**Why settlers are wrong, and why post-Zionists are also wrong**

**Settler Zionism promotes an evil policy that could bring an end to Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. But it does so under the auspices of the fashionable and misguided racket created by post-Zionist academics**

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Where else do people argue about whether the birth of their country was right or wrong? One could easily argue that the United States was created by the unjust killing of indigenous peoples and this was the case throughout north and south America, New Zealand and Canada. In fact, which country was born in a just way? ... Is Iraq just?  Jordan? United States? Brazil? " This quote was taken from an anonymous review on my books "Political Theory for the Jewish People " which I received following its publication in English. In the opinion section of "Haaretz" the writer of this review was joined by Dror Etkes who stated: "What is needed now... is no more academic and publicist discussions by descendants of immigrants on the righteousness of the Zionist idea, but healthy indigenous patriotism”. Similar comments were made on my other book “Equal Zionism" in the journal published by the Tel Aviv University's Political Science Department and in Ben Dror Yamini’s tongue-lashing section in "Maariv “ at the time.

I must admit that this is a fairly broad coalition of platforms, both academic and journalistic, some more, some less prestigious, leftist and right-wing. However, the criticism they all voiced is based entirely on an error. A mistake of both fact and discernment. As for the factual mistake: For decades Australia has been engaged in genocide as part of its establishment as a European country; these questions are being debated in the US and North America as a whole as well as in South America. Iraq and Jordan are said to have arisen as a result of administrative arbitrariness or colonial intrigue. It is not true that Israel is an exception in terms of debate within and outside of it regarding justification of its establishment. Such debates may not have taken place in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and may not exist in Jordan, but they are indeed held wherever freedom of opinion and argument are not suppressed.

The factual error of those who think that the question of state justice pales when coming to think about their discernment mistakes. In fact, they have two of them. One is practically and politically detrimental and the other – morally. The practical error is entirely related to the size of the new populations created in countries such as Australia, Brazil and the United States as a result of their modern founding and the size of their original populations - compared to the corresponding ratio of these populations in Israel and its surroundings.

The Cherokee, Creek and Inuits of North America can easily be pushed to the margins of the political and practical life of the countries that exist there. They are so easily dismissed relatively to populations of European descent and have been there since the crimes that almost completely eradicated the original nations of these countries. The Arab population of Israel and its surroundings cannot be pushed to the margins of political life in Israel without paying a significant, perhaps fatal, price. All of this makes the practical reverberation of the question of the Zionist justification and the establishment of Israel deafening for the hearing frequencies required to be able to attribute practical significance to the arguments in Australia about its treatment of the Aboriginals.

Anyone who wants to use the elephant in the room cliché may do so. Compared to the few flies left of the native peoples of America and Australia, the Arabs are far more like elephant. You may want to make them into a fly in the Land of Israel, as the Israeli government seeks along with its concentric circles , Ze'ev Elkin and Yariv Levin and the settlers and the "Price Tag” perpetrators and Rabbi Lior and Baruch Goldstein and Yigal Amir;  However, that is precisely the important reason for talking about Zionism and its destruction by these forces. This corrupted Zionism has been guiding Israel's political actions for 47 years in a way that dictates the lives of everyone who lives here and makes some people’s lives very sweet - in my opinion temporarily, as in my own case and the settlers - and some very bitter, as in the case of the Palestinians. This corrupted Zionism succeeds because its leaders are misleading themselves and the entire public here to think that it can draw legitimacy from the just Zionism upon which the State of Israel was established.

In the last of things, is the importance difference in distinction between cases of justness of Australia and the United States on the one hand, the justness of Israel on the other, which is fateful mainly from the moral perspective: On a daily basis, Israel is shifting from its just establishment to a policy that not only corrupts the justness of its present or potentially its future, but also of its past.  All other countries have made the opposite move - they have gone from a criminal formation in the past to rehabilitation of the present in a way that will enable a just future and atonement for the past.

When arguing in Australia about the question of the treatment of the Aboriginals, it is not about the criminal nature in which they were treated but, on the way to atone for these acts.  As part of this debate, there is almost complete agreement on the criminal nature of the actions. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of the Labour Party thought he should apologize for those acts. The former Conservative Prime Minister, John Howard refused, yet he did not pursue a policy that continued these crimes. Israel is on the opposite end. The Justness of its establishment was not challenged significantly before the 1970s; the same time Australia stopped committing crimes against the Aborigines.

The debate in Israel began mainly in the late 1970s, when Zionism began to lose its just image. This enabled both settler art and its post-Zionist critics to blur the difference between its justness and its ever-increasing delinquency since the 1970s. Netanyahu's settler tyranny, Bennett and Uri Ariel, has since been enabled to whitewash their criminal policy with the legitimacy that Israel and Zionism had in the county’s first two decades as well as those who made Israel's establishment just and legitimate then.

