

The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

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As the periodic bloodshed continues in the Middle East, the search for an equitable solution must come to grips with the root cause of the conflict. The conventional wisdom is that, even if both sides are at fault, the Palestinians are irrational "terrorists" who have no point of view worth listening to. Our position, however, is that the Palestinians have a real grievance: their homeland for over a thousand years was taken, without their consent and mostly by force, during creation of the state of Israel. And all subsequent crimes - on both sides - inevitably follow from this original injustice.

This paper outlines the history of Palestine to show how this process occurred and what a moral solution to the region's problems should consist of. If you care about the people of the Middle East, Jewish and Arab, you owe it to yourself to read this account of the other side of the historical record.

Introduction

The standard Zionist position is that they showed up in Palestine in the late 19th century to reclaim their ancestral homeland. Jews bought land and started building up the Jewish community there. They were met with increasingly violent opposition from the Palestinian Arabs, presumably stemming from the Arabs' inherent anti-Semitism. The Zionists were then forced to defend themselves and, in one form or another, this same situation continues up to today.

The problem with this explanation is that it is simply not true, as the documentary evidence in this booklet will show. What really happened was that the Zionist movement, from the beginning, looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the indigenous Arab population so that Israel could be a wholly Jewish state, or as much as was possible. Land bought by the Jewish National Fund was held in the name of the Jewish people and could never be sold or even leased back to Arabs (a situation which continues to the present).

The Arab community, as it became increasingly aware of the Zionists' intentions, strenuously opposed further Jewish immigration and land buying because it posed a real and imminent danger to the very existence of Arab society in Palestine. Because of this opposition, the entire Zionist project never could have been realized without the military backing of the British. The vast majority of the population of Palestine, by the way, had been Arabic since the seventh century A.D. (Over 1200 years)

In short, Zionism was based on a faulty, colonialist world view that the rights of the indigenous inhabitants didn't matter. The Arabs' opposition to Zionism wasn't based on anti-Semitism but rather on a totally reasonable fear of the dispossession of their people.

One further point: being Jewish ourselves, the position we present here is critical of Zionism but is in no way anti-Semitic. We do not believe that the Jews acted worse than any other group might have acted in their situation. The Zionists (who were a distinct minority of the Jewish people until after WWII) had an understandable desire to establish a place where Jews could be masters of their own fate, given the bleak history of Jewish oppression.

Especially as the danger to European Jewry crystalized in the late 1930's and after, the actions of the Zionists were propelled by real desperation. But so were the actions of the Arabs. The mythic "land without people for a people without land" was already home to 700,000 Palestinians in 1919. This is the root of the problem, as we shall see.

Early History of the Region

Before the Hebrews first migrated there around 1800 B.C., the land of Canaan was occupied by Canaanites.

"Between 3000 and 1100 B.C., Canaanite civilization covered what is today Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon and much of Syria and Jordan...Those who remained in the Jerusalem hills after the Romans expelled the Jews [in the second century A.D.] were a potpourri: farmers and vineyard growers, pagans and converts to Christianity, descendants of the Arabs, Persians, Samaritans, Greeks and old Canaanite tribes." Marcia Kunstel and Joseph Albright, "Their Promised Land."

The present-day Palestinians' ancestral heritage

"But all these [different peoples who had come to Canaan] were additions, sprigs grafted onto the parent tree...And that parent tree was Canaanite...[The Arab invaders of the 7th century A.D.] made Moslem converts of the natives, settled down as residents, and intermarried with them, with the result that all are now so completely Arabized that we cannot tell where the Canaanites leave off and the Arabs begin." Illene Beatty, "Arab and Jew in the Land of Canaan."

The Jewish kingdoms were only one of many periods in ancient Palestine

"The extended kingdoms of David and Solomon, on which the Zionists base their territorial demands, endured for only about 73 years...Then it fell apart...[Even] if we allow independence to the entire life of the ancient Jewish kingdoms, from David's conquest of Canaan in 1000 B.C. to the wiping out of Judah in 586 B.C., we arrive at [only] a 414 year Jewish rule." Illene Beatty, "Arab and Jew in the Land of Canaan."

More on Canaanite civilization

"Recent archeological digs have provided evidence that Jerusalem was a big and fortified city already in 1800 BCE...Findings show that the sophisticated water system heretofore attributed to the conquering Israelites pre-dated them by eight centuries and was even more sophisticated than imagined...Dr. Ronny Reich, who directed the excavation along

with Eli Shuikrun, said the entire system was built as a single complex by Canaanites in the Middle Bronze Period, around 1800 BCE." The Jewish Bulletin, July 31st, 1998.

How long has Palestine been a specifically Arab country?

"Palestine became a predominately Arab and Islamic country by the end of the seventh century. Almost immediately thereafter its boundaries and its characteristics - including its name in Arabic, Filastin - became known to the entire Islamic world, as much for its fertility and beauty as for its religious significance...In 1516, Palestine became a province of the Ottoman Empire, but this made it no less fertile, no less Arab or Islamic...Sixty percent of the population was in agriculture; the balance was divided between townspeople and a relatively small nomadic group. All these people believed themselves to belong in a land called Palestine, despite their feelings that they were also members of a large Arab nation...Despite the steady arrival in Palestine of Jewish colonists after 1882, it is important to realize that not until the few weeks immediately preceding the establishment of Israel in the spring of 1948 was there ever anything other than a huge Arab majority. For example, the Jewish population in 1931 was 174,606 against a total of 1,033,314." Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

How did land ownership traditionally work in Palestine and when did it change?

"[The Ottoman Land Code of 1858] required the registration in the name of individual owners of agricultural land, most of which had never previously been registered and which had formerly been treated according to traditional forms of land tenure, in the hill areas of Palestine generally masha'a, or communal usufruct. The new law meant that for the first time a peasant could be deprived not of title to his land, which he had rarely held before, but rather of the right to live on it, cultivate it and pass it on to his heirs, which had formerly been inalienable...Under the provisions of the 1858 law, communal rights of tenure were often ignored...Instead, members of the upper classes, adept at manipulating or circumventing the legal process, registered large areas of land as theirs...The fellahin [peasants] naturally considered the land to be theirs, and often discovered that they had ceased to be the legal owners only when the land was sold to Jewish settlers by an absentee landlord...Not only was the land being purchased; its Arab cultivators were being dispossessed and replaced by foreigners who had overt political objectives in Palestine." Rashid Khalidi, "Blaming The Victims," ed. Said and Hitchens

Was Arab opposition to the arrival of Zionists based on inherent anti-Semitism or a real sense of danger to their community?

"The aim of the [Jewish National] Fund was `to redeem the land of Palestine as the inalienable possession of the Jewish people.'...As early as 1891, Zionist leader Ahad Ha'am wrote that the Arabs "understood very well what we were doing and what we were aiming at'...[Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, stated] `We shall try to spirit the penniless [Arab] population across the border by procuring employment for it in transit countries, while denying it employment in our own country... Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly'...At various locations in northern Palestine Arab farmers refused to move from land the Fund purchased from absentee owners, and the Turkish authorities, at the Fund's request, evicted them...The indigenous Jews of Palestine also reacted negatively to

Zionism. They did not see the need for a Jewish state in Palestine and did not want to exacerbate relations with the Arabs." John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Inherent anti-Semitism? - continued

"Before the 20th century, most Jews in Palestine belonged to old Yishuv, or community, that had settled more for religious than for political reasons. There was little if any conflict between them and the Arab population. Tensions began after the first Zionist settlers arrived in the 1880's...when [they] purchased land from absentee Arab owners, leading to dispossession of the peasants who had cultivated it." Don Peretz, "The Arab-Israeli Dispute."

Inherent anti-Semitism? - continued

"[During the Middle Ages,] North Africa and the Arab Middle East became places of refuge and a haven for the persecuted Jews of Spain and elsewhere...In the Holy Land...they lived together in [relative] harmony, a harmony only disrupted when the Zionists began to claim that Palestine was the 'rightful' possession of the 'Jewish people' to the exclusion of its Moslem and Christian inhabitants." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Jewish attitude towards Arabs upon reaching Palestine.

"Serfs they (the Jews) were in the lands of the Diaspora, and suddenly they find themselves in freedom [in Palestine]; and this change has awakened in them an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and nobody among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination." Zionist writer Ahad Ha'am, quoted in Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Proposals for Arab-Jewish Cooperation

"An article by Yitzhak Epstein, published in Hashiloah in 1907...called for a new Zionist policy towards the Arabs after 30 years of settlement activity...Like Ahad-Ha'am in 1891, Epstein claims that no good land is vacant, so Jewish settlement meant Arab dispossession...Epstein's solution to the problem, so that a new "Jewish question" may be avoided, is the creation of a bi-national, non-exclusive program of settlement and development. Purchasing land should not involve the dispossession of poor sharecroppers. It should mean creating a joint farming community, where the Arabs will enjoy modern technology. Schools, hospitals and libraries should be non-exclusivist and education bilingual...The vision of non-exclusivist, peaceful cooperation to replace the practice of dispossession found few takers. Epstein was maligned and scorned for his faintheartedness." Israeli author, Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Original Sins."

Was Palestine the only, or even preferred, destination of Jews facing persecution when the Zionist movement started?

"The pogroms forced many Jews to leave Russia. Societies known as 'Lovers of Zion,' which were forerunners of the Zionist organization, convinced some of the frightened emigrants to go to Palestine. There, they argued, Jews would rebuild the ancient Jewish 'Kingdom of David and Solomon,' Most Russian Jews ignored their appeal and fled to

Europe and the United States. By 1900, almost a million Jews had settled in the United States alone." "Our Roots Are Still Alive" by The People Press Palestine Book Project.

The British Mandate Period 1920-1948

The Balfour Declaration promises a Jewish Homeland in Palestine.

"The Balfour Declaration, made in November 1917 by the British Government...was made a) by a European power, b) about a non-European territory, c) in flat disregard of both the presence and wishes of the native majority resident in that territory...[As Balfour himself wrote in 1919], 'The contradiction between the letter of the Covenant (the Anglo French Declaration of 1918 promising the Arabs of the former Ottoman colonies that as a reward for supporting the Allies they could have their independence) is even more flagrant in the case of the independent nation of Palestine than in that of the independent nation of Syria. For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country...The four powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land,'" Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

Wasn't Palestine a wasteland before the Jews started immigrating there?

"Britain's high commissioner for Palestine, John Chancellor, recommended total suspension of Jewish immigration and land purchase to protect Arab agriculture. He said 'all cultivable land was occupied; that no cultivable land now in possession of the indigenous population could be sold to Jews without creating a class of landless Arab cultivators'...The Colonial Office rejected the recommendation." John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Were the early Zionists planning on living side by side with Arabs?

In 1919, the American King-Crane Commission spent six weeks in Syria and Palestine, interviewing delegations and reading petitions. Their report stated, "The commissioners began their study of Zionism with minds predisposed in its favor...The fact came out repeatedly in the Commission's conferences with Jewish representatives that the Zionists looked forward to a practically complete dispossession of the present non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, by various forms of purchase..."

"If [the] principle [of self-determination] is to rule, and so the wishes of Palestine's population are to be decisive as to what is to be done with Palestine, then it is to be remembered that the non-Jewish population of Palestine - nearly nine-tenths of the whole - are emphatically against the entire Zionist program.. To subject a people so minded to unlimited Jewish immigration, and to steady financial and social pressure to surrender the land, would be a gross violation of the principle just quoted...No British officers, consulted by the Commissioners, believed that the Zionist program could be carried out except by force of arms. The officers generally thought that a force of not less than fifty

thousand soldiers would be required even to initiate the program. That of itself is evidence of a strong sense of the injustice of the Zionist program...The initial claim, often submitted by Zionist representatives, that they have a 'right' to Palestine based on occupation of two thousand years ago, can barely be seriously considered." Quoted in "The Israel-Arab Reader" ed. Laquer and Rubin.

