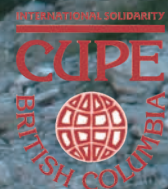


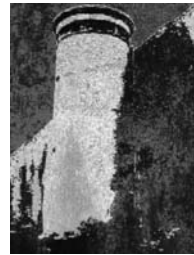
The

WALL MUST FALL



2007

End the Occupation and Violence in Israel - Palestine



The Wall Must Fall is an educational booklet produced by CUPE BC's International Solidarity Committee October 2007

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Cover Image:

Rafah, Gaza - A Palestinian boy on the steps of his bullet-riddled family home in the Tel es-Sultan neighbourhood of this refugee camp in the southernmost Gaza Strip - the scene of some of Israel's fiercest attacks during the five-year Palestinian uprising (2000-2005). Hundreds of homes in this part of the refugee camp were demolished by Israeli armoured bulldozers and tank fire. For more info on the camp: www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/gaza/rafah

Opposite Page: The International Court of Justice calls it the "Wall". It is an eight-metre-high barrier of chain link fence, barbed wire and concrete slabs with 30-100-metre buffer zones that Israel has built in the Palestinian West Bank. When complete it will be over 600 kms long.

photos: Jon Elmer jonelmer.ca

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 Barry O'Neill, CUPE BC President

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Preface

Message from the Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians

The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians welcomes the publication of the 2007 edition of *The Wall Must Fall*.

In this country, there are some Jewish organizations like the Canada Israeli Committee and B'Nai Brith, working with Steven Harper's Conservatives, to support Israel uncritically. These organizations claim that the Jewish community as a whole supports Israeli policies such as occupation and a just peace based on international law.

In reality, the Jewish community in this country is more diverse than these organizations acknowledge. While there are Jewish groups in Canada which are unquestioning in their support of Israel, our organization and others are adamantly opposed to Israel's forty-year occupation of the Palestinian territories. We support an end to the occupation, an end to the hostilities, and a just peace based on international law.

The Canada Israel Committee and B'Nai Brith claim that the roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lie in the refusal of Palestinians and other Arabs to recognize the state of Israel. They insist that Arabs are anti-Semites who want to drive Israelis into the sea. Our view is that the conflict is rooted in the expulsion of Palestinians from their land coupled with the brutality of the forty-year occupation. Arabs and Jews lived in harmony in the Middle East for hundreds of years before Palestinians were expelled from their lands in 1948.

It goes without saying that European Jews were the victims of oppression and discrimination by European anti-Semites, culminating in the Holocaust. But the Holocaust cannot serve as justification for perpetrating injustices against the indigenous people of Palestine. Furthermore, it is wrong for those who support Israeli actions to cavalierly charge the country's critics with anti-Semitism. This not only deflects attention from the substance of the underlying criticism; it can also desensitize the unsuspecting to the issue of real anti-Semitism.

Palestinians and other Arabs recently put forward a peace proposal that would guarantee Israeli security and recognition in exchange for the end of the Israeli Occupation, a return to the country's 1967 borders, and agreement to a just resolution of the plight of the thousands of dispossessed Palestinian refugees. But the Israeli government and its American and Canadian backers have rejected these proposals. It appears that the Israeli government prefers keeping control of the water and lands it conquered in 1967 in Palestinian territory and ignoring the Palestinian refugee crisis caused by the forcible expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their lands in 1948 to the prospect of a lasting peace.

Polls show that the more Canadians know about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the more they support Palestinian human rights and an end to the Occupation. The publication of *The Wall Must Fall* has an important role to play in this education process because it challenges widely accepted myths that have dominated our understanding of the issue for too long.

CUPE's involvement shows that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not a simple issue pitting Jews against Arabs, but rather a crisis that should concern anyone who is interested in the defence of human rights, dignity and justice for all.

The Alliance of Concerned Jewish Canadians (ACJC) is a coalition of Canadian Jews who are critical of the Israeli government's policies towards the Palestinians. ACJC believes that Israel wrongly claims to speak in the name of Jewish people around the world. Our perspective is shared with organizations of progressive Jews in Israel, Europe, the United States, South Africa, and other countries. We urge all Canadians to lobby the federal government to adopt a policy that respects international law, that calls for an end to the occupation, and that treats Israelis and Palestinians equally.

*ACJC Administrative Council members:
Abraham Weizfeld & Robert Silverman, Montreal
Paula Kirman, Edmontong
Judith Reich, Ottawa
Andy Lehrer & Natalie La Roche, Toronto*

*Cy Gonick, Winnipeg
Sid Shniad, Vancouver
David Cohen, Hamilton
Judy Haiven, Halifax
Michael Neumann, Peterborough*

CUPE Supports a Just Peace in the Middle East

It is with great pleasure that we publish the 2007 edition of *The Wall Must Fall*. CUPE BC's International Solidarity Committee produced the booklet after receiving a mandate to do so through resolutions adopted at CUPE BC conventions.

Trade unions deal principally with wages and working conditions, but we also serve as human rights organizations. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) actively organizes around social justice issues. The publication of educational materials on the Israeli/Palestine conflict follows in this tradition.

This 2007 edition is a major revision of the third edition published in June 2005. We have relied extensively on recent reports from Amnesty International, the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) to help describe living conditions in the occupied Palestinian Territories in the 40th year of the occupation. *The Wall Must Fall* is not an official position paper but rather a resource for interested union and community members featuring voices from the Israeli and Palestinian peace movements often shut out of the mainstream media. By highlighting the progressive peace movement, *The Wall Must Fall* demonstrates that this issue is not a Jewish vs Palestinian question, but one of basic human rights.

The booklet's main message is that peace requires the end of the Israeli occupation of Palestine Territories (West Bank and Gaza), the dismantling of the Wall and an end to violence against all Israeli and Palestinian civilians. This view is consistent with international law. Countless UN resolutions have demanded that Israel and its settlers return to the 1967 borders and end the occupation. This is also the position of the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the United Church, the New Democratic Party (NDP), and other progressive organizations.

Israeli and Palestinian peace voices report in the 2007 edition that the Israeli Wall and new Israeli settlements continue to be built on Palestinian land in the West Bank and that this construction is a serious impediment to a just peace.

We are working for an end to the occupation and a just peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. I invite readers to comment on this booklet. Copies can be downloaded from our website at www.cupe.bc.ca



Barry O'Neill
CUPE BC President
October 2007

Introduction

Just Peace in 2008

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict enters our living rooms on a daily basis. Two sides seem deadlocked in an endless tangle and there appears to be no resolution in sight. What if we took the time to examine some of the root causes of the situation?

The year 2008 marks the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. For Palestinian people, 2008 marks the 60th Anniversary of the *Nakba* or the Catastrophe, when many were forced off their traditional lands.

2007 is notable as the 40th year since the Israeli military marched into the West Bank and Gaza, driving Palestinians off their homelands yet again and setting up Israeli settlements. The current military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza by Israeli Defence Forces dates to 1967, with no end in sight. Is it simply that despite the great injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people, there is no agreement on how to resolve this conflict? Quite the contrary.

The International Consensus

There is an almost unanimous international consensus on what would constitute a just peace plan in Israel-Palestine. In fact, the framework for this just peace was first established in 1967 by UN resolutions. This consensus calls for two states of Israel and Palestine, with Jerusalem as the shared capital and justice for Palestinian refugees.

The Palestinian state would cover Gaza and the West Bank based on the 1967 borders and the Israeli occupation would end. The Palestinians accepted this as early as 1988 and in 2007 all major Palestinian parties, including Hamas, have accepted this consensus even though the Palestinian state would only be 22 per cent of the original Palestinian territory.

Since 1967 numerous United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions have called for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, reflecting this international consensus. None have been enforced. All have been ignored by Israel and the United States. Rather, Israel's strategy, with the help of the



US, has been to promote a “peace process,” without any reference to UN resolutions, a peace process without any guidelines ... a peace process that has allowed Israel, the infinitely stronger military party in the process, to continue to build more settlements, seize more land, displace more Palestinians under cover of the very same “peace process,” and then claim that there is no Palestinian partner for peace.

Henry Siegman, Head of the American Jewish Congress (1978-1994), wrote in *The August 2007*



Quick Facts

POPULATION

Israel	5,700,000
Jews	4,500,000
Palestinians	1,200,000
West Bank	2,650,000
Palestinians	2,200,000
Jewish Settlers	450,000
Gaza	1,400,000
Palestinians	1,400,000

Source: World Facts

LAND

Historic Palestine (now Israel, West Bank and Gaza)	26,995 sq km
Israel (78% of Historic Palestine)	20,770 sq km
Proposed Palestinian State (22% of Historic Palestine)	6,225 sq km
West Bank	5,860 sq km
Gaza	365 sq km

CANADIAN COMPARISONS

Prince Edward Island	5,660 sq km
Vancouver Island	32,136 sq km
Island of Montreal	499 sq km
Metro Toronto	620 sq km
Surrey, B.C.	342 sq km

A typical Israeli checkpoint inside the occupied West Bank near Ramallah. Palestinians can wait hours to go to work, school or to get health care. photo: Markus Cuel

London Review of Books:

“The Middle East peace process may well be the most spectacular deception in modern diplomatic history. Israel’s interest in a peace process has been a fiction that has served primarily as a cover for the systematic confiscation of Palestinian land.”

The main impediment to peace, says Siegman, is that Israel will not allow a Palestinian state on the full territory of the West Bank and Gaza. International insistence on such a state would make complicated peace processes unnecessary .

International Concern

A number of international organizations have researched the current Israeli military occupation in the face of the unproductive peace process. These groups regularly warn of the deteriorating Palestinian economy and the human cost in the West Bank and Gaza. The World Bank, Amnesty International, OXFAM, and the United Nations (UN), all report

on the daily impact of Israel's 500 checkpoints and roadblocks and huge separation wall on everyday Palestinian life.

Grinding poverty caused by the military occupation, restrictions on movement preventing meaningful economic activity, and house demolitions leading to increasing numbers of refugees mark the daily reality of the Palestinian people. Mainstream media organizations do not report on these facts. Violence makes the television news, and so does internal conflict between Palestinian political organizations. But many voices that shed light on the conflict are silenced.

John Dugard, a South African lawyer and UN Special Envoy on Human Rights in the Palestinian territories, writes in his March 2007 report to the UN General Assembly:

“In 1994, [South African] apartheid came to an end and Palestine became the only developing country in the world under the thumb of a western affiliated regime. Herein lies its significance to the future of human rights. There are other regimes, particularly in the developing world, that suppress human rights but there is no other case of a western affiliated regime (Israel) that denies self-determination and human rights to a developing people (Palestinians) as it's done so for so long.”

When the official peace initiatives of our governments result in meaningless meetings and the continuation

of an illegal military occupation, working for peace becomes the job of citizens and grassroots organizations.

The Struggle at Home

Faced with American and now Canadian governments fully backing Israeli defiance of international law and justice, ordinary citizens are pressuring their government to understand that there can be no peace as long as the Israeli occupation continues.

Unions, poverty organizations, artists, women's groups, and faith communities are engaged on this issue in increasing numbers, and are defending their democratic right to discuss this conflict publicly and independently, without fear of being branded anti-Semitic. Getting to understand the roots of this conflict means moving past simplistic name-calling and silencing.

Discussion is broadening, and not just discussion, but words that lead to a variety of actions.

