



**ICAHD UK**

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions  
הוועד הישראלי נגד הריסת בתים  
الحركة الإسرائيلية ضد هدم البيوت

**THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT:  
CHALLENGING SLOGANS THROUGH CRITICAL REFRAMING**

by Jeff Halper, Jimmy Johnson and Emily Schaeffer

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Challenging “Conventional Wisdom”: Reframing the Conflict

Zionism and Its Irreconcilable Flaw

1947-1949 Wars

1967/Occupation

Arabs, Terrorism & Security: No Solution?

The Oslo Peace Process/The Second Intifada

The Wall/Fence/Barrier

The Illegitimacy of Criticizing Israel

So How Do We Get Out of This Mess?

Endnotes

Further Resources

## CHALLENGING “CONVENTIONAL WISDOM”: REFRAMING THE CONFLICT

Part of Israel’s success in “selling” its wars and occupation policies lies in its ability to condense its political position in one succinct sentence. “Israel,” that *hasbara*/PR line goes, “is a small, democratic, Western [white] country besieged by Arab/Muslim terrorism.” That hits about every buzz-word possible. Omitted from this security-based framing, however, is yet another key word: occupation. Without that, of course, Israel becomes merely an innocent victim of “Muslim terrorism” – like the United States, Europe and other parts of the world whose support it seeks by nurturing a common identity of “victim.” Israel’s role in oppressing the Palestinians, in denying them self-determination in either one state or two: its overwhelming political, military and economic superiority that belies the idea that some symmetry exists – “both sides” – and conceals its pro-active annexation and “judaization” of the entire country; indeed, its refusal to contribute towards wider Middle East peace and reconciliation by refusing to give up its Occupation – all this is hidden when the word “occupation” is left out. Israel has succeeded in sanitizing its policies of expansion at the expense of the Palestinians while shifting the blame to them as “terrorists.” Framing can indeed be a powerful and compelling way of garnering support while making it self-evident that certain peoples are “enemies” that should be defeated, if not eliminated. Israel’s framing is succinct, compelling and simply makes sense in our post-9/11 world obsessed with “security.”

So how can such framings, distorting and self-serving as they are, leading us to wrong conclusions and disastrous policies and conflicts, be countered? One of the great disadvantages of progressive people is their justifiable discomfort over one-sentence slogans. Critical thinkers who understand the complexities and nuances of any political conflict hate slogans, even if we are forced to use them occasionally (“End the Occupation”; “Two States for Two Peoples”; etc.). Slogans and self-serving framings simplify to a ridiculous degree; they distort and they confuse issues far more than they clarify them. We would go so far as to argue that by polarizing rather than creating bridges of understanding, such simplistic, misleading appeals to our base instincts and prejudices actually *prevent* the resolution of conflicts by raising insurmountable barriers of “us” *versus* “them,” in which “we” are always right and “they” are wrong, if not downright evil.

Still, to our regret, slogans dominate the public discourse, in the media and in the halls of government no less than in the marketplace. The most we can hope for, if learned analysis is too much to expect, is a framing that, while concise, brings out the nuances and complexities of the conflict and points in a critical yet constructive way to a just resolution – one that takes into account the needs and claims of all sides. The Israeli framing is security-based. By omitting the fact of Occupation, the legitimacy of Palestinians claims, grievances and needs and the immense power differential between the sides, an otherwise legitimate concern for security becomes merely a pretext for continued control of the country and the repression of Palestinian rights. Through its security-based framing based on exclusive Jewish rights to the entire country of Palestine/Israel, Israel effectively rules out the possibility of a just peace.

As Israelis who believe that our people’s security, survival and moral integrity depend ultimately upon reaching a just peace with our neighbors, we do not find this an acceptable option. In fact, we reject Israel’s official framing altogether. Our reading of the history of the region and of Zionism, our understanding of how and why Israeli policy is made in regards to the Occupation and our experiences with our Palestinian partners and friends lead us to very different conclusions, to a very different framing.

The reframing that lies at the base of this booklet of “counter-rhetoric” rests on three related principles: (1) that any equitable peace must conform to human rights and international law, and in particular to peoples’ right of self-determination; (2) that it must embody justice, both in terms of the needs of both sides but also in addressing the historical wrongs that have been committed; and (3) that it engenders a

political structure that is genuinely inclusive – of both the individual rights of all the country’s inhabitants and the national identities, heritage and rights of both national groups, Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. Set against Israel’s security framing, our reframing rests on the following alternative principles:

<b>The Israeli Security Framing</b>	<b>A Justice and Rights-Based Reframing</b>
<p><i>Conception: Exclusivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Land of Israel belongs exclusively to the Jewish people; There is no other people that has legitimate rights or claims.</li> </ul> <p><i>Definition of the Problem: Security</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel is fighting for its existence. The Arabs don’t want peace; the Palestinians are our permanent enemies.</li> <li>• Israel’s policies are based solely on concerns for security; There is no Occupation.</li> <li>• The underlying problem is Arab terrorism.</li> </ul> <p><i>Solution: Win/Lose</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conflict is a win-lose proposition: either we “win” or “they” do.</li> <li>• Since Israel is the victim, it is exempt from accountability for its actions.</li> <li>• Any solution must leave Israel in control of the entire country. If Israel allows a Palestinian state to emerge, it will necessarily be truncated, non-viable and semi-sovereign.</li> <li>• The answer to anti-Semitism is a militarily strong Israel aligned with the United States.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Conception: Mutual National Rights</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two peoples reside in Israel/Palestine and each has rights of self-determination.</li> </ul> <p><i>Definition of the Problem:</i> <i>A Pro-Active, Expansionist Occupation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Palestinians recognize Israeli sovereignty over 78% of the country; the Arab world has offered Israel regional integration.</li> <li>• Israel pursues a pro-active policy of expansion into the Occupied Territory based on settlement and control.</li> <li>• The problem is Israel’s Occupation; Palestinian violence is a symptom of oppression. In human rights language, all attacks on civilians are prohibited, whether from non-state or state actors.</li> </ul> <p><i>Solution: Win/Win</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only a solution based on human rights and international law ensures a win-win solution.</li> <li>• Israel is a major regional superpower that must be held accountable for its actions.</li> <li>• Either a viable and truly sovereign Palestinian state must emerge, or another option which is mutually agreed-upon according to the principle of self-determination.</li> <li>• Anti-Semitism is a form of racism; only respect for human rights will effectively address anti-Semitism and Israel’s security concerns.</li> </ul>

Our reframing, unlike Israel’s, opens the way to dialogue, co-existence and a just peace, a genuine resolution of a conflict that disrupts the entire international system. But the problem remains of communication. Given the limited attention span of people and the limited space one gets on the media, how do we replicate Israel’s success in promoting a succinct and compelling narrative contained in that one brief sentence? We can begin by offering not slogans but brief talking-points of our own. This

booklet collects many of the slogans ICAHD staff, interns and activists have encountered in their years of interaction with Israeli Jews and those, in Israel and abroad, who present themselves as “pro-Israeli.” Unless they are countered there is no hope of developing a political conversation which could actually clarify the issues and contribute to resolving the conflict, rather than perpetuating it. We have not managed to reframe the slogans in a sentence; our commitment to intellectual honesty requires at the least brief paragraphs. But we do provide here clear, concise analyses and messages that effectively counter Israel’s propaganda and open up new, constructive ways of approaching this conflict.

In the end, the reframing offered by the critical Israeli peace camp rejects the fundamental premise of the security paradigm: that Muslims and Arabs as a whole, and Palestinians in particular, are Israel’s implacable enemies. We reject all attempts to mystify the conflict through claims that Jews and Arabs have been enemies “from time immemorial” or that we are involved in a “clash of civilizations.” We insist that the conflict be conceived as a political one, which therefore has a solution. We also reject the notion that terrorism lies at the root of the conflict. While we condemn every attack on civilians, we recognize that such violence is a symptom of intolerable oppression that will end only when the peoples’ underlying claims and grievances are resolved. We must also acknowledge the significant gains which have been made towards a just solution, primarily the recognition by the PLO and the Arab League of Israel within the “Green Line” – that is, on 78% of historic Palestine, despite Israeli rejection of the two-state solution in favor of settlements.

A just peace in Israel/Palestine is no pipe-dream. It is achievable if we approach it as a win-win equation incorporating the rights, claims and grievances of all the parties. To that end we offer our reframing. It is a critical reframing by *Israeli Jews*; it does not pretend to represent the views of Palestinians. It is constructive. Since it approaches the conflict politically, it assumes there is a just and workable solution. And it is hopeful, offering ways out of “our” century-long conflict and, on the way, providing a model of conflict *resolution* (not mere “management”) to oppressed people everywhere.

## ZIONISM AND ITS IRRECONCILABLE FLAW

*“The land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people.”*

And herein lies the rub. Israel defines itself as a “Jewish democracy,” but is that possible? A *democracy* “belongs” to all its citizens; no particular group can claim exclusive privilege over others. Once you qualify the term “democracy” it is no longer a democracy. Let’s be honest. Israel is an *ethnocracy*. Zionism emerged primarily in Eastern Europe among other ethnocracies. Until today, Poland “belongs” to the Poles, Russia “belongs” to the Russians, Hungary “belongs” to the Hungarians. As ethnocracies these countries deny diversity. Look how they treated the Jews (and Roma) historically, look at how violently xenophobic they are towards refugees today. Zionism is an Eastern European nationalism that also denies the national rights, even the very existence, of a Palestinian people in “its” country. That’s why we call them “Arabs” and not Palestinians. Palestine/Israel is a diverse country. Half the population is Palestinian, with sizable Druze and Bedouin minorities, and half is “Jewish,” although that category includes perhaps 300,000 ethnic Russians married to Jews. And what about the 60,000 African refugees to whom Israel is denying asylum and sending back to death and misery in war-torn Africa? Having an exclusive claim to a country is a recipe for internal conflict, xenophobia and civil war. Asserting your particular rights as an ethnocracy means you must deny the existence of other people, cultures, histories in “your” country. It means you must displace, isolate and, if possible, drive out as many of “them” as possible. Ultimately it means never being able to live at peace, since your exclusivity will always be challenged by those you exclude; it means, inevitably, resorting to apartheid and worse. This is the fatal flaw of Zionism that must be overcome if Israel is to avoid becoming the antithesis of what a Jewish state should be, of what the Zionist movement itself aspired to be – a light amongst the nations. Zionism must decolonize before Israeli Jews can find peace, security and acceptance in their own country and region.

-and-

Why should Palestinians accept that they are unwanted strangers in their own country, accept their own displacement, disenfranchisement and loss of their national rights and heritage? They have their own national narratives. For Palestinians, Zionism is merely settler colonialism. Living peacefully in their country, the Palestinians witnessed an influx of immigrants from Russia and Poland who claimed it exclusively for themselves, and were backed by Britain, their colonial master. They witnessed their country being taken away from them before their eyes – the UN unilaterally giving more than half their country (56%) to the Jewish newcomers, in 1948 losing half of what was left to Israel in the Nakba, or catastrophe, called by Israel its War of Independence, then in 1967 losing the rest of the remnant of 22%. Today Israel “owns” as “state lands” 90% of the country; the Palestinians, though comprising half the population of historic Palestine between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, are confined to tiny, impoverished enclaves on only 10% of their homeland. Half the Palestinians are refugees, some five million of them, and most of the rest are internal refugees. For the Palestinians the struggle is to reclaim their lost homeland and national rights – classic anti-colonialism. In fact, when Yasser Arafat, as the head of the PLO, accepted the two-state solution and recognized the State of Israel within the 1967 borders, he and his people did something unprecedented in history: a colonized people giving up political claim to 78% of their homeland. Talk about a “generous offer”! And yet, to this day, they have never been given credit for this extraordinary concession for peace: what will be the majority population, suffering a century of incremental displacement, occupation and colonial rule, willing to make peace for only 22% of their country.

~

*“But God gave the Land of Israel to the Jews, his Chosen People”*

**Mixing faith with politics is always a dangerous proposition.**

Everyone has a right to a religious belief, but not to force that belief on others. Jewish claims to a Divine right over the Land of Israel clashes with the equally valid claim that Palestine, the Holy Land, is *waqf* land holy to the Muslims, as well as a Palestinian patrimony. No claim can be objectively proven, and the assertion, by force, of one claim over the others will result only in perpetual conflict and suffering.

