The Binational State and the Colonial Imperative: Israeli–Palestinian Conflict in Historical Perspective

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With almost prophetic accuracy, Naguib Azoury, a Maronite Ottoman bureaucrat turned Arab nationalist, wrote in 1905: "Two important phenomena, of the same nature but opposed … are emerging at this moment in Asiatic Turkey. They are the awakening of the Arab nation and the latent effort of the Jews to reconstitute on a very large scale the ancient kingdom of Israel." These two peoples "are destined to fight each other continually until one of them wins." By the 1920s, the two peoples were already laying competing claims to Palestine, resulting in one of the lengthiest and deepest conflicts in modern history. Azoury's prediction of how the conflict will ultimately end, however, is not the only possibility. Logically, the two peoples could divide the disputed land between them, forming two states living side by side in peace. They could also end the conflict by forming a binational, Israeli/Palestinian state between the Jordan River and the sea, sharing its governance. Whereas the two-state option has guided policymakers thus far, the logic of the binational state option is impeccable. Facing the lingering difficulties of implementing the two-state solution, the question of whether the binational state solution can, in fact, work in our case deserves a serious consideration.

I can now state my question: Which political geography solution is more likely to achieve a stable Israeli–Palestinian peace, a binational state or two separate states? In recent years, this question, which has been asked for decades, has become a subject of heated debate among many observers,

academics, and public figures. One view in this debate supports a two-state solution and rejects a binational state. A second view calls for a binational state. A third view, stated primary by some Palestinian officials, calls on the Palestinians to insist on forming a binational state should Israel not soon withdraw from the Occupied Territories. A fourth view, held by some Israeli policy-makers, sees no end to conflict, at least not in the short to medium run. In a variant of this view, the two sides can at best arrive at a long-term interim agreement, postponing discourse on the final status for a future generation.[1]

Answering this question requires predicting the future. Some analysts proceed by making assumptions on the evolution of current forces. Given these assumptions, the arguments made are cogent; but they are hard to evaluate, since they are largely based on subjective assessments. This essay takes a different approach.

My premise is that we can gain insight on our question by putting it into historical perspective, observing the behaviours of other societies in similar situations. While caution is always needed when analyses are based on historical analogies, common-sense logic suggests that when one socio-political/economic system resembles another, the two systems are more likely to evolve along similar trajectories, in response to similar forces, than systems that are not alike, *ceteris paribus*. My approach, then, employs history as a huge socio-political-economic laboratory. On the face of it, this approach may seem to lead nowhere, as, strictly speaking, each of our

experiments was conducted only once. However, when the experiments are looked at together, common patterns may arise, which may suggest the spirit of things to come.

I will analyze our question against a backdrop that has rarely been used explicitly for this case before: colonialism and decolonization. Historically, colonialism curtailed political and individual freedoms and exploited native peoples. In the 20th century, it remained intact as long as the indigenous (or colonized) people accepted colonial rule. When this passivity was replaced by a quest for independence, colonialism eventually collapsed. Facing demand for independence, some colonial rulers left peacefully; others put up a fight, refusing to let go of the colony. In facing the nationalist fighters for independence, colonial armies were typically victorious. However, the nationalists continued to fight, turning to guerrilla methods. Sooner or later, all the colonial rulers (or metropoles) concluded that the total costs associated with holding on to the colony outweighed the benefits and left.

The benefit of using a colonialism–decolonization framework is that it places the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in a comparative environment. Too often, this conflict has been looked at in terms of its unique attributes. While Israel's presence in the West Bank and, until recently, the Gaza Strip (the Occupied Territories) is sometimes placed within the context of colonialism, this has more often than not been done using an antagonistic tone, so that any attempt to be reflective is immediately paralysed. This is not my goal, and I am aware that our colonial framework may evoke angry responses from some readers. Some features of the Israeli case are indeed unique, but I believe that there are enough similarities to historical colonialism and decolonization to warrant further analysis.

Israeli and Historical Colonialism

It would be useful to first discuss in what way Israel has been a colonial state, since when it has been such a state, and whether historical

Zionism was a form of colonialism. For reasons of space, this discussion must be relatively brief. Unlike the typical colonialist, the Zionists practised colonization without colonialism, as they did not come to Palestine in the name of any government or monarch. Within a few years of their arrival in Palestine, however, they began clashing with the Palestinians. The conflict was not colonial at that time; rather, it was a clash between two communities claiming the same land as their home.