CUPE BC believes that distribution of *The Wall Must Fall* helps open the door to democratic discussion leading to a just peace. We have not yet debated or taken a position on the issues raised in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign (see Resistance & Hope section). However, we do recognize and respect those organizations involved in this campaign.

History of the Conflict



Two activists express their views on the refugee question. *File Photo*

There's an old expression that if you want to know what's happening, follow the money. But in this case, to understand the conflict, you must follow the land.

In 1880, Palestinian Arabs lived in and cultivated almost 100 per cent of Palestine between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. In 2007, the Israeli Jews control 100 per cent of the same territory. The Palestinians have been pushed into small ghettos in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel itself, or in refugee camps outside Israel-Palestine.

In 1880, the total population of Palestine (today called Israel, the West Bank and Gaza) was about 500,000. Of those, 27,000 were Jews who did not want a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but were integrated into the wider Palestinian society. The rest were Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Christians. The territory was part of the Ottoman Empire.

Britain, France and the United States won the First World War, defeating Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The British took over the administration of

Palestine Population		
Palestine 1880		
Population		500,000
Palestinian Arab	473,000	94.5%
Jewish	27,000	5.5%
Palestine 1914		
Population		689,272
Palestinian Arab	629,272	92%
Jewish	60,000	8%
Palestine 1947		
Population		1,912,112
Palestinian Arab	1,303,887	68%
Jewish	608,225	32%

Palestine and promised European Jews a homeland. It was a remarkable promise considering that Palestinian Arabs already inhabited the homeland.

To justify this promise, it was said that Palestine was a “land without a people,” but as Ronnie Kasrils, South African Cabinet Minister, said, “An indigenous people, the Palestinians, lived there and developed agriculture and towns since the Canaanite Kingdom over 5,500 years ago.”

Between 1895 and 1945, millions of Jews emigrated from Europe to escape anti-Semitism and the Nazi Holocaust, which killed 6 million Jews. Most went to the United States, Canada and South America but about 400,000 went to Palestine.

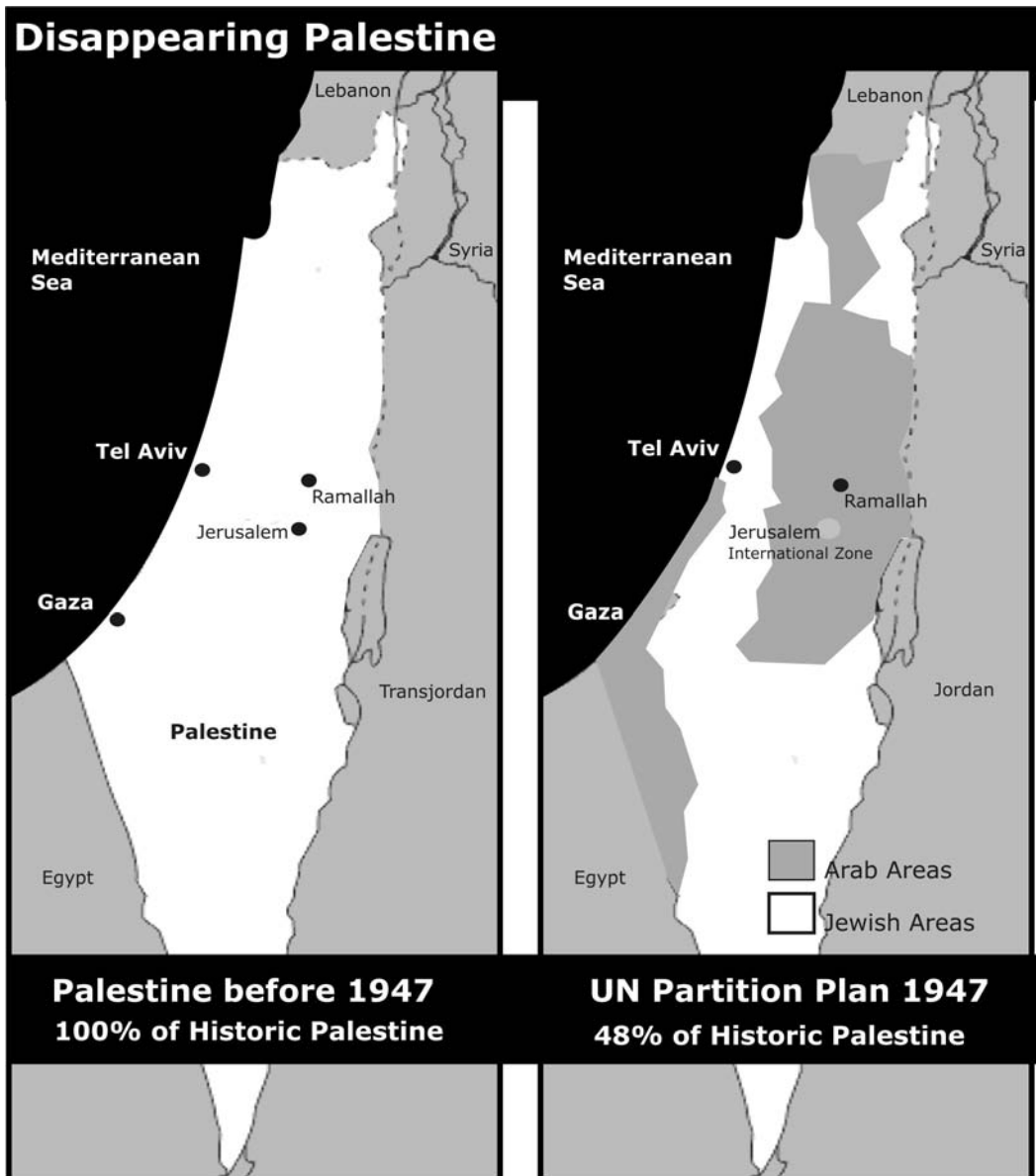
In 1947, the US-dominated UN called for the splitting of Palestine into a Jewish state, Israel (56 per cent), an Arab state (43 per cent) and Jerusalem, an international city. This split occurred despite the fact that the Jewish population was only 33 per cent of the population and owned only about 6 per cent of the land in Palestine. The promised Arab state was never formed.

In 1948, the Palestinians opposed the UN plan to give 56 per cent of Palestine for a Jewish homeland. Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, summed up the Palestinian position in *The Jewish Paradox*:

“Why should the Arabs make peace?” he asked. “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?”

Then came the 1948 Israeli “War of Independence” (the Palestinians called it *Nakba* or Catastrophe). As a result:

- About 750,000 Palestinians (three-quarters of the Palestinian population) inside the newly formed Israel were driven out or fled. The Israeli government contends that Palestinians were ordered to flee by hostile Arab regimes in the region. Several Israeli historians have shown that Israeli military terror was the main cause of the flight. The same historians say that the Israeli military acted to ethnically cleanse the native Palestinian population to secure a Jewish majority in Israel.
- Some 500 Palestinian villages were razed or existing homes were directly expropriated for Jewish occupants; the rivers, hills and valleys were renamed and their Palestinian history



erased. Palestinian Arabs fled to makeshift refugee camps, where they still reside three generations later.

- Israel was formed and it conquered all of Palestine, except the West Bank and Gaza. It now controlled 78 per cent of Palestine instead of the UN-allotted 56 per cent.
- UN resolution 194 mandated the Palestinian right of return inside the new state of Israel. This resolution has been reaffirmed annually by the UN since 1948, because it is in accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 1949, the Fourth Geneva Convention was passed. Article 49 states: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." This Convention was adopted to prevent a repeat of the Nazi Germany settlements in Eastern Europe in the Second World

War and was signed by virtually every country in the world, including Israel.

Israel continued to control 78 per cent of Palestine until the six-day war in 1967 when Israel now occupied 100 per cent of historic Palestine including the West Bank and Gaza. In response, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolutions 242 and 338, calling on Israel to withdraw to its previous borders in exchange for peace.

But Israel never withdrew. Instead, it started building settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem on Palestinian land with unprecedented support and financing from the US government. The occupation began in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews from Israel and around the world poured into the illegal settlements in the Palestinian Territories where they were protected by the Israeli army, governed by Israeli law and voted in Israeli elections.

In 1987-1992, we saw the first uprising or *Intifada* by the Palestinians as they protested the Israeli occupation. The world remembers scenes of young Palestinians armed only with stones, face to face with the Israeli military.

In 1993, the Oslo accords were signed. The new Palestinian Authority got some limited control over a tiny portion of the West Bank and Gaza. But the occupation continued, awaiting final negotiations over the status of Jerusalem, the refugees and the Palestinian state.

In 2000, the Oslo Peace Process failed because Israel had doubled the number of illegal settlements



Israel/Palestine 1967
22% of Historic Palestine



Israel/Palestine today
12% of Historic Palestine





A Palestinian farmer waiting to reach the village near Qalqilia. The electrified fence is opened only 2-3 times a day and soldiers often let the Palestinians wait for hours under the sun. photo: Markus Cuel

in the West Bank and Gaza since the Oslo Accord of 1993 in flagrant violation of these Accords. The Palestinians rose up against the oppression of daily life in occupied West Bank and Gaza in what became known as the second *Intifada* (2000-2005). The Israelis invaded and re-occupied the Palestinian-controlled areas.

After 9/11, Israel depicted its project of occupying Palestinian land as part of the war against terror, portraying the Palestinians as terrorists. Playing on this destructive racial profiling, in 2003, the Israelis rushed to build a new six-metre-high Separation Wall inside the West Bank. The wall is about 700 kilometres long as it snakes its way through the West Bank. The Berlin Wall by comparison, was three metres high and 155 kilometers long.

The Israelis claimed that they needed the wall for security, that is, to prevent suicide bombers from entering Israel. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled the Wall illegal in 2004. As Amnesty International in its June 7, 2007 report entitled "Enduring Occupation" said: "The Wall is not constructed on Israel's border with the West Bank (the green line) but right inside the West Bank itself annexing yet more land to Israel."

In 2005, the Israelis pulled their 8,000 settlers out of the Gaza strip during the so-called Gaza disengagement. They had been living amongst 1.2 million Palestinians.

The UN said that statements by the government of Israel that the withdrawal ended the occupation were grossly inaccurate. "Despite the withdrawal, the occupation continued because Israel retained control of Gaza's airspace, sea space and external borders.

In effect, following Israel's withdrawal, Gaza became a sealed off, imprisoned and occupied territory."

Dov Weinglass, top advisor to Ariel Sharon explained:

"The Gaza disengagement is actually formaldehyde, so that there will not be a political process with the Palestinians. The political process is the establishment of a Palestinian state, the evacuation of settlements, the return of refugees, the partition of Jerusalem. And all that has now been frozen."

In 2006, the Palestinians held parliamentary elections and elected Hamas, an Islamic party. The Carter Center deemed this election to be "free and fair."

The US, Canada and Israel rejected the outcome of the democratic election and attempted to undermine the newly elected government of Hamas, initially by cutting off funding to the Palestinian authority led by Hamas and organizing an international boycott to do the same.

The Israelis refused to transfer some \$800 million in tariff and tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinians, which legally belonged to the Palestinians. According to the UN, the boycott was disastrous as salaries in the public sector could not be paid: 8 out of 10 people are living on less than \$2.00 a day; families in poverty increased by 50 per

cent; half the population was food insecure, meaning that they were uncertain where their next meal was coming from.

Former US President Jimmy Carter condemned the US administration for trying to divide the Palestinian people into two groups and for favouring Fatah over the elected Hamas government.

