

Ludwig Watzal

Peace Enemies

*The Past and Present
Conflict between
Israel and Palestine*

PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

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This book is a detailed examination of the Israeli-Palestinian relations in the past and at present. It analyzes the agreements concluded or signed since 1993, discusses the development of democracy, the status of human rights in the autonomous areas and in Israel, as well as the foreign relations of Israel and its most important domestic controversies. The book represents the free expression of its author and does not necessarily represent the judgement or opinions of PASSIA. PASSIA signed an agreement with the author and publisher to translate the book into English and publish it in Palestine.

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FOREWORD

One hundred and one years after the Zionists first announced their claim to Palestine, and 50 years after the establishment of the State of Israel, the Palestinians are further away than ever before from having their own state within the borders of 1967. What was inscribed deep in the memory of this people as a catastrophe represented for the Jews the fulfillment of their desires. Moreover, the peace process that was initiated with the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) in September 1993 has time and time again proven itself, as far as the Palestinians are concerned, to be a continuation of the occupation disguised in a legalistic cloak. At the beginning of 1994, such a notion would have been considered unfounded; since then, the realities on the ground have confirmed its validity.

Israel, as it celebrates the 50th anniversary of its establishment, is a country divided and torn apart by contradictions and self-doubts. It has failed to define in a clear manner its external borders, and it still has no constitution. In addition, it faces the worst legitimacy and identity crisis of its entire history. The 'spiritualization' of politics is destroying the secular state *raison*, and the current Israeli government has virtually declared war on Zionism in its original form, while many Israelis fear for their very existence and suffer from doubts concerning Zionism, disappointment and resignation. Moreover, the country has lost its external enemy, responsible in the past for guaranteeing internal unity, and the partial 'de-demonization' of the Palestinians by the peace process has brought the social tensions that have always existed to the surface with gaps between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews, the religious and secular, and the 'Right' and 'Left', as well as between Zionists and post-Zionists, now clearly visible.

Most Germans experience problems in looking at Israeli policies objectively for historical reasons connected to the Holocaust, but the fact remains: the Israeli Government bears responsibility for the violations under International Law that Palestinians continue to face. Both Israeli Jews and Palestinians would benefit were German to establish normal diplomatic relations with both. A precondition for this, however, is a thorough analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which the peace process, democracy and the status of human rights in both societies, in addition to their respective foreign policy goals, are all demystified.

Fifty years after its foundation, Israel faces two alternatives: Western democracy or a *Halachic* God-state. History shows Israel not only as a 'victim' of 'Arab aggression', but also as a state intent on following its own hegemonic goals. Palestine, meanwhile, must decide between continuous Israeli occupation, its own dictatorship, and Western-oriented civil society. Now at the lowest point in their history, the Palestinians have obtained neither domestic nor foreign policy sovereignty, and the world remains silent while Palestinians in both Israel and the autonomous areas are tortured for the sake of 'peace'. In short, both the Israelis and Palestinians are still far away from recognizing the legitimate and political rights of the other party and from achieving the goal - "to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security" - mentioned in the Oslo Accords.

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