

PALESTINIANS or JEWS: Whose LAND Is It?



G.M. Ben-Nathan

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No one should think for a moment that the institutions or people mentioned above agree or associate themselves with my conclusion. I know for certain, some do not. This makes their assistance all the more humbling. I am truly grateful.

THE AUTHOR

G.M. Ben-Nathan was born in London in 1944 and graduated in 1968 in Social Anthropology at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. He was able to leave full time business in 2004, initially to contemplate one particular problem connected to his student studies.

His first book in 2008 "I'm Adult ! (Aren't I ?)" called for a formal rite of passage in Western Society to effect transition from child to adult status. The book was an exercise in applied anthropology. Its recommendations - acquiring social skills, social experiences and volunteering - were taken up by Prime Minister David Cameron's Youth Advisor at the time, Paul Oginsky. They formed the basis of the UK Government's first National Citizen Service (NCS) programme in 2009. To this extent, the book has had influence. Cumulatively, nearly 500,000 young people have taken part in NCS programmes. Unfortunately, however, NCS has underperformed. It has lacked the all-important element of rite of passage. For as long as this is so, NCS will have problems. A child-to-adult status-changing rite of passage is a vital sine qua non.

As for this latest booklet, the Middle East conflict is not exactly a murder mystery. It might however be seen as "The Mystery of the Twice Promised Land". Whatever the case, the author sees himself as a latter-day Sherlock Holmes who has enjoyed expending considerable detective-time uncovering the far past to get to the root cause of the mystery: how is it that two apparently separate peoples seek exclusive rights to every square inch of the same piece of land? Inasmuch as the future, for both sides, is best engaged by reference to the past, this work, too, may in time be a beneficial influence.

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INTRODUCTION:

PALESTINIANS or JEWS: Whose LAND Is It?

“A nation that forgets its past has no future”
(Attributed to Winston Churchill)

Question: Hill-country West Bank Palestinians¹ or Israeli Jews: Whose Land is it?

Answer: The Land belongs to *both!*

Both are aboriginal. *Both* are indigenous.

How?

Both peoples, as Canaanites and Israelites, were close neighbours from about 1300 to 586 BCE. As close neighbours, they fought, lived together, and, as the Bible repeatedly tells us, intermarried - that is intermarriage through seven hundred years. If Jews and Palestinians are not exactly brothers - though some may be - there will be many who are very close relatives. D N A comparisons have long corroborated a close relationship. Archaeology endorses it.

Exile to Babylon² in 586 BCE abruptly shattered the norm. Canaanites and Israelites were peremptorily divided into deportees and left-behind. Canaanites and Israelites would be in both Babylon and Canaan. There can be no reason to suppose otherwise. Intermarriage would be but one factor.

Capricious Fate once more intervened: from the late nineteenth century onwards, both peoples became unintentionally re-associated. By now, their cultures were as un-alike as chalk and cheese. After 2,500 years of separation, neither knew much of the other's existence. Each knew, and knows, their own provenance - but, crucially, only their own. For Palestinians, Israelis (Jews) are in the land as neo-colonialists; for Israelis, Palestinians are in the land as comparatively late-arrival immigrants.

Each side views the other as immigrant imposters. The two fight each other for exclusive ownership of every square inch of the same piece of land. In doing so, half the planet has been recruited into supporting one side or the other.

1 This article painstakingly separates between hill-country West Bank Palestinians and 'Palestinians' ruled by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. See Question 2.2 4 below

2 600 miles from Canaan as the crow flies; 900 miles along ancient caravan routes.

To make the case, this pamphlet charts the history in the land of *both* sides: first, Jews; then, hill-country West Bank Palestinians (painstakingly separated from 'Palestinians' ruled by Hamas in Gaza). It challenges the certainty, hitherto generally accepted, that one side is right and the other therefore must be wrong. In our scenario, *both* sides are right. Easy to assert, not so easy to accept. At the moment, each side unquestioningly accepts its own received narrative as gospel truth. *Each* side will take time to accommodate itself to a new version..

Whoever you are, actor in government dealing with the conflict or dinner-party guest discussing it, accurate analysis is vital. You may well feel that resuscitating what happened two thousand years ago can never be relevant to today's political reality. If so, be ready to argue against Churchill's maxim quoted above. The present deadlock, however, can only be broken once *both* sides accept their close relationship in the far past. If this can be achieved, a scintillating future together awaits them both.

This pamphlet makes the case:

1. That Jew and Palestinian are closely related and why and how this is so.
2. That Jews really do originate in the land - particularly, as the name 'Jew' proclaims, from the biblical area called Judah or Judea:
First, from 1300-586 BCE, 'Jews' were Israelites living closely side by side with Canaanites;
Then second, after 586 BCE, Jews were either Israelite-Canaanites left behind in the land or Israelite-Canaanites exiled to Babylon;
And then third, in Babylon, the Israelite-Canaanites there metamorphosed into 'Jews' a new ethno-religious identity. The Jews then went in one of three ways:
 - a) Some returned to Judea - even gaining Jewish sovereignty in the land for the short period of 43 years (110 - 67 BCE).
 - b) Some stayed in exile in Babylon as Jews.
 - c) Others migrated from Babylon to cities throughout the world. Roots to Judea were nurtured by Judaism, the religion that the Jews consolidated in Babylon. Judaism's earthly considerations concentrate heavily on land - initially, the land (in the Torah) of Canaan and then (in the later books of the Bible), the land of Israel of which Judea was part.
3. That Palestinians - especially those in the hill-country - have physical roots to the land going back centuries: first as Canaanites; then as left-behind Canaanite - Israelites not exiled to Babylon; then, as peasant farmers (*fellahin*) living on the land 'anonymously' over the centuries; then, only as recently as 1964, as Palestinians. This booklet argues against the idea that only a few aboriginal Palestinians may have inhabited the hill country and that this small number has

been fatally compromised by large-scale immigration. The evidence shows that large scale immigration never happened - not in the hill-country.

But any exercise in unravelling the past is unlikely to be popular.

Both sides in the conflict, particularly the leaderships, have strong vested interests in the preservation of a long-established status quo. Few will relish any prospect of leaving their comfort zone. However, the prospect of progress and real peace depends on just this. The revelation of *joint*, as opposed to *sole*, ownership of the land will, hopefully, have a strong and beneficial influence towards this.

