

**“A COUNTRY OF WORDS”:  
CONCEIVING THE PALESTINIAN NATION  
FROM THE POSITION OF EXILE**

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Mahmoud Darwish's poem, "We Travel Like Other People," opens with, "we travel like other people, but we return to nowhere." It closes:

We have a country of words. Speak speak so I can put my road  
on the stone of a stone.

We have a country of words. Speak Speak so we may know  
the end of this travel.<sup>1</sup>

Darwish's words, like so many of those of the 4,920,000 Palestinians living either in exile or under Israeli occupation as of 1986,<sup>2</sup> attempt to articulate the trauma Palestinians face in identifying themselves as Palestinian in a world in which there is no longer a country called Palestine. In this paper I will essay a mapping of the 'country of words' that has come to stand in the place of Palestine in Palestinians' thoughts and activities. Here, then, is a survey, a Palestinian 'topography', that investigates how this recent diasporic people constructs and maintains a sense of a national identity when the territorial base to which that identity refers is occupied by another national movement -- itself constituted through the denial of the legitimacy of any Palestinian national aspiration. Central to this inquiry is the ways Palestinians, in the numerous places to which they have been scattered by the loss of their homeland, discursively construct images of themselves, their homeland, and the antagonists that have prevented them from achieving the national fulfilment which grounds their identities. What Edward Said has called the "various and scattered...fate"<sup>3</sup> of the Palestinians after the originary 1948 loss of their homeland has resulted, I will argue, in the construction of a number of different 'Palestines' corresponding to the different experiences of Palestinians in the places of their exile. The nation-building process which Darwish refers to in the final lines of his poem is, I contend, made difficult by the different senses of what it means to be Palestinian engendered by more than forty years of dislocation and dispersion. Issues of tactics as well as of identity are foregrounded by this diversity. Questions must be asked

not only about whether the 'roads' laid by various Palestinian communities will be recognised by other communities as routes to a place they too would recognise as Palestine, but also about whether the members of these various communities will recognise each other as allies or as antagonists if, and when, a Palestinian state is re-established.

The war of 1948 gave birth to the State of Israel, scattering indigenous Palestinians throughout most of the world's countries.<sup>4</sup> The 1949 armistice, which fixed the borders of the territories taken by Israel in the war, left 73% of what had been Mandate Palestine within the borders of the new Israeli state and 711,000 (82.6%) of the 861,000 Palestinian Arabs who had lived on that expropriated territory in exile outside its borders.<sup>5</sup> The war of June 1967 resulted in the rest of what had been Mandate Palestine falling under the control of Israel, with another 200,000 Palestinians (20% of the total population of Gaza and the West Bank -- many refugeeed for the second time in less than twenty years -- being forced to flee the territory. Most of the 2,880,000 Palestinians living outside of Israeli control as of 1986 trace their banishment back to those moments at which they, their parents or their grandparents, were forced to flee their houses and lands.<sup>6</sup>

Additionally, there are approximately 2,040,000 Palestinians living within the territories occupied by Israel, and these, too, have witnessed the loss of their homeland even though they still reside on the territory that was once Palestine. The situation of Palestinians living in Israel (within the borders set in 1949) and in the Occupied Territories (the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights, all taken in 1967) is effectively also one of exile. The intensive dislocations and disruptions which have taken place with the setting up and 'defending' of the Israeli socio-political order (386 villages were destroyed in 1948 alone, and subsequent developments have led to the mass relocation of populations, effective destruction of agricultural communities by forcing wage labour on peasants, and ever-escalating expropriations of lands for military and settlement building) have led Palestinians 'inside', like those 'outside', to perceive the territory which is the locus of their identity as mutilated and stolen. The fact that these people, technically, still live on the land that was Palestine in no way refutes their assertions that they are exiled from their homeland. For 'homeland' is itself a term already constituted within nationalist

discourse; it is the place where the nationalist imagines his or her identity becoming fully realised. A domain wherein Palestinian identity is denied cannot be considered the Palestinians' homeland, even if it were the very same ground on which they imagine the future Palestinian nation will be built.

It is a central contention of this volume that all ideas of community are 'imaginary' constructions insofar as community always exists through the imaging of the group of which one conceives oneself a member. Darwish's phrase, 'a country of words', has pertinence not only to Palestinians and others who have suffered from nation theft and can only locate their countries in reminiscences, stories, songs and histories but also to those who, living within existent communities, take the presence of those entities as given. All communities are "countries of words" insofar as the rituals of inscribing borders, picturing territories and populations, and thematising issues salient to those terrains and the communities believed to occupy them occur within discourse. In both oral and literate societies, the community is not a 'thing' in itself but a way of speaking, and thinking, about others who are 'like us'. People create communities rhetorically through thinking that some people are 'like' themselves while others are 'unlike' them. In this respect, demographic contiguity is only one element among many that can be drawn upon in stressing similitude and difference.<sup>7</sup>

Processes of conceiving likeness and unlikeness change, however, with changes in the media of communication which bring knowledge of others to mind. Benedict Anderson has argued that the particular systems of communication characterising societies with popular literacy allow the imagined population of the imagined community to be extended far beyond the bounds of the knowable or face-to-face community of societies characterised by oral communications.<sup>8</sup> He demonstrates such extension in his description of the "mass ceremony" of reading the daily newspaper through which the reader, "in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull," concerns himself with a field of national events and conceives himself, through that concern, as like the "thousands (or millions) of others [fellow readers] of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion."<sup>9</sup>

Although Anderson's own theorisation of the phenomena of identification through text tends finally to be materially deterministic (asserting that it is the presence of the

text as commodity which 'precipitates' the construction of the category of nation), implicit in his description is the recognition that the newspaper, like the novel, provides a ground on which readers can constitute their own subjectivities through identification with scenarios set out in the text. The reader of the newspaper, novel, or other narrative-bearing medium may (or may not) recognise himself or herself in a subject position produced within the narrative. By projecting that constituted subjectivity onto others who he or she believes engage that text, the reader can imagine a collectivity of persons positioned like (or unlike) himself or herself in relation to the concerns that the texts set out. This elaboration of the process of imagining community challenges Anderson's deterministic assumptions in so far as it foregrounds the problematic -- seemingly not at all recognised by Anderson -- as to why a person should (or should not) invest himself or herself in scenarios set out in texts. For the act of reading a newspaper or a novel does not automatically interpellate the reader within the subject positions they proffer; the text, and its positions, are objects to be interpreted, and, as Bourdieu has variously demonstrated,<sup>10</sup> the positions one takes in relation to various social texts are influenced by a wide range of factors. It seems likely that, in situations like those discussed by Anderson, there is already in play in the reader an identity which enables him or her to recognise the appropriateness to personal experience of subject positions within a text.<sup>11</sup>

The reader does not, in other words, 'find' a national identity through imagining a simultaneity of thousands (or millions) of others who are reading the same text at the same time. Instead, a national identity is constituted by discovering a set of concerns he or she 'recognises' as his or her own within a text or texts. Through identification with the position set out in such discourse, the reader is carried out of the isolation of individual experience into a collective phenomenon which the discourse articulates in national terms. This re-evaluation of Anderson's theorisation of the process of imagining community not only shifts attention from commodity form (that of the novel or newspaper) to the narrative content enveloped within those forms, but also emphasises the relationship between text and audience through which the text plays a role in fixing the identity of its reader. The reader, in assenting to that identification, comes to see the text (form and content) as signifying a

community of which the reader can imagine his or her self a part. This re-assessment also enables one to move beyond texts *per se* into the wider analysis of discourse in which all cultural artifacts become, in effect, social texts providing fields for identification.

The recognition that national identity is a discursive production impels the analyst of nationhood and nationalism to examine the process of articulation through which elements of everyday experience come to connote the presence of a thing which is never actually evidenced in full; i.e., the national entity. Whether this national entity is made up of those persons one imagines are one's fellow nationals (as with Anderson's imagined community) or is actually something even more nebulous -- the 'Nation' itself -- its most distinguishing characteristic is that it appears to be signified by its parts and is never perceivable as a whole. This Anderson points out with reference to the imaginary aspect of community: "the members of even the smallest nation," he writes, "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."<sup>12</sup> Žižek, elaborating on the fantasy of 'the Nation', writes that the nation thus

"appears as what gives plenitude and vivacity to our life, and yet the only way we can determine it is by resorting to different versions of an empty tautology: all we can say about it is, ultimately, that the Thing is 'itself', 'the real Thing', 'what it is really all about', and so on...the only consistent answer is that the Thing is present in that elusive entity called 'our way of life'. All we can do is enumerate disconnected fragments of the way our community organizes its feasts, its rituals of mating, its initiation ceremonies -- in short, all the details by which is made visible the unique way a community *organizes its enjoyment*."<sup>13</sup>

Both the national community and the nation itself will be imagined, consequently, by an abstraction of images of a 'way of life' from one's experiences of the persons and practices one has come to know or has come to imagine one knows (whether through personal acquaintance or through the imagination of familiarity that comes through the various media). These images are then projected onto the generalising screen of the 'national imaginary' as fetishes of the nation which *stand in* for the thing itself.

