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The link between the Holocaust and the Nakba is probably the most charged for both Jews and Palestinians. To Jews, the Holocaust is a foundational past, and some would say a unique one, and thus to discuss it in conjunction with any other event may appear to banalize the extermination of the Jews and even to present a moral and political threat. To Palestinians, the Nakba is a foundational past, and since the Jews invoke the Holocaust to justify Zionism and Israel's actions, to many Palestinians recognition of the Holocaust is tantamount to legitimizing the injustices of the Nakba and the iniquities that Israel continues to wreak upon them. To Germans as well, the juxtaposition of these two events is a sensitive matter, since they feel particularly responsible for the memory of the Holocaust.

The book „Shoah and Nakba: Memory, National Identity and Jewish-Arab Partnership“, edited by Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, seeks to explore the link between these two events. It contains 14 articles written by Palestinian and Jewish scholars, writers, and literati, all of them citizens of Israel. This is an important book since it does not seek to persuade the reader to adopt a particular position, but presents a variety of opinions on the topic, including articles that cast doubt on the project or reject it altogether. Particularly worthy of note is the excellent introduction, with its restrained tone and its sensitivity to history and memory.

What, then, does this book argue? Let us begin by what it does not do – Bashir and Goldberg do not draw comparisons between the Holocaust and the Nakba: „These are very different events that cannot be compared as far as the scope of violence and murder committed during their course are concerned [...] the intention [of this book] is not to blur the

tremendous differences between them.“ They do invite discussion on two levels. The first addresses the memory of the Holocaust and the Nakba as traumatic events. They are both foundational pasts that constitute an ethical and historical turning point for each people. The editors propose to bundle together the memories of these two events in order to generate „empathic unsettlement“ on the part of each side toward the other. This shared empathy does not imply immediate recognition of the other's truths or the erasure of one's own identity, nor does it necessarily and immediately lead to practical results. It does, however, propose an alternative to the self-contained, zero-sum narrative of history and memory, and to the rejection of the other and their suffering. It requires the Palestinian people „to recognize that which is most inconceivable to it – the legitimacy of the Jewish-Israeli identity that evolved in the Land of Israel / Palestine,“ and requires the Jews „to recognize the catastrophe that they brought upon the Palestinians.“

The second discussion concerns our historical understanding of the two events. Bashir and Goldberg maintain that „given the potential for radical violence found in ethnic nationalism and in the modern nation-state [...] both the Holocaust and the Nakba are characterized by a purifying national violence.“ Relying on extensive scholarly literature, they assert that two major characteristics of the nation-state are the desire to associate citizenship with ethnic-national ascription, and the aspiration toward homogenization of society. The Jews of Europe suffered from this urge toward national homogenization. While this in itself fails to explain the Holocaust, once the Jews were marked as an other that did not belong, they immediately became an object of discrimination, and frequently suffered expulsion or murder.

„This type of nationalism,“ note Bashir and Goldberg, „constantly engages in defining the ethnic identity of the nation-state and its efforts at ethnic homogenization.“ In this respect, the new Jewish nationalism in Palestine regarded the Palestinians as a threat to Jewish sovereignty and an ethnic other (although there were of course other imaginations of the relations between Jews and Arabs). Once the

Palestinians were marked as such, they were driven out during the 1948 war on behalf of the creation of a homogenous Jewish nation-state. Bashir and Goldberg emphasize here once again that the Holocaust and the Nakba were events of a different magnitude and of a completely different historical character, and cannot be compared. Yet they are also events that „in certain senses share the same type of political logic.“

This methodological framework contributes to our understanding of the events' memory and history without divesting them of their particularity. Bashir and Goldberg do not seek to show that the two events are identical, but rather endeavor to understand them within a broader panoply of traumatic pasts and homogenous nation-states. This approach does not detract from the particularity of either event, on the contrary. Take the Holocaust for example. This approach is compatible with insightful approaches to the study of the Holocaust, which comprehend the extermination of the Jews within the broad context of modern comparative genocide. This scholarly approach examines the similarities as well as the differences between the Holocaust and other instances of genocide. The notion of exterminating racial groups thus appeared some hundred years prior to the Third Reich. And yet, the persecution and annihilation of the Jews was clearly pursued with greater urgency by the Nazis and was of greater historical significance than other acts of genocide that they perpetrated. It is precisely this approach that underscores the particularity of the Holocaust within its historical context. Similarly, the particularity of the Holocaust and of the Nakba is in no way compromised when one thinks about the two events in tandem. In terms of historical method and interpretation, it is appropriate to discuss these two events together, as well as other events which exist on a spectrum of modern mass violence. The aversion on the part of Jews and Palestinians to do so stems from concerns over the identity and political implications of such a move.

