

# Israel's annexation policy: For the socialist one-state solution!

Robert Teller, Neue International 248, July/August 2020 Wed, 15/07/2020 - 14:31

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Israel's Netanyahu-Gantz government, formed at the end of April and consisting of the two major right-wing parties, Likud and "Blue-White", announced it would formally complete the annexation of the Jordan Valley and settlements in the West Bank by July 1. These constitute a large part of the occupied territories still recognised as Palestinian in international law, as well as being the basis of the Oslo Accords of 1993. This deadline has now been postponed but, as we say in German, *aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben* (postponed is not abandoned).

The preconditions for actually carrying this out were, on the one hand, the "permission" of US imperialism, now granted with Trump's "Deal of the Century" and, on the other, the agreement between Likud and the "Blue-White" party to form a unity government with Netanyahu as prime minister and Ganz as defence minister until October 2021, when they are due to exchange roles. But, in a country that has seen three elections in one year, there is little certainty this deal will be fulfilled and with Trump's re-election less and less of a certainty there are good reasons for the Israeli government to make facts on the ground as soon as possible.

The annexation of the Jordan Valley and the settlements was the central electoral promise with which Benjamin Netanyahu took office. The electoral stalemate between Likud and Benny Ganz's "Blue-White" party, which had lasted for a year, has now been broken by a reactionary unity government of both opponents largely thanks to the COVID 19 pandemic which is hitting Israel hard, especially its ultra orthodox haredim communities.

The government's aim is now to complete what had previously only been delayed by the main bone of contention between the two parties; the numerous corruption trials pending against Netanyahu. Before July 1, it was not clear whether the annexation would actually be only formally declared, whether it would be postponed or just limited to some of the territories included in Trump's "deal".

## Warring Allies

The fact that any formal annexation missed its July 1 deadline, if only for the time being, in the face of widespread protests, is a common pattern in Israeli politics, in which aggressive policies are often implemented by salami tactics in order to avoid sparking huge spontaneous mass protests. At the same time, it is a courtesy by Israel to those international allies who have the greatest difficulty in presenting their relations with Israel as legitimate in view of relentless step-by-step expropriation of Palestinian land.

History has proved, time and again, however, that no strong verbal protests have ever led Israel to refrain from implementing its strategic goal of the total takeover of the Palestinians' homeland. This makes it very clear that the Western allies have no problem per se with the injustice that lies in the planned annexation,

but rather seek to avoid the public embarrassment that this obvious mockery of international law brings.

Germany's Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, for example, during his visit to Jerusalem, expressed his "serious and honest concern, as a very special friend of Israel, about the consequences of such a move" (1). The consequences would be to finally and irrevocably expose the goal of the two-state solution, which has been the official position of Western governments for 30 years, as a pipe dream; indeed, to consign it to the trash can of history. Where there is no contiguous land left in the hands of Palestinians, there can be no state. Since the fraud of the "two-state solution" was quite effective both in demobilising the Palestinian resistance and in whitewashing Israel as a "democratic ally" in Western discourse, Maas' concern is understandable. It would no longer be possible to deny that a state that annexes territories without granting civil rights to the population living there, or separates the Palestinian population in isolated and cut-off wastelands, is indeed guilty of the crime of apartheid.

While Trump's administration and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, author of the "deal of the century", have declared their wholehearted support for the annexations, the European governments remain divided on this. Some support the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, part of which was concluded as a component of the moribund "Oslo process". Other Eastern European countries (including Austria and Hungary) oppose such a measure. Consequently, no unanimous decision by EU members can become effective on this issue. And that suits Israel just fine.

### Uncompromising Zionism

The State of Israel has, in fact, long since exercised sole sovereignty over the entire West Bank. The bulk of the internationally illegal settlements, covering 66 per cent of the territory of the West Bank, are in "Area C", so designated in the Oslo accords, and are already militarily completely controlled and governed by Israel. Oslo Area A is under the autonomous administration of the Palestinian National Authority with its own police force. Lastly, there is Area B, administered by the PNA, but occupied and controlled by the Israeli army.

The step of declaring sovereignty de jure is therefore symbolic, because its content has long since become reality. But this symbolic appropriation is also valuable to the Palestinian people, finally dispelling all the illusions that have dominated the debates during the 30 years of the Oslo process. It exposes the two-state solution for the cynical sham it always was. It also reveals the PNA as the wretched puppet of the Israelis and likewise the surrounding Arab states with their huge Palestinian refugee populations (2 million in Jordan alone). It therefore adds another destabilising factor to a region already packed with powder kegs.