Meanwhile, the Israeli government continued building in the occupied territories. 20,000 new homes for Jews in occupied Arab East Jerusalem were announced in May 2007; the illegal separation wall grows and grows. New Jewish-only roads slash through Palestinian farmland and all of this without a peep from the international community.

Israel and the US

The United States supported the creation of Israel in 1948, but a special relationship developed only after 1967 when the US realized that Israel could play an important role as a Cold War ally and partner for joint control of the Middle East. Since that time, US support for Israel has emerged in several ways.

During the Cold War, the US relied on Israel's military power as an extension of its own. Israel provided arms and support for US-allied dictatorships in Chile, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and South Africa.

At the UN and in other international arenas, the US protects Israel from being held accountable for its violations of international law. After 1967, US opposition to UN resolutions critical of Israel became pronounced. Most of the US vetoes cast in the UN Security Council in the 1980s and 1990s served to protect Israel from international sanction. Israel receives 25 per cent of the US foreign aid budget.

That's more than \$3 billion a year — mostly in military aid. Israel also receives over \$2 billion a year in tax exempt contributions from American citizens.

In addition, Israel has access to the most advanced weapons systems in the US arsenal. Most of the weapons used in the Occupied Territories, including Apache helicopter gun ships, F-16 fighter bombers, and armed caterpillar bulldozers, come from the US. Israel also now has significant nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, thanks to help from the US and some European countries.

Canada: We have a History Too

From 1967 to 2004, Canada voted with the majority of UN countries to support resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories. Unfortunately, Canada refused to demand that Israel actually implement this policy.

In 2004, when Paul Martin came to power, the Liberals began to abstain from or actively vote against resolutions that were critical of the Israeli occupation. For example, in July 2004, Canada did not join 150 UN countries that condemned the building of the Israeli Separation Wall in Palestinian territories.

When Stephen Harper was elected in 2005, he took Canadian foreign policy even more squarely into the camp of the Bush administration's war on terror. Harper began to blindly follow the US policy in Palestine as well as in Lebanon and Afghanistan.

In summer 2006, Harper called Israel's destruction of Lebanon a "measured response," while his ministers were reportedly actively working with the US to prevent a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah. A thousand Lebanese and 39 Israeli civilians were killed and Lebanese bridges, schools and hospitals were destroyed by the Israeli Air Force.

In 2006, Harper boycotted the democratically elected Palestinian government. "Not a red cent to Hamas," Foreign Minister Peter McKay declared before even the US and Israel, eliminating Canada's contribution to the Palestinian authority and its 1600 schools and 438 hospitals and medical clinics, along with more than 130,000 employees and their families.

In 2007, Canada continued to boycott the elected Palestinian government despite humanitarian pleas. In a letter dated April 24, United Church moderator David Giuliano said, "I urge the Canadian government to immediately and urgently resume financial support to the Palestinian unity government so that the Palestinian people can live the life of dignity to which they are entitled."

Canada only resumed aid to the Palestinian Authority when the elected Hamas movement was expelled from the government in June 2007.

On June 18, 2007, Alexa McDonough, the NDP Foreign Affairs, critic lashed out at the Conservative support of the Hamas boycott:

“Mr. Speaker, tragically, the Palestinian Unity government has collapsed. Never in forty years had a Palestinian political body brought together the views of so many Palestinians. All major political movements were included.

“Instead of seeing the Unity government as a unique opportunity to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the Conservative government shamefully boycotted it, undermining the advocates of compromise, compounding political divisions within Gaza and the West Bank and increasing the insecurity plaguing the lives of Palestinians and Israelis.”

She continued: “The only viable government in

Palestine is one that represents all Palestinians. Peace cannot be achieved without Hamas at the table. It is a fraud to pretend otherwise. It is imperative for the Canadian government to provide leadership and push for a unified, multilateral diplomatic front.

“The current strife and tragic loss of life in Palestine will only be stemmed when a policy of peace and inclusive dialogue replaces the politics of militarism, boycott and division.”

Also in June 2007, the UN Human Rights Council voted 46 to 1 to maintain a special Human Rights envoy in the Palestinian territories. Canada was the only negative vote. Harper and the Conservatives back Israel unconditionally, including rubber-stamping their treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank.

Tax Breaks for the Jewish National Fund?

Imagine an institution that owned 13 per cent of Canada's land but would sell or lease this land only to White Christians. Of course this is now impossible in Canada. In 1948, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that this type of discrimination is unlawful and our Human Rights codes and the Canadian Charter back up this ruling.

In Israel, however, the Jewish National Fund (which owns 13 per cent of Israeli land) will only sell or lease to Israeli Jews. It excludes 20 per cent of Israeli citizens who are not Jewish and are mostly Palestinian.

Much of this JNF land was illegally taken from the Palestinians in 1948 in the first place. The JNF has also illegally constructed a park called Canada Park, financed by Canadian supporters. It is partially built on the remains of bulldozed Palestinian villages destroyed in 1967 by the Israeli army in the West Bank.

The Canadian government does not condemn these practices. In fact, the Jewish National Fund is a registered Canadian charity doling out tax breaks to Canadian contributors. Canadian tax dollars subsidize discriminatory JNF activity in Israel.



The Occupation

Betar Illit , an illegal Israeli settlement outside Bethlehem in the West Bank at final stages of construction in 2005.

photo: Jon Elmer

West Bank

The West Bank is about the size of Prince Edward Island. About 2.2 million Palestinians live there. Since 1967, Israel has installed about 450,000 Jewish settlers from all parts of the world.

According to Amnesty International's June 2007 Report entitled "Enduring Occupation," there are 235 Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. 135 are recognized by the Israeli government, 100 are outposts that are tolerated by the government. All settlements are illegal and contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The settlements range in size from 100 residents to 30,000. They often resemble California suburbs with schools, cultivated lawns and big, single-family dwellings. At the same time, they are more than civilian neighbourhoods. They are heavily fortified towns and cities, which command hilltops and consume most of the water resources in the West Bank. They are built on expropriated private

Palestinian lands, as well as on common lands long cultivated by Palestinian farmers.

The settlements are connected to each other and to Israel by a whole series of highways and by-pass roads, which gobble up great chunks of West Bank land and which are accessible only to Israelis with yellow license plates.

The settlements themselves are designated for Jews only, many of who come from different parts of the world and who have never lived in Israel itself. These settlers receive substantial financial and other benefits from the Israeli state and they are allowed to exploit land and natural resources that belong to the Palestinian population. They are entitled to the protection of Israeli law and have complete freedom of movement.

In fact, Amnesty International reports that these settlers have virtual immunity from prosecution when they assault Palestinians or when they destroy Palestinian property, such as olive groves.

The report goes on to say: “In a rare case that actually went to trial, Israeli settler Yehoshua Elitzur was convicted in August 2005 of killing Sayel Jabara, a 46-year-old Palestinian, in September 2004.

“Although witnesses agreed that Mr. Elitzur was armed with an M-16 assault weapon and deliberately shot dead the unarmed man for no apparent reason, the court contended that there was no proof that he intended to kill Sayel Jabara and convicted him of manslaughter rather than murder.

“Mr. Elitzur, who had been free on bail since the day after his arrest, did not appear in Court to hear the verdict. He is not known to have been re-arrested or to have served any sentence.”

Meanwhile, according to Amnesty International, Palestinians accused of attacks against Israeli settlers are tried by Israeli military courts and receive harsh punishments. In some cases, they are assassinated by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

The Impact on Palestinians: A Matrix of Control

For the Palestinians, the occupation is a daily grind that dominates all aspects of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Israeli activist Jeff Halper calls it “The Matrix of Control,” a massive apparatus of checkpoints, roadblocks, military bases, Jewish-only settlements and by-pass roads that prevent movement by Palestinians in order to protect the illegal settlements.

The checkpoints, according to Halper, increasingly resemble and function like International border crossings, yet they are not crossings between Israel and the Palestinian territories but are erected deep in Palestinian territory dividing communities, not nation states.

John Dugard, the UN special envoy to Palestine relates:

“The number of checkpoints, including roadblocks, earth mounds and trenches, was 540 in December 2006. These checkpoints divide the West Bank into four distinct areas: the north (Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarem), the centre (Ramallah), the south (Hebron), and East Jerusalem. Within these areas further enclaves have been created by a system of



Palestinians cut off from their crops by Israeli soldiers.
photo: Carel Moisewitsch

checkpoints and roadblocks. Moreover, highways for the use of Israelis only further fragment the Occupied Palestinian Territory into 10 small cantons or Bantustans. Cities are cut off from each other as a permit is required to travel from one area to another and permits are difficult to obtain.

“The rules governing the granting of permits and passage through the checkpoints constantly change. Generally men between the ages of 18 and 35 are not allowed to leave the northern West Bank but there is no clear rule on this subject. Military orders on checkpoints are not published and it is left to Palestinians to find out by trial and error whether they will be allowed to pass through a checkpoint on a particular day.

“To further complicate matters, there is a secret list with some 180,000 names of security risks who may not pass through a checkpoint, but no notice is served on such a person on this list until he arrives at the checkpoint. The conduct of soldiers at the checkpoints is often rough. A person may be refused passage through a checkpoint for arguing with a soldier or explaining his documents.

“The principle of legality, requiring a law to be clear, consistent and published in advance, is completely unknown and disregarded at the checkpoints. Instead, an arbitrary and capricious regime prevails.”

As B'Tselem, the Israeli Human Rights group, says: “Israeli policy is blatant discrimination based on national origin, since these restrictions apply only to Palestinians. The Israeli Defence Force has even explicitly admitted that the restrictions of movement imposed on Palestinians are intended to ensure the free movement of Jews in the Occupied Territories.”

Amira Hass, the well-known Israeli journalist, says:

“Beginning in 1991, Palestinians found that they could no longer make any plans: It was impossible to know until the very last minute whether one would get the necessary permit. While not being able to plan ahead, they also lost the ability to act spontaneously; spontaneity is no less than a human right than travel and food.

“For sixteen years, people have not been able to decide on the spur of the moment to go, say, to see a sunrise in the desert, or visit a new bookstore in Ramallah or spend an evening with old friends. The ability to plan or be spontaneous lost, many have lost the energy and determination required to even try to exercise their right to free movement and escape from the cage.”

Mohammed Khatib, a young member of the

resistance committee of the Palestinian village of Bil'in, says “The Israeli occupation has taken away our freedom of movement. I am 31 years old and have only visited Jerusalem twice in my life, although it lies only twenty miles away. Jerusalem is the third holiest place for Muslims and the capital of our historical Palestinian state. I went there once as a child with my parents, and a second time when my son went for medical care. When my friend Ramzi was shot in the head in July 2005 by soldiers with a rubber-coated steel bullet during one of our peaceful demonstrations against the Wall, even his mother was not allowed by Israeli authorities to visit him in an east Jerusalem hospital. I've only seen the Mediterranean sea in photos, even though it borders Palestine and sits twelve miles from my home.”

Health Care

The closures and checkpoints put lives in jeopardy in the West Bank. More than 70 per cent of the Palestinian population lives in rural areas that do not provide hospital services. They need quick access to hospitals, which checkpoints prevent. Sixty-eight Palestinian women have given birth at checkpoints causing thirty-four infant deaths during the period 2000-2007 (B'Tselem).

“What is happening in the Territories is a process of slow and steady genocide,” said Tanya Reinhart, a linguistic professor at Tel Aviv University.

