AL-AQSA

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WE WELCOME

Papers, Articles on any aspect of Jerusalem, Al-Aqsa Mosque and those worshipping therein. With particular references to the History, Politics, Architecture, Religion, International Law, Human Rights violation. Letters on any related topics are also welcome. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for the purpose of clarity. Points of Views are also welcome but must not exceed 2000 words. Reviews of books related to the Palestinian issue of not more than 1000 words will be considered. Papers, Articles, letters and book reviews must be typed and if possible on a computer disk (Word format). It must include the authors full name, address and a brief curriculum vitae. All should be sent to the Editor, on the above address.

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Praise be to Allah, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, who has said, and if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief. May Allah's blessing be upon all His Prophets from Adam to His final Messenger, Muhammad .

Palestinians awoke on the dawn of the 21st century under the yoke of colonialism, as they had for more than half of the previous century. In the early 20th century the then imperial superpower, Great Britain, nurtured Zionist ideologies, enshrined them in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and ensured their implementation in the land of Palestine. Almost a hundred years down the line, another imperialist superpower, the United States of America, is driving Palestinian rights and the Ummah's Islamic heritage into oblivion.

Through the so-called Oslo Peace Accord, which was to most people a transparently Israeli formula, the colonialists have sought to usurp Palestinian historical, legal and religious rights. Oslo has been a vehicle for the USA, Israel and even Europe to circumvent the implementation of international law, which according to UN Security Council resolution 242 calls for the withdrawal of Israel from territories captured in 1967 and illegally occupied ever since. In 1948, UN Resolution 194 insisted on the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. The 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention [Article 49] prohibits "individual or mass forcible transfers… regardless of motive." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal instruments concerning human rights affirm the right of every individual to leave and return to his country at will. The 1930 International Commission of Inquiry which was set up to look at the ownership of the 'Wailing Wall' and was later ratified by Britain (the Mandate Power at that time) and the League of Nations confirmed that the 'Wailing Wall' and Wailing Place (the courtyard in front of the wall) belongs to the Muslims as Islamic endowments. The European Union affirms that it considers the military occupation of East Jerusalem by Israeli as illegal and considers the occupation of West Jerusalem as *de facto* illegal. Further, UN Resolution 267 called upon Israel, the occupying power, to rescind all measures to change the status of Jerusalem and UN Resolution 465, called on Israel to dismantle settlements in the occupied Arab territories, *including Jerusalem*, and to cease the planning and construction of such settlements.

What the latest Camp David farce has revealed to the world is the United States' determination to implement fanatical Zionist quasi-religious ideologies. The very real possibility of the Muslim Ummah losing Masjidul al Aqsa Haram Sharif looms ever closer. Never before in history has the threat been so genuine; even the Crusaders, who mercilessly murdered thousands of men, women and children, showed respect for the sanctity of the buildings of Masjidul al Aqsa. For the first time, the Ummah faces the challenge of protecting the very foundations of its first qibla from the onslaught of Zionist fanaticism and imperialist dogma. The aspirations of radical groups like the Temple Mount Faithful, led by Gershom Salomon, are working relentlessly towards the destruction of Masjidul al Aqsa and are now being heard in Rabbinical Courts. A statement issued on 4th of August 2000 stated that, for the first time, Israel's top rabbis will give a formal hearing to the proposal of building a synagogue on the site of Masjidul al Aqsa Haram Sharif.

If anybody had any lingering doubts about the supposedly neutral status of Bill Clinton and his administration, these were dispelled just hours after Camp David. On Israeli television (where else) Clinton accused Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for the failure of the talks. 'I kept telling the Palestinians and I will say again to the world, that you cannot make an agreement over something as important as Jerusalem… if it is required of one side to say I completely defeated the interest of the other side.' He went further and informed his Zionist allies that he had always favoured the move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to West Jerusalem, sending a clear signal that the USA recognises Israel's claim that Jerusalem is its undivided and eternal capital.

The US has tried to broker a deal for its Zionist protégé. Palestinians to US are regarded as a threat to Israel, an obstacle to the implementation of imperialist territorial gains; Palestinians are viewed as antagonistic not only to Israel but also to all those viewing the world through Zionist-tinted glasses. Such people have clear perceptions: Palestinians who wish to return to their homes where their families have lived

for more than a thousand years; Palestinians who plead for access to their prime religious site; Palestinians who wish to have the right to work; Palestinians who wish for freedom of movement; Palestinians who wish for the right to house their family, free from imperialist controls; Palestinians who wish to elect their own leadership; Palestinians who wish to have freedom of speech; and Palestinians who claim their historical and internationally recognised legal rights - all of these Palestinians must be "fundamentalist terrorists" seeking to destroy Israel.

The USA has surely now forfeited its claim to be an honest broker for Middle East peace. Arabs and the Muslim Ummah who have repeatedly been short-changed by the Western colonialist powers need to stand firmly with the guardians of the third holiest mosque and the first qibla of Muslims, the Masjidul al Aqsa Haram Sharif. Arafat for the time being has resisted the force of the US, but for how long? Over the past few years he has sacrificed many 'holy cows' but his resistance on the issue of Jerusalem could be because he has at last realised that the Holy City is not his to slaughter. Jerusalem belongs to the whole Muslim Ummah, not just the Palestinians and the Christians and Arabs have right over it as well. Therefore any deals or pacts he signs will not change the legitimate claims of the Muslim Ummah over al Quds. It may also be true that Arafat does not want to be remembered as the man who gave away Jerusalem or that he realised there was no way he could convince the Palestinian masses that the 10 per cent of the city on offer, in the suburbs, was a just deal. According to the Israelis, compromise by Arafat on Jerusalem meant that they would retain the whole of West Jerusalem occupied in 1948 and gained both sovereignty and overall security control over East Jerusalem, including the Christian and Muslim holy sites. Included in the deal would have been an absurd suggestion to allow Palestinians easy access to Masjidul al Aqsa Haram Sharif - digging a tunnel for them under the Old City! The northern area, which is dominated by Palestinians but makes up less than 10 per cent of the total city, would have become Arafat's new Jerusalem, his capital. His own political and personal future was at stake and that seems to have swayed Arafat against signing the deal. The US's minion in Palestine has spoiled the party, but for how long? The deafening silence from Arab leaders demonstrates clearly that US tentacles have spread wide, gagging those whose duty it is to safeguard the Holy City. Immediately after Camp David, Arafat embarked on a whirlwind tour of over 25 countries hoping to drum up support for his position. It is a communal disgrace that no leader - Arab, European, African or Asian - has had the courage to stand up for the legitimate historical, religious and human rights of the Palestinian people.

Thus, it falls upon the ordinary citizens of the world to send a clear message to Mr. Clinton and his henchmen, that the status of Jerusalem cannot be dictated by the Israelis who are the illegal foreign occupiers of Palestinian land. Grassroots support is needed to urge Arab and Muslim leaders to don the mantle of protectors of the Holy City and stand up for justice. Israel has no sovereignty over East Jerusalem, wherein lie most of the Islamic and Christian holy sites. Why then is it expected of Palestinians to offer such sovereignty to Israel for the sake of colonialist aspirations? Palestinians and world leaders, especially from the Islamic countries, must make their voices heard, otherwise history will judge them as traitors, weaklings who failed to protect the Holy City in its hour of need. Europe and, in particular, Britain has a moral obligation to correct its past wrongs by calling for the implementation of international law and UN Resolutions 242, 267, 465, 338 and 194.

By refusing to cede on the issue of Jerusalem Arafat was for the first time since Oslo welcomed back home as a hero by his supporters. His stance was condoned by most Palestinians, clear evidence indeed of the direction in which the Palestinians want him to steer. Palestinian statehood for them means sovereignty, definite borders without any concessions on legitimate historical rights and, above all, no further compromises. This does not mean the expulsion of Jews, rather, it is a way for Jews to reside in peace and with justice within a Palestinian homeland, as they had done for hundreds of years before Zionism reared its pernicious head.

Israelis, from hawks to doves, have yet to come to terms with the fact that they live in and defend an apartheid state wherein Palestinians must abandon their right of return, absolve their rights over Jerusalem and accept the occupation of their historic homeland if they want peace. That is not a negotiated settlement, it is complete surrender. Such intransigence by the Israelis pushes Palestinians to follow in the footsteps of Lebanon's Hizbullah - Force, it seems, is one language of negotiation that Israel understands.

Palestine in the Media

Shaykh Yusuf Patel*

In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious

> ***"O' you who believe! If a miscreant comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth thereof, lest you harm people unwittingly and afterwards be filled with remorse for what you have done."***
> (Qur'an 49: 6)

It is vital that we critically reflect at the impact and uses of the power of information. The media is intrinsically bound to a cultural, economic and political tide and can be effectively misused to garnish the agenda of the ruling elite. It has the inherent potential to systematically perpetuate stereotypes and mould the minds of the credulous masses. The media does not only serve to "inform" it also trans-forms the values, the mindset and the prejud-ices, of its unwary audience. The very concept of despotism rests on its ability to define and enforce a single absolute truth that everyone is expected to follow and repeat without question or critique. In matters pertaining to Muslims there appears to be little room for a plurality of truths, indeed for *any truths* other than those presented by the Zionist entity and its surrogate consorts. Deviators from this form of Zionist absolutism are susceptible to being silenced and muzzled.

This is not to say that the West is a totalitarian place; to the contrary, it is a genuinely democratic place with a totalitarian anomaly in its midst! Freedom of speech is allowed except against Israel, honest journalism is cherished except if it damages Israel's image, human rights violations are to be condemned except when perpetrated by Israel, racism is inexcusable except in order to preserve what the Zionists regard as "the Jewish Character" of the state of Israel.

Islamophobia

This xenophobia is blatantly evident in the media coverage of world events. Christianity did not become the issue in the fiery disaster at Waco, Texas, or in the Oklahoma City bombing. Judaism did not feature in the case of Bernard Goldstein when he murdered 29 Palest-inians at prayer in the Hebron mosque. Neither was Hinduism castigated when religious fanatics in India destroyed the Barbri mosque. Yet the religion of "perpetrators" becomes particularly important when they happen to be Muslim.

In setting the political agenda, the media has coined a jargon of labels and catch

phrases to demonize Islam. Provocative phrases have become the familiar sound bites of the media symphony. Some of which include:

"Islamic Bomb" as opposed to a "Nuclear Bomb." Giving the impression of a united, irrational Muslim world bent upon global dominance. *We never hear of a Jewish, Christian or Hindu bomb.*

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* Shaykh Yusuf besides holding several social posts in South Africa is also the Secretary of the United Ulama Council of South Africa and the Media Watch co-ordinator. He is one of the editors of Jamiat Ulama Publications. He also participates in the South African Jamiat Relief Mission for Palestine.

Muslim Terrorists as opposed to Christian Militia - *Indiscriminate and illegitimate perpetrators of violence vis-á-vis civilians trained as soldiers to supplement the legal army*

Muslim Fundamentalists as opposed to Orthodox Jews - *Irrational, extremist fanatical religious zealots*, *vis-á-vis* those *who strictly follow traditional observances*

Islam has become synonymous with militant anti west terrorism

The term jihad has been distorted to such an extent in the West that it conjures up images of blood thirsty, trigger happy, bearded men, marching down the street – carrying swords shouting, "Allahu Akbar"; ready to butcher any infidel that dare cross their path.