And still, we are entitled to ask, why should we link these events? Is this book perhaps merely the outcome of a transitory fashionable moment at which the Nakba became a

catchword within Israeli culture, or is the debate on the relations between the Holocaust and the Nakba rooted in a longer tradition? Our historical imagination connects at times very different events because by joining them they tell us something important about who we are, where we came from, how we got here, and where we are going. This, to my mind, is true of the linkage between the Holocaust and the Nakba in Israeli culture from 1948 to the present. In his tale „Hirbet Hizah,“ which appeared in 1949 when the echoes of battle had hardly subsided, S. Yizhar depicted the expelled Palestinians as „a frightened and compliant and silent and groaning flock,“ alluding to the metaphor that served to describe the Jews who, during the Holocaust, were led as „a flock to slaughter.“ Shortly thereafter, in 1952, Avot Yeshurun's jolting poem „Passover on Caves“ appeared in Ha'aretz newspaper. He subsequently described it in the following words: „The Holocaust of European Jewry and the Holocaust of Palestinian Arabs, a single Holocaust of the Jewish People. The two gaze directly into one another's face.“ Closer to our time, in his film „Waltz With Bashir“ Ari Fulman placed the Palestinian refugees alongside the victims of the Holocaust. And the list can go on and on.

The linkage between the two events in society, literature, and politics has created a cultural tradition with its own language and images that enables Israelis to think about the two events separately and in tandem. This tradition is shared by those who connect the events and those who utterly reject this connection. For the mention of the two events in the same breath has always aroused fierce opposition and profound resentment. And yet this opposition is part of the cultural tradition that by connecting the events confront their memory and give them meaning.

The significance of the link between the two events has altered over the years with the transformations undergone by Israeli society. What insights can we gain from the book's „Introduction“ with regard to the connection between the Holocaust and the Nakba these days? While the Holocaust is a foundational event in modern history, it nevertheless, as a historical event, lies in the past. Of course, Holocaust victims bear the trauma through-

out their life, but the Jews as a collectivity live in a completely different historical and political time, both by virtue of the existence of the state of Israel and because Germans and Jews harbor no political or territorial claims on each other. The enduring struggle is that over memory. One remembers the Holocaust with such intensity precisely because it has passed from the domain of history into the domain of memory.

Yet while the Holocaust has become part of history, not so the Nakba, which is in some way a continuous present. Its outcome impacts almost every Palestinian wherever he or she may be, and the Palestinians' ongoing collective weakness is linked to the uprooting of the texture of their life in 1948. Although the Nakba – the uprooting of the Palestinians in the 1948 war – was an event specific in time and place, its results – the deprivation of the Palestinians' national rights – continue to this day. The fact that the Holocaust belongs to the past and the Nakba to the present explains why Jews and Germans find it easier to be reconciled with regard to the memory of the Holocaust than it is for Jews and Palestinians to be reconciled with regard to the memory of the Nakba.

A further point should be noted. Jews are right to assert that one cannot compare the genocide committed during the Holocaust to the Nakba. But there is another aspect of asymmetry between the two events, and Jews should do well to take note thereof: the Palestinians are in no way responsible for the Holocaust of European Jewry, whereas Israel is closely linked to the Nakba. Israel had a hand in the expulsion of the Palestinians, in the confiscation of their property, and in obstructing the return of the refugees. The question here is not who is right and who is wrong. Whether one accepts Israel's justifications of what occurred in 1948 and continues to occur to this day or not, the state of Israel is not a neutral party with regard to the suffering of the Palestinians, in contrast to the Palestinians who had no role in the Holocaust. There is no symmetry, write correctly Bashir and Goldberg: „there is a conqueror and there are the conquered; there is a sovereign and there are subjects; there are those who drove others out and there are those who were dispossessed; there

is a people that established its homeland and that caused another people to lose its homeland.“ In this sense it is not sufficient for Israeli Jews to recognize the Palestinian trauma only at the level of memory; a change must come about also at the political level.

Several of the articles in the book object to discuss the Holocaust and the Nakba in the same breath. Palestinian resistance to this linkage has nothing to do with Holocaust denial. Salman Natour writes of „the incomparability of the Holocaust and the Nakba“ because using the Holocaust „to legitimize the occupation of Palestine and the expulsion of the Palestinian people is an immoral act.“ From a Zionist perspective, Elhanan Yakira denounces the project altogether because using „the word 'Nakba' as if it were equivalent to the word 'Holocaust,' or as if the events that these two words denote belong to the same family of historical events, is completely unfounded.“ I do not accept his position, but this is a legitimate opinion. Yet Yakira proceeds to claim that „what they now call the catastrophe is nothing but their defeat in war [...] it is not even altogether clear who sought to drive them out and to what extent.“ These are notions that derive from the Jews' collective memory of what they wish to believe to have happened in 1948, not from the history of what actually happened during the war. The Nakba is the expulsion and uprooting of the Palestinians in the war of 1948, the confiscation of their property, and the prevention of their return; it is linked to the war, but its meaning cannot be confined to the war itself. In this sense it resembles the Holocaust. The annihilation of the Jews between 1941 and 1945 was a part of the Nazi war in Europe, but its significance cannot be restricted to the war itself. As far as the 1948 expulsion goes, scholarly studies have made it quite clear who drove out whom and to what extent.

