

Appendix IV: Myths & Frequently Asked Questions

Myth #1: This is an ancient war between Jews and Muslims, who simply can't get along.

The Israel-Palestine impasse actually began quite recently. Less than 100 years ago, the Palestinian people living in the area—composed of Muslims, Christians, and Jews—were actually coexisting relatively harmoniously. There were certainly exceptions, but overall Jews were better treated in the Muslim and Arab world than almost anywhere in the Christian West. Many older Palestinians remember a time, before the Nakba, when they lived side by side as neighbors with Jews and their children played together. However, with the imposition of a state favoring the rights of Jews while dispossessing and excluding the non-Jewish indigenous population has come the emergence of violence.

Also, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians worldwide are Christian and they are subject to the same restrictions as their Muslim counterparts. This is a modern struggle for human rights and equality, not a war of Jews and Muslims. The historic precedent of Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisting in Palestine can be a hope-inspiring reminder that there is nothing inherently impossible about these populations sharing the land together in the absence of discriminatory structures.

Myth #2: Criticism of Zionism or Israel is anti-Semitic.

Zionism is distinct from Judaism; in fact, many Jews find Zionism itself antithetical to Jewish principles. There is nothing Jewish about occupation and discrimination, and there is nothing anti-Jewish about speaking out against them. In fact, it is offensive to claim that criticism of human rights abuses is criticism of Judaism, which equates the two.

Myth #3: The Palestinian refugee problem was created when Palestinians fled on radio orders from Arab leaders to move out of the way of an attack.

When Zionist and Israeli state and army archives were declassified in the 1980s, the myth that Palestinians left their homes voluntarily in 1948 was refuted by Israeli historians, who monitored countless broadcasts and found “not a single order or appeal, or suggestion about evacuation from Palestine, from any Arab radio station, inside or outside Palestine, in 1948.” In fact, the only Arab orders recorded were for Palestinians to stay put.⁷ Independent Midwest scholar and activist Jason Weeks put it nicely.

It is ironic that the “orders from above” theory should enjoy a kind of afterlife in the U.S. The Zionist community here is actually rather insulated from the complex public debate about Zionism in Israel. Our U.S. pro-Israel crowd looks a little backward when they keep repeating these myths. They are still digging out the same debating points they used thirty and forty years ago. They are perhaps more an embarrassment than a help to Israel's cause.⁸

⁷ Erskine Childers, British researcher; As quoted in Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest* (Scorpion Publishing Ltd, 1983); As cited in *The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, published by Jews for Justice in the Middle East, third edition. www.archive.org/details/TheOriginOfThePalestine-israelConflict

⁸ In personal correspondence (November 19, 2006).

Myth #4: Israel is a democracy.

The myth of Israeli democracy has been consistently refuted by Palestinian, Israeli, and other human rights groups.⁹ Israel is the state of the Jewish people, not the state of its citizens. Non-Jewish citizens are excluded from many things granted automatically to Jews. About 93% of the land in Israel is managed by the Israel Lands Administration, an extension of the Jewish National Fund, rendering it either very difficult or outright impossible for non-Jewish Palestinian citizens of Israel to move onto it.¹⁰ Many Palestinian citizens of Israel are “internal refugees,” prevented from returning to their own villages within Israel, while Jewish Israelis can often freely visit, lease, or purchase that same land.

Palestinian citizens of Israel can vote or run for office, but it is within a limited framework. Any candidate running on a platform that Israel should become the state of all of its citizens—not only of the Jewish people—can be disqualified.¹¹ A 1989 High Court case challenging the law found that “it is necessary to prevent a Jew or Arab who calls for equality of rights for Arabs from sitting in the Knesset [Israeli Parliament] or being elected to it.” One Justice stated that a political party should be disqualified if it advocates “a state, as all democratic states, of the totality of its citizens, without any advantage to the Jewish people as such.”¹² Although they pay taxes, Palestinian citizens of Israel living in non-Jewish neighborhoods receive only a fraction of the resources and services granted to Jewish neighborhoods.

Moreover, more than one third of the people living under Israeli rule are denied Israeli citizenship and the rights and protections that come along with it, including the right to participate in the government that controls their lives. These are the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The government in which non-Jews in these areas *can* participate is not allowed to do basic things like control its people’s own borders, security, or finances.

Myth #5: The return of the Palestinian refugees would mean the displacement of Jewish Israelis, and is therefore impossible.

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, a former member of the Palestinian National Council and the founder of the Palestine Land Society, has conducted extensive research on the possibility of refugees returning to their villages, many of which no longer exist. At an international convention on the right of return in July of 2006, he clarified his findings in five illustrative points:

- The land of the refugees, roughly 93% of present-day Israel, is currently inhabited by 1.5% of Israeli Jews.

⁹ Examples: Adalah, B’tselem, Mossawa. The most condensed, comprehensive compilation of information I’ve found on this is an article by Jonathan Cook called “The Unwanted Who Stayed,” published by Americans for Middle East Understanding (www.ameu.org). For more information about discrimination against Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, see p. 169 or visit www.Adalah.org or www.MossawaCenter.org.

