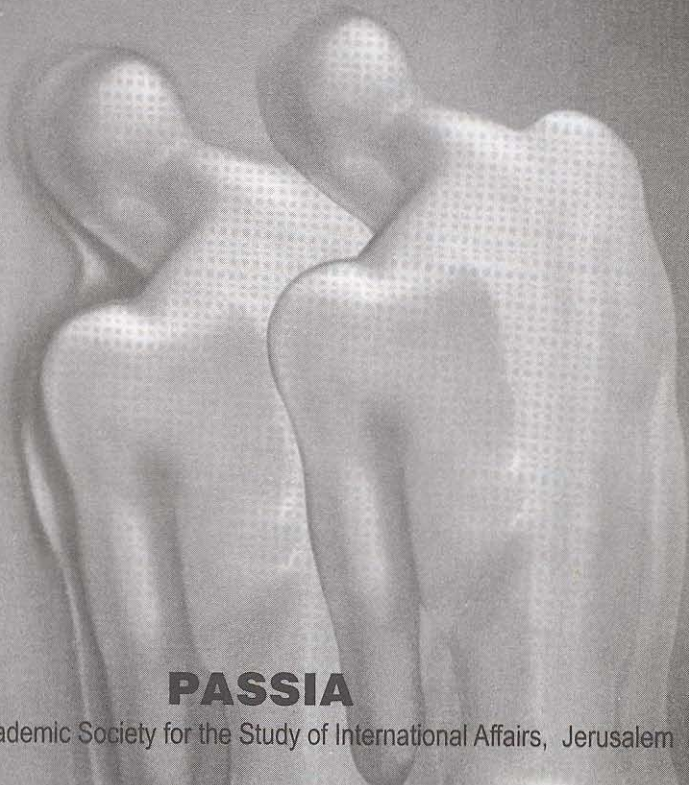


The Phenomenon of

# COLLABORATORS

in Palestine



**PASSIA**

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

# The Phenomenon of Collaborators in Palestine

Proceedings of a PASSIA Workshop

5 February 2001

**PASSIA**

**Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs**

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# Introduction

by Dr. Andrew Rigby

In February 2001 PASSIA convened a one-day conference to explore the phenomenon of collaboration within Palestinian society. The background to the symposium was the concern aroused following the execution of two alleged collaborators a few weeks earlier in Nablus and Gaza, and the sentencing to death of two others following a summary 'trial' by a security court in Bethlehem. In each case the accused were alleged to have assisted the Israelis in the assassination of Palestinian activists. As the Israelis made it clear that they would continue their policy of liquidating key activists in the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, there was growing concern in certain quarters that popular anger against those accused of betraying their fellow Palestinians and the national cause would result in an outbreak of vigilante action, fomenting further divisions within Palestinian society and thereby weakening resistance to the occupation. This worry was compounded by concerns that the justice administered by the Palestinian Authority was flawed - with serious questions being raised about the procedures whereby men were being condemned to death without the opportunity to defend themselves and without the right of appeal.

Recent Palestinian history has shown that all too often the national struggle has been undermined by divisions created within society around the issue of collaboration. Thus, the Palestinian Revolt of the late 1930s was weakened by the internecine conflicts between feuding clans and political groupings, with false charges of collaboration being leveled in order to discredit rivals and legitimize their elimination. Again, during the Intifada that commenced in 1987, the number of Palestinians killed for alleged collaboration increased as the mass base of the uprising was eroded. It has been claimed that by the spring of 1990 more Palestinians were being slain by their fellow citizens than by the occupying forces. Over the following three years the

average number of Palestinians killed on suspicion of collaboration remained constant at around 150 to 200 a year<sup>1</sup>. These relatively high numbers were the result of a two-fold process: the intensification of the struggle against collaborators by the strike forces and a broadening of the category of people deemed to be collaborators and deserving of execution.

As someone brought up in post-World War II Europe, my childhood reading included stories of heroic resistance against the Nazis in occupied France and elsewhere. I grew up assuming that under occupation there were two types of people: the heroic resisters and the cowardly collaborators. Just how painfully naïve such a view was became apparent to me a decade ago when I was doing research on the Intifada. I began to realize that so many of the people who were being accused of collaborating with the Israeli occupying force were not 'evil people' as such, but people with whom I could identify. They were people who were caught in difficult circumstances and who made their choices as best they could according to their morality, their interests and their courage. I began to wonder what I would have done in their place. What if a member of my family needed medical treatment only available overseas? What if the occupiers agreed to grant the necessary permits, so long as I returned the favor by agreeing to meet with them once a month to discuss various matters? I began to realize that under such circumstances there was no clear line between good and evil, between victim and perpetrator. Especially under conditions of occupation questions of culpability, guilt and innocence become matters of degree - they are rarely black and white. This was something that Ian Buruma came to appreciate as he reflected on the Dutch experience of occupation in World War II:

"Occupation is always a humiliating business - not just because of the loss of sovereignty and political rights but because it dramatically shows up human weakness. Heroes are very few in such times, and only a fool would put himself or herself among the imaginary heroes. It is easier to understand the ugly little compromises people make to save their own skins, the furtive services rendered to the uniformed masters, the looking away when the Gestapo kicks in the neighbor's door."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See B'Tselem, *Collaborators in the Occupied Territories: Human Rights Abuses and Violations*, Jerusalem, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Buruma *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1994, p. 6.

## Points of Discussion

Unfortunately the 'ugly little compromises' without which people cannot survive under conditions of occupation can lead all too easily down a slippery slope to betrayal, a process Dr. Saleh Abdul Jawwad graphically depicts in his paper. Most Palestinians who have been arrested and imprisoned by the Israelis have come under pressure to become an informer. Many possessed the courage and the conviction to resist, but running through Dr. Abdul Jawwad's analysis is a sense of compassion for those who gave way. For, as he writes, 'The minute the potential collaborator agrees to provide even the smallest piece of seemingly insignificant information, he is at the mercy of the system.'

Dr. Abdul Jawwad concludes his paper with a point that is echoed in the contribution of Dr. Said Zeedani. Whatever the crimes committed by the alleged collaborators, due process must be observed in their trial and sentencing. Condemning the 'street justice' that has resulted in the slaying of a number of suspected collaborators, Dr. Zeedani writes, 'The pressure of public opinion should not be the determining factor; public and fair trials by courts and not vigilante groups are what is required and necessary. Mob justice is as objectionable as vigilante activity.'

The summary execution of alleged collaborators is not something confined to the Palestinian case. Throughout occupied Europe during World War II suspected collaborators were assassinated. It has been estimated that in France around 10,000 killings took place. The majority of these occurred during the last few weeks prior to liberation, and a further 4,500 were killed over the following months. Perhaps the majority of these were driven by popular rage fuelled by frustration at the slow pace of official justice, but a significant proportion of the killings were politically motivated or carried out for private gain.<sup>3</sup>

One of the consequences of such acts is a legacy of bitterness, which can lead to violence and division over many years, particularly in cultures that emphasize the significance of collective responsibility amongst members of the same family or clan. In the case of the killing of a villager from Bruqin in the West Bank, reviewed by Dan Williams in his contribution, we witness a tragedy unfolding. Someone is executed one night outside his home. Leaflets appear accusing him of being a collaborator. No one in the village can believe such allega-

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<sup>3</sup> See Peter Novick, *The Resistance Versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1968, p. 71-72.



tions. They suspect the killing was carried out for personal motives by someone who had an affair with the victim's former wife. But they despair of obtaining justice as the suspected perpetrator works as one of the Palestinian Authority's security officials. As such they fear he can act with impunity, whatever he does he will be protected by his 'clan' - the PA.

Reflecting on the significance of such cases Dr. Zeedani raises the possibility that whilst the prime cause might be the decades of occupation, they also illustrate the flaws that run through the Palestinian polity and society, flaws that have been deepened and exploited by the Israelis. Thus, many collaboration cases have had their origins in some contravention of accepted sexual and moral standards. In a repressive society and culture too many transgressors are rendered vulnerable to blackmail and extortion. Calling for a collective process of self-examination Dr. Zeedani raises the possibility that 'there is something wrong in our value system that this kind of phenomenon feeds on.'

One of the reasons the problem of collaboration has continued to fester has been the fact that the safety of collaborators was guaranteed under the Oslo Accords. Thus, in the Cairo Agreement of 1994 the Palestinian negotiators committed themselves 'to solving the problem of those Palestinians who were in contact with the Israeli authorities. Until an agreed solution is found, the Palestinian side undertakes not to prosecute these Palestinians or to harm them in any way.' (Cairo Agreement, Article XX, para. 4). Likewise, in the Taba Agreement of September 1995 the Palestinians vouchsafed that 'Palestinians who have maintained contact with the Israeli authorities will not be subjected to acts of harassment, violence, retribution or prosecution.' (Article XVI, para. 2)

With its hands tied by its agreements, and unable to exercise any state-like power over considerable areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Authority has been unable to develop a coherent policy for dealing with collaborators. The result has been a chaotic mix of vigilante killings and the violation of human rights in the name of 'justice'. The longer-term consequences of this are a cause of considerable concern. This was articulated most clearly by one of the contributors who voiced the fear shared by many about the future of the Palestinian state: 'Unless we learn to do justice under stress we will never learn; unless we begin to build democracy under stress we will not be able to build it when the Israelis leave.'

## Towards a Longer-Term Perspective - Reconciliation

When one thinks about the long-term future for the Palestinians, thoughts must turn not just to the question of an eventual peace settlement with the Israelis but also to the prospects of reconciliation within Palestinian society itself. For reconciliation to be approached in the future, it is necessary that the divisions and hurts of the past are addressed in as constructive a manner as possible. The problem is how to acknowledge the past but not allow its painful legacy to determine the future. This is a crucial issue not just for individual Palestinians, but for the society as a whole as it emerges out of the bloodshed, division and collective nightmare of occupation. There are a number of models that Palestinians can draw for guidance in this process.