The national entity is, then, signified synecdochically (the whole being designated by one or more of its parts). In an instance where the character of the whole is not known, this is problematic in a way it is not when, for instance, the knowledge of the nature of a boat makes the designation 'sail' clear. People coming to imagine the entirety of a national community through their familiarity with a small sector of its members or conceiving the character of the nation through an extension of their knowledge of localized customs will find themselves severely at odds with others who construct their images of the national community and nation on the grounds of their experiences of entirely different groups with entirely different customs. Clearly, of course, the members of these different communities have knowledge of each other through the various media which extend the borders of the imagined community beyond the knowable community, but, as I have noted above, the positions they take up regarding the narratives presented in those media will depend on their experiences of their own milieu and of persons, or powers, which are seen to impinge on those milieu from a place they interpret as an 'outside'. This problem of imagining the nation is foregrounded in instances like that of the Palestinians in which the national community is scattered through a multitude of very different milieux. Thus, as I will demonstrate below in the cases of Edward Said, Fawaz Turki, and Raja Shehadeh, the imaginings of Palestine by Palestinians located within the various sites of the diaspora (respectively New York, Beirut and Ramallah in the Israeli-Occupied West Bank) will differ substantially, and may lead Palestinians from one domain to see those from another as foreigners or, even, as enemies. However, such dissonance is also likely to occur within established communities and nations. A nation or social order that is fixed or 'real' is as much a discursive construct as one that is dislocated, disassembled, or fantastic. In the former instance, however, the nation is taken as a given and voices that could deny its realisation are muted or marked as criminal, alien, or insane. Such hegemonisation effects a general common sense acceptance of the nation in the interiority of individual consciousnesses, promulgated not only by texts such as newspapers and novels, but also by the proliferation in the external world of signs (institutions, monuments, rituals and other 'sediments') alluding to the nation and rendering its presence irrefutable.<sup>14</sup>

It can be said that the 'national field' of discursivity operates with the nation as its parameter, and, though conflict and dissension are perceived as occurring against the backdrop of the nation (indeed, the political is generally seen to be either intra-national or inter-national), they are not perceived as putting into question the actuality of that entity (indeed, a threat to the nation, either from inside or outside, actually offers substantive support to its reality). Debate may occur as to who is part of the nation and who is its enemy, but such debate, within which major conflicts between differing modes of interpretation and identification are played out, rarely throws into question the existence of the nation. This is in large part because in a heterogeneous social field, with multiple foci of conflict and consensus, a situation of what Laclau and Mouffe refer to as a "total equivalence", where the discursive space of society "strictly divide[s] into two camps", rarely occurs.<sup>15</sup> (Civil wars and revolutions, in which diverse antagonisms are mobilised around a single set of oppositions, are exceptions, but even here the defense of the real nation is the slogan under which both sides of the conflict fight). The hegemonic discourse of the nation, like any mythology, makes the cultural -- that is the arbitrary and fashioned -- appear natural and fixed in the order of things.

Where the nation is taken as a given, national identity serves as a backdrop to the various identities adopted within the context of the national community.

Antagonism is perceived (if it is perceived at all) as threatening subsidiary identities rather than the national identity which engulfs them. Thus, in the example given by Laclau and Mouffe of a peasant prevented from being a peasant because a landowner is expelling him from his land, antagonism is perceived with reference to the identity 'peasant'.<sup>16</sup> A rhetoric of national rights may well come into play in the articulation of the conflict between peasant and landlord, but the conflict remains one between peasant and landlord, and not between non-national and national. (Although, as in Anderson's previous example where colonial officials were trained by the imperial bureaucracy only to be denied the opportunity of acting as civil servants in the Empire, the blocking of one identity by antagonism can give rise to struggles to constitute new identities which may undermine acceptance of the hegemonic discourse). In established nations, lands are also dispossessed, employment curtailed or cut off, educational opportunities denied and persons

unjustly incarcerated, but such events are discursively articulated as the *consequences* of either the operations of capital, the greed of landowners or businesspersons, the injustices of demographic settlement or localised racist practices, the incorrect interpretation of law by inept or corrupt officials and so forth. Such agencies may be seen to impede the full realisation of the national ideality, but these are discrete faults within the national order rather than antagonisms which challenge that order. Only in rare instances when the hegemonic hold of the concept of national identity has lost its grip on portions of the population are such events seen as signs of a denial of the national identity to those who suffer them.

The 'nation' in the discourse of an established national entity is an imprecise and effectively nebulous mythological concept which is, because of that imprecision, open to appropriation by all of its readers. In other words, the concept of the nation retains its grip on the imaginary of its population precisely by remaining unfixed. In this way, a wide range of persons and collectivities can identify themselves as constituent parts of it without having their readings and their allegiances to it challenged or denied by particular and exclusionary definitions. This unfixedity can only be maintained, however, as long as the persistence of the nation is taken for granted; as soon as the nation is discursively posited as endangered, battle lines are drawn and processes of selective exclusion/inclusion are set in play. Thus, when certain hegemonising groups claim the nation is threatened with dissolution or decay (as has been done in Britain by Thatcherite Tories and in the United States by McCarthyites and the 'Moral Majority') and attempt to 'correct' or fix the character of the nation along moral or political lines, constituent parts of the national entity are marked off as enemies. If the discourses of those groups are sufficiently influential, processes of division or fragmentation are set in play giving rise to conditions where equivalences can be made between seemingly disparate groups. Such processes are, however, generally curtailed by the state which isolates and marginalises the groups promoting them through the operations of ideological apparatuses or, when such groups prove sufficiently disruptive of national consensus, by criminalising and suppressing them. Such processes of division and fragmentation do, after all, assert what Laclau and Mouffe refer to as "the impossibility of society" and threaten to set in play the dissolution of the national imaginary and thus the disintegration of the

nation itself.<sup>17</sup>

When a nation is lost or unrealised, as when it is perceived as threatened, the issue of defining what impedes its realisation becomes salient.<sup>18</sup> Persons who conceive of themselves as nationals without a nation (like those who feel their national identity is endangered) will interpret all manifestations of antagonism effecting their 'subsidiary' identities as symptomatic of the denial to them of their nation. Within Israel and its Occupied Territories dispossession, unemployment, closure of schools and colleges, and imprisonment are interpreted by Palestinians as evidence of the Israeli state's systematic programme to eradicate a Palestinian presence. The same can be said of those occurrences that, to an outsider, seem unmotivated such as a drop in the number of tourists purchasing goods from Palestinian merchants in the markets of Jerusalem's Old City.<sup>19</sup> Here, in effect, all acts of threatening or disallowing particular identities (those of landholder, worker, student, etc.) are read as particular instances of a global denial of national identity. This equation renders equivalent all agents of antagonism as well as, by deduction, making 'the same' all those who suffer the effects of those antagonisms.<sup>20</sup> Such collectivities are, in other words, discursively constructed out of the recognition that all of their members (retroactively posited) suffer the 'same' oppression by the 'same' antagonist. Once such a construct is acknowledged, the process of totalizing equivalences can be realised, and a strict border can be drawn between those who deny identity and those who are denied it.

The identity that arises out of such a process, and the politics to which it gives rise, both depend on the various experiences each group (or each individual) mobilizes in its particular construction of identity, as well as on the way those elements are articulated in discourse. It is here that issues of the different experiences of communities in different locales of diaspora become central to the issue of nationalist politics. I suggested, in my revision of Anderson's theory of the way in which national identity is constituted, that the process of interpellating oneself within a nationalist discourse necessitates that one already have some sense of identity through which one can recognise the appropriateness (or inappropriateness) of the subject positions provided by that discourse. That initial identity provides the subject with the means of recognising and evaluating antagonism; one can sense that

one's identity is denied only if one has a sense of an identity to be threatened. The process of equivalence, therefore, requires that the specific identity undermined by antagonism can be extrapolated so as to be seen as constituting an element within a wider, collective identity. Thus the Palestinian street merchant whose business is eroded can come to see through the recognition of an antagonism he interprets as Israeli that he is not simply a street merchant but, like the members of the community of other persons he perceives as threatened by Israel, also a Palestinian. He is a street merchant who sees himself as a Palestinian because the economic deprivation which endangers his well-being is not simply economic but also a matter of a state policy which manifests itself in domains other than simply that of the market in tourist goods. As long as he perceives antagonism solely in economic terms the perceived source of the antagonism is as likely to reside in other merchants on the street or in the foreign tourists themselves as it is in the activity of Israeli policy.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, the elaboration of a Palestinian nationalist discourse plays a significant role in establishing this set of equivalences. In part, this happens by providing the merchant (and others) with a means of generalising their particular situations so that they appear as specific manifestations of more generic troubles -- troubles which in turn are seen as afflicting all members of the community to which they belong (or come to imagine themselves as belonging). In fact, the very existence of the term 'Palestinian',<sup>22</sup> which derives its contemporary significance from the antagonism towards 'Palestinians' manifested by agencies and allies of the Israeli state, provides any Arab who conceives of his or her origins in the territories now occupied by Israel with a subject position within a narrative of generalised Israeli hostility -- a narrative that can make meaningful all sorts of experiences of antagonism aimed at this Palestinian.

However, in a situation like that of contemporary Palestinians, where the national community is spread all over the world in a number of relatively autonomous enclaves, the nebulousness of the term 'Palestinian', which enables it to serve as a label of identity for all Palestinians, simultaneously renders it incapable of providing any sense of the distinguishing characteristics which would allow Palestinians in milieux where they suffer from particular antagonisms to recognise their situation as

'like' that of other Palestinians in different situations. A street merchant witnessing the harassment by Israeli soldiers of a peasant who has come to the city is likely to feel a consanguinity with that other 'Palestinian' because he recognises the source of the other's difficulties as being the same as his own. He is, however, unlikely, to feel any affinity with a Palestinian bourgeois he meets while visiting Jordan, even though the latter may be an exiled victim of the activities of the Israeli state. In such a situation the affliction the bourgeois Palestinian experiences in his or her life in exile will not appear to the former to be anything like that which threatens the merchant under occupation. Furthermore, the exiled Palestinian's response to the particular antagonism that afflicts him or her (a response that, in Jordan, involves attempting to build up economic influence and prestige so as to strengthen 'Palestinian' power in Jordanian society) will not be recognised by the visitor as an activity appropriate to a real 'Palestinian' even though the exile may deem it fully appropriate to the situation. Thus Raja Shehadeh, a West Bank solicitor whose The Third Way will be examined below, writes:

I don't go to Amman....seeing in the Jordanian capital men who have grown rich and now pay only wildly patriotic lip-service to our struggle is more than my *sumud* in my poor and beloved land could stomach.<sup>23</sup>

The problem is that, in the absence of any generalising positivity defining the Palestinians as a whole, the experience of antagonism itself comes to provide the determinative marker of identity. In the diasporic situation, where each community experiences different forms of antagonism, the members of each particular community will imagine their co-nationals as those who suffer 'the same' antagonisms as they do. They are unlikely to recognise as 'like themselves' others who suffer from different forms of assault on their identities, insofar as those other assaults are not the same as those they see constituting a 'Palestinian' identity.