¹⁰ Most of this land was taken from Palestinians who became refugees in 1948.

¹¹ Israel’s Basic Law: The Knesset (1958) states that “a person shall not be a candidate for election to the Knesset, if the goals or actions of the list or the actions of the person, expressly or by implication, include ... negation of the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”

¹² Shapiro, *Jerusalem Post* (December 15, 1989); *Yediot Ahronot* (December 15, 1989); As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, p. 507.

- Of the more than 500 Palestinian villages from which the refugees were expelled, 90% are still vacant (many planted over with trees), 7% are partially built-over, and just 3% are completely built over—those in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem.
- A full 97% of Palestinian refugees live within 62 miles of their homes, and 50% of them live within 25 miles. Many can see their land from their camps but cannot go there.
- The population density of Gaza is roughly 15,500 people/square mile, while Gaza's refugees' land nearby is practically empty—fewer than 16 Israelis/square mile. There are fewer Jews in the half of Israel closest to Gaza (from Ramleh to Eilat) than the population of a single Gaza refugee camp. Israel has welcomed as many Russian immigrants as there are Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Gaza combined, and has been clear that it would make room for millions more Jewish immigrants if such a possibility arose.¹³



Hundreds of Palestinian villages like Saffourieh (pictured above) were planted over with trees after their residents were forced to flee in 1948, and now lay vacant.

¹³ *Al-Awda's* 4th International Convention (San Francisco: July 2006). www.al-awda.org/abusitta.html

This survivor of the Nakba still holds the key to the home he was forced to flee in 1948. Even though his land remains largely empty, Israel has barred him from ever returning home because he is not Jewish.



The issue is not about space for Jews; it is about demographics and ideology. The issue is that allowing Palestinian refugees to return would alter the ethnic character of Israel.

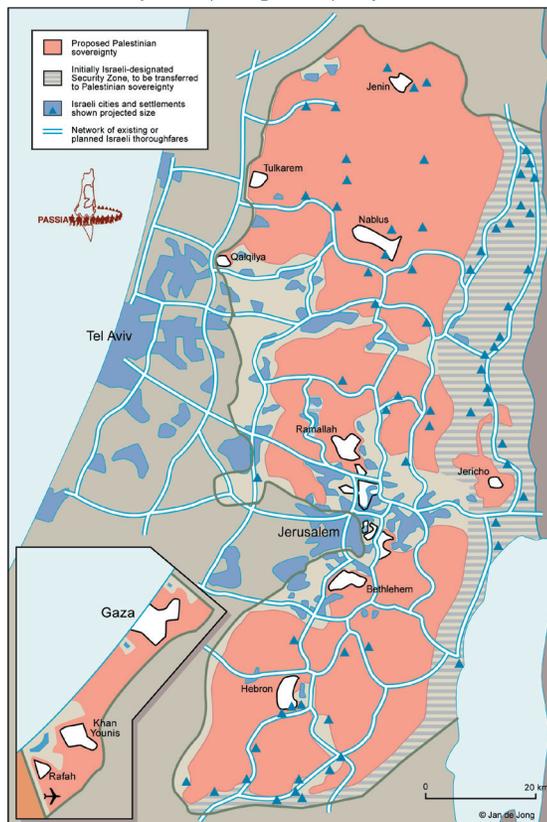
Myth #6: Israel has no genuine partner for negotiations or peace.

The most common example cited as “proof” that Palestinians do not want peace is Yasser Arafat’s rejection of the offer presented by Israeli Prime Minister Barak at Camp David in 2000. Widely perceived as generous, in fact the proposal fell far short of Israel’s responsibilities to the Palestinians under international law in numerous ways:

The proposal would have meant:

- Israel would not withdraw from the 1967 Occupied Territories, as required by international law. Settlements and Jewish-only roads would remain in the Palestinian state,¹⁴ and Israel would annex 10% of the West Bank, home to more than 80,000 Palestinians.
- The annexed land would include some of the West Bank’s most resource-rich areas. Palestinians would have limited control over their own water resources.
- Israel would maintain military control over the Jordan Valley: the West Bank’s eastern border. The Palestinian state would be divided into three separate cantons, the Gaza Strip and the northern and southern portions of the West Bank, thereby creating a de facto archipelago of Palestinian islands within Israel.

Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map presented by Israel, Camp David, July 2000



¹⁴ Ali Abunimah and Hussein Ibish, “Debunking 6 common Israeli myths,” *Electronic Intifada* (April 14, 2002).