–and–

**The vast majority of Jews do *not* believe that God gave us the Land.**

The vast majority, in both Israel and the Diaspora, are secular and do not believe that God takes sides in conflicts, has a chosen people or parcels out real estate to particular peoples (including Americans with their ideology of Divinely-blessed Manifest Destiny). Even those secular people who assert an exclusive Jewish claim to the country most aggressively, people like Menachem Begin, Ariel Sharon and Binyamin Netanyahu, base themselves on national and historical claims, not religious ones. To complicate matters even more, most ultra-orthodox Jews, who do believe God gave the Jews the Land of Israel, are anti-Zionist. In their view, secular Jews taking possession of the Land as a political act is a blasphemous cooptation of God’s Divine right to restore the Jews of the Land in His own time and circumstance.

~

*“Jews have a right to self-determination.”*

**Jews who define themselves as a nationality – that is, *Israeli* Jews who are not ultra-orthodox – do indeed have the right of self-determination.**

Jews have a genuine historical tie to the Land, but certainly not an exclusive one. Jews (actually, Judeans) were the majority in this land for only some 1900 of the past 5,000 years of recorded history, and were the governing authority for even less. For the past 1400 years or so, the country “belonged to” the Muslims, Arabs for the most part, although many peoples came and went. The Jews have no more, and no less, a right to live in the land than any of the others who populate it. In the end no people can claim exclusivity over the country. As for Zionism’s claim that the Jews are the “returning natives,” the Palestinians counter that they represent the sum total of all the indigenous peoples who have lived there in an unbroken continuity. Who is right? Both claims have merit, yet both are narratives constructed to serve present national purposes. For any kind of accommodation to take place, both peoples must acknowledge the others’ right to a national presence while finding a way of sharing it.

-and-

**National rights are universal, and so Palestinians have them too.**

The same laws and treaties that protect the Jewish people’s right to self-determination should also protect the rights of others. Again, the claim of Jews to self-determination in their historic homeland cannot be privileged over that of the Palestinians. Jews have a genuine tie to the Land, but not an exclusive one. If Israel is truly a democratic state, then it belongs equally to all its citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. At least 25% of *Israelis* are not Jews. Israel’s Declaration of Independence promises “complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all

religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.” For all the fine intentions, now you see the internal contradictions inherent in the notion of a “Jewish democracy.”

If Israel in fact “expands” to include the entire Land of Israel, as its Likud government and its right-wing coalition partners espouse, then another 4.4 million Palestinians will come under Israeli control. If Israel remains a democracy, then the incorporation of the entire Land of Israel will result in a bi-national state with a Palestinian majority. If Israel incorporates the Occupied Territory (the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza) but insists on remaining a “Jewish” state and does not grant citizenship to Palestinians within its enlarged borders, then it becomes an apartheid regime.

~

*“If England wants to maintain its English identity, why can’t Israel maintain its Jewish identity? We just want our Jewish state.”*

**England is a democracy that belongs to all its citizens, native-born and immigrant alike. Israel, as an exclusive Jewish *ethnocracy*, could never become a state of all its inhabitants, immigrants and refugees.**

In Britain and other Western democracies, your nationality is determined by your passport. In Israel, Jewishness trumps Israeli nationality shared by all those who hold Israeli passports. Israel could not become the plural society Britain did, since it allows only the immigration of Jews (again, even refugees, a type of person Jews should certainly identify with, are denied legal status and deported, in violation of human rights conventions designed to protect them). The Law of Return grants automatic citizenship only to Jews, while denying Palestinian refugees their own Right of Return. This could not happen in Britain (while conceding, of course, that racism and anti-(certain) immigrant policies exist there as well).

~

*“There must be a Jewish state in which Jews can find refuge in case they ever need to flee their own country.”*

**Fleeing racism doesn’t help.**

Anti-Semitism, racism and oppression must be confronted whenever and wherever they raise their ugly heads. It does not good to flee to some supposedly “safe” place (especially Israel, the one place in the world where Jews are the most insecure). In our global village there is no safe haven. Either the world is made safe for everyone, or we will all take turns being the victim of the hour. This is why it is so important to pursue universal human rights, to ensure that everyone lives in security, peace and dignity. Jews must continue to be – as they have been historically – advocates of justice. They cannot flee.

-and-

**Israel doesn’t need fair-weather “refugees.”**

Israel may be a future place of refuge (though it’s pretty unlikely), but don’t expect it to enter into a kind of limbo until such a time as the comfortable Jews of the West might deign to consider emigrating. Israel has to find its place in the Middle East, even if that means becoming a country quite different from what people expect. As Israelis we have a bit of advice: Stay where you are and fight anti-Semitism and injustice.

~

*“If the Palestinians were given the right of return, the Jewish state will no longer be Jewish.”*

**Do Jewish rights trump Palestinian rights?**

The Right of Return is a human right embodied in the fundamental principles of human rights and international law. The Palestinians do not have to claim it; it is theirs by right. And their right to return to their homes is not dependent on whether Israel “recognizes” that right or not. A right is a right. It is inalienable and cannot be given up even under pressure.

-and-

**In practical terms...**

A study by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research indicates that only 10% of all refugees would return to Palestine/Israel, mainly the aged. The rest prefer to become citizens of the Palestinian state, to be resettled in third countries or to be rehabilitated in their current host countries. So the problem is largely moot.

-and-

**The idiocy for Zionism of Israel’s destroying the two-state solution**

Although they have no “right” to make these concessions, both the Palestinian Authority and the Arab League have agreed that any actual solution to the refugee issue will be by mutual agreement with Israel. That means the refugees would have returned to the Palestinian state in the Occupied Territory, and not into Israel. By deliberately eliminating the two-state solution and creating, *de facto*, one state, Israel eliminated itself as a Jewish state, with or without the return of the refugees.

-but-

**Besides a practical resolution of the refugee issue, the suffering of the refugees must be acknowledged before healing and reconciliation can take place.**

The refugee issue will never be resolved until Israel formally accepts the *right* of return and acknowledges its role in driving the refugees out of Palestine. Just as acknowledging the suffering of the Holocaust is deeply significant to Jews, just as truth and acknowledgment on the part of the white community is key to reconciliation in South Africa, just as the Armenians demand acknowledgement of their genocide, African-Americans of their experience of slavery, so, too, will the refugee issue defy healing until the suffering of the refugees is acknowledged – regardless of the technical “solution” to their individual problems.

~

*“The Arabs only came to this country after the Zionists started to develop it.”*

**Wrong. And so what?**

Now we’re reaching for straws. No serious historian, Israeli or otherwise, supports that myth. The Arabs originally came to this land in 638 under Caliph Umar, but they, like all the peoples before and after them (including the Hebrews, Israelites and Judeans), mixed with the local populations and largely fused with them. (Research shows that Jews and Palestinians have the closest gene pools.) The Arabs colonized Palestine and over a few centuries Arabic language and culture became dominant. From that

time until the expulsion by Israel of more than 700,000 Palestinian refugees and the mass immigration of Jews, the Arabs were the dominant demographic majority. Even today, the Jews comprise only slightly more than half of the population of Israel/Palestine.

As can be expected, the issue of who-came-when, who is “genuinely” a native and to whom the country “belongs,” is important only to determine who can exclude whom. Part of the population increase amongst the Arabs began in the 1850’s as a result of improved medical care provided by the Ottomans and Christian missionaries. So what? There was also significant emigration of Arabs during the nineteenth century because of the difficult economic situation, although greater stability brought about by European entrepreneurs in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire did attract a considerable number of Jews, especially from Muslim countries. After WWI, the British – not the Zionists – imported workers from Syria and elsewhere, and it is likely that Palestinian families who had earlier emigrated returned. The Land of Israel/Palestine was certainly not “empty” when the Zionists began arriving, as they claimed (in 1880 about 24,000 Jews lived in Palestine together with an Arab population of 400,000, or 6%). By 1922 the Jewish population had risen to 84,000 as against 590,000 Arabs, or about 12%; by 1948 the Jewish population stood at 650,000 versus 1,300,000 Arabs, some 33%. The steady but not dramatic increase in Arab population does not seem especially tied to immigration (Porat 1986; Sachar 1981).

-and, again-

### **So what?**

No manipulation of statistics will lessen legitimate Palestinian claims to the country. Immigration has nothing to do with national rights. Ben Gurion and Begin both hailed from Poland, Golda Meir from Milwaukee, Shaul Mofaz, a former IDF Chief of Staff and Minister of Defense, immigrated from Iran, Arye Deri, the leader of the Sephardi ultra-orthodox Shas party, came from Morocco – and the three “Israelis” who authored this booklet come from Minnesota, Michigan and California respectively. Since the days of Abraham, if not the Neanderthals who populated the Carmel Mountains near Haifa 40,000 years ago, we all came from somewhere for a myriad sundry reasons.

~

*“There are no Palestinians.”*

### **Only Palestinians have a right to say that.**

When someone says to us: “Jews have no right to self-determination or a country of their own. They are only a religious group, maybe a people with a common culture, but they are not a nation with rights of other nations,” we respond: Who are you to tell us who or what we are? This is the essence of self-determination; it is *self*-determination. I won’t let anyone define me and, by extension, I have no right to define for others who they are. Before the First Zionist Congress in 1897 Jews did not define themselves as a nation and did not aspire to a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. If the Palestinians, who have lived in Palestine/Syria for generations as a distinct cultural group, a people, decide at a particular point in history that they are a nation – just as Americans, Kenyans, Italians and many other peoples have – then that is their right. They are Palestinians with rights of self-determination because they claim to be.

~

*“Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East.”*

### **Can a democracy have an occupation?**

Though many important criticisms can be made about Israel's form of democracy, how does being a democracy justify the Occupation?

–and–

### **Palestinian democracy**

Hey, what about the Palestinian elections, certified as fair and open by an army of international observers? In fact, the Palestinians have a *more* democratic system than Israel. In Palestine you vote for both candidates from your district and candidates from the different parties. In Israel you don't have a representative in the government (or on the municipal level as well); you can only vote for country-wide lists presented as a *fait accompli* by the parties. Palestine also has a minimum quota of women parliamentarians (13%). Israel has no quota and the number of its women parliamentarians falls below this figure. And what about Lebanon? And recently Iraq (admittedly flawed, but impressive nonetheless)? Maybe there would be more democracies in the Middle East if the US supported progressive elements in the Arab world instead of autocratic but "friendly" regimes.

~

*"There is no contradiction between being a Jewish state and a democracy."*

### **Democracy versus ethnocracy.**

Isn't there? Is Israel really a democracy or is it an *ethnocracy*, a country "belonging" to one particular ethnic, religious or national group? What do the terms "Jewish state" or "Jewish democracy" really mean? Arab citizens of Israel may have the vote, but can institutionalized discrimination – 93% of the lands of Israel are reserved for Jews only, for example – be reconciled with democracy? And what about the almost four million Palestinians living under Israeli rule who have no say on how Israel governs them? Can they be simply ignored?

There *is* a contradiction if the state does not extend full rights, and protect those rights, to all of its inhabitants.

~

## **1947-1949 WARS**

*"Israel accepted the UN Partition Plan while the Arabs did not and instead invaded Israel. This shows that we want peace and the Arabs have always opted for war."*

Again, this view comes from a Zionist perspective, which makes sense if you are a Zionist. But the Palestinians aren't, and there's no reason why they should be. In their equally true and compelling narrative, they are a colonized people who lived peacefully in their own country until, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, colonial settlers started arriving, claiming that this was their country exclusively. With the support of other European colonial countries (especially the British Balfour Declaration of 1917) and with great financial resources coming from Europe, these settler colonials began buying up land, displacing the peasant farmers and establishing a military. Finally, in 1947, the UN – with no authority to do so – gave 56% of their country to the recent immigrants from Russia and Poland, and internationalized their major city, Jerusalem. Given their perception and experience, why should the Palestinians have agreed to give up most of their country to people from the outside who claimed it?