Islam has become synonymous with militant anti west terrorism. The following excerpt from the World Policy journal 1995, mirrors the extent to which Islam and Muslims have been demonized:

> *'Ask American college students, in the elite universities or elsewhere, what they think of when the word "Muslim" is mentioned. The response is inevitably the same: gun-toting, bearded, fanatic terrorists hell-bent on destroying the United States"*

The insidious inference drawn from such malicious catch phrases is that the stimuli for violence, murder, and oppression stem from the religious imperatives of Islam. These terms conjure up images of an irrational retrogressive menace bent on global dominance, threatening world peace

Media anomalies abound by the day without any moral restraint:

> The world mobilized within hours to stop Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait. The illegal and arbitrary occupation of Kuwait was denounced as a blatant crime against the sovereignty of a nation, yet the Zionist occupation of Palestine, parts of Syria, Jordan and Lebanon continues without a murmur of condemnation.
>
> A suicide mission is defined as an act of terrorism, whilst the bombardments of South Lebanon were seen as acts of retaliation to combat terrorism.
>
> During the gulf war, Iraq's Scud missile attacks on Israel created the ideal opportunity to elicit pity for the beleaguered nation. Millions of people watched Israelis put on their gas masks, securing their sympathy and support. Yet, no one seemed too concerned about the fate of Palestinians living within the same vicinity.
>
> The media frequently refers to Masjidul al Aqsa as the "Temple Mount" indicating support for Zionist claims to the site, sending clear signals that Masjidul al Aqsa is Jewish property situated within the Jewish landscape.
>
> The Oslo Peace Accord violates the fundamental right to territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Palestinians. The accord as adjudged by cherished standards of Western democracy and human rights, is a shameful and humiliating instrument of self-surrender. Yet is has been hailed by the very protagonist of democracy and human rights as the most momentous event of the century.
>
> In both Israel and the U.S., a conspiracy of silence reigns as militants regularly lay siege to the Mosque. The desecration of the third holiest shrine in Islam rarely evokes censure from religious authorities, human rights activists, or the otherwise vociferous media.
>
> Europe and the U.S. boldly sanction Barak's blustering threat to break diplomatic and economic links with Austria because of Haider's extreme right-wing rhetoric. Yet, they queerly kept silent when Netanyahu made a coalition pact with the Moledet party, whose policies mirror equally abhorrent right wing fascism.
>
> The portrayal of Muslims and Arabs in movies and television is equally negative. Greedy oil barons, fanatical terrorists, sexually starved pot bellied sheiks exploiting vulnerable women is the standard portrayal of the sub human Arab.

Politicians and media pundits in the West are so busily discussing the real or supposed dangers of Islamic fundamentalism, no mention is made of Jewish brutality and oppression

Human Wrongs

At a time when politicians and media pundits in the West are so busily discussing the real or supposed dangers of Islamic fundamentalism, no mention is made of Jewish brutality and oppression. In Israel racial and religious discrimination is the hallowed creed, torture of prisoners and detainees is the judicial norm, violence is the political mean, whilst human wrongs constitute the moral ethic. Mosques and Churches are shut down with impunity, movement is restricted, and land is expropriated with legal sanction. Israel has some of the most racist and oppressive statutes in the world:

The law of Return, 1950, grants exclusive and immediate citizenship rights to members of the Jewish faith throughout the world, while it denies similar rights to Palestinians.

The Agricultural Settlement Law (1967) prohibits the sub leasing of land to Palestinians

The Defence Law controls the movement and activities of the Palestinians, depriving them of freedom of speech and press.

The fact that Israelis plunder, loot, and invade with absolute impunity and total disregard for international law is simply inexplicable. Edward Said aptly unveils this duplicity in the following words, "It is simply extraordinary and without precedent that Israel's history, its record – from the fact it is a state built on conquest, that it has invaded surrounding countries, bombed and destroyed at will, to the fact that it currently occupies Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian territory against international law- is simply never cited, never subjected to scrutiny in the U.S. media or in official discourses, never addressed as playing any role at all in provoking Islamic terror".

The Jewish lobby

AIPAC - the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is the preeminent power that dictates the course of events and news coverage in the Middle East. Referring to the tirade of AIPAC, Paul Findley, in his book; "They Dare to Speak Out" states: "*Israel, through the deep and pervasive power of its lobby threatens deeply –cherished American values – especially free speech, academic freedom and our commitment to human rights.*"

He further states: *"It is no over statement to say that AIPAC has effectively gained control virtually all of Capital Hill's action on Middle East policy. Almost without exception, House and Senate members do its bidding, because most of them consider AIPAC to be the direct Capital hill representative of a political force that can make or break their chances at election time."*

Paul Weyrich, who worked as a Senate aide before becoming a political analyst explains the effectiveness of AIPAC: *" It's a remarkable system they have. If you vote with them, or make a public statement they like, they get word out fast through their own publications and through editors around the country, who are sympathetic to their cause. Of course, it works reverse as well. If you say something they don't like, you can be denounced or censured through the same network. That kind of pressure is bound to affect Senators' thinking, especially if they are wavering or need support"*

Michael Adam in his book "Publish it or Not" encapsulates the power of the lobby in the following words: *"No editor will be found who can put his hand on his heart and deny that he has never been under pressure from the supporters of Israel. No correspondent who has ever worked in the Middle East can remain unconscious of the forces at work to influence the balance of news and comment in his newspaper".*

The link between the media and the political elite is both complex and convoluted. While discussing the Arab/ Israeli conflict, Robert Thrice, points out that Arab governments and Palestinians may never succeed in eliciting sympathy from the American public, because editorial opinions on most foreign policy issues are, as he says, *"a function of the persuasiveness of the arguments presented by the US government, the cultural, religious and belief systems of the editorial staff, and the perceptions of the opinions of significant individuals and groups in the domestic, and political environments".*

The fact that Israelis plunder, loot, and invade with absolute impunity and total disregard for international law is simply inexplicable

Appropriate response:

No amount of protestations is going to alter the current wave of misinformation and anti Islamic propaganda. Muslims themselves will have to dispel the false notion that Islam constitutes a threat to the West. There is no indication or even a remote possibility of a Muslim armed incursion into any Western country. *WE* have to turn the tide and take the lead in challenging American 'justice".

We need to:

Re-affirm our global identity, we need to enhance a global sense of belonging. The Muslims world has to evolve beyond national and superficial borders that fragment the ummah into enclaves and relegate global issues affecting the ummah to regional and ethnic origins.

Unbind ourselves from the false notion that the Israel lobby is "bigger than life" The lobby has only succeeded because it has no serious competition in the public arena. Falsehood by definition is a fragile pretence that is neither invincible nor indestructible.

Empower our people to be able to evaluate the factual content of what they read, listen, and see. The best way

Muslims themselves will have to dispel the false notion that Islam constitutes a threat to the West

The media has been relegated from watchdog status to a "bullied dog

to demolish the façade of invincibility is to understand the dynamics of the media. The introduction of media science at our schools and academic institutes as an integral part of the curricular is imperative.

Develop a global network of Muslim media activists who would exploit the untapped potential of the World Wide Web and aggressively expose the double standards, distortions, and untruths of a biased media.

To promote the training of Muslims in the highly specialized fields of information technology and journalism.

Conclusion

The media is in the business to sell and promote its wares, the wares that are manufactured by the complicity of the political elite. Beamed from thousands of media outlets, it shapes and moulds billions of minds 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all over the global village.

The media has been relegated from watchdog status to a "bullied dog," that whimpers helplessly before its loutish masters. Deception has become a noble art, the hollow cry of anti- Semitism is always used to restrict and coerce the media into accepting the Zionist view of world events.

The Zionists use the media as a political tool to legitimise their illegal occupation, which requires among other things world support. By demonising Palestinians alone, they cannot hope to secure world sympathy. They have to demonise ***all*** Muslims so that the world could be "sensitised" to the perceived danger that Islam poses to the whole Western world, in the same way that the holocaust and supposed Jewish suffering have succeeded in establishing a guilt complex which procured billions of dollars in guilt payments to the Zionist by the West.

Our challenge is to attract the help of Allah; He is our support "If Allah helps you no one can vanquish you, but if He forsakes you who can help you after that, let the believers place their trust in Allah"

Information on Palestine

www.aqsa.org.uk

Journal – Referenced articles from previous issues of Al Aqsa.
Newsletter – Quarterly printed by Friends of Al Aqsa.
Publications – History of al Masjidul Aqsa and Guide to al Masjidul Aqsa.
Flyers – On Jerusalem, Refugees, al Masjidul Aqsa, UN Resolutions and Much More
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Christian Zionism and its Impact on Justice

Dr. Rev Stephen Sizer*

A Definition: What is Christian Zionism?

At its simplest, Christian Zionism has been defined as '*Christian support for Zionism*.' In 1975, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3379 defining Zionism as, '*a form of racism and racial discrimination*.' Contemporary Christian Zionism is in part a reaction to increasing world-wide criticism of Israel's form of apartheid.

So, for example, in 1967, following the passing of U.N. Resolution 242 condemning Israel's occupation of the West Bank when the entire international community closed their embassy's in Jerusalem, the International Christian Embassy moved to Jerusalem expressly to show solidarity with Israel.

Christian Zionists see themselves as defenders of and apologists for the Jewish people and in particular, the State of Israel. This support involves opposing those deemed to be critical of, or hostile toward Israel. Anti-Zionism is equated quite wrongly with anti-Semitism. Yet it is also rare therefore to find Christian Zionists who feel a similar compassion or solidarity with the Palestinians. Walter Riggans defines the term '*Christian Zionist*' in an overtly political sense as,

> '*...any Christian who supports the Zionist aim of the sovereign State of Israel, its army, government, education etc; but it can describe a Christian who claims to support the State of Israel for any reason.*'

Christian Zionism then describes a broad coalition of agencies, some predominantly Gentile, others Jewish Christians who believe Jesus is their Messiah. There are today well over 250 Christian Zionist organisations operating in America alone.

Christian Zionists see themselves as defenders of and apologists for the Jewish people and in particular, the State of Israel

The History of Christian Zionism

In *Der Judenstaat*, published in 1896, Theodor Herzl forcefully articulated the aspirations of Jewish Zionists for their own homeland, but the Zionist dream was largely nurtured and shaped by Christian Zionists especially from the 1820's long before it was able to inspire widespread Jewish support a century later. This was in part a result of the rise of Evangelicalism - a belief in the literal interpretation of the Bible and especially the Hebrew scriptures, the growth in travel literature about the Middle East, the rise of 19th Western pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and above all by French and British Colonialist strategies for controlling the Middle East as a bridgehead to the trade routes to India and China. British politicians like Lord Shaftesbury, Palmerston, Lloyd George, Balfour, T.E. Lawrence and General Allenby were all Christian Zionists.