Side by side - continued

"Zionist land policy was incorporated in the Constitution of the Jewish Agency for Palestine...'land is to be acquired as Jewish property and..the title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people.' The provision goes to stipulate that 'the Agency shall promote agricultural colonization based on Jewish labor'...The effect of this Zionist colonization policy on the Arabs was that land acquired by Jews became extra-territorialized. It ceased to be land from which the Arabs could ever hope to gain any advantage...

"The Zionists made no secret of their intentions, for as early as 1921, Dr. Eder, a member of the Zionist Commission, boldly told the Court of Inquiry, 'there can be only one National Home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish preponderance as soon as the numbers of the race are sufficiently increased.' He then asked that only Jews should be allowed to bear arms." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Given Arab opposition to them, did the Zionists support steps towards majority rule in Palestine?

"Clearly, the last thing the Zionists really wanted was that all the inhabitants of Palestine should have an equal say in running the country... [Chaim] Weizmann had impressed on Churchill that representative government would have spelled the end of the [Jewish] National Home in Palestine... [Churchill declared,] 'The present form of government will continue for many years. Step by step we shall develop representative institutions leading to full self-government, but our children's children will have passed away before that is accomplished.'" David Hirst, "The Gun and the Olive Branch."

Denial of the Arabs' right to self-determination

"Even if nobody lost their land, the [Zionist] program was unjust in principle because it denied majority political rights... Zionism, in principle, could not allow the natives to exercise their political rights because it would mean the end of the Zionist enterprise." Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Original Sins."

Arab resistance to Pre-Israeli Zionism

"In 1936-9, the Palestinian Arabs attempted a nationalist revolt... David Ben-Gurion, eminently a realist, recognized its nature. In internal discussion, he noted that 'in our political argument abroad, we minimize Arab opposition to us,' but he urged, 'let us not ignore the truth among ourselves.' The truth was that 'politically we are the aggressors and they defend themselves... The country is theirs, because they inhabit it, whereas we want to come here and settle down, and in their view we want to take away from them

their country, while we are still outside'... The revolt was crushed by the British, with considerable brutality." Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

Gandhi on the Palestine conflict - 1938

"Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French...What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct...If they [the Jews] must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs... As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done no wrong to them. I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regard as an unacceptable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong, nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds." Mahatma Gandhi, quoted in "A Land of Two Peoples" ed. Mendes-Flohr.

Didn't the Zionists legally buy much of the land before Israel was established?

"In 1948, at the moment that Israel declared itself a state, it legally owned a little more than 6 percent of the land of Palestine...After 1940, when the mandatory authority restricted Jewish land ownership to specific zones inside Palestine, there continued to be illegal buying (and selling) within the 65 percent of the total area restricted to Arabs. Thus when the partition plan was announced in 1947 it included land held illegally by Jews, which was incorporated as a fait accompli inside the borders of the Jewish state. And after Israel announced its statehood, an impressive series of laws legally assimilated huge tracts of Arab land (whose proprietors had become refugees, and were pronounced 'absentee landlords' in order to expropriate their lands and prevent their return under any circumstances)." Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

The UN Partition of Palestine

Why did the UN recommend the plan partitioning Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state?

"By this time [November 1947] the United States had emerged as the most aggressive proponent of partition...The United States got the General Assembly to delay a vote 'to gain time to bring certain Latin American republics into line with its own views.'...Some delegates charged U.S. officials with 'diplomatic intimidation.' Without 'terrific pressure' from the United States on 'governments which cannot afford to risk American reprisals,' said an anonymous editorial writer, the resolution 'would never have passed.'" John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Why was this Truman's position?

"I am sorry gentlemen, but I have to answer to hundreds of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my

constituents." President Harry Truman, quoted in "Anti Zionism", ed. by Teikener, Abed-Rabbo & Mezvinsky.

Was the partition plan fair to both Arabs and Jews?

"Arab rejection was...based on the fact that, while the population of the Jewish state was to be [only half] Jewish with the Jews owning less than 10% of the Jewish state land area, the Jews were to be established as the ruling body - a settlement which no self-respecting people would accept without protest, to say the least...The action of the United Nations conflicted with the basic principles for which the world organization was established, namely, to uphold the right of all peoples to self-determination. By denying the Palestine Arabs, who formed the two-thirds majority of the country, the right to decide for themselves, the United Nations had violated its own charter." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Were the Zionists prepared to settle for the territory granted in the 1947 partition?

"While the Yishuv's leadership formally accepted the 1947 Partition Resolution, large sections of Israel's society - including...Ben-Gurion - were opposed to or extremely unhappy with partition and from early on viewed the war as an ideal opportunity to expand the new state's borders beyond the UN earmarked partition boundaries and at the expense of the Palestinians." Israeli historian, Benny Morris, in "Tikkun", March/April 1998.

Public vs private pronouncements on this question.

"In internal discussion in 1938 [David Ben-Gurion] stated that 'after we become a strong force, as a result of the creation of a state, we shall abolish partition and expand into the whole of Palestine'...In 1948, Menachem Begin declared that: 'The partition of the Homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized. The signature of institutions and individuals of the partition agreement is invalid. It will not bind the Jewish people. Jerusalem was and will forever be our capital. Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) will be restored to the people of Israel, All of it. And forever.'" Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

The war begins

"In December 1947, the British announced that they would withdraw from Palestine by May 15, 1948. Palestinians in Jerusalem and Jaffa called a general strike against the partition. Fighting broke out in Jerusalem's streets almost immediately...Violent incidents mushroomed into all-out war...During that fateful April of 1948, eight out of thirteen major Zionist military attacks on Palestinians occurred in the territory granted to the Arab state." "Our Roots Are Still Alive" by the People Press Palestine Book Project.

Zionists' disrespect of partition boundaries

"Before the end of the mandate and, therefore before any possible intervention by Arab states, the Jews, taking advantage of their superior military preparation and organization, had occupied...most of the Arab cities in Palestine before May 15, 1948. Tiberias was occupied on April 19, 1948, Haifa on April 22, Jaffa on April 28, the Arab quarters in the New City of Jerusalem on April 30, Beisan on May 8, Safad on May 10 and Acre on May

14, 1948...In contrast, the Palestine Arabs did not seize any of the territories reserved for the Jewish state under the partition resolution." British author, Henry Cattan, "Palestine, The Arabs and Israel."

Culpability for escalation of the fighting

"Menahem Begin, the Leader of the Irgun, tells how 'in Jerusalem, as elsewhere, we were the first to pass from the defensive to the offensive...Arabs began to flee in terror...Hagana was carrying out successful attacks on other fronts, while all the Jewish forces proceeded to advance through Haifa like a knife through butter'...The Israelis now allege that the Palestine war began with the entry of the Arab armies into Palestine after 15 May 1948. But that was the second phase of the war; they overlook the massacres, expulsions and dispossessions which took place prior to that date and which necessitated Arab states' intervention." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

The Deir Yassin Massacre of Palestinians by Jewish soldiers

"For the entire day of April 9, 1948, Irgun and LEHI soldiers carried out the slaughter in a cold and premeditated fashion...The attackers 'lined men, women and children up against the walls and shot them,'...The ruthlessness of the attack on Deir Yassin shocked Jewish and world opinion alike, drove fear and panic into the Arab population, and led to the flight of unarmed civilians from their homes all over the country." Israeli author, Simha Flapan, "The Birth of Israel."

Was Deir Yassin the only act of its kind?

"By 1948, the Jew was not only able to 'defend himself' but to commit massive atrocities as well. Indeed, according to the former director of the Israeli army archives, 'in almost every village occupied by us during the War of Independence, acts were committed which are defined as war crimes, such as murders, massacres, and rapes'...Uri Milstein, the authoritative Israeli military historian of the 1948 war, goes one step further, maintaining that 'every skirmish ended in a massacre of Arabs.'" Norman Finkelstein, "Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict."

Statehood and Expulsion - 1948

What was the Arab reaction to the announcement of the creation of the state of Israel?

"The armies of the Arab states entered the war immediately after the State of Israel was founded in May. Fighting continued, almost all of it within the territory assigned to the Palestinian state...About 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled in the 1948 conflict." Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

Was the part of Palestine assigned to a Jewish state in mortal danger from the Arab armies?

"The Arab League hastily called for its member countries to send regular army troops into Palestine. They were ordered to secure only the sections of Palestine given to the Arabs under the partition plan. But these regular armies were ill equipped and lacked any

central command to coordinate their efforts...[Jordan's King Abdullah] promised [the Israelis and the British] that his troops, the Arab Legion, the only real fighting force among the Arab armies, would avoid fighting with Jewish settlements...Yet Western historians record this as the moment when the young state of Israel fought off "the overwhelming hordes" of five Arab countries. In reality, the Israeli offensive against the Palestinians intensified." "Our Roots Are Still Alive," by the Peoples Press Palestine Book Project.

Ethnic cleansing of the Arab population of Palestine

"Joseph Weitz was the director of the Jewish National Land Fund...On December 19, 1940, he wrote: 'It must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this country...The Zionist enterprise so far...has been fine and good in its own time, and could do with 'land buying' - but this will not bring about the State of Israel; that must come all at once, in the manner of a Salvation (this is the secret of the Messianic idea); and there is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer them all; except maybe for Bethlehem, Nazareth and Old Jerusalem, we must not leave a single village, not a single tribe'...There were literally hundreds of such statements made by Zionists." Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

"Following the outbreak of 1936, no mainstream (Zionist) leader was able to conceive of future coexistence without a clear physical separation between the two peoples - achievable only by transfer and expulsion. Publicly they all continued to speak of coexistence and to attribute the violence to a small minority of zealots and agitators. But this was merely a public pose..Ben Gurion summed up: 'With compulsory transfer we (would) have a vast area (for settlement)...I support compulsory transfer. I don't see anything immoral in it,'" Israel historian, Benny Morris, "Righteous Victims."

"Ben-Gurion clearly wanted as few Arabs as possible to remain in the Jewish state. He hoped to see them flee. He said as much to his colleagues and aides in meetings in August, September and October [1948]. But no [general] expulsion policy was ever enunciated and Ben-Gurion always refrained from issuing clear or written expulsion orders; he preferred that his generals 'understand' what he wanted done. He wished to avoid going down in history as the 'great expeller' and he did not want the Israeli government to be implicated in a morally questionable policy...But while there was no 'expulsion policy', the July and October [1948] offensives were characterized by far more expulsions and, indeed, brutality towards Arab civilians than the first half of the war." Benny Morris, "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949"

Didn't the Palestinians leave their homes voluntarily during the 1948 war?

"Israeli propaganda has largely relinquished the claim that the Palestinian exodus of 1948 was 'self-inspired'. Official circles implicitly concede that the Arab population fled as a result of Israeli action - whether directly, as in the case of Lydda and Ramleh, or indirectly, due to the panic that and similar actions (the Deir Yassin massacre) inspired in Arab population centers throughout Palestine. However, even though the historical record has been grudgingly set straight, the Israeli establishment still refused to accept moral or

political responsibility for the refugee problem it- or its predecessors - actively created." Peretz Kidron, quoted in "Blaming the Victims," ed. Said and Hitchens.

Arab orders to evacuate non-existent

"The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) monitored all Middle Eastern broadcasts throughout 1948. The records, and companion ones by a United States monitoring unit, can be seen at the British Museum. There was not a single order or appeal, or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine, from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine, in 1948. There is a repeated monitored record of Arab appeals, even flat orders, to the civilians of Palestine to stay put." Erskine Childers, British researcher, quoted in Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Ethnic cleansing- continued

"That Ben-Gurion's ultimate aim was to evacuate as much of the Arab population as possible from the Jewish state can hardly be doubted, if only from the variety of means he employed to achieve his purpose...most decisively, the destruction of whole villages and the eviction of their inhabitants...even [if] they had not participated in the war and had stayed in Israel hoping to live in peace and equality, as promised in the Declaration of Independence." Israeli author, Simha Flapan, "The Birth of Israel."

