy that this state will have.

The third research dimension outlined is that of the legal domain: “Within this dimension there were two elements that were raised: (a) revisiting 181 in order to have out of it a strategy to mobilize for the one-state solution and (b) be careful on how to use law as discourse or as a strategy, should we have one single paradigm or can we work on different strategies that can address the central issues like the right of return, the equation of the racist state ...” The fourth dimension is the economy. “How do we think about a more equalitarian economy in the one state that we have?” Farsakh asks. “What kind of strategy has to be done on the international level in the context of globalization? What are the forces opposing to it?” A fifth research dimension, previously mentioned by Farsakh, is the notion of citizenship, a question that she believes is fundamental to this theoretical debate. On the political level, she proposes to build upon the point made by **Steven Friedman**: “the fact that for any political strategy we need three Ps and to which Michael Tarazi adds a fourth one: program, people, politics, and political messages or marketing.” Making an exercise to depict the state of the situation in 2007, she asserts that we are in a mixed situation: “we are not doing so badly, but we don’t know its shape, that is why the research question is there, but we know that we want one state.”

On the one hand,

what was suggested is that maybe the best way to politically strategize is to frame it within the context of democratization. In terms of people and strategies, it seems we are doing good at the grass root level, we are not at the very beginning, there are some polls indicating this and more that are to be done, a BDS campaign that is functioning ... We need thought to define some clear strategies about how to reach more policy makers within the EU or the U.S. for the one state. We came out aware that different areas need different strategies and thus we have to discuss among us and with the grassroots, where does the apartheid model or the colonization model works better ... but the whole point is canalizing towards the idea that what we need to strategize for is to bring everybody towards seeing the morality, the justice and the inevitability of the one state.

On the other hand,

that is not clear yet, and we need to work on it politically, how we work at the official (EU, U.S., international organizations) level. At the level of messaging (political message before coming to the politics), there was a “hot” debate, and we definitely do not seem to all agree how to package the message: Do we call a cat a cat, or do we do it the American political correctness way? There is obviously a disagreement on how to hand the political message. This is a very big issue, I do not know how it can be really resolved, since we came from different backgrounds, so the point is that although we are clear that we want a one state, we are still not clear on how to frame it or message it.

Last but not least, Farsakh tackles the issue of politics:

Who are the political actors who are going to work in practical, pedantic, structural, hierarchical, as well as consensual ways? This is the most difficult question we have today; this is the lacuna we are in and the reason why we are here. Some said that we need to reinvent the PLO; this is a research question, but mainly a political one. There is

Hamas, but there are other parties that are there and I believe somewhat in the state of formation. But I find the biggest challenge we are confronting today is how we are going to define a new political organization that can mobilize for a one-state solution.

She concludes by claiming that “we are not in a bad situation, we are in a very historic moment, there are many things on our side, we have various parts of the puzzle, we still need to elaborate on some of them and connect them, but I believe we are in a good starting point to achieve the one-state solution.”

Next to speak during the round table is **Haim Bresheeth**, who basically insists on his previous arguments, claiming that Zionism will not ever be a solution for anything or anybody and that the State of Israel should stop being an ethnocentric and racist state. **Pedro Martinez Montavez** warns of the dangers of forgetting about the surrounding context and the need to think about the ways in which a confessional democratic state will insert itself in a decaying Arab-Islamic context and the possible augmentation of the region’s existing instability. **Carlos Prieto** emphasizes the need to invent new and creative ways of doing politics and inserting the political struggle of Palestine (which has links with and is similar to other conflicts) within other world struggles. Militancy strategies and means of action, Prieto says,

must be articulated in transnational and fluid ways. **Ali Abunimah** reads in his turn the manifesto that has been agreed upon among the different participants of the seminar<sup>1</sup>

**Omar Barghouti** concludes by reminding us that “de-Zionization has to be done at two levels, at the conceptual level and the relational or action concrete level.” He proposes, in order for this to happen, “to reunite and recreate the PLO as the only legitimate representative including all Palestinian factions and groups” and, furthermore, “to mobilize the Palestinian refugee community in particular, as it could be the core group of the movement pushing for the one state.” The refugee community, he continues, “are the majority, and if they adopt this as their slogan, then we would have moved from a completely theoretical framework that some might call utopian into a very realistic program of action that can indeed have its own momentum and realize some concrete steps.” Barghouti sums up by claiming that “we have to offer at all times this moral vision of justice and peace that can recapture or capture the imagination and action of Palestinians, conscientious Israeli Jews, as well as the international civil society at large.”

1 <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article7102.shtml>