Green for Stop, Yellow for Go: Amnesty International



The 100-km journey from the Hebron area in the south of the West Bank to Nablus in the North takes less than two hours by car for Israeli settlers. For Palestinians it can take the best part of a day, if it is possible at all. Even Palestinians who meet the criteria laid down by the Israeli army – such as age, security “clearance,” place of residence and purpose of travel – cannot drive on most of the main roads in the West Bank. These are reserved for Israeli settlers, whose vehicles are easily identifiable by their yellow registration plates. Palestinian vehicles have green registration plates.

Palestinians have to take long detours via secondary and often unpaved roads. They have to wait at Israeli army checkpoints and may eventually be refused passage. The opening hours vary from one checkpoint to another and many are closed at night. Checkpoints often close unexpectedly during the day for unspecific periods of time.

Soldiers at the checkpoints do not inform the Palestinians waiting to pass when the checkpoint will reopen, making it difficult to know whether it is worth waiting or not. Israeli settlers encounter few checkpoints on their journeys in the West Bank, and when they do, are waived through without having to wait to have their documents and vehicles inspected.



Palestinian family stand in the ruins of their former home as an Israeli bulldozer passes. photo: Darrell Ell

“Often, people cannot get medical treatment, so someone with a heart attack will die at a roadblock because they cannot get to the hospital. There is a serious shortage of food so there is malnutrition of children. The Palestinian society is dying – daily – and there is hardly any awareness of this in Israeli society.”

House Demolitions

Israel does not allow Palestinians to build outside the boundaries of the already built up areas in the West Bank. This forces thousands of Palestinians to build without permits in order to provide shelter for their families. B’Tselem, the Israel Human Rights group, says: “Building without a permit is not an act of protest or a political act. It is one that arises out of necessity.”

Rather than changing this situation, Israel has adopted a policy of mass demolitions of Palestinian houses, which have been built without a permit. In the past ten years, the Israeli authorities have demolished more than 2,000 residences, leaving

more than 13,000 Palestinians homeless. Here is the testimony of a member of the International Women Peace Services:

“When we arrived in the village of Salfit, the aftermath of the first house demolition was already evident. The family stood on a pile of rubble, silenced and shocked. The second house demolition was just beginning, with the Caterpillar and Volvo bulldozers ripping into the top floor of the nearly completed house. The family, two of whom were handcuffed throughout the demolition, were powerless in this situation. Within an hour, years of labour and money were obliterated by the Israeli army.

“Without pause, the bulldozers and army went to the site of the third demolition, an agricultural structure. Money had clearly been invested and no doubt many mouths were dependent on the income.”

This type of barbarism does not go unnoticed. Sara Roy, an economics professor at Harvard University and the child of Holocaust survivors says: “I cannot begin to describe how horrible and

obscene it is to watch the deliberate destruction of a family's home, while that family watches powerlessly to stop it.

“For Jews, as for Palestinians, a house represents far more than a roof over one's head. It represents life itself.”

According to B'Tselem, Palestinian homes are demolished in the context of a declared policy of strengthening and expanding Israeli settlement in the West Bank. They are creating permanent facts affecting negotiations over the final status agreements, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian houses are demolished to meet the following needs:

- Construction of by-pass roads to enable movement of settlers and of military forces protecting the settlements.
- Removal of Palestinians from areas adjacent to Israeli settlements.
- Prevent transfer of land to Palestinians.

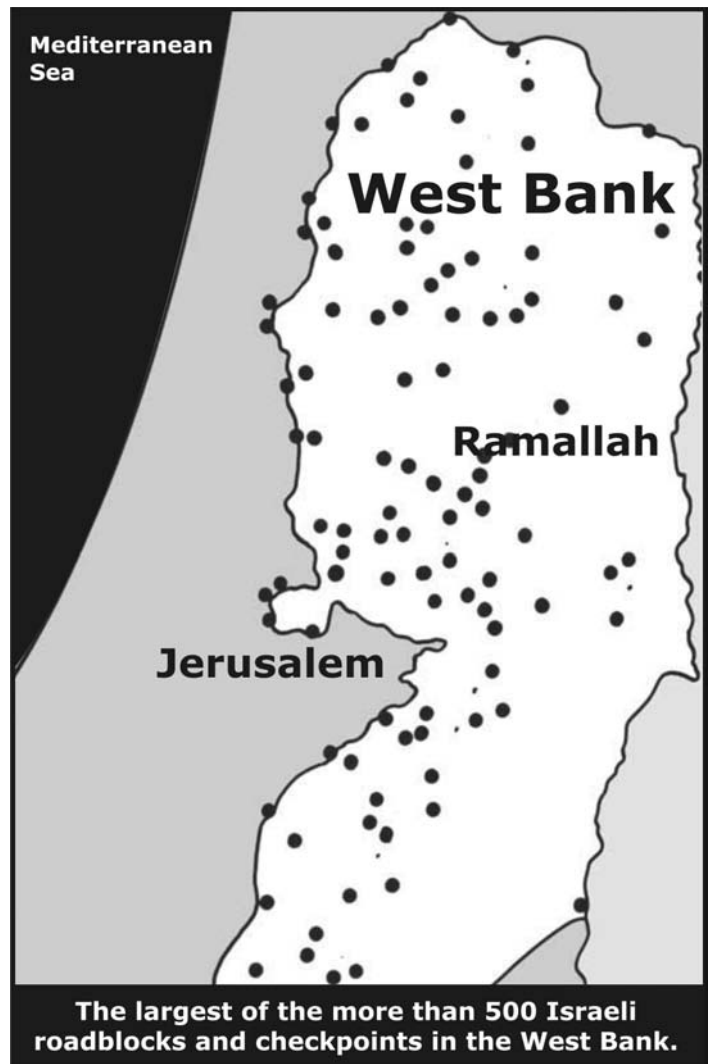
The Economy and Workers

Forty years of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza have left an economy completely dependent on the Israeli economy. “The size of the average Palestinian industrial enterprise is about four workers, no larger than it was in 1927,” according to the World Bank's May 2007 report. Since 2001, 432 Palestinian industrial factories and 9,735 small shops have been destroyed. Today, 96 per cent of the exports coming from the West Bank go to Israel and 76 per cent of West Bank imports are bought from Israel.

The World Bank documents how the restriction on the movement of people and goods caused by the Separation Wall and the checkpoints results in an economic disaster “among the worst in modern history.”

The closures have made it nearly impossible for Palestinian enterprises to meet delivery schedules and have dramatically raised costs, effectively excluding most Palestinian producers from the world economy, the World Bank reports.

Look at Palestinian agriculture for example. In 1967, 70 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank were employed in agriculture. Today in 2007, it's down to 17 per cent. Delivery delays, which cause rotting



produce, uncertain transportation, the building of the Wall, and high Israeli import duties have slammed the door on Palestinian agriculture.

Different Laws for Palestinians

Unemployment is now skyrocketing at around 30 per cent in the West Bank and some desperate Palestinians dispossessed of their land now work in the industrial zones built on Palestinian land in the West Bank by Israeli capital.

In these industrial zones, Israeli owners have hired Israeli Jews from the settlements in the occupied territories and these workers are covered and protected by Israeli labour law and Israeli unions. The Palestinian workers, working in the same factories, are not covered by Israeli labour law but by outdated Jordanian law. Thus, Palestinian workers get no vacation pay or work clothes premiums, and sick leave and accident leave are substantially less than



These Palestinians must cross an Israeli checkpoint in order to get to their own olive trees.

Photo: Carel Moisewitsch

week, and the list goes on. Israeli occupation forces also use the work permit system to gather information from Palestinian workers and to recruit collaborators among them.

In Back to the Wall: A Study of Palestinian Working Conditions in Israeli Settlements, Simone Korkus documents the exploitation and discrimination of the many Palestinian workers working in Israeli settlements.

She quotes worker J who states:

received by the Israeli Jewish workers.

Of course, these aren't the only differences between the workers. In order to work in the industrial zones, Palestinians have to obtain a magnetic card from the occupation forces and then have to apply for a work permit from the same occupation forces; these work permits are only granted at the approval of the Israeli employer. Israeli Jews in the West Bank do not require a magnetic card or a work permit in order to work in the industrial zones.

Palestinian workers, unlike the Israelis, are also faced with the daily checkpoints, the unpredictable delays, the dehumanizing procedures, and the road closures. Because a worker never knows how long the delay will be or how strict the search is, he must leave in the middle of the night for a day job thus extending his workday by many hours.

Israeli employers understand the desperation of the Palestinian worker and some of them use the threat of work permit withdrawal not to pay the Palestinians the minimum wage, to circumvent what health and safety regulations do exist, to force a 7-day work

"I have worked already 10 years in the Israeli wood factory here. We work here with 30 employees. There is hardly any protection against the sun or rain and the factory hall has no flooring. In the winter, we stand all day in the mud. There is no toilet and we are not allowed to go out, because this iron door only opens at 4 p.m. Can you imagine how dirty it gets, with 30 men? Two years ago I finally found the courage to complain. Do you know what happened?

I was sacked on the spot and sent home without pay. "Two weeks later the phone rang. It was my boss. He said that he would give me a last chance but I had to shut up.

"And that's what I do. I don't complain about the lack of protective clothes and I was silent when my fellow worker incidentally shot himself in the abdomen with the electric stapler and was sent home without pay.

"But I am furious. The worst thing is that the manager doesn't really care. It's not that he treats us as animals. He just doesn't see us at all."

Gaza

Gaza is a 45-km strip of land surrounded by sniper-tower-adorned concrete walls on three sides. On the fourth side is the Mediterranean Sea. Warships – clearly visible from shore – patrol the coast while surveillance blimps, unmanned drones and helicopter gunships fly in the skies overhead. Soldiers guard each of the two exits; virtually no one can enter and fewer are permitted to leave. Even approaching Gaza's perimeter is a death sentence. Gaza is accurately described as an open-air prison.

About three-quarters of all Gazans are refugees, most of whom were driven from their homes in what is now Israel in 1948. To this day, they reside in refugee camps that house up to 74,000 people per square kilometre, making the Gaza Strip one of the most densely populated areas on Earth.

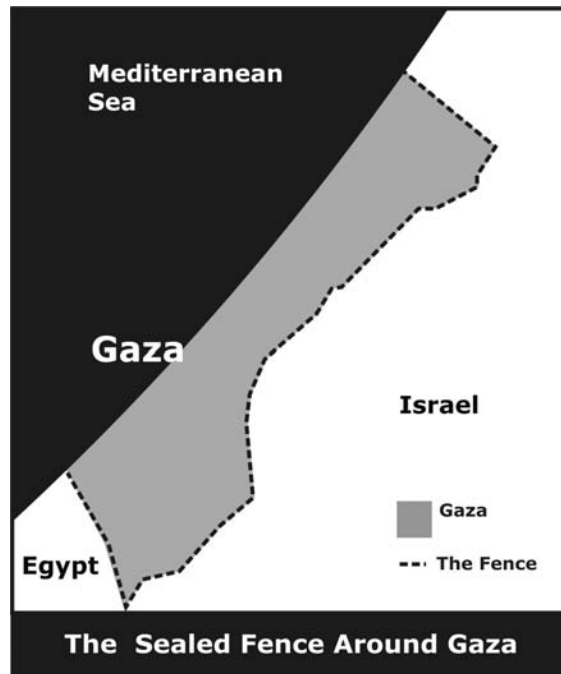
Today, the camps have the look of a permanent slum: What used to be rows of tents erected by the United Nations and Red Cross are now basic cinderblock frames topped with corrugated metal roofing. Inside, they are almost completely devoid of furniture or amenities. If there are taps at all, the water runs brown and gritty. Electricity is a luxury, subject to the whims of Israel.

