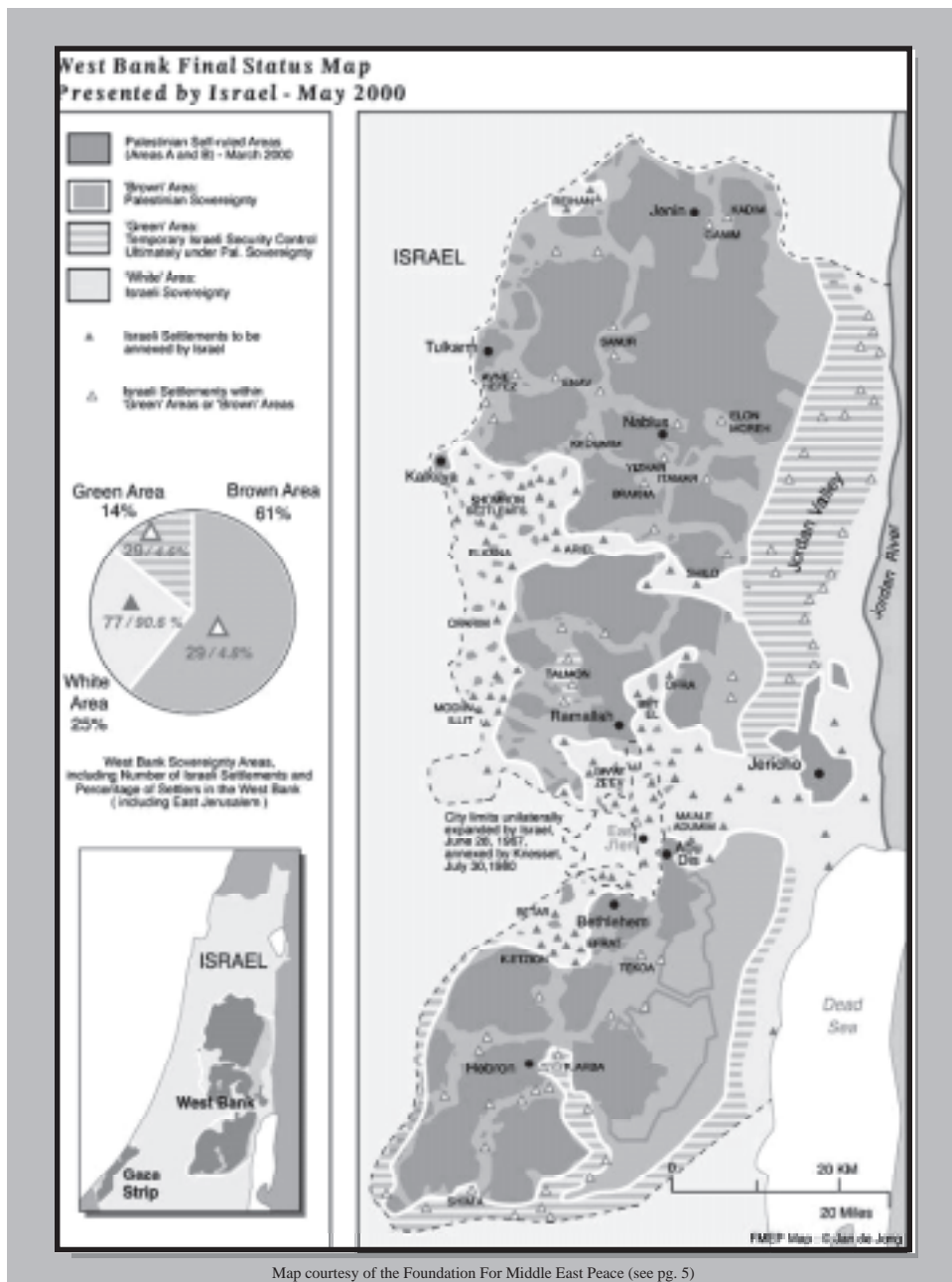


FROM JEW TO JEW:

WHY WE SHOULD OPPOSE THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA



INTRODUCTION

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, A JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE is one of a growing number of Jewish groups who are convinced that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory must end. There are two compelling reasons for this. First, we wish to preserve the best part of our Jewish heritage—a deeply-ingrained sense of morality—and pass it on to the next generation, unsullied by the mistreatment of another people. We were brought up to believe that, as Jews, we are obligated to always take the moral high road and we can't imagine letting this proud ethical tradition die now.