Palestinians with whom I spoke during my fieldwork in the Occupied Territories (1983-1985) regularly referred to Edward Said, a person widely recognised in the West as a spokesman for the Palestinian movement, as "that American."

As Laclau and Mouffe indicate, any representation of the nation is "at the same time a fiction and a principle organizing actual social relations."<sup>24</sup> The envisioning by the nationalist of who it is who makes up the imagined community of which that person

conceives himself or herself a part determines the political means mobilised in the struggle to realise the national rights of that community. The relative isolation of the various worldwide Palestinian communities means that in a very real sense each fights for a particular portion of the Palestinian population by means which are seen as appropriate to countering the threat to that particular portion. Unlike in established nations, where the struggles of parts of the population are subsumed within a national framework by the operations of a hegemonic ideology, in unrealised nations like 'Palestine' there are few, if any, mechanisms that can effectively serve to translate all the particular struggles into manifestations of a single global battle for nationhood.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, until the time of the *intifada* and, as I will argue in my conclusion, up to the present day, each Palestinian community has seen its particular situation as 'Palestinian'. It has consequently disallowed or ignored the 'Palestinian' character of other groups' struggles. Often, instead of seeing other Palestinians as 'like' themselves, Palestinians in particular milieux have seen the efforts of other groups as undermining or threatening their own 'Palestinian' interests. Thus, ironically, as the internecine struggles between guerilla organisations and the conflicts between Palestinians on the 'inside' and the 'outside' have shown, Palestinians can play the role of antagonists to other Palestinians. In the following pages I will examine a triptych of Palestinian self-portraits which variously elaborate the meaning of Palestinian identity in the pre-*intifada* period so as to illustrate the way particular articulations of Palestinian identity can function to fragment the Palestinian nation rather than bring it together. These texts are Fawaz Turki's *The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile*, Edward Said's *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, and Raja Shehadeh's *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank*.<sup>26</sup> The Palestinian lives described in each differ widely, as the reader would expect in narratives which derive respectively from the experiences a person raised in the Lebanese refugee camps, from the life of a Palestinian university lecturer in New York, and from the perceptions of a solicitor working in Ramallah on the Occupied West Bank. What the texts have in common, other than the intention of elaborating Palestinian identity, is that all three authors, in describing who they and their people are, do so in very large part by describing the antagonisms which beset them. In accordance with the theory of identity formation elaborated above, I want

to show how these different antagonisms give rise to different imaginings of community and, in so doing, create a plethora of distinct strategies for realising the Palestinian nation rather than a unified nationalist movement.

### The Disinherited

Fawaz Turki states in the first pages of The Disinherited that “[i]f I was not a Palestinian when I left Haifa as a child, I am one now.” (TD:8) Although born in Haifa, Turki left at an age that ensured his childhood memories would come from squalid Beirut refugee camps where he was raised rather than from the Palestinian city from which his family was driven. The ‘Palestine’ he did not remember was, however, ever-present in the murmurings of older Palestinians who gathered in tight knots to recreate, compulsively, every detail of the lives which had been so suddenly wrenched from them:

The moths would gather around the kerosene lamps and the men would mumble between verses ‘*Ya leil, ya aein*’ (my night, my mind -- they have fused). It is a typical Palestinian night, Palestinian mind. And we would know we were together in a transplanted village that once was on the road to Jaffa, that once was in the north of Haifa, that once was close to Lydda. (TD:45).

Such obsessive recreation of the past is not unusual in persons who have been brutally separated from their previous ways of life. Peter Loizos’ The Heart Grown Bitter (1981) charts similar reactions amongst Greek Cypriot villagers driven from their lands by the Turkish invasion, and Peter Marris, in Loss and Change (1974), likens displaced peoples’ compulsive memorialization of the past to the neurotic reactions of family members who cannot accept the loss of a loved one.<sup>27</sup> For Palestinian peasants, who made up “the overwhelming majority of those in the camps,”<sup>28</sup> village life had provided the frame of reference for all experience, and the loss of that frame effectively led to the disintegration not only of their world but of their conceptions of self as well. Thus Rosemary Sayigh, who has done extensive work within the Lebanese camps, writes:

The village - with its special arrangements of houses and orchards, its open meeting places, its burial ground, its collective identity - was built into the personality of each individual villager to a degree that made separation like an obliteration of the self.

In describing their first years as refugees, camp Palestinians use metaphors like 'death', 'paralysis', 'burial', 'non-existence', etc....Thirty years after the uprooting, the older generation still mourns.<sup>29</sup>

This kind of nostalgia does not, however, provide a foundation for national identity, since in large part the collectivities being imagined in the villagers' reminiscences are their own obliterated village communities (which were, whenever possible, demographically reconstituted in the new settings of the camps).

Fawaz Turki and his generation did not learn what it was to be Palestinian from these nostalgic fantasies. Instead, their identity was forged out of the painful intolerance and harassment inflicted upon them by their unwilling hosts -- initially the Lebanese authorities -- but later, as migrant labouring forced them to travel through the Middle East, from the hands of business and state personnel throughout the Arab world. Turki's generation were taught that to be Palestinian was to be cursed at, harassed, exploited and imprisoned by those powers who despised them but who had nonetheless created them by the treatment meted out to them within the camps. Thus, for these younger, lumpen-proletariat, camp Palestinians the enemy eventually ceased to be those who had driven their people from Palestine and became, instead, first the 'Arab' in general and then everyone else who exploited them in their exile:

To the Palestinian, the young Palestinian, living and growing up in Arab society, the Israeli was the enemy in the mathematical matrix; we never saw him, lived under his yoke, or, for many of us, remembered him. Living in a refugee camp and going hungry, we felt that [while] the causes of our problem were abstract, the causes of its perpetuation were real (TD: 53).<sup>30</sup>

Just as the enemy is given the features of the particular tormenters of the camp Palestinians, so too the population of the imagined 'land' of Palestine becomes those who share the camp Palestinians' experiences of being 'Palestinian' rather than all those who are descended from persons who lived in Palestine. Since these experiences are based on poverty and exploitation rather than on national characteristics, this population, at first, is seen to be made up of all Arabs who suffer under the unjust leadership of reactionary Arab states -- "The revolution is Palestinian in its origin and Arab in its extension." (TD: 103). In time, however, as

the drift of diasporic life introduces Turki to the worldwide extension of reaction and corruption, the Palestinian community comes to be further redefined as “a commonwealth of peoples heavily laden, heavily oppressed.” (TD: 54). The struggle for the homeland becomes the struggle to constitute a ground on which human beings can have integrity. The liberation of Palestine thus becomes the liberation of [all] men and women... Palestine is not a struggle that involves only Palestinians. It is Everyman....[We are] confronting the whole mosaic or racist mythology in the West and in Israel that essentially claim[s] that certain races are inherently cowardly, inferior, backward, and incapable of responding to the fierce exigencies that press on the human spirit. (TD: 176)

The Palestinians created by camp life in the *ghurba* (exile or dispersion) grew up with no links to a past and with few non-oppressive connections to the present. The experience turned a number of them, like Turki, into revolutionaries working within internationalist, rather than nationalist, parameters:

We grew up in a vacuum. We belonged to no nation. We embraced no culture. We were at the bottom. The only way for us to go was up....We had nothing to lose. We lived on the edge of the desert. On the fringe of the world. We had little to risk....We made common cause with the oppressed. The oppressors made common cause against us. (TD: 154)

### After the Last Sky

The bourgeoisie, who for the most part managed to flee Palestine just before the 1948 catastrophe, were not, like the peasantry, hurled into a vacuum but were welcomed into an established and well-to-do expatriate community.<sup>31</sup> From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the urban elite of Palestine had established settlements throughout the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. Here their children could have cosmopolitan educations and they themselves could escape the Ottoman draft, British taxation and the depredations caused by Zionist penetration.<sup>32</sup>

The bourgeoisie of the *ghurba* have always been socially and economically assimilationist,<sup>33</sup> yet its members, despite integration into the cultures surrounding them, have maintained a strong sense of Palestinian identity. This persistence of Palestinianism reflects to some degree the importance of family ties and loyalties

based on place of origin to social and business relationships, but it also plays a significant role in maintaining a feeling of 'rootedness'. It helps to provide a fixity of identity for individuals scattered across a number of continents who become integrated into a multitude of culturally heterogeneous societies and are thus subject to numerous radically different economic, social, political, and confessional influences.

The loss of the homeland exaggerated these émigrés' already-present awareness of displacement and severance by making it impossible for them, literally, to 'go home' -- to perform, in the flesh, the pilgrimage constantly made in the imagination to remind themselves of who they were and where they came from. Cut off from that past, the bourgeois found himself or herself inescapably immersed in the anomie of the post industrial world

where no straight line leads from home to birthplace to school to maturity, all events are accidents, all progress is a digression, all residence is exile... The stability of geography and the continuity of land - these have completely disappeared from my life and from the life of all Palestinians. (LS: 20-21)

This world, unlike that of the camp Palestinians or that of the Palestinians of Israel and the Occupied Territories, is one in which individuals, alone or hived off in nuclear families, live in relative isolation from extended Palestinian communities. Here the connections between wider networks of Palestinian families and friends are not constantly rehearsed in daily life but instead run sporadically along telephone lines or scheduled air flights.