The deliberate destruction of Arab villages to prevent return of Palestinians

"During May [1948] ideas about how to consolidate and give permanence to the Palestinian exile began to crystallize, and the destruction of villages was immediately perceived as a primary means of achieving this aim...[Even earlier,] On 10 April, Haganah units took Abu Shusha... The village was destroyed that night... Khulda was leveled by Jewish bulldozers on 20 April... Abu Zureiq was completely demolished... Al Mansi and An Nagnaghiya, to the southeast, were also leveled. . .By mid-1949, the majority of [the 350 depopulated Arab villages] were either completely or partly in ruins and uninhabitable." Benny Morris, "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949."

After the fighting was over, why didn't the Palestinians return to their homes?

"The first UN General Assembly resolution--Number 194- affirming the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property, was passed on December 11, 1948. It has been repassed no less than twenty-eight times since that first date. Whereas the moral and political right of a person to return to his place of uninterrupted residence is acknowledged everywhere, Israel has negated the possibility of return... [and] systematically and juridically made it impossible, on any grounds whatever, for the Arab Palestinian to return, be compensated for his property, or live in Israel as a citizen equal before the law with a Jewish Israeli." Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

Is there any justification for this expropriation of land?

"The fact that the Arabs fled in terror, because of real fear of a repetition of the 1948 Zionist massacres, is no reason for denying them their homes, fields and livelihoods. Civilians caught in an area of military activity generally panic. But they have always been able to return to their homes when the danger subsides. Military conquest does not

abolish private rights to property; nor does it entitle the victor to confiscate the homes, property and personal belongings of the noncombatant civilian population. The seizure of Arab property by the Israelis was an outrage." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

How about the negotiations after the 1948-1949 wars?

"[At Lausanne,] Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians were trying to save by negotiations what they had lost in the war--a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Israel, however... [preferred] tenuous armistice agreements to a definite peace that would involve territorial concessions and the repatriation of even a token number of refugees. The refusal to recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood proved over the years to be the main source of the turbulence, violence, and bloodshed that came to pass." Israeli author, Simha Flapan, "The Birth Of Israel."

Israel admitted to UN but then reneged on the conditions under which it was admitted

"The [Lausanne] conference officially opened on 27 April 1949. On 12 May the [UN's] Palestine Conciliation Committee reaped its only success when it induced the parties to sign a joint protocol on the framework for a comprehensive peace. . Israel for the first time accepted the principle of repatriation [of the Arab refugees] and the internationalization of Jerusalem. . .[but] they did so as a mere exercise in public relations aimed at strengthening Israel's international image...Walter Eytan, the head of the Israeli delegation, [stated]..My main purpose was to begin to undermine the protocol of 12 May, which we had signed only under duress of our struggle for admission to the U.N. Refusal to sign would...have immediately been reported to the Secretary-General and the various governments.'" Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, "The Making of the Arab-Israel Conflict, 1947-1951."

Israeli admission to the U.N.- continued

"The Preamble of this resolution of admission included a safeguarding clause as follows: 'Recalling its resolution of 29 November 1947 (on partition) and 11 December 1948 (on reparation and compensation), and taking note of the declarations and explanations made by the representative of the Government of Israel before the ad hoc Political Committee in respect of the implementation of the said resolutions, the General Assembly...decides to admit Israel into membership in the United Nations.'

"Here, it must be observed, is a condition and an undertaking to implement the resolutions mentioned. There was no question of such implementation being conditioned on the conclusion of peace on Israeli terms as the Israelis later claimed to justify their non-compliance." Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

What was the fate of the Palestinians who had now become refugees?

"The winter of 1949, the first winter of exile for more than seven hundred fifty thousand Palestinians, was cold and hard...Families huddled in caves, abandoned huts, or makeshift tents...Many of the starving were only miles away from their own vegetable gardens and orchards in occupied Palestine - the new state of Israel...At the end of 1949 the United Nations finally acted. It set up the United Nations Relief and Works Administration (UNRWA) to take over sixty refugee camps from voluntary agencies. It managed to keep

people alive, but only barely." "Our Roots Are Still Alive" by The Peoples Press Palestine Book Project.

The 1967 War and the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza

Did the Egyptians actually start the 1967 war, as Israel originally claimed?

"The former Commander of the Air Force, General Ezer Weitzman, regarded as a hawk, stated that there was 'no threat of destruction' but that the attack on Egypt, Jordan and Syria was nevertheless justified so that Israel could 'exist according the scale, spirit, and quality she now embodies.'...Menahem Begin had the following remarks to make: 'In June 1967, we again had a choice. The Egyptian Army concentrations in the Sinai approaches do not prove that Nasser was really about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. We decided to attack him.'" Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

Was the 1967 war defenisve?

"I do not think Nasser wanted war. The two divisions he sent to The Sinai would not have been sufficient to launch an offensive war. He knew it and we knew it." Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Chief of Staff in 1967, in Le Monde, 2/28/68

Moshe Dayan posthumously speaks out on the Golan Heights

"Moshe Dayan, the celebrated commander who, as Defense Minister in 1967, gave the order to conquer the Golan...[said] many of the firefights with the Syrians were deliberately provoked by Israel, and the kibbutz residents who pressed the Government to take the Golan Heights did so less for security than for the farmland...[Dayan stated] 'They didn't even try to hide their greed for the land...We would send a tractor to plow some area where it wasn't possible to do anything, in the demilitarized area, and knew in advance that the Syrians would start to shoot. If they didn't shoot, we would tell the tractor to advance further, until in the end the Syrians would get annoyed and shoot. And then we would use artillery and later the air force also, and that's how it was...The Syrians, on the fourth day of the war, were not a threat to us.'" The New York Times, May 11, 1997

The history of Israeli expansionism

"The acceptance of partition does not commit us to renounce Transjordan; one does not demand from anybody to give up his vision. We shall accept a state in the boundaries fixed today. But the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are the concern of the Jewish people and no external factor will be able to limit them." David Ben-Gurion, in 1936, quoted in Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

Expansionism - continued

"The main danger which Israel, as a 'Jewish state', poses to its own people, to other Jews and to its neighbors, is its ideologically motivated pursuit of territorial expansion and the inevitable series of wars resulting from this aim...No Zionist politician has ever repudiated Ben-Gurion's idea that Israeli policies must be based (within the limits of practical considerations) on the restoration of Biblical borders as the borders of the

Jewish state." Israeli professor, Israel Shahak, "Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of 3000 Years."

Expansionism - continued

In Israeli Prime Minister Moshe Sharatt's personal diaries, there is an excerpt from May of 1955 in which he quotes Moshe Dayan as follows: "[Israel] must see the sword as the main, if not the only, instrument with which to keep its morale high and to retain its moral tension. Toward this end it may, no - it must - invent dangers, and to do this it must adopt the method of provocation-and-revenge...And above all - let us hope for a new war with the Arab countries, so that we may finally get rid of our troubles and acquire our space." Quoted in Livia Rokach, "Israel's Sacred Terrorism."

But wasn't the occupation of Arab lands necessary to protect Israel's security?

"Senator [J. William Fulbright] proposed in 1970 that America should guarantee Israel's security in a formal treaty, protecting her with armed forces if necessary. In return, Israel would retire to the borders of 1967. The UN Security Council would guarantee this arrangement, and thereby bring the Soviet Union - then a supplier of arms and political aid to the Arabs - into compliance. As Israeli troops were withdrawn from the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank they would be replaced by a UN peacekeeping force. Israel would agree to accept a certain number of Palestinians and the rest would be settled in a Palestinian state outside Israel.

"The plan drew favorable editorial support in the United States. The proposal, however, was flatly rejected by Israel. 'The whole affair disgusted Fulbright,' writes [his biographer Randall] Woods. 'The Israelis were not even willing to act in their own self-interest.'" Allan Brownfield in "Issues of the American Council for Judaism." Fall 1997.[Ed.-This was one of many such proposals]

What happened after the 1967 war ended?

"In violation of international law, Israel has confiscated over 52 percent of the land in the West Bank and 30 percent of the Gaza Strip for military use or for settlement by Jewish civilians...From 1967 to 1982, Israel's military government demolished 1,338 Palestinian homes on the West Bank. Over this period, more than 300,000 Palestinians were detained without trial for various periods by Israeli security forces." Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation," ed. Lockman and Beinun.

World opinion on the legality of Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza.

"Under the UN Charter there can lawfully be no territorial gains from war, even by a state acting in self-defense. The response of other states to Israel's occupation shows a virtually unanimous opinion that even if Israel's action was defensive, its retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was not...The [UN] General Assembly characterized Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as a denial of self determination and hence a 'serious and increasing threat to international peace and security.'" John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Examples of the effects of Israeli occupation

"A study of students at Bethlehem University reported by the Coordinating Committee of International NGOs in Jerusalem showed that many families frequently go five days a week without running water...The study goes further to report that, 'water quotas restrict usage by Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, while Israeli settlers have almost unlimited amounts.'

"A summer trip to a Jewish settlement on the edge of the Judean desert less than five miles from Bethlehem confirmed this water inequity for us. While Bethlehemites were buying water from tank trucks at highly inflated rates, the lawns were green in the settlement. Sprinklers were going at mid day in the hot August sunshine. Sounds of children swimming in the outdoor pool added to the unreality." Betty Jane Bailey, in "The Link", December 1996.

Israeli occupation - continued

"You have to remember that 90 percent of children two years old or more have experienced - some many, many times - the [Israeli] army breaking into the home, beating relatives, destroying things. Many were beaten themselves, had bones broken, were shot, tear gassed, or had these things happen to siblings and neighbors...The emotional aspect of the child is affected by the [lack of] security. He needs to feel safe. We see the consequences later if he does not. In our research, we have found that children who are exposed to trauma tend to be more extreme in their behaviors and, later, in their political beliefs." Dr Samir Quota, director of research for the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, quoted in "The Journal of Palestine Studies," Summer 1996, p.84

Israeli occupation - continued

"There is nothing quite like the misery one feels listening to a 35-year-old [Palestinian] man who worked fifteen years as an illegal day laborer in Israel in order to save up money to build a house for his family only to be shocked one day upon returning from work to find that the house and all that was in it had been flattened by an Israeli bulldozer. When I asked why this was done - the land, after all, was his - I was told that a paper given to him the next day by an Israeli soldier stated that he had built the structure without a license. Where else in the world are people required to have a license (always denied them) to build on their own property? Jews can build, but never Palestinians. This is apartheid." Edward Said, in "The Nation", May 4, 1998.

All Jewish settlements in territories occupied in the 1967 war are a direct violation of the Geneva Conventions, which Israel has signed.

"The Geneva Convention requires an occupying power to change the existing order as little as possible during its tenure. One aspect of this obligation is that it must leave the territory to the people it finds there. It may not bring its own people to populate the territory. This prohibition is found in the convention's Article 49, which states, 'The occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.'" John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Excerpts from the U.S. State Department's reports during the Intifada

"Following are some excerpts from the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices from 1988 to 1991:

1988: 'Many avoidable deaths and injuries' were caused because Israeli soldiers frequently used gunfire in situations that did not present mortal danger to troops...IDF troops used clubs to break limbs and beat Palestinians who were not directly involved in disturbances or resisting arrest..At least thirteen Palestinians have been reported to have died from beatings...'

1989: Human rights groups charged that the plainclothes security personnel acted as death squads who killed Palestinian activists without warning, after they had surrendered, or after they had been subdued...

1991: [The report] added that the human rights groups had published 'detailed credible reports of torture, abuse and mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in prisons and detention centers.'" Former Congressman Paul Findley, "Deliberate Deceptions."

Jerusalem - Eternal, Indivisible Capital of Israel?

"Writing in The Jerusalem Report (Feb. 28, 2000), Leslie Susser points out that the current boundaries were drawn after the Six-Day War. Responsibility for drawing those lines fell to Central Command Chief Rehavan Ze'evi. The line he drew 'took in not only the five square kilometers of Arab East Jerusalem - but also 65 square kilometers of surrounding open country and villages, most of which never had any municipal link to Jerusalem. Overnight they became part of Israel's eternal and indivisible capital.'" Allan Brownfield in The Washington Report On Middle East Affairs, May 2000.