Children sleep on thin foam mattresses that are stacked in the morning, transforming the bedroom back into the living room. Half of Gaza's population is under the age of 15, so from their crowded houses to an overcrowded school is the norm. Most schools run two shifts of classes to make space for the number of students.

Gaza has been effectively sealed off from the world for more than a decade. With few exceptions, Gaza's teenagers have never left, never visited their families in the West Bank, never prayed at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, let alone travelled elsewhere in the world. Until 2005, Palestinians who grew up only metres from the Mediterranean Sea, were prevented from ever setting foot on the beach, lest

the security of the settlers be compromised.

Instead, trapped inside their camps, childhood is suspended and issues of life and death confront youngsters often before they can even speak. Tank, jet, bomb, gun – one or more of these words is among a child's first. They wet their beds in fear as Israeli jets crash through the sound barrier overhead, setting off a massive sonic boom.



More than 2,500 people have been killed in Gaza by Israel since 2001, thousands more have been severely and permanently wounded or disabled. Thousands of homes have been demolished, hundreds of acres of farmland bulldozed and national institutions destroyed – the power plant, government ministries, the airport. No family has been untouched.

Every aid agency working in Gaza forcefully warns of the massive humanitarian crisis being imposed on Gaza's 1.4 million people. Unemployment is almost total and extreme poverty is the norm, and 1.1 million people depend on food aid for survival day to day.

With no sovereignty over their borders, the economy in Gaza is completely controlled by Israel. Prices are inflated, artificial shortages are fostered and industrial development stagnates at levels the World Bank pegs at no greater than they were in the 1920s.

It is upon this foundation of injustice that the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis takes place. In fact, it is the model for its perpetuation. The ghettoization of the Palestinians in Gaza is the blueprint for Israeli control of the Palestinians on the West Bank. The 700-kilometre Wall being erected in the West Bank looks and operates identically to the prison walls surrounding Gaza.

Without intervention from the rest of the world, the crisis in Gaza foreshadows the reality of life in the ghettos that will be known as Palestine.

By Jon Elmer, a freelance Canadian journalist who reports extensively on the Middle East and other areas of conflict.

One CUPE Member's Experience

The ambulance station in Gaza City is a small, narrow room in the dusty basement of the nursing school. Three well-worn couches sit around an old wooden table with two telephones for dispatch and a stack of neatly folded new uniforms.

It is October 2005, and I have just arrived in Palestine to work as a paramedic for the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS). After several years of observing the daily struggle of Palestinians under occupation from afar, I decided to volunteer my skills as a paramedic as a way of solidifying the "international solidarity" work that I had been involved with during the Palestinian uprising.

Much to the disappointment of my partner Ehab, the new uniforms are much the same as the old ones, which are universally loathed by paramedics throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories: bright, cherry-red pants and a pullover shirt to match with thick bands of reflector tape around the knees, sleeves and back. Despite their desire for something more "professional," it is well understood by paramedics that their garish uniforms serve a vital function, having been carefully designed to maximize their visibility in the hopes that they will be identified by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) as emergency medical workers. In theory, all medical personnel, as well as the sick and injured they treat, are granted immunity in times of war by the Geneva Conventions, to which Israel is a signatory. Their experience, however, says otherwise.

Countless patients have been searched, arrested or beaten, and many, many more have been denied access to the hospital as a result of the hundreds of barriers to movement that comprise Israel's closure



Palestinian ambulance service attending wounded demonstrator. photo: Gush Shalom

regime. As a result, ambulances are only able to reach the sick or wounded approximately one-third of the time. Even then, ambulances are often detained for hours at checkpoints and frequently denied access to the hospital completely – regardless of the severity of a patient's injuries. In the first year and a half of the *Intifada* alone, 91 people died at Israeli military checkpoints as ambulances waited for authorization to pass.

Included among those killed are "checkpoint babies," the term used to describe the phenomena of women being forced to give birth in taxi cabs or in the dirt behind a concrete abutment after being denied access to the hospital by Israeli soldiers. According to the United Nations, 36 newborns have died under these circumstances. Indeed, it would seem as though there are no limits to what can be justified under the vague pretext of "security."

The callousness of soldiers imbued with the authority to determine if and when ambulances can pass through a given checkpoint betrays total disregard for Palestinian life and dignity that characterizes the occupation. On several occasions colleagues and I were turned back from checkpoints on the grounds that we did not have a patient, while the

person that we were trying to reach waited at a different checkpoint, unable to pass through on the grounds of not having an ambulance. The soldiers seemed deaf to the notion that before an ambulance can carry a patient it must reach that patient while empty. It is this infuriating absurdity and irrationality that has convinced a good number of Palestinians I encountered that the singular purpose of the occupation is to push the entire Territories to collective insanity.

In one of the more extreme examples of preventing the access of emergency response teams, ambulances were denied access to the Jenin Refugee Camp for 15 days during the Israeli invasion of 2002 that killed 52 people and wounded dozens more. For 15 days, ambulances were prevented from evacuating those in urgent need of medical care, with few exceptions, and the dead were left in the streets and in their homes where family members were confined for the duration of the incursion.

Since the outbreak of the *Intifada* in September 2000, the working conditions for Palestinian paramedics have been among the worst in the world. Emergency medical workers have been beaten, arrested, blindfolded, stripped-searched, verbally assaulted, and used as human shields by soldiers with the IDF. The walls of ambulance stations throughout the Territories are decorated with posters honouring the 14 of their colleagues who have been killed on the job by the Israeli military.

Ambulances have been systematically targeted in deliberate attempts to obstruct emergency medical services. A total of 841 attacks on ambulances have been recorded since September 2000 – scores of which resulted in the total destruction of ambulances beyond repair. The remains of many such ambulances can be found on display in front of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) stations throughout the occupied territories, their tangled remains a visual testimony to the indiscriminate violence of occupation: some peppered with machine-gun fire, others shelled by grenades, still others crushed under tank treads.

Paramedics themselves bear indelible evidence of a different kind. At nearly every EMS station I had the chance to visit I encountered numerous paramedics with fragments of shrapnel still embedded under their skin or scars from bullet wounds and attendant surgery. Perhaps the most lurid was the severe

facial burns of the partner of Dr. Khalil Suleiman, the director of the Red Crescent in Jenin, who was killed when IDF soldiers fired incendiary grenades at their ambulance while on duty in March 2002.

During Israeli military operations, it is not uncommon for Palestinian paramedics to work upwards of 34-hour shifts, necessitated by the steady flow of casualties that soon overwhelm the emergency response system. Even at the best of times, going home at the end of a shift is not always a practical option. For paramedics who live in surrounding villages, a three- or four-kilometre journey can take upwards of five hours.

When the Canadian government heeded the call to impose sanctions on Hamas after their election victory in 2006, the US \$300 per month that paramedics earned as a salary vanished overnight as public services administered by the government, such as schools, hospitals, and emergency medical care, were liquidated of their funding. Still, paramedics continued to work without pay for over six months as their salaries were withheld.

I was continuously impressed by the capacity of my co-workers to affirm their humanity and maintain a sense of humour in spite of the circumstances. A friend in Ramallah recounted the story of a notorious paramedic from Nablus who could no longer tolerate the humiliating process of undressing and redressing at checkpoints over the course of a day's work, and left the station one morning to attend to his first call dressed only in his underwear, explaining with an ear-to-ear grin that from that point forward he would save both himself and the soldiers the trouble.

During the three months that I spent with the PRCS, I was honoured to be able work alongside Palestinian paramedics and share skills and experience despite our drastically different backgrounds. I was greatly humbled by what I learned and by their courage and dedication in the face of the most trying of circumstances.

Valerie Zink has worked as a paramedic with CUPE 873 in the BC Ambulance Service, and is a member of CUPE 391 at the Vancouver Public Library. She spent the fall of 2005 in Gaza City, Hebron and Ramallah, volunteering as a medic with the Palestine Red Crescent Society of the International Committee of the Red Cross. She is active in Palestine solidarity organizing and struggles for immigrant and refugee rights in Vancouver.



Palestinian villages in East Jerusalem, one in front, one in back and one on the right now divided by Israeli Wall.

photo: Jon Elmer

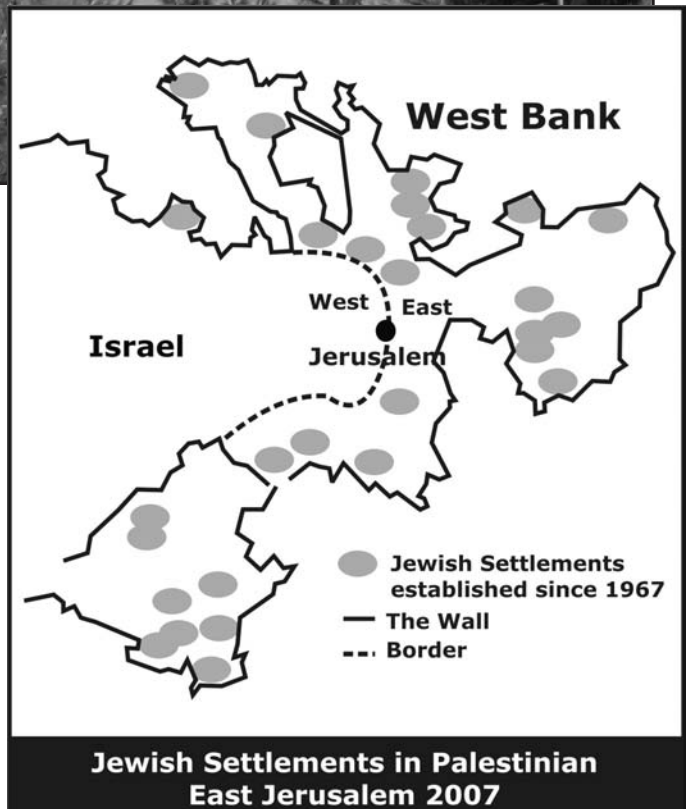
Jerusalem

Jerusalem, an important holy place for three religions, was declared an international city in 1947 by the UN. After the war of 1948, Jerusalem was divided in two: West Jerusalem in Israel and East Jerusalem in the Palestinian Territories. There was an international boundary running through the now divided city.

East Jerusalem was and is the cultural, economic, religious, and political centre of life for Palestinians in the whole West Bank as people flowed seamlessly from their rural areas into their capital.

In 1967, Israel occupied the Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem and proceeded to formally annex East Jerusalem to Israel itself, saying that Jerusalem both East and West was “the eternal and indivisible capital of Israel.”

In 1980, UN Resolution 478 declared this annexation illegal and said that East Jerusalem was not part of Israel. The UN directed countries to establish their embassies in Tel Aviv, not in Jerusalem, so that today there are no countries with embassies in Jerusalem. The International community has always said that a



peaceful two-state solution must have Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states.

With a wink and a nod, however, from the United States, Israel continued to establish all of Jerusalem (East and West) as its capital and specifically to engage in a campaign to “Judaize” (make Jewish) Jerusalem.

From 1967-2007, Israel imported 200,000 Israelis as Jewish settlers to a dozen large settlements in East Jerusalem. These settlements surround the native

Palestinian population and block their links with the rest of the West Bank.