In such a context national identity is a fragile thing maintained not so much through contemporary patterns of action and affiliation as through fetishised links to a common past:

Intimate mementoes of a past irrevocably lost circulate among us, like the genealogies and fables severed from their original locale, the rituals of speech and custom. Much reproduced, enlarged, thematized, embroidered and passed around, they are strands in the web of affiliations we Palestinians use to tie ourselves to our identity and to each other. (LS: 14)

This 'Palestine', embodied in objects, images and gestures, cannot constitute an imagined simultaneity of like persons dreaming of (and working towards) a future state. The diversity, and the isolation, of the members of the diaspora's bourgeoisie

is too great to allow them to imagine Palestine as anything more than a past moment in which all the now-scattered people of their homeland were once together. Rituals of remembrance serve therefore to provide a touchstone, like a memento from childhood, offering sensed continuity to lives almost wholly- defined by the practices and the rituals of the surrounding communities in which the Palestinian bourgeoisie is immersed. Only in 'domestic shrines' (such as those displayed in the photographs Jean Mohr provided to illustrate After the Last Sky) are these individuals momentarily able to make contact with an island of identity afloat in the sea of their difference.

Despite working from one of the several distinct locales of Palestinian diaspora, Edward Said has succeeded in producing a well-researched body of writings which appear to transcend precisely those impediments to the articulation to a global image of Palestine described above. Once, however, one considers the role played by the antagonist in the activity of defining identity, Said's work can be seen to be continuous with the context out of which it emerges. If, as is suggested, the core of identity for the displaced bourgeoisie is memory and its mementoes, then the chief enemy of their form of national identity is the corrosive impact of time and misinformation. Years and miles bring about a gradual blurring and smearing of the contours of a remembered land and this gradual destruction is aggravated by the systematic misrepresentations of Palestinian history engaged in by Zionist and pro-Israeli manipulators of the media. Said's works range from explicit attacks on the media's anti- Palestinian calumnies and obfuscation<sup>34</sup> to philosophical-literary disquisitions on the question of how to begin to tell a story when one is always already *in media res*.<sup>35</sup> His projects approach from various directions the question of how forms of representation can be true to the objects they claim to represent. The structure of Said and Hitchens's Blaming the Victims exemplifies this; a series of ten essays, all describing the mechanisms by which Palestinian history and the Palestinian people have been and are being misrepresented, leads up to a long piece entitled "A Profile of the Palestinian People" which 'sets the record straight' by describing in detail the subject distorted by the previously-discussed discourses on Palestine and Palestinians.

After the Last Sky, with its profiles and its portraits, is a similar attempt to re-present

a fragmented subject. However, the diasporic experience of the bourgeoisie determines the character of the entity Said reconstitutes in that the Palestinian nation Said senses is, like the Palestinian community of which he is a part, a group composed of individuals tenuously tied together by what is lost rather than by what is held in common:

To be sure, no single Palestinian can be said to feel what most other Palestinians feel: ours has been too various and scattered a fate for that sort of correspondence. But there is no doubt that we do in fact form a community, if at heart a community built on suffering and exile. [...] We endure the difficulties of dispersion without being forced (or able) to struggle to change our circumstances. [...] Miscellaneous, the spaces here and there in our midst include but do not comprehend the past; they represent building without overall purpose, around an uncharted and only partially surveyed territory. Without a centre. Atonal. (LS: 5-6, 129)

There is little room in such a presentation for the revolutionary internationalist programme of a Turki or the stolid solidarity in suffering evident in the people described by Shehadeh. Said's 'Palestinian' is a composite of the Palestinians he knows, and these are persons who, caught in the web of exile amidst the anomic milieux of the late capitalist world, find occasional but brief respites from alienation in the celebration of an identity set off against that world.

Finally, and like most persons caught up in our dynamic, but decentred, world, they are people whose identity is always elsewhere and whose knowledge, like ours, is made up of the central fact that wherever they are it is always away from home:

Whatever the claim may be that we make on the world -- and certainly on ourselves as people who have become restless in the fixed place to which we have been assigned -- in fact our truest reality is expressed in the way we cross over from one place to another. We are migrants and perhaps hybrids in, but not of, any situation in which we find ourselves. This is the deepest continuity of our lives as a nation in exile and constantly on the move... (LS: 164).

Thus, although Said's 'Palestine' can occasionally be seen in the "exhilaration and energy and pleasure...[the] cheerfully vulnerable triumph" which flashes in the eyes of a Palestinian child and reminds the watcher that "movement need not always be either flight or exile," that glimpse is always momentary and epiphanic. (LS: 165)

This nationhood, sensed in a moment lost by the time it is recognized, is a ground for redemption, but it is a redemption promising integrity to the uprooted individual and not one promising, or enabling, the political re-establishment of a fragmented community.

### The Third Way

Said's nostalgia and Turki's revolutionary internationalism seem not to share common ground on which an allied nationalist movement could be built; the strategies each reading of the situation suggests are at odds, and the populations to be brought together by those strategies would not, one suggests, be willing to abide with each other within shared boundaries. This divergence is in large part the consequence of the Palestinian dispersion, since both the international bourgeoisie and the camp Palestinians (groups differently constituted since well before 1948) have developed in isolation from each other and have consequently cultivated their respective images of the Palestinian past, present and future under very different sets of influences.

The situation within the borders of historic Palestine is different because there a heterogeneous Palestinian population has shared the burden of Israeli domination. This is not to say that all social groups within these borders have been influenced in the same ways by the Israeli occupation, but that, since the Palestinian populations of the Israel established in 1948 and those of the territories occupied in 1967 were brought into contact, there has been, throughout the occupied land, a continuous Palestinian population growing increasingly more aware that the antagonisms each encounters in his or her contacts with the Israeli state are aspects of a generic antagonism all Palestinians suffer under occupation.<sup>36</sup>

In light of these remarks, I would contend that a bounded territory does not in itself create a collective consciousness even if it contributes in important ways to the preconditions of the articulation of such awareness. Regardless of whether it exists within the bounds of a continuous territory or over a range of discrete sites, two preconditions are required for the establishment of a conception of national identity in the absence of a state apparatus fomenting such an identity: (i) that an antagonism exists that people can recognise as 'the same as' that which troubles others in their

imagined (but no less real) community; and (ii) that people are able to recognise that others are, like themselves, suffering that antagonism. Continuous territory in the instance of Israel and the Occupied Territories provides a setting for the development of 'Palestinian' consciousness because, firstly, as the field of the nationalist project of the State of Israel, it is a circumscribed stage on which antagonism to the Palestinians is acted out, and secondly, because Palestinians circulating within those territories can witness a particular antagonism not only operating on themselves but also on others who come to be seen as 'like them.' These two preconditions, i.e., the recognition of antagonism and recognition of others who, in suffering under that antagonism, are like oneself, are, as the work of Said and Turki have demonstrated, possible in instances other than that of a continuous territory.

However, as I will illustrate below, the particular way in which contingency intrudes into the lives of Palestinians under occupation militates against the fixing of images of self and antagonist which can occur in diasporic situations. Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories are less likely to adopt forms of identity and identification which commit them to the realization of specific and exclusive images of a future nation than are those 'outside'. Images of the nation articulated under Israeli rule remain, for the large part, closely linked to the struggle against antagonism *per se* and are thus open, as the character of antagonism shifts, to modification and to the modification of strategies of resistance which devolve from them.

The population of Israel and the Occupied Territories that has come to consider itself as 'Palestinian' is quite heterodox. Not only do Christians and Muslims coexist under the Palestinian rubric, but even those communities can be differentiated along sectarian lines. Among the minority population of Palestinian Christians there is a wide range of sects (predominant among them Greek Orthodox, Franciscan Catholic, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Anglican) among which are religious groupings with distinct religio-national loyalties (largely Armenians and Copts). More substantial distinctions can, furthermore, be made between Palestinian groups in terms of categories such as residence (rural and urban) and occupation (peasantry, mercantile, professional).

In the past, the various rulers of this area (Ottoman, British, Egyptian, Jordanian and

Israeli) have promoted those differences in order to break the indigenous population into mutually antagonistic groups incapable of collectively mobilising against their powers.<sup>37</sup> However, the radical transformations effected by the Israeli occupation (massive expropriation of agricultural lands, militarization of vast areas, development of a migrant labour market to serve newly developed industrial and service sectors, and closure of Palestinian banks, businesses and industrial concerns coexist alongside of intensive inculcation of western capitalist culture and full-scale political repression) have undermined the old patterns of life on which such distinctions were based. Those transformations effect all Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories in a number of ways that threaten their particular identities (as peasants, as land owners, participants in religious groups, members of familial and other communal units in which prestige accrues from local economic activities, entrepreneurs, etc.). Their recognition of the duality of their identities, both in terms of those particular fields of activity as well as in terms of a generalised Palestinian identity, is assisted by the open antagonism of Israelis to 'Arabs' as such (irrespective of those specificities). In effect, the latter provides Palestinians with a category, articulated by Israeli antagonism, within which all those antagonised can see themselves as the 'other' to the Israelis. In their contacts with the other Arabs of the Israeli-occupied lands they move through, this recognition of a situation, which they can see is effectively collective, impels them to acknowledge the inadequacy of old confessional, factional and territorial divisions and to adopt a overarching Palestinian identity.

