The Other Shift: Settler Colonialism, Israel, and the Occupation

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This densely argued essay offers an original approach to the study of Israel-Palestine through the lens of colonial studies. The author's argument rests, inter alia, on the distinction between colonialism, which succeeds by keeping colonizer and colonized separate, and settler colonialism, where ultimate success is achieved when the settlers are "indigenized" and cease to be seen as settlers. Referring to the pre-1948 and post-1967 contexts, the author shows how and why Israel, itself a successful settler colonial project emerging from the British mandate, has failed to create a successful settler project in the occupied territories; indeed, and paradoxically, the occupation's very success (in terms of unassailable control) renders the project's success (in terms of settler integration/indigenization) impossible. Also addressed are the consequences of occupation, particularly what the author calls Israel's "recolonization," and the implications of the approach outlined for the Israel-Palestine conflict and its resolution.

IN RECENT YEARS, a growing body of comparative literature has emerged exploring various aspects of the transformations following Israel's victory in the 1967 war. Among these works, Menachem Klein's *The Shift: Israel-Palestine from Border Struggle to Ethnic Conflict* proposes an analytical framework involving an Israeli-imposed "control system" over no less than five Palestinian constituencies defined by the administrative regimes to which they are subject: the citizens of Israel, the residents of East Jerusalem, the residents of Gaza, and the residents of the West Bank, the latter being divided into those living to the west of the separation wall and those living to the east of it.[1] The progressive emergence of this "pattern of control," Klein argues, has transformed what was originally a border dispute into an ethnic confrontation. The consequences of such a shift are obvious: if approaching a border conflict necessarily involves a search for a territorial resolution, an ethnic confrontation by definition rules out this possibility.[2]

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The present essay suggests that, as well as a shift from a border to an ethnic conflict, we should consider a parallel shift that involves a transition from a system of relationships that can be understood as *settler colonial* to a relational system crucially characterised by *colonial forms*. The essay highlights the distinction between colonial and settler colonial formations, between attempts to permanently dominate indigenous constituencies while ruling them from a metropolitan center (as, for example, Britain's rule in India and Nigeria) and efforts to erase indigenous peoples for the purpose of replacing them with another socio-political body (as, for example, in the United States, Canada, Australia, and so on).[3] The latter case, which one might characterize as "classic" settler colonialism, has required the prior extermination or expulsion of a majority of the indigenous populations, followed by the demographic "swamping" of these territories by settlers from the metropole and/or a variety of other locales. The former, by contrast, has primarily focused on controlling the "natives." Klein compares the various administrative regimes Israel has established to diverse colonial settings, but his overall conclusion is that colonialism is not the issue. This article, on the other hand, argues that the conflict should be understood as *primarily* informed by colonial forms.

Emphasizing the relevance of colonial and settler colonial studies to an understanding of the conflict in Israel-Palestine, while undoubtedly privileging the theoretical over the empirical, remains important for its implications in terms of new ways of looking at the conflict and its solution. For example, the prospects of a "two-state" solution—whether achieved through negotiations followed by international recognition of an independent "Palestine," or vice versa—is premised on an interpretation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is based on a paradigm involving the transition from colonial subjugation to decolonization. According to this format, a previously nonsovereign entity subjected to external control becomes emancipated in the context of an international system of relationships (e.g., the United Nations). This approach neglects settler colonialism as a social formation that is distinct from (and indeed largely antithetical to) colonialism. It further fails to understand Zionism as a settler colonial movement, and is unable to address the circumstances either of Diaspora Palestinians (those who left the newly created State of Israel in 1947–48) or "Israeli Arabs" (Palestinians who did not leave what is today Israel proper, also known as Palestinian citizens of Israel).

Thus, the colonial subjugation-to-decolonization paradigm, which allows for only one dimension of Zionist history and practice, addresses the circumstances of only one Palestinian constituency among several. This being the case, approaching a conflict that may require a *suite* of solutions from a perspective that effectively limits the outcome to one of two—either a "one-state" or a "two-state" solution—is not productive.[4] This is where an analysis of the conflict within the framework of settler colonial studies can make a contribution.

A Failed Settler Colonialism

It is important to emphasize that settler colonial objectives have informed Zionist actions pre-1948, post-1948, and post-1967.[5] As *settler colonial* phenomena are essentially defined by processes where an exogenous collective replaces an indigenous one, there is an underlying and uninterrupted continuity of intent that recurring and sustained Zionist attempts to distinguish between pre- and post-1967 Israeli circumstances are unable to disguise. Nonetheless, there is at least one crucial difference between pre- and post-1967 Israeli settler colonial practice: Israel's capacity to reproduce a successful settler colonial project has substantially declined.

Israeli/Zionist settler colonialism was remarkably successful before 1967, and was largely unsuccessful thereafter. Indeed, if settler colonialism is about establishing *legitimate* claims to specific locations, Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza ultimately has very little to show for after over forty years of unrestrained rule. Normally, debates regarding the Israeli settlements in the West Bank focus on the question of their morality and legality. While not discounting the importance of a moral compass, the failure of post-1967 attempts to turn the occupied Palestinian territories into an extension of an otherwise successful settler society requires investigation.