### *Amnesia and amnesty*

In 1975, the Spanish dictator Franco died. He came to power through a military rebellion and subsequent civil war, and after his victory in 1939 his regime became infamous for its barbaric treatment of the defeated and the repression practiced throughout the country. Yet after his death and the transition to democratic rule there was no purge, but rather an exercise in collective amnesia. Everything was subordinated to the peaceful transition to democratic rule - and this exercise in letting bygones be bygones would appear to have worked, the roots of democracy in Spain have deepened. But what of justice?

### *Purges and trials in pursuit of a kind of justice*

At the opposite pole from amnesia is the active attempt to police the past and prosecute the guilty. Here the example comes to mind of the prosecution of Nazi war criminals and their collaborators that took place at Nuremberg and elsewhere in Europe after the Second World War. More recently there has been the prosecution of former East German border guards charged with the killing of fellow citizens trying to escape to the West in the years before the European political map was transformed in 1989, and the International Criminal Tribunals for Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

There is something appealing about the prosecution of those guilty of crimes against their fellow citizens. It satisfies our sense that there should be some degree of retribution, people should be made to pay for their sins. Moreover, if the punishments are administered through due legal process they help to establish the rule of law within society

and remove any justification for extra-judicial acts of vengeance by misguided vigilantes.

Trials and the pursuit of retributive justice exercise a strong appeal for those who are convinced that there is a clear division between guilty and innocent, perpetrators and victims. But this Manichean paradigm does not reflect the complexity and the 'messiness' of life under occupation. It was for this reason that President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic was initially reluctant to endorse any kind of purge following the Velvet Revolution of 1989. He was too aware of the manner in which the machinery of the old regime could colonize people, turning them into unwitting accomplices of the repressive apparatuses of the state. As he wrote in his essay 'The Power of the Powerless', it was not necessary for people to believe in the system in order to become one of its pillars, what was important was that people behaved as if they believed in the system, that they acquiesced in 'living within a lie' and thereby reinforced it.

The German philosopher Karl Jaspers, reflecting on the holocaust, distinguished between four types of guilt: the criminal guilt of those who actually committed the crimes; the political guilt of those who helped such people get to power; the moral guilt of those who stood by doing nothing as the crimes were being committed; and finally the metaphysical guilt of those who survived whilst others were killed, thereby failing in their responsibility to do all that they might have done to preserve the standards of civilized humanity.

Purges and trials might be valid processes for determining criminal guilt, but they are not best suited to coping with all the different forms, shades and degrees of culpability. Moreover trials have their limitations when it comes to unveiling the truth about the past. They are combative encounters where defendant and prosecutor compete in what we might term the manipulation of history, insofar as they each have an interest in concealing some aspects of the past and highlighting others. As part of this process trials can serve as morality plays, where good triumphs over evil and the guilty are made to pay the price for their misdeeds, but they are not the best means for dealing with all the subtleties of the past. For that another approach seems best suited - that of the truth commission.

*Truth Commissions: whose truth and what about justice?*

Whereas trials and purges are aimed at punishing the perpetrators of crimes against their fellow citizens, the prime concern of the truth



commission approach to addressing the pains of the past is with the victims. The aim is to identify them, to acknowledge the wrongs done to them, and to arrive at appropriate compensation. The intention is that through such a process they might be helped to come to terms with their anger and bitterness. The pattern was set by the 'National Commission on the Disappeared' established in Argentina in 1983. In its report the Commission tried to unveil the secrecy surrounding the torture, killing and disappearance of the thousands of victims of the military regime. Chile followed its neighbor's example in 1991 when the report of the 'Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation' was published.

Critics of the Argentinean and Chilean Commissions claim that by revealing only a partial truth they served to conceal other aspects of the past. Thus, in both cases the Commissions were prevented by their remits from naming the individuals responsible for abuses. At the heart of such criticisms is the claim that justice is forfeited in the proclaimed quest for truth and the alleged reconciliation is false. The criminals provide a version of the truth in return for amnesty, and the victims are then left to do the reconciling.

It was because of such criticisms that the South Africans introduced the element of *conditional* amnesty into their model. Any perpetrator of human rights abuses who sought an amnesty did not have to express regret or remorse, but to be free from the fear of prosecution they were required to confess their crimes and convince an amnesty committee that these had been 'political' in nature and were not committed out of personal malice or for private gain.

For many South Africans there was something abhorrent in these amnesty provisions, which allowed the perpetrators to walk free. What had happened to justice? In response Archbishop Desmond Tutu articulated an alternative conception of justice, the principles of *restorative* justice embodied in the concept of 'ubuntu'. At the heart of this was the basic insight, which is shared by so many spiritual traditions, concerning the thread of interdependence that links us all one to another. Hence, to the extent that we treat others as if they were less than fully human, so we dehumanize and impoverish ourselves. From this perspective, then, it is in all our interests to try and restore social harmony once it has been fractured. Therefore, to forgive others and welcome them back into our common human household is not altruistic, it is the highest form of enlightened self-interest, insofar as it affirms the humanity of the other, and hence of ourselves, and thereby helps restore community.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of collaboration amongst Palestinians highlights some of the fractures within Palestinian society and its polity. At the core of 'reconciliation' as a concept and a process is the notion of restoring harmony and wholeness, transcending the divisions of the past. The major challenge that faces Palestinians at the moment is the pursuit of reconciliation, not so much with the Israelis, but within their own society. In approaching this challenge Palestinians must seek their own balance between those values that are constitutive of reconciliation but which remain in constant tension - justice, truth, and compassion.

# The Phenomenon of Collaboration

*by Dr. Andrew Rigby*

The following is drawn primarily from my interest in the phenomenon of collaboration as it relates to occupied Europe in the Second World War, which is an interest that grew out of my studies here and the feeling that 'there but for the grace of God might I be'. Such an interest comes in part from a larger interest in the whole moral dilemma of how to live under occupation.

Firstly, I want to make the point that occupation 'colonizes' people. It is impossible to live under occupation without some form of collaboration with the occupier, unless you want to be a hero or martyr, and most of us are weak human beings with all the accompanying faults and failings and lack what it takes to be heroes and martyrs.

Secondly I should stress that, based on my research on the countries that were occupied in Europe; France, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Denmark, collaboration was commonplace. These numbers are enough to give you an idea:

In Belgium, with a population of 8 million, 300,000 people were investigated for collaboration. In Holland, with a population of 9.2 million, over 250,000 people were investigated. In each occupied country hundreds of thousands were suspected of collaboration of one form or another.

I would like to underline this point because, as someone who studies Palestine from outside, I feel that one always comes across this idea of the 'particularism' of Palestine. I think there is also a feeling projected by the media which creates the impression that Palestinian collaborators are something special. The point I want to make here instead is that under occupation collaboration is commonplace.

## 'Types' of Collaboration

For our purposes it is best to leave aside the idea of an actual hard, clear definition of collaboration. This is simply because I do not think there is one and the attempted definitions of collaboration continually change with the period of the struggle and the occupation, resulting in a situation where sometimes it is only retrospectively that some things become described as collaboration.

Nonetheless, we should examine certain 'types' of collaboration. Here, again based on my research on the Nazi occupation of Europe during the Second World War, there are numerous ways of distinguishing different types of collaboration. For instance one could talk about the "political collaboration" of those who sometimes actually shared the beliefs of the Nazis. The best known, certainly in Britain where the word 'quisling' has come into the language, meaning a traitor, was Vidkun Quisling; he was the head of the Norwegian Fascist political party and aligned himself with the Nazis. This can be seen as a type of '*political collaboration*'.

'*Military collaboration*' is another 'type'. 50,000 Dutch men volunteered for the German army! The numbers are not the issue here but it does serve to give us some sense of the scale; we're looking at thousands. In this case they actually went to the Eastern Front and the like.

At the other extreme we find the '*social collaboration*' and the phrase you sometimes come across, '*horizontal collaboration*'; that is the women who consorted with the enemy and had relationships with the enemy.

Perhaps the most difficult or ambiguous area is '*economic collaboration*'. Here there were about two million nationals from occupied countries who voluntarily went to work in Germany as part of the war effort. These figures ignore the fact that under occupation much of Europe's industrial capacity was geared towards the German war effort in any case. This is a most poignant 'type' of collaboration to think about, bearing in mind the Palestinian scenario. This area of collaboration is very difficult to approach because we have to ask where the need to survive ends and becomes collaboration.

A case that might serve as a good example of some of the ambiguities is one in France, in Clermont Ferand, which was the home of the main factory of the Michelin Company. The head of the factory there was a supporter of the resistance but at the end of the war was charged with



collaboration because, of course, they were making the tires for the German airplanes and the German armed vehicles and so on. This is a very difficult area.

Some distinctions that have been useful in thinking about collaboration stem out of the motivations that drive the collaborator; is it for self-interest, or is it for community interest? One must recognize that some people collaborate not for their own private gain but because they seek to serve their own community, however distorted this view might appear to others. A second useful category to employ is whether they collaborate willingly or reluctantly.

The easiest one of these above 'types' or 'distinctions' to deal with is the one who falls into the category of the outright traitor. This is someone who betrays his or her fellow citizens or countrymen for private gain; there is no principle involved, as such. This is the straightforward traitor.

A second level of this is represented by what we might call the '*patriotic traitor*'; this is someone like Quisling, who went to his death (he was executed) still believing he had done nothing wrong. He identified with the Nazi project; he believed in it and in every country in Europe there was such an organization, which identified with the Nazis and believed in their project. As someone from Britain, I might be tempted to feel nice and 'clean' because we were not occupied but in those parts of the British Isles that were occupied (the Channel Islands) one finds exactly the same phenomenon of collaboration.