A traditional opposition, like that between Christian and Muslim Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem, will only be maintained as long as the context out of which it has grown remains pertinent. However, when life is sufficiently disrupted to undermine or disable the efficacy of traditional allegiances, people are able to subordinate old oppositions to the need for new alliances.<sup>38</sup> The presence of an antagonist who, in the main, does not differentiate between those it antagonises provides its victims with a new category in which they can recognise as equivalent themselves and others who they, in the past, might have considered enemies.<sup>39</sup> In such situations, attempts by the state to mobilise old categories and divide the dominated population will tend to be recognised as such, thus further undermining

the hegemony of the traditional categories and promoting an even stronger awareness of a collective identity.<sup>40</sup>

Raja Shehadeh's The Third Way, although very much centred on the experiences of a West Bank lawyer based in Ramallah, draws on a wide range of Palestinians in describing the state of the nation. One can imagine the 'nation' Shehadeh claims is drawing together in the face of a common enemy through his evocations of the strength of the women's groups, his descriptions of peasants becoming aware that land expropriations threaten the homes on which their traditional 'my home is my castle' attitudes have been built, his vignettes of professional and academic lives distorted and blocked by state and racist interventions, his recounting of the degradations brought on by touristic development and so forth. Shehadeh's image of the population of 'Palestine' is neither as indeterminate as Turki's nor as definitive as Said's; the text, in part because of a narrative style which allows both Shehadeh and the people he meets to articulate their situations, gives the impression of a heterogeneity embraced by an overarching unity forged out of recognition of common antagonism.

Movement by foot, by car, by airplane provides a constant refrain in The Third Way as it does in Said's After the Last Sky and, to a lesser extent, Turki's The Disinherited.

<sup>41</sup> Unlike Said's 'Palestinian restlessness', which always leads the author to an empty site from which Palestine has already been stolen away, Shehadeh's movements bring him into contact with a land in the process of being transformed by the activities of an antagonist and with a wide diversity of people who are both being hurt by those multiple transformations and recognising the necessity of resisting them. In contrast to Turki's 'migrations', in which Turki always encounters oppression but, already knowing its 'real' nature, never grants the people suffering it with the authority to articulate their experiences for themselves, Shehadeh's movements bring him into contact with individuals and groups whose increasing awareness of the nature of the antagonist they face enables them to articulate strategies of resistance which are both valid for their particular situations and commensurate with those of others whose identities they are coming to recognise as their own.

Shehadeh's historical awareness and his constant contact with the actual

transformations of historic Palestine enable him to treat the development of the contemporary situation as a continuing process rather than as an abrupt shifting of images from the idyllic to the demonic. Unlike Said's text, which is redolent with a sense of irrecoverable loss, or Turki's, which stands just this side of an apocalyptic transformation that has not yet been set in play, Shehadeh's is very much located in a present moment which is as open to definition as it is penetrated by contingency and antagonism. Instead of sketching an opposition of perfect past to perfidious present or perfidious present to utopic future he maps out for critical examination those aspects of past Palestinian lives which have lent themselves to the production of the alienated present. This historical interest is far from nostalgic; Shehadeh condemns aspects of a past others render as bucolic insofar as he reads the present as a product, rather than a violation, of the past. Thus, for example, he analyzes and critiques the structures of authority and of trust that were developed in pre-Zionist days and sees in them a major contribution to the loss of the land and the subsequent muting of political activism: "No effort is needed to control a society so geared to paternalism that it barely matters who the authority is which does the ordering." (TW: 29)

This evaluation is complex insofar as it takes away the edenic image of that stolen 'thing' nationalists invoke to fantasise their inherent perfection<sup>42</sup> by suggesting that Palestinian behaviour too has been (and without careful scrutiny will continue to be) a source of the dilemmas of the Palestinians. In this way it renders contingent and permeable the border between the community to which the self belongs and that of the antagonist which is so carefully delineated and defended by others like Said and Turki. As a result, he is inclined neither to imagine a pure past which existed before Zionism destroyed Palestine nor to evoke a perfect post-revolutionary world which will follow the collapse of the capitalist order of which Zionism is a part. Instead he represents the contemporary moment, with its antagonisms, as one in which a particular form of struggle has to be carried out, but implies that future struggles will follow. Israel and its agents are, at the present moment, the most telling threat to the survival of the people who have conceived themselves as a community in the face of that threat, but when the struggle against that antagonism has been concluded there will be other struggles in which allies in the contemporary struggle may turn against each other.

Thus, in his portrayal of Palestinian women, he suggests that a temporary concurrence of their identities as women and as Palestinians has made them superb street fighters, but implicit in that description is the idea that if they succeed in defeating the enemies who have made them recognise that they are **Palestinian** women, they are likely to then take on the antagonists who threaten their being as **women** per se:

Sometimes I think that those few women who manage to survive this are the strongest of all *samidin* and it is they who will finally lead the revolt. They have the least to lose and no ego to be pampered, hurt, or played on by the Israeli rulers. You see them fearlessly head demonstrations and shout at soldiers at road blocks. They have been used to brutal oppression by men from the day they were born, and the Israeli soldiers are not a new breed of animal to them (TW: 115).

In representing women as strong allies in the struggle against occupation Shehadeh does not simply subsume their particular identities as women under the rubric 'Palestinian'. Instead he demonstrates that their resistance to Israeli soldiers is a particular extension of their antagonism to male oppression (particularly that of Palestinian males) and, in so doing, suggests that the strength they gain through struggling against the Israeli state can, after its defeat, be turned against other, sexist Palestinian, antagonists.<sup>43</sup>

This recognition of the unfixedness of identity is inscribed throughout The Third Way in a manner not matched either in The Disinherited or After the Last Sky. Each of the latter two books posit pure and essential identities which Palestinians must realise if they are to be true to themselves; in Turki's text it is that of the revolutionary internationalist inalterably opposed to the machinery of capital while in Said's it is the (finally irrecoverable) ideality of the Palestinian who existed before Zionism deformed and scattered his or her identity and stole Palestine. Since, as I have argued above, these identities are forged in the fire of the contemporary situations of Turki and Said, they are not universals or vague generalizations but particular extensions of specific, context-bound experiences of antagonism. They are therefore not necessarily identities that other Palestinians, whose experiences differ, are able to recognise as their own and take on. Shehadeh's recognition that the identities that have been melded under the Israeli occupation are particular manifestations of that

situation leaves the future, in effect, open to the formation of new identities which might not, at the moment at which he writes, be conceivable. His text does not 'fix' Palestine and the imagined community which might fill its as yet indeterminable borders but designates a particular struggle which has to be engaged before one can even begin to imagine the boundaries and the population of a future national ground.

It is thus indicative that he comes to elaborate the mechanisms of mobilising, and transcending, that struggle in the course of conversation with an American Jewish writer he claims to "like a lot." (TW: 85). Robert Stone, his friend, talks with him about the 'pornographic' relationship to the land of Israel that the Jews in diaspora developed in their longing to return to it:

When you are exiled from your land...you begin, like a pornographer, to think about it in symbols. You articulate your love for your land, in its absence, and in the process transform it into something else. ...[W]hen Jews came to settle here this century, they saw the land through these symbols. Think of the almost mystical power that names of places here have for many Zionists. ...As for what it really looked like, they tried to transform it into the kinds of landscape they left in Europe. ...It is like falling in love with an image of a woman, and then, when meeting her, being excited not by what is there but by what her image has come to signify for you. You stare at her, gloating, without really seeing her, let alone loving her... (TW: 86-87)

Shehadeh, subsequently musing on this discussion, realises that Palestinians, exiled from their land while still on it, are themselves being placed in such a 'pornographic' relation to that land by the experience of having that they know and love taken away piece by piece.<sup>44</sup> He becomes aware that he is transforming that with which he, himself, has had an intimate and unarticulated relationship, into a symbol of what he must join with others to consciously struggle for:

Sometimes, when I am walking in the hills... -- unselfconsciously enjoying the touch of the hard land under my feet, the smell of thyme and the hills and trees around me -- I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol of the *samidin*, of our struggle, of our loss. And at that very moment, I am robbed of the tree; instead there is a hollow space into which

anger and pain flow. I have often been baffled by this -- the way the tree- turned symbol is contrasted in my mind with the sight of red, newly turned soil, barbed wire, bulldozers tearing at the soft pastel hills -- all the signs that a new Jewish settlement is in the making. ...[I see] the image of an uprooted olive as a symbol of our oppression (TW: 87 and 88).

Shehadeh realizes that this "identification of the land with your people and through that with yourself" (TW: 87-88) is taking place in the hearts and minds of Palestinians throughout Israel and the Occupied Territories.<sup>45</sup> He recognises that such identification lifts those people out of the isolation enforced by their earlier and immediate experiences of their private lands, making them citizens of a common land -- even if that land is one that is forfeit and must be redeemed:

Before the occupation there was no national symbolism and cohesion specifically connected with the West Bank. ...[Now] even Abu-'Isa, who always thought of himself and his house as a separate kingdom, is beginning, through the threat of an Israeli incursion, to extend his horizons. Although I am glad that this is happening -- we could not hope to fight off the Israelis without it -- I cannot but allow myself a moment of anger and regret. I feel deep, deep resentment against this invasion of my innermost imagery and consciousness by the Israelis (TW: 88).

What, however, is salient in Shehadeh's description of this process of nationalistic pornographising is his acknowledgement of the "anger and regret" which rises in him when he watches the olive tree shudder and turn into a symbol of the nation. The thing which is transformed for the struggle is not, at the same time, lost to everything but the struggle; the particular experiences which are metamorphosised into symbols in the mobilisation for nationalist struggle are not forgotten, but, in Shehadeh's text, remain simultaneously as elements which can be rearticulated for different identities and different strategies;

[W]e who have lived a silent love for this land are left with the grim satisfaction of seeing that the Israelis will never know our hills as we do. They are already making endless, ignorant mistakes. For all their grand rhetoric, they are strangers. We *samidin* may be turning into pornographers -- but our love is not forgotten. The reason for our grief is also our strength... (TW: 89).

