

Israel's Illusion of Normality Collapses

May 2021 has shattered Israeli illusions that they are immune from the volcano the country has created through its history of ethnic cleansing and apartheid.

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For decades Israelis have basked in the light of success. After fifty years of brutal, illegal occupation and control of the whole of Palestine, they have managed to habituate the world to the realities of Israeli Apartheid. They even started believing that they have managed to get the Palestinians to accept such success. Israel was gearing up to welcome many tourists in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis in Europe and elsewhere, being one of the only countries which have managed to control the virus successfully. Israel may not have a properly elected government for the last 28 months, its Prime Minister is facing criminal charges in court, and the ICC is preparing its case against Israeli war crimes, but none of this stopped Israel from committing more war crimes daily.

Israelis lived under – or upon – a volcano, believing themselves to be immune from standard legal and societal norms. Their control of over six million Palestinians seems to be safe from intervention, criticism or challenge. They believed the Palestinians have been completely neutralized by their [new reproachment](#) with the Gulf dictatorships.

May 2021 has shattered such bizarre illusions.

Having succeeded in controlling the COVID-19 virus, the government returned with energy to the main task, as seen by most political parties in Israel – control of Palestine. The front is ranging across all sectors of society. The main task is not new – freeing the land of its indigenous people, removing Palestinians from their houses, fields, towns and villages – moving towards an [Arabrein Israel in the whole of Palestine](#), through far-reaching racist legislation such as the new [Nation State Law](#). From a *de facto* racist state, Israel has become an Apartheid state *de jure*.

This is not a simple project, but Israel has a long history in perfecting the methods of ethnic cleansing – much longer than the history of the state. For over a hundred years the task of clearing Palestine of its people has had the support of the west – the strongest entities on the planet have protected the Zionist project since 1917 and the Balfour Declaration, and continue to do so – without qualifications, legal or moral boundaries or standards of

behavior. With such staunch support for illegality Israel is guaranteed success.

The three decades of British control over Palestine have imported methods of dispossession developed in Northern Ireland, employed in the country by the Black and Tans – the volunteer force supporting the British police and army in Ireland during its struggle for independence. The brutality they affected in Ireland was soon to be used in Palestine as many were sent there by Winston Churchill in 1922, to serve under the famously vicious ex-ERIC commander, Henry Hugh Tudor, who became the chief of the Palestine Police Force. The racism practiced against Catholics in Ireland, has become even more virulent against the Palestine Arabs. During the Mandate years [British support of the settler-Colonial project of Zionism](#) was crucial in building a base – military, social, financial and industrial – for the future Israel. The brutal methods of the PPF and the British Army which supported it during the [suppression of the Palestine Arab Rebellion 1936-39](#) have become the stock-in-trade of the Zionist militias, forerunners of the IDF, only to be further perfected and amplified after 1948. Israel has become [“a little loyal Jewish Ulster,”](#) in the words of Sir Ronald Storrs, first Military Governor of Jerusalem; This Little Ulster proved to be much nastier and more powerful than Ulster ever was.

The war in 1948 was almost successful in offering Zionism most of Palestine – 78% of the country. Many in Israel considered it unfinished business – the rest of the country had to be taken over, they believed, like Ben-Gurion, Israel founding father and first Premier. [In a letter to his son](#), on October 1937, he explains: “My assumption (which is why I am a fervent proponent of a state, even though it is now linked to partition) is that a Jewish state on only part of the land is not the end but the beginning.” What could not be achieved in 1948, will have to be done later. And it was.

En route to occupying the whole country in 1967, Israel has changed partners from the decrepit British empire to the French ‘colonial democracy’ ending up in De Gaulle’s Fifth Republic. France has not only armed Israel, but also enabled its nuclear military option, pushing the Palestine conflict into new, uncharted territory. Israel paid back by [joining the two colonial empires, Britain and France](#), in an illegal and outrageous attack on Egypt in 1956. This act of naked, unjustified aggression has clarified the long terms aims of Israel. Israel behaved like a foreign settler colony ever since its establishment, and since 1967 this has been the permanent *modus operandi* of all Israeli governments.

For over five decades, Israel has denied all rights to the Palestinians under its control, has stolen most of their resources – agricultural land, water and forced taxation which serves only the occupier. Tens of thousands of houses were destroyed, millions of trees were burnt or uprooted, tens of thousands of Palestinians were jailed for trumped-up charges, including thousands of children, and more than 15 thousand innocent Palestinians were killed by the IDF. Ambulances and medical teams were shot at and many were killed in the act of offering medical assistance. Schools and Universities were forced to close for years, and the vulnerable infrastructure of communication, water, health, education, electricity, roads, industry and food production and distribution were destroyed time and again in periodic attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, as well as those of Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. Over 250,000 Palestinians were expelled in the aftermath of the war in 1967, and a similar number had left their land since as a result of other war crimes which made their lives insufferable. Human Rights Watch has pointed out the facts of Israel’s decades of occupation in a major report in 2019. Even the UN, so careful not to invoke Israel’s ire, has finally given up the pretense, in a [report published recently](#). It is now official – Israel is an

Apartheid state committing periodic and continuous war crimes.