In the third and broadest category of collaborator we find those that collaborate in some way or another, reluctantly because they feel they have no other choice for their own survival. These might be called the '*accommodationists*'; the people who accommodate to the situation of occupation in order to survive. This is the largest category and the most difficult to define in terms of its parameters because we all have to survive under occupation and if, in order to survive, you need to work ... and if that employment involves supporting the occupation to some degree or another, then to some extent you are cooperating with the occupier; serving their interests, and can be seen retrospectively as being less than honorable in your behavior.

The real problem here is that in Europe there was a general recognition that if you ran a factory then to some degree you were going to have to deal with the Germans and provide goods for them. The debate started to focus upon whether or not these people made excess profits, but this always remains a very difficult area. Again, as I men-

tioned above, under occupation people are colonized, as well as the land, and if the prime goal is to survive and if to do this you need to work ... then you face inevitable dilemmas: who controls the economy? How can you find work without, in some way, supporting the occupier? These kinds of question become pivotal.

A fourth category or type includes those who serve the occupier reluctantly but out of a sense of communal responsibility. Here we find the civil servants that stayed at their posts, the judges and judiciary and police who stayed and occupied their posts because they felt that they ought to. They felt it better that they continue to fulfill their duties rather than the occupier. They also thought that they could maybe act as a 'shield' between the occupier and civil society. In this category you find the tragic situation where you have the Jewish Councils in some cases actually organizing the registration of those of their community to be deported to the camps, because they felt it better that they did it and save people that little bit of suffering.

Collaboration is, if you like, a slippery slope. Cooperation with evil corrupts eventually; what can start out with noble or understandable intentions can too easily transcend the boundaries of the individual categories I have just summarized. The reason I am interested in collaboration is because it truly highlights the moral dilemmas of life. For example, the judges in Holland decide they will maintain order and try to preserve the rule of law in their society and so they persist but then the call comes for the Jewish judges to be dismissed and sent to the camps and the non-Jewish judges remain in office. There is the slippery slope. The Jewish councils start as protection and shield and then they end up participating in the deportations ...

After the war and the occupation we find the issue of dealing with the collaborators emerges. There is a common 'package' of measures employed to deal with these people that one comes across looking at the European experience. The first of these, and the one that I think is particularly relevant to the Palestinian case, is the phenomenon of what we can call 'self-help' justice, vigilantism, cross-roads justice, lynch-law; there are various words, all describing people taking the law into their own hands and executing those that they accuse of collaboration. Now this attracts a lot of attention as we see in the Palestinian context as we have seen in the past and are seeing again here today. But again it is not a particular to Palestine.

In France, with a population of 36 million, there were over ten thousand summary executions of alleged collaborators *during* the war and



four and a half thousand in the weeks immediately after the war. In a lot of these cases there may have been secret trials and warnings and, therefore, some claim to a semblance of as proper procedure as was possible under occupation conditions. But the danger in all of these situations is that the allegations may be just a 'camouflage' to cover rivalry; political rivalry, social rivalry, sexual rivalry and so on.

In Denmark, with a population of four million there were still 170 summary executions; people shot in the street etc., during the war. Holland, a country, like Denmark, where democratic institutions and the rule of law were traditionally and historically embedded in the fabric of the state and the society, with a population of 9.2 million at that time, held three hundred summary executions in 1944 alone. Again, this is not uncommon.

At the end of the war a major concern of the new regime, if it was the returning government or the new government, was the restoration of law and order. In this regard one finds the phenomenon of retroactive legislation; that is the reclassification of acts as criminal that were not in themselves legally defined as criminal at the time they were committed. Thus, in Denmark, Holland and Norway there was no death penalty but after the war they introduced the death penalty for cases of extreme collaboration and crimes against humanity like the torture of victims. Belgium, having been occupied in the First World War already had the death penalty. So in Denmark, where their actions had been retroactively deemed worthy of the punishment, 45 people were executed; in Holland 36 and in Norway 25; in Belgium there were 230. Many of these were those we categorized as patriotic traitors and those who had gone and fought with the Germans. In France there were 767 such executions through retroactive legislation.

Because there were so many collaborators, because it was ubiquitous and commonplace the legal system, in the throws of being reestablished after the occupation, is incapable of coping. As a result you see the establishment of tribunals. These are of two sorts; institutional tribunals - one for the police, for the judiciary, the civil service etc. - whose job would be to decide on this factor we discussed of 'accommodation'; where did it stop and become collaboration. The second type would be local tribunals set up because literally tens of thousands of people were accused of collaboration and their cases had, somehow, to be processed and people wanted it done quickly. In continental Europe, as opposed to Britain, they have a 'Napoleonic' legal system where rather than being judged by your peers (as in the jury system) you have three judges. Because of collaboration though, they

introduced laypeople onto the tribunals; you would have one judge or a magistrate and a couple of laypeople. This was an innovation to try to reflect the fact that the collaborators had 'sinned' against their fellow citizens.

The penalties ranged through from execution - capital punishment - through to prison terms, fines and confiscation of property. These latter were mainly applied to those who fell into that gray area of accommodation where people maybe made undue profits and so on and it was seen as a punishment for benefiting unduly somehow from occupation or from your relationship with the occupier. A further aspect of this punishment process which I find particularly interesting and had not known about until I did this study is the deprivation of the rights of citizenship for a limited period; the principle being that 'you have dishonored your nation, behaved in an uncivilized manner (or uncivic manner) and therefore you should be deprived of the rights of citizenship.' This exclusion from the right to vote, receive welfare etc. would be for a period of time, say five years. I think this is an interesting kind of approach. Aside from these methods people were relocated and/or restricted to particular areas; there were a whole range of penalties.

From the point of view of the new regime I think there were two key factors. One was to restore state authority; they had suffered under an illegal occupation; a *de facto* regime that they had never recognized legally. In occupation people, as you know, become used to the black economy, the gray economy; law is something to be broken or to be sidestepped. Restoring the authority of the state thus becomes a priority. Secondly, they needed and set out to mark and lay the foundations of a new democratic political social order. This explains why they were so concerned to halt what I have called the 'self-help' justice. They wanted to encourage people to leave things to the state authorities out of a fear that by not doing so they would leave the way open for a growth in interfactionalism and so on and so forth.

What can be observed after World War II is that the struggle against the Germans is pretty soon replaced by the Cold War and so those communists who had been part of the 'brave resistance' become the 'security threat within'.

There is an important distinction and failure in the meting out of 'rough' justice, which should be remembered. There is a term in French for those collaborators who were strung up in the streets; *lampistes* - they are basically the small people. It is a terrible thing to call someone who does the torture the 'small' person, the person who literally has the

blood on his hands. But what you find is that the people who instructed and ordered the person with blood on their hands does not get caught, so it is the 'small fry' that suffer because everybody knows that they're the ones who pulled the trigger or spied on the community and so on. What you find is that with the passage of time after the end of the occupation, the desire for blood vengeance starts to disappear, because the Cold War quickly arrives and people want to re-create community, and as a result of this you find that those who came up in the courts later on did not receive the same penalties as those who appeared immediately after liberation. This can lead to the sowing of seeds of resentment and the raising of numerous questions about justice and equality; questions which persist.

If you have people that are full of resentment, who have been contaminated as dirty, dishonorable etc., then you have their families; and that means you're talking about tens of thousands of people. Interestingly, in this regard, is what I came across in Holland; the establishment of a voluntary society for the care of collaborators and their families; to deal with the reentry into the community, all the welfare needs were provided for through an organization staffed by volunteers. There was a sense there that 'we're responsible for them' and I think this is an interesting factor. What you do not have in the European scenario is the more recent phenomenon of the 'truth commissions'.

As a final observation I should add that with the outbreak of the Cold War and so on you find the institution of amnesties, whereby people who were sentenced to jail were released; pretty much everyone was released within 2 years and citizens' rights which had been revoked were reinstated.

## COMMENTS

- I would like, having heard your thoughts on the phenomenon of collaboration in Europe, to know whether or not you came across or have formulated any ideas as to how to prevent collaboration effectively in an occupation. A lot of the individuals involved find themselves forced into collaboration, which means that while we look at the aftermath and the punishments we should probably spend some energy seeking preventative measures as well.*

I think in the European case you can see that most of the countries I discussed had not had prior experience of occupation and so they really did not have a set way of dealing with it from the start or a sense



of the parameters of collaboration. Belgium, which had been occupied in the First World War, knew about it and had 'rules'. So I think this is certainly a preventative factor; having clear definitions coming from state or whatever authorities one respects, saying 'here is the boundary' because most people do not know what the boundary is exactly and, as we know, it changes with the intensity of the emotions. In this regard it is worth noting that the summary executions increased towards the end of the war because, in part, people knew after about 1943 and Stalingrad which way the war was going to end. That is when everyone started to join the resistance!!

The other thing is that there were a lot of people who were collaborators during the day and resistance fighters at night. They worked for the authorities during the day in order to obtain, say, the plans of the building or railway station and then at night they provided those plans to those who were going to go and try to blow it up.

I would say that paramount here is having clear boundary lines; maybe that is at the level of the community and in that sense it really calls for discussion and I think that this is vital, particularly in the areas that are grayer than others; the economic collaborators and the like. Once people transgress a clearly defined boundary they can maybe be expected to take the consequences.

# The Classification & Recruitment of Collaborators

*by Dr. Saleh Abdel Jawwad*

Following the well-publicized execution of two alleged Palestinian collaborators, at the hands of a PA firing squad, in the beginning of January, there has been an increased prominence of discourse on the role collaborators play in the Israeli strategy of eliminating Palestinian activists. These executions were followed by the televised trial of four other suspected collaborators (two of whom were sentenced to death), and an announced PA campaign to struggle against the "enemy within".

