



1967 – 2017: Nationalism and its Discontent in Israel/Palestine

7 June 2017, 13:00-19:00 hours

Theatre, Badia Fiesolana, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Organisers:

Feike Fliervoet | SPS Department, European University Institute

Jan Rybak | HEC Department, European University Institute

Workshop description:

The year 2017 marks the anniversary of one of the most pivotal events that shaped the political landscape of Middle East, and in particular the small strip of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea: the 1967 Six-Day War. The conflict caused dramatic shifts in world- and regional politics, and was a turning point in Israeli/Palestinian power relations. Not only did Israel assert itself in the region, but through the conquest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it came to rule over (initially) one million Palestinians, and in many regards turned into an “Accidental Empire” (Gershom Gorenberg). The subsequent development of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, as well as the emergence of a distinctly Palestinian national movement which was directed against the occupation, were defining factors in the shaping of the current situation and the formation of national identifications on both sides of the Green Line. While the Oslo accords promised the establishment of a Palestinian state, and Israel pulled out of the Gaza strip in 2005, the West Bank remains largely under Israeli control and came to be an ideological battleground on which both Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian national identities are fought over and defined against one another.

This half-day workshop on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the June 1967 war looks at the history and the current situation of the conflict from various perspectives. It aims to analyse the processes of identity-formation, discuss the prospects for the region, and offer new tools for understanding the complexities of the ongoing rivalry in Israel/Palestine.

PROGRAMME

13:00 – 13:15 **OPENING REMARKS**

13:15 – 15:00 **BOOK PRESENTATION | Israel under Siege: The Politics of Insecurity and the Rise of the Israeli Neo-Revisionist Right**

Prof. Raffaella Del Sarto | Associate Professor, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University
Part-Time Professor, RSCAS, European University Institute

Chair: **Feike Fliervoet** | Ph.D. Researcher, SPS Department, European University Institute

Discussant: **Prof. Arturo Marzano** | Associate Professor, Department of Civilizations and
Forms of Knowledge, Università di Pisa

15:00 – 15:15 **COFFEE BREAK**

15:15 – 16:45 **LECTURE | The Jews and the Arabs of Israel/Palestine: Owners, Plunderers, Competitors, or Victims?**

Prof. Chaim Gans | Professor Emeritus, Buchmann Faculty of Law, Tel Aviv University
Visiting Fellow, SPS Department, European University Institute

Chair: **Ion Pagoaga Ibiricu** | Ph.D. Researcher, SPS Department, European University Institute

Discussant: **Prof. Olivier Roy** | Joint Chair, RSCAS and SPS Department, European
University Institute

16:45 – 17:00 **COFFEE BREAK**

17:00 – 19:00 **LECTURE | The Occupied Territories Fifty Years On: The Need for A New Dictionary**

Prof. Ilan Pappé | Professor of History, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of
Exeter

Chair: **Jan Rybak** | Ph.D. Researcher, HEC Department, European University Institute

Discussant: **Dr. James Renton** | Department of English and History, Edge Hill University
Jean Monnet Fellow, RSCAS, European University Institute

ABSTRACTS

RAFFAELLA DEL SARTO | Israel under Siege: The Politics of Insecurity and the Rise of the Israeli Neo-Revisionist Right (Book Presentation)

Raffaella A. Del Sarto examines the creation of Israel's neo-revisionist consensus about security threats and regional order, which took hold of Israeli politics and society after 2000 and persists today. The failed Oslo peace process and the trauma of the Second Palestinian Intifada triggered this shift to the right; conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah and the inflammatory rhetoric of Iranian President Ahmadinejad additionally contributed to the creation of a general sense of being under siege. While Israel faces real security threats, Israeli governments have engaged in the politics of insecurity, promoting and amplifying a sense of besiegement. Lively political debate has been replaced by a general acceptance of the no-compromise approach to security and the Palestinians. The neo-revisionist right, represented by Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud, has turned Israel away from the peace process and pushes maximalist territorial ambitions. But they have failed to offer a vision for an end to conflict, and there has been little debate about whether or not the hardline policies toward the region are counterproductive. Del Sarto explains this disappearance of dissent and examines the costs of Israel's policies. She concludes that Israel's feeling of being under siege has become entrenched, a two-state solution with the Palestinians is highly unlikely for the foreseeable future, and Israel's international isolation is likely to increase. Del Sarto's analysis of this tense political situation will interest scholars and students of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Middle East Studies, and International Relations.

CHAIM GANS | The Jews and the Arabs of Israel/Palestine: Owners, Plunderers, Competitors, or Victims?

I will first present two mainstream and very common Israeli interpretations of Zionism, and the mainstream Arab justification for resisting Zionism. To my mind these interpretations of the conflict cannot serve as bases for reconciliation between the parties. They either conceive of the parties as pairs of owner/plunderer, or as a pair of competitors. The first interpretations imply that one of the parties carries the whole blame for the conflict whereas the other is entirely innocent. The second conception conceives of the two parties as legitimate competitors but does not contain a method for resolving the conflict between them. I will then present an interpretation of Zionism in a way which requires conceiving the two parties as victims. This interpretation of Zionism may allow it to be considered just *despite* the fact that the Palestinian resistance to it is also justifiable,

and not by denying the justifiability of the Palestinian resistance to it. This interpretation will also enable the Palestinian opposition to Zionism to be justified *not by denying the justifiability of Zionism* but rather despite its justifiability. According to this interpretation neither the Jews nor the Palestinians are viewed as owners or plunderers. Both parties are viewed on equal footing, as victims. I will explain why this account of the justice of Zionism, apart from being much more plausible historically and morally than its rivals, can unlike its rivals serve as a basis for a just, stable and lasting peace in the Middle East.

ILAN PAPPÉ | The Occupied Territories Fifty Years On: The Need for A New Dictionary

The lecture will suggest revisiting the 1967 occupation and examining it in the light of new evidence and recent historiographical approaches to the study of Israel and Palestine.

The importance and relevance of 1948 to the events of 1967 will be the first topic to be discussed in the talk, with particular interest on how the young Israeli generals of 1948 pushed for the war of 1967.

The second point will focus on the crucial decisions Israel took after the war of 1967, for which new evidence has just been recently declassified.

Finally, the lecture will examine the implications of the settler colonial paradigm on our understanding of the origins of the war and its significance for our time. This will include a discussion on the failure of the peace process and the possible alternatives for it.