Just one example, Writing to the British ambassador in Constantinople in 1840, Lord Palmerston claimed,

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There exists at the present time among the Jews dispersed over Europe, a strong notion that the time is approaching when their nation is to return to Palestine... It would be of manifest importance to the Sultan to encourage the Jews to return and to settle in Palestine because the wealth which they would bring with them would increase the resources of the Sultan's dominions; and the Jewish people, if returning under the sanction and protection and at the invitation of the Sultan, would be a check upon any future evil designs of Mohamet Ali or his successor... I have to instruct Your Excellency strongly to recommend [the Turkish government] to hold out every just encouragement to the Jews of Europe to return to Palestine.

The Jewish temple as described by the prophet Ezekiel has never been built, it must one day be built in place of the Masjidul al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock

In the 20th Century many leading American politicians were Christian Zionists including Ronald Reagan and Jimmie Carter.

The Theology of Christian Zionism

1. Biblical Literalism

Christian Zionism originated essentially in the 1820's when a group of influential Christian leaders began to speculate that promises made in the Hebrew scriptures that has not yet been fulfilled literally must therefore await future fulfilment. So for example the borders of the land promised to Abraham and the descendents of Isaac - from the Nile to the Euphrates - will Christian Zionists claim, become the future borders of the State of Israel. Because the Jewish temple as described by the prophet Ezekiel has never been built, it must one day be built in place of the Masjidul al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock. Promises made during the exile of Jews in Babylon in the 5th Century BC are made to apply 2500 years later to the emigration of Soviet Jews to Palestine today.

Instead of allowing Jesus and his Apostles to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures they are made to speak about present and future events almost as if the Christian Scriptures were never written

It is this biblical literalism - where every word must be taken literally and unconditionally - that fuels Christian Zionism. Instead of allowing Jesus and his Apostles to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures they are made to speak about present and future events almost as if the Christian Scriptures were never written. Just one quote from the New testament that refutes this position.

By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear... The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. (Hebrews 8:13; 10:1)

Under the Old Covenant, revelation from God came often in shadow, image, form and prophecy. In the New Covenant that revelation finds its consummation in reality, substance and fulfilment in Jesus Christ. The question is not whether the promises of the covenant are to be understood literally or spiritually as Christian Zionists like to stress. It is instead a question of whether they should be understood in terms of Old Covenant shadow or in terms of New Covenant reality. This is the most basic hermeneutical assumption which Christian Zionists consistently fail to acknowledge.

2. Covenant Chosenness

Because of their biblical literalism Christian Zionists believe that the Jews remain God's chosen people and have a unique relationship to God. The promises made to Abraham remain true today for the descendants of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. In Genesis 15 God indicates the extent of that land,

"On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates." (Genesis 15:18)

Christian Friends of Israel insist,

The Bible teaches that Israel (people, land, nation) has a Divinely ordained and glorious future, and that God has neither rejected nor replaced His Jewish people.

Bridges For Peace similarly affirm,

'Through programs both in Israel and world-wide, we are giving Christians the opportunity to actively express our biblical responsibility before God to be faithful to Israel and the Jewish community.'

The Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) claims to be the largest association of Messianic Jewish believers in the world, founded in 1915. MJAA has affiliations in 15 countries, 250 Messianic Synagogues, and 350,000 Messianic Jews world-wide. They insist they are *'the leading representative organisation for American Jews who believe in Messiah Yeshua.'* Their simple statement of belief states,

We believe in G-d's eternal covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We, therefore, stand with and support the Jewish people and

the State of Israel and hold fast to the Biblical heritage of our forefathers.

Christian Zionists err because they fail to recognise in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, 'chosenness' becomes the gift of God's grace to all who trust in Him, irrespective of their racial origins.

3. Restorationism

The theology of Christian Zionism is based on a belief in Restorationism, that is the promise of the land made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph was unconditional and eternal. Therefore, Christian Zionists encourage Jews to return to Palestine and occupy what they see as their eternal heritage.

The International Christian Embassy is the most politicised Christian Zionist organisation. At the *Third International Christian Zionist Congress* held in Jerusalem 25-29 February, 1996 under the auspices of ICEJ, some 1,500 delegates from over 40 countries unanimously affirmed an affirmation of Christian Zionism including the following,

> *The Lord in His zealous love for Israel and the Jewish People blesses and curses peoples and judges nations based upon their treatment of the Chosen People of Israel... According to God's distribution of nations, the Land of Israel has been given to the Jewish People by God as an everlasting possession by an eternal covenant. The Jewish People have the absolute right to possess and dwell in the Land, including Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.*

Lewis Sperry Chafer, founding president of Dallas Theological Seminary, United States, the most influential Christian Zionist academic institution in the world, claims,

> '*Israel is an eternal nation, heir to an eternal land, with an eternal kingdom, on which David rules from an eternal throne*'

These ideologies forms the basis on how their theology influences or determines their politics.

The Politics of Christian Zionism

Three aspects of the politics of Christian Zionism that impact the search for justice in the Middle East.

1. Attitudes toward Arabs and Palestinians

Christian Zionists while lovers of Israel are invariably also hostile toward Arabs and Palestinians. The demise of the Soviet Union, the rise of militant Islam, the success of the Allies in the Gulf War, and the beginning of third millennium have only fuelled more imaginative speculations among fundamentalists, while the same anti-Arab prejudices and Orientalist stereotypes persist.

Hal Lindsey is the most popular Christian Zionist author write over 20 books and sales exceeding 50 million copies. He insists,

> *Long ago the psalmist predicted the final mad attempt of the confederated Arab armies to destroy the nation of Israel... The Palestinians are determined to trouble the world until they repossess what they feel is their land. The Arab nations consider it a matter of racial honour to destroy the State of Israel. Islam considers it a sacred mission of religious honour to recapture Old Jerusalem.*

Charles Dyer, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary warns that Saddam Hussein plans to attempt to repeat Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel, the only Arab ever to have done so. '*The Middle East is the world's time bomb, and Babylon is the fuse that will ignite the events of the end times.*'

For American Christian Zionists, in particular, America is seen as the great redeemer, her role in the world providentially and politically preordained. The two nations of America and Israel are like Siamese twins, linked not only by common self interest but more significantly by similar religious foundations. Together they are perceived to be pitted against an evil world dominated by Communist and Islamic regimes, antithetical to the values of America and Israel.

America and Israel are like Siamese twins, linked not only by common self interest but more significantly by similar religious foundations

2. Apocalyptic View of the Future

The 1967 'Six Day War' marked a significant watershed for evangelical Christian interest in Israel and Zionism. For example, Jerry Falwell did not begin to speak about modern-day Israel until after Israel's 1967 military victory.

> *Falwell changed completely. He entered into politics and became an avid supporter of the Zionist State... the stunning Israeli victory made a big impact not only on Falwell, but on a lot of Americans... Remember that in 1967, the United States was mired in the Vietnam war. Many felt a sense of defeat, helplessness and discouragement... Many Americans, including Falwell, turned worshipful glances*

toward Israel, which they viewed as militarily strong and invincible. They gave their unstinting approval to the Israeli take-over of Arab lands because they perceived this conquest as power and righteousness... Macho or muscular Christians such as Falwell credited Israeli General Moshe Dayan with this victory over Arab forces and termed him the Miracle Man of the Age, and the Pentagon invited him to Vietnam and tell us how to win the war.

The world is degenerating and that the forces of evil manifest in godless Communism and militant Islam are the real enemies of Israel

The titles of Hal Lindsey's books show an increasingly exaggerated and almost pathological emphasis on the apocalyptic, on death and suffering. They are replete with categorical assertions that biblical prophecy is being fulfilled in this generation signalling the imminent destruction of the world. Hal Lindsey dogmatically asserts,

We are the generation the prophets were talking about. We have witnessed biblical prophecies come true. The birth of Israel. The decline in American power and morality. The rise of Russian and Chinese might. The threat of war in the Middle East. The increase of earthquakes, volcanoes, famine and drought. The Bible foretells the signs that precede Armageddon... We are the generation that will see the end times ...and the return of Jesus.

Lindsey's last but one book, *The Final Battle*, includes the statement on the cover,

"Never before, in one book, has there been such a complete and detailed look at the events leading up to 'The Battle of Armageddon.'"

Lindsey confidently asserts that the world is degenerating and that the forces of evil manifest in godless Communism and militant Islam are the real enemies of Israel. He describes in detail the events leading to the great battle at Megiddo between the massive Russian, Chinese and African armies that will attempt but fail to destroy Israel. He offers illustrated plans showing future military movements of armies and naval convoys leading up to the battle of Armageddon. These will merely hasten the return of Jesus Christ as King of the Jews who will rule over the other nations from the rebuilt Jewish temple on the site of the destroyed Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it... With the Jewish nation reborn in the land of Palestine, ancient Jerusalem once again under total Jewish control for the first time in 2600 years, and talk of rebuilding the great Temple, the most important sign of Jesus Christ's soon coming is before us... It is like the key piece of a jigsaw puzzle being found... For all those who trust in Jesus Christ, it is a time of electrifying excitement.

An indication of how seriously Christian Zionists take the military aspect of their apocalyptic scenario can be seen from the content of the itinerary used by Jerry Falwell, in his 'Friendship Tour to Israel'. It includes meetings with top Israeli government and military officials and,

.....On-site tour of modern Israeli battlefields... Official visit to an Israeli defence installation... strategic military positions, plus experience first hand the battle Israel faces as a nation.

3. Hostility toward the Peace Negotiations

The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, as the semi-official voice of Zionist organisations, is frequently cultivated, exploited and quoted by the Israeli Government whenever a sympathetic Christian viewpoint is needed to enhance their own policies, and rebut Western criticism. Every Israeli Prime Minister since 1980 has spoken at their annual international gatherings in Jerusalem.

In October 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu the Israeli Prime Minister spoke at the Jerusalem 3000 rally organised by the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem, to support Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. Following the provocative opening of an underground tunnel by the Israelis from the Western Wall through the Moslem Quarter, he was cheered when he insisted the tunnel, *'is open. It will stay open. It will always stay open.'* The religio-political agenda of the International Christian Embassy is made quite explicit in this declaration.

Because of the sovereign purposes of God for the City, Jerusalem must remain undivided, under Israeli sovereignty, open to all peoples, the capital of Israel only, and all nations should so concur and place their embassies here. As a faith bound to love and forgiveness we are appreciative of the attempts by the Government of Israel to work tirelessly for peace. However, the truths of God are sovereign and it is written that the Land which He promised to His People is not to be partitioned... It would be further error for the

nations to recognise a Palestinian state in any part of Eretz Israel... The Golan is part of biblical Israel and is a vital strategic asset necessary for the security and defence of the entire country....

To this end we commit to work with Israel and to encourage the Diaspora to fulfil the vision and goal of gathering to Israel the greater majority of all Jewish People from throughout the world.

Not surprisingly therefore the Oslo Peace-Accord has been sharply criticised by Christian Zionist groups who see it as a threat to the realisation of Eretz Israel. In particular they have opposed the handing back of the West Bank and the threat to the status of the Jewish settlements. For example, Theodore Temple Beckett, Chairman of the Christian Friends of Israel Community Development Foundation has initiated an '*adopt-a-settlement*' program among American Evangelical Churches. The Jewish town of Ariel has already been adopted by Faith Bible Chapel in Denver. By the end of 1995 it was Beckett's expectation that around 70 Jewish settlements would have been adopted by churches,

...with larger churches adopting larger settlements and smaller churches adopting smaller settlements and giving all a morale boost to show them they are not alone and are loved by many.