As soon as these events began the international community and Israeli government harshly criticized them. While I will make no attempt to defend or excuse the Palestinian Authority's behavior in this matter, there is, beside the need to assess their role in the treatment and punishment of alleged collaborators, a real need to delve deep into the issue of collaboration to further understand the phenomena independent of political motivations.

The killing of suspected Palestinian collaborators by the national movement was used by Israel and the Zionist movement as a means of de-legitimizing the national struggle as early as 1936. At the time, the Zionist movement promoted a myth that the victims of internal elimination amongst Palestinians totaled more than the amount of Palestinians killed by the British Mandate forces themselves during the 1936-39 Revolt. During the first Intifada, the subject of killing of collaborators spearheaded Israeli efforts to discredit the popular nature of the Intifada. Today, the same tactic is seen again.

This article aims to clarify important aspects of the phenomena of collaboration often overlooked in normative discourse.

## Collaboration: A General Overview

Collaboration is a widespread phenomenon that characterizes all colonial situations. All national liberation movements have had to contend with the issue. Revolutionary and national liberation literature tackles the subject whether by Mao Tse Tung (China) or Che Guevara (Cuba) and from the Algerian revolution to France under Vichy rule. The Zionist movement itself had to deal with the issue, often doing so in a particularly harsh manner.<sup>1</sup> It is a complicated phenomenon that has a greater significance than a mere issue of 'security', which is often mistakenly perceived, especially in the case of Palestinian society. In fact, the security element composes only one dimension of what is a larger social phenomenon.

The collaborator betrays his own people either because he is in a position of weakness and suffering, (i.e., under torture or in need of health care during detention, etc.) and/or perceives the occupying power to be invincible, and he and his people to be hopelessly weak. This is why if we look today, it is difficult to find Israelis who collaborate with Palestinians. However there are many cases of Jews who collaborated with the Nazis, because at the time, the Jews were also in a position of similar weakness.<sup>2</sup>

The Palestinian collaborator is an expression of Israel's larger 'defense' policies. Israel is one of those preeminent countries, whose interest in acquiring information has historically acted as a main part of its military power and as a means of control. Collaborators are a part of this process of information gathering alongside the satellites, sensitive listening equipment, wire tapping, unmanned drones, not to mention access to data from schools, banks and other bureaucratic paper trails. The Palestinian collaborator in the Israeli strategy also serves the purpose of creating mistrust, spreading confusion and undermining collective self-confidence within Palestinian society.

Against the backdrop of the 33-year Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Oslo Accords failed to do anything to alleviate the problem of collaboration. This was partly because Israel used Oslo as a way to continue the occupation through other means, and as such, the role of the collaborator remained intact and essential to the occupier.



## Kinds of Collaborators

Having established this brief background to the phenomena of collaboration, it is now necessary to divide collaboration into the various 'types' that have been historically present in Palestinian society. The first and perhaps most well known kind of collaborator is the land dealer (*simsar al-aardi*). This person intermediates between Israelis (either settlers or the Jewish National Fund) and the general Palestinian population in order to acquire Palestinian lands. This is necessary because, in general, Palestinians do not want to sell their lands. Here, the *simsar's* role as the Palestinian land broker is to acquire the land from the Palestinian landowner and to then transfer it to the Israelis. This kind of collaborator has been present since the beginning of the last century. The Palestinian national movement took a stance in opposition to this form of collaboration in 1935 when meetings were held to address the issue and a religious decree (*fatwa*) was issued. The *fatwa* encouraged the killing of collaborators and made it forbidden for them to receive a religious burial. These collaborators played an important role in the pre-1948 period as well as, in certain cases, after the 1967 occupation.

The second kind of collaborator is the intermediary (*al-wasit*). This collaborator acts as an intermediary between the Israeli occupation and the population. After the 1967 Occupation, Israel created a kind of occupation administration whereby any services rendered by the occupation to the population involved going through the intelligence services and a "security check". Sometimes the individuals will prefer to go through well-known intermediary collaborators to have their "paper work" done, rather than dealing with the occupation administration by themselves. The *wasit* is usually well known to the population since his role is to intermediate between the population and the occupier's administration and is therefore not considered to be an immediately 'dangerous' kind of collaborator. In contrast however, the *simsar* is considered to be highly 'dangerous', because the nature of his work is deceptive and relates to the most fundamental aspect of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (land).<sup>3</sup> The role of both these kinds of collaborator diminished in importance after the signing of the Oslo Accords and with the arrival of the Palestinian Authority in certain parts of the West Bank and Gaza.

A third kind of collaborator is the armed collaborator (*al-'ameel al-musallah*). These are collaborators who became well-known land brokers or intermediaries, and as such were completely marginalized and isolated from Palestinian society. The Israelis used them to accom-

pany their Special Forces to the houses of certain activists, and they were even armed by the Special Forces in order to participate in such raids. A famous example of such a collaborator is Ahmed Nattur from Ya'bed village in the Jenin district. Nattur used to provide information and accompany Israeli Special Forces on raids throughout the Jenin area because he was familiar with the villages and knew where certain activists' houses were. He eventually became the head of the West Bank collaborator village known as Fahmeh that the Israelis set up on an old Jordanian military base after the outbreak of the first Intifada. Together with its counterpart of Dihiniyeh village in the Gaza Strip, the camp was established because Israel needed a place where it could collect and protect certain collaborators after the Intifada began. Nattur eventually left the West Bank together with hundreds of other collaborators and he is now living inside Israel.

The fourth kind of collaborator is the informant (*jasous*). The *jasous* provides information upon the activities and movements of certain activists as well as general information about political activity in a given area. For example, the *jasous* will provide a list of people who may have participated in demonstrations and details on "who hangs out with whom". It is important however to emphasize that the information the *jasous* provides comes from outside the inner circle of political activity. The *jasous*, therefore, is to be distinguished from the infiltrator who shall be discussed below and who provides information from within Palestinian national organizations.

Before continuing it should be emphasized that it is not uncommon that these four kinds of collaborators – the intermediary, land brokers, armed collaborators and informers – play more than one role, i.e., an intermediary will also work as an informer, or an armed collaborator also tries to do land deals or the *vice versa*.

In addition to these types of collaborator are three other types of collaborator, which Palestinian society tends not to talk about. The first is the *economic collaborator*, whose job is to push Israeli products onto the Palestinian market and to mobilize propaganda against Palestinian national products. These also fulfill a role by pushing Israeli products into the Arab world. In the latter case, the collaborator promotes the product as though it were a Palestinian or non-Israeli product. Such collaborators usually emerge from well-off social strata and are often agents of Israeli companies. Today examples of such kind of collaboration can be found in the Palestinian Territories, well after Oslo.

A second, less well talked-about, collaborator is the *political collaborator*. These are people who also come from well-off social strata, and are sometimes involved in the municipal affairs of Palestinian cities. Sometimes they have been known to show a nationalistic 'face', but generally they apply long-term Israeli political policies. Sometimes the role of these collaborators coincides with economic collaboration. Historically, political collaborators have worked against nationalistic mayors in an effort to discredit them or to divide or confuse the support of popular nationalist leaders. In general, however, the economic and political collaborator is not recruited and their role is not that of giving information to the intelligence services, but rather to serve Israeli economic and political interests. Nonetheless, they do encourage and facilitate the process of recruitment of smaller-time collaborators due to the psychological effect of their perceived material 'success'.

Political and economic collaborators have historically benefited at the expense of internal rifts within the national movement. During the 1970s and 1980s, leftist leaders in the Occupied Territories such as Bassam Al-Shaka', Ibrahim Daqak, Abdel Jawwad Saleh, and Haidar Abdel Shafi were seen as obstacles to the ongoing process of preparing the ground for what eventually would take place later. Thus, a de facto convergence of interests emerged between Israel and the mainstream PLO leadership. This situation led to the promotion and strengthening of Palestinian individuals and leaders who operated within the Israeli sphere of economic and political interests, at the expense and exclusion of those who leaned in other directions.

The last category of collaborator is the *infiltrator* and can be defined as someone who succeeds in infiltrating Palestinian national organizations. Many times such people are originally active members of political parties, and come to be an infiltrator through the use of torture during prison sentences, combined with the fact that they are often young and inexperienced. In most cases, the individual is pressured through various means by Israel, in an effort to induce them to collaborate. For example, it is not uncommon for the potential collaborator to be threatened with a life sentence whether it be possible or not. As is usually the case, these people are released from prison and are not suspected of being collaborators because of the sacrifices and time they have spent in prison. They then re-enter the national movement and begin to provide information from the inside about certain activities. The infiltrator is therefore the most 'dangerous' kind of collaborator because he can give accurate information from the inside, which can endanger the lives of others and might sabotage an entire operation, or organization.



In general, collaborators that provide such types of information, together with the basic informant (the *jasous*), are helped by the social phenomena of 'talking'. Palestinian society does not have a tradition of "keeping its mouth shut" which stems from a tradition that encourages and values the celebration of courage, bravery and heroism.

Beyond all this – and something which is generally completely ignored by Palestinians – is the sophisticated technology that Israel uses to gather information. Israel has developed an advanced complex of intelligence gathering that brings together hundreds of individual pieces of information, so that when combined they give a "picture to the puzzle". So when, for example, the Palestinian Authority sentences two people to death for providing information on the assassinated Fateh activist Hussein Abayyat in Bethlehem, one can be sure that these two people were only a small part of a much larger process which probably included unmanned drones, high-tech binoculars, and listening equipment amongst other devices.