In theoretical terms, one crucial distinction between colonialism and settler colonialism as separate formations is that the first aims to perpetuate itself whereas the latter aims to supersede itself.[6] The difference is absolutely critical: while a colonial society is successful only if the separation between colonizer and colonized is retained, a settler colonial project is ultimately successful only when it *extinguishes* itself—that is, when the settlers cease to be defined as such and become "natives," and their position becomes normalized. To succeed, a settler project must emancipate itself from external supervision and control, establish local sovereign political and cultural forms, terminate substantive indigenous autonomies, and tame a landscape once perceived as intractably alien. In other words, a settler colonial project that has successfully run its course is no longer settler colonial.

All successful settler colonial projects are inherently dynamic processes with regard to the relationships they establish with their alterities—with their external (i.e., the metropole) and internal "others" (i.e., the indigenous population), and with the land. The fact that all settler colonial projects envisage an end point, where relationships of alterity are finally resolved and no longer detectable, explains why settler colonialism is usually associated with locations where it ultimately failed (e.g., Rhodesia, Algeria) rather than with locales where it finally succeeded (e.g., the United States, Australia): "*islands* of White" stand out more clearly than *continen*ts of White.[7]

Like the Marxist notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which theoretically should result in the disappearance of the state, settler colonialism can be conceptualized as a "dictatorship of the settlers," a form of exclusive but inherently temporary rule exercised against indigenous and exogenous alterities pending the settler society's "disappearance" via its normalization. This is what eventually happened in Israel proper and in other successful settler societies. In the case of the occupied Palestinian territories, however, it *did not* and indeed *cannot* happen. The occupation of the Palestinian territories remains a powerful manufacturer of illegitimacy, not its opposite.

The separation between colonial and settler colonial forms sustains yet another crucial distinction: Israel's occupation *of* the territories is not the same thing as its settler colonization project *in* those territories. Israel's occupation is the military and administrative rule instituted by Israel following its 1967 conquest of the territories; as such, the occupation was intended to reproduce itself and, like colonialism, to become permanent. But at the same time, the occupation was *also* intended to be a means to an end: making possible and facilitating settlement. And here, we face a paradox: while the occupation is the absolute precondition for the settlements' establishment and ongoing existence, its success (like that of colonial rule) depends on its ability to maintain the sharp division between colonizer and colonized—the very division that prevents the realization of a successful settler colonial society.

To better understand the paradox, it is useful to rehearse certain particularities of the Palestine-Israel situation. Israel's contiguity to the territories it occupied, combined with its special relationship to its settler colonial project there, could obscure the fact that, structurally, its position vis-à-vis the West Bank and Gaza is analogous to Britain's vis-à-vis Palestine during the Mandate (1922–1948). Structurally, both Britain and Israel functioned/function as the metropolitan center (the occupying colonial power) relative to the territories they seized militarily in 1917 and 1967, respectively. Both sponsored Jewish colonial settlements, and because during their respective occupations the indigenous population remained in situ, these settlements required military and administrative means to assure their survival and development. But whereas Zionism during the 1947–49 war was able to expel the majority of the Palestinians from within the borders of what became Israel proper, in 1967 the population living in what remained of Palestine did not leave.

Consequently, the "classic" model of settler colonialism (i.e., where the indigenous population has been reduced to a "manageable" remnant), does not apply in the 1967 territories. Instead, like in Rhodesia and South Africa, we have a situation of colonial settlements amid a far larger population, where the best possible outcome would be the emergence of a docile and, to the extent possible, invisible population. However, because Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has successfully accomplished what

occupations are supposed to do (i.e., maintain control inter alia through the strict separation of ruler and ruled), it did not produce the "domestic dependent nation" that is an indispensable requisite for the triumph of a settler colonial project.

Another vital consideration with regard to colonial versus settler colonial conditions involves citizenship. Under colonial conditions, citizenship rights for the colonized are denied or indefinitely postponed in order to disallow native sovereign capacities. Under the classic settler colonial model, on the other hand, because of the radical reduction of the indigenous population, elements of a settler citizenship can be selectively offered as a means to eradicate residual sovereign impulses. The prospect of integration/assimilation, and the rhetorical claim that indigenous individuals *can* participate in the political life of the settler polity, are among the most powerful tools available for consolidating settler colonial projects. Indeed, settler colonialism is at its strongest when it can speak in universalising terms, when it can claim to be "closing the gaps." This has been the case within Israel proper, where the Arabs constitute a minority. Yet, as indicated above, such strategies cannot be deployed in the occupied territories where the Palestinians greatly outnumber the settlers. Israel's occupation emphasizes and reinforces the distance between the two groups. In the context of viable settler colonial situations, indigenous subjectivities are physically and/or discursively transferred away, not permanently subjugated.[8]