The History of Terrorism in the Region

Editor's Note: We believe that the killing of innocent people is wrong, in all cases. Thus, we cannot condone the use of terrorism by some extreme Palestinian groups, especially prevalent during the 1970s. That being said, however, it is necessary to examine the context in which such incidents occurred.

We hear lots about Palestinian terrorism. How about the Israeli record?

"The record of Israeli terrorism goes back to the origins of the state - indeed, long before - including the massacre of 250 civilians and brutal expulsion of seventy thousand others from Lydda and Ramle in July 1948; the massacre of hundreds of others at the undefended village of Doueimah near Hebron in October 1948;...the slaughters in Quibya, Kafr Kasseem, and a string of other assassinated villages; the expulsion of thousands of Bedouins from the demilitarized zones shortly after the 1948 war and thousands more from northeastern Sinai in the early 1970's, their villages destroyed, to open the region for Jewish settlement; and on, and on." Noam Chomsky, "Blaming The Victims," ed. Said and Hitchens.

Terrorism - continued

"However much one laments and even wishes somehow to atone for the loss of life and suffering visited upon innocents because of Palestinian violence, there is still the need, I

think, also to say that no national movement has been so unfairly penalized, defamed, and subjected to disproportionate retaliation for its sins as has the Palestinian.

The Israeli policy of punitive counterattacks (or state terrorism) seems to be to try to kill anywhere from 50 to 100 Arabs for every Jewish fatality. The devastation of Lebanese refugee camps, hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, and orphanages; the summary arrests, deportations, house destructions, maimings, and torture of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza..these, and the number of Palestinian fatalities, the scale of material loss, the physical, political and psychological deprivations, have tremendously exceeded the damage done by Palestinians to Israelis." Edward Said, "The Question of Palestine."

The U.S. Government and media bias on terrorism in the Middle East

"It is simply extraordinary and without precedent that Israel's history, its record - from the fact that it..is a state built on conquest, that it has invaded surrounding countries, bombed and destroyed at will, to the fact that it currently occupies Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian territory against international law - is simply never cited, never subjected to scrutiny in the U.S. media or in official discourse...never addressed as playing any role at all in provoking 'Islamic terror.'" Edward Said in "The Progressive." May 30, 1996.

Jewish Criticism of Zionism

"Albert Einstein - "I should much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish State. Apart from practical considerations, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish State,with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power, no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain'...

"Professor Erich Fromm, a noted Jewish writer and thinker, [stated]...'In general international law, the principle holds true that no citizen loses his property or his rights of citizenship; and the citizenship right is de facto a right to which the Arabs in Israel have much more legitimacy than the Jews. Just because the Arabs fled? Since when is that punishable by confiscation of property, and by being barred from returning to the land on which a people's forefathers have lived for generations? Thus, the claim of the Jews to the land of Israel cannot be a realistic claim. If all nations would suddenly claim territory in which their forefathers had lived two thousand years ago, this world would be a madhouse...I believe that, politically speaking, there is only one solution for Israel, namely, the unilateral acknowledgement of the obligation of the State towards the Arabs - not to use it as a bargaining point, but to acknowledge the complete moral obligation of the Israeli State to its former inhabitants of Palestine'...

"Martin Buber - 'Only an internal revolution can have the power to heal our people of their murderous sickness of causeless hatred...It is bound to bring complete ruin upon us. Only then will the old and young in our land realize how great was our responsibility to those miserable Arab refugees in whose towns we have settled Jews who were brought here from afar; whose homes we have inherited, whose fields we now sow and harvest; the fruits of whose gardens, orchards and vineyards we gather; and in whose cities that we robbed we put up houses of education, charity, and prayer, while we babble and rave about being the "People of the Book" and the "light of the nations"'...

"In an article published in the Washington Post of 3 October 1978, Rabbi Hirsch (of Jerusalem) is reported to have declared: 'The 12th principle of our faith, I believe, is that the Messiah will gather the Jewish exiled who are dispersed throughout the nations of the world. Zionism is diametrically opposed to Judaism. Zionism wishes to define the Jewish people as a nationalistic entity. The Zionists say, in effect, 'Look here, God. We do not like exile. Take us back, and if you don't, we'll just roll up our sleeves and take ourselves back.' 'The Rabbi continues: 'This, of course, is heresy. The Jewish people are charged by Divine oath not to force themselves back to the Holy Land against the wishes of those residing there.'" Sami Hadawi, "Bitter Harvest."

Jewish Criticism - continued

"A Jewish Home in Palestine built up on bayonets and oppression [is] not worth having, even though it succeed, whereas the very attempt to build it up peacefully, cooperatively, with understanding, education, and good will, [is] worth a great deal even though the attempt should fail." Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, first president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, quoted in "Like All The Nations?", ed. Brinner & Rischin.

Martin Buber on what Zionism should have been

"The first fact is that at the time when we entered into an alliance (an alliance, I admit, that was not well defined) with a European state and we provided that state with a claim to rule over Palestine, we made no attempt to reach an agreement with the Arabs of this land regarding the basis and conditions for the continuation of Jewish settlement. This negative approach caused those Arabs who thought about and were concerned about the future of their people to see us increasingly not as a group which desired to live in cooperation with their people but as something in the nature of uninvited guests and agents of foreign interests (at the time I explicitly pointed out this fact).

"The second fact is that we took hold of the key economic positions in the country without compensating the Arab population, that is to say without allowing their capital and their labor a share in our economic activity. Paying the large landowners for purchases made or paying compensation to tenants on the land is not the same as compensating a people. As a result, many of the more thoughtful Arabs viewed the advance of Jewish settlement as a kind of plot designed to dispossess future generations of their people of the land necessary for their existence and development. Only by means of a comprehensive and vigorous economic policy aimed at organizing and developing common interests would it have been possible to contend with this view and its inevitable consequences. This we did not do.

"The third fact is that when a possibility arose that the Mandate would soon be terminated, not only did we not propose to the Arab population of the country that a joint Jewish Arab administration be set up in its place, we went ahead and demanded rule over the whole country (the Biltmore program) as a fitting political sequel to the gains we had already made. By this step, we with our own hands provided our enemies in the Arab camp with aid and comfort of the most valuable sort - the support of public opinion - without which the military attack launched against us would not have been possible. For it now appears to the Arab populace that in carrying on the activities we have been engaged in for years, in acquiring land and in working and developing the land, we were systematically laying the ground work for gaining control of the whole country." Martin Buber, quoted in "A Land of Two Peoples" ed. Mendes-Flohr

Israel's new historians now refute myths of the founding of the state

"Since the 1980's,.....Israeli scholars [have] concurred with their Palestinian counterparts that Zionism was...carried out as a pure colonialist act against the local population: a mixture of exploitation and expropriation..."

"They were motivated to present a revisionist point of view to a large extent by the declassification of relevant archival material in Israel, Britain and the United States. [For example,]..."

Challenging the Myth of Annihilation - The new historiographical picture is a fundamental challenge to the official history that says the Jewish community faced possible annihilation on the eve of the 1948 war. Archival documents expose a fragmented Arab world wrought by dismay and confusion and a Palestinian community that possessed no military ability with which to frighten the Jews...

Israel's responsibility for Refugees - The Jewish military advantage was translated into an act of mass expulsion of more than half of the Palestinian population. The Israeli forces, apart from rare exceptions, expelled the Palestinians from every village and town they occupied. In some cases, this expulsion was accompanied by massacres [of civilians] as was the case in Lydda, Ramleh, Dawimiyya, Sa'sa, Ein Zietun and other places.

Expulsion also was accompanied by rape, looting and confiscation [of Palestinian land and property]...

The Myth of Arab Intransigence - [The U.N.] convened a peace conference in Lausanne, Switzerland in the spring of 1949. Before the conference, the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution that in effect replaced the November 1947 partition resolution. This new resolution, Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, accepted [U.N. Mediator] Bernadotte's triangular basis for a comprehensive peace: an unconditional return of all the refugees to their homes, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the partitioning of Palestine into two states. This time, several Arab states and various representatives of the Palestinians accepted this as a basis for negotiations, as did the United States, which was running the show at Lausanne...Prime Minister David Ben Gurion strongly opposed any peace negotiations along these lines...The only reason he was willing to allow Israel to participate in the peace conference was his fear of an angry American reaction...The road to peace was not taken due to Israeli, not Arab, intransigence.

Conclusions - The new Israeli historians...wish to rectify what their research reveals as past evils...There was a high price exacted in creating a Jewish state in Palestine. And there were victims, the plight of whom still fuels the fire of conflict in Palestine." Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé in "The Link", January, 1998.

"It is no longer my country"

"For me, this business called the state of Israel is finished...I can't bear to see it anymore, the injustice that is done to the Arabs, to the Beduins. All kinds of scum coming from America and as soon as they get off the plane taking over lands in the territories and claiming it for their own...I can't do anything to change it. I can only go away and let the whole lot go to hell without me." Israeli actress (and household name) Rivka Mitchell, quoted in Israeli peace movement periodical, "The Other Israel", August 1998.

The effect of Zionism on American Jews.

"The corruption of Judaism, as a religion of universal values, through its politicization by Zionism and by the replacement of dedication to Israel for dedication to God and the moral law, is what has alienated so many young Americans who, searching for spiritual meaning in life, have found little in the organized Jewish community." Allan Brownfield, "Issues of the American Council for Judaism", Spring 1997.

Zionism and the Holocaust

The U.N. decisions to partition Palestine and then to grant admission to the state of Israel were made, on one level, as an emotional response to the horrors of the Holocaust, Under more normal circumstances, the compelling claims to sovereignty of the Arab majority would have prevailed. This reaction of guilt on the part of the Western allies was understandable, but that doesn't mean the Palestinians should have to pay for crimes committed by others -- a classic example of two wrongs not making a right.

The Holocaust is often used as the final argument in favor of Zionism, but is this connection justified? There are several aspects to consider in answering that question honestly. First, we will examine the historical record of what the Zionist movement actually did to help save European Jewry from the Nazis.

Shamir proposes an alliance with the Nazis

"As late as 1941, the Zionist group LEHI, one of whose leaders, Yitzhak Shamir, was later to become a prime minister of Israel, approached the Nazis, using the name of its parent organization, the Irgun(NMO)..[The proposal stated:] 'The establishment of the historical Jewish state on a national and totalitarian Pd bound by a treaty with the German Reich would be in the interests of strengthening the future German nation of power in the Near East...The NMO in Palestine offers to take an active part in the war on Germany's side'...The Nazis rejected this proposal for an alliance because, it is reported, they considered LEHI's military power 'negligible.' " Allan Brownfield in "The Washington Report on Middle Eastern Affairs", July/August 1998.

Wasn't the main goal of Zionism to save Jews from the Holocaust?

"In 1938 a thirty-one nation conference was held in Evian, France, on resettlement of the victims of Nazism. The World Zionist Organization refused to participate, fearing that resettlement of Jews in other states would reduce the number available for Palestine." John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

Main goal of Zionism - continued

"It was summed up in the meeting [of the Jewish Agency's Executive on June 26, 1938] that the Zionist thing to do 'is belittle the [Evian] Conference as far as possible and to cause it to decide nothing...We are particularly worried that it would move Jewish organizations to collect large sums of money for aid to Jewish refugees, and these collections could interfere with our collection efforts'...Ben-Gurion's statement at the same meeting: 'No rationalization can turn the conference from a harmful to a useful one. What can and should be done is to limit the damage as far as possible.'" Israeli author Boas Evron, "Jewish State or Israeli Nation?"

Main goal of Zionism - continued

"[Ben-Gurion stated] 'If I knew that it was possible to save all the children of Germany by transporting them to England, but only half of them by transporting them to Palestine, I would choose the second - because we face not only the reckoning of those children, but the historical reckoning of the Jewish people.' In the wake of the Kristallnacht pogroms, Ben-Gurion commented that 'the human conscience' might bring various countries to open their doors to Jewish refugees from Germany. He saw this as a threat and warned: 'Zionism is in danger.'" Israeli historian, Tom Segev, "The Seventh Million."