By the end of 1995 it was Beckett's expectation that around 70 Jewish settlements would have been adopted by churches

Conclusions: A Critique of Christian Zionism

Karen Armstrong is not alone in tracing in Western Christian Zionism evidence of the legacy of the Crusades. Fundamentalists have, she claims, '*returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading.*' Rosemary Ruether also sees the danger of this kind of Christian Zionism in its, '*dualistic, Manichean view of global politics. America and Israel together against an evil world.*' The following quote from Senator Bob Dole is a good example,

American-Israeli friendship is no accident. It is a product of our shared values. We are both democracies. We are both pioneer states. We have both opened our doors to the oppressed. We have both shown a passion for freedom and we have gone to war to protect it.

This *'simple dualism'* and *'highly dogmatic thinking'* is something Bishop Kenneth Cragg, probably the greatest English Christian Islamic scholar alive today, comments on. Satirically, he writes,

It is so; God chose the Jews; the land is theirs by divine gift. These dicta cannot be questioned or resisted. They are final. Such verdicts come infallibly from Christian biblicists for whom Israel can do no wrong-thus fortified. But can such positivism, this unquestioning finality, be compatible with the integrity of the Prophets themselves? It certainly cannot square with the open peoplehood under God which is the crux of New Testament faith. Nor can it well be reconciled with the ethical demands central to law and election alike.

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), representing the indigenous and ancient Oriental and Eastern Churches, has been highly critical of the activities of Christian Zionists. They assert Christian Zionists have aggressively imposed an aberrant expression of the Christian faith and an erroneous interpretation of the Bible, which is subservient to the political agenda of the modern State of Israel. Indeed they represent a tendency to,

...force the Zionist model of theocratic and ethnocentric nationalism on the Middle East... (rejecting)... the movement of Christian unity and inter-religious understanding which is promoted by the (indigenous) churches in the region. The Christian Zionist programme, with its elevation of modern political Zionism, provides the Christian with a world view where the gospel is identified with the ideology of success and militarism. It places its emphasis on events leading up to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today.

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that among the Middle East churches generally, Christian Zionism is regarded as a devious heresy, an unwelcome and alien intrusion into their culture, which advocates an ethnocentric and nationalist political agenda running counter to their work of seeking justice and reconciliation among both Jews and Muslims.

Zionists have aggressively imposed an aberrant expression of the Christian faith and an erroneous interpretation of the Bible

Essentially, Christian Zionism fails to recognise the deep seated problems that exist between Palestinians and Israelis; it distorts the Bible and marginalises the universal imperative of the Christian message that God loves all people; it has grave political ramifications and ultimately ignores the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of indigenous Christians. It is a situation that many believe the Government of Israel exploits to her advantage, cynically

welcoming Christian Zionists as long as they remain docile and compliant with Israeli government policy. Kenneth Cragg offers this astute critique of Christian Zionism,

> *The overriding criteria of Christian perception have to be those of equal grace and common justice. From these there can be no proper exemption, however alleged or presumed. Chosenness cannot properly be either an ethnic exclusivism or a political facility.*

Christian Zionism offers an uncritical endorsement of the Israeli political right and at the same time shows an inexcusable lack of compassion for the Palestinian tragedy

Christian Zionism offers an uncritical endorsement of the Israeli political right and at the same time shows an inexcusable lack of compassion for the Palestinian tragedy. In doing so it has legitimised their oppression in the name of God. In the words of Kenneth Leech, Christian Zionism as a form of fundamentalism,

> *"...represents a narrowing of vision, a closing of doors, a diminishing of human beings, and a backward force in human history..."*

Christian Zionism : True Friends of Israel?

To be frank, Israel is a materialistic and apartheid State practising repressive and dehumanising measures against the Palestinians in flagrant disregard of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Christian Zionists who endorse such policies would do well to heed Joshua's final words,

> *Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. But just as every good promise of the LORD your God has come true, so the LORD will bring on you all the evil he has threatened, until he has destroyed you from this good land he has given you. If you violate the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you* (Joshua 23:14-16).

Like Isaac's children Jacob and Esau, it is time to stop fighting over the birthright and start sharing the blessings.

Constructive[38]	**Destructive**
1. Encouragement of dialogue between Jews and Christians	1. Justifies apartheid in an exclusive Jewish State
2. Opposition to Anti-Semitism	2. Supports ethnic-cleansing of Palestinians and building of Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories to create Eretz Israel
3. Education of the Jewish origins of the Christian faith	3. Encourages religious intolerance, demonising Islam and any opposition to Israel
4. Humanitarian work among Jewish refugees	4. Incites religious fanaticism in supporting building of Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah
	5. Dismisses moderate Jewish position who are willing to negotiate land for peace
	6. Undermines Christian faith by justifying the denial of human rights
	7. Apocalyptic Eschatology is in danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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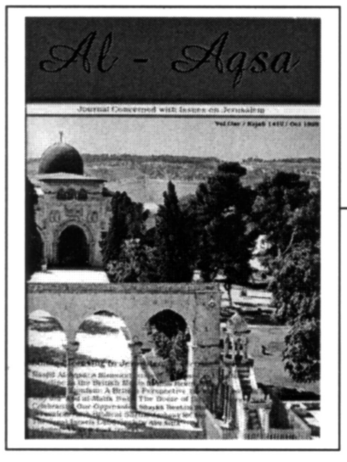

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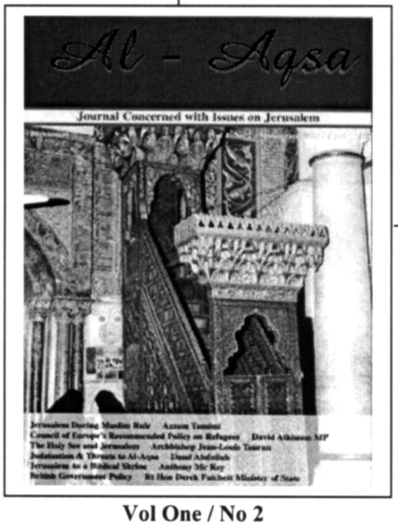

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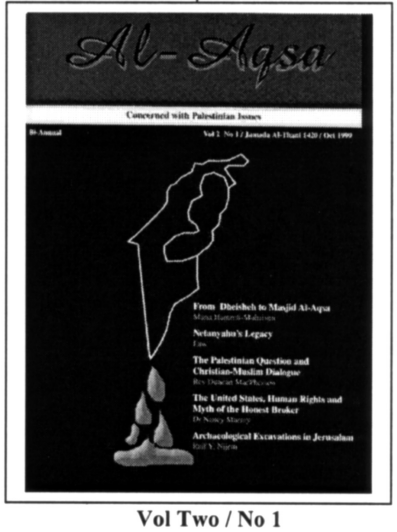

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Justice for Al Quds

Second national conference report*

The first Friends of Al-Aqsa conference, held in 1998, was always going to be a hard act to follow, but the second event, Justice for Al-Quds, held in Leicester on 6th May 2000 managed to do just that. The large hall was packed to capacity with hundreds of men listening attentively to a highly polished programme both educational, inspiring and practical. Delegates included, the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Christian and other community leaders. Ibrahim Hewitt set the tone for the meeting by contrasting the Lockerbie case, bringing justice after eleven years, whilst after over fifty two years, Palestinians are still denied their justice. Palestine was an issue dear to all people who love justice. The problem was not the Palestinians, but political Zionism, a threat to world peace.

Dr Daud Abdullah of the Palestine Return Centre read the speech by Iqbal Sacranie, Sec. Gen. of the Muslim Council of Britain. He stated that Palestine was the foremost international concern for Muslims, and that British Muslims remained resolute about it. According to UN figures, the Israelis had violated the truce 43,000 times between 1948 and 1967. The MCB demanded that 'Israel' be compelled to obey UN resolutions with the same vigour showed to Iraq. The conference was reminded that 'Israel' used napalm against Egyptian children in 1970. Concern was expressed about the failure to address Jerusalem in the peace talks. The MCB expressed its solidarity with the Palestinians and refused recognition to any agreement leaving Islamic sites under Israeli control. Concern was also expressed about Christian sites. MCB promised to exert all its pressure on these issues. Practically, the existence of professionals in the community allowed them to dispel Zionist myths of the empty land.

An Evangelical Christian vicar, Rev. Stephen Sizer, spoke about 'Christian' Zionism. He stressed that the majority of Christians did not support Zionism. He examined the history of the phenomenon, and its links with the colonial movement. It was characterised by a crass literalism that saw a special place for Jews. 'Christian' Zionists were racist against Palestinians and Arabs, whereas the Bible presents a God who loves everyone. Their belief in a Jewish State also contradicted the words of Jesus – 'My kingdom is not of this world'. They aimed to replace Al-Aqsa with a revived Temple. Sizer denounced 'Christian' Zionism as a distortion of the Scriptures, as heresy and apostasy, as had the Middle East Council of Churches, and noted that the renowned Bishop Kenneth Cragg had stated that it was incompatible with the Bible.

The MCB demanded that 'Israel' be compelled to obey UN resolutions with the same vigour showed to Iraq

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra spoke of the practical achievements of Friends of Al-Aqsa. The previous conference had been a milestone in reviving the Palestinian cause among British Muslims. Local conferences had been held on average every two months, which had successfully motivated people. A ladies conference was planned for 21 May. Meetings had been held with Government ministers, diplomats, and the UNCHR. Campaigns had been waged against advertisements by the Israeli Tourist Board on the London Underground, against Burger King for licensing an outlet in a West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumin and against

* Courtesy of Muslim News 26th May 2000

Paron Wine a company which displayed the Dome of the Rock on a wine bottle. In 1999 after a Parliamentary lobby, 100 MPs signed an early day motion upholding the right of return. Friends of Al Aqsa, after being alerted about a map in Dublin Zoo showing Eretza Israel, the appropriate authorities were contacted, and it was removed.

Muslim attitudes to Al-Aqsa as the third holy site were belied in practice

Shaykh Riadh ul Haq, Imam of Birmingham Central Mosque, bemoaned that Muslim attitudes to Al-Aqsa as the third holy site were belied in practice. Although Muslims travelled to mosques all over the world, the Hadith commanded Muslims not to journey for Salah save to three mosques – Makkah, Medina and Al-Quds. Bait al-Maqqdis was the place of many prophets. Prophet Ibrahim [as] had made hijra to there. It was the Qiblah for 17 months. Prophet Muhammad [saas] at one instance prayed facing both Al-Aqsa and Makkah. It was the place of the Miraj and 'Isra where a unique privilege occurred – the only place prophets gathered with Prophet Muhammad [saas] in salah. Muslims visiting Bait al-Maqqdis return in a state of infant [fitra]. Its holiness was not just because of the Miraj and 'Isra, but went back to creation; it was built by Adam [as] forty years after the Ka'abah. Allah took an oath by Al-Quds, it was the place of resurrection and judgement. The Hadith promised a thousand-fold blessing for those visiting Al-Aqsa rather than elsewhere. The Hadith also stated that one should first visit Al-Aqsa, put on Ihram, and then make the journey to Makkah for Haj. Towards the end of time there would be a second hijra to Al-Quds. Many Sahabah are buried there, whose graves have been violated by the Zionists.