Colonial studies, almost since its inception as a field of scholarly inquiry, has emphasized that colonialism is fundamentally characterized by the reciprocal co-constitution of colonizer and colonized in the context of a dialectical process (this field of studies, perhaps not surprisingly, remained underdeveloped in Israel).[9] Given the structural fact of Israel's colonial relationship to the occupied territories, then, Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza—its building of infrastructure, establishment of settlements, and appropriation of Palestinian land—cannot possibly produce the conditions conducive to the eventual success of a settler colonial project. In fact, the reverse happens: the more infrastructure and settlements are established and the more land is forcibly appropriated, the more the reciprocal constitution of colonizer and colonized becomes entrenched.[10]

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The widespread interpretative paradigm whereby the "irreversibility" of the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank renders the two-state solution "impossible" may therefore turn out to be misleading: by making permanent the distinction between an indigenous subordinate collective and an exogenous dominant one, the occupation and its permanent infrastructure may actually *contribute* to

making a two-state solution inevitable. And yet, one witnesses a strange interpretative convergence. Supporters of Israeli rule over the territories *wish* that if only the occupation could be made more oppressive, brutal, and forceful, the settler colonial project could succeed by causing the indigenous population to leave. Opponents of the occupation, on the other hand, *fear* that if it is allowed to become more intrusive, the settler colonial domination of the occupied Palestinian territories will be irreversible. These approaches are based on knowing everything about the occupation, except what it probably means.

Prior to the first intifada, the occupation could perhaps have been seen in some ways as being in the process of disappearing, insofar as the Green Line seemed increasingly to be erased as a meaningful border for *all* those—Arab or Jewish, colonized or colonizer—who lived in the geographical area under Israeli control. Tens of thousands of Palestinians crossed daily from the territories into Israel for work, others travelled freely to visit family and friends who had remained in Israel, to see the places and landscapes of their birth, and so on, while Israeli Jews went to the territories for shopping, business, to visit friends and relatives, even tourism in the settlements. However, with the outbreak of the first uprising in late 1987, and especially after the institution of the closure policy in the early 1990s, a comprehensive segregationist regime was gradually imposed. This was then confirmed and reinforced by the Oslo accords. The Green Line acquired renewed meaning, even if the meaning was different for different constituencies.

Crucially, however, in a viable settler colonial context—again, the "classic" settler colonial polities referred to above—indigenous segregation in *one* set of locales (i.e., indigenous reserves) must correspond to the possibility of indigenous integration (unequal, of course) in all other locales, where indigenous peoples and constituencies can partake of variously defined assimilatory processes. On the other hand, in the West Bank (though not East Jerusalem), the enforcement of segregation *everywhere* has resulted in creating a colonized subjectivity mirroring the institution of *colonial,* rather than *settle*r colonial, forms. This is why merely calling settlements "neighborhoods" or "communities" and ensuring that settlements *look* like neighborhoods can never be enough. The necessary normalization cannot proceed unless these "neighborhoods" become fully integrated in their surroundings and the relationship of opposition between settler and indigenous collectives is erased or superseded, which for the reasons noted above is not possible.

Conversely, in the context of a segregating practice deemed indispensable for reasons of defense and enforced by separate laws and onerous restrictions, it is the settlements' very existence that creates the permanent opposition between colonizer and colonized. As mentioned above, and as confirmed by a comparative analysis of locales where settler collectives were able to manage what I have elsewhere defined as the local

"population economy," settler colonial practices can be effective only in situations where indigenous integration (also referred to as "absorption" or "assimilation") is at least theoretically available to the indigenous peoples.[11] In the absence of this possibility, attempts to physically separate colonizer and colonized will not be sufficient to establish a settler colonial system of relationships. As the transition from colonial to neocolonial forms of exploitation has demonstrated, physical proximity is a *consequence* of a colonial system of relationships, *not* the thing *itself*. Likewise, controlling a specific constituency while refraining from depending on (or exploiting) its workforce—another effort to supersede an (admittedly crucial) aspect of a colonial system of relationships—is also bound to fail.[12] Nor can ending the direct exploitation of a colonized collective (and in fact, examples of non-exploitive colonialisms do exist) produce conditions capable of fostering a successful settler colonial situation.[13]

FROM SETTLER COLONIALISM TO COLONIALISM

Focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian antagonism in a context where the main opposition may be between a colonial occupation that prevails by reproducing itself and a settler colonial occupation that prevails by erasing itself, could thus be misguided. On the one hand, the occupation is essential to the entire settlement project, and dismantling it would jeopardize the viability of the settlements themselves. On the other hand, the occupation *erases the very conditions* necessary to produce a viable settler colonial project. It is a double bind from which, from the Zionist point of view, there is no way out. Israeli planners thought they could achieve settler colonial goals via essentially colonial means, apparently not realizing how inherently antithetical the two circumstances are.