- The proposal offered the Palestinians control over certain sections of Jerusalem, but kept all of the city—as well as 85.3% of settlers—under Israeli sovereignty.
- The proposal denied Palestinian refugees—the majority of the Palestinian people—their inalienable right to return to their homes and lands.¹⁵

Arafat's rejection of Barak's offer does not seem so shocking when you see a map of what the final effect would have looked like. President Jimmy Carter writes about Camp David: "There was no possibility that any Palestinian leader could accept such terms and survive, but official statements from Washington and Jerusalem were successful in placing the entire onus for the failure on Yasir Arafat."¹⁶ Even Barak's foreign minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami—a key player at Camp David—later admitted publicly: "If I were a Palestinian I would have rejected Camp David as well."¹⁷

In fact, Israel has been offered peace in exchange for compliance with international law several times, and rejected each offer. Here are some examples:

- In the mid-1970s, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) endorsed a comprehensive peace with Israel in exchange for its full withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. Israel rejected the offer.¹⁸
- In March 2002, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, along with all 21 other members of the Arab League, proposed not only peace but normal relations and regional integration with Israel in exchange for an end to the Occupation and a "just solution" to the refugee problem. Israel rejected the offer.¹⁹
- Israel effectively rejected the Saudi Initiative a second time when the proposal was included as part of the "Roadmap" announced by the UN. Wrote Carter, "The Palestinians accepted the road map in its entirety, but the Israeli government announced fourteen caveats and prerequisites, some of which would preclude any final peace talks."²⁰

Shortly after being elected to power in 2006, Hamas also announced its willingness to establish peace with Israel along its internationally-recognized borders. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh told *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*:

If Israel withdraws to the 1967 borders, then we will establish a peace in stages. We will establish a situation of stability and calm which will bring safety for our people ... a long-term hudna [ceasefire].²¹

Israel has refused to negotiate with the democratically elected Palestinian government of Hamas for three official reasons: (1) failure to renounce violence, (2) failure to recognize and abide by previous agreements, and (3) failure to recognize the right of a state besides one of its own to exist in historic Palestine. Interestingly, Israel is guilty of all three of the very things for which it faults Hamas.²²

¹⁵ Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights, 2002.

¹⁶ Carter, 152.

¹⁷ John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby: Mearsheimer and Walt Respond to Criticisms," London Review of Books (May 11, 2006); As cited by Scholars for Peace in the Middle East. www.spme.net

¹⁸ Finkelstein, Image, p. 176.

¹⁹ Ibid., at xxi.

²⁰ Carter, p. 159.

²¹ Yitzhak Ben-Horin, "We don't want to throw them into the sea," *YNet Israel News* (February 25, 2006). www.ynetnews.com

²² See pp. 329-330 for an elaboration on this point.

Myth #7: Palestinian textbooks incite hatred against the Jewish people.

There is a widely held belief that Palestinian textbooks demonize Israelis and teach Palestinian children to hate Jews. This particular myth originated with Itamar Marcus, an Israeli settler who founded an organization called the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace. Marcus's claims have been refuted by Palestinian, Israeli, American and European studies that examined the actual content of Palestinian texts.²³

In response to pressure from Congress to investigate the issue, the US government commissioned the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information to convene a team of professional educators—Israeli, Palestinian and American—to explore the allegations. Their 2003 report concluded: “[The Palestinian] textbooks do not incite against Israel or against peace” and “the overall orientation of the curriculum is peaceful despite the harsh and violent realities on the ground.... Religious and political tolerance is emphasized.”²⁴

In Europe, the prestigious Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research facilitated research into the allegations. The Hebrew University's Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace and the *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture* have published studies on the texts. Committees of the US Senate and the European Parliament have both held hearings on the matter. It seems that no people's textbooks have been subjected to as much scrutiny as those of the Palestinians.

Time and again, independently of one another, researchers have found no incitement to hatred in Palestinian textbooks. It seems the original allegations were based on Egyptian or Jordanian textbooks and false translations.²⁵ A Middle East Working Group of the European Union found the textbooks “free of inciteful content ..., constituting a valuable contribution to the education of young Palestinians.”²⁶

If anyone's textbooks deserve scrutiny, perhaps it's those of the Israelis. Professor Dan Bar-Tal of Tel Aviv University concluded from a study of 124 Israeli textbooks that “over the years, generations of Israeli Jews [have been] taught a negative and often delegitimizing view of Arabs.” Bar-Tal reported two major themes of Arab characteristics. One implied a “primitiveness” and an “inferiority in comparison to Jews.” The other presented Arabs as violent, brutish, untrustworthy, cruel, fanatical, treacherous, and aggressive.²⁷

In an article entitled, “Learning all the wrong facts,” *Haaretz* reporter Akiva Eldar cites numerous studies concluding that many Israeli textbooks not only dehumanize Arabs, but are entirely devoid of the word “Palestinian.” Also alien to many educational materials was the Green Line to distinguish Israel from the 1967 Palestinian territories. Those maps that do outline the West Bank often refer to it as “Judea and Samaria” or “Palestine-*Eretz Israel*,” i.e. part of the “Land of Israel.” Some official maps in Israeli textbooks include Israeli settlements but *exclude* Palestinian towns, even those within Israel.²⁸

²³ Len Traubman, “Reports on Palestinian kids' hatred grossly exaggerated,” *Jewish News Weekly of Northern California* (February 6, 2004).

²⁴ “Reviewing Palestinian Textbooks and Tolerance Education Program,” *Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information*, submitted to the Public Affairs Office US Consulate General (Jerusalem, 2003).

²⁵ Roger Avenstrup, “Palestinian textbooks: Where is all that ‘incitement?’” *International Herald Tribune* (December 18, 2004).

²⁶ Akiva Eldar, “Reading, writing, and propoganda,” *Haaretz* (September 10, 2004).