PART 1: HABIRU (Hebrews),³ISRAELITES, JEWS - their attachment to the Land

The people who became Jews experienced two prior identities:

1. Habiru, (Hebrew).
2. Israelite, Israelite - Canaanite.
3. Jews

1.1 Jews as Habiru (Hebrews): 1900 -1300 BCE

Not all scholars agree that Habiru and Hebrew are one and the same. But a lot of what is known about the Habiru also conforms to the Hebrews - and vice versa. If the two are coterminous, the first attachment to the land of Canaan by the people who ultimately became Jews (some eight hundred years later) was circa 1300 BCE.

The three component syllables of the word 'Habiru' comprise a semitic language root which means 'over' or 'beyond'. 'Beyond' being 'beyond the River', the 'River' being well to the East, the Euphrates (not the Jordan).

3 The word is from the Akkadian language: Linguistically, labials /b/, /p/ and /v/interchange. Vowelling changes too: HaBiRu becomes A-Pi-Ru which becomes in the Bible, Hebrew I-VRi (plural I-VRi-im). The root is observable in the English, HeBRew. In the Bible, Hebrew refers to ethnic grouping, not language. The term 'Hebrew' is used by Israelites as a 'shorthand' to describe themselves to third parties who may not know (or care) who Israelites really are (Gen. 40:15; 41:12; Jon. 1:9) but who certainly know who Hebrews (Habiru) are.

The Habiru emanated from 'beyond the River' i.e. from Mesopotamia (as did Abraham). They are extensively mentioned in the ancient Egyptian Tel-el-Amarna archive of 362 clay tablets written circa 1350 BCE.

The Habiru were not an ethnic group. They functioned as wandering bands of jobbing labourers. In the Amarna archive, they are labelled bandits and mercenaries.

Habiru worked for Pharaoh Akhenaten (ruled 1353 - 1332 BCE) and on his demise, they fled, in fear of their lives, to Canaan. In the book, 'Canaanites - People of the Past', Jonathan N. Tubb⁴ states that the fleeing Habiru settled in the Canaan hill country where they were referred to as 'Israel'^{5,6}. This historically attested migration from Egypt to Canaan serves as a useful back-up to the as yet unattested account in the Book of Exodus.

1. 2 Jews as Israelites in Canaan (circa 1300 - 586 BCE) and their intermarriage with Canaanites

Israelite settlement in the land of Canaan⁷ is recorded in the Bible from the Book of Genesis onwards. Beyond the Bible's own precise details, external archaeological references to Israelites or Israel are few and far between. But there are some: line 27 of the Merneptah stele (Pharaoh Merneptah, ruled: 1212 - 1201 BCE) reads:

'Israel is laid waste and his seed is not'.

The name 'Israel' is therefore attested in Egypt at least as early as the late C13th BCE.

In Canaan, Israelites co-existed with Canaanites. Scholars seem to use 'Canaanite' as an all-inclusive description for the many peoples who lived within the area of Canaan. The peoples of the coastal area, including Philistines and Phoenicians, as well as those in the hill-country and the Jordan valley are all classified as Canaanite.

In the Bible, Moses's successor, Joshua, is charged with subduing the Canaanites; the Bible itself makes it clear⁸ that he never fully succeeds. It may have been a case of : 'If you can't beat them, join them - or let them join you'. This seems to be precisely what happened. Some Israelites and Canaanites, not all, seem to have moved beyond coexistence into intermarriage⁹:

4 Tubb, 1998, p.109.

5 Ibid. p.108.

6 Ibid. p.108 Wolfe. 2009.

7 The phrase 'The Land of Israel' is not found in the Five Books of Moses - only 'The Land of Canaan'

8 Judges 1: 27 -33, Judges 2: 1-4, 11

9 Judges 3:6

And they took their (Canaanite) daughters to be their wives, and gave their own (Israelite) daughters to their (Canaanite) sons and worshipped their gods

Inter-marriage between Israelites and Canaanites was not something fleeting. It continued for more than 700 years. How do we know? The phenomenon of intermarriage is mentioned in two books (Judges and Ezra) which recall history 700 years apart: Ezra the Scribe returned from Babylon to Jerusalem in 458 BCE - 700 years after the period covered in the Book of Judges. He found the same thing going on and it shocked him. He recorded¹⁰ wholesale intermarriage:

The People of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations...

For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons ... yea, the hand of the princes and the rulers have been first in this faithlessness

The Prophet Ezekiel, himself an exile from Jerusalem, is thus minded to proclaim¹¹:

Thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem
Thine origin and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite;
The Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was a Hittite

If the Biblical accounts are to be accepted - and, human nature being what it is, liaison as described seems likely - Israelite and Canaanite inter-married for over seven hundred years (1200 - 450 BCE).

Some modern scholars go further. They see Israelite and Canaanite culture as almost identical¹²:

Despite the long regnant model that the Canaanites and Israelites were people of fundamentally different culture, archaeological data now casts doubt on this view.

...Given the information available, one cannot maintain a radical cultural separation between Canaanites and Israelites for the Iron 1 period (1200-1000 BCE)".

This mixing together to the point of intermarriage is critical. It has radical implications for today's conflict:

Firstly, it suggests that Canaanites, Israelites, and families of both, would each have been deported to Babylon. In today's terms, this might translate into Palestinians,

¹⁰ Ezra 9: 1-2

¹¹ Ezekiel 16:3

¹² Smith,2002 pps 6-7.

Jews and families of both. Of course, in 586 BCE, Palestinian and Jewish identity has yet to be established (though Jewish identity would not be long in coming). Identity of pre-Islamic non-Jews as Palestinians lies much further down the line of history.

Secondly, it suggests, with similar caveats, that those left behind in Canaan would also be a mix of the same three elements: Palestinians, Jews and families of both.

Lastly, it suggests, too, that the conquering Babylonians, resisted by both Israelites and Canaanites, would have selected from both in deciding whom to deport to Babylon and whom not to. It cannot be supposed that the deported elite were exclusively Israelite or exclusively Canaanite. Similarly, the same is true in respect of those left behind.