Islam demanded that injustice be fought with the hand, the tongue or the heart – whatever one could perform

The Palestinian activist Azzam Tamimi spoke with characteristic forthrightness about the practical aspects of justice. Islam demanded that injustice be fought with the hand, the tongue or the heart – whatever one could perform. His mother had been ethnically cleansed from Beersheba. The refugees still have their house-keys, and are determined to return, either they or their descendants. He noted that Zionism was condemned by many Jews in the 19th century, especially by religious Jews on theological grounds. Zionism was a crime against all humanity. It was a worse form of Apartheid than that which existed in South Africa. It was essential to build a power-base in the West against Zionism.

Lord Ahmed of Rotherham, standing in for George Galloway, emphasised the right of self-determination due to everyone, including Palestinians. Palestine was especially important to Muslims because of Al-Aqsa. He called for an international delegation of Muslims in the peace process to defend Al-Aqsa. He warned about the new Terrorism law that could conceivably ban conferences such as the present one! He emphasised the need to work with Christians on this issue, and to establish a Parliamentary lobby. An Inter-Parliamentary Committee on holy sites was needed. Jerusalem was important for all Muslims, not just Palestinians.

The renowned former BBC correspondent Tim Llewellyn urged everyone to lobby councillors, MPs, the Government and the media. He denounced the infamous Balfour Declaration for nowhere mentioning Arabs or Muslims. The British Government has a special responsibility in this case, because of its close relationship with the USA. He noted that many London Muslims had voted for Livingstone partly because of his more sympathetic stance on Palestine. He then gave real-life examples of Zionist Apartheid at work, squeezing Palestinians out of Jerusalem. He also commented that media officials do listen to lobbying, so it was essential to apply pressure on editors and broadcasting officials.

Coming from South Africa, the guest speaker Shaykh Yusuf Patel was familiar with Apartheid. He denounced the media stereotypes about Muslims and Palestinians and black-out of anything but Zionist propaganda. A dangerous example was the reference to Al-Aqsa as 'the Temple Mount'. There was a conspiracy of silence when Jewish militants attacked the mosque. Equally, although the new Austrian Government was condemned for having a racist party in coalition, nothing was heard when the Moledet party, advocating ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, was taken into the Israeli Government. In 'Israel', racial and religious discrimination was the norm. Mosques and churches had been desecrated. He urged Muslims to break down the media silence.

Ismail Patel, the chairman, echoed many of the facts given out at the conference about the practice of Zionist Apartheid/ ethnic cleansing which deny Palestinians human rights. He proposed a four-point practical plan:

1. Visit Palestine – to witness at first hand the Israeli apartheid policies and promote solidarity with the Palestinians.
2. Expose companies conducting business with the Zionist regime. Mention was made of stores illegally selling fruit produced in the Occupied Territories, and of tourist firms.
3. Media watch – it was necessary to regularly and immediately challenge biased reporting.
4. Lobby councillors and MPs – especially at elections – about Palestine. There was a need for a world lobby on this issue. Muslims must become proactive if they want to see a brighter future in Palestine.

It was this emphasis on the practical ways the delegates could help the suffering Palestinians that enabled the conference to exceed in quality the high standards of the first event in 1998. In the final analysis, talk is cheap, and nothing will ever be affected by rhetoric. The practical suggestions that many speakers put forward, if implemented by thousands of British Muslims on the ground, lobbying councillors, MPs, the Government, the media and businesses, could seriously turn the tide against Zionist Apartheid.

'The multiracial and high attendance was a clear signal to see justice with peace in the Holy Land and all those supporting the Zionist apartheid regime better take note of this', said Ismail Patel, Chairman of Friends of Al Aqsa.

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The Rule of America in Palestine: Duplicity and Treachery

Time and again it has been asked why 'peace' is so elusive in the Middle East. To understand the problem in Palestine one has to analyse of the partial and self-interested role of America. Does America really want peace in the region? Herein lies the problem.

The answer to this question has been elucidated years ago by authors such as Noam Chomsky, Edward Said, Israel Shahak and the late Ismail Al Faruqi. In some quarters these personalities do not exist or never existed at all. I once quoted from Israel Shahak's work 'Jewish History, Jewish Religion' to a Jewish Professor who questioned the existence of Israel Shahak.

In the forward of Noam Chomsky's book 'Fateful Triangle- the United States, Israel and the Palestinians', Edward Said comments: ' Chomsky's major claim is that Israel and the United States, especially the latter- are rejectionists opposed to peace, whereas the Arabs, including the PLO, have for years been trying to accommodate themselves to the reality of Israel. Chomsky supports his case by comparing the history of the Palestine-Israel conflict- so profoundly inhuman, cynical and deliberately cruel to the Palestinian people with its systematically rewritten record as kept by those whom Chomsky calls "The supporters of Israel."

Chomsky includes invaluable material on Oslo and Wye accords- "an unnecessary line of Arab capitulation by which Israel has achieved all its tactical and strategic objectives at the expense of every proclaimed principle of Arab and Palestinian Nationalism and struggle. For the first time in the twentieth century, an anti- colonial liberation movement has not only discarded its own considerable achievements but has made an agreement to cooperate with a military occupation before that occupation has ended."

Israel Shahak is of the same view that Israel has not really changed and like America do not want peace with the Palestinians and other Arabs.

So coming to the crux of the question as to the real intention of America in the region, the late Ismail Al- Faruqi sites two overriding American interests: dictated assumption by the United States of the whole burden of European colonialism in the area following World War II: Anti-Soviet military strategy and oil.

The creation of the state of Israel served at once all the purposes, strategy and interest of America, viz:

To provide, in case of another world war, a friendly base whose friendship to the West depends upon its own inevitable need for protection by the West for survival.

To provide a sore capable of draining all energies and resources of the surrounding areas so as to retard, if not to render impossible, any reconstruction that would make them more capable of resisting Western domination.

Since the discovery of oil in the Arabian Peninsula in the thirties, to provide a strong but dependent friendly Israel which can be counted upon to assist in the security of this tremendous and vital resource.

To provide a cause which would throw the whole area into constant turmoil and thereby enable Western domination to fulfil its colonialist exploitative objectives more cheaply and easily.

To provide an apparently non-Western 'hatchet' which can be manipulated and hurled by the West at any state seeking to rid the area of Christian influence.

To provide relief to the Western European conscience ridden with the guilt- complex of West's crimes against the Jews over two millennia.

To subvert the worldly power of Islam by splitting it into an Asian half and an African half separated by an insurmountable barrier.

Noam Chomsky is also of the view that the strategic importance of the region lies primarily in its immense petroleum reserves and the global power accorded by control over them and crucially, from the huge profits that flow to the Anglo-American states, which have been of critical importance for their economics.

It has been necessary to ensure that this enormous wealth flows primarily to the West, not to the people of the region. That is one fundamental problem that will continue to cause unrest and disorder. Another is the Arab- Israel conflict with its many ramifications, which have been closely related to the major US strategic goal of dominating the regions resources and wealth.

Laudium, South Africa.

Dr. Anver Suliman
Executive member
Media Review Network

The Role of British Muslims in Bringing Justice to Palestine

Iqbal Scranie*

Despite their many differences and political persuasions, Muslims scholars are united and resolute about one issue. They agree that the question of Palestine and the status of Jerusalem is the foremost international concern on the agenda of Muslims. The eviction of its indigenous population and denial of their right to return and exercise their national rights in peace and dignity has been one of the greatest injustices of twentieth century diplomacy. The Muslim Council of Britain, therefore, views the illegal occupation of Jerusalem as a Muslim issue and not as a Palestinian issue.

We come here today not to weep over the past or wring our hands of our individual and collective responsibilities towards this matter. We have come, instead, to dedicate the life, strength, and resources that Allah Almighty has endowed us with for the cause of Jerusalem. We have come to recognize our power not as an end in itself, but as a means to the restoration of our stolen rights. Indeed, ours is a duty to reassess the present state of affairs and resolve that we shall not depend on others to deliver Palestine and Jerusalem for us on a silver platter.

The ease and impunity with which Israel, the occupying power, has been able to defy the international will and violate the law is enough for us to change our approach. We must question the current state of affairs after more than 600 Security Council and General Assembly resolutions have failed to bring peace and justice to this tormented land. Surely we have every justification to question the integrity of the present order after it has allowed, indeed enabled, the Jewish state to violate the truce with neighboring Arab states more than 43,000 times between 1948 and 1967 alone. In this light, the MCB maintains that there can be no just or lasting peace in the entire Middle East region unless and until Israel is made to comply with international legality in the same manner that Iraq is compelled to do.

We have no doubt that the Zionist project in Palestine represents one of the last outposts of European colonialism in the Muslim world. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the EU has now agreed to consider accepting Israel as a member of its regional grouping. Should this occur, the Jewish state would qualify to become a member of the Security Council. Not that it needs to become a member of the body to perpetrate its aggression and violations of human rights.

Denial of their right to return and exercise their national rights in peace and dignity has been one of the greatest injustices of twentieth century diplomacy

Today while all the states of the region are coerced to sign and adhere to the Treaty of the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Jewish state continues to stockpile weapons of mass destruction - biological, chemical, and nuclear - in the holy land. It has, in fact, resorted to the use of some of these unconventional weapons against innocent civilians. And, as is always the case, women, children and the elderly have suffered most. Here, we recall the dreadful bombing of the Bahr al Baqar School in the Nile Delta in 1970 when 46 children, all under the age of eleven, were killed by napalm bombs.

We wish to take this opportunity to send a clear message to patrons of the peace negotiations. That military force and power will not be enough to secure peace nor deliver the security that the Jewish state so desperately craves. We believe that any attempt to resolve the conflict in Palestine on racist lines would not succeed. We recognize that Palestine and Jerusalem have, throughout the ages, been the targets of foreign aggression and greed.

The Zionist project in Palestine represents one of the last outposts of European colonialism in the Muslim world

While it is true that our legitimate rights in Jerusalem is deeply rooted in our Islamic

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heritage, we must emphasize that it is equally rooted in the tenets of international law. In this regard we recall that after its detachment from the Ottoman Empire in 1917, Palestine was recognized as an independent country according to Article 22 of the Charter of the League of Nations. Neither the Balfour Declaration that gave the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine or the British Mandatory had divested its people of sovereignty over their land.

We have come today to reaffirm on behalf of British Muslims our solidarity with the Palestinian people

Since no legal measures were ever taken according to international law to divest the Palestinians of their right to the land, we must keep up the pressure on those involved in the search for peace not to address the Palestine question as an exceptional issue without applying the standards of international law to it. We say this with all the conviction and certainty that not even the United Nations General Assembly, which partitioned the land in 1947, had the authority to deny the Palestinians full rights of sovereignty over their land.