Homeland Party chairman Uri Bank, a leader of the settlement enterprise in East Jerusalem, said: “We break up Arab continuity and their claim to East Jerusalem by putting in isolated islands of Jewish presence in areas of Arab population. Then we definitely try to put these together to form our own continuity. It is like Legos: You put the pieces out there and connect the dots. That is Zionism. That is the way the state of Israel was built. Our eventual goal is Jewish continuity in all of Jerusalem.”

During the 1967-2007 period, according to Meron Benvenisti, former Jewish Israeli deputy mayor of Jerusalem, conditions of discrimination and oppression have prevailed against Palestinian citizens in East Jerusalem itself. The per capita Palestinian income is one-fifth that of the Jewish population, the Palestinians have been prevented from building houses, Palestinian institutions have been shut down, and Palestinian politicians have been arrested when campaigning in East Jerusalem.

Benvenisti notes that, despite the Israeli campaign to Judaize Jerusalem, despite the settlements and the house demolitions, the Palestinian population of Jerusalem has succeeded in maintaining its vitality and has since actually increased in percentage as compared to the Jewish population.

Now, since 2003, the Israelis have built the separation wall to run through East Jerusalem itself. This has nothing to do with security because 200,000 Palestinians continue to live inside the wall in Jerusalem itself.

But as the maps demonstrate, the Wall through East Jerusalem cuts off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank so that Palestinians can no longer freely enter Jerusalem from the West Bank.

In one fell swoop, 55,000 citizens of Jerusalem are now outside the Wall with no automatic access to Jerusalem.

Meron Benvenisti joins with the

European Union in warning that “prospects for a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine are receding,” because the separation wall is threatening the possibility of achieving national and local co-existence in this divided city and is aimed at closing off any option of a mutual agreement.

The Wall

On July 9, 2004, 14 judges of the world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, determined that the so-called Israeli “security fence” – or Apartheid Wall, as it has come to be known around the world – is illegal.

ICJ: The Wall is Illegal

The court said Israel must dismantle the wall and pay compensation to Palestinians, who have suffered devastating losses of livelihood and agricultural land as a result of its construction. Most importantly, the ICJ ruled that all nations have an “obligation...to ensure Israel complies with international law.”

Earlier decisions by the ICJ on the illegal South African occupation of Namibia and the Indonesian occupation of East Timor were influential because they hastened the eventual independence of these countries.

This time, the court found that Israel’s policy of settlement occupation in the West Bank and Gaza,



West Bank Wall construction near Bil'in. photo: Jon Elmer



which began in 1967, was contrary to international law – in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. It stated in article 49:

“The occupying power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

The ICJ determined that the wall was constructed in part to defend the very same illegal settlements and was thus itself illegal. The court rejected Israeli arguments that the wall was a legitimate defensive measure against terrorism.

The wall was built almost entirely on Palestinian land in the West Bank and that 975 square kilometers – or 16.6 per cent of the West Bank – already had been incorporated into Israel.

The ICJ concluded that no state should recognize the illegal wall as legitimate and that every state should work to dismantle it.

Twelve days after the court’s announcement, the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly

agreed to implement the ICJ decision, voting 150 to 6 in favor of dismantling the wall, with 10 abstentions. The United States, Israel and Australia opposed the resolution. Canada abstained. A month later, despite the ruling, Israel announced that it would continue to build the wall.

World Bank Says Wall Kills Economic Activity

The World Bank 2007 report is an understated but searing indictment of the Wall construction and its impact on Palestinians.

The Israeli government has purposely run the Wall through the West Bank to act as a new border to replace the internationally recognized Green Line. The Wall thus incorporates 87 per cent of Israeli settlers on the west or Israeli side of the Wall. This annexed land is now called the “Seam Zone.”

Palestinians currently living in it or “visiting” it are required to have a permit or else face a five-year prison sentence or hefty fine for unlawful entry. “Seam Zone” restrictions only apply to Palestinians; Israeli citizens can come and go as they please without a permit.

Besides this open land grab, the World Bank reports that the Wall is:

“cutting employment for Palestinians, isolating farmers from markets, causing particularly serious damage to residents’ health care needs and undermining social and family life.”

Some Israeli and North American commentators have suggested that the Wall’s route has been altered and that it will enclose 7.5 per cent of the West Bank. Not the 16 per cent suggested in the ICJ decision.

Gush Shalom, the Israeli peace group, and Electronic Intifada, an American website, argue that while the actual wall route annexes about 10 per cent of the West Bank, the Israeli government plans to annex almost 50 per cent.

They would do this either by extending an eastern section of the wall in the Jordan Valley (West Bank) or by annexing lands adjacent to settlements in the Jordan Valley.

The Israelis and the Occupation

Israeli politics continues to be dominated by political parties (Labour, Likud, Katima, and a variety of smaller, religious parties) that have never renounced their desire to control and settle 100 per cent of historic Palestine. For the past 40 years, the major parties have encouraged Israelis to settle in the West Bank and Gaza by providing them with financial and other incentives.

In the summer of 2007, the Israeli Prime Minister Elud Olmert continues to approve settlement expansion and Wall construction in the West Bank, while claiming an interest in a “peace process.”

No major Israeli political party supports a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza based on the 1967 borders. They all covet the fertile lands and the water resources of the Palestinian territories. They all want to annex large swaths of the West Bank to Israel with the Wall as the new border.

There is a small but vigorous Israeli peace movement, led by such groups as Gush Shalom, Ta’Ayush and the Israel Committee against House Demolitions. There is also a group of more than 500 Israeli soldiers, known as the “refuseniks,” who have refused to serve in the Occupied Territories.

This peace movement supports the international consensus that peace can only arrive when the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is brought to an end. It has been actively defending Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Territories. John Dugard, The UN Special Rapporteur in Palestine, praised these organizations:

“The Israeli women’s group, Machsom Watch, monitors the behaviour of members of the IDF at checkpoints and in so doing softens the conduct of some soldiers. Israeli peace activists have assisted in the harvesting of olives and protected Palestinian farmers against settler violence. Israeli and Palestinian activists regularly demonstrate against the construction of the Wall at places like the village of Bil’in. Civil society must therefore be credited with having reduced the suffering of the Palestinian people.”

This movement belongs to one of the great traditions



Young Israeli peace activist with symbol of Gush Shalom, the Israeli peace movement. photo: Gush Shalom

in the Jewish community that South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu noted:

“In our struggle against apartheid, the great supporters were Jewish people. They almost instinctively had to be on the side of the disenfranchised, of the voiceless ones, fighting injustice, oppression and evil. I have continued to feel strongly with the Jews. I am patron of a Holocaust centre in South Africa. I believe Israel has a right to secure borders. What is not so understandable, not justified, is what it did to another people to guarantee its existence.” (*The Guardian*, April 30, 2002.)

Political Prisoners

As of June 2007, Israel is holding 10,214 Palestinian political prisoners in jail. 390 are children 14 to 17. Palestinians are holding one Israeli prisoner, an army corporal named Gilad Shalit.

Since the occupation began in 1967, Israelis have detained 650,000 Palestinians, which is 40 per cent of the total male Palestinian population since then.

These men are charged with violating Israeli military regulations, which have governed the Palestinians for 40 years in the Occupied Territories. Many observers feel that their real offence is resisting the occupation.

The prisoners are tried by Israeli military courts in the West Bank and then transferred to a prison inside Israel. This transfer is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention which states explicitly: "People accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country."

Family visits to prisoners in Israel are rare, if not impossible, because permits are rarely issued by the Israeli authorities for Palestinian travel inside Israel. Years can go by between visits.

Palestinian prisoners are also subject to physical and psychological torture. Torture during interrogation has effectively been legalized within the Israeli judicial system in cases where detainees are deemed a threat to state security. Confessions extracted through torture are admissible in Israeli courts.

Over 750 of these prisoners are held in "administrative detention," which is arrest without charge or trial. Administrative detention is based on secret evidence introduced to military tribunals, can be extended indefinitely and is contrary to international law.

There are 380 Palestinian children in Israeli prisons most of whom are serving sentences for minor offences such as throwing stones at the Israeli military. These children are arrested in their homes, rarely granted bail and almost always receive prison sentences as opposed to another form of punishment.

The Israelis are also holding 42 elected members of the Palestinian Parliament they say are terrorists. Israeli military arrested them in their homes on the West Bank and transferred them to Israel.

Some courageous European parliamentarians have protested these kidnappings but generally the international community has remained silent. We can only imagine the outcry that would occur if Palestinians arrested 42 members of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and imprisoned them in the West Bank.

Political Prisoners	
Political Prisoners held by Israel	
TOTAL	10,214
Women	200
Children under 18	390
Israeli Prisoners held by Palestinians	
TOTAL	1
Women	0
Children under 18	0

Water

Israel today consumes far more water than falls on its territory and is able to do so only because of its occupation of the West Bank and Syria's Golan Heights, reports Fred Pearce in his book, *When Rivers Run Dry*.

The 1967 War was by this account the first modern water war. In fact, according to Pearce, Israel did not have to occupy the West Bank to take the water. It was doing so years before the war. But the subsequent occupation did stop Palestinians from developing their water resources and ensured that Israelis could continue to take the lion's share.

Palestinians and Israelis share two water sources, the large mountain aquifer fed by rain that falls on the West Bank, and the Jordan River and its tributaries. International law demands that the water be shared equitably from these resources amongst the two populations.

But that is not what happens. In 1967, when the Israelis occupied the West Bank, they took possession of the aquifers and integrated them into the Israeli water system, which was managed by Mekerot, the Israeli water company. Today, Israel continues to maintain almost total control over the water sector in the Occupied Territories. Every new water-related project, from drilling a well to laying pipes or building a reservoir, requires Israeli approval.

The Israelis have refused to give permission to the

Palestinians to dig new wells to meet basic human needs and, thus, despite significant growth rates among the Palestinian population, the number of active wells is half today what it was in 1967 (328 today vs 774).

Water Distribution Unfair

The Israelis now take 83 per cent of the water that falls on the West Bank for use in Israel and Israeli settlements. The Palestinians get only 17 per cent.

Israelis consume about 330 litres per day per person for non-agricultural uses (domestic, public and industrial), while Palestinians only receive 60 litres per day. Israelis citizens receive five times as much water per person, simply because of their nationality.

The US Agency for International Development and the World Health Organization recommend 100 litres of water per person per day for all non-agricultural uses as a basic standard. Palestinians fall far short of this level.

When supplies of water are low in the summer months, the Israeli water company Mekorot closes the valves supplying Palestinian towns and villages so as not to affect Israeli supplies. This means that illegal Israeli settlers have swimming pools topped up and lawns watered while Palestinians living next to them, on whose land the settlements are situated, do not have enough water for drinking and cooking.

As existing springs and wells deteriorate and their population grows, Palestinians find that they have less water per capita than when the Israelis invaded in 1967.

“We used to bathe and wash clothes every day, now it is every 2 or 3 days. We would love to have water for a garden, trees, even a pool like the Jews do in the settlements,” said Siham Khabirat, a mother of six, to Fred Pearce. Pearce calls this water distribution system in the West Bank “hydrological apartheid” because water is distributed to people according to their race or ethnicity.

The construction of the Separation Wall in the West Bank is a further erosion of the 17 per cent of the water supply that Palestinians now receive. Palestinian controlled wells are located near the Green Line dividing Israel from Palestine. Israel has

built the wall not only to annex land but also to annex wells and the rich agricultural farm land serviced by these wells.