### **The Colonial System and the Industry of Collaboration Production**

Collaborator recruitment relies upon an enormous and complicated web, which the occupation administration established soon after the War of 1967. Israel transformed the function of the most minor of administrative bureaucracy into an opportunity for collaborator recruitment. This applied to everything from the obtaining of travel permits (including those to Jerusalem), the receiving of building permits and obtaining trade licenses. All such bureaucracy was accompanied by an obligatory "security check", meaning that those in need of such permissions were, without fail, to go through a process of being screened and possibly approached for collaboration recruitment. Up until the late 1980s, Palestinians wishing even to obtain a driver's license had to go through an intelligence service 'check-up'.

One must stress that much of the driving force behind the system and logic created by the Israeli occupation was designed with the clear intention and commitment that such a system would enable Israel to create sufficient collaborators within Palestinian society. As such, collaboration plays an important role in the psychological warfare which Israel wages against the population.

Recruitment of collaborators takes place against the backdrop of imbibing an emphatic sense of Israeli strength vis-à-vis the Arab world, as well as *within* Palestinian society. The latter is presented as weak,

sickly and composed of untrustworthy characters. Thus, it is not uncommon that, during the initial phase of recruitment, the Israeli side emphasizes to the potential collaborator, that "Palestinians are collaborators themselves" and that "the information that led to your arrest came from another Palestinian". Sometimes there are assurances that the "information you give is also given by others". In certain cases, recruitment officers will go so far as to talk about "Arabs who have sexual relations with animals", all in an effort to create a sense of inferiority in the potential collaborator.

In addition to the occupation administration as a means of collaborator recruitment is the Israeli prison system. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been funneled through the Israeli prison system since 1967. This is not because all Palestinians who were put in prison were especially active in the national resistance, but rather because the prison was used as a refinery system with several clear objectives. First and foremost, the prison was used as a means to collect social and political data about the entire population. At the same time, prisons also provided direct information about individual Palestinian prisoners. Such information included who an individual's mother and father were, who else was in his family, what his orientation, thoughts, and political affiliations were and what were his strengths and weaknesses. In addition to this information informers can embellish this social data with information on the leadership capabilities of certain prisoners. This has enabled Israel to control the population from an early stage, particularly because it is able to identify those who are the potential future leaders of the society. Though this system is not foolproof, by any means, it has proven itself effective in neutralizing potential leaders, as well as in placing unqualified and potentially harmful people in important positions.

The prison system plays a central role in the creation of collaborators, not merely through the use of torture, but also through the use of psychological pressure upon the inmate. This latter form of torture grew in importance soon after the *Sunday Times* (in London) published an important report on the death in custody of Mohammed Al-Khawwaja from Ni'lin village in 1976. As a PFLP activist, Al-Khawwaja was killed in an Israeli prison under excessive torture. A year later, Menachem Begin came to power and placed some restrictions upon the use of torture in prisons. This was largely because Begin was an ex-prisoner himself and he understood the value of the rights of prisoners, unlike his predecessors in the Labor Party. In any case, the importance of psychological pressure is equal to, if not more important than, sheer physical pressure in the recruitment process.

## Mechanisms of Recruitment: The Trap

The most recent cases of collaboration this Intifada has provided give rise to certain questions that are not immediately easy to answer: how is it that a person gets to a stage where he is willing to collaborate with Israel to the extent that he provides information which leads to the death of popular leaders, some of whom are even family members?

Needless to say, there are many techniques of collaborator recruitment. In all cases however, when a Palestinian enters prison, the Israeli authorities will have, in advance, compiled a certain amount of information about the inmate. This data is then compounded with additional information from collaborators inside the prison, as well as confessions the inmate may have provided under torture. The forms of torture Israel uses are not primitive, but are rather a part of the personality destruction process of the potential collaborator. The recruiting process combines various elements, mentioned below, in this stage of convincing the victim/potential collaborator. This generally occurs after a period during which the prisoner has been 'prepared' and 'weakened' by a process of physical and psychological torture.

### ▷ *"Cooperation not Collaboration"*

The potential collaborator is told that working with the Israelis is a way for him to help his own people. The recruiters therefore emphasize that it is a form of "cooperation" rather collaboration. You are not a collaborator - an *'ameel* or a *jasous* - you are someone who *yata'awan* (operates), rather than *yata'amel* (collaborates).

This technique could be observed in the case of Majdi Makkawi just recently. Makkawi was sentenced to death and executed by a Palestinian military court for giving information to the Israelis about his uncle, a popular Tanzim activist named Abu Rizeq from Rafah who was supposedly involved in shooting incidents against the Israeli army and settlements. The information Makkawi provided led to the ambush and death of Abu Rizeq and three others in a car traveling between Khan Younis and Rafah in early December. Makkawi had been convinced by his recruitment officers that the vital information he was giving to Israel about the movement of his uncle was to be used to capture his uncle, and that this was in fact the only way to save the uncle's life because it was, otherwise, only a "matter of time before he was killed."



In certain such cases, recruiters will also attempt to convince the victim that it is better for them [Israel] to operate with accurate information, rather than rely upon rumors given by 'opportunist' collaborators.

▷ *The End of Suffering*

Another line of attack in collaborator recruitment relates to the potential collaborator's strengths and weaknesses. By appreciating the inmates weaknesses – for example the desire to put an end to torture, to be released from prison, to get a lesser sentence, or to get medical care – the recruitment process attempts to convince the potential collaborator of their ability to "take care" of such concerns.

▷ *Money*

If a Palestinian is poor, his family is dependant upon him as a source of income and he has been in prison, he will be offered money or the necessary permits to work and travel. Interestingly, the money offered for collaboration is not very much. For instance in the Makkawi case, he began receiving 1,000 NIS (about \$250) a month. Even as he became more and more involved, ultimately providing the information that resulted in the death of his uncle, he was still only receiving 2000 NIS a month, or \$500. It appears that money is used only as a means to cement the sick relationship between the collaborator and his handlers.

▷ *Scott Free*

A third element of collaborator recruitment is the emphasis placed upon convincing the recruit that he "will never be caught" and that "nobody will ever know". They will try to show how much they 'take care' of their collaborators, or how they intervene to take them out of problems if ever they are faced with any. Recruitment officers stress that "you will be met in places that the Arabs don't know" and that "you will be met by high commanders".

▷ *Blackmail*

Blackmail, especially sexual, is a common practice used to recruit collaborators. Photographs acquired through secret cameras in dressing rooms and hair-salons etc. as well as other forms of leverage possible when dealing with drug users.

▷ *Career Promotion*

When Israel is confronted with a personality who has ambitions of power and position, the message will be delivered that through collaboration the person will be helped with certain opportunities made available through Israel and its network including the media, facilities for traveling abroad, funds and backing.

▷ *Creating a Schizophrenia Personality*

In certain cases recruitment officers might emphasize, "We don't have a problem with your nationalism". They will tempt the individual by telling him that through cooperation "you will be able to further your own nationalist principles" but just "tell us what you know and learn from the freedom you enjoy."

▷ *Shutting the Trap*

All these methods consist of doing whatever is necessary to get the potential collaborator to take the bait that is in the trap. If they get a young Palestinian individual, who is not entirely politically aware of things, and they tell him that he is "helping his own people", and that it is better that the "activists he knows of be arrested than killed", and that "if you need money or permission it will be provided", and that "we'll get you out of prison right away", and that "you can remain nationalistic", and that "you will not be hurting anybody", and that he can "take his time, and call whenever he feels comfortable", and that they only want "a small piece of information" and that "no one will ever know" – then such considerable psychological pressure as is often added to by physical torture as well as the feeling of permanent confinement adds up to a very powerful coercive force. The minute the potential collaborator agrees to provide even the smallest piece of seemingly insignificant information, he is at the mercy of the system. It is from this point on that the system begins to strengthen the scope of interests, to demand more and more information from the collaborator, and make it increasingly difficult to resist the benefits of collaboration, or to avoid its consequences.

The severe psychological pressure the collaborator experiences as a result of his acquiescence to his recruiter is not without its toll on the individual. Thousands of Palestinians (most of whom are young) have been forced to leave their homeland indefinitely because it represented the only means to free themselves of this painful and exploitative relationship. We can also presume that many have committed sui-

cide though their stories will never be known. In certain cases, collaborators have turned against their recruitment officers and killed them as a means of 'cleansing' themselves from the stigma of betraying the national cause. This was the case with Beshar Habbash from 'Askar Refugee Camp near Nablus in the early 1980s and Maher Abu Srour who killed Haim Nehmani in Rehavia in 1993

## Post-Oslo Collaboration

After the signing of the Oslo Agreements, Israel lost some of its potential to recruit collaborators once the Palestinian Authority took control of the major cities. Average Palestinians could have most of their daily needs taken care of within the context of the city that the PA now controlled. Less people were entering prisons. Wanted individuals could take refuge in Area A, etc. Therefore the risk of Palestinians being put in the position of becoming potential collaborators was decreased. In this sense some of the classical techniques and efficacy of recruitment of collaborators were lessened, posing problems for Israel in the sense that a new generation of activists was able to emerge.

As a result, Israel re-intensified its effort to recruit collaborators as well as to gather information through other means. For instance, settlements became an important center of intelligence gathering and a meeting point between collaborators and intelligence officials. This went hand in hand with the Israeli policy of closure, which became a mechanism of monitoring and restricting Palestinian movement. This is an important reason behind Israel's insistence on remaining in the Gaza Strip with settlements. Throughout the entire Gaza Strip, there are probably no more than 6,000 Israeli settlers. However, the importance of a settlement like Netzarim lies not in the amount of its settlers, but in the function of Netzarim as a center of collaboration, intelligence gathering, and monitoring of the Palestinian population. The settlers themselves are frequently a cover for the entire process of collaboration, especially, but not only, in Gaza. This is also probably the case in many of the settlements that are strategically located on mountaintops where sophisticated monitoring devices can be hosted.