Second, as we will show in this paper, we are convinced that the only way to ensure the security of the people of Israel is for their government to conclude a just peace with the Palestinians. Without some reasonable version of justice being done, there will never be peace, and so we oppose any Israeli government policy that denies the Palestinians their legitimate rights. What those are will be examined shortly.

Is this position “anti-Jewish”? No, it is not (any more than criticizing U.S. government policies is anti-American.) Even as we love all of humanity, we have a special love for the Jewish people and for the warm and compassionate side of Jewish culture. We share with all Jews the trauma of the genocide of our people by the Nazis and our long history of periodic persecution. We understand the instinct to “circle the wagons” when our people face danger, and we long for the day when Jews in Israel, as everywhere, will be able to lead normal, secure, productive lives. The question is how will that happy day come about? By blindly supporting the Israeli government's self-destructive path to war and more war? We don't think so.

We feel that these crucial issues need more discussion within the American Jewish community, not less. They certainly are debated at length in Israel itself, as evidenced by a *Ha'aretz* poll published July 4, 2001, showing that 40% of Israelis think that all the settlements in the Occupied Territories should be evacuated, in total opposition to their government's policy. It's time for us to join the debate as well, and help formulate a more reasonable solution to the conflict.

Unfortunately, the ongoing violence in Palestine and Israel has led too many people, on both sides, to adopt blanket stereotypes of one another, turning them into something “less-than-human”. This process of dehumanization then allows people to justify the violence committed by their own side, starting the cycle all over again. This is a classic “lose-lose” situation that can continue on forever.

Is there a way out of this mess? Yes, we think so, but only if we suspend our understandable reaction of automatically blaming the other side. Only then can we objectively assess the root causes of the conflict and the realistic choices there are for resolving it. So, in the interest of peace, and with an open heart and mind, please consider the following facts.

1. THE OCCUPATION

The international community, through the United Nations, has made it clear that virtually the entire world considers the Israeli occupation of territories it captured in the 1967 war to be wrong and contrary to basic principles of international law. Every year since 1967, up until the Oslo Process started, the UN General Assembly passed the same resolution (usually by lopsided votes like 150-2), stating that Israel is obligated to vacate the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

While the circumstances were much different, the legal basis of these resolutions is the same principle used to force Iraq out of Kuwait—i.e., a country cannot annex or indefinitely occupy territory gained by force of arms. The only reason that Israel is able to maintain its occupation of Palestinian land is that the US routinely vetoes every Security Council resolution that would put teeth into the General Assembly resolutions. One of the original goals of Zionism was to create a Jewish state that would be just another normal country. If that is what Israel wants (and that is a reasonable goal), then it must be held to the same standards as any other country, including the prohibition against annexing territory captured by force of arms.

2. THE SETTLEMENTS

Similarly, all Jewish settlements, every single one, in territories outside Israel's 1967 boundaries, are a direct violation of the Geneva Conventions, which Israel has signed and is obligated to abide by. As John Quigley, a

professor of international law at Ohio State has written, “The Geneva Convention requires an occupying power to change the existing order as little as possible during its tenure. One aspect of this obligation is that it must leave the territory to the people it finds there. It may not bring its own people to populate the country. This prohibition is found in the convention’s Article 49 which states, ‘The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.’ ”

Here’s what former President Jimmy Carter wrote recently, “An underlying reason that years of US diplomacy have failed and violence in the Middle East persists is that some Israeli leaders continue to create facts by building settlements in occupied territory. . . It is unlikely that real progress can be made...as long as Israel insists on its settlement policy, illegal under international laws that are supported by the United States and all other nations.”

In fact, on December 5, 2001, a conference of 114 nations that have signed the Fourth Geneva Convention (a conference boycotted by the US and Israel), decided *unanimously* that the Convention did indeed apply to the occupied territories, that Israel was in gross violation of their obligations under that Convention, that Jewish-only settlements in those territories were illegal under the rules of the Convention, and that it was the responsibility of the other contracting parties to stop these violations of international law.