Why shouldn't they fight for it? Wouldn't you if your country was so threatened? Palestine is the only case in history in which, when the colonial regime ended (the British Mandate), the country did not revert to its indigenous population that owned 94% of the land. And of course the Israelis wanted "peace." Newcomers to the country, representing only a third of the population, they received more than half of historic Palestine. Great deal for them, unacceptable – and rightly so – for the native population.

*"The Palestinian refugees left voluntarily or under the direction of Arab commanders."*

**The refugees were victims of a deliberate campaign of ethnic cleansing, aided by the early exit of their elites.**

The Zionist movement came to Palestine not only with a claim to the land as the Jews' historic patrimony in which they seek national self-determination, but with an *exclusive* claim which denied the very existence of a Palestinian people and its rights and claims to the country. This emerged publicly and explicitly as early as 1937, but came operationally to the fore in 1947 when, *before* Israel was established as a state, *before* it entered into any fighting with the Palestinians or was attacked by Arab armies, a decision was taken by the Jewish leadership to take concrete military steps to ensure Jewish demographic domination in all of Palestine. As the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé details in his book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), the first *offensive* operations begin in late 1947/early 1948. "Every attack [on Arab neighborhoods, towns and villages]," according to one participant in the decision-making, "has to end with occupation, destruction and expulsion [*tihur*]" (Pappé 2006:64). In March, 1948, two months before the British departed, the Jewish leadership adopted its infamous Plan Dalet of expulsion. By the time Israel declared its independence, 250,000 Palestinians had either fled or been driven from their homes (Pappé 2006:119). It makes little sense that people leave their homes "voluntarily" for an uncertain future, and, according to the premier authority on the matter, Benny Morris (2004), there is no record of any call from the Arab leaders on the Palestinian population to leave their homes.

-and-

**Taking responsibility.**

In our reframing of the conflict, Israel is not the victim but has consistently pursued an exclusive, proactive claim to the entire country that put it on a collision course with the native population. The point is not to *blame* Israel (as "pro-Israeli" advocates try to blame the Arabs); it is rather to hold Israel – and the Palestinians – *accountable* for their actions under international law.

~

*"There were no massacres."*

**Wrong. Let's take responsibility.**

Benny Morris (2004) states that there were 18 massacres perpetrated by Jews on Palestinian civilian communities. Ilan Pappé (2006) lists 36. See also Abu Sitta (2001).

~

*"If events had been turned around, the Arabs would have massacred us."*

**How do you know? Isn't this what every colonial people says about its "uncivilized" natives, even as it goes about massacring them?**

History was not turned around and we Israelis were the ones who did most of the massacring; it was us who expelled over 60% of the Palestinians, for which some accounting must be made. What also escapes attention are Arab attempts to deal politically with the Yishuv (the pre-1948 Jewish community) and the young state of Israel. Yishuv leaders had excellent relations with Egypt before 1948 (Shlaim 2000); Israel entered the 1948 war with a pact with Jordan to divide the country between them (Shlaim 1988); and the Palestinian commander Fawzi al-Qawuqji sought a truce from January through March, 1948, in which he offered to bring the issue of the Jewish presence in Palestine to the Arab League for discussion (Pappe 2006:116).

But why would the Arabs have massacred us? We know the cold calculation behind our massacres, the desire to create a purely Jewish state and homeland, but the Arabs, who had lived with Jews in Palestine and throughout the Arab world for centuries, had no such national aspiration. The conflict is, at root, a colonial one, with the indigenous population resisting with all the means at its disposal – invariably far less than those of the colonial powers – the loss of their country and their displacement. Had Zionism dealt with the Palestinians’ national aspirations and fears instead of relentlessly pursuing a goal of ethnic domination, not only might the wars have been avoided but any motivation the Arabs might have had to massacre Jews as well.

## 1967/OCCUPATION

*“There is no Occupation. It is disputed territory.”*

### **Pure sophistry.**

Israel’s claim that it has no Occupation and that the territories it took in 1967 are merely “disputed” or “administered” is supported neither by international law nor the international community. Israel argues that occupation only occurs when one sovereign country conquers the territory of another sovereign country, and since there was never a sovereign power over the West Bank, East Jerusalem or Gaza (Jordan and Egypt also having taken them in 1948), no one has a claim. This interpretation gives the Palestinians no status at all, and flies in the face of the internationally-accepted definition of occupation, which has to do with effective control of territories beyond one’s recognized borders rather than with issues of sovereignty.

Here’s what John Dugard, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967 and one of the world’s leading authorities on international law, had to say in his 2007 report to the Human Rights Council:

The international community, speaking through the United Nations, has identified three regimes as inimical to human rights - colonialism, apartheid and foreign occupation. Numerous resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations testify to this. Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem contains elements of all three of these regimes, which is what makes the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) of special concern to the international community.

That the OPT is occupied by Israel and governed by the rules belonging to the special legal regime of occupation cannot be disputed. The International Court of Justice confirmed this in respect of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in its 2004 Advisory Opinion on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (p. 136, paragraph 78), and held that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, was applicable to this Territory (p. 136, paragraph 101). The

Security Council, General Assembly and States Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have declared that this Convention is applicable to the entire OPT (p. 136, paragraphs 96-99). Moreover, it is not possible to seriously argue, as Israel has attempted to do, that Israel has ceased to occupy Gaza since August 2005, when it withdrew its settlers and the Israel Defense Forces from Gaza....Israel was able to exercise effective control over the Territory by reason of its control of Gaza's external borders, air space and sea space. Since that date it has exercised its military authority within Gaza by military incursions and shelling, in circumstances which clearly establish occupation.

~

*"The settlements are for security."*

**No, they are for control, for "judaization," and to prevent the establishment of a viable Palestinian state.**

The Israeli government, from the day it began building settlements almost immediately following the 1967 war and until today, has never claimed that they contribute to security. They were established for two reasons, both having to do with Israel's claim to the entire country rather than to security: for control of territory and because of the connection of the place to Jewish history. Indeed, most of the settlements, placed in the middle of densely populated Palestinian territory, actually *created* security threats to their civilian populations, and in that way justified a military presence. Ariel, for instance, is located smack in the middle of the West Bank. There is no plausible pretext for the army bases and the Wall surrounding it without those Israeli civilians.

The settlements have one role only: to grab more land from the Palestinians, on whose private lands most are built. They are illegal in international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibiting an occupying power from transferring its civilian population into an occupied territory. (See the Foundation for Middle East Peace website: [www.fmep.org](http://www.fmep.org). Also the "settlement watch" page of the Peace Now website: [www.peacenow.org](http://www.peacenow.org).)

We would go even further and argue that almost no element of the Occupation has to do with genuine security. Security does not explain the establishment of some 250 settlements, the expropriation of the majority of Palestinian land, the demolition of almost 48,000 Palestinian homes since 1967, the uprooting of a million olive and fruit trees, the economic "closure" and severe limitations on freedom of movement (imposed at the start of the Oslo peace process, not in response to any security threat), the tortuous route of the Separation Barrier which intrudes deep into Palestinian territory, the construction of a massive Israeli-only highway system throughout the West Bank, the annexation of "east" Jerusalem; indeed, although "security" is the catch-all term used to frame Israel's policies in the Occupied Territories, it actually has little to do with Israel's matrix of control, a pro-active claim to the entire country, not a defensive policy (Halper 2005).

## **THE ARABS, TERRORISM & SECURITY: NO SOLUTION?**

*"Jews and Arabs cannot live together peacefully and never have."*

**First thought: If that's true, then Zionism was a really bad idea!**

Fortunately, however, this slogan is simply not true. Over the long history of the Middle East and North Africa vibrant Jewish communities could be found in almost every country. To be sure, there were

invariably tensions and occasional incidents of conflict – though remarkably few and minor for a history going back 1600 years to the origin of Islam and thousands of years of pre-Islamic co-existence. True, concepts of equality were lacking (they were lacking in Europe as well until the American and French revolutions), but to cast Muslims as the “enemy” of Jews is an egregious oversimplification. Indeed, the very concept “Judeo-Christian,” invoked in the Clash of Civilizations argument against Islam, fundamentally distorts history. If anything, there was a Judeo-Islam civilization as set apart from the Christians. Judaism resembles Islam in theology, structure and rituals far more than it does Christianity, and Jews lived infinitely better in Muslim societies than they did in Christian ones.

Jews and Christians were recognized by Islam as “Peoples of the Book.” Though much has been made of the term *dhimmi*, translated much too simply and out-of-historical-context as “second-class citizens,” Jews and Christians enjoyed internal communal autonomy according to the religious laws and traditions. They were not considered infidels by Islam and were not proselytized; nor were they considered a foreign element in Muslim countries, as the Jews were in Europe. Nothing approaching an ideology of anti-Semitism ever appeared in the Muslim world, and if Jews and Christians had to acknowledge their subordinate status vis-à-vis Muslims, that took the form of symbolic acts only (such as paying a poll tax). Except for the partial exceptions of Yemen and Iran where Shi’ite Islam ruled, Jews never suffered from the severe restrictions imposed on them by the Christian populations of Europe (such as not being allowed to own land, engage in many professions or enter major cities). Jewish quarters were nothing like European ghettos (Halper 1991: 25-31).

The fact remains that when the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal under the Inquisition, they found welcome refuge in the Muslim Ottoman Empire. Pogroms and ultimately the Holocaust were products of European anti-Semitism. It does great injustice to both Muslims and Mizrahi Jews (Jews from Muslim countries) to try to impose a European model of anti-Semitism on Middle Eastern/North African Jewish history. After the founding of Israel masses of Mizrahi Jews chose to come to Israel; they did so for religious and economic reasons, they were not driven out of their countries of origin (Stillman 1979). Even today Jewish communities thrive in Morocco (where there is Jewish government minister) and in Turkey, and in Iran.

-and-

**As history shows, we are embroiled in a political conflict, not an “inevitable” clash of civilizations.**

As the native Sephardi historians Eliahu Eliaschar (1997) and Meron Benvenisti (2001) testify, relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine were also traditionally harmonious. The rise of Zionism changed that – the first real fighting between Jews and Arabs took place in Sejera at the turn of the century when Jews purchased village land from absentee landlords and evicted the peasants who had farmed there for generations (R. Khalidi 1997). Our reframing requires us Israeli Jews to accept responsibility for our actions rather than always blaming others. Consider the words of Ahad Ha’am, later one of the most prominent figures in cultural Zionism, in his 1891 essay “Truth From the Land of Israel:”

From abroad we are accustomed to believe that the Land of Israel is presently almost totally desolate, an uncultivated desert, and that anyone wishing to buy land there can come and buy all he wants. But in truth it is not so. In the entire land, it is hard to find tillable land that is not already tilled....From abroad we are accustomed to believing that the Arabs are all desert savages, like donkeys, who neither see nor understand what goes on around them. But this is a big mistake....And what do our [Jewish] brethren in the Land of Israel do? They were slaves in the land of exile, and they suddenly find themselves with unlimited freedom, the kind of wild freedom to be found only in a country like Turkey [the Ottoman Empire]. This sudden change has engendered in them an impulse to despotism, as always happens when “a slave becomes a king,” and behold they walk with the Arabs in hostility and cruelty, unjustly encroaching on

them, shamefully beating them for no good reason, and even bragging about what they do, and there is no one to stand in the breach and call a halt to this dangerous and despicable impulse.

Again, the conflict between us Israelis and the Palestinians – and by extension with the wider Arab and Muslims worlds – has nothing to do with some primordial enmity. We are embroiled in a *political* conflict of two national movements claiming the same land. Only by insisting that the conflict is political rather than mystifying it can we hope to find a way out of this mess.

~

*“There are 22 Arab states, why can’t the Palestinians go there?”*

### **Why should they? There is only one Palestine.**

There is no justifiable reason why the Palestinians should go to any other country. What if some said: All Anglo-Saxon Americans should go back to England because that’s where English-speakers should live? This slogan assumes that all Arab countries are the same, rather than acknowledging the rich variety of histories, cultures, dialects and climates represented by them. According to the same logic, an Italian should feel right at home in Finland because the majority in both countries are white and Christian.