With the launch of the Oslo process, the Israeli leadership thought it could pay lip service to a "two-state" solution (especially when addressing international audiences) while operating decisively to prevent its emergence. Certainly, it is not unusual for the *actions* of those in charge of political processes to differ from their *declared intentions*, but in this case they did what they only at times said they would do while thinking they were doing the opposite. Despite their resolve, preparedness, and mastery over technology and resources, the political leaders did not seem to realize that the systemic "matrix of control," and the consequent separation they were enforcing, would inevitably produce precisely the colonized Palestinian subjectivity that heralds the strategic failure of a settler colonial project.[14]

Indeed, the relationship between occupation and settlement in the territories seems now to be irreversibly compromised. The occupation infrastructure was established over time to ensure the viability of the settlements, but now it is the settlements that perpetuate the need for permanent occupation.[15] Failed settler colonialism reverts to colonialism.

It is an impasse that not even a fully committed proponent of transfer can escape. Why would fantasies of a Nakba-type scenario (and there is substantial evidence of such wishful thinking in current Israeli public discourse) even be necessary if the regime was seen to be operating satisfactorily in the first place?[16] The settler colonial project is obsessed with demographic concerns. But could a settler colonial project that must hope for catastrophic events, visited upon others, in order to envision its ultimate success really be doing all that well?

Theoretically, a smoothly operating occupation should render the Palestinian population largely invisible, yet the occupation is premised on an enhanced, panoptical capacity to *see* all facets of Palestinian life. It further requires that its own responses to possible challenges be predictable, disproportionate, and, most importantly, *highly visible*. While this posture may secure "deterrence," it certainly defeats the original purpose. The most efficient way to make Palestinian lives "invisible" would be to discontinue their direct oppression. But given the impasse, the best the occupation can do is to maintain rather than supersede itself. It is exactly because the occupation is efficient that it is not effective.

As a population controlling regime, the occupation—and this includes the settlements—is not likely at this point to be dismantled through a series of deliberate acts reversing its entrenchment, especially after 1992 and the onset of the policy of systematic closure. In this sense it may be irreversible. But if the occupation is irreversible, the exit will probably be forward: the Palestinian Authority (PA) and/or a Hamas-led government in Gaza could end up inheriting the occupation's structures and fashion their rule as postcolonial successor polities. This would not be the first time that a colonial power succeeded by establishing effective colonial state institutions which, in turn, made decolonization possible.[17] Moreover, such a "solution" would not constitute a major departure: the PA and Hamas, together with a plethora of western non-government organizations, can be considered an integral part of the occupation in its current configuration. As historian of postcolonial Africa Mahmood Mamdani has repeatedly noted, a decolonized polity and the neocolonial relations it maintains with former colonizing cores should be understood as the direct successors of the colonial state (and its colonial relations with the imperial center).[18] Thus, as the scholarship on decolonization processes has emphasized, continuity and discontinuity should be considered together.

The prospect of the establishment of a successor Palestinian polity, however, should be seen as a function of Israeli strength, not weakness. Likewise, internationally sanctioned Palestinian independence (and associated forms of neocolonial dependency) in the West Bank and Gaza should be viewed as the logical outcome, not the demise, of the colonial occupation. It is inevitable: for a colonial occupying power, altering the status of the occupied territory ultimately requires negotiating sovereign capacities

between polities (however unequal); for a colonial settler project, reaching its goals requires negotiation *within* the polity. In other words, whereas colonialism is followed by (generally only nominal) decolonization, settler colonialism remains "impervious to regime change."[19] Colonial and settler colonial forms routinely mix and interpenetrate, and yet, given their essentially antithetical nature, one ultimately prevails over the other. No regime is formidable enough to extinguish and reinforce itself simultaneously, and in the West Bank and Gaza, it is the colonial form that appears to have prevailed.

This is ironic. For much of its history as a settler colonial project, Zionism achieved remarkable results in comparatively difficult circumstances. But after 1967, having achieved unchallenged regional supremacy and acquired unwavering U.S. support, success eluded it. Without doubt, the pre-1947 Zionist leadership had a fully-developed comparative understanding of their project, and part of the ensuing failure could relate to the post-statehood era leadership's inadequate understanding of colonialism and settler colonialism as distinct formations.[20] Also important, however—the subject of the next section—is the seepage of colonial forms into Israel proper, where the relative integration of the "Israeli Arabs" is being progressively reversed, and where the very autonomy of Israel as a settler colonial society is being eroded.

FROM SETTLER COLONIALISM TO RECOLONIZATION

Dependency on external support is entirely natural for a colonial project—*colonial* dependencies are by definition political entities ruled from the outside. In the case of settler colonial entities, however, dependency must be temporary. Pre-1948 Palestine was governed by Britain, but Palestine's *settler* colonial entity—the Yishuv, the community formed by the incoming Zionist settlers—depended as well on other external support. Thus, while Britain provided the diplomatic, administrative/legal, and military framework without which the colonial settler entity could not have expanded, developed, and thrived, the Yishuv was an emanation of a number of Jewish Diaspora organizations, most notably the World Zionist Organization and its executive arm, the Jewish Agency, which governed the community under the terms of Britain's mandate over Palestine.