The process of turning elements of the experience of Palestinians into symbols of the

national entity for which they must fight is essential to the mobilisation of a unified community. As essential to Shehadeh, however, is the knowledge that those things which stand behind the symbols, like the particular lives of the people who become 'Palestinians', are always more than simply moments of the articulation of a national entity. In large part because he can meet, talk with and respect the particularities of the widely heterogeneous population of Palestinians living within Israel and the Territories, Shehadeh recognises and retains recognition of the fact that the imagined community of Palestinians is both a very diverse population suffering under all sorts of oppression (of which the particular Israeli antagonism is but the currently most telling) **and** a single collectivity now united in the contemporary struggle to hold onto the land and their lives in the face of Israeli incursions. There are many identities at play beneath the nationalistic identity of *samidin*, and the political strength of the Palestinians in the Israeli-Occupied territories will lie in - if it can be maintained - the recognition that the diversity which is the foundation of unity is also the grounds on which a democratic and pragmatic state can be built. In Shehadeh's book, unlike in the texts of Turki and of Said, there is no 'Palestinian'; there is only a plurality of Palestinians. For Shehadeh, as a result, both tactics and allies in this particular struggle are open to processes of re-evaluation. Such processes, which are vital to the formulation of strategies in a situation where the forms of oppression and opportunity are labile, would be rendered unworkable by more fixed conceptions of antagonism and identity.

### **The *Intifada* and Beyond**

The Disinherited, After the Last Sky, and The Third Way were all written and published before the *intifada* broke out in December 1987. That popular struggle has taken on a mythical character in the self-imaginings of Palestinians throughout the world, and has given rise to activities -- both inside and outside the Israeli-Occupied territories -- which may lead to a political settlement providing some sort of autonomy for a Palestinian entity in the territories now occupied by Israel. In closing this paper I would like briefly to consider some of the implications of the way the *intifada* or, as it should be translated into English, the 'shaking off' has been received inside and outside the territories. Some of the conflicts now arising within the Palestinian nation-in-waiting (independence was formally declared on 15

November 1988) in response to the American-sponsored 'peace talks' are, I believe, consequences of the different processes of identity formation which took place throughout the Palestinian diaspora before 1987.

Shehadeh's text was written during a period in which Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories were becoming more and more aware of their common interests as Palestinians in resisting Israeli policies pertaining particularly to military control, land expropriations and colonial forms of economic development. The stance of *sumud*, articulated in The Third Way, was in large part a policy of holding fast -- of "stay[ing] put,...cling[ing] to our homes and land by all means available" (TW: vii) -- in a situation in which the increased militarisation of the territories inaugurated by the Likud's 1977 electoral victory made more open forms of struggle unfeasible. In the ten years that followed the Likud's ascension to power land expropriation increased dramatically as settlements blossomed throughout the territories (by 1987 55% of the land area of the West Bank and 30% of that of Gaza were in Israeli hands). Political oppression escalated to unbearable levels, especially under the 'Iron Fist' programme Yitzhak Rabin inaugurated in August 1985. By 1987 illegal expulsions of Palestinians had become common, and popular Israeli support for right wing policies of 'transporting' entire Palestinian populations out of 'Greater Israel' and into surrounding Arab countries was growing.

On the eighth of December 1987 an Israeli tank transporter swerved to the wrong side of the road at an Israeli checkpoint in Gaza and flattened a car full of Gazan workers who were waiting to be cleared to cross into Israel so that they could go to work in Tel Aviv; four residents of the Jabaliya refugee camp were killed in the incident. By that time, such an 'accident' could only appear to Palestinians throughout the territories as a symbol of what seemed like a general Israeli state policy of exterminating the presence of Palestinians in the areas under state control. I would argue -- and discussions I had with Palestinians in Jerusalem, Ramallah and Beit Sahour in August 1988 confirm this interpretation -- that at the moment news of the killed Gazan workers reached them Muslim and Christian, villager and shopkeeper, revolutionary and housewife recognised that there was nothing evinced in Israeli activities towards Palestinians in general that would have prevented it from being any one of them who was flattened in that car. As news of the workers' deaths spread throughout the Occupied Territories and Israel, men and women from

all walks of life, whose only common trait was their 'Palestinianness', recognised their own in the mangled bodies in the car.

I would contend that the *intifada* was conceived as Palestinian experiences of Israeli-state antagonism flooded in, filling that iconic moment and creating what Laclau and Mouffe describe as a situation of "total equivalence" in which, in the Palestinian instance, the society of Israeli and Palestinian constituted under occupation "strictly divide[d] into two camps."<sup>46</sup> However, such a 'spontaneous' response demands more than the manifestation of what is taken to be genocidal policy; certainly between 1979 and 1982, when Shehadeh was writing, enough of a recognition of solidarity forged by oppression existed throughout the territories to provide the tinder for any of several events to spark into conflagration. Had Palestinian reception proved appropriate the assassination attempts on Palestinian mayors in June 1980 and the bombings by the extremist Israeli *Kach* movement which accompanied them could have provided such a spark. A collective recognition of a people's fate at the hands of a hostile force is not enough to spark active insurrection; there is as well a need for something to suggest that success resides in active resistance.

Interestingly, in late November 1987, a successful attack by an external Palestinian group (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command) had been carried out across the northern border resulting in the deaths of six Israeli soldiers. This attack (virtually the first successful guerilla action across the Lebanon/Israel border since the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon) served to prove, at a signal moment, that Israeli power was not invincible. Confidence that Israel was not omnipotent was, furthermore, augmented by the escape from prison in August of that year by a number of Islamic Jihad activists who, while successfully avoiding recapture, succeeded in assassinating a Captain of the Military Police in Gaza. These proofs that the enemy was vulnerable, occurring at the same time as other events showed that the policy of *sumud* was not sufficient to restrain the antagonism of the Israeli apparatus, pushed the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and, soon after, in Israel itself into a new and different form of resistance.

Certainly, however, if the insurrection were to last (as it has now for nearly six years), it was vitally important for it to organize in a manner which would enable it

to convince people that it **could** provide an alternative future to that promised by Israel. It had, in other words, to inscribe in the consciousness of the Palestinian community a set of alternative institutions which would make visible a Palestinian alternative to Israeli rule. A Palestinian infrastructure was rapidly coordinated out of the various institutions which had separately developed under the period of *sumud* described by Shehadeh: medical, educational, legal, and advisory groups, which had previously operated autonomously, rapidly established links and attempted to take on the problems raised not only by the insurrection but also by the attempted disengagement of the Palestinian economy from that of Israel.<sup>47</sup> The United National Leadership of the Uprising (U.N.L.U.), which quickly organised without assistance from outside as the insurrection promised to continue, called on Palestinian landowners to cease collecting rent from people who were separated from their incomes by the insurrection (especially those who had, until the *intifada* called for disengagement, worked as labourers within Israel).<sup>48</sup>

Such assertions of the possibility of surviving without Israel also occurred at local levels. I was told, in 1990, that one family of stonemasons, who continued to work for Israeli contractors after the onset of the *intifada*, was shamed out of what was seen as collaboration by a delegation of villagers who carried a number of sacks of wheat to the house of the family and presented them to the head of the household saying “we are sorry that you are so poor that you must work for the enemy, and we have collected from amongst ourselves this food so that you will no longer have to.” Such mutual support, given sincerely as well as ironically, asserted to Palestinians that they could survive as Palestinians without maintaining the economic ties with the Israelis that until then they believed they needed to perpetuate in order to endure. In so doing it also institutionalised the boundary between Israel and Palestine which had been taking form through the period leading up to the *intifada* and which had been deeply and irrefutably scored in Palestinian consciousness by the Gazan episode.

The external leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation was taken by surprise by these activities of the Palestinian community under occupation which “presented the organisation with an unmistakable challenge...[by taking] its future into its own hands.”<sup>49</sup> The ‘outside’, which had until then dismissed Palestinians

under occupation as incapable of thinking for themselves and had seen its role as that of instigating and directing internal resistance, suddenly found itself faced with a people which did not conform to its image of it: "almost before anyone knew it, a unique way of doing things had taken hold in the territories along with a new vision of the population as a self-propelled body that was both leading and waging the struggle against Israel on its own."<sup>50</sup> Arafat and the P.L.O. were quick to respond to this challenge, however, and within days were working to create the conditions to allow the *intifada* to continue; they had somehow to integrate in their own organizational framework the scores of new leaders that were emerging; they had to bring into play the political programme of the PLO in a way that would respond to both 'the crowd's sentiments' and the 'new target' the leaders outside knew had a chance of being achieved considering the changing balance of power the *intifada* was bringing about.<sup>51</sup>

Nonetheless, as Baumgarten points out, even the P.L.O. had difficulty in conceiving the difference of the struggle that was taking place within the territories from that which it deemed appropriate to the 'Palestinian' situation. Until the seventh of March 1988, when *Fateh's* disastrous attack on Dimona proved that military attacks damaged, rather than contributed to, the *intifada*, P.L.O. communiqués and strategies presumed that the popular uprising conformed to the P.L.O.'s image of an appropriate response to Israeli hegemony in being an armed struggle.<sup>52</sup> Other guerilla groups, linked with -- as well as opposed to -- the P.L.O., continue, until the present day, to use the P.L.O. leadership's subsequent support of the non-violent character of the uprising as a means of articulating their attempts to discredit the P.L.O. and the internal leadership.<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, in the period following the advent of the *intifada*, that uprising was transformed from a particular response of a particular Palestinian community in a specific situation into an icon of Palestinian aspirations throughout the diaspora. By early March 1988 the various organisations which constituted the main body of the P.L.O. (*Fateh*, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Palestine Communist Party) had settled their oft-times fratricidal differences and announced their solidarity in supporting and maintaining the *intifada*. On November 15, 1988, the Nineteenth Palestine National

Council announced its full support of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence which had been drafted by the internal leadership, and, subsequently, gave its backing to the P.L.O.-U.S. dialogue which seemed to give credibility to the national 'road' on which the *intifada* appeared to have set all Palestinians. A year later there were celebrations throughout the Palestinian diaspora ('inside' and 'outside') of the first anniversary of the yet-to-be-established state of Palestine.