²⁷ Traubman, *Jewish Weekly News of Northern California*.

²⁸ Akiva Eldar, “Learning all the wrong facts,” *Haaretz* (December 9, 2004).

Myth #8: Israel only uses violence as a last resort, to defend itself and to prevent terror attacks.

Human rights organizations have documented extensive disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli army over 40 years. For example, according to *Amnesty International*, most of the children killed by soldiers in 2002 were attacked “when there was no exchange of fire and in circumstances in which the lives of the soldiers were not at risk.”²⁹ *B'tselem*, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, described the situation as follows:

In every city and refugee camp that they have entered, IDF soldiers have repeated the same pattern: indiscriminate firing and then killing of innocent civilians, intentional harm to water, electricity and telephone infrastructure, taking over civilian houses, extensive damage to civilian property, shooting at ambulances and prevention of medical care to the injured.³⁰

Israel also uses humiliation tactics, as in the town of Halhul where town notables and other men were taken from their homes to the town square by soldiers in the middle of the night, where they were “ordered to urinate and [defecate] on one another, and also to sing *Hatikva* [‘The Hope,’ the national anthem of Israel] and to call out ‘Long Live the State of Israel.’ ... Some were even ordered to lick the earth.” Other Palestinian detainees and civilians have reported being forced to crawl on all fours and bark like dogs. Children were made to slap their parents. Soldiers wrote numbers on the arms of Palestinian prisoners on Holocaust Remembrance Day.³¹ Israeli settlers reportedly “caught an old man who had protested when his lands were taken and shaved off his beard—just what Polish anti-Semites did to Jews.”³²

Under scrutiny, most aspects of the Occupation simply do not make sense within the context of self-defense. If you want to secure your country, you would want to define your borders. Strong, fortified borders are good for national security. But Israel, in its entire history, has never officially defined its own borders. Its borders continue to grow onto more and more Palestinian land; does that make Israel safer? If you want to separate Palestinians from Israelis, why build the Wall between Palestinians and Palestinians, separating them from their lands and each other? If you want to secure your citizens, would you pay them to leave their homes in Tel Aviv or West Jerusalem and move into settlements, to live surrounded by the so-called “enemy?” Most institutions of the Occupation are less consistent with defense than with the desire for domination and expansion.

FAQ #1: Lots of countries are violating human rights. Why single Israel out?

It is successive US governments that have consistently singled Israel out. Israel has unconditionally received more US economic and military aid than any other country in the world. US taxpayers should be particularly concerned by the atrocities they are subsidizing.

²⁹ “Killing the Future,” *Amnesty International*, pp. 1-2, 16; As cited in Finkelstein, *Chutzpah*, p. 113.

³⁰ “A Deadly Pattern,” *B'tselem*, press release (March 12, 2002); As cited in Qumsiyeh, p. 117.

³¹ Zvi Barel, *Haaretz* (January 20 & 30, 1983); Edward Walsh, *Washington Post—Boston Globe* (February 18); David Richardson, *Jerusalem Post* (February 18); Aharon Bachar, “Do not say: We did not know, we did not hear,” *Yediot Achronot* (December 3, 1982); As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, pp. 130-131.

³² “The Gangrene of the Occupation,” *Al Hamishmar* (February 19, 1982); As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, p. 142.

The Wall cuts through Bethlehem, leaving farmers on one side and their land on the other, begging the question: how does separating Palestinians from their trees make Israel safer?



The US government also perpetuates the conflict by preventing the United Nations from taking decisive action against Israel's crimes. A University of Cambridge study found that the US veto has ensured that Israel enjoys "virtual immunity" from the enforcement measures typically adopted by the UN against countries committing identical violations of international law.³³ According to President Carter:

The United States has used its U.N. Security Council veto more than forty times to block resolutions critical of Israel. Some of these vetoes have brought international discredit on the United States, and there is little doubt that the lack of a persistent effort to resolve the Palestinian issue is a major source of anti-American sentiment and terrorist activity throughout the Middle East and the Islamic world.³⁴

Of course, opposing Israeli atrocities in Palestine is part of a larger commitment to global justice and antiracism. Moral consistency requires that we stand vigilant against injustice no matter where it happens, no matter who the victim.

Sadly, this question is often used not to highlight other just freedom struggles but to deflect criticism away from Israel, which has violated more UN resolutions than any other country in the history of the UN. Whereas other countries are routinely punished for their transgressions, Israel is not. The question is not whether Israel should be singled out for criticism, but rather whether it should be held to the same standard as other countries or singled out for impunity.

FAQ #2: Why place so much blame on Israel when Arab countries have also abused Palestinians?

Some Arab countries, such as Lebanon, have a terrible record with regard to Palestinian rights; others, like Syria and Jordan, have been more welcoming to Palestinians, though grievances remain. It is inaccurate to group all Arab countries together. The fact that Palestinians have not always been welcomed by other countries does not in any way absolve Israel of its responsibility in having forced Palestinians into exile and prevented them from returning to this day. To offer an analogy: Nobody would ever claim that since Jews were persecuted and rejected as they fled Europe during World War II, Germany

³³ Mark Weller and Dr. Barbara Metzger, "Double Standards," *Negotiations Affairs Department, Palestinian Liberation Organization* (September 24, 2002); As cited in Finkelstein, *Image*, p. xviii.