Main goal of Zionism-continued

"Even David Ben-Gurion's sympathetic biographer acknowledges that Ben-Gurion did nothing practical for rescue, devoting his energies to post-war prospects. He delegated rescue work to Yitzak Gruenbaum, who [stated]...'They will say that I am anti-Semitic, that I don't want to save the Exile, that I don't have a varm Yiddish hartz...Let them say what they want. I will not demand that the Jewish Agency allocate a sum of 300,000 or 100,000 pounds sterling to help European Jewry. And I think that whoever demands such things is performing an anti-Zionist act.'

"Zionists in America...took the same position. At a May 1943 meeting of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, Nahum Goldmann argued, 'If a drive is opened against the White Paper (the British policy of restricting Jewish immigrants to Palestine) the mass meetings of protest against the murder of European Jewry will have to be dropped. We do not have sufficient manpower for both campaigns.'" Peter Novick, "The Holocaust in American Life."

Main goal of Zionism - continued

"The Zionist movement...interfered with and hindered other organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish, whenever it imagined that their activity, political or humanitarian, was at variance with Zionist aims or in competition with them, even when these might be helpful to Jews, even when it was a question of life and death...Beit Zvi documents the Zionist leadership's indifference to saving Jews from the Nazi menace except in cases in which the Jews could be brought to Palestine...[e.g.] the readiness of the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo, to absorb one hundred thousand refugees and the sabotaging of this idea - as well as others, like proposals to settle the Jews in Alaska and the Philippines - by the Zionist movement...

"The obtuseness of the Zionist movement toward the fate of European Jewry did not prevent it, of course, from later hurling accusations against the whole world for its indifference toward the Jewish catastrophe or from pressing material, political, and moral demands on the world because of that indifference." Israeli author Boas Evron, "Jewish State or Israeli Nation?"

Main goal of Zionism - continued

"I have already gone exhaustively into the reason for our being here, reasons that I as a pioneer of 1906 can affirm have nothing to do with the Nazis!...We are here because the land is ours. And we are here because we have again made it ours in this time with the work we have put into it. Nazism and our history of martyrdom abroad do not concern our presence in Israel directly." David Ben-Gurion, "Memoirs."

In hindsight, it is easy to say that the millions of Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust could have been saved if Palestine had been available for unlimited

immigration. The history of this period is not so simple, however. First, keep in mind that other realistic resettlement plans were proposed but actively opposed by the Zionist movement. Second, the great majority of Jews in Europe were not Zionists and did not try to emigrate to Palestine before 1939. Third, after the start of the war, as the Nazis occupied various countries, they refused to let the Jews leave, making emigration virtually impossible. And Palestine, as we have shown, was already occupied; the indigenous Arabs had more valid reasons than any other country for wanting to limit Jewish immigration. Read on:

Emigration to Palestine before World War II

"In 1936, the Social Democratic Bund won a sweeping victory in Jewish kehilla elections in Poland...Its main hallmarks included 'an unyielding hostility to Zionism' and to the Zionist enterprise of Jewish emigration from Poland to Palestine. The Bund wished Polish Jews to fight anti-semitism in Poland by remaining there...The Zionist goal was also opposed, as a matter of principle, by all the major parties and movements among pre-1939 Polish Jewry..."Elsewhere in eastern Europe...Zionist strength was weaker still." Prof. William Rubinstein, "The Myth of Rescue."

Emigration to Palestine before World War II - continued

"In fact, Zionism suffered its own defeat in the Holocaust; as a movement, it failed. It had not, after all, persuaded the majority of Jews to leave Europe for Palestine while it was still possible to do so." Israeli historian, Tom Segev, "The Seventh Million."

Emigration during World War II

"[With the start of the war, Nazi] edicts forbidding emigration followed in all countries under direct Nazi control: after 1940-1 it was in effect impossible for Jews legally to emigrate from Nazi-occupied Europe to places of safety...The doors...were firmly shut: by the Nazis, it must be emphasized." Prof William D. Rubinstein, "The Myth of Rescue."

Palestine was not necessarily a safe haven either

"In September 1940, the Italians, at war with Britain, bombed downtown Tel Aviv, with over a hundred casualties...As the German Army overran Europe and North Africa, it appeared possible that it would conquer Palestine as well. In the summer of 1940, in the spring of 1941, and again in the fall of 1942 the danger seemed imminent. The yishuv panicked...Many people tried to find a way out of the country, but it was not easy...Some...were taking no chances; they carried cyanide capsules." Israeli historian, Tom Segev, "The Seventh Million."

In any case, Palestine was not Britain's to give away; it was already occupied.

"We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish, state here...Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages...There is not a single community in the country that did not have a former Arab population." Israeli leader, Moshe Dayan, quoted in Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi's "Original Sins."

Already occupied, continued

"One can imagine an argument for the right of a persecuted minority to find refuge in another country able to accommodate it; one is hard-pressed, however, to imagine an argument for the right of a peaceful minority to politically and perhaps physically displace the indigenous population of another country. Yet...the latter was the actual intention of the Zionist movement." Norman Finkelstein, "Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict."

The use of the Holocaust for political gain

"[In 1947] the U.N. appointed a special body, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), to make the decision over Palestine and UNSCOP members were asked to visit the camps of Holocaust survivors. Many of these survivors wanted to emigrate to the United States, a wish that undermined the Zionist claims that the fate of European Jewry was connected to that of the Jewish community in Palestine. When UNSCOP representatives arrived at the camps, they were unaware that backstage manipulations were limiting their contacts solely to survivors who wished to emigrate to Palestine," Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé in "The Link," January March 1998.

Political gain - continued

"Inside the DP camps, emissaries from the Yishuv organized survivor activity - crucially, the testimony the DPs gave to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and the UN Special Committee on Palestine about where they wished to go...The Jewish Agency envoys reported home that they had been successful in preventing the appearance of 'undesirable' witnesses at the hearings. One wrote his girlfriend in Palestine that 'we have to change our style and handwriting constantly so that they will think that the questionnaires were filled in by the refugees.'" Peter Novick, "The Holocaust in American Life."

Roosevelt's advisor writes on why Jewish refugees were not offered sanctuary in the U.S. after WWII

"What if Canada, Australia, South America, England and the United States were all to open a door to some migration? Even today [written in 1947] it is my judgement, and I have been in Germany since the war, that only a minority of the Jewish DP's [displaced persons] would choose Palestine..."

"[Roosevelt] proposed a world budget for the easy migration of the 500,000 beaten people of Europe. Each nation should open its doors for some thousands of refugees...So he suggested that during my trips for him to England during the war I sound out in a general, unofficial manner the leaders of British public opinion, in and out of the government...The simple answer: Great Britain will match the United States, man for man, in admissions from Europe...It seemed all settled. With the rest of the world probably ready to give haven to 200,000, there was a sound reason for the President to press Congress to take in at least 150,000 immigrants after the war..."

"It would free us from the hypocrisy of closing our own doors while making sanctimonious demands on the Arabs...But it did not work out...The failure of the leading Jewish organizations to support with zeal this immigration programme may have caused the President not to push forward with it at that time..."

"I talked to many people active in Jewish organizations. I suggested the plan...I was amazed and even felt insulted when active Jewish leaders decried, sneered, and then attacked me as if I were a traitor...I think I know the reason for much of the opposition. There is a deep, genuine, often fanatical emotional vested interest in putting over the Palestinian movement [Zionism]. Men like Ben Hecht are little concerned about human blood if it is not their own." Jewish attorney and friend of President Roosevelt, Morris Ernst, "So Far, So Good."

Victimology

"Jewish proponents of the 'victim' card are aware not only of its social effectiveness but of its usefulness as a means of insuring Jewish solidarity and, hence, survival. If we were forever hated by all and are doomed to be forever hated by all, then we'd best stick together and make the best of it...Personally, I have never found this view of the eternally-hating gentile to have any resemblance with reality. It seems a myth, pure and simple, and an ugly one at that.

"Is it a good means of social control? Perhaps, but at what cost? It strips the faith and history of Jew and gentile alike of all but their months of antagonism. It wallows in evil imagery and postulates a forever morally superior Jew, victimized by the forever morally inferior 'goy'..I have spent most of my adult life among Hasidic Jews, almost all of whom were Holocaust survivors, and I've heard almost nothing of the of the relentless harping on victimology and our need to forever memorialize it...(Victimology) allows Jews to bypass their own faith and offers the national allegiance of Holocaust/Israel in its place." Rabbi Mayer Schiller, quoted in "Issues of the American Council for Judaism," Summer 1998.

General Considerations

Israel has sought peace with its Arab neighbor states but has steadfastly refused to negotiate with Palestinians directly, until the last few years. Why?

"My friend, take care. When you recognize the concept of 'Palestine', you demolish your right to live in Ein Hahoresh. If this is Palestine and not the Land of Israel, then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who have lived here before you came. Only if it is the Land of Israel do you have a right to live in Ein Hahoresh and in Deganiyah B. If it is not your country, your fatherland, the country of your ancestors and of your sons, then what are you doing here? You came to another people's homeland, as they claim, you expelled them and you have taken their land." Menahem Begin, quoted in Noam Chomsky's "Peace in the Middle East?"

More from the horse's mouth

"Why should the Arabs make peace? If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country. Sure, God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs, We come from Israel, it's true, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we came here and stole their country. Why should they accept that?" David Ben-Gurion, quoted in "The Jewish Paradox" by Nathan Goldman, former president of the World Jewish Congress.

More from the horse's mouth

"Before [the Palestinians] very eyes we are possessing the land and the villages where they, and their ancestors, have lived...We are the generation of colonizers, and without the steel helmet and the gun barrel we cannot plant a tree and build a home." Israeli leader Moshe Dayan, quoted in Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel"

More from the horse's mouth

"The Arabs will be our problem for a long time," Weizmann said, "It's not going to be simple. One day they may have to leave and let us have the country. They're ten to one, but don't we Jews have ten times their intelligence?" Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann in 1919 at the Paris peace conference, quoted in Ella Winter, "And Not To Yield."

The international consensus on Israel (a very small representative sampling)

"[In the early 1950s] Arab states regularly complained of the reprisals to the UN Security Council, which routinely rejected Israel's claims of self-defense..."

"In June 1982 Israel again invaded Lebanon, and it used aerial bombardment to destroy entire camps of Palestinian Arab refugees, By these means Israel killed 20,000 persons, mostly civilians...Israel claimed self-defense for its invasion, but the lack of PLO attacks into Israel during the previous year made that claim dubious...The [UN] Security Council demanded 'that Israel withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon'..."

"The UN Human Rights Commission, using the Geneva Convention's provision that certain violations of humanitarian law are 'grave breaches' meriting criminal punishment for perpetrators, found a number of Israel's practices during the uprising [the intifada] to constitute 'war crimes.' It included physical and psychological torture of Palestinian detainees and their subjection to improper and inhuman treatment; the imposition of collective punishment on towns, villages and camps; the administrative detention of thousands of Palestinians; the expulsion of Palestinian citizens; the confiscation of Palestinian property; and the raiding and demolition of Palestinian houses." John Quigley, "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice."

From the 1970s until the 1999 Israeli High Court decision forbidding torture during interrogation (theoretically), hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were subjected to inhuman treatment in Israeli prisons.

"Israel's two main interrogation agencies in the occupied territories engage in a systematic pattern of ill-treatment and torture - according to internationally recognized definitions of the terms...The methods used in nearly all interrogations are prolonged sleep deprivation; prolonged sight deprivation using blindfolds or tight-fitting hoods; forced, prolonged maintenance of body positions that grow increasingly painful; and verbal threats and insults.

"These methods are almost always combined with some of the following abuses; confinement in tiny, closet-like spaces; exposure to temperature extremes, such as deliberately overcooled rooms, prolonged toilet and hygiene deprivation; and degrading treatment...Beatings are far more routine in IDF interrogations than in GSS

interrogations. Sixteen of the nineteen detainees we interviewed [detained between 1992 and 1994] reported having been assaulted in the interrogation room. Beatings and kicks were directed at the throat, testicles, and stomach. Some were repeatedly choked; some had their heads slammed against the walls...