Today, in terms of the land, call it Israel or Palestine, this in turn might explain firstly, why both Jew and Palestinian claim the same land, inch for inch, with such tenacity. Secondly, it may clarify why, as Israeli researcher Tsvi Misinai shows¹³, some Palestinian clans claim memories¹⁴ of a pre-Islamic 'Jewish' past. Thirdly, it may explain why Jews and Palestinians are apparently related by DNA¹⁵, and fourthly, why the language of Hebrew seems to be 'in the blood' of many Palestinians¹⁶

1.3 Six questions. Six answers

1. What is the origin of the word 'Jew'?
2. Why is Babylon so central to Judaism?
3. Why, in Judaism, is Jewish sovereignty dependent on religious observance?
4. Did exile to Babylon sever all connection between Jews and the land of Canaan/Israel?
5. "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land"? (Ps 137:4)
How well did Israelites (from Babylon onwards, Jews), take to exile?
6. Judaism's essential paradox: Urban Jews and an agricultural religion

¹³ Misinai, 2016.

¹⁴ Misinai, with Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi before him, are in no doubt these are memories of a Jewish background. This is open to question. Judaism came from Babylon via Jerusalem. It may have come as predominantly urban, with rural areas of Judea remaining as they always were.

¹⁵ For example, Nebel et al., 2000: The final sentence of the Paper concludes: 'thus, our findings are in good agreement with historical evidence and suggest genetic continuity in both populations despite their long separation and the wide geographical dispersal of Jews'.

¹⁶ To illustrate: Dr Ahmad Tibi, Arab Member of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) from 1999 to date (2018) and a Deputy Speaker, is on record as desiring to establish a special Knesset committee dedicated to improving the quality of spoken Hebrew in the Parliament. His Knesset speech in 2010 in commemoration of the Holocaust is regarded as one of the best speeches ever made in the Chamber.

Why don't Jews farm? Is it for a psychological reason?

1.3.1 What is the origin of the word 'Jew'?

The name 'Jew' does not appear at all in the Five Books of Moses. It hardly appears in the Prophets. It first occurs in writings just prior to the exile to Babylon, 586 BCE.

The background seems to be: The Babylonians referred to Judah, the province they had just conquered, as *Yehud Medinata*. The mixture of Israelites and Canaanites from *Yehud Medinata* (Judah), forcibly compelled to live in Babylon, were called 'Jews' (Hebrew: *yehudi*, plural *yehudim*) by the Babylonians. The exiles accepted the name and have been called 'Jews' ever since. Jew is thus a name first appearing in Babylon

In the Bible, 'Jew' (Hebrew *yehudi*) is not used as a shorthand for resident of the province of Judah. The proper name, Judah, is always retained: i.e. "men of Judah" etc.

In English, especially in the New Testament, Judah is referred to as Judea. This version of the name has spawned the adjective, 'Judean' - with no equivalent in Hebrew.

1.3.2 Why is Babylon so central to Judaism?

The mixture of Israelites and Canaanites deported from Judea, now called 'Jews' by the Babylonians, did not evaporate into the Babylonian background as could have happened. In Babylon, the exiles put their Weltanschauung into writing. The outcome was the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible¹⁷. Beliefs cultivated over many centuries in Canaan were immortalised in Babylon. Israelites (also referred to as 'People' or 'Children of Israel') dominated the Bible as its central characters. In the Bible, after the Five Books of Moses and the Book of Joshua, the names 'Canaan' and 'Canaanite' appear less and less. In contrast, 'Israel' and 'Land of Israel', appear more and more.

1.3.3 How, in Judaism, is Jewish sovereignty dependent on religious observance?

In the Bible, God makes a covenant with the people. God's covenant is through 'land' - not any land, but His special land¹⁸. This land is:

a land which the LORD thy God careth for; the eyes of the LORD are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of it.

¹⁷ The use of Hebrew script, developed in Babylon (k'tav ashur, 'Assyrian' script), strongly indicates Babylon, not Canaan, as the Bible's written provenance. The much older Hebrew script of the land of Canaan/Israel, k'tav ivri, often called 'paleo'-Hebrew, has been retained only by the Israelite Samaritans who use it to this day to scribe Torah scrolls and other sacred texts.

¹⁸ Deut. 11:12

The message was simple: obey His laws, and God will allow you to occupy His land; Disobey them and you **'defile'** His land. The land itself will **'vomit you out'**.¹⁹ Those exiled believed this is precisely what happened to them: they had been 'vomited out'. They sought to recover the situation, to restore the *status quo ante*. The 'they' involved were no longer Israelites or Canaanites; *'they'* had metamorphosed into Jews. An unconscious by-product is that, as Jews, they had traded a simple national identity, Israelite or Canaanite, into a new, unique ethno-religious identity, (Babylonian) 'Jew'. The identity of 'Jew' has been ethno-religious ever since.

The religious element of the new identity was expressed by the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible. They spawned a new Religion - Judaism. No matter where in the world they settled, orthodox Jews believed, amongst everything else, one fundamental truth: only by observing the laws, rules and regulations of Judaism would God restore them to sovereign independence in the land from which He had ejected them.

Regaining sovereign independence in the land has been the single-minded objective of Jews and Judaism throughout the ages. In Judaism's narrative, God had delivered His people out of Egypt; God had 'vomited them out' of His "promised land"; so only God, as Commander-in-Chief, aided perhaps by a Messiah, would restore them. Full stop.

1.3.4 Did exile to Babylon sever all connection between Jews and the land of Canaan /Israel?

A Messiah was not long in coming. The Babylonians were conquered in 539 BCE by Persian King Cyrus the Great, the Lord's Messiah²⁰. Jews returned in 516 BCE to rebuild Jerusalem's walls and Temple. Ezra the Scribe returned in 458 BCE and preached Rabbinical (*halachic*, i.e. legal) Judaism to the city of Jerusalem - with questionable success. The extent to which Judaism reached the villages and countryside of Judea, if at all, is highly problematical. The same perhaps applies to the Galilee, though perhaps not to Samaria²¹.

Return to Judea was not unconditional. Persians retained overall control. After the Persians, Judea was ruled by successive empires. Jews themselves became a majority in Judea but, as stated, under foreign control. They only ever achieved sovereign independence for a short period of just 43 years²² (110 - 67 BCE). Subsequent Jewish

19 Lev. 18:28

20 Is. 45:1: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed (Hebrew *limshicho*, to his Messiah) to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden...."

21 The Israelite Samaritans (Israelite descendants, it is said, of the Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh), living in Samaria venerate the Five Books of Moses (Torah) as do the Jews.. Although few in number today (circa 1000), Torah-observing Samaritans, in 300 BCE, may have equalled the Jews in number.