After Oslo, it seems that Israel made certain guarantees for its collaborators so that they would avoid prosecution under the new regime of the PA according to interim agreements. This resulted in revenge attacks against certain collaborators. The fact that the PA was not able to prosecute collaborators during this period also meant that it was possible that a new generation of collaborators could be recruited. The



assassination of Palestinian nationalist activists during this Intifada as a result of information provided by collaborators somewhat liberated the PA from its old commitments. The execution of Makkawi and Bani Odeh, who were indicted in the killing of their relatives, placed the PA in a position whereby it had to pass a judgment of capital punishment in order to satisfy popular rage. Despite this, it is clear that summary trials and executions will not solve the problem of collaboration and is damaging to fundamental democratic norms.

**Endnotes:**

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<sup>1</sup> Ben-Yehuda, Nachman, *Political Assassinations by Jews: A Rhetorical Device for Justice*, State University of New York, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> These people were known in Yiddish as the *Schtenkerim*. Their case is particularly disturbing because these were people who were ready to be a part of the machinery of the holocaust, including putting people in gas chambers. Many German prisons, and even camps, were in fact administrated locally for some time: the Germans mainly guarding the prison as well as being involved in the administrative running of the prison. However, the labor force was largely Jewish.

<sup>3</sup> The role of the *simsar* was much more prominent in the pre-1948 period. Cases of land brokering by *simsars* after the 1967 occupation are quite limited, and generally are cases where the *simsar* was involved in falsification of documents rather than legally purchasing land.

## Collaborators - Recent Cases in the Palestinian Territories

*by Dan Williams*

When I left here, where I had been working as a correspondent, in 1992, I took many naive ideas with me and one of these was the thought that perhaps the collaborator question would fade away. This is one of the many wrong ideas I took away with me in 1992.

Of course both sides – although engaged in peace talks all these years – maintained certain preparations for conflict and on the Israeli side this included the maintenance and even creation of collaborator networks. The difficulties the Palestinians have in dealing with this, judging by the three recent cases which I have looked at, stem from the length of time collaboration has been a problem in the Palestinian community – a problem which, of course, predates 1967, it predates 1948, it goes back, under different definitions, to the 1920s and 1930s.

In this specific era of this very strange occupation, in which the Palestinian Authority also governs certain areas, there is a new difficulty. This is that, having not used the years in control of the big towns in the West Bank and Gaza to establish some sort of system of justice or even a system of law and order, it is very difficult for the Authority to then suddenly intervene and say, 'We the Authority, with a court, are going to take care of the collaborator issue.' It has already been awkward and it's going to continue to be awkward because there are many difficulties people have accepting the effectiveness of the Palestinian Authority in this manner.

I looked at three cases and I think the details are fairly well known so if I do bring anything new it'll be regarding the 'aftermath' of these cases. One is the case of the assassination of Ibrahim Bani Odeh, the Hamas bomb-maker in Nablus who was decapitated by an explosive put in the

headrest of his car. Another is a case in Bruqin, near the Green Line southwest of Nablus, of the murder or killing of an alleged collaborator. Three leaflets came out after the killing accusing the victim, Mohammed Musa Abdul-Rahman, whose nickname was Hanoun, of being a collaborator but no one in the village seems very persuaded by this. The third case is the Bethlehem assassination of Hussein Abayyat, a Fateh gunman who was rocketed in his car in Beit Sahour. In this case two alleged collaborators have subsequently been sentenced to death although their executions have not yet been carried out.

### **The Assassination of Ibrahim Bani Odeh**

I will start with the Nablus case, which seems like the most open and shut case, yet there are some 'difficulties' with it. Ibrahim Bani Odeh actually grew up in the Gulf, was in the army in Jordan, and returned to the Nablus area on a family reunification permit having to do with his marriage to a Palestinian woman. His expertise was, apparently, making bombs and in this activity he lived a rather solitary life but he was befriended by a distant relative, Alan Bani Odeh. The village the Bani Odeh family comes from is called Tammun, but Ibrahim rarely visited it. This man befriended him, they had coffee together and, in what is a traditional display of Palestinian friendship, Alan did many favors for Ibrahim; he tiled his bathroom floor, he helped plaster the walls and, fatally, he would frequently lend him his car.

There is some mystery about Alan Bani Odeh's history. Some people in Tammun say that he, from a very young age, worked in an Israeli settlement in the Jordan Valley. In any case, at some point he was, according to his relatives, picked up by the Israeli authorities and told that he would be thrown into jail for one reason or another if he did not spy on Ibrahim.

Anyway the relationship continued and one day, according to the court records, Alan was told by his Israeli handler to be sure to get the car to Ibrahim on a certain day and to tell his Israeli handler when this had been accomplished. One day they had coffee together and it appears that Ibrahim had had some sort of revelation and suddenly didn't trust Alan anymore and they didn't leave together. Nonetheless Alan, after several phone calls to Ibrahim's wife was able to find him in central Nablus, tell him that he needed to go to Ramallah and would only leave his car with him – Ibrahim, 'the only man he trusted in Nablus with his car'.



Fifteen minutes later, near Nablus Circle, the car blew up, decapitating Ibrahim and blowing a hole through the roof. Alan got a call from his handler (supposedly) telling him to come to some checkpoint outside of Nablus, where he was picked up by the Israelis and whisked away into Israel. A few days later he came back however, apparently at the behest of his brothers who wanted him to clear his name because the family was immediately in jeopardy over this issue. Everyone knew that it was Alan's doing - one way or another.

The court case was not open to the public; it lasted two hours; he was sentenced and then executed in a semi-public execution at Nablus jail to which there was an invitation list for VIPs but, as there was a clamor for other people to get in, several hundred people eventually attended this execution.

Essentially all sides agree on the details of the case except on one point and it shows the difficulty in really 'closing' a collaborator case. This is true traditionally in Palestine but especially in today's atmosphere. All sides agree that Alan Bani Odeh collaborated with the Israelis and that he was tailing and feeding information to the Israelis about the movements of Ibrahim Bani Odeh. Where they differ is when it comes to whether Alan the collaborator knew that the bomb was in the car. Supposedly Alan came back to Nablus to say, 'yes I collaborated, but no I was not aware of this - I was tricked by the Israelis.'

He laid out a story of being at a settlement, having a meeting with his Israeli handler where the car was out of his sight; he comes back and it's surrounded by soldiers; it is weird but he does not think much of it. He later identifies this moment as being the moment when the explosive was placed in the headrest of his car.

In what may be more of an indication of Nablus' 'personality' rather than a general Palestinian 'personality', no one in the city seems dissatisfied with the judgment or even the way the case was handled; closed - not closed, secret - not secret, evidence - not evidence ... you cannot really get an objection or suggestion as to how it was or should have been done out of the people of Nablus. Lawyers in Nablus would not take the case. Not for the same reasons as Bethlehem's lawyers in the other case, but because they 'will not defend a collaborator'. They do not seem, in principle, to be against the Security Court, which is the court in Palestine that handles these cases, but simply will not handle collaborator cases.

Despite this, closing the case is difficult. Not because of the dead collaborator but because of his family in Tammun. At first the entire clan got together and renounced the collaborator – meaning, as I understand it in Palestinian society, 'he is without protection'; 'indefensible'; 'challas'. Later, however, the brothers amend their renunciation and say, 'he was tricked and he should not have been executed.' So this has created a certain amount of tension in the village because the issue has become – "if these people are defending the collaborator shouldn't they be expelled or something? Shouldn't something happen to *them*?"

The Authority has not spoken out on this matter; so the local government – in this case the Palestinian Authority – has not done what would be presumed the natural thing and stepped in to say, 'It is finished; enough.' In fact it is Hamas that has stepped in. Hamas issued a leaflet saying 'it is finished'. It is all in rather opaque language but the climax is: "God judges people, not other people." In other words the execution is finished and these people should be left alone. Whether that's going to be the end of it ... I do not know. It seemed rather tense there; the family was more or less forced to put a big poster of the dead Ibrahim over their store as a sign that they are agreed with all this.

In this Nablus case, despite the acceptance of the sentence and even the way it was handled, there are still Palestinian traditional components that have not yet been adequately resolved. Part of the family does not accept the court case, which puts them at odds with other parts of the family. Nonetheless, that is the most open and shut case of the three that I have looked at.

### **The Case of Mohammed Musa Abdul-Rahman**

The second case is, if anything, the polar opposite. It takes place in Bruqin on the Green Line with a population of about 3,500 people. There's a small old town but most of the houses are set amongst fields and olives and donkeys and so on. The 'collaborator's' name is Mohammed Musa Abdul-Rahman. He is killed one night when he's arriving at his home. His wife is away at a relative's house. He's unloading his truck full of eggs – which he sells. No one claims to have seen this killing although everyone seems to agree that the men were masked – so there's some contradiction here.

Three leaflets come out signed by various Fateh factions; one is Fateh 'Hawks' and another is Fateh 'Jaguars'. Three of these come out accusing him of collaborating but without very specific indications of why this person should have been executed. It is not the Authority; it is not the police; this is an 'old Intifada'-style vigilante execution. Now it does not mean there are not some, but no one in the village that I talked to believes this man should have been executed. In fact no one believes he was a collaborator ever.

The Abdul-Rahman family has a history. The father was a mukhtar who belonged to the Village Leagues. However, no one I talked to suggests that the victim was in any sense a collaborator. So how did he get to be labeled? Well this is a story with many twists and turns – I will try to keep it short.