³⁴ Carter, pp. 209-210.

should not be faulted for having caused them to flee; in fact, the world's reluctance to protect Jewish refugees rendered Germany's actions all the more reprehensible.

FAQ #3: Why don't many Palestinians recognize Israel's right to exist?

Historically speaking, Fatah already recognized Israel's right to exist in 1988.³⁵ Today, Hamas has implicitly agreed to recognize Israel in a long-term ceasefire, even if they do not think it has a *right* to exclude Palestinians. It is in fact Israel that does not recognize Palestine's right to exist. For example, Likud, a prominent Israeli political party, specifically bars the existence of a Palestinian state.³⁶ If recognition is a precondition, why does the international community not hold Israel to the same standard before lending it support?

Also, as President Carter has put it, "What Israel?" Israel has never officially defined its own borders; they expand over time. Does "Israel" mean the 1947 borders, or the 1967 borders, or the borders today—encompassing virtually all of historic Palestine? Or does it mean any Israel, no matter how far it goes in the future? How can Palestinians recognize the right of a state perpetually displacing them?

The bottom line is that in order to create and maintain a Jewish state with a Jewish majority, it has been necessary to forcibly expel almost all non-Jews from the area, and continuously discriminate against them. Palestinians are being asked: "Do you recognize the *right* for there to be a state on your historic homeland that explicitly excludes you, your family, and your people?" What would your own answer be to that question?

FAQ #4: Why does the US continue to give Israel so much aid and political support?

There is a lot of debate about why the US supports Israel as much as it does. The different theories can be summed up as follows:

1. One of the most powerful lobbies in the US is the "Zionist Lobby" or "Israel Lobby" (often mislabeled the "Jewish Lobby" even though it is composed of many non-Jews, and many Jews oppose it), led by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).³⁷ Described in the *New York Times* as "the most important organization affecting America's relationship with Israel,"³⁸ AIPAC has more than 100,000 US members and an annual budget of as much as \$40 million,³⁹ which it uses to promote US policy aligned with Israeli interests. AIPAC has successfully defeated numerous senators who were perceived to be insufficiently pro-Israel.⁴⁰

University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard professor Stephen Walt published a controversial piece entitled "The Israel Lobby," outlining various ways in which the lobby's control over US politics actually functions to the detriment of US strategic interests.⁴¹

³⁵ PASSIA 2007.

³⁶ Frank Barat, "Likud has a Charter which does not recognize the right of Palestine to exist," *The Comment Factory* (January 30, 2009).

³⁷ Daniel Kurtzman, "AIPAC listed 2nd most powerful group on Fortune list," *Jewish News of Greater Phoenix* (November 28, 1997).

³⁸ As cited on AIPAC's homepage: www.aipac.org

³⁹ "AIPAC Holds National Meeting Amid Spy Scandal Investigation," *Democracy Now!* (May 25, 2005).

⁴⁰ Mitchell Kaidy, "Tiny Israel's Giant U.S. Lobby Goes Unmentioned in Campaign Finance Hearings," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (December 1997), p. 42.

⁴¹ John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby," *London Review of Books* (March 23, 2006).

2. Some argue that the US would never pursue another country's interests above its own and that US support for Israel is due to the countries' twin interests in military and spin-off development projects and the storage and base facilities that Israel provides for US forces targeting oil-rich countries in the region.⁴²

Still others believe that it is a combination of the Zionist Lobby and US strategic interests that perpetuates US support for Israeli violations of international law.

3. No small number of American industries are profiting from US support for Israel. Most notable among these are US arms manufacturers. In addition to American weapons that are donated to Israel, at least two-thirds of US financial aid to Israel is earmarked for purchase of more US arms.

Other groups profiting from the conflict include the oil industry, Arab leaders, and US elected representatives who receive generous election donations for maintaining the status quo or increasing US unconditional support for Israel.⁴³

4. Finally, American public opinion tends to be sympathetic towards Israel for two reasons: First, people are understandably sensitive to the plight of Jews throughout history. Against this historic backdrop, people are resistant to criticizing Israel and seeing Jews as anything other than the victims.

Second, although American taxpayers give more foreign aid to Israel than to any other country in the world, many remain largely ignorant of the uses of this aid and therefore do nothing to change it. This is due in large part to what many—myself included—perceive as a US mainstream media pro-Israel bias, which is documented extensively by the organization If Americans Knew. One of the group's studies found that the Associated Press reported deaths of Israeli children even more often than they occurred but failed to cover 85% of the deaths of Palestinian children. Another study on the *San Francisco Chronicle* made 30 mentions of Israeli children dying for every 20 who died (i.e., some deaths were reported more than once), but reported on only 1 in 20 deaths of Palestinian children. Studies on the *New York Times*, ABC, CBS, NBC, and other media sources revealed similar trends. Stories about torture, hunger strikes, Israeli refuseniks, and Palestinian popular resistance were also grossly underreported. As long as Americans remain ignorant of Israeli's atrocities, they are unlikely to pressure their government to stop funding them.

