

I Accuse Israel

I lack the eloquence of Emile Zola, who wrote his famous “J’accuse” in 1898 to denounce the French anti-Semitism that had poisoned the *affair Dreyfus*. But like him, I step forward to defend Jews. The difference being that, in my case, in order to defend Jews I must attack the Jewish state of Israel.

Can ordinary citizens from around the world organize themselves and file before every single court with universal jurisdiction a public interest action against the Jewish state of Israel to declare its extinction as a Jewish state, not only on the grounds that throughout its existence it repeatedly committed crimes against humanity, but first and foremost because its very constitution as a Jewish state is itself a crime against humanity? Yes they can. And since there is no statute of limitations for this type of crime, the timing is right. So here are the arguments and the solutions for restoring to both Jews and Palestinians, not to mention the world at large, the dignity that was stolen from them by one of the most violent acts of European colonialism in the twentieth

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century, later reinforced by American imperialism and Europe’s bad conscience since the end of the Second World War.

The word Zionism describes the movement supporting the “return” of the Jews to their alleged homeland, from which they were also allegedly expelled in the fifth century BC. A distinction needs to be made, however, between Jewish and Christian Zionism. Jewish Zionism has its roots in anti-Semitism, which always infamously persecuted Jews across Europe and culminated in the Nazi holocaust.

The great proponent of Zionism was Theodor Herzl, an Austrian Jew, but his vision was the creation of a safe homeland for the Jews, not a Jewish state. Christian Zionism, on the other hand, is anti-Semitic in nature, and the notion of a Jewish state

was first devised by British politicians, Zionists and devout Anglicans like Lord Shaftesbury, whose primary aim was to see their country rid of Jews-as-Jews. Christianized Jews were tolerated (as was the case of Benjamin Disraeli, who became Prime Minister), but not other Jews. Such tolerance was congruent with the Christian prophecy which claims that Jews are destined to convert to Christianity. The same sentiment can be found these days among North American evangelicals, who support Israel as a Jewish state and its ruthless colonialist expansion against Palestinians, as they believe that total redemption shall come at the end of time, with the conversion of the Jews at the Parousia (the Second Coming).

Lord Shaftesbury seems to have been the originator, in the nineteenth century, of the notion of “a land without a people for a people without a land”, which was to help justify the 1948 creation, in Palestine, of the Israeli state. A few years later, another Jewish Zionist (Arthur James Balfour) proposed the establishment of a

“Jewish homeland” in Palestine, without consulting the Arab peoples who for more than a thousand years had lived in this land. In the words of the Balfour Memorandum of 11 August 1919, “The Great Powers [Austria, Russia, France and England] are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-old traditions, in present need, in future hopes, of far more profound import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land”. It was therefore imperative to turn those Arabs into a non-people.

With the approval of the Western powers, notably England, the year 1948 witnessed the establishment of the state of Israel, located in a Palestine inhabited by Arabs and 10 per cent Jewish immigrants. At the time it was argued that some area of land had to be found for the Jewish people, alongside whom no one seemed to want to live after the German genocide. Long before the latter catastrophe, Jewish Zionists had already pondered various locations for their future state. In the late nineteenth century the Uganda region, in present-day Kenya – but still a British colony at the time –, was considered as one of such possible locations. A part of Argentina was also considered. When asked about the possibility of locating it in North Africa (in what is now Libya), the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel, is re-

ported to have refused with the reply: “Ma è ancora casa di altri”. But no European, no matter how concerned with the Jewish situation, has ever suggested a place within Europe. “A land without a people for a people without a land” had to be invented, even if an entire people had to be annihilated. And so it came to pass that for sixty-six years a people has been steadily erased from the face of the earth. The Palestinian West Bank keeps being dismantled by illegal settlements, and the Gaza Strip turned into a prison camp. In its claim that the “stinking Arabs of Gaza be thrown into the ocean,” the Israeli extreme right is just a bit more vociferous than the government. What is truly astonishing, according to *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), by Israeli Jewish historian Ilan Pappé, is to see how in 1948 the Jews who only recently had been driven from their homes, dispossessed of their belongings and ultimately exterminated, set out to destroy Palestinian villages without blinking, expelling their inhabitants and massacring those who would not leave. José Saramago’s controversial comment from a few years ago, to the effect that the spirit of Auschwitz has been revived in today’s Israel, rings truer than ever.

Thus Palestine was sacrificed, amidst invocations of biblical and historical reasons which the Bible does not sanction and history eventually exposed. Many

Jews, like the members of the Jewish Voice for Peace, are not Zionists and view the state of Israel and the circumstances under which it was created (one territory, one people, one language, one religion) as an archaic colonialist aberration based on the myth of a “land of Israel” and a “Jewish people” that isn’t even upheld by the Bible. As the Israeli Jewish historian Shlomo Sand, among others, clearly demonstrates, the whole notion of Palestine as the “land of Israel” is a recent invention (*The Invention of the Land of Israel*, 2012). Furthermore, according to the same author, the concept of “Jewish people” is also a recent invention (*The Invention of the Jewish People*, 2009).

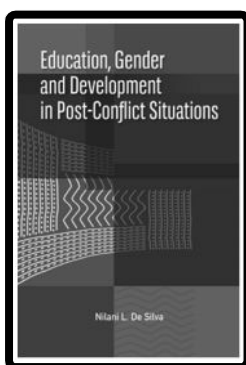
The establishment of the Jewish state of Israel is a continuous crime whose grossly brutal depths are now being brought to the light of day. The citizens of the world propose that a constitutional assembly be summoned in Palestine, with full participation of all the peoples living there, so that, once the extinction of the Jewish state of Israel has been declared, a secular, multinational and intercultural state may be established, where Jews and Palestinians can live in peace and with dignity. The dignity of today’s world hinges dramatically on the dignity of a true coexistence between Palestinians and Jews.

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Education, Gender and Development in Post-Conflict Situations

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Given the multiple changes that post-war societies are undergoing, this study seeks to examine how girls’ education is being moulded in the transition period in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These two countries experience wide gender disparities, particularly in the formal labour market and in education. Examining the barriers that prevent girls from benefiting from education is one way forward to address the important aspect of female development. In this study, it is argued that the persistence of gender injustice in education will have serious implications on transition countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone, not only in achieving the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that aim to empower women, but also in combating increasing levels of gender-based violence and feminized poverty.