~

*“The Palestinians do not want peace. Even if Israel withdraws, all the Arabs want is to throw the Jews into the sea. You can’t trust the Arabs”*

This slogan, the Doctrine of the Permanent Enemy, as it may be called, is probably the most cynical one, used effectively by Israel’s political and military leaders to win support for their occupation policies. Flying in the face of history, peace agreements with Arab countries and an offer of peace by the Arab League, together with a long-standing readiness on the part of the Palestinians to reach a genuine settlement, the claim that there is no political solution to the conflict only mystifies and perpetuates it. Playing on fear and stereotyping, it disempowers the Israeli public, leaving it no choice but to hunker down and trust in the army to bring some sort of personal security. Peace depends upon a just resolution of the conflict, not maintaining an unequal *status quo* of power.

~

*“Israel wants peace. The Arabs always reject it.”*

### **The record shows a significant degree of Israeli responsibility for prolonging the conflict.**

This is not the place to review years of conflict. Suffice it to say that Israel carries its fair share of the responsibility. “The files of the Israeli Foreign Ministry,” writes the Israeli historian Avi Shlaim (2001:49), “burst at the seams with evidence of Arab peace feelers and Arab readiness to negotiate with Israel from September 1948 on.” To take just a few examples of opportunities deliberately spurned:

- In the spring and summer of 1949, Israel and the Arab states met under the auspices of the UN’s Palestine Conciliation Committee (PCC) in Lausanne, Switzerland. Israel did not want to make any territorial concessions. Ben Gurion observed in a cabinet meeting that the Israeli public was “drunk with victory” and in no mood for concessions. Had they been sober, could sixty years of conflict have been avoided?

- In 1949, Syria's leader Husni Zaim openly declared his readiness to be the first Arab leader to conclude a peace treaty with Israel – as well as to resettle half the Palestinian refugees in Syria. He repeatedly offered to meet with Ben Gurion, who steadfastly refused (Morris 1999:63-265).
- King Abdullah of Jordan engaged in two years of negotiations with Israel but was never able to make a meaningful breakthrough on any major matter. "I could justify a peace by pointing to concessions made by the Jews," he said. "But without any concessions from them, I am defeated before I even start" (Morris 1999: 262).
- In 1952-53 extensive negotiations were held with the Syrian government of Adib Shishakli, a pro-American leader who was eager for accommodation with Israel. Those talks failed because Israel insisted on exclusive control of the Sea of Galilee, Lake Huleh and the Jordan River.
- Nasser made repeated offers to Ben Gurion beginning soon after the Revolution in 1952 to talk peace, with no success (Morris 1999:265-268).
- Israel's post-1948 war inflexibility was stated flatly by Ben Gurion: "Israel will not discuss a peace involving the concession of any piece of territory. The neighboring states do not deserve an inch of Israel's land.... We are ready for peace in exchange for peace" (Morris 1999:265).
- In late 1965 the head of the Mossad, Meir Amit, was invited by Abdel Hakim Amer, the vice-president and deputy commander of the Egyptian armed forces, to come to Cairo. The visit was vetoed by the government (Morris 1999:305). Could the 1967 war have been avoided? We'll never know.
- Immediately after the 1967 war Israel sent out feelers for an accommodation with both the Palestinians of the West Bank and with Jordan. The Palestinians were willing to enter into discussions over peace, but only if that meant an independent Palestinian state, an option Israel never even entertained. The Jordanians were also ready, but only if they received full control again of the West Bank and, in particular, East Jerusalem and its holy places. King Hussein even held meetings with Israeli officials, but Israel's refusal to contemplate a full return of the territories scuttled the process. Israel's annexation of a "greater" Jerusalem area and an almost immediate program of settlement construction foreclosed any option for a full peace, then and until today (Gorenberg 2006:175-176; Shlaim 2000:264).
- In 1971 Sadat sent a letter to the UN Jarring Commission expressing Egypt's willingness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel (Morris 1999:388-389). Israeli acceptance could have prevented the 1973 war, but Golda Meir summarily dismissed the idea.
- Feelers put out by Arafat and other Palestinian leaders in the early 1970s expressed a readiness to discuss peace with Israel (Aburish 1998:134).
- In 1978 Sadat attempted to expand the Israel-Egypt peace process to resolve the Palestine issue; he was rebuffed by Begin who refused to consider anything beyond Palestinian "autonomy" (Morris 1999:469).
- In 1988, five years before the Oslo peace process began, the PLO publicly recognized Israel within the Green Line and expressed a willingness to enter into discussions (Morris 1999:605-610). Until today this is excluded from the Israeli framing.

- In 1993, as the very start of the Oslo peace process, Arafat and the PLO reiterated in writing their recognition of Israel within the 1967 borders (that is, on 78% of historic Palestine). Neither in Oslo nor subsequently has Israel ever agreed to relinquish the territory it conquered in 1967 in favor of a Palestinian state (Savir 1998). On the contrary, during the seven years of the Oslo “peace process,” successive Labor and Likud governments eliminated the two-state solution and any possibility of peace by more than tripling the settler population (from 200,000 in 1993 to 400,000 in 2000, and to 750,000 in 2014).
- Sharon completely disregarded the Arab Peace Initiative. Drafted by Saudi Arabia and approved unanimously by the Arab League in 2002, it offers Israel recognition, peace and regional integration in return for relinquishing the Occupation. It is an offer still on the table.
- Arafat, the most congenial and cooperative partner Israel ever had and the last Palestinian leader who could “deliver,” was excluded from the political process by Sharon, who subsequently boycotted his successor, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), as well.
- In mid-2006 Sharon’s successor, Ehud Olmert, declared “irrelevant” the Prisoners’ Document in which all Palestinian factions, including Hamas, agreed on a political program of seeking a two-state solution.
- As the Palestinians pushed for peace within the framework of the Road Map and the Arab League initiative, the Olmert government continued to pursue the “Convergence Plan” for an expanded Israel and a non-viable, semi-sovereign Palestinian prison-state. Settlement construction, economic “closure” and impoverishment of the Palestinian people and their imprisonment within the “Separation Barrier” continued apace.
- Beginning in the fall of 2006 and continuing to this day, Bashar Assad of Syria made repeated overtures for peace with Israel. To this Prime Minister Netanyahu responded: “We will never leave the Golan Heights” (*Ha’aretz*, April 17, 2016).
- In July, 2013, US Secretary of State John Kerry embarked on a major initiative to negotiate a peace settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians. Israel, however, refused to publicly accept the two-state solution, refused to discuss borders, the status of Jerusalem or any other substantive issue, refused to accept the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, and refused to release Palestinian prisoners. On the contrary, in the midst of the negotiations the Israeli government announced the construction of some 16,000 new homes in the settlements. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon also publicly humiliated Kerry: “The only thing that can ‘save’ us,” he said derisively, “is that John Kerry will get a Nobel Peace Prize and leave us alone.” When the talks finally collapsed in April, 2014, Martin Indyk, the American negotiator who was considered extremely pro-Israel and had once headed AIPAC, blamed Israel for their failure. This, despite pointing out that the “solution” pursued by the US would leave 80% of the settlers intact in their homes.

-and-

**It’s in Israel’s interests to go beyond slogans and settlements to pro-actively seek peace.**

All this is not to say that the Palestinians and the wider Arab world do not carry responsibility as well, but as the Occupying Power and the strong party in the conflict, we would argue that Israel nevertheless bears the lion’s share of the responsibility for ending the conflict – which is end-able, as the Arab peace initiatives listed above show. Our position is that if Israel will not take the lead in forging a peace in the

best interests of itself and its antagonists, then the international community, guided by human rights, international law, UN resolutions and a universal need for peace and justice, must do so. Our warning to Israel is that this conflict, including the settlement project and any hint of a non-viable Palestinian mini-state, is ultimately unsustainable. Today Israel can dictate its own terms, but that won't last forever. It has already, in our view, eliminated the two-state solution, which was the easiest to achieve and the most pro-Israeli (leaving at least 78% of the country in Israeli hands). Now it looks like Israel has created the conditions in which only a single democratic state (bi-national or not) is possible. That means that Israel, by its own hand, has eliminated itself as a Jewish state. If it refuses to transform itself into anything other than an apartheid state, it will eventually become so isolated and conflict-ridden that it will be uninhabitable by all but a few die-hards. Unless Israel takes the initiative, it will be forced to accept a political solution far less in its interests, and conceivably lose everything.

~

*“If the Arabs get the West Bank and Gaza, they’ll want Jaffa and Haifa next.”*

### **Political settlements between states resolve outstanding disputes.**

The Palestinians will never cease viewing Jaffa and Haifa as part of Palestine, just as we will never cease viewing the Old City of Jerusalem and Hebron as part of the Land of Israel. For both Arabs and Jews, Palestine/Israel is one indivisible country. Ironically, the vast majority of both peoples (though not Israeli governments) agreed that the land be divided into two states. This is a political solution that would have given both peoples peace, security and national self-determination. But it's gone, and all these slogans have lost any meaning. Israel is a strong and internationally recognized state. If a solution to the conflict had been reached within agreed-upon borders, there is no reason why both peoples would not have gotten on with their lives in the normal way other peoples and countries do. Today the issue is reversed: If Israel gets the West Bank (it is trying to slough Gaza off on the Egyptians), will it lose itself?

~

*“The Palestinians do not recognize Israel as a Jewish state.”*

### **No, but they do recognize the State of Israel.**

Again, what are we demanding? That the Palestinians must become Zionists before we talk to them? The Palestinian national leadership as represented by the PLO has recognized the state of Israel within the 1949 armistice lines – over and over and over for the past 30 years. They have even given up political claim to half the territory appropriated to them by the UN in 1947. They recognize the *state* of Israel, just as every country recognizes the existence of other states though not necessarily agreeing to their ideologies, self-definitions or policies. Since 20% of Israelis are Palestinians, there is no reason why the Palestinians should be expected to accept the Jewish character of the state. That would compromise the right of their own people, Palestinian citizens of Israel, to struggle for a democratic Israel offering equality to all its citizens, a struggle many non-Palestinian Israelis also support. Guaranteeing Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel the fundamental right to full equality is a key element in the broader Palestinian program. It cannot be reconciled with recognition of Israel as a Jewish state.

In fact, this demand was never raised by Israeli governments previous to Netanyahu's. Rabin never made it a condition for negotiating with the Palestinians, and Egypt and Jordan were not required to recognize the Jewishness of Israel as a precondition for diplomatic relations. When Olmert raised this issue with George Bush and Condoleezza Rice, it was laughed off. Only Netanyahu has raised it – with the support of Obama and Kerry, it must be noted – in order to effectively torpedo any peace talks while blaming the Palestinians for their failure.

~  
*“ Hamas does not recognize the State of Israel. ”*

**Again, a simplistic, self-serving slogan.**

On the surface it's true. Hamas, which sees all of historic Palestine as Palestine, will never recognize either the political legitimacy of Israel or the fact that 78% or more of Palestine belongs to another people. This is a reasonable and understandable position from an anti-colonial perspective. But Hamas is also pragmatic. So it has agreed – in the Prisoners' Document of 2005 as well as in subsequent policy statements – that if the Fatah party enters into negotiations with Israel and the outcome approximates a genuine two-state solution, it will respect that if approved by a Palestinian national referendum. We simply cannot expect a colonized people to recognize and legitimize the taking of their country. The fact that the Palestinians even accepted the two-state solution back in 1988, thereby giving up political claim to 78% of their homeland, is unprecedented. Hamas's position of living with Israel without legitimizing it is, in fact, a principled and constructive compromise.

~

*“ Most Palestinians are terrorists or support terrorists. ”*

**By the same token, one may add that “most Israelis are terrorists or support terrorists.”**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (1995) defined terrorism as, “the deliberate and systematic assault on civilians to inspire fear for political ends.” By this definition both Israel and the Palestinians are guilty of terrorism. During the second Intifada, for instance, more than 1000 Israeli civilians were killed, including 113 children and youths, and around 6000 injured. At the same time some 3500 Palestinians died in Israeli attacks, 85% of them civilians including 650 children or youths. More than 29,000 Palestinians were injured (Palestinian Red Crescent Society). More recently, Israel killed about 1300 people in its 2008 assault on Gaza, more than half of them civilians (including 400 children); Hamas rocket fire had killed 20 Israeli civilians over the preceding two years. In the 2014 assault on Gaza, more than 2,100 Palestinians – more than half of whom were civilians – were killed in Gaza, along with 66 Israeli soldiers and seven Israeli civilians. *All* were victims of terrorism. (95% of Israeli Jews supported the three latest attacks on Gaza, in 2008-9, 2012 and 2014). To the degree that both the Hamas and Israeli regimes employ terrorist policies that are supported by their populations, both peoples support terrorism. Israel, of course, hides its state terrorism behind the notion that since only states possess a legitimate monopoly over the use of force, all resistance on the part of non-state actors is “terrorism.” This classically colonialist use of the term distorts reality and leaves states off the hook for far more violent actions.