By 1948, the Zionist–Palestinian conflict had turned into all-out war. As a result of that war, the Zionists won control over 78 % of Palestine, which became the state of Israel. After 1949, most Israelis came to accept the borders of the new state (the Green Line) as final. By the late 1950s, only the Zionist revisionists longed for the remaining 22 % of the land, and even their zeal was beginning to fade. The young state of Israel discriminated heavily against its Palestinian citizens in various institutionalized ways, all in the name of national security. At the same time, it never took away their right to vote or their right of free speech. By the late 1950s, this state of affairs, which had much in common with internal colonialism, was disappearing. In 1966, the government dismantled it. The next Israeli colonial drive would prove much more intense and resilient to change.

Some writers argue that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is about partition of Palestine.[2] I argue that although partition was central to the conflict before 1967, since 1967 the conflict has become colonial. Historical colonialism involved states expanding intentionally beyond their accepted borders and occupied peoples rejecting the expansion. It is possible to argue that the Israeli occupation of the territories in 1967 was not fully intended, as Israel was trying to prevent Jordan's King Hussein from entering the war. In the first 10 years of the occupation, Israel was generally unable to decide what to do with the territories. All that changed in 1977, when the

offspring of the Zionist revisionists came to power in Israel for the first time since 1948, turning the territories into a settler colony in the full historical sense of the term.

In broad terms, in the last 500 years there have been three types of settler colonies. In one type, settlers intermarried with the native elites. Assisted by soldiers from the metropole, they ousted many native people from their lands, exterminating some and enslaving others, and imported slaves from Africa to work in their plantations, as in Spanish America. In a second type, the settlers formed exclusive white societies. Assisted by metropolitan forces, they expelled the native people from their lands and marginalized them demographically, becoming the majority in the colony, as in British North America, Australia, and New Zealand. In a third type, the settlers remained a minority. They balanced this weakness with a privileged access to the colonial state, which provided them technology and armies. Assisted by the metropole, they seized native lands and resources, but they did not exterminate the natives demographically; they excluded them socially and politically but employed them in low-paying menial jobs, as in, for example, Algeria, Angola, the East Indies, South Africa, and Rhodesia. In the last two cases, the settlers formed a state that kept political power in white hands, excluding the Africans. It is this third type of settler colonialism that is most applicable to Israel.

The new rulers asserted their exclusive sovereignty over the land upon claiming it as a colony. Similarly, in 1977 the new Israeli regime asserted that there must be Israeli sovereignty between the Jordan river and the sea. Most of the European colonial powers promoted settlement actively in their settler colonies, including in Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Lybia, Kenya, and, to a lesser extent, in the East Indies. The state of Israel has followed closely in their footsteps, providing, for example, generous tax incentives, subsidies, and grants to settlers; building industrial, agricultural, and transportation infrastructures for exclusive settler use; and deploying the Israeli Defense Force to defend settlers and fight their wars. As the rate of colonization in the territories accelerated, the government fundamentally changed the historical Zionist approach to land acquisition. Whereas before 1948 the Zionists acquired land by purchasing it from Palestinians, after 1977 land seizure became the primary tool of acquiring land in the territories, as in settler colonialism.

While the number of Jewish settlers has grown considerably, they have always remained a small minority in the territories. As in the non-Spanish settler colonies, they formed a highly segregated society and have not intermarried with the natives. The situation in the territories has had typical colonial attributes, including settlers looking down on natives, endemic settler–native violence, settlers taking the law into their own hands, a large gap between settler and native standards of living, biased state allocation of water and land to settlers, and settlers employing natives in low-paying menial jobs. Separate systems of law and order have applied for settlers and natives, and some Palestinians have collaborated with Israel, informing on their brethren, and turning them in to the authorities. In time, the Israeli military administration installed after the occupation has turned into a civilian one, introducing the usual colonial routinization of daily life. As in all colonies, the Palestinian economy has evolved to serve the needs of the Israeli metropole and has become dependent upon it, while Israel has not invested in developing the native economy. Most importantly, like all colonial rulers, until recently Israeli had rejected the formation of a Palestinian state, offering instead various schemes of indirect rule; even now, it is not clear whether the Palestinian state Israel has in mind will be fully sovereign.