Nevertheless, a further annexation also enables the Palestinian resistance forces and their supporters in Europe and North America to assert beyond the shadow of a doubt that Israel's settler colonialist strategy leaves no room for any sort of "democratic compromise" and that Israel's bogus "right to self-determination" is in fact inextricably tied to denying that right to the country's indigenous inhabitants.

The Israeli government is well aware that the real danger to its plans lies not in the attitude of its international allies or the corrupt PNA, but in the mass resistance of the Palestinians, who will never accept annexation, and their massive support worldwide. The government, and its Zionist supporters in the imperialist heartlands, fear a new intifada, and the international BLM movement reminds them that state racism causes an irrepressible anger which could once again break out in Palestine.

The planned annexation could herald the end of the carefully constructed division of labour between Israel and the PNA. Representatives of the Authority have announced that, in protest, among other things they will suspend their "security cooperation" (i.e. coordination with Israeli security forces, extradition of

prisoners, etc.) and stop regular payments to their own employees and officials in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These "threats" which, incidentally, have been made several times before, but have hardly ever been carried out, prove that the Palestine Authority has no sovereignty whatsoever. It is no more than an executive arm of the occupying power and its actions are limited to ceasing to perform this function - as Hussein al-Sheikh, Fatah member and responsible for cooperation with Israel in the Autonomy Authority, announced: "Every day, I'll be retreating from my responsibilities. I am telling the Israelis, if this situation continues, you will have to take full responsibility as an occupying power. It could go back to like it was before Oslo." (1)

Such announcements, nevertheless, do prove the important point that the official assumption of sovereignty by Israel removes the basis for the Authority's actual function of keeping the Palestinian movement in check. This could enable a new beginning within the movement, open the way for a new generation of activists, and put an end to the fraud organised by Fatah, Hamas and other leaders of the Palestinian movement, freeing it from the false dogma of the two-state solution.

### Bankruptcy of the Palestinian Authority

The bankruptcy of the PNA is the necessary result of the political orientation towards the two-state solution by the leading PLO factions, based on the good graces of US and EU imperialism. This policy contributed decisively to the defeat of the Second Intifada, 2000-2005, and since then has left the Palestinian movement in a passive agony. A new Palestinian mass movement must reject the co-administration of the occupation and try to include all Palestinians, whether living in the pre-1948 areas, in the post-1967 West Bank, in the Gaza Strip or the Diaspora in the neighbouring countries, and win them over to the goal of fighting for a single state in the whole of Palestine; "from the River to the Sea" as the liberation slogan goes.

This state must grant equal rights to all its inhabitants, whether Jews, Palestinians or other nationalities, and it must unconditionally accept the right of return for the refugees. The Palestinian bourgeoisie is politically completely discredited and will not play the decisive role in this struggle. It is the task of revolutionaries to win the youth, the workers and the poor for the goal of a one-state solution and to fight within the movement for the position that such a state can only be achieved as a socialist one, hand in hand with the mass movements of other countries, and as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East. For this, a programme of action is needed that combines the struggle for immediate goals, that is, against the daily harassment of the occupation, with the struggle for a socialist, multi-national state of Palestine.

Internationalists worldwide must work in the workers' movements of their different countries to condemn the annexation policy, to end all support for the State of Israel, giving the Palestinian movement all the support necessary and possible. In so doing we will face the false accusations orchestrated by Israeli embassies around the world against prominent supporters of the Palestine cause such as Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of Britain's Labour Party, and prominent Jewish socialists who supported him. Presenting a lifelong antiracist as a racist, and Labour as a cesspit of antisemitism, played a vital part in the victory of a genuine, lifelong racist, Boris Johnson, with a huge majority.

Whilst the connection between Zionism's repeated attacks against the Palestinians and its support for domestic reactionaries in Europe and North America has been revealed time and again, this is not to claim Zionism is the fountain of world reaction, which is a reflection of the real antisemitic "Jewish world conspiracy". Rather, the real sources lie in the actions of the rival imperialist powers, now including Russia and China, but it is true that Israel plays an important auxiliary role as the West's gendarme in the Middle East. This, in turn, gives it a strong leverage on governments in Europe and the USA to support its expansions, even when they bring difficulties in Washington, London or Berlin.

## Endnotes

(1 ) <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-israel-german-fm-calls-annexation-illeg...> [1]

(2) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/world/middleeast/palestinian-authorit...> [2]

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### Links:

[1] <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-israel-german-fm-calls-annexation-illegal-but-doesnt-threaten-sanctions/>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/world/middleeast/palestinian-authority-annexation-israel.html>