-and/but-

**Why aren't states held accountable for terrorism?**

Our reframing adopts a human rights approach to the issue of terrorism, one that asserts an absolute prohibition of killing, harming or intimidating non-combatant civilians. The human rights approach is especially useful because it condemns *all* forms of terror, whether coming from non-state actors (the ones usually accused of terrorism) or from states (who are generally let off the hook). Since governments are responsible for the overwhelming majority of violence and deaths, it is far more important to hold them accountable to international law than groups we vilify as “terrorists.”

In his book *Death By Government*, R. J. Rummel (1994:13) claims about 170,000 innocent civilians were killed by non-state terrorists over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – a pretty significant figure. But, he adds,

during the first eighty-eight years of this [20<sup>th</sup>] century, almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, knifed, burned, starved, frozen, crushed or worked to death; buried alive, drowned, hung, bombed or killed in any other of the myriad ways governments have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. The dead could conceivably be nearly 360 million people.

And that doesn't include Zaire, Bosnia, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Saddam Hussein's reign, the impact of UN sanctions on the Iraqi civilian population and other state-sponsored murder that occurred after Rummel compiled his figures. It also does not account for all the forms of State Terrorism that do not result in death: torture, imprisonment, repression, house demolitions, induced starvation, intimidation and all the rest. "Terrorism from below," while illegal, immoral and horrible, pales in comparison to the "terrorism from above" of states – Israel included. That is why we must aim not to blame the parties but to hold them accountable under human rights and international law.

–and–

**Most Palestinians do *not* support terrorism (unless under immense pressure).**

The Oslo peace process began with the support of 85% of the Palestinians. More recently, the main reason behind Hamas' period of "calm" in 2005-2006 was the need to take into consideration the desires of the general Palestinian populace, which largely supported the lull and the disarming of the militant groups (Center for Special Studies 2006). If they have a "political horizon," Palestinians overwhelmingly support negotiations. In periods of desperation and Israeli settlement expansion (as well as house demolitions, economic sanctions and other acts of Israeli violence towards the Palestinian civilian population), they tend to support – though always with a clear preference for negotiations – violent resistance, which they feel is the only language Israel understands. In the current state of desperation (from the 2014 assault on Gaza through today's repression in the West Bank), 66% of Palestinians in the Occupied Territory support another Intifada.

~

*"The Palestinians chose armed struggle rather than non-violence."*

**As did the Jews, the Americans, most colonized peoples, etc. etc....**

There is a huge amount of hypocrisy and self-righteousness in this slogan. Why single out the Palestinians? Did the Jews adopt a non-violent strategy to their struggle for independence? Regardless of our preferences, international law recognizes the right of people to resist oppression, occupation and colonialism through armed struggle, as long as innocent civilians are not targeted.

And in fact the masses of Palestinians struggle non-violently every day, whether passing through checkpoints or avoiding them, whether rebuilding their "illegally" demolished homes or demonstrating against Israeli policies. The nonviolent struggle is not reported and it is not well known. The media tends to report only violent clashes and not the work of peace activists. Not all Palestinians believe that armed struggle is the right strategy – the International Solidarity Movement, among other Palestinian movements, follows a strictly non-violent policy – even if they believe that it is legitimate. Some see the armed struggle as counterproductive because the Palestinians cannot defeat the Israeli military might

militarily. Others are fearful that the world outside sees them only as terrorists and overlook the justice of their cause.

-and-

### **The Palestinians tried non-violent negotiations unsuccessfully.**

The PLO agreed to abandon the armed struggle when it declared Palestinian independence on November 15, 1988, on condition that the Occupation end and a viable Palestinian state emerge. Unfortunately, the Occupation, violently imposed and maintained, prevailed.

~

*“The real problem is the anti-Semitic propaganda that Palestinians receive since childhood; their schools teach hatred of Israelis.”*

### **Not true.**

Ruth Firer of the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Sami Adwan, a professor of education at Bethlehem University in Bethlehem compared Palestinian and Israeli textbooks (Firer and Adwan 2004). In their 2004 study of 13 Israeli textbooks and 9 Palestinian textbooks they found that

The books portray Jews throughout history in a positive manner and avoid negative stereotypes. However, according to the everyday experience of Palestinians, modern-day Israelis are presented as occupiers. The texts include examples of Israelis killing and imprisoning Palestinians, demolishing their homes, uprooting fruit trees, and confiscating their lands and building settlements on them. The texts also talk about the right of return for the 1948 Palestinian refugees when describing how those refugees live in camps. The Israeli textbooks, on the other hand, don't even mention Palestinians. The Palestinians, as such, are not found in any of the three types of primary-level textbooks. Disputed territory is presented as being part of Israel: Many of the chapters describe “the good land,” sometimes called “our birthplace” or “homeland,” and include photos of places that are in the PNA or are in dispute between the two nations (i.e., East Jerusalem). Either side's books tell the story of the conflict from the other's viewpoint, both ignore the other side's suffering and each counts only its only victims. While there is clearly a nationalist sentiment in Palestinian textbooks (as there is in Israeli textbooks as well), there is no call for incitement or violence against Jews or Israelis in the Palestinian Authority's curriculum.

### **On the contrary....**

Nurit Peled-Elhanan, an Israeli educator, examined 17 Israeli textbooks and reached the conclusion in her 2012 book, *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Propaganda and Ideology in Education*, that Arabs (they are never referred to as Palestinians, she says, unless the context is terrorism), are presented in an overwhelmingly negative, Orientalist and demeaning light. “The Arab with a camel,” she writes, “in an Ali Baba dress. They describe them as vile and deviant and criminal, people who don't pay taxes, people who live off the state, people who don't want to develop. The only representation is as refugees, primitive farmers and terrorists. You never see a Palestinian child or doctor or teacher or engineer or modern farmer.” Instead, they are represented – even Palestinian citizens of Israel – as terrorists, refugees or primitive farmers.

## THE OSLO PEACE PROCESS/THE SECOND INTIFADA

*“There is no partner for peace.”*

This is probably the most damaging slogan for peace that Israeli politicians have ever devised – and it was the product of a Labour Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, not Sharon, Netanyahu or the others of the right (although they repeat it ceaselessly). It effectively ended all interest Israeli Jews had in any kind of reconciliation with the Palestinians, and has caused them to simply wipe their hands of the entire conflict, including their own responsibility. The “Arabs” (we don’t use the term “Palestinians” in Israel), are to blame; they rejected Barak’s “generous offer” – which is an urban myth, no such offer was ever made in Camp David or after – and so they have eliminated themselves as “partners.” If the definition of “peace” is merely a lack of conflict, with Israel maintaining military control of the entire country and permanent political control over East Jerusalem, the settlement blocs, borders, water resources and even the Palestinians’ airspace, the essence of Israel’s “offer” at Camp David, there is indeed no partner for that kind of peace. But if the Palestinians would receive sovereignty within a viable state of their own and Israel acknowledges the refugees’ right to return, or if another just solution is found, then, yes, Palestinians have shown themselves full partners, as negotiations from the Oslo, the Road Map and Kerry’s abortive initiative have shown.

Barak’s decree that “there is no partner for peace” is the reason why the Occupation has become a non-issue for Israelis across the political spectrum, and why they feel no pity or responsibility towards the suffering Palestinians. “There is no partner for peace” means, for Israeli Jews, “they brought their own suffering upon themselves; they deserve whatever they get.” It answers yet another perplexing question: after everything that Jews have gone through in their history, why don’t they care about what happens to Palestinians?

-and-

Just consider these two statements by Yasser Arafat.

As a precondition for opening the Oslo peace process, the Palestinians were required yet again to formally recognize the state of Israel. In an open letter to Rabin (September 9, 1993), Arafat went far beyond that mere declaration when he wrote:

The signing of the Declaration of Principles marks a new era in the history of the Middle East. In firm conviction thereof, I would like to confirm the following PLO commitments:

The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security.

The PLO accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process, and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides and declares that all outstanding issues relating to permanent status will be resolved through negotiations.

The PLO considers that the signing of the Declaration of Principles constitutes a historic event, inaugurating a new epoch of peaceful coexistence, free from violence and all other acts which endanger peace and stability.

Accordingly, the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.

In view of the promise of a new era and the signing of the Declaration of Principles and based on Palestinian acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the PLO affirms that those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist, and the provisions of the Covenant which are inconsistent with the commitments of this letter are now inoperative and no longer valid.

(For the record, Rabin's reply acknowledged neither the Palestinians' right to self-determination nor acquiescence to a two-state solution. His one sentence letter simply stated dryly: "In response to your letter of September 9, 1993, I wish to confirm to you that, in light of the PLO commitments included in your letter, the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.")

And who remembers the moving words of Yasser Arafat at the (unsuccessful) conclusion of the Wye Plantation negotiations in 1998? That's when Netanyahu decided to stop agreed-upon Israeli withdrawals in the West Bank and his Foreign Minister Sharon publicly called on the settlers to "grab every hilltop." Nonetheless, in the concluding press conference, with nothing to gain and no prompting, Arafat said:

I am quite confident that I'm talking in the name of all Palestinians when I assure you that we are all committed to the security of every child, woman and man in Israel. I will do everything I can so that no Israeli mother will be worried if her son or daughter is late coming home, or any Israeli would be afraid when they heard an explosion.

~

*"The Palestinians rejected Barak's 'generous offer' and then responded with violence."*

**The second Intifada broke out *because* there was no generous offer (or any other).**

Again, the "generous offer" is an urban myth. It stems from the "Clinton Parameters" under which Israel would withdraw from 96% of the Occupied Territories (and remember, we're talking about 96% (though really much less) of 22% of historic Palestine). But the proposal came much too late in the process to be seriously considered, let alone implemented. The very idea, however, rests on the mistaken assumption that the more territory the Palestinians get the more sovereignty and economic viability they get. This is not the case. The Palestinians could receive that much land yet still not have a *viable* state. Keeping only a strategic 5% (in reality more like 10-15% when "east" Jerusalem, settlement blocs, "no-man's land" and other areas are factored in), Israel could control borders, movement of people and goods in and out and within the Palestinian territories, water, the airspace and the communications sphere, not to mention its main settlement blocs. (Barak's "generous offer" included 80% of the settlers within an expanded Israel.) It could also control the Palestinian economy, the most important religious and cultural sites of the Palestinians (like the Haram/Temple Mount and other holy places in and around Jerusalem). And it would still leave the refugee issue unresolved.

Arafat would have had solid reasons for rejecting Barak's "offer" at Camp David – had there really been such an offer. As it was, jumping to "final status negotiations" before the Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank mandated by the Oslo agreements had been completed ensured that the Palestinians would enter into negotiations from an extremely weak position on the ground.

–and–

**Arafat did not ignite the Second Intifada.**

Although Arafat was blamed for the outbreak of the second Intifada (rather than Sharon for his provocative excursion to the Haram/Temple Mount), both Israel military intelligence and political analysts admit today that it was a spontaneous uprising against what the Palestinian perceived as the institutionalization of the Occupation (Peri 2006:242). Indeed, indications are that the Intifada was aimed at Arafat, as a warning that he not surrender to the massive pressures placed on him to submit to Barak's dictates. Says Menachem Klein, an advisor to the Israeli Delegation to the 2000 Camp David Summit:

The claim that Arafat after dismissing a generous Israeli offer launched a violent intifada is a myth. There is no evidence whatsoever that there was any such pre-planned decision by the Palestinian Authority. There were preparations by several groups of the new opposition to confront Israel. They came to Arafat asking him to give a green light to confront Israel with violence and a popular uprising to force Barak to make concessions and to take the Palestinians seriously. But Arafat rejected this request. Arafat did not say yes, but his responses were ambiguous in response to pressures coming from different sides....Arafat tried to maneuver but he lacked machinery and institutions to control the situation. His system, like the old PLO system, was weak. So he tried to ride the tiger. Sometimes he succeeded, other times he failed.

