“Checkpoints and Bus Stops: The Enduring Relevance of Said on Statehood and Separation”

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Once a proponent of the two-state solution, Dr. Edward W. Said changed his position to oppose the Palestinian Authority’s plans to declare a separate Palestinian state. Among his primary concerns were that the lack of territorial contiguity meant that establishing a separate Palestinian state “would definitively divide the Palestinian population and its cause more or less forever.” This paper returns to Said’s concerns more than a decade later to assess the current condition of separation and movement restrictions through the lens of Palestinian public transportation. Using Said’s insights as guidance, this paper will answer the following questions: What is the relationship of the PA to the public transportation systems Palestinians use? How do these systems interface with the lack of territorial contiguity in Palestinian life? And more broadly, how do proposals for various “state solutions” address the key problem of freedom of movement for Palestinians?