Nonetheless, the Yishuv jealously guarded its independence of action and self-sufficiency in all domains—including arms manufacture and the building of a military force—and was supremely adept at utilizing Diasporic support to achieve its goals. Settler colonialism is inherently premised on settler autonomy and the eventual if not immediate establishment of a substantive localized sovereign capacity ultimately capable of challenging the metropolitan power. Thus, the Yishuv was among settler colonialism's most successful embodiments. As the successor state of Mandate Palestine following the withdrawal of the British and the success of the 1947–49 war, the Yishuv, by then the State of Israel, was no longer dependent on outside

powers. Although Israel for the next two decades benefited enormously from external support, there is a crucial difference between taking advantage of such support and having to rely on it.

After 1967, however, and progressively more so in recent years, the situation changed, when Israel's ongoing occupation of the territories it conquered and its expanding settlement project put it at increasing odds with much of the international community. More and more, it was forced to depend on the United States both for diplomatic cover and for the military aid necessary to maintain qualitative military edge over its combined neighbors. The result has been that in recent decades Israel may have undergone what could be defined as a recolonization process.[21] Beyond U.S. government aid, the need to mobilize the Diaspora (and other supporters, such as the U.S. Christian Zionists) in order to colonize the West Bank has produced a situation in which the entire settler colonial project of Israel depends, once again, on external support. That recolonization is an endogenous Israeli trend—i.e., that it has the ostensible support of the majority of the Jewish Israeli public—does not make it structurally different from other recolonization processes and does not change its inherently anti-settler colonial character.

Focusing on the recolonization of a settler colonial project, not as a *fait accompli* but as a *process*, can be useful in interpreting current Israeli circumstances. Zionism in practice was about establishing a country of *some* Jewish people (i.e., those who would move there as opposed to those who would not). Recurring emphasis on Israel as the country of *all* Jews rather than the country of Zionists inevitably produces a recolonization effect, subjecting Jewish Israelis to the political determination of others. To succeed, a settler project can only be the project of its settlers—of no one else. The push for new immigrants and reliance on external supporters, by erasing the necessary distinction between settler insiders and exogenous outsiders (in this case, between those who have moved to Palestine and those who have not) prevents the indigenization of the settler, an indispensable component of all successful settler colonial projects.[22] Many in the Zionist movement understood this clearly, even though their proposals regarding *how* to approach the indigenization of the settler varied dramatically.

It is significant that, according to settler colonial traditions, it is settlement that makes a nation, not vice versa. Indeed, these renditions of colonizing processes routinely refer to the differentiation of national types that inevitably results from the very experience of settlement and life on the land. This differentiation, which can also be expressed as that which progressively separates the colonizing metropole from the settler periphery, is itself used to sustain claims to political autonomy. Such processes require the full indigenization of the settler. Indeed, failure to indigenize creates the conditions of possibility for recolonization to become operative. In the end, recolonization processes constitute a "new old land," not the "old new land" of settler colonial/Zionist imaginings.

The external constituencies that support Israel's colonial control of the West Bank may in the last analysis not have the interests of Israel (as a settler colonial project itself) at heart. They seem more interested in shaping Israeli actions, sustaining control over all Palestinians, and using Israeli circumstances as a reference point capable of galvanizing their political rhetoric. They can, for example, be quite resistant to what could be construed as attempts within the Israeli polity to renegotiate the Israeli system of control over Palestinian life (and, implicitly, of the settler sovereign capacity that enacting this renegotiation would constitute and demonstrate).

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External supporters also resent typically settler colonial attempts to promote immigration to Israel as a settler society, as if a successful settler colonial project should need to actively promote the immigration of potential settlers beyond the ostensible possibility of a "regenerated" lifestyle. An example, but a telling one, was the swift and overwhelming reaction to an advertising campaign promoted by the Israeli Absorption Ministry in late November 2011, seen as 'insensitively' promoting the re-emigration to Israel of Israelis living in the United States by questioning the Jewishness of Jewish life in the Diaspora; the Israeli government immediately backtracked.[23] (It is important to note that these ads were not trying to convince American Jews of the desirability of migrating to the settler colonial locale, but were targeting a constituency that had, for an extraordinary diversity of reasons, voted with its feet *out* of a settler society.) Moreover, the campaign in question was not promoting the opportunity to embrace a regenerating lifestyle but, on the contrary, was emphasizing the possibility of retaining a specific definitory character—as defensive a proposition as can be. Similarly, the Jewish Agency recently shifted its focus from supporting immigration to promoting the links between Israel and the Diaspora via the sponsorship of temporary visits.[24] This is not how a healthily indigenizing settler colonial collective positions itself. The agents of the various settler colonies that were dispatched to the European metropoles during the nineteenth century and, later, their successors from the British dominions (even those from colonies or dominions that were either hard pressed to attract sufficient numbers of settlers or had serious doubts about the quality of those they attracted), while always careful to play down the cultural differences between metropole and colony, never attempted to recruit those who had failed to settle after a stay in the colonies.

