

# End British Mandate System of Injustice

by Michele Steinberg

April 1—On the eve of the inauguration of the Netanyahu war government in Israel, a couple of hundred people attended a conference on March 28-29 at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, titled, “One State for Palestine/Israel: A Country for All Its Citizens?” More than 30 speakers, including professors and scholars on Middle East studies from the most eminent universities in the U.S., Britain, Israel, and Canada, made presentations that, in total, represent a shocking notification to the U.S. foreign policy establishment. Their collective message, based on years of study and fighting for political and human rights, is that it is time to give up the pretense that Israel has any intention of creating a sovereign, independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, based on the borders prior to the 1967 Arab-Israeli War; on United Nations Resolution 242; on the Oslo Accords; or, on the so-called “Road Map,” the stillborn baby of the George W. Bush Presidency that created the cover for mass violence against the Palestinian people.

This was not an academic exercise. Several of the Jewish speakers, in particular, warned that there will be more massive Israeli attacks, like that against Gaza, on the Palestinians—and soon. But while no conference on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis could have taken place without including discussion of Gaza and Operation Cast Lead, in which the Israeli Defense Forces killed an estimated 960 women, children, and elderly civilians, out of the about 1,400 dead, the conference was not a sudden reaction to the latest Gaza operation. Rather it was planned months in advance, a studied effort to present a solution with parameters that go outside the “politically correct” bowing down before the “two-state solution,” that has been repeated so often that it has become meaningless.

The speakers provided a thought-provoking examination of the apartheid system in Israel—the country that is sustained in its present form *only* by massive

annual aid from the United States, and which had been called the “only democracy” in the Middle East by the criminally stupid Bush-Cheney Administration. More significantly, the collaboration of the many Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim, and Arab scholars, provided a framework that could end the hideous legacy of the British mandate system in Palestine, and bring about justice for both Palestinians and Jews.

After eight years of the Bush Administration; after the civil war inside the Palestinian camp, following the U.S.-European ostracizing of Hamas after its election victory; and after the clear victory of the fascist/religious right in Israel, a large number of organizations and academics, both Jewish and Palestinian, from universities in England, Canada, Israel, and the U.S., have concluded that the two-state solution is dead, and undesirable in any case under current circumstances. In the 16 years since Oslo, the Palestinian Authority is weakened beyond belief, and about half the members of the Palestinian Legislative Assembly are rotting in Israeli jails.

The presentations made clear that the debate in Washington over solving the Israel-Palestine crisis has been made so narrow, as to be almost useless. The “two-state” mantra leaves out the millions of “stateless people”—the Palestinians who have lived in the refugee camps for generations, since the “*nakba*,” the expulsion by violence of Palestinians from their homes in what is now Israel. It leaves out the state of “apartheid” and second-class citizenship for Palestinians who live in Israel, and especially Jerusalem, where a Palestinian baby born is not even given the dignity of a birth certificate. It leaves out the very definition of “sovereignty” and the end of colonialism as envisioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and spelled out in FDR’s frank discussions with Winston Churchill.<sup>1</sup> It leaves out the principles of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly spelled out as the only solution to the religious wars that have been deliberately ignited by the Anglo-Dutch oligarchy following World War II.<sup>2</sup> Other than the Westphalia principle, which has been uniquely developed in recent years by Lyndon Lyndon and Helga Zepp-LaRouche, all of these other issues were powerfully addressed at the conference.

1. Elliott Roosevelt; *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946).

2. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, “Peace of Westphalia Is a Model for Today,” *EIR*, Aug. 25, 2006.

## Renewing an Old Fight

This is a discussion that is not easy for Washington to swallow; it challenges the very fundamentals of a “Jewish” state, that is, a state where the privileges of citizenship, property, marriage, inheritance, ownership, and freedom of movement are given to only one religious group, and where security considerations treat “the other” as an enemy within. It is a debate which has been largely buried since 1988, when the Palestinian Liberation Organization recognized the existence of the State of Israel, and constituted itself as a government-in-exile with a Palestinian National Congress (PNC). The debate was further closed, reported many Palestinian speakers, after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, where the PLO, in order to create the Palestinian National Authority, gave up representation of the Palestinians living inside Israel, those in refugee camps, and those in the diaspora, who had previously been part of the PNC.

But, it is clear that Washington will be hearing far more of this renewed debate. In fact, immediately following this conference, about two-thirds of the University of Massachusetts speakers addressed the Second Annual Conference on Gaza, sponsored jointly by Harvard University and MIT, where they joined Rep. Keith Baird (D-Wash.), who was the first Congressman to visit Gaza since 2006, immediately after Operation Cast Lead; Henry Siegman, director of the U.S./Middle East Project; and Dr. Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, who has called for an “expert inquiry” to investigate allegations of war crimes committed in the Gaza War.