The Israelis from the very beginning did not help him. Rather than seeking to support Arafat and the Palestinian establishment, the Israelis blamed and demonized them. This strengthened the radical forces and led to escalation of the intifada. The Israeli leadership and its negotiating team also failed to evaluate the real goals of the intifada. From my perspective, they defined the intifada as a low-intensity conflict, rather than a struggle for liberation and independence....What was needed, instead, was a leadership that was willing to make the real concessions, like those tentatively made at Taba, especially concerning territory and settlement. A decision to evacuate several settlements, for example, might have stopped the intifada and helped the Palestinian leadership restore calm. It was not done.  
([http://www.fmep.org/analysis/articles/origins\\_of\\_intifada.html](http://www.fmep.org/analysis/articles/origins_of_intifada.html)).

-and-

### **Again, don't forget the Palestinians original "generous offer"**

By accepting the two-state solution in 1988, the PLO under Arafat made an unprecedented concession for a colonized people: Even though we Palestinians are the indigenous population, even though we will be the majority in Palestine/the Land of Israel with or without the return of refugees, we will nevertheless recognize and accept your sovereignty, Israel, over 78% of our homeland, if you give us merely the 22% remaining (and not pieces adding up to 22% but fragmented and non-viable, as the Israel's "territorial swaps" idea proposes). What could be more generous than that? Certainly not Barak's generous non-offer.

-and-

### **Israel ended the Oslo peace process.**

It was the Israelis, we should recall, and not the Palestinians who walked away from the Taba negotiations in January, 2001, the last significant meeting of the Oslo peace process.

~

*"The Palestinian Authority can't control its people. Until the PA controls terrorism we cannot end the Occupation."*

**The PA does not even have security access to 95% of the Occupied Territories.**

In principle, the Palestinian Authority has jurisdiction and security control only of Area A (18% of the West Bank truncated into dozens of tiny enclaves) and Gaza, not of Areas B or C where Israel holds sway. In fact, Israel controls *all* Palestinian cities and territory in the West Bank with the partial exception of Jericho, while Hamas controls Gaza. Without sovereignty over a coherent territory and the ability, denied by Israel, to deploy security forces, it is unreasonable to expect the PA to exert any control or responsibility over its people.

-and-

The Shin Beit, Israel's internal security agency, attested that the Palestinian Authority does not incite terrorism, has significantly improved its response to terror in the West Bank and, thus, deserves "conciliatory gestures" from Israel (Israeli News, January 7, 2016). In fact, in an interview on Israel's Channel 2 TV (March 31, 2016), Abbas publicly asked Netanyahu for even one week of full Palestinian security control in Area A in order to prove how effective a policeman for Israel he can be (a request that dismayed the Palestinians).

-and-

**We cannot expect the PA to be Israel's policeman.**

Unless there's a political plan for their freedom to accompany the Israeli demand to end the violence, it will simply never happen. Remember, international law recognizes the right of oppressed peoples to resist, even in armed struggle – as long as their resistance does not involve attacking civilians. To lump all resistance under the label of "terrorism" and then to expect an occupied people to passively accept that situation is neither realistic nor fair. If all that is left to the Palestinian Authority is to be a collaborationist regime and Israel's policeman (which is how most Palestinians view it today), then it will collapse sooner or later. People don't police their own captivity.

~

*"The Palestinians fare better under Israel's Occupation than they would under their own PA."*

**What a choice!**

The Palestinians certainly cannot envision or accept permanent existence under Israeli Occupation. How could they? Almost 90% of the Palestinian population are confined to Areas A and B of the West Bank and tiny Gaza, less than 10% of their homeland and that fragmented into dozens of disconnected, impoverished enclaves. According to the World Bank, 35% of Palestinians live under the poverty line of \$2 a day. Since 1967 Israel has frozen home construction and has demolished some 48,000 homes of ordinary people who simply want decent housing for their families, homes built *on their own land*. (The 18,000 homes destroyed in Gaza in the 2014 assault have never been rebuilt.) True, the PA has little to offer its people: no viable economy, few social services, a heavy hand of repression required by being Israel's policeman (the only condition on which Israel would allow a PA), so the choice for Palestinian is stark. But given genuine independence and the chance to build a new democratic country with a strong economy, in which the autocratic and unelected PA of today would be replaced by an elected government, do you think they would really opt for life under Israeli occupation? Unlikely.

-and-

**Back to 19<sup>th</sup> century colonialism**

Self-determination does not guarantee a good life, as the experience of many (if not most) of the countries of the world amply shows. Whether or not the Palestinians succeed, they have a right to try like everyone else. This slogan smacks of paternalistic colonialism: “Let us accept our White Man’s Burden and take care of our brown brothers, sparing them the humiliation of failing to run their own affairs.”

~

## **THE WALL/FENCE/BARRIER**

*“The Wall is not a wall, but a fence. The Wall is 95% a fence.”*

### **It’s a “barrier,” OK?**

The official name is a “separation barrier” (*mikhshol hafrada*). Does it really matter what material the Wall/Fence/Barrier is made of, or whether or not you can see through it? The point is, it effectively prevents the Palestinians from accessing roads, schools, hospitals, places of employment, government services, family members, holy sites and their capital, Jerusalem. Moreover, this same barrier has been built so as to confiscate large sections of land from the Palestinian Territories, in contravention of international law.

-and-

### **The term “fence” is deliberately misleading.**

Although it has the appearance of a “fence” in the rural areas, the Barrier is as formidable an obstacle to movement as any wall. The electronic fence is accompanied by patrol roads, trenches, surveillance cameras and sensors, mine fields, guard towers, electric gates open only sporadically, terminals, checkpoints, and secondary fences. It carves a sterile swath 680 kms/450 miles long and 75-100 meters wide through Palestinian farmlands and open space. “Only” 5% or so is an actual wall – in many places an 8 meter/26 foot concrete wall twice as high as the Berlin Wall – but it is not linear as was the Berlin Wall. It encloses entire cities, urban neighborhoods, towns and villages. Some 50,000 Palestinians are trapped between the Green Line border and the wall, facing impoverishment, alienation from their land and water, and eventual transfer (UN 2005). When it is completed, about 260,000 Palestinians will be permanently confined to small encircled enclaves, including 55,000 residents of East Jerusalem. On the other side of the barrier more than two million Palestinians have been enclosed within the West Bank “cantons.”

~

*“The Barrier is for security.”*

### **The Wall began as a threat, not as a security measure, then turned into prison walls.**

The Barrier was conceived by Barak’s government as a warning to Arafat that if he were not more “forthcoming” in his negotiating positions, Israel would unilaterally create its own facts on the ground – in this case a demographic border. Thus, in October, 2000, Barak’s government published a "Security Separation Plan" in which the proposed “barrier” would provide physical security to Israeli citizens (its main selling point to the Israeli public) while pressuring the Palestinians by imposing economic and workforce closures, trade restrictions, sanctions and other means of pressuring them to submit, just as it has in Gaza. It was not motivated by security, as its official name, the Separation Barrier, demonstrates.

-and-

**It is a “separation” and *not* a “security” barrier.**

The falsity of presenting the Wall as a security barrier is demonstrated graphically in the Israeli government decision in 2007/08 not to complete it at all. Enough has been built on the western side (about 60%) to effectively demarcate the future expanded Israeli border. The eastern side of the Barrier was never even started. Besides, over 200,000 West Bank Palestinians remain on the “Israeli” side of the Wall. If the danger truly comes from them, how can it possibly serve Israel’s security?

Conceived as a “separation barrier,” not a security barrier (and hence its name), the Wall was conceived as a way of achieving the physical separation from Palestinians that Israel has always desired (*hafrada*). Israeli government officials have spoken often and publicly of how the circuitous path of the Wall will incorporate the major settlement blocs, including a “Greater” Jerusalem, into the fabric of Israel. In December 2005, then Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni said, “One does not have to be a genius to see that the fence will have implications for the future border.”

-and-

**It is an illegal structure, causing great and disproportionate suffering.**

Had the Wall been built on the Green Line, as a true security barrier would have been, it wouldn’t even have been controversial. Israel would not have been hauled before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. As it was, in 2004 the ICJ ruled the Wall (as the Court called it) illegal, both because it violated Palestinian territory and because it violated the principle of proportionality: the degree of suffering it inflicts on the Palestinian population is grossly disproportional to the security concerns of Israel – especially since security was not the main motivation behind construction of the Wall in the first place. The ICJ ordered the Wall dismantled, a ruling was upheld by the General Assembly of the UN by a vote of every country in the world (including all of Europe) versus, as usual, the US, Israel, Australia and a couple Pacific atolls.

~

*“If we take down the Wall, there will be more attacks. Gaza is a testament to the effectiveness of a wall.”*

**Walls cannot bring peace or security, especially if they themselves are part of the oppression.**

It is impossible to ascribe the reduction in attacks on Israel to one variable. Since it is highly porous and will remain so, can this relative quiet be credited to the Wall, or perhaps Israeli military activity going on for years is a better explanation? What about other, *political* explanations such as the periodic but lengthy cease fires declared by the Palestinians (including Hamas, whose *hudna* lasted a year and a half until Israel resumed its assassination campaign)? Or does the reduction in violence signal only a temporary lull in the conflict whose root causes are not being addressed? In fact, an argument can be made that the Wall, instead of bringing security to Israel, actually enflames the conflict by making Palestinians so desperate that they have no choice but continue to resist with violence. In the end, the Wall/Barrier/fence may only serve to perpetuate the conflict.

~

*“A country has the right to defend itself.”*

**Defense is not the issue here.**

Israel certainly has a right to defend itself, but the Palestinians, who recognized the existence of the state of Israel almost thirty years ago, also have a right to live in freedom. Our argument is that these rights must complement each other; no one can enjoy security if others do not enjoy their rights and security as well. International law therefore insists on a balance between legitimate self defense and policies, often couched in terms of self-defense and security, which harm other civilian populations. The disproportionality between the Wall's alleged security function and the damage and suffering it has inflicted upon the Palestinians is precisely what led the International Court of Justice to rule it illegal, despite their recognition of Israel's right of self-defense.

By the same token, Israel's unrestrained assaults on Gaza in 2008/9, 2012 and 2014 were war crimes by virtue of their disproportionality and the fact that more than half the victims killed were civilians. Had Israel responded to the repeated pleas of the Palestinians of all factions to lift the ongoing siege of Gaza, to cease its repeated violations of the cease-fire with Hamas and to take meaningful steps to end its 49-year Occupation, the rocket fire from Gaza and all other threats to Israeli civilian lives could have been avoided altogether.

-and-

**Genuine security comes from making peace.**

**THE ILLEGITIMACY OF CRITICIZING ISRAEL**

*"Jews opposed to the Occupation are anti-Israel and self-hating. Criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic."*

**Many Jews in Israel and abroad are critical of the Occupation.**

Since most Jews, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, support a two-state solution, criticism of Israel's policy of perpetuating the Occupation through settlement construction and refusing to negotiate seriously does not mean anti-Israeliness or self-hatred. On the contrary, it implies a concern for Israel's very survival, certainly as a "Jewish" state, if the Occupation does not end. Look at Jewish Voice for Peace and even J-Street in the US, Jews for Justice for Palestinians and Independent Jewish Voices in Britain, IJV in Canada, and European Jews for Just Peace, an alliance of critical Jewish groups in 16 European countries. They all show that Jews, too, can (and *should*) be critical of Israel's occupation policies. Conflating criticism of the Occupation and Israel's occupation policies with anti-Semitism is to imply that Israel has the right to do anything it wants even if it violates human rights, international law – and Jewish ethics. We don't think so.