In 1990, a young man who was head of a Fateh strike force in this area and was – along with many people at this time – on the run from the Israelis, looked for refuge. Naturally he looked in the mukhtar's house – the one house that no one would search. But in this house there's a young bride, the bride of Mohammed Abdul-Rahman. Apparently an affair gets underway. Not advisable, but in any case the fugitive escapes from the Israelis and there's no huge repercussion from the affair; the Abdul-Rahman couple stays together and life goes on. Shortly after this episode though, the fugitive and his strike force take Abdul-Rahman to the hills to interrogate him as a 'collaborator'. According to the account of the villagers he was mistreated; they strapped him with his arms in the front and his legs in the back – like a swing - and they sat on him; not an unknown practice but done, according to the people in the village, because of the affair. The thinking being that if you label a person 'bad' then something 'bad' will eventually happen to him.

Eventually the fugitive is arrested by the Israelis and goes to jail for two years. He gets out in 1992 and things seem quiet but they are not. When the Authority arrives in Jericho the Fateh activist-adulterer is hired as a security official, apparently in intelligence. Suddenly Abdul-Rahman is repeatedly called to Jericho for questioning as a 'collaborator'. This goes on for a period of several years. The people in Bruqin say that this was simply a means of getting him out of the house so that this affair could carry on. I have no way of verifying this but this is what they say.

In 1995, some members of Abdul-Rahman's family confront the adulterer and there is a shoot-out in the village wherein one of the members of Abdul-Rahman's family is, in fact, wounded. There is a big up-



roar and villagers go to the house of the man – or his parents' house actually – and burn it (with no one inside) and there is a feud going on. This is quieted down by a mosque-confession by the Fateh-adulterer – to the shooting but not to the affair. The obvious question is: why hasn't Abdul-Rahman at some point taken things into his own hands? The people of the village say that the family is not powerful enough to do so and someone confronted them who, in some sense, represents a new clan: the Authority. The Authority is a clan, which is actively protecting its own. Abdul-Rahman is, however, warned that his wife is having an affair and he should keep his eyes open. In 1997, there is a divorce, the woman moves in with her lover in Ramallah and Abdul-Rahman remarries. Nonetheless this quarrel festers and there is constant questioning; he is still called to Ramallah for repeated interrogation.

At one point, late last year, Abdul-Rahman lost his head and went to Ramallah where he beat his rival in the streets of the city. Then, one night in January, he is shot down in front of his house. He is dead. Then the leaflets appeared.

To cut a long story short, no one in Bruqin believes that he was a collaborator and, furthermore, they want action. They are afraid because they feel that this guy can act with impunity, that he is protected, belongs to the Palestinian Authority. And, of course, no one is doing anything and no one *has* done anything about this *murder*. It is a killing after all. Even though this is Area C, plain-clothes Palestinian police did show up to 'look into things' but there is no investigation *per se*. And these people want action. They say things like – and this is why this case is very interesting – if the Authority does not do something then this is not the Authority they want. In some sense one can see here a potential 'breeding ground' for future collaboration or even future rebellion.

These Palestinians are suspended between an old sense of doing things, which they tried – clan mediation, burning houses – and the State, which pretends to assert authority over all Palestinians. The brother of the murder suspect is presently trying to mediate in the old way but the Authority itself is absent. Obviously the Authority is in a difficult position. First of all the Authority itself interrogated this man so it is in a position to know whether he is a collaborator or not. Above that they are in a position to know whether he should have been executed or not. Since there have been no specific accusations against him, such as causing someone's loss of life – as in Nablus for instance – it does not seem like execution was the question here in any case. But if the Authority did anything about these first two things then they

would have to do something about the murder. If it is in fact one of their own, then they would have to prosecute one of their own and I do not know if the Palestinian Authority or any Palestinian group has ever prosecuted anyone for a wrongful killing of a 'collaborator'. This is what the people of Bruqin want and this is where they look. As with so many other Palestinians they clearly hunger for the rule of law – are they going to get it?, is this case too small? I do not know, but there is a small, small cancer in this village and how many like that there are over all of Palestine one cannot know.

Here is the dilemma the Authority faces – having taken upon itself the role of dealing with collaborators will it also take it upon itself to look retroactively upon a case where an alleged collaborator has been killed and do something about?

This is the exact kind of situation they were hoping to avoid by having these 'trials' of collaborators they announced in December. In Bethlehem they went even further when they not only held the trial, but, in an attempt to show some sort of 'justice,' they put the event on TV.

### **The Assassination of Fateh Leader Hussein Abayyat**

In the Abayyat case there were four alleged collaborators; two of them suspected of directly causing the assassination of Hussein Abayyat in Beit Sahour; two others were convicted of other things, which seem to have more to do with future possible acts than with any act itself. They put this on TV – presumably to show the people of Bethlehem and (perhaps) all of Palestine that there is some sort of justice and that this justice system works. Everybody in Bethlehem wanted something done about the collaborators as in most cases and especially in these particular cases. However, when everyone saw this trial they were horrified. Basically they were horrified.

Of course there were no defense lawyers – or rather there was one defense lawyer who was going to defend a man named Asslini, one of the two who was sentenced to death. The lawyer only became acquainted with the case that very morning; he asked for a delay in the trial and the judge said no. It seemed like a little to ask but the judge said no. That left the defendants to defend themselves. Only one had the 'wherewithal' to do that; that was Mohammed Deifallah Al-Khatib. He defended himself and among the things he said was that he was tortured in jail to get the confession, which has been taped. The judge, in a moment of 'weakness' called in the doctor from the prison and he

was cross-examined by Mohammed himself who said, "didn't you give me medicine for this? Didn't you see these bruises here?..." Palestinians who saw this tape say that the doctor denied everything but that he was lying; something they deduced mostly through body language ... head down, mumbling etc. – not a very good performance, they thought. People were horrified by this.

After the trial people were saying – and I am not referring solely to the intellectuals or notables, but the common people – 'we would rather have had a trial that lasted one or two years "like other countries" than have such a thing happen'. These people have not yet been executed – In contrast to the Nablus case, which seems to suggest that somewhere down in Gaza people are trying to figure out what to do about this.

I was here for the legislative elections in 1996 and I was struck by just how much people seemed to want their democracy and justice systems; how everything seemed to show the potential to evolve. So now that things do not really work; there are 17 different security forces; there are people all over the place with guns and nobody seems to know exactly who's who – I ask Palestinians, 'well what about this, what is to be done?' They reflexively answer, despite their own complaints to me about all these situations, 'we must get rid of the Israelis first and then we will take care of this: then the Authority will go or we'll have democracy or otherwise do something about this.'

What these cases show, perhaps most clearly in Bethlehem but also in Bruqin, is that in this strange situation of occupation, in which the Palestinian Authority also governs, the lack of democracy and its institutions in fact harms the struggle against Israel. They pretend now – the Authority – to take up the battle against collaborators but they are unequipped to do it, unequipped to convince people that they can do it and unequipped to right injustices. In Bruqin, regardless of the level of activity or involvement there in the current Intifada, they are alienated from the Authority over this case. In Bethlehem I wouldn't say people are totally alienated but they are raising questions. The Authority cannot handle this collaborator issue in any way that resembles justice. Bethlehem, a little like Ramallah, is a relatively cosmopolitan place, there are Christians and Muslims, human rights groups on every street corner and yet lawyers in Bethlehem, unlike the lawyers in Nablus, would not take the cases because they do not recognize the authority of the Security Court. In fact they hope to use this case to reform justice – a hope I think a little wishful given the advent of Sharon and the overall situation in Palestine, but that is the hope.



Palestinians have to ask themselves whether the delay in justice and democracy after six or so years (or since whenever one dates the arrival of the Authority) was really something wise to put off. Would it not strengthen Palestinian society in this larger battle for the land if they had more faith and more participation in their own institutions?

## COMMENTS

*I wonder if, given your role and experience in the media, you could add some comment about the role of the media in all this and whether or not we should ever expect to see any changes in the Authority's 'thinking' as an effect of the media coverage? I should add that I see all these stories in detail in the foreign press and yet I have hardly seen it in the local media here and I fail to see awareness of it among people as a result and in addition fail to see an effect on the Authority; they do not seem under pressure to correct their injustices.*

I can speak for the foreign press somewhat and should emphasize that this is a typical thing, which I faced in the first Intifada: Bruqin and Nablus happens but the next day something else happens. I mean there's a follow-up problem. It was very embarrassing and somewhat touching with the whole thing in Bruqin; I mean why do they talk to me? You know a conservative Palestinian village is not eager to talk about sex and lies in their own community and yet this was quite an open discussion. You see they think that something I publish could somehow make its way to the Ra'ees in Gaza.

The place was flooded with reporters for a day, and so was Tammun, but this aftermath issue of what is really happening in people's minds in fact just fritters into the fog because the foreign press and, from what you're saying, the local press as well, just leaves it. There's a sensation; an execution and everyone says *Allahu' Akbar* and then everyone goes off to something else. It's a shame because – especially in the cases of Bethlehem and Bruqin – people have a hunger for something better and so they'll talk to people like me out of desperation, more than anything else.

- *We all keep hearing what you just said: that we'll wait until we deal with the Israelis and then we will do something. Well some of us are so upset with this because it is becoming a cliché, an excuse and we feel that unless we learn to do justice under stress we will never learn; unless we begin to build a democracy under stress we will not be able to build it when the Israelis leave. I just want to know how you feel about this.*

Well yes, I even get that reflexive answer from opposition activists in Ramallah – ‘when the land is taken care of we will take care of the rest’. But these kinds of conversations I have, not just on collaboration but on the issue of corruption or the issue of a lack of legislative power don't arise because I'm going after them. It occurs because I'm interested in something else and eventually every conversation seems to end with some issue about the Authority, so this has evidently been on everyone's mind all these years since I have been gone. Yet people will conclude with this attitude we mention; ‘no justice, no democracy – but we cannot take care of it now.’ What I think I see a little bit in this so-called Intifada is that the rapidly declining participation in places like Ramallah and Bethlehem has something to do with the feeling amongst Palestinians that they are not participating in decisions.