3. ISRAEL’S SECURITY

It is sometimes argued that the settlements are necessary for Israel’s security, to protect Israel from terrorism and the threat of violence. But the reality is that the settlements are a major cause of Israel’s current security problems, not the cure for them. New York Times columnist Anthony Lewis pointed out the aggressive nature of the settlements as follows, “It is false to see the settlements as ordinary villages or towns where Israelis only want to live in peace with their Palestinian neighbors. They are in fact imposed by force—superior Israeli military force—on Palestinian territory. Many have been built precisely to assert Israeli power and ownership. They are not peaceful villages but militarized encampments. . . The settlement policy is not just a political but a moral danger to the character of the state.”

“But wouldn’t the Palestinians use their own state as a base for even more attacks against Israel?”, it might be asked. There is an historical precedent that gives a realistic answer to this question. During the first years after the Oslo agreements were signed, Hamas tried to disrupt the peace process but, because of the prevailing optimism, their influence in Palestinian society diminished and their armed attacks fell off sharply. What that means for the future is that if the Palestinian people feel that even a rough version of justice has been done, they will not support the more extreme elements in their political spectrum. This is not just guesswork; it already happened with just the hope of justice being done.

The other aspect of this is that if Israel had internationally recognized borders, then they could be defended much more easily than the current situation where every hill in Palestine is a potential bone of contention because of Jewish settlements encroaching on Palestinian land. If they and their settlers and the military apparatus they require were gone, and the Palestinians were given enough aid by the international community to create a viable economy in their own state, they would naturally be overjoyed and a positive turn of events would be the inevitable result.

4. “BUT DON’T THEY JUST WANT TO DRIVE THE JEWS INTO THE SEA?”

Officially since 1988, and unofficially for several years before that, the Palestinian position has been that they recognize Israel’s right to exist in peace and security within their 1967 borders. Period. At the same time, they expect to be allowed to establish a truly independent, viable, contiguous, non-militarized state in all of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. This is what UN Resolution 242 says: “Land for Peace”—and the Palestinian Authority has stated repeatedly that UN Resolution 242 has to be the basis for any long-lasting solution to the conflict.

It is true that some Palestinians want all of what was Palestine to return to Arab control, as it was before 1948, but that just isn’t going to happen. Statements to that effect by some Palestinians are just hyperbole and do not represent the official Palestinian position. Similarly, statements by some Palestinians inciting people to violence against Israelis can easily be matched by statements from Orthodox rabbis and fundamentalist settlers calling for death to the Arabs. There are *meshuganahs* aplenty on both sides.

But since the Palestinians’ official position is clear, why shouldn’t Israel take the Palestinians up on this offer and withdraw from the occupied territories? Israel is far stronger militarily than all the Arab armies combined and would face no credible military threat from a Palestinian state. And the threat of individual terrorist acts

would, of necessity, be much less once the Palestinians felt that they had received a modicum of justice.

What would Israel lose by this obvious solution of just ending the occupation, which they could do tomorrow if they wanted to (or, more likely, if the US insisted that they do so)? The only thing it would “lose” is the dream of some of its citizens for a “Greater Israel”, where Israel’s boundaries are expanded to its biblical borders. The problem with that dream is that it totally ignores the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the will of virtually the entire international community. As long as the right-wing settlers and their supporters in the Israeli government insist on pursuing this dream, there will be nothing but bloodshed forever. The Palestinian people have lived in Palestine for thousands of years and they are not going away. Israel must conclude a just peace with them or innocent blood will continue to be shed indefinitely, on both sides.

5. WHO IS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT VIOLENCE?

The answer to that question is to be found in reports issued by numerous human rights groups. Human Rights Watch, for example, states that, “Israeli security forces have committed by far the most serious and systematic violations. We documented excessive and indiscriminate use of lethal force, arbitrary killings, and collective punishment, including willful destruction of property and severe restrictions on movement that far exceed any possible military necessity.”

B’tselem is Israel’s leading human rights group and their detailed analyses of the current intifada can be found at www.btselem.org. They concluded early on that, “In spite of claims to the contrary, Israel has not adopted a policy of restraint in its response to events in the Occupied Territories...Israel uses excessive and disproportionate force in dispersing demonstrations of unarmed Palestinians. . . Collective punishment, in the form of Israel’s severe restrictions on Palestinians’ movement in the Occupied Territories, makes life unbearable for hundreds of thousands with no justification.” Collective punishment, by the way, is illegal under international law.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights reported the following, “There is considerable evidence of indiscriminate firing at civilians in the proximity of demonstrations and elsewhere (by Israeli troops). . . The live ammunition employed includes high-velocity bullets which splinter on impact and cause the maximum harm. Equally disturbing is the evidence that many of the deaths and injuries inflicted were the result of head wounds and wounds to the upper body, which suggests an intention to cause serious bodily injury rather than restrain demonstrations. . .