As in all settler colonies, there have been pockets of anti-Israeli violence in the territories almost from day one of the occupation.

In general, before 1987 it seemed that Israel was able to control the territories with minimal effort, as in almost all colonies. Things changed in December 1987, when growing Palestinian resentment exploded into widespread revolt against Israeli rule. The revolt took many Israelis by surprise, as other metropoles have been startled by their wars of decolonization. Since then, some periods have been relatively calmer than others, but the violence has never stopped. Israeli colonization of the territories has also never stopped. Determined to quell the revolt, Israel has resorted to collective punishments in order to reduce public support for the rebels, as have all other colonizers, including those that, like Israel, aspired to democracy at home (e.g., the British in Kenya, the French in Algeria, and the United States in the Philippines).

Facing a militarily stronger Israel, the Palestinians have turned to guerrilla war, the usual native tactic in wars of decolonization. Eventually, metropolitan fatigue set in at home, and Israel began to consider schemes of partial decolonization, leaving the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria in 2005. The Israeli insistence on keeping a foot in the colony is not unique historically, particularly when colonizers are attached to the colony, as in French Algeria (which was viewed as part and parcel of France), the Dutch East Indies (which the Dutch viewed as very important to the home country), and Portuguese Angola and Mozambique (which Lisbon viewed as *provincias ultramares*—overseas provinces). In all these cases, the colonizer insisted on some sort of partial decolonization, which the colonized people rejected. The turbulence in Israel since 1987 over the decolonization is also typical for metropoles during wars of decolonization. Even the claim of some settlers that their coming to the territories was sanctioned by God is not new but has previously been observed in both South Africa and North America.

The Israeli–Palestinian Binational State Solution

In the context of colonialism, which solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is more likely to achieve peace: two states, or one binational state? The two-state solution has been on the table for many years. The 1937 Peel Commission in Britain sought partition, and so did the United Nations in 1947. From 1967 to the early 1990s, Israel rejected the idea of a Palestinian state. Then, under the weight of the ongoing war of decolonization in the Occupied Territories, it began softening its position, following the historical trajectory. In 2003, Israel formally accepted the two-state solution embedded in the U.S. "Road Map" peace plan. The binational state idea is also old. Theodor Herzl's celebrated novel *Altneuland* (*Old-New Land*; [1902] 1997) tells the story of a democratic (Jewish–Arab) New Society in Palestine. Before 1948, the idea of binationalism was promoted by such Jewish luminaries as Professor Martin Buber and Hebrew University President Judah Magnes. It was also considered by the 1946 Anglo-American Commission, which pushed it aside in favour of the two-state solution, leading to the UN partition plan of 1947.

With the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, the binational state idea became moot, but in recent years it has resurfaced, championed by both Jewish and Palestinian public figures and intellectuals. Unlike Herzl's New Society, the new binationalism is driven by the realities on the ground. The argument is as follows. It is apparent that Israel refuses to fully vacate the West Bank. To bolster its grip on the West Bank, Israel has steadily expanded the settlements there, doubling the number of settlers during the Oslo process period alone, and has since continued to do so under the Sharon government. The geographical layout of the settlements sanctions a Bantustan system of Palestinian government (one made of separate cantons surrounded by Israeli land or

connected by bridges, tunnels, and narrow passages). Meanwhile, the Arab population west of the Jordan River has consistently grown faster than the Jewish population, and it is expected to continue to do so for years to come. As a result, there are already more Arabs than Jews west of the Jordan River, or there will be more Arabs than Jews in the area within a few decades (depending on the particular estimate).[3]

Given these realities, proponents of the binational state conclude that it has become virtually impossible to separate Israelis and Palestinians. Since Israel will not or cannot evacuate its settlers from the West Bank, Palestinians and Jews have no choice but to find a way to live together, as the black and white populations have done in South Africa since 1994. Some Palestinian intellectuals and public figures take this argument further, calling on their people to stop their revolt, dismantle the Palestinian Authority, and demand to be annexed to Israel should it not leave the territories soon. They argue that a situation in which a Palestinian majority would demand equal rights and a Jewish minority would deny these rights is not sustainable. The moral implications of this situation are obvious. Sooner or later the world community will force Israel to dismantle what amounts to an apartheid system, as it did in South Africa. At that time, a fully democratic binational state would form west of Jordan River, resolving the conflict.