We are, indeed, deeply concerned with the way the current negotiations are unfolding and we are resentful of the pressures that are being exerted upon the Arab states and the Palestinians in particular. Here again, while the Islamic traditions and precepts are perfectly clear, we note also that Jerusalem is still occupied territory, forcibly taken by the Zionists in the 1967 war. The MCB notes with a grave sense of concern that none of the agreements signed between Israel and the Arab parties have addressed the issue of Jerusalem. The Zionists have insisted on every occasion to keep the issue off the agenda and as far away as possible from the negotiating table.

In the circumstances, we have come today to reaffirm on behalf of British Muslims our solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as declare that we would not recognize any solution that grants the Jewish state sovereignty over the Islamic holy sites. In this regard the letter of Salah al Din al Ayubi to King Richard II of England is of particular relevance here:

> "Jerusalem is our heritage as it is your heritage. From Jerusalem our Prophet ascended into the heavens. And in Jerusalem the angels gathered. Do not think that we can ever dispense with it; for we can never give up our rights in it as Muslims. As for the land, your occupation of it was accidental. It occurred because the Muslims at the time were weak. And Allah would not enable you to cement one stone in this land as long as the war continues."

Surely, there must be some lessons in these words for British Muslims.

First and foremost, that we should not ever feel defeated internally, in our hearts or minds. We must not believe for one moment that the present situation cannot change. We must recognize that history is dynamic, a process of constant change. Those in power who hold the nuclear keys may think that history has stopped. We have news for them:

> *"Have you not heard how your Lord dealt with Aad? The people of the many columned city of Iram, whose like has never been built in the whole land? And with Thamud, who hewed out their dwellings among the rocks of the valley? And with Pharaoh, who impaled his victims upon the stake? They had transgressed in the land and multiplied corruption in it. Therefore your Lord let loose on them the scourge of his punishment, for he observes all."* (Holy Qur'an 89:6-11)

Yet, in as much as Allah has the power to do all things and change any condition of any people, we must note that as a vehicle of change, Islam does not function in a miraculous manner. But that we must harness our resources, develop our talents, overcome our weaknesses, and sacrifice our narrow interests for the greater good of the *ummah*. Only then, does Allah intervene with his help. When a people change that which is in themselves.

Allah intervene with his help. When a people change that which is in themselves

On another level, we must change the dominant and erroneous understanding that these are political issues and that politics is the private preserve of a select group of individuals. And, that we are a religious and pious people and should not concern ourselves with such worldly matters as who holds the power and who enjoys sovereignty over the holy lands. On the contrary, we must always remember and be inspired by Allah's saying; *"You are the best nation that has ever been raised up for mankind. You enjoin justice and forbid evil. You believe in Allah"* (Holy Qur'an 3:110) We are, of course, the salt of the earth. We are the ones who, because of the purity of our faith, our perfect guidance, and sublime understanding are capable of returning sanity and justice to the international system.

It is not enough for us to opt out of the international system or indulge in splendid isolation. We are obliged to cooperate with others, to spread the message of Islam, of justice and peace. The Muslim Council of Britain takes this opportunity to announce that it would continue to exert all its moral, financial and political influence upon the British government to pressure Israel into accepting a fair and just solution of the Jerusalem issue. Ours is a duty to resist oppression and injustice. Since there are few other places in the world today that exemplifies and embodies the evil of oppression and injustice than Palestine and holy Jerusalem, we in the MCB remain committed to supporting all international efforts against the illegal occupation of Jerusalem.

For reasons largely akin to prejudice and misunderstanding, we Muslims are often portrayed as a backward people. In Palestine and Jerusalem we have an opportunity to prove to the world that this is not so. Surely, we are capable of harnessing the modern technology and means of communication to cooperate with our brothers in Palestine. Ours is a challenge and a duty to support, help and relieve their suffering. Let us exploit all the available channels to receive and disseminate accurate information of conditions there. Ours is a duty to free ourselves from the chains of the western media which has, for so many years, distorted and dominated this issue. Today, we have all the means before us to turn this situation around to our own advantage. We have tremendous human resources and expertise in our community here in Britain. We have professionals and experts who are capable of bringing the information to our homes and our mosques. We are blessed with people who are committed and capable of helping us to interpret and analyze events. Let us, therefore, take full advantage of every facility and opportunity not simply to correct false information about the conflict but rather to present in a bold and assertive manner the truth about Palestine.

The fact of the matter is that there are many people in Britain, and the west generally, who are ignorant of this issue. Through an aggressive campaign of misinformation they were made to believe that Palestine was a land without a people and that Jerusalem is the gift of God to the Jewish people. Ours is a duty to cooperate and assist the Friends of al Aqsa in its work to dispel some of these myths, and to present the history in its true and pristine form. Since this dangers facing Jerusalem are also directed against the Christian monuments and religious sites in the city we must, likewise, educate and cooperate with them to change the present order.

Ours is a challenge and a duty to support, help and relieve their suffering

Ours is a religious obligation to keep up the pressure on the western governments that are quietly changing their positions on Jerusalem and moving gradually toward the acceptance of the Israeli occupation.

We are aware of the continued plans to destroy the al Masjidul Aqsa. While some are awaiting a miracle like an earthquake that will destroy it, more extremist and fanatical elements within the Zionist camp are seeking to achieve this through what they call archaeological work, which started in 1967.

Let me conclude by declaring in clear and explicit terms, that the Muslim Council of Britain would not relent in its efforts until Jerusalem is won back for Islam, not simply because we have every legal right to the holy city but also because only Islam can guarantee real peace in Jerusalem as it did for centuries before its current occupation.

Boycott Burger King

Friends of Al Aqsa, requests all persons of conscience to renew their boycott against Burger King Corporation. American Muslims for Jerusalem has initiated this action response to the Corporation's apparent decision to renege on its August 26, 1999 commitment to its customers worldwide. That commitment was to remove the Burger King logo and products from a food court in the illegal Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim in the occupied West Bank.

Ma'ale Adumim is a Jewish colony located three miles east of Jerusalem. It is established on confiscated land to create demographic imbalance favouring Israelis in Jerusalem. This has long been recognized as an obvious attempt to consolidate control over occupied Jerusalem.

The apparent decision to renege on its commitment gives the appearance that Burger King has become so desperate in its search for market share that it is willing to cast aside all standards of decency.

We urge people of conscience to reject Burger King, its products and its regrettable embrace of an occupation the international community has declared illegal. We will continue this call until Burger King implements its August 26, 1999 commitment to its consumers to "remove the Burger King brand from (Ma'ale Adumim) immediately." Action you can take: (Always remain polite and concise.) Contact Burger King. Protest their decision to renege on their commitment to close the restaurant in the Occupied Territories. Inform them that you will boycott their products until they implement their commitment.

Mr. Dennis Malamatinas, CEO
Burger King Corporation,
17777 Old Cutler Road,
Miami, FL 33157
Phone: (305) 378-7011 Fax: (305) 378-7403
E-mail: cedwards@whopper.com

Mr. Rob Doughty, Vice President
Phone: (305) 378-3577 Fax: (305-378-7714
E-mail: rdoughty@whopper.com

Talking Points:

1. Burger King's apparent decision to renege on its commitment to remove its products and logo from Ma'ale Adumim is reprehensible.
2. Since Burger King values occupation over customers it deserves to be boycotted.

Organizations joining the call for a boycott:

American Muslims for Jerusalem (AMJ),
Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR),
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR),
Council for the National Interest (CNI),
Partners for Peace,
Muslim Women's League,
Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG),
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

Kill Thy Neighbour!

Dr. Eyad R. Sarraj*

The first patient to arrive at a Gaza Community Mental Health Programme [GCHMP] clinic in 1990 was a young man, Yousif, who had witnessed the killing of his father a few years earlier. His father was knifed by a Palestinian on suspicion that he was a collaborator. The young man recalled how he saw his father gasping while blood poured from his neck. Yousif told me how he was terrified. Later he felt angry and humiliated as people stared at him, their eyes accusing him of being the son of a collaborator. This is the worst thing for any Palestinian. It broke his pride and destroyed his inner self. Being the son of a collaborator means that you are ostracised, boycotted, and targeted for abuse. Yousif told me that for two years after the death of his father he was unable to visit his friends and that his schoolmates avoided him. He was incensed and deeply humiliated. All along he believed that his father was a nationalist, a patriot, his example and hero. He wanted to clear his father's name and was gradually filled with the desire for revenge. Yousif wanted to kill his father's murderers, but he did not know them. He decided there was only one way to find out, so one day he went to the Israelis and offered his services as an informer. In return, he hoped to find his father's killers.

Yousif was given instructions by an Israeli officer. He was told to mingle with militants and activists, join demonstrations and go to mosques. He was told to report on everything and everybody. For that he was given a few hundred shekels every month.

Gradually he began to feel guilty and to agonise over his guilt. Would his father accept what he was doing? He felt terrible and was beginning to hate himself, but did not dare to talk about it. After some time, when he felt that he was about to burst, he confided in a friend about his long hidden secret. His friend advised him to make a public confession in the mosque after the Friday prayer when it is full of people. At that time, Hamas was urging collaborators to confess publicly, and promised them forgiveness and salvation. So he did. He stood in front of the crowd, declared that he was a spy, a traitor. Even his uncle turned against him. When Yousif went to his uncle's family looking for support, his uncle told him not to come back. He was ashamed of Yousif's behaviour and could not understand or forgive him. Angrily he told him, "You brought shame to our family. How can we walk in the street when our pride is shattered? How can we talk to people when they know that you are a spy?" Yousif tried desperately to explain that he wanted to take revenge for his father's murder, that he was young and stupid, that he had confessed in the mosque and asked for forgiveness, and that he had nowhere to go. Yousif's uncle pushed him away and shouted at him to go to hell.

A few months ago, Yousif was arrested and sentenced to death by a Palestinian military court. He had confessed to killing a Palestinian officer. Seven years after his father's murder, Yousif killed his father's killer.

This true story is one of thousands that are unfolding in our life. There is always someone killing someone else in the process of taking revenge for a previous killing.

There seems to be no end. Even more troubling is the fact that since the establishment of the PNA, the number of killings has multiplied. A child who witnessed the killing of his mother a few years ago in Jenin, recently joined a security

He was told to mingle with militants and activists, join demonstrations and go to mosques. He was told to report on everything and everybody. For that he was given a few hundred shekels every month

There is always someone killing someone else in the process of taking revenge for a previous killing

* Dr Eyad R Sarraj is the President of the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme. He is also the Seceretary General of the Palestinian Commission for Citizen Rights. He is the winner of Martin Ennals award 1998, and Physicians for Human Rights award 1997.

force, searched for the killer, and murdered him.

A few months ago, Lieutenant Hassona was driving home in Deir El-Balah when he was stopped by a pedestrian and hit with a barrage of bullets. He died instantly. His killers were three neighbours from the Bheissi clan who were taking revenge for the killing of their son, Ibrahim, a few years earlier. Lieutenant Hassona's leaders had instructed him to kill Ibrahim because he was a spy. Ibrahim was a teacher and was shot dead in front of his pupils. The GCMHP urgently dispatched a team of counsellors to the school. Other teachers were in a state of shock and alarm. Some were crying in disbelief and described their friend very movingly. One teacher said, "This is the end of me here. I will not live in a place that is so unjust even to its noble citizen!"