The movement from the moment at which one can conceive oneself as a part of a national community to that in which the nation is realised through the establishment of a state is, however, not only one of struggle against antagonism but also one of compromises, sacrifices and the fixing in place of those institutions which will become hegemonic in the future state. It is, in other words, a process of definition. Palestinians throughout their dispersion were able to see their freedom and fulfilment in the icon of Palestinian aspirations the *intifada* initially provided, but as the uprising began, against great odds, to make progress on its path towards Palestinian statehood within a portion of the territories occupied by Israel many Palestinians -- both those 'inside' and 'outside' -- began to question whether the Palestine those persons backing the United National Leadership of the Uprising were beginning to gain sight of was actually the promised land to which they aspired. Within the territories *Hamas*<sup>54</sup> contested the leadership of the *intifada* -- often by violent means -- because of U.N.L.U.'s commitment to a democratic, secular state. On the 'outside' various guerilla factions, with their allegiances to particular refugee populations outside of the borders of the Israeli state, came to fear that any settlement which created a state in the Occupied Territories *per se* would leave the Palestinians they claimed to represent -- many of whom had originally resided in the territories annexed by Israel in 1948 -- without any right to return to the homes from which they had been driven.<sup>55</sup> Some of these groups began to fight in the interest of Palestinians 'outside' against the gains being made by the Palestinians 'inside'. A telling example of this struggle, and its disruptive power, was the 1990 attack by the Palestine Liberation Front on a Tel Aviv beach which succeeded in breaking off negotiations between the U.S. and the P.L.O.

As the peace talks proceed along their tortuous and impeded way and the negotiators (of whom Raja Shehadeh is one) succeed in eking small, but vital,

concessions from the Israeli team, groups inside and outside the territories come to see that whatever might come out of the negotiations is not likely to fulfil their fantasies of what Palestinian nationhood should mean. The resulting dissension can only please the Israeli government, since it appears as proof of its assertions that the Palestinians are a people who do not deserve a nation; Palestinians are too “fractious”, too “extremist”, too “fundamentalist”, and too “fanatic” to be allowed to control their own lives, homes and lands. This orientalist rhetoric is, of course, an example of what Said and Hitchens term “blaming the victims.” It suggests there is an essence of fractiousness which is inherent within ‘Arabs’ in general, and Palestinians in particular, whereas in fact the divided character of the Palestinian people in exile is a product of that involuntary exile. However, insofar as reality is discursively constructed, such a rhetoric can succeed in turning many non-Palestinians into advocates of a *pax Israeli*, despite the sympathy they have come to feel for Palestinians under occupation as a result of witnessing in newspaper stories and on television screens the brutality with which Israeli soldiers and settlers have attempted to crush the *intifada*.

The chief problem afflicting Palestinians in the current situation, aside from the antagonism of Israel, is what Laclau and Mouffe call the “impossibility of society.” One’s fantasy is always far more (and, in ways hinted at by Shehadeh, far less) than what can be realised, and the fantasies of ‘Palestine’ constructed in its absence prevent those people who see themselves as ‘Palestinian’ from recognising places for themselves in the Palestine that is currently being put together. The long period of exile from Palestine, in which no hegemonic apparatus served to fix an image of the nation in the minds of its involuntary émigrés, has resulted in people imagining what the nation could be if the antagonisms which prevented it were to disappear, and these imaginings have generated a number of diverse, and idealist, images of the future state. As the power of the antagonist afflicting one particular Palestinian community begins to wane, a nation that may answer to some of the needs and aspirations of that population is beginning to take form. As Palestinians in the occupied territories inch closer to the realisation of statehood, the ideal image of the ‘Nation’ is tarnished and diminished by the concessions and pragmatic sacrifices necessitated in building a state from the ground up. The Palestine that results from that process of state formation will not be one that gives back to all Palestinians all

that they have lost, nor bequeaths to them all they imagine could be gained were the antagonisms that have made them what they are to evanesce. Many of them will not recognise, in the subject positions it provides for its citizens, a place in which they can locate the identities their experiences have constituted for them. That Palestine will not be their Palestine.

Although a future Palestinian state in the rump of what was Palestine may provide a means through which more widely satisfying solutions to the 'Palestinian problem' might eventually be found, this can only happen if Palestinians -- who cannot recognise in the form it is beginning to take on anything resembling their promised land -- do not, out of frustration and fear of an even more permanent dispossession, assist in preventing its establishment. It cannot be satisfying for people who have been waiting for their homeland for forty-five years to be told that they must wait, and work, longer. The phrase "after the last sky," which provides the title for Said's book, is taken from another poem of Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us", which queries:

Where should we go after the last frontiers,  
where should the birds fly after the last sky?<sup>56</sup>

The slight satisfaction available to Palestinians exiled outside their land can only be found in knowing that there are no final frontiers, there is no last sky.

#### ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Mahmud Darwish, "We Travel Like Other People," Victims of a Map, (bilingual text in Arabic and English), trans. Abdullah al-Udhari, (London: Al-Saqi Books, 1984), p. 31.

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David McDowall, The Palestinians: Minority Rights Group Report no. 24, (London: Minority Rights Group, 1987), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Said, After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives, (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> See Laurie Brand, Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Statistics cited by Brand show that in 1982, 40.5% of Palestinians lived within Israel and other Israeli-occupied territories, while 25.1% were resident in Jordan, 10.4% in Lebanon, 6.4% in Kuwait, 4.8% in Syria, 7.3% in other Arab countries, 2.1% in the United States and 3.0% in other non-Arab countries such as Australia, Germany and Chile (p. 9).

<sup>5</sup> Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 297-298.

<sup>6</sup> McDowall, The Palestinians, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> A topographically unbroken landscape can be shattered by the representations of several groups which may mutually inhabit it and yet envisage themselves as discrete and discontinuous communities. A striking example of this is set out in Raymond Williams's The Country and the City where, in discussing Jane Austin's rural landscapes, Williams demonstrates that for the agrarian aristocracy the distances between one country house and the next were seen as unpopulated territories despite the dense inhabitation of those lands by the rural peasantry [R. Williams, The Country and the City, (St. Albans: Paladin. 1975), pp. 135-157]. In this instance, as in that of the pre-state Zionist declaration that Palestine 'is a land without a people for a people without a land', it is clear that the recognised population is made up of groups and individuals with whom the definers see themselves sharing common interests and projects rather than simply a tract of land. Armenians and Jews in diaspora, furthermore, engage in frequent religious gatherings in which they liturgically celebrate themselves as parts of a national entity constituted in eternity and working towards historical reconstitution on the land on which their nations and their religions were formed. In the absence of literal land, 'Israel' and 'Armenia' are figured in a liturgical landscape in which 'standing on' sacred ground prefigures return to the lost territories. Such persons, engaged in ritualized reminiscences in spaces which symbolically participate in the territories of Israel or Armenia, are able to see themselves as parts of world-wide communities of others sharing both their exile and their projects of recuperation.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (Verso: London, 1991), pp. 22-36. See also Brian Stock, The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 88-92.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods," Media, Culture and Society, 1980, II:3, pp. 261-293 and Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, trans. Richard Nice, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1984).

<sup>11</sup> Anderson's later consideration of the role played in fomenting national identity by the colonial policy of neither allowing substantial advancement to indigenous officials within the colonial bureaucracy nor permitting them to serve as officials in areas outside those from whence they came, supports this assumption (Anderson, Imagined Communities, pp. 56-57). The training of the apprentice bureaucrat in the ways of the colonial bureaucracy enables him to see himself as an official of the empire but this identity is subsequently denied by an act of symbolic violence which prevents him from operating as an imperial officer outside the boundaries of the colony of his birth. This subject thus is open to recognising his own impeded situation in the stories of others who have experienced the same or similar

constraints to advancement and is to join with those with whom this identification identifies him in processes of reimagining or rearticulating identity -- processes which, as Anderson points out, give rise to the creation of new, in this case nationalist, identities.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Slavoj Žižek, "Eastern Europe's Republics of Gilead," New Left Review, 183, Sept./Oct, 1990, pp. 50-62.

<sup>14</sup> Theoretical concern with the inscription of the ideological on the material can be traced from Durkheim and Mauss's, Primitive Classification, trans. Rodney Needham, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963; orig. 1901-1902) to Duncan's The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandy Kingdom, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Trotsky, describing Lenin's "desire to unfold the party's programme in the language of power" through, among other things, the constant issuance of revolutionary decrees, demonstrates how, in the early days of the revolution, putting markers of the new social order in place was a major project of the Soviet bureaucracy: "It was impossible to tell in advance whether we were to stay in power or be overthrown. And so it was necessary, whatever happened, to make our revolutionary experience as clear as possible for all men. Others would come, and, with the help of what we had outlined and begun, would take another step forwards. That was the meaning of the legislative work during the first period ....He [Lenin] was anxious to have as many revolutionary monuments erected as possible, even if they were of the simplest sort, like busts or memorial tablets to be placed in all the towns, and, if it could be managed, in the villages as well, so that *what had happened might be fixed in the people's imagination, and leave the deepest possible furrow in memory.*" [Leon Trotsky, My Life: An Attempt at an Autobiography, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 356-357; emphasis, mine].

<sup>15</sup> Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics, trans. Winston Moore and Paul Cammack, (London: Verso, 1985), p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, p. 125.

<sup>17</sup> See further Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, p. 122; and Ernesto Laclau, New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time, (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 89-92.

<sup>18</sup> Here one finds that the recognition of the 'other' is central to the constitution of any identity as Derrida and Staten have indicated in their discussions of the 'constitutive outside' [see Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976), pp. 39-44; and Henry Staten, Wittgenstein and Derrida, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 16-19]. Moreover, as Laclau and Mouffe have stressed in their elaboration of the concept of antagonism, alterity in antagonism takes on a threatening role which demands a resistance if identity is to be maintained (see Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, pp. 122-127). The "nebulosity" of national identity in an established nation can be seen to be a result of a passive relation to the constitutive outside; one is British because one is not French, and to maintain this identity one need define it no further

than to say it is not the same as that of the other. In a situation of antagonism, on the other hand, one is impelled by the assertion of the power of the antagonist to attempt to make positive -- to define -- the position that antagonism attempts to negate.