22 Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus 1st. made the breakthrough. Towards the end of his rule, he finally shook off Seleucid control in 110 BCE. Immediately, he set off in conquest of his neighbours. He subdued Idumea (Edom) in TransJordan, forcibly converting its population to Judaism. This paved the way for Herod the Great (reigned, 37 - 4 BCE), a client king of the Romans, a Jew of Edomite origin, who refurbished (19 BCE) the Second Temple.

attempts to regain independence failed - particularly in the revolts against the Romans of 70 and 135 CE. Imperial rule²³ continued for two thousand years until 1948 when independence was re-established.

1.3.5 “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land”? (Ps.137:4) How well did Israelites (from Babylon onwards, Jews) take to exile?

Most Jews who stayed in Babylon managed very well. They were overwhelmed by Babylon’s civilisation. They lapped it up. Babylon became the centre. Although important religious texts were written back in Canaan / Israel - the *Mishnah* (200 CE) and the Jerusalem *Talmud* (350 - 400 CE) - scholars agree on Babylon’s pre-eminence. A large Jewish population lived in Babylon and subsequently Baghdad, 60 miles south west. Jewish settlement continued there for over two thousand five hundred years reducing heavily only after the re-establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 and the Six Day War in 1967.

1.3.6 Judaism’s essential paradox: Urban Jews and an agricultural religion Why don’t Jews farm? Is it for a psychological reason?

Judaism evolved in Babylon. Jews themselves became intensely cerebral, fiercely analytical acquiring a high degree of literacy (in Hebrew and Aramaic). Why this should be, one can only speculate. It may well be that they (correctly) foresaw God-led restoration to sovereign independence as achievable only in the very long term. The comparatively early permission to return to Judea in 516 BCE, just seventy years after exile, was by Persian initiative - not by successful rebellion. Continuing Persian suzerainty underlined this reality.

Urban-based as they were, Jews could now observe Judaism in Babylon and any other city. And, over time, Jews took their Judaism to many other cities in countries around the Mediterranean and then beyond, all over the globe.

The great paradox of Judaism is that whilst Jews are so intensely urban, Judaism, the religion, is anything but. The religion, in its earthly focus, is intensely agricultural - but only in relation to one land - Judea, the land from which Jews, as Israelites, had been exiled.

Perhaps in deference to this, it is hard to find an example, through two and a half thousand years of Diaspora existence, of Jews, outside the land of Israel, earning their living as farmers²⁴.

23 Following Herod (d. 4 BCE), the timeline of imperial rule runs: Romans, 3 BCE - 390 CE; Byzantine, 390 - 634; Rashidun, 632 - 661; Umayyad, 661 - 750; Abbasid, 750 - 1258; Mamluk 1260 - 1517; Ottoman, 1299 - 1917; British Mandate 1920 - 1948.

24 Landsberg, 2003..

Jews have rarely farmed communally on any sustained intergenerational basis. Many Jewish communities go back for centuries in a single country. Few have ever farmed. Is there a psychological explanation for this? Does farming represent some sort of ultimate belonging? Would such a degree of belonging mentally sever Judaism's agricultural links to Judea and the land of Israel?

Palestinians know nothing of all this. Nor have they needed to until the late nineteenth century. Then, Jews began to return. For many Palestinians, Jewish return was, and still is, akin to alien invasion.

PART 2: CANAANITES, FELLAHIN, PALESTINIANS - their attachment to the land

Two allegations are frequently levelled against the Palestinians. Both need to be rebutted.

Firstly, that Palestinians are not a people. They *are* a people. They always have been a people - but perhaps not in the conventional sense that inhabitants of the West are used to.

Secondly, that Palestinians are now largely made up of immigrants. It is said that a few may be aboriginal, but the bulk of the people are alien immigrants. Whilst this may be true of Palestinians in the coastal lowland areas, it is not true of the Palestinians of the hill-country West Bank.

2.1 A note on the name: 'PALESTINE'

2.1.1 Linguistic note.

The four consonants, 'P', 'L', 'S' (sometimes 'SH') and 'T' occur in the Hebrew Bible²⁵. They frequently occur in stories of the early history of the Israelites. The name *Pe-le-sh-et*²⁶, denoted a geographical location on the Mediterranean coastal strip. The name translates into English as 'Philistia'. *Pe-li-sh-tim* denoted the inhabitants of that location, the 'Philistines'²⁷ (*pe-li-sh-tim*).

²⁵ The name, either as location or people, does not occur in the New Testament.

²⁶ Gen 21:32

²⁷ Philistine culture as attested by its pottery and jewellery is very attractive. The epithet 'Philistine', as a synonym for boorishness, is exceedingly unjustified.

The Philistines were a sea-people. They inhabited five cities near or on the coast: Gaza, Gath, Ekron, Ashkelon and Ashdod. In contrast, the Israelites inhabited the inland hill-country areas of Judea and Samaria.

The Greeks and Romans added a further consonant ('n') and changed the vowelings to produce *pe-le-s(h)-ti-na* - the Palestine of today. In Arabic, the bilabial 'p' has changed to a labiodental 'f' to produce *fē-li-s-tin*.

Philistia gave its name to Palestine. The southern desert (Negev), Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Philistia itself were incorporated by Roman emperor Hadrian in 132 CE into one overall province - Syria Palestina.

2.1.2 The terms 'Palestinian' and 'fellahin'.

The name 'Palestinian' was acquired late²⁸ in the people's long history. For the sake of convenience, the name is used here to refer to all stages of that history: the world knows these people by this name. Above all, it is what they call themselves. However, the term fellahin (peasant farmer) is also used.

'Palestinian' is not a prime identity. Palestinians have passed through centuries of history before eventually acquiring the name.

2.2 Six questions. Six answers.

1. How can the (West Bank) Palestinians be Canaanite in origin?
2. How did Canaanites, 'disappear from the stage of history'?
3. Has Canaanite and Israelite intermarriage left a trace?
4. Why, in this booklet, have Palestinians in the hill-country (the West Bank) been so painstakingly differentiated from Palestinians in Gaza ruled by Hamas?
5. Has the aboriginal integrity of hill-country Palestinians been fatally compromised by substantial immigration?
6. What is the situation today?

²⁸ Mid-twentieth century (1964).

2.2.1 How can the (West Bank) Palestinians be Canaanite in origin?

Canaanites, says Tubb²⁹, did not know they were Canaanites. They would answer to the name of whatever tribe or people they belonged to. The name 'Canaanite' is conferred by modern scholarship. It refers to all the multifarious peoples who have dwelt in the region from 'remote pre-history'³⁰. The term embraces numerous tribes of very different origins. Some scholars class Israelites as Canaanites.³¹ Tubb says: ³²

it becomes clear that that Israelites were themselves Canaanite and historical, as opposed to literary, Israel was in reality a sub-set of Canaanite culture.³³

So Israelites may be Canaanite. But what about modern Palestinians?