“To the best of our knowledge, the IDF, operating behind fortifications with superior weaponry, endured not a single serious casualty as a result of Palestinian demonstrations and, further, their soldiers appeared to be in no life-threatening danger during the course of these events. . .

The UN report continues by stating, “The demolition of homes and the destruction of olive and citrus trees, nurtured by farmers over many years, has caused untold human suffering to persons unconnected with the present violence. . . The measures of closure, curfew or destruction of property constitute violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and human rights obligations binding upon Israel.”

Amnesty International has made numerous statements on the current intifada including the following, “Amnesty International reiterated its long-standing calls to Israel to end its policy of liquidations and other arbitrary killings and urged the international community to send international observers. . . In these state assassinations the Israeli authorities offer no proof of guilt, no right to defense. Extrajudicial executions are absolutely prohibited by international law.”

The overwhelming consensus of these reports means that Israeli demands for the Palestinians to “stop the violence” turns reality on its head. Answering stone throwing with M-16 military weapons, or ineffective Molotov cocktails with very effective armored tanks and attack helicopters is simply not morally justifiable and is why we hold Israel to be primarily responsible for the current situation.

And, of course, things have deteriorated considerably, on both sides, since the start of the current fighting. For just one example, an IDF reserve soldier interviewed recently on prime-time First Channel Israeli TV (12/14/01) stated, “Nowadays, there is much less of a dilemma. We more or less got a clearance from both the military and the political echelons. Nowadays, we shoot them in the head and no questions asked.” Is this what we want our Jewish legacy to be?

It is also important to keep in mind that most of Israel’s actions have been going on, in various degrees, for the last 34 years—systematic torture of Palestinians in Israeli jails, the forcible and illegal appropriation of over half the West Bank and Gaza by Israel for Jewish-only settlements, Jewish-only by-pass roads and closed military areas, daily humiliations and abuse at Israeli military checkpoints all over Palestinian land—these are the

root causes of the current violence. Please also note that a people finding themselves under military occupation (including the Palestinians), have the right, under international law, to resist that occupation.

6. NEGOTIATIONS LEADING UP TO THE CURRENT INTIFADA

It has often been asked, “But didn’t Barak offer 95% of the Occupied Territories to Arafat at Camp David and doesn’t his rejection of that offer mean that they don’t want peace?” There are several crucial things to understand here. First, prisoners may occupy 95% of a prison’s space, but it is the other 5% that determines who is in control. Similarly, the offer Barak made at Camp David II would have left the main settlement blocks and their Jewish-only bypass roads in place. Along with the extensive areas Israel planned on retaining indefinitely for its military use, this would have dissected Palestinian territory into separate bantustans (“native reservations”), isolated from each other, each surrounded completely by Israeli-controlled territory, having no common borders with each other or other Arab nations, with no control over their own air-space, borders, or water resources, and with the Israeli military able to surround and blockade each enclave at will. Jerusalem would have been similarly dissected so that each Palestinian island would be surrounded by an Israeli sea. This wouldn’t be an acceptable “end of the conflict” to you if you were Palestinian, would it? Please see the map on the cover of this paper and see for yourself what this “most generous” offer actually looked like.

Also, the 95% theoretically offered to Arafat excluded “Greater Jerusalem”, which was unilaterally annexed by Israel after the 1967 war and which takes up a large chunk of the West Bank, most of it having no municipal connection with the actual city of Jerusalem. Thus the Foundation for Middle East Peace estimates that the actual percentage of occupied land offered to the Palestinians was more like 80%, not 95%. The international community has never recognized Israeli sovereignty over “Greater Jerusalem”, and has repeatedly declared that Israel should withdraw from this and all territories it has captured by force of arms during and after 1967.

“But if Israel made concessions in the negotiations, shouldn’t the Palestinians have to as well?” John Whitbeck, another international law specialist, answers this question as follows, “There is much talk of ‘concessions’ being demanded from and offered by Israel. The word suggests the surrender of some legitimate right or position. In fact, while Israel demands numerous concessions from Palestine, Palestine is not seeking any concessions from Israel. What it is insisting on is ‘compliance’—compliance with agreements already signed, compliance with international law and compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions—nothing more and nothing less.”