For instance, this man Abayyat who was killed in Beit Sahour. No one will say this now except sort of *sub rosa* and not in front of other Palestinians, but he was highly unpopular in Bethlehem/Beit Jala because he would go in and he would be doing the shooting at Gilo – he and his group; then he would have his picture taken later, I am told, pulling people out of their ruined homes. The people of Beit Jala – I think this is well known – did not have decision-making authority on who was going to shoot from whose house. This is a very strange situation because you have an Authority which is part national liberation movement and part governor and the hats come off and on by the moment but the people in the communities who, in some sense – at least for a period of time – ran the first Intifada do not run this one. So you may be sitting in your home overlooking Gilo and the next thing you know Abayyat, whom they nicknamed ‘Rambo’, comes into your living room and starts shooting.

The difficulty created by this lack of participation can be exploited by the Israelis. One of the two accused collaborators in the assassination of ‘Rambo’ in Beit Sahour also used to go from his house to the front line of houses in the south of Beit Sahour to fire on the Israeli camp. I know this because the parents of a friend of mine had their house

shelled by the Israelis following one of these incidents. So he would come down without permission to shoot. Now, especially for me having come back after being away for a while, but also for Palestinians, it is not easy to know who all these people with guns are at all! I mean when I go to Ramallah at night – this guy in black has a gun, this guy in green, this guy in a leather jacket ... who *are* all these people? If I get my pocket picked in Ramallah who exactly do I go to see here? I mean there are all sorts of people with guns intersecting here and I don't think my trouble is so different from that of most Palestinians. So then if someone comes to my house and says 'I'm going to shoot' he may be Abayyat from Fateh who may or may not have authority to do so – he evidently did for a time – or it might be some kid, a 'collaborator' from up the hill. So who can come? One cannot exactly be picking and choosing ... I mean if I am a Palestinian with my wife and three kids I would not know what to do so I would do exactly what these people – my friend's parents – did; they moved to their butchers shop in the center of Beit Sahour and prayed that their house would not be destroyed – which it was.

This is part of the reason for my saying that my impression is that the lack of participation of people weakens the battle against Israeli occupation.



# The Issue of Collaborators from a Human Rights Perspective

*by Dr. Said Zeedani*

First I should make the point that I have never specifically studied this phenomenon of collaboration and so I am not an expert in any meaningful sense.

Let me begin making a few qualifications or points of emphasis. The Oslo Accords do not allow the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to prosecute these collaborators and that's a very important part of the context in what we've experienced here in the past weeks; cases in which individuals or groups took it upon themselves to punish collaborators – while the Authority was not officially allowed to do so.

A major difference between the Palestinian case and that of Europe under Nazi occupation is that in Europe we are referring to a period of a few years whereas the Israeli occupation has been prolonged; we are talking about decades not years.

I am going to focus on the 'clear cases'; not the 'ambiguous' or 'mixed' ones but the cases of informers and what we might call armed collaborators or infiltrators; cases in which there is no doubt that the people were involved in harmful activities. Most importantly though, my approach is really from the 'normative' level; I want to examine what should or should not be done legally and otherwise.

It is very important, even at the normative level, to analyze and dissect all the components in order to be familiar with them and discern between them. It is fundamental to emphasize that collaborators inflict damage and cause harm upon their fellow citizens, the national cause and individuals. They inflict harm and cause damage to what we might call the Palestinian national interests, so in some sense, in one way or

another, they betray their own country and fellows. Thus they deserve to be prosecuted and punished, there should be no doubt about that – again, we are referring to clear-cut cases. I think the PNA and Palestinian society has not only a legal but also a moral right to punish them.

The question is, really, *how* to punish them and what the goal of this punishment should be. In theories of punishment, whether in legal philosophy or what the British would call jurisprudence or in moral philosophy, you punish in order to reform, deter or as a form of revenge – the retribution factor. What is most relevant to our case appear to be the elements of deterrence and revenge, because reform is not the main issue; you do not punish a collaborator in order to reform them. When the conflict is behind us we can talk about amnesty, truth and reconciliation and forgiveness and so forth. Under the present circumstances I think that the whole point of punishment is to deter others and, as these people did commit this level of wrong they should be punished proportionally. Punishment should, then, be proportional to the crime on the one hand and provide deterrence to others on the other hand. Reform as a goal of punishment is not the issue these days; it might come up later.

So collaborators should be punished and their punishment should deter others and should be just in its proportion to the crimes committed, which are, of course, not uniform. The next question is, naturally, 'who has the right to determine who is guilty and who is innocent?' – who is entitled to determine the kind or magnitude of punishment collaborators deserve, whether this be the death penalty or something less. The punishment of collaborators should not be left to non-judicial bodies or vigilante groups; we should not allow it, no matter what the motives or intentions of these groups are, because we will encounter the sort of difficulties associated with 'mixed motives' or 'ulterior motives' or issues relating to family honor and political and social issues; the intertwining and intermingling of these motives. Regular courts have the jurisdiction and the expertise in this regard and so these cases should be left to the court and only to the court. Acts of killing by non-judicial bodies should not be permitted or tolerated; they are unjustifiable on humanitarian grounds, moral grounds or even simple grounds of self-interest.

The crimes committed by collaborators are not uniform; certainly generically it is collaboration, but the acts are different and the consequences are, likewise, not uniform; the harm done is different in every case. This is why it is only the court that has the knowledge necessary

to first determine the existence of the crime and discern its level and then its punishment or magnitude. Hence it is not fair to impose the same penalty, which is the death penalty at its maximum, on all crimes of collaboration regardless of weight and regardless of consequence and regardless of motive. All these factors need to be taken into account; the weight and consequence are not to be determined by people and how they might feel at the time. The pressure of public opinion should not be the determining factor; public and fair trials by courts and not vigilante groups are what is required and necessary. Mob justice is as objectionable as vigilante activity.

Occupation, as we know, is the prime-mover behind this phenomenon of collaboration; occupation authorities have resorted to a variety of means and ways to mobilize agents and collaborators – blackmail, coercion, temptation. The point I want to make in mentioning this is that some of these means are prohibited by the applicable international laws and standards; occupation authorities are breaking international law when they resort to such means. We should, therefore, maintain our sense of proportion in this matter really; since occupation is mainly responsible and since the same occupation is violating international law in most cases and since crimes are not uniform I think we should be very careful to keep our sense of proportion.

Public and fair trials that take the motives of collaborators, means employed by occupation authorities and the level of responsibility held by the occupation into consideration should be our only 'guide to the perplexed' on this issue.

Regardless of the punishment collaborators deserve or do not deserve there are disagreements in Palestinian society, comparable to disagreements in other societies, about the death penalty; whether it is effective as a deterrent, whether it's humane or not. There is now an urgent need in Palestinian society for rational deliberation and discourse on this matter of principle. This deliberation and the resulting legislation should take seriously into account the experiences of other countries; many countries abolished capital punishment, a few maintain it only for extreme cases. In addition the attitudes of Palestinian and international human rights organizations should be taken into account, which are in principle against the death penalty.

In any case, the requirements of public and fair trial should be obtained; conditions of due process should be upheld whether in the trial of collaborators or non-collaborators, in times of war as well as in times of peace. There are great threats and dangers as far as the ju-



dicial process is concerned when these conditions are not met or are compromised. These conditions are well known to us, experts and non-experts. Given that, it is clear to us that the state security forces are not the guardians when it comes to fair trial and the recent case in Bethlehem provides us with painful proof of this.

In terms of the Security Courts, there are serious doubts about their need to exist and about their mandate because sometimes civilian cases are referred to them. There are also serious doubts about the extent of their respect or disrespect for procedures necessary for fair and impartial trials. To condemn the accused to death, such as we saw in Bethlehem case, after two hours deliberation is counterfeit justice, it is travesty.

There is also a need in the Palestinian context to revise and modernize the legal package concerning penalties for collaboration; the present package is the legacy of different eras and different regimes. In the West Bank there is the Jordanian Law of 1959, modified in 1960; there is the Mandatory Law of 1936, applicable in Gaza; there's the PLO Revolutionary Act of 1979. This legal package is incompatible with principles and standards, which emanate from international conventions and covenants. There is an urgent need to rethink, revise and adjust this legal backdrop.

So far we have examined the requirements of what has been called 'formal' justice with its emphasis on the rule of law, due process, fair trial, independence of the judiciary as well as the monopoly on the use of force held by the Executive, but I would like to end by touching on an intriguing question; 'what makes so many Palestinians vulnerable to the temptation of collaboration with their enemy, whether during this Intifada, the previous Intifada or before or in the period between the two? Especially intriguing are the Bani Odeh case and the Yahya Ayash case (where both times a relative was involved). We can try to shed light on that from many angles, but I would like to suggest a component that may play a big part in these kinds of cases.

Is it the lack of genuine democracy in the Palestinian political body that accounts for at least some of these instances? Of course it is occupation; every occupation entails this phenomenon, but we are talking about the magnitude of it. Do we have to take the lack of any viable democracy into account here? To what extent should we ask whether something is rotten in our value system or code of ethics? Many collaboration instances relate to sexual issues; in a conservative society the Israelis have used this effectively. I think there are many indica-

tions that the problem involves a deeper and wider self-searching process; there's something wrong in our value system that this kind of phenomenon feeds on. This is in addition to the fact that there is something wrong or rotten in our body politic; autocratic, non-democratic and so forth. I think we need a serious search in order to answer such weighty questions; it is not only political, it is moral, legal, social ... Occupation is related to all of these. We need to identify the most important internal factors in addition to the major factor of occupation.

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