"Israeli interrogations consistently use methods in combination with one another, over long periods of time. Thus, a detainee in the custody of the General Security Service (GSS) may spend weeks during which, except for brief respites, he shuttles from a tiny chair to which he is painfully shackled; to a stifling, tiny cubicle in which he can barely move; to questioning sessions in which he is beaten or violently manhandled; and then back to the chair.

"The intensive, sustained and combined use of these methods inflicts the severe mental or physical suffering that is central to internationally accepted definitions of torture. Israel's political leadership cannot claim ignorance that ill-treatment is the norm in interrogation centers. The number of victims is too large, and the abuses too systematic," 1994 Human Rights Watch report, "Torture and Ill-Treatment: Israel's Interrogation of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories."

The use of 'force' - continued

"Amnesty International also observed that, when brought to trial, most Palestinian detainees arrested for 'terrorist' offenses and tortured by the Shin Bet (General Security Services) 'have been accused of offenses such as membership in unlawful associations or throwing stones. They have also included prisoners of conscience such as people arrested solely for raising a flag.' On a related point, Haaretz columnist B. Michael noted that there wasn't a single recorded case in which the Shin Bet's use of torture was prompted by a 'ticking bomb' scenario: 'In every instance of a Palestinian lodging formal complaint about torture, the Shin Bet justified its use in order to extract a confession about something that had already happened, not about something that was about to happen.'" Norman Finkelstein, "The Rise and Fall of Palestine."

The 1997 U.N. Commission Against Torture rules against Israel

"B'Tselem estimates---that the GSS annually interrogates between 1000-1500 Palestinians [as of 1998]. Some eighty-five percent of them - at least 850 persons a year - are tortured during interrogation...

"The U.N. Committee Against Torture,..reached an unequivocal conclusion:...The methods of interrogation [used in Israeli prisons]...are in the Committee's view breaches of article 16 and also constitute torture as defined in article 1 of the Convention...As a State Party to the Convention Against Torture, Israel is precluded from raising before this Committee exceptional circumstances'...The prohibition on torture is, therefore, absolute, and no 'exceptional' circumstances may justify derogating from it." 1998 Report from B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, "Routine Torture: Interrogation Methods of the General Security Service."

Some arguments used to justify Zionism

"There is clearly no need to justify the Zionist dream, the desire for relief from Jewish suffering...The trouble with Zionism starts when it lands, so to speak, in Palestine. What has to be justified is the injustice to the Palestinians caused by Zionism, the dispossession

and victimization of a whole people. There is clearly a wrong here, a wrong which creates the need for justification...

[E.g., the inheritance claim] The aim of Zionism is the restoration of a Jewish sovereignty to its status 2,000 years ago. Zionism does not advocate an overhauling of the total world situation in the same way. It does not advocate the restoration of the Roman empire...[In addition,] Palestinians have claimed descent from the ancient inhabitants of Palestine 3,000 years ago!...

[Jewish suffering as justification] It was easy to make the Palestinians pay for 2,000 years of persecution. The Palestinians, who have felt the enormous power of this vengeance, were not the historical oppressors of the Jews.

They did not put Jews into ghettos and force them to wear yellow stars. They did not plan holocausts. But they had one fault. They were weak and defenseless in the face of real military might, so they were the ideal victims for an abstract revenge....

[Anti-semitism as justification] Unlike the situation of Jews persecuted for being Jews, Israelis are at war with the Arab world because they have committed the sin of colonialism, not because of their Jewish identity...

[The law of the jungle justification.] Presenting the world as naturally unjust, and oppression as nature's way, has always been the first refuge of those who want to preserve their privileges...The need to justify Zionism, and the lack of other defenses, has made it part of the Israeli world view...In Israel, one common outcome is cynicism, for which Israelis have become famous...

[The effect on Israelis] Israelis seem to be haunted by a curse. It is the curse of the original sin against the native Arabs. How can Israel be discussed without recalling the dispossession and exclusion of non-Jews? This is the most basic fact about Israel, and no understanding of Israeli reality is possible without it. The original sin haunts and torments Israelis; it marks everything and taints everybody. Its memory poisons the blood and marks every moment of existence." Israeli author, Benjamin Beit-Hallahami, "Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel."

Zionism's 'historical right' to Palestine

"Zionism's 'historical right' to Palestine was neither historical nor a right. It was not historical inasmuch as it voided the two millennia of non-Jewish settlement in Palestine and the two millennia of Jewish settlement outside it. It was not a right, except in the Romantic 'mysticism' of 'blood and soil' and the Romantic 'cult' of 'death, heroes and graves'... "The claim of Jewish 'homelessness is founded on a cluster of assumptions that both negates the liberal idea of citizenship and duplicates the anti-Semitic one that the state belongs to the majority ethnic nation. In a word, the Zionist case for a Jewish state is as valid as the anti-Semitic case for an ethnic state that marginalizes Jews." Professor Norman Finkelstein, "Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict,"

How about the Zionist argument that Jordan already is the Palestinian state?

"It is often alleged that there was, in fact, an earlier 'territorial compromise', namely in 1922, when Transjordan was excised from the promised 'national home for the Jewish people,'...a decision that is difficult to criticize in light of the fact that 'the number of Jews living there permanently in 1921 has reliably been estimated at two, or according to some authorities, three persons.'" Noam Chomsky, "The Fateful Triangle."

Why doesn't Israel, "the only democracy in the Middle East," have a constitution?

"The abstention from formulating a constitution was no accident. The massive expropriation of lands and other properties from those Arabs who fled the country as a result of the War of Independence and of those who remained but were declared absent, as well as the confiscation of large tracts of land from Arab villages who did not flee, and the laws passed to legalize those acts - all this would have necessarily been declared unconstitutional, null and void, by the Supreme Court, being expressly discriminatory against one part of the citizenry, whereas a democratic constitution obliges the state to treat all of its citizens equally." Israeli author, Boas Evron, "Jewish State or Israeli Nation?"

"The only democracy in the Middle East?" - continued

"The 1989 Israel High Court decision that any political party advocating full equality between Arab and Jew can be barred from fielding candidates in an election...[means] that the Israeli state is the state of the Jews...not their [the Arabs'] state." Professor Norman Finkelstein, "Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict."

Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel*

The fundamentalist wing of the Jewish religion, while certainly not representative of Judaism as a whole, is influential in Israel, and is the ideological basis of the settler movement in the West Bank and Gaza (except for "Greater Jerusalem" where many secular Jews have moved because of cheap, subsidized housing) The following quotes show the racism inherent in this world-view and why its influence should be opposed by all rational people.

Ideological basis of racism in Israel

"The Talmud states that...two contrary types of souls exist, a non-Jewish soul comes from the Satanic spheres, while the Jewish soul stems from holiness...Rabbi Kook, the Elder, the revered father of the messianic tendency of Jewish fundamentalism said, "The difference between a Jewish soul and the souls of non-Jews...is greater and deeper than the difference between a human soul and the souls of cattle." "Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky's "Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel"

Racism - continued

"Gush Emunim rabbis have continually reiterated that Jews who killed Arabs should not be punished, [e.g.]...Relying on the Code of Maimonides and the Halacha, Rabbi Ariel stated, 'A Jew who killed a non-Jew is exempt from human judgement and has not violated the [religious] prohibition of murder'..The significance here is most striking when the broad support, both direct and indirect, for Gush Emunim is considered. About one-half of Israel's Jewish population supports Gush Emunim." "Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky's "Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel"

Jewish fundamentalist rationale for seizing Arab land

"They argue that what appears to be confiscation of Arab owned land for subsequent settlement by Jews is in reality not an act of stealing but one of sanctification. From their perspective the land is being redeemed by being transferred from the satanic to the divine sphere...To further this process, the use of force is permitted whenever necessary...Halacha permits Jews to rob non-Jews in those locales wherein Jews are stronger than non-Jews." "Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky's "Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel"

Intifada II and The "Peace Process"

The flaws of the Oslo Accords

"The United States has been a terrible 'sponsor' of the peace process. It has succumbed to Israeli pressure on everything, abandoning the principle of land for peace (no U.N. Resolution says anything about returning a tiny percentage, as opposed to all of the land Israel seized in 1967), pushing the lifeless Palestinian leadership into deeper and deeper holes to suit Netanyahu's preposterous demands.

"The fact is that Palestinians are dramatically worse off than they were before the Oslo process began. Their annual income is less than half of what it was in 1992; they are unable to travel from place to place; more of their land has been taken than ever before; more settlements exist; and Jerusalem is practically lost...

"Every house demolition, every expropriated dunum, every arrest and torture, every barricade, every closure, every gesture of arrogance and intended humiliation simply revives the past and reenacts Israel's offenses against the Palestinian spirit, land, body politic. To speak about peace in such a context is to try to reconcile the irreconcilable."Edward Said in "The Progressive", March 1998

The roots of Intifada II

"The explosion of Palestinian anger last September 29 put an end to the charade begun at Oslo seven years ago and labelled the 'peace process.' In 1993 Palestinians, along with millions of people around the world, were led to hope that Israel would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza within five years and that Palestinians would then be free to establish an independent state. Meanwhile both sides would work out details of Israel's withdrawal and come to an agreement on the status of Jerusalem, the future of Israeli settlements, and the return of Palestinian refugees.

"Because of the lopsided balance of power, negotiations went nowhere and the Palestinians' hopes were never fulfilled. The Israelis, regardless of which government was in power, quibbled over wording, demanded revisions of what had previously been agreed to, then refused to abide by the new agreements. Meanwhile successive governments were demolishing Palestinian homes, taking over Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem for Jewish housing, and seizing Palestinian land for new settlements. A massive new highway network built after 1993 on confiscated Palestinian land isolates Palestinian towns and villages from one another and from Jerusalem, forcing many Palestinians to go through Israeli checkpoints just to get to the next town...

"According to President Clinton and most of the media, Prime Minister Ehud Barak conceded at Camp David virtually everything the Palestinians wanted, and Yasser Arafat threw away the opportunity for peace by rejecting Barak's offer. In fact Arafat could not accept it. Barak, backed by Clinton, wanted assurance of Israel's continued strategic control over the West Bank and Gaza, including air space and borders, and insisted that Israel retain permanent sovereignty over most of East Jerusalem, including Haram Al-Sharif. This was a deal no Arab would accept.

"As the protests grew, army helicopters rocketed neighborhoods in several Palestinian cities, destroying entire city blocks and causing scores of casualties. Israeli tanks surrounded Palestinian towns with their guns turned toward the town. Armed Israeli civilians within the Green Line rampaged through Arab neighborhoods destroying Arab property and shouting "Death of Arabs"...Israeli police who were quick to use bullets against Palestinian stone throwers failed to restrain the Israelis and instead fired at Arabs trying to defend their homes. Two Arabs were killed.

"The uprising was undoubtedly fueled by the resentment caused by years of daily abuse and humiliation under Israeli occupation. On September 6, a group of Israeli border police stopped three Palestinian workers as they were returning home from Israel and, for no reason at all, subjected them to 40 minutes of torture. The San Francisco Chronicle reported on September 19 that the policemen punched the three men, slammed their heads against a stone wall, forced them to swallow their own blood, and cursed their mothers and sisters. The incident only came to light because the policemen took photographs of themselves with their victims, holding their heads by the hair like hunting trophies. Israeli human rights workers said such beatings are a common occurrence, but they are seldom reported." Rachele Marshall, "The Peace Process Ends in Protests and Blood", Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, December 2000.

"Israel has failed the test"

"In the Oslo Agreements, Israel and the West put Palestinian leadership to a test: In exchange for an Israeli promise to gradually dismantle the mechanisms of the occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian leadership promised to stop every act of violence and terror immediately. For that purpose, all the apparatus for security coordination was created, more and more Palestinian jails were built, and demonstrators were barred from approaching the [Jewish] settlements.

