

Ayman Odeh:

Ayman Odeh began by calling for turning the tables on President Trump because of his “deal” of recognizing Jerusalem as capital of Israel and moving the American Embassy to the city, and saying that “Israel has worked and is still working in a planned and systematic way towards eliminating any possibility of achieving a two-state solution.”

Referring to an [article](#) by Professor Zeev Sternhell, a prominent Peace Now activist, Hebrew University lecturer, and one of the world's leading experts on fascism, in which he argued that Israel has surpassed fascism and is moving on to Nazism, Mr. Odeh also warned of the shift to the right and the extreme right in Israeli politics. He explained that after reading Sternhell's article he became anxious and went to visit him in his home to discuss and try to grasp what he meant. Sternhell drew a lot of astonishing comparisons between Nazi laws that were introduced in Germany in the 1920s and present-day Israeli legislation as well as proclamations of German and Israeli politicians respectively. Odeh said that, uneasy as he felt about this, he replied that Palestinians have nevertheless achieved success, mentioning, for example, that 23% of the total and 35% of the female students at the Technion in Haifa are Arabs, that there were 46 Palestinian lecturers in 1996, whereas today 471 Palestinian lecturers teach at the Technion and Weizmann Institute, that 31% of the doctors at the Rambam Hospital are Arabs, and that the number of Palestinians in the high-tech sector has increased from 400 to 5,200. Professor Sternhell answered with a smile on his face, presenting a huge book about Jewish success stories in Germany in the 1920s and saying that compared to those, the Palestinian achievements were rather modest.

After expressing his worries regarding Israel's control over the country, its systematic attacks on Arabs, delegitimizing them, treating them as enemies, and viewing them as a fifth column, Odeh pointed that whenever Israeli politicians explore possible scenarios for the Gaza Strip, they always add in every news bulletin and in every piece of analysis the mobilization of Palestinians inside Israel, which shows, how tangible treating Arabs as enemies has become in Israel.

With regard to Israel's continuous efforts to undermine the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state, Odeh said that after new annexation laws were released in recent Knesset meetings and the Ariel College [in the West Bank settlement of Ariel] was recognized of as part of the Israeli academic system, the possibility of an official annexation of Area 'C' may well be imminent, unless there will be significant changes in the American stance regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Odeh observed that the USA has always worked for and clearly wanted a Jewish majority in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This became particular obvious after the fall of the Shah in 1979, when the CIA declared that the only country it depended on in the East was Israel with its Jewish majority and that relying on an Arab or Muslim dictator always carried the risk of a coup d'état at any time. American official speech reiterated that as long as Israel has the guarantee of a Jewish majority, it would have continuous American support. Odeh also mentioned the letter which President George W. Bush handed to Sharon on 14 April 2004, encouraging him to Judaize the Galilee and the Negev, and the position of Mike Pence, Trump's Vice President and Counselor, who believes in and eagerly defends Israel's right to owning all the land. Finally, the US Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, who is a settler and the first

American ambassador explicitly against evacuating settlements, believes that annexation of Area 'C' has become legitimate and tangible.

According to Odeh, annexation of Area 'C' will be the first project pursued by Netanyahu and Bennett in the upcoming parliament round and its achievement will give the currently ruling conservative party a strong boost. He added that the governing right-wing coalition is not merely a continuation of the traditional right-wing in Israel, but a different right that was determined to succeed in the elections, and persisted to gain control over of the country to ensure that whether or not they lose in the next elections, the changes made will take a long time to recover from.

Odeh went on to say that not only did President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and the former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, discuss East Jerusalem and the restoration of the Wailing Wall, but that Olmert told him in a meeting three weeks ago that he is fully convinced that there must be a return to the boundaries of the Green Line, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Historical Achievements:

Odeh insisted that despite Israel's official denial of Palestinian rights and the accelerated colonization to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, there have been historical achievements in establishing a Palestinian state on the 1967 Green Line boundaries, thanks to the Palestinian strife and the 35,000 martyrs since then. He said that half of the Israeli public support the two-state solution, along with more than 90% of the people worldwide, not only through UN Security Council Resolution No. 2334 of December 2016 which reaffirmed that all Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem are illegal, and which the USA did not veto.

As for the one-state "solution", Odeh said it was not the result of an ideological rationale or any convictions, but rather of a weak position and desperation, adding that this is illogical as we all share the feeling that Israel is eliminating the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state. Odeh asked whether escaping by running forward to a solution with no depth or planning is an illusion, or is it directed towards developing a plan that can be achieved? However, Odeh warned about the one-state solution, saying it is obvious that it will take long phases and many stages to build trust, procedures and negotiations, but from the first moment the settlements become legal, there would be no difference between Tel Aviv and the Kiryat Arba settlement in Hebron since it would be considered one country. After 20 years of struggle, the question then is who is economically and militarily stronger? Who will control the natural resources, economy, checkpoints, etc?

Odeh gave an example of what he witnessed during his visit to South Africa two weeks ago on the occasion of celebrating a quarter century after the end of Apartheid: there is a complete economic division, and the only economic change was that a party of black people joined a party of white people to control the black populace in South Africa; a number of rich black people, that form 1%, joined the rich white people to control the black people... this is South Africa today.

Odeh believes a Palestinian state should be established first, then other issues would be open for negotiation. Borders can be opened, with a shared economy and currency. However, the main problem

remains the occupation which has to end, because as soon as it does, there would be a foundation for reaching equal opportunities. There are two solutions: de-Zionization of Israel or a continued occupation. The public is divided into two camps: the first is relatively small and believes that Palestinians should obtain their rights in an independent state, and the other, larger one wants separation from the Palestinians in order to maintain a Jewish majority.