-and-

**World Jewry is characterized by a commitment to social justice which transcends blind support for Israel**

Social justice and a deep concern for human and civil rights define modern Jewry, at least in the Diaspora where most Jews live. Rene Cassin, a French Jew closely identified with the Jewish community, authored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for which he was awarded the 1968 Nobel Peace prize. Jews have been disproportionately active in the Civil Rights Movement in the US, in the anti-apartheid movement (all the white ministers in Nelson Mandela's first government were Jews,

and a Jewish judge drafted the new South African constitution). Jews have been prominent in revolutionary activity in Europe, the US and Latin America. Regardless of a Jew's political position on Israel and the conflict, most Jews understand that human rights are universal and that any concern for Israel's well-being must be linked to the well-being of the Palestinians.

~

*"If you weren't born here, aren't Jewish, didn't lose a relative in an attack or didn't serve in the army, you can't understand...."*

### **Being Israeli and an army veteran does not immunize you against peace.**

Victims of attacks or veterans of the Israeli army have no monopoly over the truth. Almost every Israeli peace activist had been in the army (although we are also blessed with conscientious objectors). Peace Now, the mainstream Zionist peace movement, was founded by army officers. Yesh Gvul (meaning "there is a limit/border") is an organization of army reservists who for many years have refused to serve in the Occupied Territories. Breaking the Silence is an organization of soldiers who served in Hebron and elsewhere and felt they had to speak out. They take Israelis on tours of Hebron to see the suffering our government, army and settlers have brought upon the local population. More than 635 reservist soldiers have signed the "Courage to Refuse" letter, which reads in part:

We, reserve combat officers and soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, who were raised upon the principles of Zionism, sacrifice and giving to the people of Israel and to the State of Israel, who have always served in the front lines, and who were the first to carry out any mission, light or heavy, in order to protect the State of Israel and strengthen it.

We, combat officers and soldiers who have served the State of Israel for long weeks every year, in spite of the dear cost to our personal lives, have been on reserve duty all over the Occupied Territories, and were issued commands and directives that had nothing to do with the security of our country, and that had the sole purpose of perpetuating our control [over the Palestinian people.... The missions of occupation and oppression do not serve this purpose [of Israel's defense] – and we shall take no part in them.

In September 2003, twenty-seven pilots in the Israeli Air Force issued a statement saying that "aerial activity over the [Palestinian] territories is illegal and immoral." In December 2003, members of the IDF's elite Special Operations Unit *Sayeret Matkal* issued a letter to the Prime Minister saying: "We say to you today, we will no longer give our hands to the oppressive reign in the territories and the denial of human rights to millions of Palestinians, and we will no longer serve as a defensive shield for the settlement enterprise."

Many of us have also had experiences with terrorism. Nurit Peled, one of the most outspoken of Israeli peace advocates, lost her young daughter Smadar to a terrorist attack in Jerusalem. The Parents Circle is an organization of Israeli *and* Palestinian families who have lost loved ones to terror attacks (Palestinians are victims of Israeli terror as well; you don't have to be Jewish to have that experience). They offer mutual support to one another and together actively oppose the conflict.

~

*"Israel has the most humane and moral army in the world."*

First, how can any army be humane and moral?

And given the multitudes of human rights violations perpetrated by Israel's armed forces, this cannot possibly be true.

~

*“Israel treats its Arab citizens better than Jews were treated in Arab countries.”*

**Not true.**

Jews may have suffered certain symbolic restrictions in Muslim countries (though not many, and often none, except in Shi'ite Yemen and Iran), but they were not barred from living wherever they liked, as are the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Unlike Jews in Muslim countries, Arabs in Israel are considered a foreign element and are subject to many restrictions and to discriminatory policies, in education, in housing, in employment and in the political sphere. According to a 2006 poll conducted by the Center Against Racism in Israel, half of Israel's Jews feel uncomfortable and fearful when they hear people speaking Arabic, and 18% feel hate. 68% of the Jewish public would not agree to live in the same apartment building with Arabs; 46% of Jews said they would refuse to allow an Arab to visit their home; 41% of Jews support the segregation of Jews and Arabs in places of recreation; 63% agreed with the statement that "Arabs are a security and demographic threat to the state"; 34% agreed that "Arab culture is inferior to Israeli culture"; and 40% agreed that "the state should encourage Arab citizens to emigrate" (*Haaretz*, March 23, 2006; see also the reports of Sikkuy <[www.sikkuy.org.il](http://www.sikkuy.org.il)>). Not to mention Avigdor Lieberman's party which became Israel's third largest on a program of transferring *all* Palestinians out of the country – including (especially!) Israeli citizens.

-and-

**What is the connection?**

Even if it were true, how is second-class citizenship in Israel justifiable solely because Jews might be third-class citizens in present-day Syria?

~

*“Double standard: The world judges Israel more harshly than it does other countries/ The UN is anti-Semitic – which you can see by the disproportionate number of UN resolutions dealing with Israel.”*

**Global conflicts receive more attention.**

The Israeli/Palestine conflict gets disproportionate attention because it is a global rather than merely local conflict. Its destabilizing effect over the entire global system is significant. The US announced in mid-2007 that it was pouring \$63 billion of military hardware into Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, in addition to the billions spent each day in Iraq. The Israel-Palestine conflict is emblematic to the Muslim world and must be resolved, as James Baker has stated, before the international community can prevail in its struggle with terrorism and get on with business-as-usual. Still, other conflicts – Darfur, for example, Tibet, Chinese violations of human rights, Burma, Guantanamo, Columbia, the civil wars in Central and West Africa, human rights issues in Russia and Eastern Europe, plus many more – vie for attention. We are especially sensitive to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict because it concerns us especially. If we were the Sudanese or Chinese or Burmese or Cuban or American governments, we would complain that undue attention is being paid to our violations of human rights instead of to others'.

-and-

**There is a need for *more* concentrated attention and action.**

It seems true that more attention is paid to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than many other serious and pressing issues in the international community, but the fact that criticism of Israeli policies has not led to Palestinian self-determination means that insufficient pressure is being applied. Raising the profile of other international issues is important, but it has no bearing on campaigns to pressure Israel over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

~

*“The State of Israel defines me as a Jew; it is the center of my personal, ethnic and religious identity.”*

**Respect Israel as a sovereign country with a right to develop and find its own destiny.**

Israel is a real country. It is changing, evolving, developing in directions no one could have predicted in 1897 or 1948. And that’s all for the good. Israelis must find their place in their native Middle East, hopefully as a strong and constructive force for peace and development. As Diaspora Jews or others seeking the best for Israel – you have to let us go. Come visit, invest in our country, support those forces working for peace in Israel/Palestine, but let us go. Don’t try to contain us within ideologies and political models that no longer work. Help us reframe, help us surmount the mutually destructive conflict that embroils us.

-and-

**You cannot use Israel to define your identity unless you’re Israeli.**

You cannot define your Jewish identity and culture by vicariously identifying with one country while living in another. Israel should be important to you and it should offer you sustenance as a Jew – through its literature, for example, or by developing a Hebrew culture in the Land of Israel that expresses aspects of Judaism not available in the Diaspora, or merely by offering you an exciting place to visit. But Israel cannot completely supplant the rich Jewish culture of the Diaspora, both historical and contemporary, nor the culture of your own country. You don’t have to “support” Israel; it’s a strong country that can fend for itself, although you can help it extract itself from the conflict that is undermining it. You also shouldn’t manipulate Israel for your own personal identity needs, like trying to keep some idealized image of it which does not allow the real Israel to show through. Unless you become an Israeli, you can’t expect Israel to conform to what you need and want. Remember again: Israel is a real country; it is not some projection of Jewish Brooklyn or Golders Green. Accept that and respect that.

**SO HOW DO WE GET OUT OF THIS MESS?**

The reframing we’ve done here is not merely an academic exercise. It is not meant to “prove” one side right and the other wrong. It is meant to open the political discussion to viewpoints and possibilities that have been closed by “pro”-anybody framings, like the Israeli security paradigm. In the end, reframing is a necessary step in finding a way out of this mess that respects the rights, claims and narratives of all the parties involved – who do not have to be “enemies.”

~

*“There is no solution to the conflict. The Arabs will never accept Israel in the region.”*

**The conflict is political and should not be mystified.**

We in the Israeli peace movement believe that Israel's survival – both as a society and as a society with values which can be defined as “Jewish” rather than “Spartan” – is dependent upon making peace with its neighbors. Israel, like every other country, does not exist in isolation; it must reach an accommodation with the countries surrounding it. The readiness of the Palestinians until this day to accept the two-state solution – a tremendously *pro*-Israeli solution that the Israeli government itself declares that it rejects – plus the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 (which is still on the table), plus the fact that Israel has close diplomatic relations with Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf States and close *de facto* relations with Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia (pending the end of the Occupation) demonstrates that peace is possible. In fact, the Arab Peace Initiative and Israel's close military alliances with Sunni Muslim regimes show that Israel has already been accepted as a regional power. The very term “Israeli-Arab Conflict” is completely out of date and inaccurate.

-and-

### **Here are the essential elements of any just and workable peace...**

Although we at ICAHD have come to the conclusion that the two-state solution is gone, we do not espouse a particular solution, since this has to be done jointly with our Palestinian partners, and the process of formulating such an agreed-upon solution is difficult and complicated – especially since the Palestinians cannot easily meet with each other (the Palestinians of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, inside Israel, the refugee camps and in the Diaspora have not really met each other since 1948, and the PLO, their only forum for collective strategizing, is moribund). Still, we do offer these elements we believe are essential to *any* political solution. Without *all* of them being present, *no* solution will work.

1. *A just peace must find a balance between collective rights (self-determination) and individual rights (democracy), between a shared state system and one that gives each people substantive space for cultural expression.* This means that the bi-national reality of P/I must be accepted and the new state that emerges must be inclusive of both peoples. The national identities of Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, both seeking self-determination in a common land, cannot be ignored or denied if a workable, *substantially* just resolution to the conflict is to be realized.
2. *A just peace and the negotiations leading up to it must conform to human rights, international law and UN resolutions* in respect to both the collective and individual rights of both peoples. If power negotiations alone determine the outcome, Israel wins and the conflict becomes irresolvable.
3. *A just peace requires that the refugee issue be fully resolved.* This requires Israeli acceptance of the refugees' *right* of return as set down in UN General Assembly resolution 194; Israeli acknowledgement of its responsibility in creating the refugee issue, a symbolic act upon which closure and eventual reconciliation depends; and only then technical solutions involving mutually agreed combinations of repatriation, resettlement elsewhere and financial compensation. Land redistribution within the new country to address the massive loss of land and property suffered by the Palestinians in 1947 must be a key element in both resolving the refugee issue and establishing just and equal relations between Palestinians and Israelis now sharing a common country.
4. *A just peace must be economically viable.* All the citizens of Palestine/Israel must have equal access to the country's basic resources and economic institutions. Once viable economic and political structures are in place, the Palestinian Diaspora will invest in the country, supporting in particular the Palestinian sector, a source of economic parity seldom taken into account. The new state will have to redress the social and economic imbalances created by a half-century of displacement,

occupation and de-development as well. It will have to integrate refugees, perhaps in the hundreds of thousands, mainly unskilled, impoverished and completely unfamiliar with democratic institutions. Added to this, more than 60% of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories and in the refugee camps is under the age of 25, a young generation that has been brutalized, traumatized, impoverished, left with little education and few skills. The challenge of *viability coupled with parity* constitutes an enormous joint national challenge.

5. *A just peace must address the security concerns of all in the region.*
6. *A just peace must be regional in scope.* Israel-Palestine is too small a unit to address such regional issues as refugees, water, security, economic development, climate change and the environment. Any peace process must provide a suitable regional environment in which P/I can integrate, ultimately leading to a regional confederation.

-and-

**Here is the outline of a solution, a binational, democratic state.**

In order to represent the interests and views of both the national communities of Palestine-Israel and its individual citizens, a “consociational democracy” based on power-sharing could be mixed with direct democracy. Each voter would have two votes: one for whichever representative of the community s/he belonged to (or most identified with) that s/he prefers; the other for a representative from his/her constituency. The parliament would accordingly be composed of two houses, the communal, representing the national communities, and that representing the wishes of the electorate through constituent elections. Each house could legislate laws which, if passed within its chambers, would require the approval of the other house. Through the parliament each sector would elect a representative to the governing Federal Executive Council, which would therefore be composed of three people: a representative of the Palestinian community, a representative of the Israeli Jewish community, and a representative of the general electorate. In this way Palestine/Israel would, unlike Western states, validate the national identities of its two constituent communities. And instead of being the repository of national identity, thus raising the irresolvable question of who the state “belongs” to,” the relatively weak executive acts merely as an administrative unit, as in Switzerland or Belgium.