The idea of a binational Israeli–Palestinian state is laudable. Such a state can also work well, as it does in Belgium, Switzerland, and India. But can it work in our case? Laudable ideas, after all, may still face impassable obstacles to implementation, making them impractical in some cases. For example, many people will probably agree that socialism is a laudable idea. And yet it collapsed because the initial conditions for its implementation, and the people enforcing it, were imperfect (like all human beings).

The Israeli–Palestinian Binational State Solution in Historical Perspective

Can a binational state end our conflict? Let us turn again to historical analogy. Conflict was endemic to settler colonialism, and it was ended either by forming a binational state or by forming two states. There were essentially three types of conflict. Colonies with many settlers sought secession from the metropole, or at least self-government, which the metropole rejected in some cases (e.g., today's United States). The colonies rebelled, and the metropole eventually gave up the colony. This amounted to a two-state solution—the metropole and the settlers.

In a second conflict type, settlers clashed with natives over land, resources, control, and status; this happened in virtually all colonies of settlement. Some settler societies continued the fight after gaining independence or self-government, expelling the natives and exterminating them demographically (e.g., the aboriginal peoples of North America and Australia). Years later, they granted the remaining natives equal rights, forming (in effect) a binational state. South Africa and Rhodesia evolved along a different, yet related, trajectory. Here, there were many settlers, but they were always a minority in the colony. They formed settler states that depended on the native population for labour. These states did not demographically marginalize the natives but did deny them political rights. Faced with growing native demands for full rights (which, in Rhodesia, led to a war), the settlers dissolved their state, also forming a binational state with the natives in its place.

In a third conflict type, settler minorities rejected the native demand for independence, seeking to keep their preferential status. When the natives revolted, the settlers and the metropole fought them, as in, for example, Algeria, Angola, Indonesia, and Kenya. The natives were often on the run, facing the overwhelming military superiority of the colonial state, but they continued to fight, turning to

guerrilla war. The conflict ended only when the metropole decided to let go of the colony. Shortly thereafter, the settlers left and a native state formed. This solution, then, amounts to a two-state solution, the two states being the metropole and the former colony.[4]

Turning to our case, Jewish settlers have not sought to secede from Israel and are not likely to do so in the future. They also have not exterminated Palestinians demographically or expelled them. Some of the settlers' political allies in the metropole have called for the Palestinians to be transferred to Jordan, and in the past Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon apparently believed that Jordan was the Palestinian state; he has since changed his mind (see Aronson 1990, 69; Palombo 1990, 155; Morris 2001, 568). In any case, the state of Israel could not expel the Palestinians from the West Bank even if it wanted to. Whereas Americans or Australians (and others) expelled and exterminated native people in an era when colonialism was the norm, today colonialism is passé. The world community would most likely intervene swiftly to stop such a move, and it is very likely that most Israelis would reject it as immoral. Unlike the North American Indians or Australia's Aborigines, the Palestinians are in Palestine to stay.

The conflicts in Algeria, the East Indies, and so on are relevant to our case. In historical perspective, there is no substantive difference between, for example, the Algerian FLN fighting France and the PLO fighting Israel. The South African and Rhodesian cases also seem relevant to our case. While Jewish settlers have not formed a state, their leaders have been ministers in the metropolitan government, blurring the settler/state divide, as occurred in several other cases, particularly in French Algeria.[5]

Which end game is more likely in our case—the Algerian type or the South African type? Which end game is more conducive to peace? Our discussion suggests that the binational state solution can work in two cases. First, there are many settlers; they use extreme methods against the natives and become the majority; only then, and not immediately, they grant the natives full rights. Second, there are more natives than settlers, and the overall power balance is tipping in their favour despite the settlers' military and technological advantage. Fearing they may lose it all, the settlers strike a binational deal with the natives: They will dismantle their internal colonialism in return for the right to keep properties seized from the natives.