None of these crimes could have taken place without the active support of the US, the European Union, the UK, Canada and Australia, who have provided Israel with a diplomatic umbrella at the UN, and made it impossible to pursue the peaceful option used in the case of Apartheid South Africa – Boycott, Divestment and Sanction against Israeli Apartheid, illegal occupation and war crimes over more than seven decades. You may wish to put BDS into a search engine, only to find that the official sites of such organizations are blocked for users. It does not take a genius to work out who is responsible for such a digital hacking of the campaign.

Every time Israel forces the situation into an explosive juncture, the US and its allies are insisting on Israel's 'right to defend itself', as if destroying Gaza or Beirut is a form of defense, or as if the denial of rights, and imposing an illegal total blockage is a way of resolving conflict. Not once did the western nations mention the [right of Palestinians to defend themselves](#) – apparently, they have no such right, as far as such 'democratic' nations are concerned. They also lack human rights of all kinds – the rights for self-determination, for living in peace, owning property, education, health or employment. [Palestinians have no political rights](#), the right to be free of occupation and oppression – all rights invoked on behalf of other nations the west purports to support, such as the Ukraine.

What we are now witnessing is far more serious than the two intifadas and the attacks on Gaza – it is typified by the coming together of Palestinians on both sides of the erased Green Line – erased by Israel. Israel has started a fire it may not be able to extinguish. Palestinians in Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, Haifa, Nazareth, Acre and of course in Jerusalem and Gaza, are rising against the racist, brutal and unjust settler-colonial society which has destroyed their life for over a century, ever since the start of the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Israeli society has never been more conceited, racist and nationalist than in the last decade under Netanyahu. The four years of the Trump administration have greatly contributed to the illusion of total impunity, and the government has increased the tempo of land confiscation, illegal destruction of houses, and settlement building, proving that they intend to squeeze out as many Palestinians out of their country, and make the life of the remaining ones so impossible that they will leave to wherever they may be able to. The process is over a century long, and succeeded in granting Israel total control over the whole of Palestine, so why doubt its further success? Israelis, of left, right and center, do not doubt that they can continue to oppress and suppress [Palestinians with impunity](#).

But now the streets are burning. Palestinians – those with the few rights still conferred on them by Israel, or their brothers and sisters in the 'occupied territories' (all of Palestine is occupied) who lack any form of rights, are now acting together against the atrocities of Israeli colonial control. What have they got to lose? Only their lives; and their lives are not safe under Israeli rule, for sure. They have had enough, much more than enough, for many generations, and those who advised them to wait, were false messiahs and snake-oil merchants.

Let us consider the dangers of this new, unprecedented situation. The so-called international community, weak and powerless at the best of times, is now less inclined than ever to move towards a just solution in Palestine, by applying sanctions against Israel. The Arab regimes of all colors are in a crisis of identity, embroiled in colonial wars started by the west – in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, and [most have signed up](#) to the Trump New World Order deal with Israel, taking themselves out of the conflict and away from any support of the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority – a creature of Israel and an arm of its control – has cancelled the first elections called since 2006, as we knew they would, under Israeli pressure. One of the [‘Arab’ parties in Israel, Ra’am](#), has been in talks with both sides of the political divide, prepared to work with either in defiance of the Palestinian public sentiment; [This at least had collapsed](#) within days of the Jerusalem attacks, and may lead to a more united Palestinian front. Palestinians have been abandoned by the west, by the Arabs, by Israeli liberals, and by liberals the world over. This realization is dangerous – for Palestinians and Israelis alike; dangerous times call for desperate measures.

We know that Israel has been [preparing for many years](#) for a *window of political opportunity* – a historical juncture which will enable it to [vacate Palestine of most of its remaining indigenous population](#). All governments in the west have proved their fickle credentials on Palestinian rights in the last couple of decades. Israel is safe in presuming international lack of political will to intervene in case of further war crimes. The temptation may prove too much for Netanyahu – the choice between jail and becoming the national hero of racist Israelis through further ethnic cleansing is simple to work out. He will certainly be supported in any attack by his many political rivals, who are vying with him in aggressive utterances. [The fire is now well lit](#), and will [consume many innocents](#). Some Israelis are arguing that he only does this to stay in power, as if this explains it away.

What more is needed for an urgent, principled political intervention on behalf of the Palestinians, forcing Israel into a just peace in the Middle East? What more is required to prevent an endless series of communal massacres, war crimes and forced expulsions? Is this crisis beyond the ken and the will of the world community, tired and beaten as it is by the health crisis? Must we stand aside while Israel ignites the Middle East?

One certainly hopes this is not the case.

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