From considering themselves as Palestinians, people are now regrouping into tribal affiliations, as the internal political map is redrawn

The killing of Hassona alarmed his comrades, other Fatah Hawks, who were killers in the days of the Intifads and are now officers in the Preventive Security forces. Two hundred of them went to the scene of the crime and threatened to wipe out the entire Bheissi clan. They had their machine guns loaded and ready. Only a last minute intervention by the police averted a massacre. A Military court was rapidly formed and within a day three people were sentenced to death and twelve others to various prison sentences. All of the condemned were from the Bheissi clan, some of them, officers in various security forces. The military judge defended the speedy trial and the sentence as important elements in appeasing the burning rage of the security forces, and showing that the Authority can protect and offer protection.

In Palestinian society today, tribal identity seems to be re-emerging. From considering themselves as Palestinians, people are now regrouping into tribal affiliations, as the internal political map is redrawn. With widespread disillusionment in the peace process, a deteriorating economy and dwindling hope, the Palestinian people are becoming insecure. A further element of this insecurity is the fact that the Palestinian Authority has chosen to rule through tribal politics. A person has to be from a big family or belong to Fatah, the ruling party, to get anywhere. The rule of law is undermined as security forces function above the law, to the point that even decisions of the High Court of Justice are ignored by these forces. In such an environment, people can only rely on their families for protection. The danger is compounded by the fact that thousands of soldiers, whose loyalty is also tribal, are heavily armed. In a recent conflict, in the Shejayyia neighbourhood of Gaza City, the soldiers who were sent to intervene between the two feuding families quickly became involved in the fight.

This insecurity is the fact that the Palestinian Authority has chosen to rule through tribal politics

The latest violent confrontation in Gaza culminated in the killing of two of the Khalidid family by members of the Abu Sultan family. The families are neighbours in Deir El-Balah, and all involved were off-duty security officers. The Khalidis are also members of Fatah.

The reasons behind the conflict and killings remain unclear, although it is rumoured that the incident began over a 'peeping tom'. The crime took Gaza by storm. After the deaths, Fatah was mobilised and pressured Arafat to execute the Abu Sultans, following the death sentence that was passed speedily by a military court. This court was presided over by non-other that the infamous Khalid Qidra, who was forced to resign his post of Attorney General last year.

The majority of Gazans also wanted to see the Abu Sultans killed, and the area suddenly swelled with tension and anger. People wanted revenge and Fatah, functioning as a tribe, wanted the same. An eye for an eye. Blood must be spilt. The Abu Sultans were the objects of this mounting fury and defiance. Once they were killed by the firing squad, Gaza became calm again.

As some measure of tranquillity enters our homes, it looks as if we will have to endure a painful passage in the process of restoring normality. The divorce rate is on the rise, as are complaints of incest and abuse. The legacy of the Israeli occupation and the Intifada is heavy and serious, and our tradition or revenge and our culture of violence are deeply rooted. The solution is not summary military courts or in tribal Solha. It will take much more. Indeed military courts are the wrong remedy, for they undermine the rule of law and destroy the spirit and structure of civil society. We need a community Solha, an acceptance of grief and recognition of guilt. We need to begin the process of healing ourselves. We need scholars, leaders and concerned people to launch an initiative. And we need courage. But above all, we need a state authority that applied the law and acts as an example to us. People have to feel that they are equal before the law and that they are protected by the law, rather than by family or party connections.

The Way Ahead

Ismail Adam Patel*

My dearest respected Ulamas, elders and friends I first thank Allah [swt] for having gathered us here in order to express our concerns at the injustices meted out to our Palestinian brothers and sisters and to hopefully gather momentum in order to alleviate their sufferings of more than 52 years.

I would like to re-iterate some of the recent statistics that show the slow but continued Judaisation or ethnic cleansing of al Quds by the Israeli occupying authorities is still in progress. One must note that what is happening in the Holy City is being repeated throughout the occupied territories.

There are approximately 200, 000 Palestinians residing in the Holy City representing one-third of the population. However the Palestinians are only allowed to inhabit 11 per cent of the city – namely East Jerusalem and have access to only 3.5 per cent of the city's total urban space for their housing and community needs.

In the last year - 1999, Israeli authorities withdrew over 2,500 residency rights of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem.

In the last three years, since 1987, over 16,700 Palestinians have been made homeless by the wanton destruction of some 2,650 homes.

How does the Policy of Ethnic Cleansing Work?

The Israelis in order to confiscate Palestinian land and property has historically done so by passing legislation in the so called democracy of Israel. The Absentees' Properties Law of 1950 is one such law, which within four years, allowed the Israelis to robe the Palestinians of 4.5 million dunums of land.

Recently in the Holy City the Israeli authorities in order too usurp Palestinian Land is preventing house planning schemes for Palestinian neighbourhoods. Any planning application by a Palestinian to built or even extend his home is almost most certainly denied. This has led to a severe housing shortage and further cramped condition, where it is not uncommon to see more than 10 people living in two room apartments.

The oppressive and unjust Israeli policies forces the Palestinians to extended or renovate their homes without a permit. Once the Israeli's find out of any construction on a house they move in and demolish the property thus forcing the residents to move outside the Holy City. Once a Palestinian has moved outside the boundaries of the Holy City, The Ministry of Interior revokes their residency rights and banishes them from the city forever – Ethnic Cleansing Israeli Style Accomplished, under the very noses of world media, which chooses to remain mostly silent! This haemorrhage of the Palestinians out of their motherland, which started in 1948 is unfortunately still in progress as we deliberate on what actions to employ.

One must note that what is happening in the Holy City is being repeated throughout the occupied territories

What do these figures mean in reality? In human cost and sufferings? Allow me to narrate a recent incident, which I hope will go some way towards making us appreciate what is happening on the ground.

Three weeks ago, on the 18th of April before fajr Salah [dawn prayers] in the darkness of the night over 30 heavily armed Israeli soldiers arrived at a village of Essawiyeh on the outskirts of Jerusalem. They stormed into the house of a 51 year old Palestinian, Muhammad Dirbas, forced his wife and 6 children out of the house and into the darkness of the night and demolished his property. The Israeli authorities, as always, claimed he had extended the house without a planning permission. The permission which is never granted and too add insult to injury, Muhammad Dirbas was only given 4 hours notice to appeal. This is not the end of the injustices.

The Absentees' Properties Law of 1950 is one such law, which within four years, allowed the Israelis to robe the Palestinians of 4.5 million dunums of land

* Ismail Adam Patel, Chairman, Friends of Al Aqsa. Lecture delivered at the Friends of Al Aqsa second national conference – Justice for Al Quds, 6th May 2000.

After the incident Muhamad Dirbas, as any father would do, in order to shelter his family gathered polythene bags, rugs and paper to construct what could only politely be described as a tent. They began to reside within this construction making most of what was left.

Israeli policies are unjust and they need to be made aware that such apartheid policies have no future

A week later the Israeli army returned one more time, as do criminals in the dead of the night, and this time they destroyed the tent Muhammad Dirbas had constructed to shelter his family. Imagine the situation, a father made felt helpless and useless in front of his wife and children. The children powerless to assist their ailing father. The psychological and mental torture cannot be conveyed by words alone.

But this time the vengeance from the Israeli soldiers was much more draconian. They not only demolished Muhammad Dirbas's tent but they also demolished 10 more homes that night. When one innocent boy of 10, Samaad Mahmoud, tried to stop the Israeli soldiers from pillaging their belongings he was lynched upon by the Israeli Soldiers, until he fell to the ground. When his sister tried to intervene she was struck with the butt of a rifle.

A military doctor was summoned to examine young Samaad and the doctor requested the soldiers to refrain from attacking him. A few minutes later a group security personnel in civilian clothing appeared- the soldiers pulled the 10 year old Samaad and it appears a signal was given to resume beating him. Samaad today lies in a hospital – make duaas for him and the likes of him, who today despite their tender age are being physically, morally and psychologically destroyed simply because they are Palestinians.

I unequivocally state, that the Israeli policies are unjust and they need to be made aware that such apartheid policies have no future. The continuation of such policies is no doubt bringing untold hardship on the Palestinians but the long-term impact upon the Israeli and Zionist public is too dire to contemplate. They are with their own hands fashioning for a wrath to visit them and we need to make the Israelis understand the bankruptcy and futility of their unjust policies. The Israeli policies are unjust because: They deny the Palestinians their historical rights, they deny the Palestinians their territorial rights, they deny the Palestinians their political, legal and moral rights and above all they deny the Palestinians their basic human rights.

Every individual person has the potential of playing a vital role in ensuring that justice with peace is implemented in the Holy Land

The Zionists and her allies are trying to camouflage their vested interested in amicable terms like, Peace Treaty, Wye, Sharm al Shaykh and Final Status Negotiations but I ask you, how can any just and equitable human being agree to the Israeli demand – Which states that:

They must have the total and full control of Jerusalem, they must control all external boarders, they must have control of the overall security, Israel annex all Palestinian territories and the Palestinian refugees have no right of return.

Although the facts on the ground are devastating, we need not be despondent. I say this not because I have a secret knowledge of aid or a rescue mission but because I sincerely believe, when the oppressor breaks all the limits of civil rights, the oppressed, with the Mercy of the Almighty, will attract assistance from the Just & Equitable members of the world.

I believe it is we, the ordinary citizens of the world that can be that body of assistance. We do not need to look for help from the Arab World, The power-laden corridors of Washington or Whitehall, neither at international institutes nor organisations. Every individual person has the potential of playing a vital role in ensuring that justice with peace is implemented in the Holy Land. Every one of us has the potential to ensure the sufferings of our brothers and sisters of over 52 years is brought to a halt.

And remember O Muslims we are commanded to uphold justice, the Holy Qur'an states:

> *O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves or your parents or kin and whether it be against rich or poor.*

It is clear from this verse of the Holy Qur'an that it is not only the duty of Governments to establish justice wherever it encounters injustices but it is an incumbent responsibility on each and every one of us.

Each and every individual needs to act upon some of the ideas discussed today or implement what he considers the most effective. I would like to suggest four strategies from the many that could be and should be employed in helping the Palestinian Cause:

1. Visit the Holy Land: Unfortunately, since we have lost touch with the reality of the situation in occupied Palestine or as they call it "facts on the ground" and in the absences of objective reporting, with a few exceptions, I consider a visit to al Quds has become one of the most important action we can undertake. It has several benefits –

   Firstly – It allows us to see for ourselves the atrocities, oppression and apartheid policies in action.

Secondly – It brings us closer to those suffering and in particular to the plight of al Masjidul Aqsa Haram Sharif. Hopefully the love one builds up after such a visit will be a catalyst towards making that individual more pro-active in seeing justice in the Holy land. Finally - our presence in the Holy Land is a ray of hope for the Palestinians and a reassuring gesture that the world has not abandoned them.