The Solution

Any peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians will require Israel to hand back much of its control and much of the water. Israeli water experts, such as Airie Issar, say that Palestinians should receive 50 per cent of the water from the mountain aquifer. Issar says:

“People talk about water wars, but water can also be the basis for peace and I think it can be so here. We Israelis use too much drinking water for irrigation when farming is no longer important for our economy. We do crazy things like turning fresh water into oranges and exporting them. The Palestinians need that water. They should have it.”

But, as author Fred Pearce states, “So far the Israeli government has refused to countenance those ideas. It regards the mountain aquifer as the hydrological crown jewel of Palestine, a more vital resource for Israelis than even the land of the West Bank. They want to control in order to prevent new drilling by the Palestinians.”

The occupation is not only about the land, it is about the water.

Violence and the Occupation

The violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories has come from both sides. Human tragedies are equally devastating for all victims and their families. Innocents, including children, have been killed on and by both sides and both sides have violated international law.

But the violence by Israelis and Palestinians cannot be equated. It does not have the same roots, nor are the two sides guilty in the same way.

Israeli violence takes place in the course of enforcing an illegal occupation (a form of violence in itself). This violence is in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention, which identifies the obligation of an occupying power to protect the occupied population.

Many of these Israeli acts of violence are war crimes according to international law.

For example, the United Nations has cited 656 military raids by the Israeli army into the West Bank in November 2006 alone. These raids resulted in more than 130 Palestinian deaths. Every day, Palestinian villages and towns see Israeli soldiers demolishing houses, beating, arresting and killing alleged “terrorists.”

In the summer of 2006, Israeli air strikes decimated the entire infrastructure of Gaza, destroying bridges, power stations and civilian administration buildings. Palestinian violence historically has tended to be a violence of resistance. Palestinians have the legal right to resist against military targets and have done so in the past. However, the violence had changed between 2000 and 2005 as living conditions under the Israeli occupation deteriorated dramatically and increasing numbers lost hope and succumbed to desperation.

Deaths in 2006	
Palestinians	650
Children under 18	120
Israelis	23
Children under 18	1

Source: B'Tselem

In this context, suicide bombing began inside Israel, specifically targeting Israeli civilians. These Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians were themselves a violation of international law and were universally condemned.

Recently, following the brutal Israeli air strikes in the summer of 2006 on Gaza, some Palestinians had been launching crude rockets from inside Gaza aiming at the Israeli town of Sderot. These rockets have caused relatively little damage but because they are aimed at civilian targets, they are also in violation of international law.

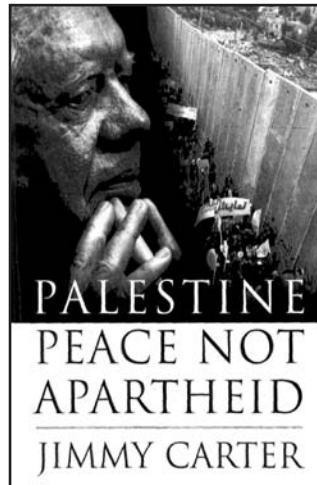
In any event, the number of Palestinian deaths and wounded is much larger than the Israeli casualties. The past year we have seen a ratio of thirty Palestinian deaths for every Israeli death.

There is a tendency to view casualty statistics in light

of a military conflict between two warring sides. In the case of Israel and the Palestinians, the deaths and injuries occur not in a clash at the front lines of some contested territory, but in the heart of occupied Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps.

Debate on Apartheid

The publication in 2006 of former US president Jimmy Carter’s book *Peace Not Apartheid* caused a huge stir in North America and Europe. Carter said that, in the occupied West Bank, there is a system



of apartheid similar to that practiced in South Africa up until 1993, “with Israelis totally dominant, depriving Palestinians of their basic human rights.” He called for “Peace Not Apartheid.”

Many defenders of Israel denounced Carter’s book. Many in the US Democratic Party he once led disowned his views. Critics were astonished Carter could compare

Israel, a country they consider a modern democracy, with South Africa, although many groups including the Canadian Labour Congress (Executive Council Report 2002) had been making such a comparison for years.

Why All the Fuss?

The South African apartheid regime (1948-1993) was one of the most hated regimes in the world since the Second World War.

“Apartheid” comes from the Afrikaans word for “separation.” South African whites developed one system of laws for whites and another system for non-whites. These separate legal systems ensured white domination and privilege.

Apartheid was also physical separation in South Africa as many Blacks were shunted into Bantustans. Bantustans were established in South Africa for the purpose of concentrating members of designated Black inhabitants.

When South Africans resisted apartheid, they were imprisoned, tortured and killed. The world community

boycotted South African apartheid beginning in the middle 1980s and finally expelled it from the “civilized” world. Privilege based on race or ethnicity was no longer to be tolerated.

To accuse Israel of practicing “apartheid” is to resurrect the memories of South Africa’s regime and the scorn and hatred it generated.

Reports on the conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank by Amnesty International, the World Bank, the International Red Cross and the United Nations published in 2007 do not mention the word “apartheid.” They do describe, however, how one group, the Israeli Jewish settlers, have privileges and legal rights that are superior to the Palestinians merely because of their ethnic origin. These reports describe in detail the restriction on Palestinian movement and the total freedom for Israeli Jews.

They describe how Palestinian land has been confiscated for the use of Jewish settlements. They describe home demolitions and targeted killings of Palestinians .

Reporter Chris McGreal of *The Guardian*, who has had the unique experience of reporting for extended periods of time from both South Africa and Israel, wrote: “There are few places in the world where governments construct a web of nationality and residency laws designed for use by one section of the population against another. Apartheid South Africa was one. So is Israel.”

The South African anti-apartheid activists who have

visited the Palestinian territories have all remarked on the similarities between the two.

Desmond Tutu, the renowned Anglican bishop of South Africa, said:

“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.”

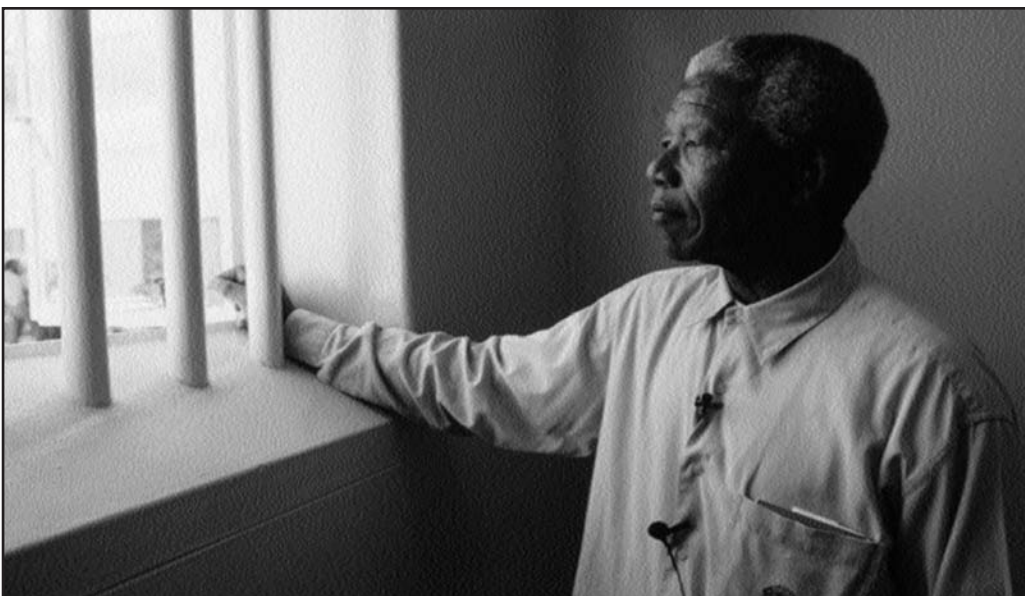
Ronnie Kasrils, a close companion of Nelson Mandela in the fight against South African apartheid, said the following in his speech to the South African Parliament on June 6, 2007, the 40th Anniversary of the Occupation:

“The people within the West Bank and Gaza are literally imprisoned under the most unjust conditions, suffering hardships and methods of control that are far worse than anything our people faced during the most dreadful days of apartheid. In fact, any South African visiting what amounts to enclosed prison ghettos – imposed by a Jewish people that tragically suffered the Nazi Holocaust – will find similarity with apartheid immediately coming to mind. He ended his speech by quoting Nelson Mandela, who said in 1998: “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.”

Tony Karon, a Jewish South African activist in the African National Congress and now a senior editor at TIME.com commented: “Jimmy Carter’s use of the word ‘apartheid’ is morally valid. It is essential because it shakes the moral stupor that allows many liberals to rationalize away the daily, grinding horror being inflicted on the Palestinians.”

Nelson Mandela: “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.”

file photo



End the Occupation



Bil'in villagers hold weekly non-violent protests against the Wall, which has cut off sixty per cent of the village's land.
photo: Carel Moisewitsch

International Consensus

The international community, through United Nations resolutions and international conferences, has developed a framework for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. It is called the two-state solution:

- Israel must end the occupation of West Bank and Gaza, leave the settlements and withdraw to the 1967 borders. An Israeli state within the 1967 borders would have 78 per cent of historic Palestine.
- A Palestinian state would be formed in the West Bank and Gaza (Palestine would have 22 per cent of historic Palestine).
- Both Israel and Palestine would have secure borders and be recognized internationally. All violence against citizens, whether Palestinian or Israeli, would end immediately.
- A permanent international administrative regime would be established in Jerusalem, allowing it to serve as capital city for both Israel and Palestine.
- There would be a just settlement of the Palestinian refugee question based on UN resolution 194 (Right of Return). Israel and Palestine would negotiate the details of such a settlement. This would allow Palestinians forced from their homes when Israel was established to return

home or to receive compensation for their expulsion.

The Palestinian right of return can be compared to the right of First Nations in Canada to have their land claims negotiated. While the specific terms and conditions of a just resolution of land claims is open to negotiation, any resolution requires the initial agreement from all sides to acknowledge the Canadian government's responsibility in creating the problem in the first place, as well as its responsibility to negotiate just terms and conditions.

Countries around the world have accepted the basic elements of this consensus called the two-state solution. Even Israel and the US claim to support the two-state solution, but in practice they reject it.

The Israeli government, backed by the US, refuses to end the occupation and withdraw to its 1967 borders. Israel rejects the idea that Jerusalem should be the capital of both states and, in fact, has annexed all of Jerusalem. It refuses to accept any responsibility for the role it played in creating the plight of Palestinian refugees. It rejects the Palestinian right of return in principle, either the actual return of refugees or the responsibility to provide financial compensation.

Israel claims that it is taking these hard-line positions because the Palestinians want to drive them into the sea. Despite their initial opposition to the existence of Israel, the Palestinians have changed this position. In 1988, the Palestinian National Council accepted a historic compromise, based on a two-state solution, granting 78 per cent of historic Palestine to Israel and 22 per cent to a Palestinian state.

The vast majority of Palestinians do not wish to destroy Israel. But they are determined to establish their own state.

Some Question the Two-State Solution

A number of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, including Ilan Pappé and Nareer Aruri, warn that the two-state solution has now been rendered impossible because of the construction by Israel of the separation wall and the huge Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Massive structures, roads, and checkpoints, push the Palestinians into separated, unconnected ghettos, unsuitable for a modern state. Israel's program of colonizing the West Bank has become irreversible and the land base for a viable Palestinian state has disappeared.