"The two sides agreed on a period of five years for completion of the new deployment and the negotiations on a final agreement. The Palestinian leadership agreed again and again to extend its trial period...From their perspective, Israel was also put to a test: Was Israel really giving up its attitude of superiority and domination, built up in order to keep the Palestinian people under its control?

"More than seven years have gone by and Israel has security and administrative control of 61.2% of the West Bank and about 20% of the Gaza Strip and security control over another 26.8% of the West Bank. This control is what has enabled Israel to double the number of settlers in 10 years..and to seal an entire nation into restricted areas, imprisoned in a network of bypass roads meant for Jews only...

"Israel has failed the test. Palestinians control of 12% of the West Bank does not mean that Israel has given up its attitude of superiority and domination...The bloodbath that has been going on for three weeks is the natural outcome of seven years of [Israeli] lying and

deception." Israeli journalist Amira Hass, "Israel Has Failed The Test," in Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, 10/18/00.

Jimmy Carter's simple statement of the facts - November 2000

"An underlying reason that years of U.S. diplomacy have failed and violence in the Middle East persists is that some Israeli leaders continue to 'create facts' by building settlements in occupied territory...

"At Camp David in September 1978...the bilateral provisions led to a comprehensive and lasting treaty between Egypt and Israel, made possible at the last minute by Israel's agreement to remove its settlers from the Sinai. But similar constraints concerning the status of the West Bank and Gaza have not been honored, and have led to continuing confrontation and violence...

"[Concerning UN Resolution 242] Our government's legal commitment to support this well-balanced resolution has not changed...It was clear that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories were a direct violation of this agreement and were, according to the long-stated American position, both 'illegal and an obstacle to peace.' Accordingly, Prime Minister Begin pledged that there would be no establishment of new settlements until after the final peace negotiations were completed. But later, under Likud pressure, he declined to honor this commitment...

"It is unlikely that real progress can be made...as long as Israel insists on its settlement policy, illegal under international laws that are supported by the United States and all other nations.

"There are many questions as we continue to seek an end to violence in the Middle East, but there is no way to escape the vital one: Land or peace?" Former President Jimmy Carter in The Washington Post, November 26, 2000.

Oslo and Intifada II - continued

"After three weeks of virtual war in the Israeli occupied territories, Prime Minister Ehud Barak announced a new plan to determine the final status of the region. During these weeks, over 100 Palestinians were killed, including 30 children, often by 'excessive use of lethal force in circumstances in which neither the lives of security forces nor others were in imminent danger, resulting in unlawful killings,' Amnesty International concluded in a detailed report that was scarcely mentioned in the US.

"Barak's plan...ensure(s) that useable land and resources (primarily water) remain largely in Israeli hands while the population is administered by a corrupt and brutal Palestinian Authority (PA), playing the role traditionally assigned to indigenous collaborators under the several varieties of imperial rule: the Black leadership of South Africa's Bantustans, to mention only the most obvious analogue...

"It is important to recall that the policies have not only been proposed, but implemented, with the support of the U.S. That support has been decisive since 1971, when Washington abandoned the basic diplomatic framework that it had initiated (UN Security Council Resolution 242), then pursued its unilateral rejection of Palestinian rights in the years that followed, culminating in the 'Oslo process.' Since all of this has been effectively vetoed from history in the US., it takes a little work to discover the essential facts. They are not controversial, only evaded," Noam Chomsky, "Al-Aqsa Intifada", October 2000, on Znet, www.lbbs.org/meastwatch.

America - An impartial mediator?

"America's credibility as mediator had long been questioned by Palestinians, and with reason. 'The Palestinians always complain that we know the details of every proposal from the Americans before they do,' one Israeli government source told The Independent recently. 'There's good reason for that: we write them.'" Phil Reeves in "The Independent" (U.K.), 10/9/2000

Lockstep U.S. Media tell (some of) the facts but not the truth

"Rarely do American journalists explore the ample reasons to believe that the United States is part of the oft-decried cycle of violence. Nor, in the first half of October, was there much media analysis of the fact that the violence overwhelmingly struck at the Palestinian people.

"Within a period of days, several dozen Palestinians were killed by heavily armed men in uniform - often described by CNN and other news outlets as 'Israeli security forces'. Under the circumstances, it's a notably benign-sounding term for an army that shoots down protestors.

"As for the rock-throwing Palestinians, I have never seen or heard a single American news account describing them as 'pro democracy demonstrators.' Yet that would be an appropriate way to refer to people who - after more than three decades of living under occupation - are in the streets to demand self determination.

"While Israeli soldiers and police, with their vastly superior firepower, do most of the killing...American news stories highlighted the specious ultimatums issued by Prime Minister Ehud Barak as he demanded that Palestinians end the violence - while uniformed Israelis under his authority continue to kill them...

"Like quite a few other Jewish Americans, I'm appalled by what Israel is doing with U.S. Tax dollars. Meanwhile, as journalists go along to get along, they diminish the humanity of us all." Norman Solomon, "Media Spin Remains In Sync With Israeli Occupation," from FAIR's Media Beat, October 14, 2000.

Intifada II- An overview

"There is, in the final analysis, only one way to 'stop the violence,' and that is to end the occupation. The desire for liberation will, eventually, always bring an occupied people out into the streets, stones in hand, ready to face the might of powerful armies, preferring to risk death than live in bondage. This is not extreme nation.0 racism or religious fervor. It is the need to be free...

"[Occupation] means a reality of unending violence. It means being surrounded by an abusive foreign army that enforces a social system indistinguishable from apartheid; confiscations of land that is then given to hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers in Jewish-only communities linked by Jewish only roads; home demolitions; torture; cities cut off from each other, closed down on a regular basis. It means living in a massive prison...

"Since 1967, there has been only one workable solution to the conflict. The plan is articulated in U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which sets up a two-part 'land for peace' solution. Part one holds that Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967. Part two calls for all states in the region to live in peace and security in those borders. The Israeli obligation, withdrawal from the occupied territories, is utterly

unfulfilled." Hussein Ibish, communications director of the American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee, in the Los Angeles Times, October 18, 2000.

Albright stands the facts on their heads

"With the same deadpan, expressionless, emotionless, glazed look, Madam Albright repeated: 'Those Palestinian rock throwers have placed Israel under siege,' adding that the Israeli army is defending itself...[But] It is Israel that is the belligerent occupant of Palestine (and not the other way around) Israeli tanks and armored vehicles are surrounding Palestinian villages, camps and cities (and not the other way around). Israeli (American-made) Apache gunships are firing Lau and other missiles at Palestinian protestors and homes (and not the other way around). It is Israel that is confiscating Palestinian land and importing Jewish settlers to set up illegal armed settlements in the heart of Palestinian territory (and not the other way around). The settlers on the rampage in the West Bank and Israelis terrorizing Palestinians in their own homes (and not the other way around)...Israel is committing atrocities against the Palestinians with total impunity, and yet you maintain, 'Israel is besieged.'" Hanan Ashrawi, in "The Progressive", December 2000

What Arafat was offered

"In American coverage of the recent Camp David meetings, the American press obediently followed the Israeli and US government spin that while Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak made courageous concessions for peace, Palestinian unwillingness to compromise caused the meeting to fail.

"Never mind that Barak's 'courageous concessions' consisted of allowing the Palestinians to have joint administrative responsibility over a couple of remote Arab neighborhoods of Arab East Jerusalem - pathetic crumbs tossed on the floor which Arafat was expected to gratefully pick up." American Jewish reporter, Eduardo Cohen, from "What Americans Need to Know - But Probably Won't Be Told - To understand Palestinian Rage" from Palestine Media Watch, www.pmwatch.org

What Arafat was offered - continued

"Barak appears to be asking for only 10% of the occupied territories. In reality, it's closer to 30%, taking into account the territories he wants to annex in the Jerusalem area and place under his "security control" in the Jordan Valley. But even worse, in the map submitted to the Palestinians, these percentage points cut the country up from East to West and from North to South, so that the Palestinian state will consist of groups of islands, each surrounded by Israeli settlers and soldiers.

"World opinion is always on the side of the underdog. In this fight, we are Goliath and they are David. In the eyes of the world [outside the US], the Palestinians are fighting a war of liberation against a foreign occupation. We are in their territory, not they on ours. We are the occupiers, they are the victims. This is the objective situation, and no minister of propaganda can change that." Israeli peace activist. Uri Avnery, "12 Conventional Lies About the Palestine-Israeli Conflict" from Palestine Media Watch, www.pmwatch.org.

An Israeli's "Open Letter to a Friend In Peace Now"

"It has been seven years exactly since I wrote my last letter to you. It was the day after the signing of the Oslo Accords, when you invited me to dance with you in Menorah Square... Permit me to quote for you a few passages from that old letter.

"You danced in the square because you were happy about this peace. Not just plain peace, but a blend of peace, security, Palestinian chest-beating over sins committed (renunciation of terrorism), and far-reaching concessions by the other side. A peace that you can be proud of. A peace - so you boast - for which we are giving nothing ("Just a tiny bit," whispers the prime minister) and gaining much; recognition, greater security, a halt to the Intifada, renunciation of terrorism, being relieved of the Arabs and more. You are happy about this peace, and in its honor you invite me to dance with you. No thank you... You got rid of Gaza, you separated Israelis from Palestinians, you gave them the dirty work and you didn't even promise withdrawal or a real state. Could peace possibly be bought more cheaply?"

"I, by contrast, see peace as an end and not merely as a means, and call for getting out of the Occupied Territories because we have nothing to be there for, even if the occupation did not cost us even one victim or one cent; and I am against shooting children - and adults - simply because it is forbidden to shoot children or ordinary civilians.'

"Since the writing of these lines you celebrated the peace and you became fat and prosperous. The repeated and varied violations of the agreements did not move you, not to speak of any change in our culture of war and occupation, the arrogant tone of those negotiating in our name and their attempts to demand more and more in exchange for less and less...

"What is there to be confused about? A conquering army is using tanks and helicopter gunships to disperse demonstrations. What is so hard to understand here?... There is an occupation and there is a struggle against the occupation. There are demonstrators and there is an army that has received orders to shed their blood. And don't come to me with the story of the rifles, Your glorious war record qualifies you to understand that even CNN reporters understand, that those rifles do not endanger either Israel or the soldiers if they don't get too close...

"[From 1993 letter]"peace is a tango that takes two equal partners dancing in unity; it is not a dance of one who drags around his partner at will... In your dance of peace you have no partners, only enemies. For your peace is his occupation, your success is his loss... Peace is still far away because peace demands honesty, because peace demands equality. You want to force them to lie, you want of them a peace of surrender, you are celebrating a peace of master and slave. Under such conditions there will perhaps be peace-and-quiet, but Peace, no. Not until you open your eyes and your heart. Not until we are ready for a peace of partnership and equality." Michael (Mikado) Warschawski, "The Party Is Over: An Open Letter to a Friend In Peace Now," from Znet, www.lbbs.org/ZNETTOPnoanimation.html

"Barak promised peace and brought war, and not by accident."

"(Barak) promised peace and brought war, and not by accident. While speaking about peace, he enlarged the settlements. Cut the Palestinian territories into pieces by 'by-pass' roads. Confiscated lands. Demolished homes. Uprooted trees. Paralyzed the Palestinian economy.. Conducted negotiations in which he tried to dictate to the Palestinians a peace

that amounts to capitulation. Was not satisfied with the fact that by accepting the Green Line, the Palestinians had already given up 78% of their historic homeland. Demanded the annexation of 'settlement blocs' and pretended that they amount only to 3% of the territory, while in fact he meant more than 20% would remain under Israeli control. Wanted to coerce the Palestinians to accept a 'state' cut off from all its neighbors and composed of several enclaves isolated from each other, each surrounded by Israeli settlers and soldiers...Boasts publicly that he has not given back to the Palestinians one inch of territory...When the intifada broke out, sent snipers to shoot, in cold blood from a distance, hundreds of unarmed demonstrators, adults and children. Blockaded each village and town separately, bringing them to the verge of starvation, in order to get them to surrender. Bombarded neighborhoods. Started a policy of mafia-style 'liquidations', causing an inevitable escalation of the violence." Israeli peace activist, Uri Avnery, February 3, 2001, www.gush-shalom.org

A 'benign' occupation?