We should be aware of a recolonizing trend and of the difficulties a settler colonial project (i.e., Israel) faces in its assertion of ultimate sovereign capacity vis-à-vis its exogenous alterities (i.e., the Jewish Diaspora). Perennial attempts to interpret automatic U.S. support for Israeli actions as a product of the extraordinary capacity of an organized, well-funded, and strategically located pro-Israel lobby are overblown.[25] The lobby is there,

of course, and it is well-funded and strategically located, even if largely redundant (how can one improve upon automatic, unquestioning, and unqualified support?), but its activities should be framed in the context of the recolonization of Israeli circumstances, not in the context of an Israeli "colonization" of U.S. policy. Even if the two processes may look alike, they proceed from different sources.

Besides, when it comes to recolonization processes it seems wise to look both ways. In a recent article entitled "The Republican Nightmare," David Bromwich highlighted the crucial distinction between appealing to Jewish *voters* and appealing to Jewish *donors*. Noting the almost unanimous opposition expressed by the Israeli intelligence establishment to military adventurism against Iran, he concluded:

> So we are at a strange crossroads. The right-wing coalition government of Israel is trying to secure support, with the help of an American party in an election year, for an act of war that it could not hope to accomplish unassisted; while an American opposition party complies with the demand of support by a foreign power, in an election year, to gain financial backing and popular leverage that it could not acquire unassisted.[26]

Strange indeed, but it would make more sense if an appraisal of a recolonization dynamic were added to the equation; after all, all recolonization processes rely necessarily both on a recolonization party located in the settler periphery and on a recolonization lobby firmly established in the metropolitan core (and their entanglements). It is possible to be the colony of a diaspora, of a particular lobby, or of a corporate body and its local allies.[27] The history of the British Empire, with which I am most acquainted, is replete with instances of this kind.

In any case, making options that could not otherwise be available is an incredibly powerful way to shape decision making. Paradoxically, it is the external support that makes the colonial occupation possible that, in turn, compromises Israel itself as a successful settler colonial state (and its "democratic" life).[28] After all, from a Zionist standpoint and for the reasons outlined above, the problem may not be that the occupation is not allowed to do what it is meant to do, but that it quite efficiently does what it is not meant to.

Conclusion

The Shift argues that since 1967 the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation has progressively reverted to what it was before 1948: an ethnic conflict. In these preliminary notes I have suggested that Israel has indeed reverted (especially since it instituted the closure policy in the early 1990s) to a pre-1948 configuration: a locale again primarily informed by the presence and operation of a variety of specifically colonial forms.[29] The shift

Klein identifies without doubt *has* produced a set of circumstances where the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation can now be read as an ethnic conflict, and a territorial solution *has* become impracticable. In a sense, though, the conflict has simultaneously remained a border conflict: the border separating a colonial from a settler colonial system of domination.

When we think about settler colonialism in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we need to direct our gaze both towards the West Bank, where it has manifestly failed, and towards Israel proper, where it succeeded. What has happened in the West Bank may be a consequence of the institution of an "accidental empire" (depending on one's definition of 'accidental'). Nonetheless, while there are settlers, and while it is an empire, it is not a settler colonial empire.[30] This is the "other shift" I am arguing for—an interpretative one.

As the "one-state" solution turns out to be the settler colonial solution, the occupation and its perpetuation should be seen as the colonial solution, a regime that will likely lead to the establishment of two (unequal) polities in the Erez Israel/greater Palestine area. That the colonial settlers of the West Bank are failing as settler colonizers and that they and their supporters are damaging the "achievements" of Israel as a settler colonial society should be emphasized, as should the recolonizing trend in Israeli life. Thus, we are confronted with *one* Zionist settler colonial project and *two* outcomes: one largely successful, the other largely unsuccessful. The coexistence of successful and failed settler colonialisms—that is, of a largely successful settler society in Israel, and a largely successful colonial formation in the occupied territories—explains why the decolonization paradigm remains available for the West Bank and Gaza despite the ongoing occupation, while other frameworks must remain available for the Palestinians who were trapped *inside*, and those who were trapped *outside* the area controlled by Israel in 1949 and their descendants (i.e., the "Israeli Arabs," and the Palestinian Diaspora).

These considerations are important not only for people who have an interest in Zionist efforts, but are also vital for debates that need to take place within the Palestinian national movement. We must consider the implications of the PA leadership's pursuit of a "two-state" solution for the Palestinians who have been subjected to the successful settler colonial project that is Israel. For all these reasons, the Palestinian constituencies that have been neglected in the context of the "two-state" solution framework must be allowed to talk about settler colonialism and the way it works (and sometime doesn't).

