



INTERVIEW conducted on 22.12.2018

by

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PEACE DOES NOT HAVE ALTERNATIVE

Tell me, please, about your family and childhood background

I was born in Yazour, one of the most beautiful towns in Palestine; adjacent to the city of Jaffa, which was called “the bride of the sea.” In 1948 we were ethnically cleansed by Jewish terrorist gangs, which caused me and my family to lose everything we ever owned. As a consequence, we were forced to live in a miserable refugee camp that lacked all health and social services; the camp, in which we lived 5 years, was located outside the city of Jericho, the oldest city in the world. Two of those 5 years were lived the hunter-gatherer way of life which appeared about one hundred thousand years ago; then my father began working in a palm trees orchard located in the desert between Jericho and the Jordan River. Due to my frequent visits to him, I was fully exposed to the way of life of the tribal society which first appeared about thirty thousand years ago. In 1954 we moved to Jericho where my father worked as a farmer in charge of a nice orange and other fruits grove, where I had to help him, and that exposed me fully to the life of the agricultural society. Due to unusual circumstances, life in Jericho prepared me to deal with women as colleagues and friends. In Jericho, life became less harsh and more interesting and enjoyable. After finishing the 6th grade in the refugee camp, I transferred to Jericho’s Hisham bin Abdulmalik high School.

Tell me more about your education background

I graduated from high school in 1957, ranking first in the Jericho district; as a consequence, I received a scholarship from the UNRWA to study in Cairo, Egypt, where I studied economics at the University of Ain Shams, graduating first in my class in 1962. But as I was studying for an MA degree in economics at the American University of Cairo, I received a scholarship from the German Government to pursue my graduate studies in Germany. Though I loved almost everything in Germany, I did not like the German educational system of the time; so after living in Germany about 2 years and being fully exposed to the way of life of a mature industrial society, I left for the United States, where I received a research assistantship from the University of Houston, Texas. In Houston, I received the MA and PhD degrees in economics in 1968 and 1970, respectively. During my studies there, however, I took every course the university offered in sociology and anthropology.

During my studies in high school I was fond of history, which lead me to read the few history books available; and as a victim of the Zionist colonialist settler movement which was supported by the great colonialist powers of the time, I got involved in politics at an early age; and as a man who started his life living the life experience of the hunter-gatherer man, moved from there to experience the life of the tribal man, followed by the life experience of the agricultural man, and then the life of the industrial man, I lived in my own life the life experience of more than 700 generations, starting with the hunter-gatherer and ending with the knowledge man of the 21st century. Therefore, I can say with confidence that I lived a life like no other; no human being has lived my life experience, and no one will; because many of the societal transformations I lived in the past had come and gone and will never come back again.

Tell me about your career history

In 1967, I began teaching at Texas Community College in Houston, and a year later, I started teaching at Texas Southern University, in addition to studying at the University of Houston. After three years teaching in the US, I joined Kuwait University in 1970, where I spent 6 years teaching undergraduate and graduate students. And while being in Kuwait, I managed to accomplish many things that usually take decades to accomplish: 1. changing the educational system at the university, adopting the American system after modifying it to suit the Arabic

culture; today, about two-thirds of all Arab universities use the system I wrote from A to Z back in 1973; 2. In 1974, I launched the Social Science Quarterly and served as its managing editor until leaving Kuwait in 1976; 3. In 1974, I wrote the proposal for the OPEC Development Fund which was established in 1975, which has its headquarters in Vienna; 4. In the summer of 1974, I initiated summer school for college students for the first time in the Arab world; 5. I conceived and wrote the proposal for Kuwait's Foundation for the Advancement of Science, and invented a creative way of finance it from the private sector; the foundation was established in 1976. 6. In 1973, I led a group of businessmen and concerned individuals to establish a corporation to serve Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis as a cooperative selling its products at reduced prices. 7. In 1974, I conceived the idea of convening the best minds in the Arab world to discuss the issue of "The Crisis of societal Development in the Arab World" I organized the conference and gave the keynote speech at the end of it; and much more. And while at Kuwait University, I published two books; The Brain Drain, which was the first book ever to be published on this issue; and Economy and Society, in addition to hundreds of newspaper articles and several scholarly papers and tens of public lectures and radio and TV interviews.

In 1976, I resigned from Kuwait University and moved to Jordan, with the intention of living there; however, the intelligence services told me politely that I had no place in Jordan. Fortunately, I had a standing invitation from Georgetown University to teach there for the summer; and this enabled me to get a visa for me and my family and go back to the United States. While living in Washington, I taught also at the Johns Hopkins and the American universities as well; gave tens of public lectures on several issues such as the Arab Israeli conflict, the economics of oil and energy, Third World development, and doing business in the Arabian Gulf region. In addition, I organized several conferences and participated in many more and kept travelling between the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and America speaking on political, economic, cultural and educational issues. In the meanwhile, I served as executive director of the Palestine Research Institute in Washington, and established the not-for-profit Institute of Educational Development to help students study in the US.