None of these conditions holds in our case: there is no demographic extermination or expulsion, and it is not likely that the Palestinians will accept the current distribution of land resources between Jews and settlers. Moreover, unlike Africans and white settlers in South Africa and Rhodesia, who shared a common religion and, in many cases, places of worship, Jews and Palestinians do not share religion. Nor do they seek a binational state. In November 2003, 78 % of Israeli Jews supported two states, and 6 % supported a binational state. In December of that year, 59 % supported a swift separation from the Palestinians, based on the desire of 73 % of Jews to avoid a *de facto* binational state. A year later, 64 % of all Israeli citizens (Jews and Arabs) supported two states. In December 2004 and May 2005, 54 % of the Palestinians supported the two-state idea on the basis of the 1967 borders; 27.3 % supported a binational state. In September 2005, Palestinian support for two states rose to 63 %.[6]

Even in South Africa, the last word on binationalism may not yet have been said. In recent years, tensions have been rising there because whites, 20 % of the population, still hold 97 % of the fertile land. In Zimbabwe (the former Rhodesia), a similar problem has caused severe civil strife. In South Africa, blacks are pressuring the government to seize lands owned by whites, most of which they seized from blacks. In August 2005, the South African vice president noted that the land reform process is slow and said that the government might consult Zimbabwe on this

matter. If South Africa, the one colonial case that seems to be going for binationalism, is in fact stumbling, binationalism in our case looks all the more unattractive.[7]

The Israeli–Palestinian Two-State Solution in Historical Perspective

Still, it cannot be denied that the two-state solution faces hurdles. Perhaps the toughest of these concern the borders of the Palestinian state and the future of Jerusalem. It is one thing to support a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders and a division of Jerusalem; it is another thing to support a Bantustan-like state without a share of Jerusalem, or even a contiguous state in parts of the West Bank. While some Palestinians still dream about Greater Palestine, most would end the conflict in return for a state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Virtually all Palestinians reject partial decolonization, similar to their historical counterparts. However, a recent poll suggests that while 61 % of Israeli Jews support a Palestinian state, only 34 % support a state based on the 1967 borders.[8]

Will Israel ever return to the 1967 borders? Let us look at history. The decision to decolonize is the outcome of a gigantic, to some extent subconscious cost–benefit analysis, which drives the national mood. Historically, metropoles lost interest in their colonies either because a war of decolonization was dragging on, with no end in sight, or because they came to perceive other options toward which to direct their national energy as more attractive than the colony in question.

The two things that Israeli colonialism still has going for it are the implicit support of the United States and Palestinian fatigue. Both, however, may change. The United States may conclude that Israeli colonialism no longer serves its interests and impose real pressure on Israel to decolonize. Those who doubt whether this can happen should recall that it has happened before. In the early 1950s, for example, the United States funded the huge French war effort in Indochina. In 1954 it decided to let go, refusing the French cry for help to save their stranded garrison in Dien Bien Phu. This effectively ended French colonialism in Indochina. The U.S. approach toward Dutch colonialism reveals a similar pattern. At first, the United States was ambivalent and even supported the Dutch, who, in effect, used American-made weapons. In 1948, it became apparent that the nationalist regime in Jakarta would be staunchly anti-Communist. The United States then changed its position and literally forced the Dutch to decolonize, threatening to cut all Marshall Plan and military aid to the Netherlands. A similar scenario is not impossible in our case. Already there are signs that anti-Americanism in the Arab world is fuelled to a considerable extent by the pro-Israeli U.S. position in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The Palestinians have most likely not said their last word yet. In several historical cases, colonial peoples mounted numerous revolts until they succeeded in bringing about decolonization. Sooner or later, the Palestinians will probably revolt again.

Facing the prospect of these changes, and the evolving demography west of the Jordan, the Israeli metropole will likely grow more tired, and more fearful of the binational state spectre. Eventually, it may elect leaders who will opt for full decolonization, as is the historical norm. There are already signs of Israeli metropolitan fatigue. Suffice it to indicate that Israel has recently been doing things that were unthinkable only 15 or even five years ago. For example, it has opened talks with the PLO, accepted a Palestinian state, said the occupation is morally bad, erected a massive physical barrier more or less along the Green Line, evacuated settlements from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria, discussed the costs and benefits of continued occupation in the open, experienced growing refusals by army elites to serve in the Occupied Territories, and, yes, reopened the discourse on binationalism. The totality of these actions suggests growing fatigue, the

type that, with the associated soul-searching, has been observed in the 20th century in the American, British, Dutch, Belgian, Portuguese, and French metropoles.