FAQ #5: Shouldn't people remain balanced and not take sides on a controversial and divisive issue like Israel/Palestine?

South African anti-apartheid leader Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." There have been times in history when remaining neutral was the wrong thing to do; in fact, it is what has enabled grotesque human rights violations to continue. It is always good to hear different perspectives, but once certain injustices become clear, it is appropriate to take a side—not for or against any particular religious or ethnic group, but for justice and against discrimination. In this way, we can be proudly one-sided: pro-equality and anti-oppression.

⁴² Ibid, at xiii.

⁴³ See Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan*, pp. 203-204 for details about each of these groups.

Appendix V: Quotations from Prominent Figures

Early Zionist leaders on the fulfillment of Zionism

*It must be clear that there is no room in the country for both peoples...If the Arabs leave it, the country will become wide and spacious for us...The only solution is a Land of Israel...without Arabs....There is no way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer all of them, save perhaps for [the Palestinian Arabs of] Bethlehem, Nazareth, and the old Jerusalem. Not one village must be left, not one tribe.*⁴⁴

—Joseph Weitz, director of the Jewish National Fund, 1940

*We must expel the Arabs and take their places and if we have to use force to guarantee our own right to settle in those places—then we have force at our disposal*⁴⁵

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding father and first prime minister, 1937

*In Palestine we do not propose to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants ... The four great 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 desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.*⁴⁶

—Lord Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, author of the Balfour Declaration, promising a “homeland for the Jews” in Palestine, 1919

*Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population.*⁴⁷

—Vladimir Jabotinsky, founder of revisionist Zionism, 1923

*I support compulsory transfer. I do not see anything immoral in it.*⁴⁸

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding father and first prime minister, 1937

⁴⁴ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestine Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 27; As cited in “What leading Israelis have said about the Nakba,” *Institute for Middle East Understanding* (May 9, 2007).

⁴⁵ Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of Palestinians*, p. 66; As cited in *IMEU*, “What leading Israelis have said.”

⁴⁶ Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*; As cited in *The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, published by Jews for Justice in the Middle East, third edition. archive.org/details/TheOriginOfThePalestine-israelConflict

⁴⁷ Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Iron Wall: We and the Arabs*; As cited in Qumsiyeh, p. 75.

⁴⁸ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (1999); As cited in Jews for Justice in the Middle East, *The Origin*.

On Zionist resistance to British occupation

*Neither Jewish ethics nor Jewish tradition can disqualify terrorism as a means of combat ... First and foremost, terrorism is for us a part of the political battle being conducted under the present circumstances, and it has a great part to play ... in our war against the occupier.*⁴⁹

—Yitzhak Shamir, Israel's 7th Prime Minister, 1943

During the War of 1948

*In the Negev we will not buy land. We will conquer it.*⁵⁰

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founding father and first prime minister, 1948

*These operations can be carried out in the following manner: either by destroying villages (by setting fire to them, by blowing them up, and by planting mines in their rubble), and especially those population centers that are difficult to control permanently; or by mounting combing and control operations according to the following guidelines: encirclement of the villages, conducting a search inside them. In case of resistance, the armed forces must be wiped out and the population expelled outside the borders of the state.*⁵¹

—From military plan “Operation Dalet,” adopted by the Zionist leadership, 1948

*We had only five days left ... until 15 May [1948]. We regarded it as imperative to cleanse the interior of the Galilee and create Jewish territorial continuity in the whole of the Upper Galilee ... I gathered the Jewish mukhtars [Kibbutz chiefs], who had ties with the different Arab villages, and I asked them to whisper in the ears of several Arabs that a giant Jewish reinforcement had reached the Galilee and were about to clean out the villages of Hula, [and] to advise them as friends, to flee while they could. And rumour spread throughout Hula that the time had come to flee. The flight encompassed tens of thousands. The stratagem fully achieved its objective.*⁵²

—Yigal Allon, Haganah militia commander and Israeli Lieutenant General, 1948

⁴⁹ Yitzhak Shamir, *Hehazit*, LEHI, the “Stern Gang” (1943); translated in *Middle East Report* (1988); As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, pp. 485-486.

⁵⁰ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 170.

⁵¹ The English translation is in Walid Khalidi, “Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, issue 1 (1988), pp. 4-20; As cited in Pappe, “The 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, issue 141 (2006).

⁵² Morris, p. 122; As cited in *IMEU*, “What leading Israelis have said.”