In 1985, while speaking at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Germany's most prestigious research institute, I predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in my book, The New World Order, published in 1992, I predicted the financial and economic crisis that hit the US and the world in 2008; however, the crisis was

delayed a few years due to the advent of the Internet and the GPS which created thousands of new businesses and millions of jobs. In addition, I predicted the ‘Arab Spring’ in more than one book and article and in a poem written in 1995, saying that change was coming but not necessarily for the better.

In 1998, Prof. Peter Glotz, who was chosen to reopen Erfurt University after being closed for almost 200 years, asked me to help him prepare the educational programs of the university. The university was closed due to the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries and because Germany was divided into two states following the Second World War. So for almost 3 years, I served as the university’s director of international relations and US representative, where I helped create a joint program for a BA degree in social sciences between the American University in Washington, DC and Erfurt University. In 2001, the Al Akhawayn University in Morocco invited me to join its faculty, and help develop the MA program in international relations and diplomacy. And in 2013, I returned to Morocco, joining the School of Governance and Economics in Rabat. After returning to Washington in 2014, I concentrated my efforts on writing academic books and my memoirs. Nevertheless, I continued my travels to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa and other places. In 2015, I won the Lifetime Achievement Award granted by the State of Palestine; and in the next year, South Korea’s Economic Institute invited me to deliver the keynote speech at its annual conference.

Until today, you have published about 44 books in English and Arabic that cover several disciplines, and hundreds of articles and numerous scholarly papers. How do you feel being chosen as one of the top 100 world writers for 2017 by the International Biographical Center, Cambridge, England?

The award is for Literature. But most of your books are on politics and economics. How do you feel about that?

Any recognition by an international institute or organization is an honor to be appreciated and celebrated. However, when you read the statement of the recognition, you notice that it says you are one of the writers “who made a significant contribution in their field to endow influence on the local, national and international basis.” This means that the recognition is not limited to literature, but includes all other fields and writers who make a difference in the lives of other peoples. In fact, the award I received from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany’s most prestigious academic foundation lately, which gave

me the opportunity to spend 3 months there is another international recognition of great value; it enabled me to visit several German cities and historic towns, give 3 public lectures; conduct a weekly seminar for 6 weeks at the German American Institute in Heidelberg, and meet a few important personalities from Germany and other parts of the world. In fact the Alexander von Humboldt foundation had invited me back in 1992 to become a fellow and granted me a six months stay in Germany. And though the foundation did not ask me to do anything in particular, I used my time and money to travel to Austria and Hungary and other European states and write my book, "Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity," which was the first book to articulate a theory of conflict resolution.

Are you working on a new book to be published soon?

Yes; I am working on 3 projects at the same time; the first is to complete the translation of my memoirs from Arabic to English. During my stay in Germany, I was lucky to meet a nice lady who is a professional translator; she is now reading what had been translated of the memoirs in preparation for translating it from English to German. In addition, my last stay in Germany gave me the opportunity to meet a publisher to publish the memoirs in German once they are completed. The second project is a new book whose title is more likely to be "The Crash of Western Civilization"; the book starts by explaining that the West did not become civilized until after the end of the Second World War. Before that, the West had behaved as savage states that fought each other and sought to dominate the world, enslave the poor peoples and steal their natural, and later on, human resources to enrich themselves and foster their superior power. Thus to speak about a "Western Civilization" misses the point; what the West had in common between the 17th and 20th centuries was a culture created by the industrial revolution. Therefore, the West had no civilization because the word 'civilization' implies talking about a group of civilized nations, which the West did not and could not have until the 1950s. The third project is another book that tries to articulate a new global social order to replace the one we currently have and suffer from its excesses due to being controlled by the riches 1% of the world's population who own more than 50 percent of the world's wealth. The book to be called, "A Future of All" proposes new political and economic and social systems that guarantee fairness and enables the poor and weak of the world to regain their rights and dignity.

You were involved with the peace process between Palestine and Israel because you were the person who conceived the idea of the US-PLO dialogue that led to the Oslo Accord of 1993. But the situation now is such that Israel is breaking many rules and UN resolutions and treaties, especially the demolition of houses of Palestinians, expansion of settlements in the West Bank for Jewish migrants, and the siege they imposed on Gaza and its people.

What more constructive actions could be taken against Israel?