After the Camp David talks ended without an agreement, did Arafat refuse to negotiate? In a word, no. At the end of Camp David it was Barak who said that his offers there would not be the basis for further discussions, that they were now “null and void”, that Camp David was an “all or nothing” summit. The Palestinians were willing to continue serious negotiations, and did at Taba, even after the current intifada had started. According to Ron Pundak, an Israeli diplomat who was a key architect of the Oslo Accords, “The negotiations in Taba, which took place moments before Barak’s government lost the elections, proved that a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was within reach. (It) led to dramatic progress on all issues on the agenda.”

But meanwhile, Sharon had gone to the Temple Mount with 1000 Israeli soldiers in tow, followed the next day by a demonstration of Palestinians (who had no firearms), which was met with totally unnecessary lethal force by the Israeli police, resulting in seven Palestinians being shot and killed. This demonstration, which could have been contained by non-lethal means if the Israeli government had wanted to, was the beginning of the current cycle of violence.

7. THE REAL MOTIVATION FOR THE OCCUPATION

While we deplore and condemn the harming of innocent people (on either side), the use of violence against civilians by some Palestinian groups is a sign of Palestinian weakness, not strength, in relation to Israel, and is, among other things, a desperate response to their land being taken from them. Israel has one of the world’s most powerful armies and the Palestinians have watched helplessly as Israel appropriated more and more Palestinian land for itself.

Is Israeli security or raw expansionism the motivation for this policy? To cite the UN Human Rights Commission report again, “Initially this programme of creeping annexation pursued by means of the requisitioning and occupation of Palestinian land was justified by Israel on security grounds. This pretext has long been abandoned. . . From the perspective of the (Israeli) Government, settlements create factual situations on the ground that serve to establish political control over the occupied territories.”

The proof that Israel’s motivation for occupying Palestinian land is expansionism, not security, is to be found in the diplomatic history after the 1967 war was over. For an example of just one proposal, Allan Brownfield

writes, “Senator J. William Fulbright proposed in 1970 that America should guarantee Israel’s security in a formal treaty, protecting her with armed forces if necessary. In return, Israel would retire to the borders of 1967. The UN Security Council would guarantee this arrangement, and thereby bring the Soviet Union—then a supplier of arms and political aid to the Arabs—into compliance. As Israeli troops were withdrawn from the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank they would be replaced by a UN peacekeeping force. Israel would accept a certain number of Palestinians and the rest would be settled in a Palestinian state outside Israel. The plan drew favorable editorial support in the United States. The proposal, however, was flatly rejected by Israel.”

Or again from Prof. John Quigley’s book, “Palestine And Israel”, “Mordecai Bentov, a cabinet minister who attended the June 4 (1967) cabinet meeting and supported the decision to invade Egypt, said Israel’s ‘entire story’ about ‘the danger of extermination’ was ‘invented of whole cloth and exaggerated after the fact to justify the annexation of new Arab territories.’” The historical record is full of such statements by Israeli officials, including Menachem Begin, Yitzak Rabin and Moshe Dayan. Is the Israeli desire for additional land an acceptable justification for the endless conflict and bloodshed we see today? We don’t think so.

8. THE JEWISH PEACE MOVEMENT

One’s opinion on the Israel/Palestine conflict need not be a black or white question; you can support the Israeli people but still criticize their government’s illegal and ultimately self-destructive policies. We consider that the position of the Israeli government to hold onto territory that is not theirs (whether done to try to fulfill the fundamentalist vision of a “Greater Israel” or simply to be “the winner” of the conflict) is morally wrong and, in the long run, is nothing but a disaster for the people of Israel.

We believe that the Jewish peace movement, both in Israel and around the world, has a far better plan to ensure Israel’s security. That plan is to create real peace as a consequence of real justice being done, not a “peace” of victor and vanquished. We recommend that you go to www.gush-shalom.org, www.btselem.org and www.batshalom.org to read for yourself what thinking Israelis demand of their own government. Or go to www3.haaretz.co.il, where there is an English version of Israel’s best newspaper and you can read journalists like Amira Haas, Gideon Levy and others who report daily on what is actually being done in our names. Thousands of Israelis, including hundreds of Israel’s top university professors, are convinced their government is committing unpardonable acts and have taken public stands against them.