*[Capturing the village] without a fight, [Zionist forces first] killed about 80-100 [male] Arabs, women and children. The children they killed by breaking their heads with sticks. There was not a house without dead.... One soldier boasted that he had raped a woman and then shot her. One woman, with a newborn baby in her arms, was employed to clear the courtyard where the soldiers ate. She worked a day or two. In the end they shot her and her baby.*⁵³

—Eyewitness soldier of the massacre at Ad-Dawayima village, October of 1948

Early Zionist leaders on the partition of Palestine

*The debate has not been for or against the indivisibility of Eretz Israel [the “Land of Israel,” including the West Bank and Gaza]. No Zionist can forgo the smallest portion of Eretz Israel. The debate was over which of two routes would lead quicker to the common goal.*⁵⁴

*I have no doubt that our army will be among the world’s outstanding—and so I am certain that we won’t be constrained from settling in the rest of the country, whether out of accord and mutual understanding with the Arab neighbors or otherwise.*⁵⁵

*After the formation of a large army in the wake of the establishment of the state, we will abolish partition and expand to the whole of Palestine.*⁵⁶

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding father and first prime minister

*The partition of the Homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized.... It will not bind the Jewish people. Jerusalem was and will forever be our capital. Eretz Israel [the “Land of Israel,” including the West Bank and Gaza] will be restored to the people of Israel. All of it. And forever.*⁵⁷

—Menachem Begin, Israel’s 6th Prime Minister, 1954

After the establishment of Israel

*In our country there is room only for the Jews. We shall say to the Arabs: Get out! If they don’t agree, if they resist, we shall drive them out by force.*⁵⁸

—Ben-Zion Dinur, Israeli Minister of Education and Culture, 1954

⁵³ Morris, p. 230; As cited in Finkelstein, *Image*, p. 76.

⁵⁴ Quote from 1937. Arlosoroff memorandum; As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, p. 162.

⁵⁵ Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 260; As cited and expanded in Finkelstein, *Image*, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Quote from 1937. Remi Kanazi, “Transferring the Truth,” *AIC* (September 20, 2005).

⁵⁷ Menachem Begin, “The Revolt” (New York: Schuman, 1951), p. 335; As cited in Chomsky, *Fateful*, p. 161.

⁵⁸ *History of the Haganah*; As cited in Sam Bahour, “Israel at 58: A Failed Experiment,” *Electronic Intifada* (May 15, 2006).

*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.... There has been anti-semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?*⁵⁹

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founding father and first prime minister, 1956

*Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either...There is not one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab Population.*⁶⁰

—Moshe Dayan, chief of staff, Israel Defense Forces and Minister of Defense, 1969

Modern Israeli historian on 1948

*When it comes to the dispossession by Israel of the Palestinians in 1948, there is a deep chasm between the reality and the representation. This is most bewildering, and it is difficult to understand how events perpetrated in modern times and witnessed by foreign reporters and UN observers could be systematically denied, not even recognized as historical fact, let alone acknowledged as a crime that needs to be confronted, politically as well as morally. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the ethnic cleansing of 1948, the most formative event in the modern history of the land of Palestine, has been almost entirely eradicated from the collective global memory and erased from the world's conscience.*⁶¹

—Ilan Pappé, Israeli historian, 2006

Leading up to the 1967 War and Occupation

*[Israel 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.*⁶²

—Moshe Sharatt, Israel's Second Prime Minister, 1955

*In the case of the new war, we must avoid the historic mistake of the War of Independence [1948 War] and, later, the Sinai Campaign. We must not cease fighting until we achieve ... the territorial fulfillment of the Land of Israel.*⁶³

—Yigal Allon, 1969 Interim Prime Minister, Architect of the Allon Plan

⁵⁹ Nahum Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox*, trans. Steve Cox (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978); As cited in John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), p. 96.

⁶⁰ *Haaretz* (April 4, 1969); As cited in *IMEU*, "What leading Israelis have said."

⁶¹ Ilan Pappé, "The 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, issue 141 (2006).

⁶² Livia Rokach, *Israel's Sacred Terrorism* (AAUG Press, 1986); As cited in Jews for Justice in the Middle East, *The Origin*.

⁶³ Michael Brecher, *Decisions in Crisis* (Berkeley: 1980), p. 100; As cited in Finkelstein, *Image*, pp. 195-196.

Reflections on the 1967 War

*The thesis that the danger of genocide was hanging over us in June 1967 and that Israel was fighting for its physical existence is only bluff, which was born and developed after the war.*⁶⁴

—Matityahu Peled, Israeli General, 1972

*I do not think that 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.*⁶⁵

—Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's 5th Prime Minister, 1968

*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.*⁶⁶

—Menachem Begin, Israel's 6th Prime Minister, 1982

*I know how at least 80 percent of all the incidents with Syria started. In my opinion, more than 80 percent ... It would go like this: we would send a tractor to plow ... in the demilitarized area, and we would know ahead of time that the Syrians would start shooting. If they did not start shooting, we would inform the tractor to progress further, until the Syrians, in the end, would get nervous and would shoot. And then we would use guns, and later, even the air force, and that is how it went.... We thought ... that we could change the lines of the cease-fire accords by military actions that were less than a war. That is, to seize some territory and hold it until the enemy despairs and gives it to us.*⁶⁷

—Moshe Dayan, Israeli Defense Minister, 1976

Quotes from modern Israeli leaders

*It is the duty of Israeli leaders to explain to public opinion, clearly and courageously, a certain number of facts that are forgotten with time. The first of these is no Zionism, colonialization [sic], or Jewish State without the eviction of the Arabs and the expropriation of their lands.*⁶⁸

*Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take now will stay ours.... Everything we don't grab will go to them.*⁶⁹

—Ariel Sharon, Israel's 11th Prime Minister

⁶⁴ *Haaretz* (March 19, 1972); As confirmed by his son, Miko Peled, in personal correspondence.