"Israelis like to believe, and tell the world, that they are running an 'enlightened' or 'benign' occupation, qualitatively different from other military occupations the world has seen. The truth was radically different. Like all occupations, Israel's was founded on brute force, repression and fear, collaboration and treachery, beatings and torture chambers, and daily intimidation, humiliation and manipulation." Israeli historian, Benny Morris, "Righteous Victims."

What "closure" means

"Just an hour's drive from Jerusalem, a cruel drama has been underway for the past five months, the likes of which have not been seen since the early days of the Israeli occupation, but the majority of Israelis are taking absolutely no interest in it. The iron grip of the closure in its new format is increasingly strangling a population of 2.8 million people, yet no one is saying a word. . .

"It has to be said starkly and simply: There has never been a closure like this there, in the land of barriers and closure. In the worst of times of the previous Intifada, when the iDF was in eveÅr and curfew reigned supreme, there was not a situation in which a whole people was jailed without a trial and without the right of appeal.

"Israel has split the West Bank by means of hundreds of trenches, dirt ramparts and concrete cubes which have been placed at the entrance to most of the towns and villages. No one enters and no one leaves, not those who are pregnant and not those who are dying. There isn't even a soldier with whom one can plead and beg. A network of bizarre Burma roads that break through the encirclement are sending an entire people along muddy, rocky routes, with the situation aggravated by a substantial risk of getting caught or getting shot by soldiers who often open fire on the desperate travelers. . .

"Never before has there been distress and suffering on this scale among the Palestinians in the territories. They will engender unprecedented despair and ultimately they will spark violence more cruel and painful than anything seen so far. . . This is the point: the horrific distress of the Palestinians because of the present closure will quickly turn into the distress of the Israelis. . . The current siege, a shamefully appalling operation, must be lifted quickly. This must not be made conditional on the cessation of the violence,

because the siege itself is the most effective spur to violence." Israeli writer, Gideon Levy, in Ha aretz, March 4, 2001

Views Of The Future

A future free of ethnocentrism

"The first challenge, then, is to extract acknowledgement from Israel for what it did to us...But then, I believe, we must also hold out the possibility of some form of coexistence in which a new and better life, free of ethnocentrism and religious intolerance, could be available...If we present our claims about the past as ushering in a form of mutuality and coexistence in the future, a long-term positive echo on the Israeli and Western side will reverberate."Edward Said in "The Progressive", March 1998

The answer? A sovereign Palestinian state.

"The final destination of a Palestinian-Israeli peace settlement has begun to emerge from the political haze. Such a settlement must...give the Palestinian people a sovereign, uncontested, independent state of their own. This is a matter of justice and practicality. If a truly lasting and stable peace is the goal, there is no other option...The mere trappings of statehood will not suffice. The state has to be real and workable. The following are its essential conditions.

Territorial integrity and contiguity...Any further dissection of Palestinian territory would make it politically and economically impossible to maintain a state...There can be no civilian pockets under Israeli rule on Palestinian land...

A sovereign capital in Jerusalem. East Jerusalem is Palestine's historical, spiritual and commercial heart. To exclude it from a Palestinian state is unthinkable...

"Justice and fairness for refugees...As a matter of principle, the Palestinians right to return or be compensated for their lost homes and land is nonnegotiable...Israel must acknowledge the suffering and hardship Palestinian refugees have faced as a result of their eviction from their homeland, and must assist in their rehabilitation and reabsorption." A.S. Khalidi, Op-Ed piece in the New York Times, February 11, 1997.

Palestinian refugees claim to repatriation is realistic, as well as just

Palestinian engineer and parliamentarian Salman Abu Sitta...(showed) that 'the return of the refugees is possible with no appreciable dislocation of Jewish residents.' This is because '78 percent of the Jewish population of Israel lives on only 15 percent of the land'...

"Ironically, the land in the upper Galilee from which a very large percentage of the refugees were driven is so lightly populated because most of the immigrants [that] settled there refused to remain so far from the centers of Israeli urban life in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem...Of those actually cultivating those former Palestinian fields, many are non-Jewish Thais, Rumanians and others slated to return to their countries at the end of their contracts." Richard Curtiss from June 2000 issue of "Washington Report On Middle East Affairs."

Israeli professor calls for a new Zionism

"It was our nationalism...which drew the country into an occupation and settlement of the West Bank...None of the leaders of the Labor movement believed that the Palestinians deserved the same right [as Jews] because none of them believed in universal rights. Pretending, like [Arthur] Hertzberg and others do, that the Occupation and the colonial situation created in the last thirty years was merely the product of the Arab refusal to recognize Israel, is no more than looking for an alibi and falsifying history..."

"The time has come to say that if the settlements in Judea and Samaria or in the very heart of Hebron are the natural, logical and legitimate continuation of the original intention of Zionism, then we need another Zionism. If a 'Jewish State' that does not recognize the absolute equality of all human beings is considered to be closer to the spirit of the founding fathers than a new liberal Zionism, then it is time to say good-bye to the ghosts of the founders, and to start forging for ourselves an identity detached from the mystical ramifications of our religion and the irrational side of our history." Israeli professor of political science, Ze'ev Sternhell, in "Tikkun", May/June 1998.

Sources for further research on Palestine and Israel

These short quotes do not, of course, prove the assertions made here. The historical evidence, however, is overwhelming and is available in fully documented form in the books cited. Particularly useful sources are:

1. "Palestine and Israel: A Challenge to Justice" by John Quigley, professor of law at Ohio State University. Duke University Press, 1990.
2. "The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel & The Palestinians" by Noam Chomsky, professor at MIT and "arguably the most important intellectual alive" (NY Times). South End Press, 1983.
3. "Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel" by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi. An honest history of Zionism by a noted Israeli scholar who teaches at Haifa University. Olive Branch Press, 1993.
4. "Bitter Harvest" by Sami Hadawi. A very complete look at the documentary evidence of the creation of the state of Israel, by a Palestinian Christian who lived through that period. Caravan Books 1979.

For articles from the alternative and Israeli press, please see ZNet at www.lbbs.org and www.commondreams.org/viewsarchive.htm.

A wealth of information on Palestine/Israel is to be found at www.geocities.com:0080/CapitolHill/Senate/7891.

Another very useful resource is the Jewish Voice for Peace. To join their mailing list, e-mail shlensky@socrates.Berkeley.edu.

Also, the American Educational Trust, publisher of Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (a great magazine) has a large selection of books available. Write for their free catalog to AET, PO Box 53062, Washington, DC 20009. Our booklet can also be found on the web at www.cactus48.com

CONCLUSION I For Jewish Readers

As we have seen, the root cause of the Palestine-Israel conflict is clear. During the 1948 war, 750,000 Palestinians fled in terror or were actively expelled from their ancestral homeland and turned into refugees. The state of Israel then refused to allow them to return and either destroyed their villages entirely or expropriated their land, orchards, houses, businesses and personal possessions for the use of the Jewish population. This was the birth of the state of Israel.

We know it is hard to accept emotionally, but in this case the Jewish people are in the wrong. We took most of Palestine by force from the Arabs and blamed the victims for resisting their dispossession. If you run into someone's car, for whatever reason, simple justice demands that you repair it. Our moral obligation to the Palestinian people is no less clear. It is time for all Jewish people of good conscience to make whatever amends are possible to the Palestinians in order to live up to the best part of the Jewish tradition - its ethical and moral basis.

Any criticism of Israel is traditionally seen by American Jews as harmful to the Jewish people, even if the criticism is true. But "my people, right or wrong, my people" is no different than "my country, right or wrong, my country". Once we start down the slippery slope where the ends justify the means we have left behind any claim to morality. Along with millions of other American Jews unaffiliated with the major U.S. Jewish organizations, we are outraged at the Israeli government's ongoing oppression of the Palestinians and feel that it has been the ruination of the high moral standing of the Jewish people.

The Israeli government could solve the Palestine/Israel crisis tomorrow. It actually would be in the best interests of its citizens to do so because random acts of terrorism against Israelis would cease if Palestinian demands for a viable, independent state were accepted and compensation for Arab losses made.

Here in America, we Jews are thoroughly assimilated into the mainstream of society and hold positions of power and influence in every field of endeavor. We do not need to be in a defensive mood anymore. We can afford to change our attitude from "is it good for the Jews?" to "Is it good?" At the very least, American Jews need to categorically state that we cannot condone Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land, and the intentional murder and crippling of Palestinian protestors armed only with rocks, as documented in reports by the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Israeli groups like B'Tselem, etc.

According to a survey commissioned by the five largest American Jewish organizations, but suppressed by them afterwards, 20% of American Jews support Palestinian demands and 35% say that Jerusalem should be shared. This, in the face of a near-total blackout of the Palestinian position in our press, is very impressive. Join this growing segment of American Jews by contacting Not In My Name, at www.nimn.org, a group that is spearheading a coalition of Jewish groups to protest the Israeli occupation.

Israel's long-term interests can best be served by supporting Israeli peace groups, like Gush Shalom (www.gush.shalom.org), not the Israeli government and its brutal repression, which just leads to endless violence. Israeli peace groups rightfully criticize their government and we should too, since they claim to act in our name. American groups like the Jewish Peace Lobby, Jewish Voice For Peace and the Middle East

Children's Alliance also deserve your support. Don't compromise your ethics in blind support of bad politics--work for a just solution instead. Please share free copies of this booklet and ask your Jewish friends to consider the information presented here. For everyone's sake. Peace.

CONCLUSION II

We hope that this look at the historical record concerning the root cause of the Middle East conflict will give second thoughts to all who have previously supported Israel's actions.

The persecution of the Jews for centuries in Europe was the worst of many stains on the European record, and the Zionists' desire for a place of sanctuary is certainly understandable. Like all other colonial enterprises, however, Zionism was based on the total disregard of the rights of indigenous inhabitants. As such, it is morally indefensible. And, as previously stated, all subsequent crimes - and there have been many on both sides - inevitably follow from this original injustice to the Palestinians.

Given the damage that has been done to the Palestinian people, Israel's obligation is to make whatever amends possible. Among these should be assisting the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state in the entire West Bank and Gaza with its capital in East Jerusalem. Israel should not object to this state and, in addition, should help with its foundation via generous reparations. Besides being the right thing to do, this would stop the sporadic acts of violence against Israel, as the Palestinians' legitimate desire for their own state would be realized. Moreover, all laws that discriminate against non-Jews living in Israel should be repealed.

Given the history outlined in this paper, we conclude that the Palestinians have gotten "the short end of the stick" and that justice demands that wrongs should be righted. Full and complete justice would entail allowing any Palestinian to return to Israel if they wished but, practically speaking, we understand that this is a recipe for even more bloodshed. Therefore, recognizing that reality, we join Gush Shalom and other Israeli peace groups in calling for a negotiated, modified right of return with the bulk of Palestinian refugees being settled in a Palestinian state, financed by generous reparations from both Israel and the international community.

As U.S. citizens, we have a special obligation to see that justice is done in this matter. U.S. financial aid to Israel has been, and continues to be, enormous; and our diplomatic support is the crucial factor allowing Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories. We strongly recommend that you contact your elected representatives in Washington and urge them to insist that, as a precondition of continued support, Israel must abide by the consensus of world opinion and withdraw to its 1967 borders, as demanded in numerous UN votes.

American Jews in particular have a special responsibility to acknowledge the Palestinian point of view in order to help move the debate forward. As Chomsky writes in his *Peace in the Middle East?*, "In the American Jewish community, there is little willingness to face the fact that the Palestinian Arabs have suffered a monstrous historical injustice, whatever one may think of the competing claims. Until this is recognized, discussion of the Middle East crisis cannot even begin."

In the long run, only by admitting their culpability and making amends can Israelis live with their neighbors in peace. Only then can the centuries-old Jewish tradition of being a people of high moral character be restored. And only in this way can real security, peace and justice come to this ancient land.

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