A number of (mainly British) diplomat, scholar soldiers, sent to explore Palestine in the nineteenth century reached the conclusion that Palestinians - though they were not called Palestinians in the nineteenth century, but *fellahin* peasant farmers - were Canaanite in origin. Their views are particularly important because they all wrote before the seeds of the conflict were even generated. None had any axe to grind.

Elizabeth Anne Finn (1825-1921) wrote 'Palestine Peasantry'³⁴. Finn lived in Palestine from 1846 to 1863 while her husband, James, held the post of British Consul in Jerusalem. Finn wrote her work in the 1860's and 70's. It was published, however, in 1923 two years after she died at the great age of 96. She concludes her work with the following observations:

In the foregoing pages we have argued in favour of the probability that the present rural population of Palestine, the Arab Fellahheen, (sic) are descendants of the Canaanitish nations.

1. First, because five of those nations³⁵ continued to exist in the land until the Christian era, and cannot have been annihilated or driven out since.
2. Secondly, because the Fellahheen are apparently an aboriginal people, and there is no tradition or record to show that they are anything else.

29 Tubb, 1998, . P.13.

30 Ibid.

31 Golden,2009,p.269

32 Tubb, 1998, p.16

33 This opinion agrees with Prof Marc Smith's view cited above at n. 12..

34 Finn,1923, pp. 94 - 95

35 Perizzites (Nablus), Jebusites (Jerusalem), Amorites (Hebron), Edomites and Hivites.

3. Thirdly, because many customs of the Canaanites prohibited in the law of Moses still exist as customs of the Fellahheen³⁶
4. Fourthly, because they have preserved the ancient geographic names³⁷
5. And lastly, because there appear to be customs among them derived from the Israelites³⁸

British Royal Engineers soldier scholar Col. Claude Conder (1848-1910) agreed:³⁹

If we may judge the origin of any people by language, then, by their dialect, the descent of the Fellahin, or “tillers” may be traced from the older inhabitants of Palestine, and perhaps from the pre-Israelite population.....

Conder even saw ethnic relationship⁴⁰ between *fellah* and Jew. Such an insight corroborates, to some extent, the overall thrust of this booklet. Unfortunately, what he says is mixed. There is good and there is bad:

Good:

These traits of the (fellah) national character are all characteristic of Semitic origin, and are not less distinctive of the Jews: high religious zeal, endurance, intelligence, energy and courage of a peculiar kind, are qualities eminently remarkable in the Jewish character, and...

Bad:

on the other hand, (fellah) love of money, craft, exclusiveness, and lying, are vices which have always been chargeable against that nation (the Jews)

Be this as it may, the eminent Jewish Historians and pioneer Zionists, Yitzhak Ben Zvi and David Ben Gurion, quote from the Finns (James and Elizabeth) and extensively from Conder. They are listed in the index of their 1918 best-seller, *Land of Israel - Past and Present*.⁴¹ Ben Zvi's approval, however, did not extend to French scholar, Charles Simon

36 Finn, 1923: moral transgressions contrary to Mosaic law: As at 1873, still existing customs were: cooking kids in their mother's milk (Ex. 23:19; 34:26); cooking young birds with the mother bird (Deut 22:6-7); plowing, ox and ass together (Deut 22:10) Mingling materials (Deut 22:11); eating Camel (Lev 11:4); muzzling oxen (Deut 25:4); eating at the graves of the departed (Deut 26:14); tattooing (Lev 19:23); Head Shaving (Lev 19:23).

37 Hebron is called 'El Khaleel', the epithet applied to Abraham 'The Friend' (of God). The Dead Sea is the 'The Sea of Lot'.

38 As at 1873, fellahin and Mosaic law coincided in respect of: fourfold restitution of stolen animals; restitution of pledges (Ex. 22 10-13); hospitality particularly towards those seeking refuge from an avenging enemy; leaving produce for the poor to glean (Lev 19 9-10); maintaining landmarks (Deut 19:14 and 27:17); a jealous husband taking his wife to the Priest (Num. 5:11-31); Leviratic marriage (Deut. 25:5-10); Law of reciprocity (lex talionis) (Deut 19:16-21); land allocation by lot (Num.26:55)

39 Conder, 1879, p.216

40 Ibid. pp. 210-211

41 Ben Zvi and Ben Gurion, 1918

Clermont-Ganneau (1846-1923). Clermont-Ganneau also claimed, like Finn and Conder, that Palestinians were of Canaanite origin. But it's from Clermont-Ganneau, rather than Finn or Conder, that Ben Zvi picks up the idea that 'Palestinians are Canaanites'. He does not like it.

With a tinge of sarcasm, Ben Zvi asks:⁴²

...However, let us suppose that Clermont-Ganneau's assumptions are to some extent well-founded. How are we to explain, in such a case, the amazing fact that the Canaanites continued their existence as the majority of the inhabitants during all the days of the First Temple and the Second Temple and the Talmud, namely for a period of 1500 years without being noticed at all, until they were revealed to the sharp eye of the French scholar some 2,500 years after they had disappeared from the stage of history?

And yet, Ben Zvi's understandable scepticism has a plausible answer to it:

2.2.2 How did Canaanites, 'disappear from the stage of history'?

First, Canaanites, as such, were never on the stage of history. As stated, no-one ever called themselves 'Canaanite'. The term is generic created by scholars.

Second, Ben Zvi might have noticed Mrs Finn's 1863 observations⁴³. They help explain how the *fellahin* existed 'without being noticed at all'

...we had abundant opportunities for observing that the Fellahheen do not, properly speaking form a nation. There is among them neither coherency nor spirit of patriotism⁴⁴

...They speak a common language; they possess a common religion; their manners and customs are generally the same all over the country. Yet of national unity there is absolutely none⁴⁵

...All are Fellahheen, and yet all are apart from each other, independently and commonly at enmity⁴⁶

...Though they have with each other no national cohesion, the Fellahh Arab clans cleave to the land with the tenacity of aboriginal inhabitants. No clan has for a long time overpassed the boundaries of its own district, and they show no disposition to do so.⁴⁷

42 Hebrew version 1936. pp. 139 - 140. (private) translation into English by David Herman Translations, Jerusalem.

43 Finn, 1879

44 Finn, 1923, p.11.

45 Ibid. p.11

46 Ibid. p. 12

47 Ibid. p. 12

And finally:

...Many of them do not even so much as know the names of the villages a district or so from their own homes⁴⁸

So what is going on? Common language, common religion, manners and customs generally the same all over the country: yet the *fellahin* “do not properly speaking form a nation”. How can this be?

