

A Modest Proposal imagines how a single democratic state stretching from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean, with equal rights for all, might look. Take the illegal West Bank settlements occupied by Israeli Jews. The settlers would become citizens of the new state, and could stay in their homes. But the settlements would no longer be segregated, and vacant houses would become available to all. Apartheid roads, theft of water, armed guards and the Wall would disappear.

Right of Return

Unlike the two-state illusion, a single democratic state could make the Palestinian Right of Return a reality. Israel has plenty of land to accommodate Palestinians wishing to return to the areas from which their families were expelled. Architects and planners could take up the challenge of designing new model villages. For those choosing not to return, Karl Sabbah proposes offering either compensation or an annual time-share to reconnect with their communities, with travel and accommodation paid from a Right of Return scheme.

Would Israel, defining itself as the Jewish State, ever accept such an outcome? Only if it faces the full price for apartheid, a racist state system of discrimination, amidst Palestinian resistance and international action.



Voices from within

Haneen Zoabi was a member of the Knesset for the Balad Party within 1948 Israel since 2009, standing down this Spring. “[Balad’s] vision is to campaign for a state for all its citizens and to challenge the idea of a Jewish and democratic state. Zionism is a colonial ideology and the only way to have democracy is to disconnect the state from Zionism. We envisage a democracy. We don’t say you came as colonists now you must leave; we say you came as colonists but now you have a chance to live with us.”

Bassem Tamimi has led the popular uprising in Nabi Saleh, a West Bank village resisting the settlements. He had supported two-states-for-two-nations. But in 2013, he told the Israeli newspaper Ha’aretz “Israel has killed the two-state solution. That is why we must adopt a new strategy, and find a new partner for that strategy in Israeli society. We must kill the occupation and the [sense of] separation in the Israeli consciousness. The future will not change if we continue to think with the same concepts of the past. The solution is a single state.”

Israeli anti-Zionists including Ilan Pappé and Jeff Halper are now working with the One Democratic State Campaign, led by Awad Abelfattah, a former leader of Balad.

Ali Abunimah, editor of the Electronic Intifada, responded recently in Ottawa to a claim that Zionism was the overwhelming perspective of Jews. “I refuse to equate Jews with Zionists or Judaism with Zionism, and I refuse to accept that Israel speaks for all Jews in the world. To do so would concede the false claim that these things done to Palestinians are done in the name of Jews, and I won’t do it.”