 For people like Shlomo Sand, Yehuda Shenhav and Uri Ram, the criminal policy of Netanyahu, Bennett and Ariel is blackening Israel's foundation and what it could have been. The two sides complement each other in staining Judaism with a historical blemish that will be difficult to remove as well as in Israel's destruction.

But a big mistake would be to compare the strength of these two factors with the stain they impose on Judaism, a stain whose spread is accelerated daily, and the destruction they are expected to bring upon Israel; a danger that increases daily.  The capacity of their responsibility cannot be compared as the Post-Zionists are a marginal group in terms of their political power.  Settler and proprietary Zionism, on the other hand, is the ideological foundation of the elements in most Israeli governments of the last 40 years. These determine the practical and political existence of the country on a daily basis.  Academic scholars from the post-Zionist stream would not receive the public attention they receive, nor would they provoke the noise they generate had it not been for this racket and the intimidation produced through which they serve the interests of the Israeli governments in advancing their disastrous policies daily. If the chances of the evil they are promoting , i.e. the end of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel - are not slim, it is not because the errors of post-Zionist criticism of Zionism may catalyze the process that will eventually end Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel;  it is the dominance of settler and proprietary Zionism in the base of Israeli policy over the past 40 years which is more likely to speed up the processes at the end of which this evil will occur.

Settler-proprietary Zionism is also devastating because its foundations cannot be accepted by decent people and even more so because its consequences cannot be accepted by such people. The basis of settlement Zionism is, as is well known, related to understanding the historical connection between the Jews and the Land of Israel as a proprietary relationship  Naftali Bennett is carrying ancient coins in his pocket on all over the world to prove this property relationship on television shows he appears on.  But he won't convince anyone. Jean-Jacques Rousseau very clearly stated the reasons for this in his remarks about the customs of territorial strongholds: "How can a single person or an entire people occupy vast land and prevent all mankind from enjoying it, if not by a punishable act of plunder if by doing so, they a robbing the rest of the people of a place of habitat and sustenance that nature has given everyone equally?” Rousseau, it should be noted, negates the very possibility that the first in the territory will gain ownership in the first place. Imagine what he would say about the this claim to territory when played in retrospect, regarding the territory abandoned by its first holders and seized many centuries ago by others whose successors today cannot be held responsible for the wrongs committed by their ancestors.

**In Between Both Extremes**

Regardless of ownership, perhaps the first of the territories in history and the identity of nations - not the first of nations in the history of territory - may be the basis for defining the geographical location of nations’ equal right to self-determination if they don’t already enjoy such a right.

This was the case of the Jews before Israel was established. However, such a premise can only be a basis for deciding the place of realization of self-determination, not its territorial extent.

During the pre-Six-Day War, the Zionist movement understood this well. Even if it did have leaders, thinkers and activists who thought like Netanyahu and Bennett, and no doubt it did, in its official documents its always talked about a national home or state for a Jew in Palestine. It did not talk mention all of Palestine, let alone all the land of Israel. This was the case with the Basel Plan by the First Zionist Congress, the Balfour Declaration, and the partition decisions and its plans. Of course, one could argue that the Zionist leadership drafted or agreed to these documents only for tactical reasons or false pretense. Nevertheless, as is well known, tactics and pretense often express the reality and justness of what it is they are professing. Why else would you use this to play pretend?

However, the problems that settler Zionism has with its foundation on the claim of Jewish past ownership of the Land of Israel are nothing compared to the problems it has with its implications on the Jewish future in the Land of Israel; and these are the main things that need to be said in its condemnation.

 This is an interpretation that sentences Zionism by virtue of its internal logic for a systematic and day-to-day violation of Arab human rights. According the settler interpretation of Zionism, the Arabs, as a historical collective, must be perceived as those who captured the land of the Jews. It is not at all conceivable from the perspective of this interpretation that they be granted collectively rights to in this country as granting such rights is like granting the robber ownership of what they’ve robbed simply because they’d robbed it. As for the rights of Arabs as individuals: Settler Zionism is swinging on this issue between its right-wing extreme - the Kahanist end seeking to remove all Arab individuals from Israel - and its " left-wing " end of Moshe Arens, who speaks of the disappearance of Arabs as a collective from the land of Israel while maintaining their civilian status as citizens.

And like a pendulum, settler Zionism is mostly the middle of both. It is gradually expelling the Arabs, violating large property rights under private law, waving in front of them their loyalty to the Jews as the condition for their political rights as well as grave injustices, some of which carried our by Israel and other suggested constantly by political parties in Israel. From the perspective of settler and propriety Zionist interpretation, they are not at all considered injustices but just actions.  Israel is therefore doomed to continue this way if this ideology continues to be its policy platform, just as Afrikaners' South Africa was condemned to harass blacks when racism and apartheid were the base of its policy. Although settler Zionism is not really racism and apartheid, it is the same as far as its practical implications. It is an ideology in which discrimination of the other in Israel, its humiliation and violation of its human rights is inherent.