And recently, over 300 reserve combat officers and soldiers in the IDF have publicly stated their moral opposition to Sharon’s increasingly brutal use of force during the current intifada. These “refuseniks” have the sympathy of a growing portion of the Israeli public, now up to 26% of those surveyed in a February 2002 poll. Their statement reads, in part:

“We, who sensed how the commands issued to us in the Territories destroy all the values we had absorbed while growing up in this country. . . hereby declare that we shall not continue to fight in this War of the Settlements. We shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people. We hereby declare that we shall continue serving in the Israel Defense Forces in any mission that serves Israel’s defense. The missions of occupation and oppression do not serve this purpose—and we shall take no part in them.”

Even Ami Ayalon, the former head of the Shin Bet (Israel’s equivalent to the FBI), recently stated in *Le Monde*, “I favor unconditional withdrawal from the Territories, preferably in the context of an agreement, but not necessarily. What needs to be done, urgently, is to withdraw from the Territories, a true withdrawal which gives the Palestinians territorial continuity.”

So if disagreement with the Israeli government is kosher in Israel, shouldn’t it also be a topic of discussion among American Jews? For just one example, a recent survey of American Jewish attitudes showed that 35% of us think that sharing Jerusalem would be an acceptable outcome of peace talks, in total contradiction to the views expressed by the major American Jewish organizations that claim to speak in our name. Our community does not, and should not, have just one opinion on these questions. What is needed is more discussion, not less, on these crucial matters. What should you do if you come to the conclusion that Israeli policies are morally wrong? Just like during the Vietnam War era, we feel that public protest is essential to bring these issues to the attention of the American public; and the American public is the only hope for persuading the American government to take a more even-handed role in the conflict and pressure Israel to live up to its obligations under international law.

The intifada is not primarily the result of Arab religious fanaticism or blind anti-Semitism or “inherent violent tendencies”. Rather, in our view, it is the inevitable result of the most basic human emotions—their need

to be free and to live with dignity in the land of their ancestors. A Palestinian child who is awakened at dawn by Israeli soldiers demolishing his home and uprooting the family's olive grove does not need anyone to tell him to hate. The Israeli Occupation has seriously eroded the Jewish people's proud moral heritage, developed over the centuries; and, in any case, we are convinced it will never work, even in the most pragmatic terms. The Palestinians will always resist being under military occupation, and understandably so. As a result, there will never be real security for Israel until there is a reasonable version of justice for the Palestinians. How could it be otherwise?

9. THE FACTS OF THE CURRENT INTIFADA

A major cause of misunderstanding between the Jewish peace movement and other American Jews is that we rely on different sources of information. If what you know about Israel and Palestine comes from the corporate press, TV news &/or the mainstream Jewish press, then your perception of events will be determined by their world-view. As Jewish media critic Normon Solomon recently wrote, "Searching the Nexis database of U.S. media coverage during the first 100 days of this year, I found several dozen stories using the phrase 'Israeli retaliation' or 'Israel retaliated.' During the same period, how many stories used the phrase 'Palestinian retaliation' or 'Palestinians retaliated'?" One. Both sides of the conflict, of course, describe their violence as retaliatory. But only one side routinely benefits from having its violent moves depicted that way by major American media."

If, however, you supplement your information by reading the Israeli press, progressive magazines like Tikkun or The Nation, internet sites like www.commondreams.org or Znet at www.lbbs.org, then a very different picture of what is going on emerges. In particular, we suggest that you sign up for our Jewish Peace News, the single most useful source of information available, by sending an e-mail to jewishpeacenews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. As of February 2002, to the best of our knowledge, the situation is as follows:

FATALITIES

- At least 1000 Palestinians and 281 Israelis have been killed.
- The Palestinians have been killed primarily by Israeli military personnel—snipers shooting demonstrators with high-powered rifles; assassinations of specific individuals, without trial; attacks on Palestinian towns by invading tanks, missiles, attack helicopters, and F-16 fighter jets, causing numerous casualties and widespread devastation. There have also been fatalities caused by rioting Jewish settlers who have rampaged through Palestinian villages, and by individuals who died from being denied access to medical care because of Israeli road-blocks and military checkpoints surrounding every Palestinian town in the West Bank and Gaza.
- The great majority of Israeli casualties have either been the victims of suicide bombers or Israeli settlers shot by Palestinians while traversing Palestinian territory. Until 2002, there were no Israeli military fatalities at Palestinian demonstrations, checkpoints, etc., since the IDF operates from well-defended bunkers, armoured tanks and guard towers.