Dr. Pappé states: "Under the cover of the 'peace

process', under the cover of 'two states for two peoples', the settlements were extended and the harassment and oppression of the Palestinians were deepened. In any case, by 2007, there is not a single stone visible in what is now the West Bank, which can serve in the construction of a Palestinian state."

Dr. Aruri, a renowned Palestinian intellectual and former member of the Palestinian government, agrees with Dr. Pappé.

"I used to be a supporter of the two-state solution but it is now impossible. In fact, Israel-Palestine is now one state controlled entirely by the Israelis. In this state, Israeli Jews have rights and privileges simply because they are Jewish and meanwhile the Palestinians have virtually no rights. It's time for one person, one vote, in one democratic state."

While the "one-state position" is gaining currency among some Israeli and Palestinian activists, it is not the position of any of the major political parties inside the Palestinian territories, and, as mentioned, the two-state solution remains the dominant international position.

However, Alvaro de Soto, UN Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace, said in his May 2007 report:

"Should the Palestinian Authority pass into non-existence and the settlements keep expanding, the one-state solution will come out of the shadows and enter the mainstream."



Resistance and Hope

Gaza Elementary school destroyed by Israeli warplanes. *photo: Jon Elmer*

Historically, Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation was non-violent. The first Intifada saw a number of different tactics ranging from non-payment of taxes, general non-cooperation with the Israeli military authorities, demonstrations, etc. Even the youthful stone throwing against the military was more symbolic than violent.

These non-violent tactics were always met by Israeli brutality, teargas, rubber bullets, live bullets and directives to “break the bones” of demonstrators.

It is true, as mentioned, the Palestinians have also returned violence with violence and sometimes in a manner that is illegal and immoral, so deep is their desperation. Yet, after 40 years of occupation, the dominant trend in Palestinian society is expressed by Omar Barghouti, a political Palestinian writer and activist who commented in June 2007:

“Irrespective of the right of Palestinians to resist foreign occupation by all means, as granted in international law, we have a moral duty to avoid tactics that indiscriminately target innocent civilians

and inevitably corrupt our own humanity.

“Civilian resistance that has the potential of engaging and mobilizing the Palestinian grass roots seems not only morally but pragmatically preferable.”

We look in this section at three campaigns that were started by the Palestinian non-governmental organizations and that have been picked up by organizations outside of Palestine who support the struggle for human rights.

Boycott: Civil Resistance

Recently, over 100 Palestinian NGOs, including trade unions, have called for a widespread international boycott, divestment and sanctions(BDS) campaign against the state of Israel and those corporations that support the occupation. The organizations are proposing a non-violent tactic similar to the approach of the African National Congress in their struggle against apartheid South Africa.

Progressive Israelis such as Jeff Halper of the Israeli



Women leads demonstration against Wall construction in Bi'lin. photo: Jon Elmer

President Toope of the University of BC called the threatened boycott “a dangerous and unsupportable attack on the core values of academic life.

Committee Against House Demolitions and Ilan Pappé, Israeli professor, insist that after 40 years of illegal occupation, only sanctions, boycotts and other external pressure can force Israel to actually negotiate a just peace in the region.

The World Council of Churches, the US Presbyterian Church, and the United Church of Canada are all discussing the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign.

A number of unions around the world have adopted resolutions endorsing the BDS campaign, including:

- Unison, the British Public Sector Union,
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU),
- Services, Industrialists, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) in Ireland,
- Norwegian Electrician and IT Workers Union,
- British University and College Union, and
- CUPE Ontario Division.

Other unions, like CUPE BC, while supporting the “End the Occupation” campaign have not yet taken a position on the BDS campaign.

Controversy

This campaign, particularly the proposed debate on the potential academic boycott of Israeli universities by Britain’s University and College Union, has generated much controversy.

“The attempt by one group of scholars to stifle the views of another is an affront to modern society and must be condemned wherever it arises.”

Colin Green, professor of surgical sciences at the University of London and a member of the Union, disagrees with President Toope. He says, “The exchange of ideas and debate, however fierce, is central to our life. However, after forty years without resolution, many of us believe that the Israel-Palestine conflict is so dangerous for all of us that abnormal responses become an urgent, indeed desperate, moral imperative.”

Professor Green goes on to state that the University and College Union motion called for a 12-month debate about whether to have an academic boycott.

“I suggest that this is in the best tradition of academic freedom and free speech. Now at last we can actually have a robust, honest and fearless debate. I strongly support this debate.”

Professor Green goes on to explain: “Since starting academic work in the occupied territories during the first intifada in 1987, I have travelled a trajectory of hope to near despair. From a naïve optimism for a just and lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians twenty years ago, in which I welcomed with great enthusiasm Israeli post graduates to my institute for specialist surgical training and research, I now refuse any collaboration with any Israeli university or research institution,

violations of human rights I have seen over the past two decades and in which they collude.

“As in the past, I still work with Israeli humanitarian organizations genuinely seeking justice for the Palestinians. I am no longer prepared to stand idly by and not come out publicly against the level of oppression I have seen, including ethnic cleansing and the establishment of a brutal apartheid regime. There is terrible injustice against the indigenous population of the occupied territories.

“You have to see it for yourself. We cannot go on muttering platitudes about academic freedom and exchange of ideas. What freedom? In these past two decades, the wretched suppression of academic freedom in the West Bank and Gaza has been so obvious and so overt that the wonder is that international academics have done so little to stop it or even to comment on it.”

“The Wall Must Fall” Campaign

Many villages and popular organizations impacted by the building of the Israeli Wall in the West Bank have come together to launch the “Stop the Wall” campaign and have encouraged Israeli and other international citizens to join them. Let’s listen to Mohammed Khatib, a member of the Bil’in Popular Committee against the Wall:

“Three years ago, the International Court of Justice at The Hague, the world’s highest legal body, ruled that Israel’s construction of the Wall on Palestinian land violated international law and must be stopped. Today Palestinian’s villages like ours are struggling to implement the ICJ decision and stop construction using non-violence but the world has done little.

“The Wall is strangling Bil’in where our village sits two-and-a-half miles east of the Green Line (in the Palestine territories). Israel’s Wall and settlements will take more than 60 per cent of our land. This land is also money for us; we work it. Bil’in’s 1,600 residents depend on farming and harvesting our olive trees for our livelihood. The Wall will turn Bil’in into an open-air prison.

“After Israeli courts refused our appeals to prevent wall construction, we along with Israelis and

people from around the world, began peacefully protesting the confiscation of our land. We’ve opened our homes to the Israelis who have joined us. They have become our partners in struggle.

“We have had hundreds of peaceful demonstrations. Since the Wall has been built, we’ve chained ourselves to olive trees that were being bulldozed for the Wall; we’ve distributed letters asking the soldiers to think before they shoot us.

“Israeli soldiers act against our peaceful resistance with terror. They attach our protest with tear gas, clubs, rubber-coated steel bullets and live ammunition and have injured more than a hundred villagers. They invade the village at night, entering homes, pulling families out and arresting people. They collectively punish the entire village for protesting.

“Please stand with us so that we can end Israeli’s occupation and achieve our freedom by peaceful means.”

Support for the “Stop the Wall” campaign has been widespread in Canada. The United Church, the Anglican Church and the Mennonite Central Committee have expressed support. Unions such as the CLC, BC Federation of Labour, CUPE, BCGEU, and CUPW, have all passed resolutions either calling for an end to the occupation or condemning the Wall.

“End The Occupation” Campaign

Palestinian activists have been encouraging progressive organizations and individuals all around the world to express their outrage at the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to lobby their governments for international support.

In Great Britain, a wide variety of unions, churches and community organizations have come together to form, “Enough,” which is now a broad coalition against the Israeli occupation.

In Vancouver, on June 6, 2007, the Canada/

Palestine Support Network (CANPALNET) hosted a distinguished panel of 13 Canadians from churches, universities, the art sector, and unions, including Ken Davidson, long-time CUPE activist and Chair of the CUPE National Global Justice Committee. The panellists spoke about the various pathways, which brought them to the simple conclusion that the Israeli occupation must be ended for elementary justice and to salvage the humanity of all.

The panellists received a statement of support from the new parliamentary group Canada/Palestine Parliamentary Association (CPPA) that was signed by Réal Menard (Bloc Québécois), co-chair and Libby Davies (NDP), secretary-treasurer. This group made up of members from all political parties in Parliament will be working with community groups, unions and churches in the movement to end the occupation.

June 6, 2007 Panellists

Svend Robinson

Public Services International
Advocacy Officer and former MP

Sister Elizabeth Kelliher

Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement

Murray Dobbin

Journalist, broadcaster and author

David Diamond

Founder and artistic director of Headlines Theatre and recipient of the City of Vancouver Cultural Harmony Award

Lee Lakeman

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter organizer and Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres representative

Carl Rosenberg

Editor, *Canadian Jewish Outlook Magazine*

Terry Greenberg

Recently retired member of the Department of Foreign Affairs

Brenda Faust

Minister, Port Coquitlam Trinity United Church

Henry Krause

Pastor of Langley Mennonite Fellowship

Cynthia Flood

Prize-winning short story writer

Dr. Ivar Ekeland

Canada Research Chair in Mathematical Economics at UBC and former President of the University of Paris

Ken Davidson

Chair, CUPE National Global Justice Committee

Thekla Lit

Founder and President of BC Alpha (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia)

Resources

Union members and community activists who wish to get involved or who desire a fuller understanding of the conflict can contact the following:

Trade Union Committee for Justice in the Middle East (TUCJME) –

A group of trade unionists from British Columbia who support the End the Occupation Campaign. For more information or to join the organization and/or their email list which provides weekly updates from a labour prospective, contact spstout@telus.net

Stop the Wall Campaign The Palestinian Campaign to Stop the Wall - www.penjon.org

Canada Palestine Support Network –

Excellent resource for information, campaigns and activities, particularly in Canada, www.canpalnet.ca

Canadian Jewish Outlook –

Monthly progressive Jewish publication opposed to the occupation, [cjoutlook@telus](mailto:cjoutlook@telus.net), www.vcn.bc.ca/outlook

Coalition against Israeli Apartheid -

Canadian group organising the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign (Chapters boycott), www.caiaweb.org

CANPALNET Ottawa -

notes that a campaign to strip the Jewish National Fund of its tax exempt status has been launched by a Montreal alternative newspaper, www.canpalnet-ottawa.org/JNF_Charitable%20status.htm

Electronic Intifada –

Excellent source for daily news, <http://electronicintifada.net>

Palestinian Centre for Human Rights –

A source of daily news from the Occupied Territories and elsewhere in the Middle East, www.pchrgaza.org

Palestine Monitor –

Extensive and up to date information by a Palestinian non-governmental organization, www.palestinemonitor.org

Gush Shalom –

Very good site with detailed maps and other information of this important Israeli peace group, www.gush/shalom.org/english/index.html

Churches for Middle East Peace –

Interdenominational group advocates End the Occupation, a shared Jerusalem between Israelis and Palestinians, www.cmep.org

Ha-aretz Israeli Daily –

This Israeli newspaper provides a wide ranging prospective from Israeli government to Israeli peace movements, www.haaretzdaily.com

Alternative Information Centre –

Israeli/Palestinian organization for peace and social justice, www.alternativenews.org

B'Tselem –

Israeli non-governmental organization monitors human rights abuses of Palestinians in Occupied Territories. These research reports incorporate eye witness accounts, www.btselem.org

Znet –

Excellent progressive articles from all over the world every day on a lot of subjects including the Middle East, www.zmag.org/znet.htm