One of Post- Zionism’s greatest sins happening precisely at this point. The time of the Post, as Uri Ram writes, is a time when one must replace "the dominant ethnic nationalism in Israel, according to which there is an identity of a people as an ethnocultural entity and a state as a constitutional-administrative entity with territorial nationalism, which can be separated from nationality and a state in such a way that community affiliation (or cultural, religious, ethnic and so on) will not constitute a constitutional pillar (but will remain voluntarily at the level of civil society)” Shlomo Zand has similar views. Ram and Zand and other post-Zionists claim this because they believe that Israel does not treat Arabs as equals. Nevertheless, this inequality can and must be resolved by granting collective self-determination rights to the Arabs as well. There is no need to give up on this the main goal of Zionism: the establishment of self-determination for Jews in Israel.

The post-Zionist proposals are bad and unjustified proposals not only because they completely negate Zionism and give Jews much less than they deserve in Israel. These are bad suggestions because they are distracting from what is terrible in Zionism as the State of Israel has practices it in recent decades; not as an ideology that seeks to maintain self-determination for Jews in the Land of Israel, but as an ideology that seeks to exercise Jewish ownership over the entire land of Israel. Although as a historical movement, Zionism committed crimes in its formative years that shouldn’t have been, even for the sake of its fundamental purpose (the realization of the Jewish right to self-determination), it is not a goal that, by definition, has not been given in the past and cannot be executed while maintaining equality today with Palestinian self-determination in Palestine. By contrast, Settler propriety Zionism, by definition, causes systematic, constant, principled, and grave infringements of their human rights. Such Zionism cannot exist without causing these transgressions.

**Delinquent State**

In his book "The Law of Peoples", perhaps the most important political philosopher of the 20th century, American philosopher John Roll S., makes a distinction between several types of peoples in terms of their moral standards. At the top of his scale are "liberal" peoples - those who maintain democracy and equality among themselves. He then ranks peoples whom he calls " decent” - Those who do not maintain democracy and equality and who instead have class hierarchies and rights in relation to different types of groups and communities, but are "well-organized" as Rawls's says and at least respect the human rights of those under their control. The third category and the most important in our case, is that of "delinquent" states - countries that threaten peace in an attempt to expand their spheres of influence while violating basic human rights of those in their territories

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If what I said about settler- propriety Zionism's interpretation is true, it would also be right to classify Israel not only as a state which, despite its pretensions, is not liberal and equitable, but also as a "non-decent" state. If the fundamental theory of Israeli politics is proprietary Zionism - and because of settlement policy there is no way to interpret the theory underlying this politics except in any other way a way - Rawls's third category, that of a delinquent state, seems more suited to Israel's natre than the second category of a non-equal, hierarchical, yet decent.

To settle for the claim that the Post-Zionists are content with it and to say that there is a contradiction between Israel's Jewishness and its democracy in a way that makes it an unequal society is criticism that completely misses the mark.

The Post-Zionists make claims that are at the same time too stringent and too lenient. On the one hand, they demand it too strictly to give up on the goals of Zionism as it was in its formative years: the realization of the Jewish right to self-determination in Israel. On the other hand, they all too easily avoid sufficiently highlighting the main crime - the realization of Zionism in a way that means a systematic, constant and fundamental violation of non-Jewish human rights. Their sin is twofold. The fact that they are unjustly demanding Israel to renounce the Jews' right to self-determination produces, because of its obvious injustice, a commotion that obscures what is really needed to be shouted out regarding Israel. No wonder the dominant Zionism in Israel, the proprietary Zionism, jumps on the post-Zionism back so diligently and highlights its publications despite the political marginality and theoretical weakness of their arguments. Under the auspices of the antagonism post-Zionist unjust claims (among other things) evokes, proprietary Zionism continues to fulfill its criminal vision, as if it were the only and proper interpretation of Zionism.

It does this, without noticing that if Zionism comes to an end, it will be because of its actions, not the weak arguments of post-Zionist academics.

I began this account with a question often asked in my work on Zionism: "In what country do people argue about whether the birth of their country was just?” as well as claims of the needlessness of the question of Zionist justness. I already gave most of the answers to this question at the beginning of this account, however yet to give the most important one of all: As far as I know in no Western country, the territorial, demographic, historical and ideological realities that led to its establishment continue to exist and nourish its daily life as significantly as it does in Israel. It is about daily life in foreign and defense policies, in constitutional and legal arrangements, in economics, in land and immigration arrangements, not to mention the organization of public and symbolic spaces. Zionism shapes all these areas. Without understanding the arguments and justifications of Zionism and arguing over them, action in its name will continue to be simplistic, rude, blind, vicious and disastrous as it has been over the past 40 years. Attempts to offer alternatives that eliminate it altogether, as post-Zionism attempts, began in the 1930s with the Canaanites. It has today as it did then, intellectual grace and style.  One can use them to spice up the debate about the meaning and justification of Zionism. But they cannot replace this argument. It is in our very core.