The answer comes from the discipline of social anthropology. Anthropology, among its investigations, describes the various forms of human social organisation that proliferate the globe. Elizabeth Anne Finn was ahead of her time. The behaviour she described among Palestinian clans was a classic example of a ‘segmentary’ society⁴⁹.

In a segmentary society, the key unit is the individual and his family. National institutions, if they exist at all, are vestigial. Segmentary societies mobilise from the bottom up: “I against my brother”; “I and my brother against our cousin” and so on. Segmentary societies, also, are frequently characterised by feud⁵⁰. And, indeed, traditionally, feud has governed the lives of hill-country Palestinians. Strict rules control the way feud is conducted.⁵¹

Today’s Palestinians lived through history in this extreme parochialism. Palestinian society, especially in the hill-country West Bank, has changed little. Certainly, through History, the people had no formal name - either subjectively or objectively. From Greek and Roman times, the location, Palestine, had a name; but the majority people living within it, did not - they were just anonymous *fellahin*.

Whilst Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi correctly realised and accepted that *fellahin* presence on the land long predated the Arab invasion of 636 CE⁵², they seem to assume that *fellahin* were Jews - Jewish survivors from second Temple times.

48 Ibid p.13 American bible scholar, Edward Robinson (1794-1863, Robinson’s Arch, Jerusalem) bitterly complained: ‘I found it necessary to obtain a new guide at the end of every few miles; inasmuch as the peasants, though well acquainted with the immediate neighbourhood of their own villages, seldom know much of the country at a distance from their homes’.

49 It was not until 1940, 77 years after Mrs Finn’s observations, that E. E. Evan-Pritchard produced ‘The Nuer - a Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People’. The Nuer are a society, similar to Palestinians, based on agnatic (male) segmentary lineage. To this day, this book is de rigueur for first year students of social anthropology.

50 I am grateful to Professor Joy Hendry, Professor Emerita of Social Anthropology at Oxford Brookes University for confirming my description of traditional Palestinian society as an example of segmentary lineage. (private communication, 01 Dec 2017)

51 Gluckman.,1955, p. 26. “The more a man’s ties require that his opponents in one set of relations are his allies in another, the greater is likely to be the peace of the feud”. This line of thinking would be very familiar in traditional Palestinian society.

52 The Battle of Yarmuk 15 - 20 August 636 CE. Rashidun forces unexpectedly vanquished a much larger Byzantine army. This event introduced Islam to the Levant and the area became ‘Arab’ remaining so to the present time.

Some *fellahin* might have been just this - originally Jewish. There could be among them those Jews forcibly converted (see al-Hakem Edict, directly below) to Islam. But this would not account for *all* the *fellahin*. When Judaism returned to Judea, in 516 BCE, it concentrated in Jerusalem. Even there, if Ezra's fulminations⁵³, almost sixty years later, are to be accepted, Judaism did not initially gain much hold. Any idea that Judaism took root among the *fellahin* in settlements in the remote hill-country is hard to sustain.

2.2.3 Has Canaanite and Israelite intermarriage left any trace?

Yes, certainly. The close DNA relationship between their latter-day descendants, Palestinians and Jews, must be the legacy of Canaanite and Israelite union. As noted in one article⁵⁴, DNA scholars and scientists have produced data which are:

...in good agreement with historical evidence and suggest genetic continuity in both populations (Palestinian and Jewish) despite the long separation and the wide geographical dispersion of Jews

There are many articles in the same vein.

As for further intermarriage, the Muslim community in Palestine was strengthened by the 'convert or leave' edict in 1012 enacted by the Fatimid Caliph, Abu Ali al Mansur ('Al Hakem') (985 - 1021 CE). Although the edict was revoked in 1044, many Jews (and *fellahin*) were forced into Islam and remained Muslim.

Misinai writes⁵⁵

...The al-Hakem Edict became a decisive turning point in the demography of Eretz-Israel. In contrast with the small number who converted to Islam prior to the decree, those among the People of Israel who accepted the Islamic faith rose as a result of the al-Hakem Edict to 90 percent! The number who continued to abide by the Religion of Israel became a tiny minority of the People of Israel in Eretz-Israel. Among the Christians, the results were even more far-reaching. A huge majority of Christians who had clung to their homeland through countless trials and tribulations left Eretz-Israel

Some Muslim clans claim Jewish origin. This may be folklore memory of times before their forced conversion in the C11th. Be this as it may, forced conversion has propelled many Jews into Islam.

53 458 BCE..

54 Nebel et al., 2000

55 Misinai, 2016, p. 68.

2.2.4 Why, in this booklet, have Palestinians in the hill-country (the West Bank) been so painstakingly differentiated from Palestinians in Gaza ruled by Hamas?

The Palestine Authority (P.A) is the administrative arm of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (P.L.O). The P.A controlled the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on behalf of the P.L.O. But in June 2007, the P.A was forcibly ousted from the Gaza Strip by the Islamic fundamentalist movement, Hamas. Both the P.A and Hamas call for the destruction of the Jewish State. But they do so for differing reasons. From Israel's point of view, they all amount to the same thing - a call for annihilation. Understandably, they are therefore treated as one and the same.

Those sitting in armchairs away from the conflict can afford to highlight and analyse these differing reasons.. They reveal a great deal.

The contrast between the P.L.O./P.A. and Hamas is most elaborated in their respective Charters.

The P.L.O. Charter, the Palestine National Covenant, first appeared on the 28 May 1964. After the 1967 Six Day War, it was replaced in July 1968 by the Palestine National Charter. The Charter is composed of 33 articles. Each article is short, succinct and to the point.

Article 1. Palestine is the homeland of the Palestine Arab people; it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab people.

Three points emerge from the P.L.O. Charter:

1. The Palestinians make no overt claim to specifically Canaanite origin.
2. The Palestinians identify themselves throughout as the Palestinian Arab people.
3. Not once are the words 'Islam' or 'Muslim' mentioned⁵⁶.

This Charter is thus a very secular document calling for national liberation.