To further enhance each people’s national heritage and self-expression, each might found a national university, a national museum and a national theater, as well as operating newspapers, television channels and schools – all alongside, however, public institutions for those who wish to develop a common civil identity: non-sectarian schools and universities, common cultural spaces and inclusive labor movements, not to mention mere neighborliness.

And since a bi-national solution does not require the dismantlement of settlements – their very integration will neutralize their exclusive and controlling character – it does not require “ending the Occupation,” the main obstacle to the two-state solution. It simply transforms the entire country into the normal territory of a state. Indeed, the establishment of a bi-national state in Palestine/Israel based on power-sharing and a mix of communal and common democratic institutions will resolve the refugee issue in the normal course of its development. Able to finally address the needs of both peoples within a common geographical space extending from the sea to the river, joint planning bodies could comprehensively address the various facets of refugee return: returning to the actual sites of the their villages and rebuilding; return of their urban properties or fair compensation; and integration of Palestinians into Israel’s cities, towns and villages, as well as into the settlements of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, thus nullifying their control.

~

*“Why do you say the two-state solution is dead?”*

**5 reasons:**

1. Israel’s “facts on the ground” are so massive and permanent that they are irreversible: 750,000 settlers, 200 settlements, the wall, the confinement of the Palestinians into the enclaves of Areas A and B and Gaza and, ultimately, the success of Israel after 50 years of “Judaizing” the West Bank, turning it into Judea and Samaria. You could well argue there is no more occupation. Certainly there is no coherent territory that could be detached from Israel to make a Palestinian state.
2. Successive Israeli governments have announced as matters of policy that there will not be a two-state solution – including the Labor Party under Itzhak Herzog.
3. There is no will on the part of the international community to push Israel out of the Occupied Territory. In fact, all Israel needs to maintain its Occupation permanently is the support of the US Congress and Germany, and it has that.
4. Israeli Jews are happy and content with the *status quo*. In fact, they seldom think about the Occupied Territory (they never use that term) or Palestinians (another non-term). There is no motivation or incentive to seek a just peace, which Israelis have been led to believe is impossible anyway.
5. Israel makes a lot of money exporting the weapons, security and surveillance systems, models of control and tactics it has perfected on the Palestinians. You could well argue that the Occupied Territory is actually a resource for Israel, a laboratory for developing weapons systems for export. It also gives Israel the reputation that it knows how to deal with terrorism, an important element in its garnering of international support for its occupation policies (Halper 2015).

~

*“Anyone who does not support a two-state solution is calling for the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state.”*

**Then why did Israel eliminate it?**

Peace is possible; the continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state may not be. Attempts to create ethnically pure states are hopelessly out of date in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, especially when one people tries to foist itself upon and entirely displace another. If Israel’s only hope of surviving as a Jewish state was dependent upon the creation of an adjacent Palestinian state – the alternative being either apartheid or one democratic state in all of Israel/Palestine which would not be Jewish – then why did successive Israeli governments, Likud and Labor as one, pursue so relentlessly a settlement enterprise that would only make the two-state solution impossible? Indeed, the Netanyahu government has declared that a two-state will not arise. The greatest irony in all of this is that Israel, by its own hand, eliminated itself as a Jewish state.

In the end – and this is a key point of our reframing – Israel must take responsibility for its own policies and actions and cannot object if others hold it accountable as well. But honey may yet emerge from the rottenness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As Israelis, we are not daunted by the prospect, created by Israel itself, that we might have to live together with the Palestinians and forge a new bi-national society. It’s happened before. When South Africa moved to Black majority rule, the Afrikaners did not disappear; they continue speaking Afrikaans, attending their Afrikaner schools and universities, reading their Afrikaner press, going to their Afrikaner churches. If Israeli governments create a bi-national

reality, the Hebrew language, Israeli culture, its institutions and an Israeli economy will continue to thrive, within a wider Israeli-Palestinian polity and society. Finally the great wish of Zionism will be realized: the Jewish people will have returned culturally and not only politically to the hearth of their civilization, the Land of Israel and the larger Middle East.

-and-

### **Solutions change over the years....**

This is an interesting turn-about, since until the Oslo peace process of the early 1990s it was considered “anti-Israel” to support a two-state solution!

~

*“Your presentation of the conflict is not balanced.”*

### **There is no such animal.**

We have tried to put human rights and International Law at the centre of our case. Yet there is no such thing as a “balanced” presentation of anything. Even mathematicians belong to certain schools and have widely divergent approaches to what may seem like the most precise and objective subject. Indeed, the very demand for “balance” is disempowering. It assumes that you as an individual have no ability to critically evaluate a presentation, a book or a lecture. Who would be the “balance” of our critical presentation? An Arab perspective? Peace Now? The settlers? Mainstream peace organizations like Peace Now? Maybe the Likud, or the IDF? Or would it be working-class *Mizrachi* Jews of Middle East origin, who see our concern with peace as a middle-class Ashkenazi preoccupation disconnected from social injustice inside Israel? Or women, who often criticize presentations of peace disconnected from issues of gender, or even Diaspora Jews who insist on having a voice in presenting Israel’s “case”? They all represent another “side” of the positions we are espousing here. There are no “balanced” presentations, only intellectually honest ones that set out a logical case. Certainly so-called “pro-Israel” speakers, who we believe seriously misrepresent Israel’s genuine interests, are not “balanced.” They only demand balance so as to be able to silence other views.

-and-

### **The conflict itself is not “balanced.”**

For all the criticism of the Palestinians and for all their share of the responsibility, Israel is the strong party, Israel is the Occupying Power and Israel is the only party that can actually end the Occupation and pave the way for a just peace.

## **ENDNOTES**

Aburish, Said K. 1998 *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator*. London: Bloomsbury.

Abu Sitta, Salman 2001 *The Palestinian Naqba 1948: The Registrar of Depopulated Localities in Palestine*. London: Palestinian Return Centre.

Benvenisti, Meron 1995 *Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- 2002 *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eliaschar, Eli 1997 *To Live with Palestinians*. Jerusalem: Misgav [Hebrew].
- Finkelstein, Norman 2003 *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Verso.
- 2005 *Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Firer, Ruth and Sami Adwan 2002 *Comparing Palestinian and Israeli Textbooks*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University.
- Flapan, Simcha 1979 *Zionism and the Palestinians*. London: Croom Helm.
- 1987 *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*. New York: Pantheon.
- Gorenberg, Gershom 2006 *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Halper, Jeff 1991 *Between Redemption and Revival: The Jewish Yishuv in Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century*. Westview: Boulder.
- 2005 *Obstacles to Peace: Reframing the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. Jerusalem: ICAHD.
- 2005 Israel as an Extension of American Empire. In *Challenging Christian Zionism: Politics, Theology and the Israeli-Palestine Conflict*. Jerusalem: Sabeel.
- 2007 A Prophetic Judaism of Human Rights: Rene Cassin and Resistance to the Israeli Occupation. In *Peace, Justice, and Jews: Reclaiming Our Tradition*. Murray Polner and Stefen Merken (eds.). New York: Bunim and Bannigan, pp. 276-282.
- 2011 *An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel*. London: Pluto Press.
- 2015 *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification*. London: Pluto Press.
- Israeli News 24 2016 <<http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/diplomacy-defense/98228-160107-israeli-security-officials-urge-concessions-as-pa-takes-tough-stance-against-violence>>.
- Khalidi, Rashid 1997 *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Margalit, Meir 2006 *No Place Like Home: House Demolitions in East Jerusalem*. Jerusalem: ICAHD.
- Masalha, Nur 1992 *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948*. Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies.
- Morris, Benny 1999 *Righteous Victims: A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1881-1999*. New York: Knopf.
- 2004 *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited, 1947-1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Netanyahu, Benjamin 1995 *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Pappe, Ilan 2006 *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: One World Publications.

- Peled-Elhanan, Nurit 2012 *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Propaganda and Ideology in Education*. London: Taurus.
- Peri, Yoram 2006 *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Porath, Yehoshua 1986 "Mrs. Peters' Palestine: An Exchange." *New York Review of Books*, Retrieved 8 October, 2006 from <http://www.nybooks.com>.
- Rummel, R.J. 1994 *Death By Government*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- Sachar, Howard M. 1981 *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: Knopf.
- Savir, Uri 1998 *The Process*. New York: Vintage.
- Segev, Tom 1999 *One Palestine, Complete. Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Shlaim, Avi 1988 *Collusion Across the Jordan*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- 2014 *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Penguin, UK.
- 2001 Israel and the Arab Coalition in 1948. In Eugene R. Rogen and Avi Shlaim (eds.). *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79-103.
- Stillman, Norman 1979 *The Jews of Arab Lands*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.
- United Nations 2005 *The Humanitarian Impact of the West Bank Barrier on Palestinian Communities*. Jerusalem: OCHA.
- Weizman, Eyal 2003 Ariel Sharon and the Geometry of Occupation (part 1). *Open Democracy*, [http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict/article\\_1474.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/conflict/article_1474.jsp).
- 2004 Strategic Points, Flexible Lines, Tense Surfaces and Political Volumes: Ariel Sharon and the Geometry of Occupation, *The Philosophical Forum* 35(2):221-244.
- 2006 *The Art of War*. <[http://www.frieze.com/feature\\_single.asp?f=1165](http://www.frieze.com/feature_single.asp?f=1165)>
- 2007 *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso.
- Yiftachel, Oren 1999 'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine. *Constellations* 6: 364-391.

~

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- Al-Haq: <[alhaq.org](http://alhaq.org)>
- Alternative Information Center: <[www.alternativenews.org](http://www.alternativenews.org)>
- Badil: <[www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org)>
- Breaking the Silence <[breakingthesilence.org.il](http://breakingthesilence.org.il)>
- B'tselem: <[www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org)>
- Christian Peacemaker Team: <[www.prairienet.org](http://www.prairienet.org)>
- Coalition of Women for Peace: <[www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org](http://www.coalitionofwomen4peace.org)>
- The Electronic Intifada: <[electronicintifada.net](http://electronicintifada.net)>

Gush Shalom: <[www.gush-shalom.org](http://www.gush-shalom.org)>

*Ha'aretz* newspaper: <[www.haaretzdaily.com](http://www.haaretzdaily.com)>

ICAHD (The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions) <[www.icahd.org](http://www.icahd.org)>

ICAHD UK <[www.icahduk.org](http://www.icahduk.org)>

ICAHD USA <[www.icahdusa.org](http://www.icahdusa.org)>

ICAHD Finland <[www.icahd.fi](http://www.icahd.fi)>

ICAHD Germany <[www.icahd.de](http://www.icahd.de)>

ICAHD Australia <[www.facebook.com/icahdau/info](http://www.facebook.com/icahdau/info)>

Indymedia: <[www.indymedia.org.il](http://www.indymedia.org.il)>

Jerusalem Media and Communication Center: <[www.jmcc.org](http://www.jmcc.org)>

Jews for Justice for Palestinians <[www.jjfp.com](http://www.jjfp.com)>

Jewish Voice For Peace: <[www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org](http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org)>

New Profile: <[www.newprofile.org](http://www.newprofile.org)>

Palestine Monitor: <[www.palestinemonitor.org](http://www.palestinemonitor.org)>

Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR): <[www.pchrgaza.org](http://www.pchrgaza.org)>

PASSIA: <[www.passia.org](http://www.passia.org)>

Rabbis for Human Rights: <[www.rhr.israel.net](http://www.rhr.israel.net)>

Sabeel: <[www.sabeel.org](http://www.sabeel.org)>

Ta'ayush: <[taayush.tripod.com](http://taayush.tripod.com)>

US Campaign Against the Occupation <[www.endtheoccupation.org](http://www.endtheoccupation.org)>

Yesh Gvul: <[yeshgvul.org](http://yeshgvul.org)>