In 1987, following the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada, I began thinking of a way to start a meaningful dialogue between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization or the PLO. After some work, an American friend who served previously as an assistant to the US president in charge of the Middle East at the National Security Council agreed to partner with me. So I wrote a one page statement outlining the US conditions for opening a dialogue with the PLO, and the PLO conditions for accepting the US conditions; all of this was done before informing Arafat, the PLO leader of what was being done. To our surprise, US officials accepted the proposal within minutes of being presented to them; and that forced me to fly to Tunis to meet with Arafat the same day. After the PLO Executive Committee accepted the paper, I coordinated the secret contacts between the two parties until final agreement was reached and the dialogue started at the end of the year. However, neither the PLO nor the American government was able to take advantage of that opportunity and make meaningful progress toward a solution to the Arab Israeli conflict. To my surprise, I discovered later that the US has never intended to help establish a state for the Palestinians in their land

Is the BDS the answer to make Israel play by the rules?

The BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement is not the answer to making peace, because the movement calls for pressuring Israel through actions that involve boycotting Israeli products, and withdrawing investments made by foreign companies and banks in Israel, and imposing sanctions on Israel to force it to abide by international law and UN resolutions concerning the rights of the Palestinian people. However, there is no doubt that the BDS movement has scored many victories; it convinced several American universities and churches to withdraw investments made previously in Israeli companies; it also convinced many European and American athletes and artists to boycott events in Israel. However, Western governments have largely ignored the BDS demands for action, and some are trying to outlaw the movement in their countries like the US.

However, the BDS public impact, particularly among college students is positive, which paves the way for future change, while containing Israeli propaganda and preventing it from dominating the streets and campuses.

You were born in Yazuor and grew up in Jericho but made it big in USA. Tell us about this.

Yes; I was born in Yazuor which is a small town next to Jaffa, grow up in a refugee camp near Jericho and graduated from high school while 9 of us (the parents, 3 girls and four boys) lived in one room. However, it was the parent's encouragement and insistence that we get the best education available and my determination to be the first in my class that helped me succeed and excel. Honesty, love of knowledge, perseverance, and knowing what I wanted form life were other factors that made it possible for me to reach the highest level of education in my field. In addition, I recognized that the American system and a large portion of Americans discriminates against people like me, but without getting angry and feeling helpless. Recognition of a bad situation does not mean accepting it and adjusting to it; rather, it means identifying it as a serious obstacle and doing what you can to overcome it and succeed. Keeping focused on my goals and working hard to reach them helped me to move from one achievement to another with ease while enjoying life and respect wherever I went. However, I consider all recognition I received in my life was little compared to the praise and appreciation I have received and continue to receive from my students; my ideas, writings, way of teaching and caring were designed to make sure that they get the best education and guidance, while helping them free themselves from the illusions of ideology, conspiracy theories and the past. Every book I published gave birth to new ideas for one or more book; and that kept my spirit high and the incentive to do more alive.

What are your hopes for peace in the Holy Land?

My hope is to achieve peace, not through negotiations with the Israelis, but by starting from the ground up, and convincing as many Jews inside Palestine and outside it that the only way to free Jews and Palestinians from hatred and enmity and fear, and enable them to live meaningful lives is to create a hospitable space where all are able to live side by side in peace and harmony. This requires an acknowledgement that no Israeli leader is willing or able to make peace with the Palestinians; because any peaceful agreement between the two sides requires the

evacuation of the approximately 700 thousand Jewish settlers who live in the West Bank; and that could cause a civil war in Israel.

My proposal for achieving an Israeli Palestinian peace calls for several things to be done, including the following. 1. The transformation of the entire land of Palestine into a shared homeland for all Israeli Jews and Palestinians to live in and share; 2. The establishment of one state in Palestine that is secular, democratic and demilitarized, while acknowledging the existence of two communities; one Jewish and the other is Palestinian; this community would include all non-Jewish minorities living in Palestine at the time of establishing the new state. 3. Constructing an innovative political system that enables the two communities to share powers indefinitely, where the people elect a parliament and a president directly. 4. While the parliament controls the legislative powers, the president shares the executive powers with a prime minister. 5. Parliament elects the prime minister from outside its ranks and the prime minister forms his/her cabinet from outside the ranks of the parliament in order to guarantee the separation of the executive from the legislative powers. 6. Palestinians who lost property in Palestine since 1947 would regain the rights to their property; as a result, they would be free to develop it, rent it or sell it to whomever they chose without interference from the state or anyone else. Nevertheless, there would be no forced evacuation of Jews from the homes they would be living in at the time. 7. All those who were born in Palestine or one of their parents or grandparents at anytime in the past would have the right to return to Palestine and claim citizenship, regardless of their nationalities. This formula would solve all issues that hindered the brokering of a political settlement to the conflict in the past. (a copy of the proposal is attached for future publishing)

Israel just passed the Jewish Nation-State Law. There are about 1.8 million Palestinian in that country. This law spells out Israeli apartheid system clearly. What do you think about this?