## What Is the Most Just?

The composite picture presented by many of the speakers, especially those who have lived in Israel, or in the Palestinian territories, demonstrated that whatever the ideals had been in the Oslo Accords, they are now *gone*. From 2000 to 2009, more Jews and Palestinians have died in fighting than in all of the years from 1948 to 2000, according to Dr. Norton Mezvinsky, a Jewish professor at Central Connecticut State University; at the time of the Oslo signing, there were 109,000 Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories; now, there are over 235,000, even though the expansion of settlements was outlawed, reported Palestinian leader Prof. Nareer Aruri, from the University of

Massachusetts, Dartmouth; and the “Wall” has stolen more land and water from Palestinians, reported numerous speakers, documenting the increased immiseration of the Palestinian people since the creation of the Palestinian National Authority.

The solution is to go back to fundamentals, the principles of sovereign nationhood and equal rights for all states.

As the Jewish speakers, both Israeli and non-Israeli—including Mezvinsky, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti, Prof. Joel Kovel, Dr. Mark Ellis, author Ilan Pappé, and Dr. Gabriel Piterberg—made clear, this is not an easy fight now, nor has it ever been. To be a champion of democracy in the Israeli-Palestinian debate is to be branded “anti-Semitic” or, the Anti-Defamation League’s favorite cry of ostracization, a “self-hating Jew.” But the ideas that they provided for opening the debate are powerful.

Piterberg broke the ice on the ADL’s insults, quipping that, as the son of a Jewish mother, how can he be described as “self-hating”? Mezvinsky, who claimed to have the most difficult topic, “Mobilizing World Jewry” to support a strategy for “building one country, secular and democratic,” presented a *tour de force* of the historic debate on Zionism, with so many writings and speeches of 19th- and 20th-Century Jewish rabbis and scholars against Zionism and the British-sponsored Zionist colonists, that he (like many other speakers) barely had time to scratch the surface. Ellis, the author of a new book, *Judaism Does Not Equal Israel*, referenced how Israeli Jews who criticize the occupation, and who have written or spoken out against the immorality of Israel’s treatment of Palestinians, have been ostracized and exiled. Speaking on “Israel, Ethnic Particularism and Universalist Values,” Ellis concluded with the idea that the State of Israel cannot exile Jews of Conscience, but rather that history will see the “Jews of Conscience” travelling into exile, “carrying the Covenant.”

Palestinians Ali Abunimah and Omar Barghouti, who spoke respectively on the first panel, and in the closing colloquy, laid out all of the essentials about the intolerable conditions that Palestinians live under, the political obstacles to discussing a single democratic and secular state, and how to proceed with organizing for this idea. Salman Abu Sitta, coordinator of the Right of Return Congress, presented excellent documentation, with all necessary maps and coordinates, demonstrating that the return of Palestinian ref-

ugees would be actually a very minor disruption of the current population distribution of both Israel and the Palestinian territories. And Boston University law professor Susan Akram provided a detailed review of the United Nations’ actions, and international law precedents for the return of the Palestinians, and how security and justice in “one country for all its citizens” can come about in Israel/Palestine.

Is a single state the only solution? No, but these scholars, after the last decade, view it as the most just, and perhaps the only one.

## Regime Change

Author Ilan Pappé warned the conference attendees that the battle for creation of one single, secular, democratic state of Israel and Palestine, is nothing less than calling for “regime change,” in Israel. Not just the change of a current regime, but of 100 years of “facts on the ground,” including the totality of postwar U.S./European policy.

One of the final speakers at the conference was Dr. Ghada Karmi, author of the book *Married to Another Man*, which takes its extraordinary title from an 1897 report to the rabbis of Vienna on the prospects for a Jewish state in Palestine. After a fact-finding mission to Palestine, the report concluded, in the best tradition of Yiddish Renaissance humor, “The bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man.”

Karmi concluded her presentation by reading excerpts from a 2007 draft resolution for the UN General Assembly that she co-authored. The resolution reviews the UN resolutions that were passed by the Security Council and accepted by Israel as a precondition for Israel’s membership in the United Nations, in 1949. She explained how Resolutions 181 and 194 explicitly demand a full right of return for all Palestinians who were kicked off their land in 1948. Israel has violated UN resolutions and the UN Charter itself, even though Israel’s membership is explicitly predicated on full compliance.

The proposed 2007 UNGA resolution abolishes the partition, and establishes a single state in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, to be a democratic, secular state, under a new constitution, to be drafted by a representative body of the Palestine/Israel state. Karmi explained that if one member-state of the General Assembly introduces the resolution, it would have to be debated by the full Assembly.