Precisely because the Holocaust and the Nakba are foundational events, it is essential to study their history. The purpose of the national narratives of both peoples is to explain and to justify their identity in the present, and less to become familiar with and to understand the complexity of past events. We must therefore be prepared to learn the past and face it unflinchingly. This requires willingness

on the part of the Palestinians to learn about the Holocaust. If one adheres to the assumption that the Zionists were no more than European settler colonialists, as many Palestinians believe, one fails to understand that Zionism was also a movement of national liberation that grew out of the persecution of the Jews in Europe prior to the Holocaust. And it requires willingness on the part of the Jews to learn about the Nakba. One of the explanations for the uprooting of the Palestinians, which appeared immediately after the 1948 war and over the years became a part of the Israeli narrative, is that the Palestinians' leaders ordered them to leave in order to facilitate the Arabs' military campaigns, and assured them that they would return to their homes in the wake of the armies' victory. This is a fable; even Zionist historians no longer believe it.

As a scholar of Germany and the Holocaust, as well as of 1948 in Palestine, I find it helpful to think in association about Holocaust and Nakba memory in order to learn and apply useful methods and approaches. The term „Holocaust“ came to stand for the extermination of the Jews in Europe only in the late 1950s and the beginning of 1960s, although references to „Shoah“ were already made during the Second World War. The term Nakba was coined to represent the dispossession of the Palestinians by the historian Constantine Zurayk in his small, influential book „The Meaning of Disaster“ written in mid-1948. But the term did not catch up among Israeli Jews, and, as far as I could attest, was not used regularly in public space by Palestinians citizens of Israel until the 1990s. In both historical cases the term that came to stand for the event was attached to it years after it actually happened. Also of interest is that while the Holocaust and the Nakba are foundational pasts that elicit strong emotional response, the history of denying they ever happened is part of the history of their memory. Finally, Israeli Jews can look at how Germans remembered the Holocaust—at the road they traveled from years of denial and half-hearted recognition to assuming historical responsibility—and draw important lessons for the way they should assume historical responsibility for aspects of their 1948 past.

We can think about the Nakba by telling

a story of 1948 that does not seek to lay blame, score points, and divide the world into clear-cut perpetrators and victims, but that recognizes the complexity of human affairs and accepts that perpetrator and victim may coexist in the same person. Since the topic is so charged, it is insightful to begin understanding it from a broader historical perspective. Something happened in Palestine in 1948. 750,000 Palestinians were uprooted. They did not just leave of their own accord. What happened in Palestine in 1948 was part of a history of forced migrations whereby nation-states sought to create homogenous populations by violently removing thousands and even millions of people. The 1940s were a key decade in this respect that witnessed forced migrations in Europe, in India/Pakistan, and in Palestine/Israel. In Europe, among others, eleven million Germans were uprooted from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in a wave that began in 1944 as millions fled the advancing Red Army. In India, in 1947–1948, twelve million people were expelled from their homes in the new India and in the two parts of the new Pakistan. Thousands of Hindus in Lahore and Muslims in Delhi left before the mass expulsions began for fear of their safety. Millions were driven out thereafter.

Jews can draw two conclusions from their role in the forced migration of the Palestinians. They can emit a sigh of relief, „Well, everyone expelled people in the 1940s, that's life, what can we do about it, let us be.“ And some may even add, „it's a pity we didn't finish the job.“ Of course, such an arrogant and disparaging attitude is inconceivable when discussing the atrocities visited upon the Jews in the 1940s, including the Holocaust. A second conclusion would be to view Zionism in general and 1948 in particular from a wider perspective; not as a unique story, but as a story of human beings acting within specific historical time, place, and circumstances. From this perspective, forced migrations took place in various locations during the first half of the twentieth century, and in particular during the 1940s. They had general causes, while they were acted out in specific historical contexts. But they did happen; they constitute a human tragedy that has to be acknowledged

by those who are fully or partly responsible for them.

1948 is the year of the Nakba and is also the year in which the Jews founded a state of their own, with its own language, culture and vitality. The Nakba and Israel's independence also „gaze directly into one another's face.“ Just as one cannot understand the rich history of the United States only through the prism of the genocide of the Native-Americans, so one cannot understand the rich history of the state of Israel only through the expulsion of the Palestinians. Yet it behooves the Jews to recognize the role played by their people in the Nakba, for a very simple reason. The Nakba is part of their history, and an important part: they remember the Nakba whether they deny it or relate it in prose or in poetry. The very attempt to erase the memory of the Nakba is the outcome of an immense mobilization of political, economic, and cultural effort. The erasure of memory is the outcome of an extraordinarily lively awareness. The Jews are condemned, in some sense, to remember and remember and remember the Palestinians who lost their homes and their homeland, and to tell this story in various ways because it is inextricably bound up with the way in which they themselves won their homes and their homeland. And this is one of the reasons that the defining past events of both peoples have continued to eye each other ever since 1948.

Why is this book important? Its power lies not in a quest for agreement or in an attempt to persuade, but in the act of Jews and Palestinians speaking, writing, and reading together about the Holocaust and the Nakba; this is the real event and the significant effort. This act in itself generates a jolt, without which there is no prospect of national rights and human rights for all the inhabitants of the land.

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