⁶⁵ *Le Monde* (February 28, 1968); As cited in Jews for Justice in the Middle East, *The Origin*.

⁶⁶ "Address by Prime Minister Begin at the National Defense College," *Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (August 8, 1982).

⁶⁷ "Interviews on the Golan Heights and on Jewish Settlements in Hebron," *Yediot Ahronot* (November 22, 1976); As cited in Finkelstein, *Image*, p. 187.

⁶⁸ *Agence French Presse* (November 15, 1998); As cited in *IMEU*, "What leading Israelis have said."

⁶⁹ Quote from 1998. *Ibid.*, at 147.

*The vision I would like to see here is the entrenching of the Jewish and the Zionist state.... I very much favor democracy, but when there is a contradiction between democratic and Jewish values, the Jewish and Zionist values are more important.*⁷⁰

—Avigdor Lieberman, Israeli Minister of Strategic Threats, 2006

Quotes from other prominent figures

*We will have to face the reality that Israel is neither innocent, nor redemptive. And that in its creation, and expansion; [sic] we as Jews, have caused what we historically have suffered; [sic] a refugee population in Diaspora.*⁷¹

—Martin Buber, Jewish Philosopher, 1949

*I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightfully 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.*⁷²

—Mahatma Gandhi, 1938

*There are gross, egregious and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the [occupied Palestinian territories], committed not by undisciplined and uncontrolled militias but by one of the most disciplined and sophisticated armies in the modern world, directed by a stable and disciplined government.*⁷³

— John Dugard, United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, 2004

*Israel has consistently disregarded international outcries from both the ICJ and UN as to the illegality of its policies, and the world has not moved to call Israel to account. The wall has reached 60% completion. Enough is enough. It is time to adopt a weapons' embargo and divestments from all companies which profit from Israeli military occupation.*⁷⁴

— Luisa Morgantini, Italian Member and former Vice President of the European Parliament, 2009

⁷⁰ *Scotsman* (October 23, 2006); As cited in Ali Abunimah, "World silent as fascists join Israeli government," *Electronic Intifada* (October 25, 2006).

⁷¹ Deepak Tripathi, *Imperial Designs: War, Humiliation and the Making of History* (Potomac Books –University of Nebraska, 2013).

⁷² Martin Buber and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples* (University of Chicago Press, 2005); As cited in Jews for Justice in the Middle East, *The Origin*.

⁷³ Statement by John Dugard, 59th Session of the UN General Assembly Third Committee, Item 105 (c), New York (October 28, 2004).

⁷⁴ Luisa Morgantini, "If Palestine Is Denied By a Wall: A Story of Land Expropriation," *Intifada Palestine* (November 28, 2009). Translated by Barbara Antonelli and Susanna Bennett from *Liberazione*.

On the analogy between Israel and Apartheid South Africa

*If you change the names, the description of what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would be a description of what is happening in South Africa.*⁷⁵

*I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy Land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us black people in South Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks, suffering like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about.*⁷⁶

—South African Nobel Prize winner and anti-apartheid leader
Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 1989 and 2002

*The UN took a strong stand against apartheid; and over the years, an international consensus was built, which helped to bring an end to this iniquitous system. But we know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.*⁷⁷

—Nelson Mandela, former South African Prime Minister
and anti-apartheid leader, 1997

*I have now personally witnessed the plight of the Palestinian people. They are living under conditions of permanent Martial law. I came back convinced that Israel is indeed an apartheid state. And in certain respects it is worse than apartheid.*⁷⁸

—Ahmed Kathrada, anti-apartheid leader held prisoner
with Nelson Mandela on Robben Island, 2013

*When Israel does occupy this territory deep within the West Bank and connects the 200-or-so settlements with each other, with a road, and then prohibits the Palestinians from using that road ... this perpetrates even worse instances of apartness, or apartheid, than we witnessed even in South Africa.*⁷⁹

—Jimmy Carter, U.S. president and Nobel Peace Laureate, 2009

*It's time. Long past time. The best strategy to end the increasingly bloody occupation is for Israel to become the target of the kind of global movement that put an end to apartheid in South Africa.*⁸⁰

—Naomi Klein, best-selling author and political analyst, 2009

⁷⁵ Peter Steinfels, "Tutu Asks U.S. Jews to Urge Palestinian Pact," *The New York Times* (February 4, 1989).

⁷⁶ "Apartheid in the Holy Land," *The Guardian* (April 29, 2002).

⁷⁷ Address at the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (December 4, 1997).

⁷⁸ In a letter to actor Morgan Freeman, urging him not to accept an award from Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (May 6, 2013). www.bdssouthafrica.com/2011/05/letter-from-ahmed-kathy-kathrada-to-mr.html

⁷⁹ In an interview with Harry Smith of *The Early Show*, February 11, 2009 (minute 3). www.cbsnews.com/2100-500186_162-2212124.html

⁸⁰ Naomi Klein, "Israel: Boycott, Divest, Sanction," *The Nation* (January 26, 2009).