INJURIES

- Over 15,000 Palestinians have been injured, thousands of them sustaining permanent, crippling injuries from Israeli high-tech weapons designed for battlefield use, not crowd control. Thousands of them are children under 18, the vast majority of whom were only throwing rocks or equally ineffective Molotov cocktails at well-defended Israeli soldiers.
- Israelis injured in the intifada number in the hundreds, not many thousands. This is because the Israeli civilian population is not being periodically attacked by the region's most powerful and well-equipped army, as the Palestinian population is.

PALESTINIAN MORTAR ATTACKS

According to an AFP news wire in May, 2001, "Since the beginning of the violent events, the Palestinians fired more than 160 mortar bombs, which led to the wounding of 12 Israeli civilians and one Israeli soldier, the army said." Please note that there were no fatalities in the first year of fighting from these crude mortar attacks but they were the excuse for numerous Israeli "reprisals" in which many Palestinians were killed.

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENTS

Israel has forcibly demolished hundreds of Palestinian residences and tens of thousands of Palestinian fruit and olive trees. Israeli forces have fired into crowds of protesters with live ammunition on numerous occasions. Israel has unilaterally imposed various degrees of "closure" on virtually every town and village in Palestine, making daily life impossible, strangling their economy, preventing people from traveling to other villages, going to work or school, getting medical care, etc. These collective punishments of an entire civilian population because of the actions of a few serve no conceivable purpose and are totally contrary to international law.

10. CONCLUSION

We certainly believe that Israel has the right of legitimate self-defense within its 1967 borders, but its policies for the last 34 years, and especially during the current intifada, have been based on the old adage, “the best defense is a good offense”. While that’s OK in football, in Israel that has translated into systematic torture or ill-treatment of literally hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, according to *B’selem* and other reputable groups. It translates into articles in *Ha’aretz* in which Israeli snipers calmly discuss their orders to target and shoot any protesters who might conceivably be a threat to them, as long as they look like they are over 12-years-old. It means wanton cruelty being inflicted every day at military checkpoints, wanton destruction of Palestinian homes, and illegal strangling of Palestinian economic life, leading to extreme deprivation. In short, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is simply wrong—brutal, illegal and unnecessary.

We hate to be the bearers of bad news, but we are not making these things up—they are a matter of public record. As American Jews we are, in good measure, responsible for these actions since they are being done in our name and with our tax dollars. Of course, the Palestinians have also committed gross crimes themselves, but far less, if for no other reason than they are by far the weaker party in the conflict. We, however, are not morally responsible for their actions, only our own.

In the long-run, the only hope for a normal, peaceful life for the people of Israel is for their government to end their occupation of Palestinian land, allow the creation of a viable Palestinian state, and live and let live. The only other alternative is the current situation of endless bloodshed, which our silence, among other things, makes possible.

“Thou shalt not side with the majority in doing wrong, nor bear false witness with the many and thereby pervert justice.” Exodus 23:2

HOW TO DO YOUR PART FOR PEACE

If you have found this paper enlightening, please join A JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE and help us in our work. We have been organizing and educating people about the real causes of the unrest in Israel and Palestine since 1996. Among our many useful projects, we have made available to people, free of charge, an e-news service that delivers daily to its readers the best articles on the current conflict, largely from the Israeli press. To sign up for the Jewish Peace News, simply send an e-mail to jewishpeacenews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

To get in touch with us, phone 510-239-2239 x 5788, write us at P.O. Box 13286, Berkeley, CA 94712, or email us at info@jewishvoiceforpeace.org. Our website is full of up-to-date information and is located at www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org.

Only by joining with others who agree that the Occupation must end can we make a real difference. The U.S. government must come to understand that a good part of the American Jewish community does not condone Israel’s illegal and excessive actions. Only then will it be able to reverse its position of unqualified support for whatever the Israeli government does. And that is the key to ending the nightmare of the Occupation once and for all.

We will be happy to send you copies of this paper for \$.30 each (our cost) for you to give to your friends, family and your local rabbi. Your efforts for peace are crucial. Shalom.