The Hamas Charter of 1988 is in stark contrast. The Hamas Charter is religious. It does not pull its punches. Its preamble proclaims:

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it just as it has obliterated others before it”

⁵⁶ Conder, 1879, p. 218: The hill-country fellahin have not been very religious. Whether this changed in the last century is unclear. Conder noticed; "you may live for months in the out-of-the-way parts of Palestine without seeing a mosque , or hearing the call of the Muedhen (sic) to prayer".

And its **Article 2** reads:

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf (a permanent Muslim religious asset) consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day.

Religious zeal motivates Hamas's desire to destroy Israel. The lack of such religious zeal and the contrasting secularism of the Palestine National Covenant has not gone unnoticed by Hamas. Hamas Charter **Article 27** is especially scathing:

The day the Palestine Liberation Organisation adopts Islam as its way of life, we will become its soldiers and fuel for the fire that will burn its enemies

The implication is obvious. Unless and until such a day occurs, the Palestine Liberation Organisation is on its own.

The Hamas Charter lives and breathes religious imperialism - with Israel as its (first) target. Hamas, a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, originated in Egypt. The majority of Hamas's Gaza population emanates from Egypt and the Gulf⁵⁷.

It may be, therefore, that neither nationalism nor religion are the real fault-lines that divide the P.L.O./P.A. Perhaps the real divide is ethnicity. This ethnic divide might be the real reason that so many attempts to reconcile have failed.

It is also reasonable to insinuate that it is precisely because the Gaza population is not authentically or historically Palestinian that Hamas has been forced into its peculiarly religious, jihadi, imperialist and non-nationalist approach.

This is why, in this piece, such sharp distinction has been drawn between the P.L.O and Hamas. This is why the Palestinians ruled by the P.L.O. have been continually referred to as: hill-country (West Bank) Palestinians. Although much of the world, in a fundamental antipathy towards the Jewish state, is happy to regard both Hamas and the P.L.O. as Palestinian, they are far from singing from the same hymn-sheet.

2.2.5 Has the aboriginal integrity of hill-country Palestinians been fatally compromised by substantial immigration?

There has been substantial immigration - but not, it is argued here, to the West Bank hill-country. That is not to say that over history there has never been immigration to

⁵⁷ Hammad, 2012: 'Brothers, half of the Palestinians are Egyptians and the other half are Saudis' Excerpt from an address by the Hamas Minister of the Interior and of National Security, Fathi Hammad, in a speech broadcast on Al-Hekma TV on March 23 2012 recorded by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) TV Monitor Project as Clip 3389. The Minister was appealing to the Egyptian and Arab world for help over a fuel shortage in the Gaza strip.

this area. There has been. This is listed below. But this immigration has not been substantial. Immigration, per se, has not reshaped or transformed *fellahin* culture. Such large-scale immigration as there has been - from Egypt and from the Gulf - has been to the coastal plain. This is nineteenth and twentieth century immigration which has followed Zionist re-development.

Numbers of Palestinians in the West Bank hill-country have fluctuated, but health and hygiene have been the critical factors in these fluctuations - not immigration. Health and hygiene increased in the British Mandate period (1920 -1947) and under Israeli control from 1967; health and hygiene was poor under Ottoman rule to 1918 and under Jordanian rule between 1948 and 1967.

In the conflict, each side sees the other as new arrivals to the land. Israelis are supported in this belief in that Arabs and Islam only first took control of the area as late as the seventh century.⁵⁸ The Palestinians, the *fellahin*, whose presence on the land, it is said, long predated this invasion nevertheless, over time, adopted Arab culture - at least outwardly. To Israelis, to the world, to themselves even, *fellahin* are Arab. The insights of nineteenth century British, and other, researchers to the effect that *fellahin* are not of Arab provenance, seem not, even now, to have registered upon either the Israeli or the world psyche - nor, it would seem, even upon the *fellahin* themselves.

The prevailing view of some Israelis is summed up:⁵⁹

the vast majority of Palestinians today are immigrants since the beginning of Zionism.

It is true that the vast majority of those who migrated to Palestine did so on the back of Zionist re-development of the land. It is not true that these immigrants make up the vast majority of Palestinians - certainly not those Palestinians, the *fellahin*, living in the hill-country West Bank.

To begin with, Zionists did not develop the hill-country. In fact, to this day, the hill-country is largely undeveloped. Israeli journalist Nadav Shragai reveals:⁶⁰

The fact is 90% of the land of the West Bank is empty with no Palestinian or Jewish construction. Even today, most of the land of Judea and Samaria is open territory - barren hill tops, desert or agricultural land. The areas that have been built up, both by Palestinians and Jews, are small.

As stated, the number of hill-country Palestinians has fluctuated. In a certain sense,

58 Battle of Yarmouk: 15-20 August 636 CE,

59 Private communication June 16 2017 from the director of an Israeli NGO.

60 Shragai, 2017

number does not matter. What matters is what accounts for the change in number. Is it change generated by immigration (or, emigration)? Or, is it change in birth-rate reflecting better, or worse, medical conditions? Or, maybe both?

Only overwhelming immigration (or emigration) would compromise the ethnic integrity of a pre-existing population. This has not happened. The parochialism of historical and traditional Palestinian *fellahin* culture is as much present today as it ever was.

Backing up the claim there has been little substantial immigration, a list follows: the list details author/s; date of publication (precise details are further referenced by footnote); and the date in history which is discussed.

For those who would like a base number for the Palestinian population, the figure 250 - 300,000 occurs and re-occurs. The figure holds true until the mid-twentieth century.

1. Ben Gurion and Ben Zvi, published 1918, on the Arab conquest in 636 CE:⁶¹

“The Arab victors did not destroy the agricultural population which they found in Israel. They only expelled foreign Byzantine rulers: they did not harm the local population. *The Arabs also did not engage in settlement* (Author’s emphasis). They were exactly like the Bedouin of today, mainly shepherds of flocks and cattle, warriors and merchants. In the conquered lands they did not look for new territories to settle on for their peasant class which almost did not exist among them.

So, the Arab conquerors themselves did not settle the land.

Successive Arab dynasties⁶² ruled the area. The Ottomans gained control in 1299.

2. Professor Bernard Lewis (1916 - 2018), published 1954;⁶³ registers from the early Ottoman archives of 1550 revealed:

From the mass of detail in the registers, it is possible to extract something like a general picture of the economic life of the country in that period. Out of a total population of about 300,000 souls, between a fifth and a quarter lived in the six towns of Jerusalem, Gaza, Safed, Ramle, Nablus and Hebron. The remainder consisted mainly of peasants, living in villages of varying size, and engaged in agriculture.