In fact, Israeli metropolitan fatigue has already led to almost full decolonization. In December 2000, Israel accepted the Clinton plan in the wake of an intensifying Palestinian revolt. Both Israel and its U.S. patron have opted for almost full decolonization. The Barak government was apparently ready to push even further in the Taba talks. The subsequent regimes in Israel and the United States, however, effectively ignored the Taba understanding. In retrospect, one cannot help but wonder whether things would have evolved differently had U.S. President Bill Clinton suggested his plan in July 2000 instead of December 2000. Of course, we will never know for sure. Such are the fortunes of history, one is compelled to conclude. But history is not just a random process; it is also the only "crystal ball" that may tell us something meaningful about the future.

Notes

1   For arguments in favour of two states and against a binational state, see Lustick (2002); Tamari (2002); Bartov (2003); Foxman (2003); Walzer (2003); Esteron (2003); Prior (2003); Ben-Ami (2004); Sher (2004); Golan (2004); Shavit (2005). For arguments in favour of a binational state, see Said (1999); Segal (2002); Karmi (2002); Abu-Odeh (2002); Judt (2003a, 2003b); Hanegbi (2003); Benvenisti (1997, 2003); Gavron (2004). For conditional support for a binational state, see Eldar (2003); Qureia (2004); Rubinstein (2004). More conflict: Yaalon (2005); Barak (2005). Interim agreement: Sharon (2002).

2   For example, see Shavit (2005), Newman (2002), Klieman (2000), Alpher (1995).

3   Population estimates were published in *Haaretz* on 7 June, 9 June, and 8 August 2005, and in *Newsweek* on 1 April 2002.

4   Some metropoles rejected decolonization in the face of revolts, even when there were not many settlers in the colony. Examples include the United States in the Philippines or the British in Malaysia. These colonizers won their battles, but sooner or later decolonized.

5   The non-settler colonies are obviously not relevant to our case.

6   78%: *Haaretz*, 5 November 2003. 59%, 73%: *Haaretz,* 7 January 2004. 54%, 27.3%: *Haaretz*, 18 January 2005. 63%: Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, May 2005.

7   On the brewing conflict in South Africa see, for example, Pogrond (2005).

8   Poll published in *Haaretz*, 4 April 2005.

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The Palestinian Arabs and the member nations of the Arab League hated the idea. Most of the Jews in Palestine were fine with it, though Irgun was not. The UN approved the recommendation, and the Arab League began preparing for war. Â The Israeli Defense Forces retaliated with extreme prejudice, massacring civilians in some cases and hoping to "prove that the price for Jewish blood is high." A Cold War pissing contest turned into the Suez Crisis, with Israeli, French, and British forces invading the Sinai peninsula. Â Did the Israeli-Palestinian conflict start only after WW2 due to the birth of the State of Israel or is it an ongoing affair? Whose side are you on in the Israel and Palestine conflict? The Israeli-Palestinian Conflictâ€"(1948- Present): The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is both simple to understand, yet deeply complex. At the heart of this conflict is a basic idea that both sides believe: The Israelis believe that they are entitled to the land now known as Israel, while the Palestinians believe that they are entitled to the land they call Palestine. Unfortunately, both sides claim the same land; they simply call the land by different names. Â The history of the conflict is much more complex than that simple explanation, but the religious and historical differences are very important to this story. On another level, the reasons for the continual fighting is easy to understand. Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Perspectives on the Peace Process. Book Â· January 2010 with 4,759 Reads. How we measure 'reads'. Â However, in spite of this consensus and the fact that peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians have been ongoing in one way or another for over 17 years, peace has been elusive at best. The frustration and the suffering of the people on both sides of the conflict have led many to believe that the two-state-solution consensus is, in fact, unattainable, and this has fueled the emergence of alternative solutions. Â Yehezkel Landau argues. in his essay that it is imperative to include a religious dimension as part. of the peace process, including the participation of religious leaders and.