<sup>19</sup> Glenn Bowman, "Letter from Jerusalem," Middle East International, n. 299, 1 May, 1987, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, pp. 128ff.

<sup>21</sup> Bowman, "Letter from Jerusalem," p. 20.

<sup>22</sup>

'Palestine' was constituted as an imaginable entity at the moment of its loss; as such, there were few explicitly national traditions for its members to carry into exile. As Nels Johnson has shown in Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982), the inter-factional feuding of the political elite of pre-1948 Palestine, as well as the localized interests of the Palestinian peasantry, meant that identity was tied tightly to local, factional or class interests and not to some idea of national or nationalist solidarity. Resistance to Zionist encroachment was couched in terms either strictly regional (focusing on resistance to land loss) or broadly international (pan-Islamic or pan-Arabist) by the various groups concerned (see p. 57 and *passim*). Consequently there was no pre-existent vehicle that could be mobilized to create, in the exile, a sense of national simultaneity and a promise of territorial re-establishment -- at least not in the way the Armenian Orthodox liturgy could for the Armenians, or the way "that mixture of folklore, ethical exhortation and nationalist political propaganda that we call the Bible" could for the Jews. [See Eugene Kamenka, "Political Nationalism -- The Evolution of the Idea," in Kamenka (ed), Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), p. 4].

<sup>23</sup> Raja Shehadeh, The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank, (London: Quartet Books, 1982), p. 8. *Sumud* is an Arabic term referring to Palestinians under occupation whose identity derives from their dedication to holding on to their homes and lands by all means available. See also p. vi.

<sup>24</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, p. 119.

<sup>25</sup> The Palestine Liberation Organisation is organised around a structure allowing relative autonomy to each of the groups represented therein: "The apparatuses and the country organisations each have their own budget and organisational structure, with their lines of control meeting only at the level of the Central Committee. This unique organisational structure was developed by the leadership primarily to ensure the survival of the movement in the face of repeated Arab efforts to infiltrate, split or otherwise undermine it; but it also enabled them to isolate any source of ideological ferment, thus keeping the ideological common denominator of the movement at the intentionally low and all-embracing level with which it was founded." [Helen Cobban, The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 26]. As a result, although the P.L.O., with the Palestine National Congress which is effectively its legislature, serves as a government in exile, it is unable to do little more than stand as a symbol (the 'ideological common denominator') of Palestinian aspirations while each of its

autonomous units works in the interest of the discrete communities of the diaspora they represent.

<sup>26</sup> Fawaz Turki, The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile, 2nd edition, (London: Monthly Review Press, 1974) here after within text as TD; Edward Said's After the Last Sky, op. cit. hereafter within text as LS; and Raja Shehadeh, The Third Way, op. cit., hereafter as TW. All page references to these titles will be listed in the text within parenthesis.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Loizos, The Heart Grown Bitter: A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Peter Marris, Loss and Change, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> Pamela Ann Smith, "The Palestinian Diaspora, 1948-85", Journal of Palestine Studies, XV:3, Spring 1986, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries, (London: Zed Press, 1979), p. 107.

<sup>30</sup> The Israelis have, of course, come to play a more immediate role in the demonology of camp Palestinians since they began to take a more unmediated role in the persecution of Lebanese Palestinians. The increasingly active participation of Israelis in the inter-communal strife of the Lebanon through the nineteen seventies culminated, in the early nineteen eighties, in actual Israeli occupation of significant parts of the country. This, in part by proxy and in part directly, continues to the time of writing. Just as the 1967 Israeli Occupation of new territories of historic Palestine led eventually to a sense of solidarity between 'Israeli Arabs' and the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, so it might be hoped that eventually the Palestinians of Lebanon will grow more empathetic towards the Palestinians of Palestine who share with them Israeli occupation.

<sup>31</sup> With respect to this exodus, see: Salim Tamari, "Factionalism and Class Formation in Recent Palestinian History", in Roger Owen, ed., Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 180; and Ian Lustick, Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), p. 48.

<sup>32</sup> See Smith, "The Palestinian Diaspora", pp. 17-37.

<sup>33</sup> Although recent restrictions on Palestinian economic influence in the Middle East in general and the Gulf States in particular -- including widespread imprisonment, banishment and execution -- may cause interesting redefinitions of position.

<sup>34</sup> On this point see Edward Said's Orientalism, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978); his The Question of Palestine. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); and his Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981). As well see Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens, Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question, (Verso: London, 1988).

<sup>35</sup> Edward Said, Beginnings: Intention and Method, (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> For the Israeli strategies of occupation within 1948-67 Israel see Lustick, Arabs in

the Jewish State, op. cit. For the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza see, Jan Metzger, Martin Orth and Christian Sterzing, This Land is Our Land, (Zed Press, London, 1986). On the experience of the West Bank peasantry, see Tamari, "Building Other People's Homes: The Palestinian Peasant's Household and Work in Israel," Journal of Palestine Studies, XI:1, 1981, pp. 31-66.

<sup>37</sup> See Steven Runciman, The Historic Role of the Christian Arabs of Palestine, (Second Carreras Arab Lecture of the University of Essex, 26 November 1968), London: Longman, 1969); and Lustick, Arabs in the Jewish State, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> See my, "Unholy Struggle on Holy Ground: Conflict and Interpretation in Jerusalem," Anthropology Today, 1986, II:3. pp. 14-17; and as well, Loizos, The Heart Grown Bitter, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>39</sup> See my "Religion and Political Identity in Beit Sahour," Middle East Report, nos. 164-165, May- August 1990, pp. 50-53, and "Nationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli- Occupied Territories," Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, XXVIII:3, September 1993, pp. 431-460.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of Israel's unsuccessful attempt to strengthen the rural/urban divide and thus weaken Palestinian identity, see Salim Tamari, "In League with Zion: Israel's Search for a Native Pillar," Journal of Palestine Studies, 1983, XIII. pp. 41-56.

<sup>41</sup> In The Third Way, see in particular pp. 30-33, 96-98.

42

On this point see Slavoj Žižek, Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 213-214.

<sup>43</sup> A similar statement of the recognition that the struggle against Israeli occupation will not end the problems of the Palestinians was made to me by a Palestinian leftist in Jerusalem in 1985: "we have two battles to fight; the first is the war of national liberation, and after that is the revolution."

<sup>44</sup> Shehadeh's use of the term 'pornography' suggests that one loses the object of desire in pursuing an image of that object into which one has actually invested desire. I would stress here that the issue is not one of the real as opposed to the fantastic (which is Shehadeh's construction) but instead an issue of the way the 'pornographic' discourse of desire fetishises the image and perversely 'fixes' it outside of the historical and political domain in which the object exists.

<sup>45</sup> For the centrality of the issue of land, see Geoffrey Aronson, Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada: Creating Facts on the West Bank, (London: Kegan Paul International, 1990). The foregrounding of the land as the field in which all activities characterising and maintaining Palestinian lives take place results from the fact that one of the most salient aspects of Israeli domination is the state's theft of Palestinian lands. The land thus is transformed into an emblem of Palestinian existence and its theft becomes the sign of the Israeli will to efface the Palestinians. A Beit Jala woman, talking of her brother's death by heart attack when he heard his property had been confiscated by Israeli settlers, told me "when you see a big healthy man fall over dead in his prime it is because of land -- land is all they have, it is their connection. Land is the issue on the West Bank."

<sup>46</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, p. 129. In the following week, violent demonstrations, starting in the refugee camps and spreading quickly to the towns, broke out throughout the territories. This process of polarisation and mobilisation seems to follow quite closely that described by Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1967); see especially the effects on the development of revolutionary consciousness of the "hecatombs" of the slaughtered (p. 56). The particular policies of relatively non-violent resistance successfully promoted by the United National Leadership of the Uprising differ from the violent strategies engaged in the opening phases of the Algerian revolt, and this may be a consequence of the way that in the territories communication (not only that effected by media and telephones but also that brought about by travel -- both voluntary and that forced by taking on employment away from one's residence) rendered the gap between urban and rural consciousness less abysmal than that which existed in Algeria.

<sup>47</sup> Joe Stork, "The Significance of Stones: Notes from the Seventh Month," in Zachary Lockman and Joel Beinin (eds.), Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising against Israeli Occupation, (Boston: South End Press, 1989), pp. 67-79.

<sup>48</sup> On this point, see further: Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising -- Israel's Third Front, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), pp. 188-92; and also Aronson, Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada, pp. 328-332.

<sup>49</sup> Aronson, Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada, p. 328.

<sup>50</sup> Schiff and Ya'ari, Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising -- Israel's Third Front, p. 188.

<sup>51</sup> Helga Baumgarten, "'Discontented People' and 'Outside Agitators': The PLO in the Palestinian Uprising," in Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (eds.), Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads, (New York: Praeger, 1990, p. 218).

<sup>52</sup> Baumgarten, "'Discontented People' and 'Outside Agitators'," p. 210.

<sup>53</sup>

Baumgarten, "'Discontented People' and 'Outside Agitators'," pp. 219-222.

<sup>54</sup> *Hamas* is the 'Islamic Resistance Movement', an offspring of the fundamentalist 'Society of the Moslem Brethren' that conceives of Palestine not in national terms but as sacred territory dedicated as a *waqf* (religious bequest) to God.

<sup>55</sup> The 1948 war led to the expulsion of 83% of the Palestinian population of what then became Israel; any settlement which recovers only the West Bank and Gaza will not, in even a territorial sense, recover the homes of these people and their very numerous descendants.

<sup>56</sup> Mahmud Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us," Victims of a Map (bilingual text in Arabic and English), trans. Abdullah al-Udhari, (London: Al-Saqi Books, 1984), p. 13.