61 Ben Zvi and Ben Gurion, 1918, p.196

62 See note 23 above.

63 Lewis, 1954

There is no indication of population movement - either immigrant or emigrant.

3. David Grossman, published 2010.⁶⁴Nineteenth century migration into Palestine.

Grossman records some migration into Palestine. Many deserters from the Egyptian army remained in the land following the army's retreat from Palestine in **1841** at the end of the Second Egyptian - Ottoman war (1839 - 1841). He estimates a number of deserters as high as 30,000. Many settled in Jaffa (500 Egyptian families, in a population of 2,000 people); in the Sharon coastal region and in Nahal 'Iron (Wadi Ara), near Haifa. In the hill-country, some settled in Samaria though no figure is given.

A migration of Arab-Berbers from Algeria to Safed (Tsfat) is recorded in **1860**. No numbers are given. But there is no reason to suppose the figure is significant.

In **1870**, the Ottomans settled Sunni Muslim Circassians in the Galilee. These were people expelled to Turkey by the Russians from their homeland in the N. W. Caucasus. The Circassians are settled in the lower Galilee town of Kfar Kama (2010 population 3,000) and the upper Galilee village of Rehaniya (2010 population, 1000).

In **1878**, Austro-Hungary occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Muslims fled to Palestine. Palestinians called the Bosnians 'Bushnak'.⁶⁵ Numbers, again, are not given but reference⁶⁶ is made to 'a small minority of Palestinians who are of Balkan origin'.

4 Joan Peters, published 1984.⁶⁷ Comparative population figures for the years 1893 and 1947⁶⁸

Joan Peters has long been regarded as an apologist for the Zionist cause. Be this as it may, Peters has conducted meticulous research from sources which she extensively details on an almost sentence by sentence basis.

Peters identifies⁶⁹ the West Bank as Judea and Samaria. She designates this as:

A main area of Arab settlement - no Jewish settlement

⁶⁴ Grossman, 2010, p.45

⁶⁵ 'Bushnak' became a synonym in the Palestinian dialect for a good looking person.

⁶⁶ Bulletin Solutions, 2018.

⁶⁷ Peters, 1984.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 255.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 255 and map p. 249.

The Ottoman Turks,⁷⁰ estimated the West Bank population at 233,500 in 1893. By 1947, 54 years later, following an Anglo-American survey⁷¹, the population had more than doubled to 517,000.

During this period, there was no Zionist development in Judea and Samaria. And, perhaps because there was no Zionist development, there is no record of immigration to the area. The inference therefore is that this population growth, over nearly two generations, was predominantly due to natural increase. Half the 54 year period coincided with the relatively benign rule of the British Mandate (1920 - 1947).

The contrast in the coastal plain is very marked. Using the same sources, Peters cites a figure of 92,100 for 1893. By 1947, the population has grown to 462,900 - a rise of just over **five** times. Immigration - Zionist and Arab (and, natural growth) - is the only factor to account for this scale of population increase. Immigration took place on the coastal plain. It did not take place in the West Bank hill-country.

The challenge is presented to produce evidence to the contrary..

2.2.6 What is the demographic situation today?

Israeli Ambassador (Retd.) Yoram Ettinger has long specialised in producing economic and demographic data. In respect of the West Bank, he writes:⁷²

Intense urbanisation has transformed the 70% rural Arab population of Judea and Samaria in 1967 to a 75% urban population

Ettinger estimates⁷³ a figure of 1.85 million inhabitants for Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). For metropolitan Israel, he claims an overall population of:

1.6 million Israeli Muslim Arabs, 130,000 Israeli Druze, 30,000 Israeli Christian Arabs, and seven million Jews

Putting all the figures together, Ettinger assesses an overall 65.5% Jewish majority in the combined area of pre-1967 Israel, Judea and Samaria.

⁷⁰ Karpal, 1978.

⁷¹ Anglo-American Committee, 1984.

⁷² Ettinger, 2018.

⁷³ Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs (JCPA) Daily Alert, 14 December 2018

CONCLUSION

The time has come for Israeli Jew and Palestinian to reconcile. In fact, it is long overdue.

The basis for reconciliation must be recognition of their joint past together. True, it was a very long time ago. But without recalling this mutual past, their mutual future is blighted. Churchill was right: "A nation that forgets its past has no future".

This pamphlet recalls the mutual past. It pinpoints the moment of separation. It traces the history and fate of those exiled and those left behind.

If both sides recall the far past and use it to re-adjust their perception of their neighbour, a scintillating future awaits. Free of the threat of violence, the two peoples can emerge as world leaders. The vision of what can be achieved is without limit.

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PALESTINIANS or JEWS: Whose LAND Is It?

Whose Land is it? Answer: *Both*

Palestinians, principally those of hill-country towns and villages in the West Bank, and Israeli Jews are equally indigenous and equally aboriginal to the land.

This is a controversial assertion: it questions received certainties and threatens long established narratives. Palestinians regard Israeli Jews as neo-colonialists; Israelis regard Palestinians as immigrant late-arrivals. They, and respective supporters, the world over, operate on these certainties.

But the narratives are untrue. They demand rebuttal. This booklet is devoted to this end. It charts the histories in the land of the two peoples: first, those who ultimately became Jews; then, those who ultimately became Palestinians. DNA verifies a linkage. Each people contains in it part of the other. After all, they were neighbours together for a full seven hundred years (1300 -586 BCE).

Nineteenth century research on Palestinian ancestry by (British) scholar soldiers and diplomats has gone 'unremembered' in Israel. They found that the presence in the land of hill-country Palestinians long predates the Arab invasion of 636 CE. Historians and early Zionist statesmen Ben Zvi and Ben Gurion quote this research. And yet it has never gained traction in the Israeli political establishment. It needs re-iterating.

For the most part, Palestinian culture has lacked literacy. Perhaps, as a result, Palestinians have too easily been prisoners of propaganda. The time has come to start spoiling jolly good stories about Jews with.....facts.

"A Nation that Forgets its Past has no Future" said Winston Churchill. The key to the future *does* lie in the past. Palestinian and Jew need to acknowledge this far past together. Emerging from the conflict depends upon it. Once re-engaged, a scintillating future awaits: the world will be their oyster!

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