ENDNOTES

1. Menachem Klein, *The Shift: Israel-Palestine from Border Struggle to Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

2. On Palestinian "fragmentation," see Meron Benvenisti, "United we stand: Do Israelis and Palestinians belong to one divided society, or to two separate

societies in a situation of forced proximity as a result of a temporary occupation?" *Ha'Aretz*, 28 January 2010, and Oren Yiftachel, "'Creeping Apartheid' in Israel-Palestine," *Middle East Report* 253 (Winter 2009), pp. 7–15, 37. It is significant in the context of this article that Benvenisti refers to settler colonialism as a suitable concept for the interpretation of current circumstances in Israel/ Palestine.

3. On settler colonial forms as distinct from colonial ones, see Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999); David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Societies: States of Unease* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Lynette Russell, ed., *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European Encounters in Settler Societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century: Projects, Practices, Legacies* (London: Routledge, 2005); Alyosha Goldstein and Alex Lubin, eds., "Settler Colonialism," special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (2008); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Tracey Banivanua-Mar and Penelope Edmonds, eds., *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Penelope Edmonds, *Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds., *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and also this author's works cited below and *Settler Colonial Studies*, a new scholarly journal dedicated to the comparative study of this specific colonial formation.

4. As Moshe Behar has recently noted, the "one state/two states" debate should take account of what happens outside of the conceptual and geographical boundaries set by its parameters. After all, supporters of what he defines as the "one— ethnically—cleansed—state solution" have never been so powerful, and regional developments could present the opportunity for enacting a further "transfer" of substantial segments of the Palestinian population. Behar concludes: "If my delineations thus far are even partially correct, then one conclusion emerges: as critical, engaging and stimulating as the 1S2S exchange is—in practical terms it remains utterly esoteric once juxtaposed with ongoing material politics free from doses of wishful thinking." Moshe Behar, "Unparallel Universes: Iran and Israel's One-state Solution," *Global Society* 25, no. 3 (2011), pp. 353–76 (quotation on p. 360).

5. For interventions interpreting Zionism as primarily a settler colonial movement, see Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (New York: Monad Press, 1973); Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1983); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Steven Salaita, *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006); Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008); and also Omar Jabary, Mezna Qato, Kareem Rabie, and Sobhi Samour, eds., "Past is present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine," special issue of *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012).

6. For more sustained discussions of this distinction, see Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills: Palgrave

Macmillan, 2010), and Lorenzo Veracini, "Introducing *Settler Colonial Studie*s," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011), pp. 1–12.

7. Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987).

8. On settler colonialism as transfer, and for a taxonomy of different settler colonial transfers, see Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, especially pp. 33–52.

9. See Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan, 2003), and Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001). Introducing the Hebrew translation of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in 2006, Ella Shohat significantly remarks on an academic and public sphere "where the 'colonial' itself had hardly been thought through in any depth" (by the time of postcolonial studies' emergence in the early 1990s). This gap, she notes, has not been closed. Ella Shohat, "Black, Jew, Arab: Postscript to 'The Wretched of the Earth'," *Arena Journal* 33/34 (2009), pp. 32–60 (quotation on p. 57).

10. For a Memmian analysis of the colonial dimensions of Zionist/Israeli control of Palestinian life, see David Lloyd, "Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception: The Example of Palestine/Israel," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012), pp. 59–80.

11. Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, pp. 17–32.

12. See Shir Hever, *The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation: Repression Beyond Exploitation* (London: Pluto Press, 2010).

13. In the late 1970s, Robert Paine coined the notion of "welfare colonialism" to describe the system of colonial relationships then prevalent in the Canadian North. Inherently contradictory, "solicitous rather than exploitive, and liberal rather than repressive," welfare colonialism is a circumstance in which colonizers still take all decisions and still control the future of the colonized. Robert Paine, "The Path of Welfare Colonialism," in Robert Paine, ed., *The White Arctic: Anthropological Essays on Tutelage and Ethnicity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 7–28 (quotation on p. 3). Similarly

solicitous rather than exploitative, and yet repressive and more repressive, the colonial regime instituted in the occupied Palestinian territories could be defined as "harmfare colonialism."

14 , Jeff Halper, "The Key to Peace: Dismantling the Matrix of Control," Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions, http://www.icahd.org/node/100.

15. Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso, 2007).

16. Behar, "Unparallel Universes," pp. 364–67.

17. It bears mentioning, however, that the deliberate establishment by colonial powers of defective postcolonial successors in the aim of ultimately demonstrating their own indispensability is not unknown (i.e., as a model, but the list could indeed be an extended one, the hasty abandonment of Congo by its Belgian rulers).

18. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Oxford: James Currey, 1996), and *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

19. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006), p. 402.

20. For evidence of the intensity of this comparative awareness, see, for example, Zachary Lockman, "Land, Labor and the Logic of Zionism: A Critical Engagement with Gershon Shafir," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012), pp. 9–38, and Shalom Reichman and Shlomo Hasson, "A Cross-cultural Diffusion of Colonization: From Posen to Palestine," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, no. 1 (1984), pp. 57–70.