In 1948, Jewish terrorist gangs and the Israeli army occupied 78 percent of the land of Palestine and expelled its native inhabitants, causing about 800,000 Palestinians to lose their homes and land and property and become homeless living in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza and the neighbouring Arab states. However, an estimated 156,000 Palestinians remained in Palestine, many of them hid themselves in abandoned homes and caves to avoid being killed or expelled from their homeland; the number of those Palestinians has grown since then to more than 1.8 million today.

The nation-state law passed by the Israeli Knesset is clearly an act to deny all Palestinians, and not only those Palestinians who became citizens of Israel the right to live in Palestine as full citizens; as such it is worse than the laws enacted by the Apartheid state of South Africa four decades ago; the Israeli law says that Palestine is home to the Jews only. So a Jew who was born in Ukraine or Poland even before Israel was created has the right to be a citizen of Israel, while a Palestinian like me who was born in what is today Israel and his parents and grandparents were born also there has no right to return to his homeland and live there. Israel today dictates to most European governments and the US government what they should do and how to deal with the Palestinians rights. Yes, there are courageous retired politicians and intellectuals and many professors and hundreds of thousands of students scattered all over Europe and America who reject almost everything Israel stands for; and though their numbers are growing, they are still weak to effect meaningful change in policies. This requires that everyone who stands for human rights and against discrimination and racism should join the forces that oppose Israeli policies and defend the rights of the Palestinian people.

What about World Peace? Is there a future for it?

World peace is a challenge that no group of people or a state can by itself face; however, it is an existential challenge that no one can avoid facing; a challenge that will affect our future as humans and our relations to each other and to our natural, social, technological and economic environments. Today, the richest 1% or the world's population owns more than 50% of the world's wealth, leaving less than 50% of the wealth to the other 99% of the world's population; in fact, while the richest 1% of the world's population own over 50% of the world's wealth, the unfortunate poorest 50% of the world's people, who represent about 70% of the world's workforce, own 2.7% of the world's wealth only. The inequality report finds that the richest 1% of the world's population received 27% of the world's income between 1980 and 2016. The bottom 50%, by contrast, got only 12%. And since income is the major source of wealth, the more income the richest 1% gets, the wider the wealth and income gaps become. In addition, about 95% of the increase in income goes to the richest 10% of the world's population, leaving 5% only for the other 90%, not enough to keep pace with the annual increase in population and inflation. As a consequence, the current income and wealth distribution has denied the overwhelming majority of the world's people from maintaining the living standards they had enjoyed in the 1970s.

In my latest book, *The Global Debt Crisis and its Socioeconomic Implications*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) I proved that the widening income and wealth gaps worldwide cause the global economic growth rates to decline. While it is possible to have a good year once a while, there is correlation between the two trends; as those gaps widen, the economic growth rates decline. And that causes the tax revenues of states to shrink and limit their abilities to provide the social services the public needs, which causes poverty to spread and alienation and unrest to increase, as we are witnessing today in France. Social crises, when ignored, usually transform themselves into political crises that force the existing social orders to change, sometimes fundamentally and irreversibly.

I believe that there will be no peace in our world unless the ruling elites of the great powers of our times, namely the United States, China, Russia, Britain and France change their attitudes and policies to become more conducive to world peace and cooperation. But what we see today is more friction, more animosity, more divisions, and more ruthlessness and wars that poison the international atmosphere. In fact, I believe that the West in general has never had a collective leadership that is so politically and economically corrupt and morally and intellectually bankrupt, which makes this elite untrustworthy and therefore, unfit to govern and lead. However, the unfolding crises in France, Britain, Italy, Greece and Hungary, in addition to the racism crisis sweeping most European countries, particularly those of Eastern Europe, are signs that the worse is still to come.

To deal with the global debt crisis and address its sociopolitical and socioeconomic and sociocultural manifestations, I articulated in my latest book a comprehensive plan (Ramo Plan) to reset the entire world economy. The plan provides a venue for all rich and poor nations to repay their entire public debts in their own national currencies at once; and at no cost to a state, bank, investor, or taxpayer. In addition, as the plan repays the debt it generates in the process \$10 trillion to create 4 global funds; these funds are the Educational Fund, the Humanitarian Fund, the sustainable environmental Fund and the Development Fund. The mission of those funds is to deal with the social, educational, humanitarian, environmental and economic aspects of the current global situation, which manifests itself in a global debt crisis, slow economic growth rates, spreading poverty and alienation and radicalism in most parts of the world. The Ramo Plan is designed to help everyone and penalize no one; the full implementation of this plan is expected to take us within 25 to 30 years from a state of turbulence, poverty, enmity, ignorance, war

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and class conflict to a state of peace, tranquillity and sustainable development, creating a new world for all to love and enjoy living in.

Thank you very much for this exclusive interview for DIOGEN pro culture magazine, respectable Prof. Mohamed Rabie.

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