21. "Recolonization" is a concept developed by New Zealand historian James Belich in analyzing the development of many settler-colonial contexts, particularly in the economic domain. The notion, however, can be extended to its political manifestations. James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2009), especially pp. 435–547.

22. On Zionist attempts to collectively "indigenise," see Piterberg, *Returns of Zionism*, pp. 107–09 (on the Canaanites), and chapter 7, ("The Bible of an Autochtonous Settler: Ben-Gurion reads the Book of Joshua"), pp. 244–82. On "indigenization" as a fundamental trait of all settler colonial discursive orders, see Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, especially pp. 17–32.

23. Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu cancels controversial ad campaign to bring back Israeli expats from the U.S.," *Ha'Aretz*, 2 December 2011. This refrain is not unprecedented in settler discourse. White Rhodesians, for example, also promoted immigration by highlighting how only in Rhodesia it was possible to embrace a lifestyle premised on old-fashioned and traditional notions of Britishness that had been discontinued in the motherland.

24. See a recent exchange published in *Ha'Aretz* on the subject, where in response to criticism regarding the Jewish Agency's plan to discontinue its funding for the higher education of new (Jewish) immigrants to Israel and focus on "Jewish-identity building" instead, Jewish Agency for Israel Director-General Alan Hoffmann reiterated the agency's "new mission: bringing ever-larger circles of young Jews to visit and experience Israel." Daniel Tauber, "Keep aliyah on the agenda," *Ha'Aretz*, 13 January 2012, and Alan Hoffmann, "A better approach to aliyah," *Ha'Aretz*, 20 January 2012.

25. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

26. David Bromwich, "The Republican Nightmare," *The New York Review of Books* 59, no. 2 (9 February 2012). Chemi Shalev recently noted in *Ha'Aretz* that "Israel has never been so prominent in any presidential race. It never served as such a 'wedge issue.' And it never received such sweeping and unequivocal support—especially for its right flank. The statement made by the current front-runner, Newt Gingrich, about the Palestinians being 'an invented nation' is only the most recent in a string of policy statements that, in Israeli terms, would position the Republican candidates—

with the exception of Ron Paul—somewhere in the Knesset's radical right, between the Likud's Danny Danon and National Union's Aryeh Eldad. Michele Bachmann says Israel shouldn't give back one more inch of territory; Rick Perry says Israel can build settlements to its heart's content; Rick Santorum has already annexed the West Bank to Israel proper; Jon Huntsman claims that Israel is the only American interest in the Middle East; and Mitt Romney thinks the United States should keep its mouth shut on the peace process and surrender the floor to his good friend 'Bibi' Netanyahu. Oh, and they all promise to move the American Embassy to Jerusalem, at once." Chemi Shalev, "The Republican's unconditional support for Israel is undoubtedly gratifying for many Jewish voters, but in the long run, it could do more harm than good," *Ha'Aretz*, 15 December 2011. I suspect that this support would become somewhat confused if it needed to decide between an occupation that reinforces itself and an occupation that supersedes itself. This support is not unqualified: it only exists because Israel can be represented as needing support, and because it can be represented as a heterotopian locale, as a really existing place of alternative ordering. In the end, these supporters are probably more interested in supporting their support for Israel than in supporting Israel.

27. Advocating a "break away from the Jewish lobby" and its capacity to shape Israeli policy—that is, calling for what amounts to a declaration of settler independence, and noting Prime Minister Netanyahu's primary reliance on foreign funding, Oudeh Basharat recently noted that "there are some [i.e., those who rely on the lobby] who see America as the place where they will live after retiring from their years of service in the Middle East." Oudeh Basharat, "For Mideast peace, Israel must cut off U.S. Jewish lobby," *Ha'Aretz*, 5 February 2012. This intuition is significant and convincing: the distinction between an intention to stay and an aspiration to eventually leave is, after all, as good a definition as any of what separates a "colonist" from a "settler."

28. In *The Anatomy of Israel's Survival* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011)

Hirsh Goodman expands on his concern with what the settlers do to Israel's ultimate security because of what they do to its legitimacy. While Israel's survival is not at stake, its survival as a settler society is. On the other hand, as it differently affects Zionist constituencies located in two separate locales, the "crisis of Zionism" could indeed be seen as a colonial crisis. See Peter Beinart, *The Crisis of Zionism* (New York: Times Books/Henry Holt, 2012).

29. Colonialism and settler colonial forms are always mixed in reality, and this is not to say that colonial forms did not inform Israeli-Palestinian relations in the period between the establishment of the Israeli state and the formal disbandment of the military government in 1966 (and indeed later—most of its regulations remained in place). The crucial difference is, however, in the ways in which a particular regime is imagined either as permanent or in the process of extinguishing itself. In other words, if the military government and the policies that followed its disbandment were manufacturing "Israeli Arabs," the post-1967 occupation, and especially its post-1992 closures-filled version, has been a tremendously powerful manufacturer of "Palestinians." It is no small difference.

30. Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977* (New York: Times Books, 2006).