2. Boycott; Those in the West must begin a campaign and expose companies which are supporting the state of Israel either via direct donations, indirectly by trading with it or assisting in consolidating illegal settlements in the occupied territories. It is true there is no law against trading with Israel. However, neither was there an economic embargo against apartheid South Africa but an efficient campaign against companies such as Barclays Bank bore fruits. I believe we need to become prudent and find out where and whom our one Pound, we spend in shops, is ending up in suppressing. The companies actively involved in propping up the Israeli apartheid regime need to be discouraged, at present no doubt a mammoth task, but if we do not try we have no hope in succeeding. Many fruits on British supermarket shelves are exported from the occupied territories, illegal under EU law and achieved through cheap labour and exploitation of the Palestinian workforce. We need to examine the products we purchase more closely and lobby the supermarkets appropriately.
3. Media Watch: In the global village the media forms the umbilical cord feeding us with news and shaping our sympathy. Unfortunately in the UK and perhaps even throughout Europe the biased or mis-reporting of events of facts on the ground are not challenged as often enough as they should be. Allowing the editors to not only escape with their prejudiced views but to continue with their campaign of tilting the balance of opinion. Under the present circumstances every individual must be encouraged to reply on any biased reporting and I urge members of other organisations concerned with the Palestinian issue to dedicate one member of their team reviewing the media.
4. Lobbying: We need to become more aware of our rights in this country and employ the political instruments in order to put forward our views. It is of paramount importance to meet with Members of Parliament, Councillors and other public office workers and to put forward our concerns and aspirations. It is not a far fetched idea to see members here inviting the different candidates at an election time and put forward their local, national and international needs, thereafter voting for a candidate who best suits to serve their needs- This in essence is democracy and it is high time we started exercising our democratic rights.

Within Muslims there is yet another armour, a much more important ammunition that needs to be employed - and that is duaa [supplication]. But we must remember duaas can only be fulfilled if there is a means by which Allah can make them manifest. Therefore use the power of duaa to make your efforts successful. But if there is no effort on our part then we cannot expect duaas on its own to bear any fruits. Therefore in conjunction with duaa rise to the needs of the Palestinians and al Masjidul Aqsa Haram Sharif.

No doubt since the Palestinian issue has become chronic and western governments with their passivity are in effect acknowledging the status quo the previous means to remedy the affliction need not only to be re-evaluated but new strategies need to be employed in order to establish a better and brighter future. What is being advocated here is the creation of world lobby towards enforcing a creation of a State where Palestinians are given the deserved right to be treated as humans – I do not think that is asking for too much! Anything short of this, through Oslo or Wye will only be a compromise for the Palestinians and insecurity for Israel.

I hope each one of us takes it upon himself and makes it his responsibility to correct any wrong that transpires to him regarding the Palestinian issue.

This conference's success can only and should only be measured in the number of people who become pro-active in employing all legal means possible in bringing down the injustices in al Quds. I humbly request to all the delegates to spare some time and think over what has been discussed here today and hopefully assist us in bringing Peace with Justice to this glorious land of the Prophets, the Land of the Blessed Mosque of Al Aqsa Haram Sharif, the auspicious land of Meh'raj and the land of Resurrection.

What is being advocated here is the creation of world lobby towards enforcing a creation of a State where Palestinians are given the deserved right to be treated as humans

PALESTINE

PALESTINE WAQF PROJECT

Sadaqah Jariyah

For the sake of Palestine

Interpal is mounting a new campaign to promote a special Palestine *Waqf* (Endowment) Fund to enable British Muslims to perform an act of *Sadaqah Jariyah*. In doing so, donors will support projects helping not only the poor and needy of Palestine, but also other charitable and development projects in the Holy Land.

By supporting the Interpal Palestine *Waqf* Fund you can be sure that you will be supporting very worthy projects and the benefits of your *Sadaqah Jariyah* will be seen in this world and the Hereafter, with the reward continuing for you even after your death.

Labourers and volunteers replacing damaged paving slabs in the grounds of Masjidil-Aqsa

Pupils at an Interpal funded school for girls

For the sake of your deceased relatives,
So that this will become light for them in their graves;

For the sake of your children,
So that they become used to doing good and donating to charity;

For your own sake,
So that you may have good deeds to place before Allah (*SWT*) on the Day of Judgement;

For the sake of Palestine,
So that it will continue to have religious endowment sites and charitable organisations.

Take this opportunity to contribute towards Interpal's Palesine *Waqf* Fund, So that it will be *Sadaqah Jariyah* which will ensure all of the above, *Insha'Allah*.

For further information on Interpal's Palestine Waqf Project please contact us.

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PALESTINIAN RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT FUND

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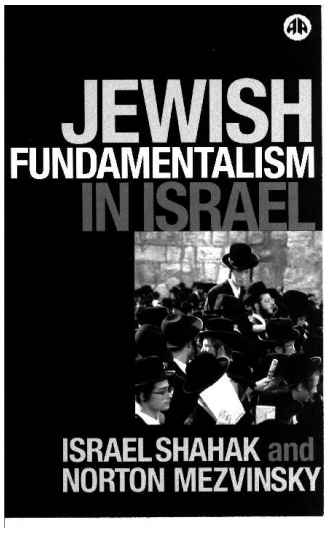
Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel

by Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky. Pluto Press, London. ISBN 0–7453–1276–4. £12.99 (PB). ISBN 0–7453–1281–0. £40.00, 192pp. (HB)



Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel opens a window to Israeli society through which images rarely seen, let alone understood, can be viewed. This book is particularly valuable for Arab and Muslim readers since much of Arab and Islamic writings on Israeli Jews are shallow and reductionist. An average Arab or Muslim intellectual can hardly see a difference between one Jew and another. Zionism has contributed to the blurring of the vision of most Muslims and Arabs who see in it, and consequently in Jews, enemy number one. Although *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* is not about Zionism per se, it provides valuable information about the link between Zionism and Judaism and about the nature of the relationship between Israel and Jews, which – that is the information – is not easily accessible to Muslim readers.

In *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, the authors rely on primary sources to draw a map of Jewish religious groups that have become increasingly powerful and influential to the extent of impacting on Israeli politics. Israel, the fruit of Zionism, has changed considerably since the 1967 seven-day war. The most significant change has been the growth in the size and influence of religious, or fundamentalist – to use the authors' terminology, Jewish groups. It is no secret that major secular political blocs compete for the blessings of such groups, clearly not because of anything to do with faith but because of the effect such groups can have on election results.

Religious groups in Israel belong to two camps distinguished by differences in the interpretation of the concept of redemption. As a consequence, the positions of the two camps vis-à-vis Israel and Zionism as well as issues of interest to the Palestinians, or to the Arabs and Muslims, are determined. In spite of differences even within each camp of 'fundamentalists', all such Jews form one huge bloc within Israeli society in opposition to secular Jews, who identify with Judaism only in historic and nationalistic terms and who easily account for more than fifty per cent of Israeli Jews.

The authors of *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* make no effort to hide their dislike of the phenomenon they seek to describe to their readers. Not only do they disagree with, and even deplore, the beliefs and life-styles of 'fundamentalists' but they also consider them a threat to Israel and its secular democratic setting. In this light all Jewish fundamentalists are found to be the same. They share in common suspicion of liberalism and opposition to what they deem to be godless libertine life-styles. Such is a position that they may share with religious communities in other faiths, including Islam and Christianity. In a way this explains the convenience of the term fundamentalism, which secularists in every society apply to their religious compatriots as a distinguishing category.

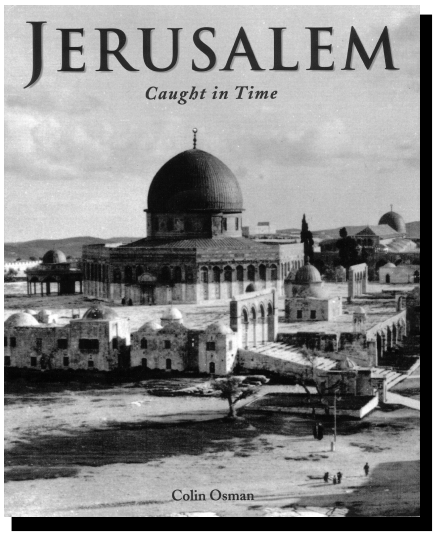
While enormously informative and enjoyable to read, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* must be problematic for Israeli Jews. Wittingly or otherwise the book discredits religious groups in Israel. Inherent in this is an attempt to dissociate 'democratic secular Israel' from Judaism. Religious Jews belong either to a camp that does not believe, in spite of living in or on Israel, in the legitimacy of the Jewish state, since the Messiah has not yet come with redemption, or to a camp that justifies Zionism in perfectly religious terms, having re-interpreted redemption to mean a process that begins with the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and that ends with the coming of the Messiah. What, then, are the secular justifications for the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine? It is true that this is not the theme for which the book was written in the first place, but it is definitely a legitimate question that comes to mind when reading about the attitude of different religious Jewish groups toward Israel and Zionism.

Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel introduces to its readers a Jewish population that is not only diverse and in conflict but that is also imported and alien to the land in which it lives. *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* is a testimony to the fragile nature of Israel, a state that is supposed to be home for a people alleged to be of sacred descent and one origin but who are so mundane and mosaic.

London **Dr Azzam Tamimi**

Jerusalem Caught in Time,

by Colin Osman, Garnet Publishing, Reading, UK. Dec 1999, 160pp, 260 x 210 mm, 148 duotone and 12 colour photographs. ISBN 1 85964 120 2. Cased £19.95.



Jerusalem, Holy and central to the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has been beautifully presented in a photographic form covering from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first World War.

Jerusalem which has become the greatest contentious issue as we enter the new millennium is according to the author being presented as a non political or religious book, 'it is purely and simply about photography.'

This great challenge and idle however is hard to achieve in the case of Jerusalem. As most of the photographs are of religious sight. In fact some of heading of the chapters include the major religious sites: The Holy Sepulchre, The Dome of the Rock and The Jews. Also where every terminology about the landscape determines your affiliation towards one group or the other one is but helpless from being impartial. This is especially true when referring to Mount Moriah as Temple Mount or Al Aqsa Haram Sharif. On page 93 Al Marwan quarters are referred to as Soloman's Stable

It is a shame that in this 'impartial' book the statistics used to show the population of the city are only those of Y. Ben Arieh. The author fails to quote the most realistic population study taken during the period, namely that of Ottoman census of 1905. Whereas Y. Ben Arieh's figures for 1900 shows 10, 000 Muslims, 10, 000 Christians and 35, 000 Jews – total 55, 000. The Ottoman census shows 11, 000 Muslims, 8, 000 Christians and 13, 400 Jews – total 32, 400.

Besides the many well-framed and informative pictures of religious buildings one is delighted with images of local Arab and Jewish inhabitants exuding the vibrancy of the city, that it must have been.

As the author acknowledges the majority of the photographs are taken from the achieves of the Palestine Exploration Fund [PEF], which has played a vital role in collecting photographs of Palestine over the years from archaeologists, tourists, pilgrims, serviceman and off course photographers. Although PEF is a great institute most of their photographers are from orientalists and as author acknowledges 'most Arabs are pictured waving spears or guns and usually carefully posed for the photograph'. The author could have done better by exploring photographic achieves in Palestine to show a much more sincere portrayal of his subjects, the book 'Before their Diaspora- a photographic history of Palestine 1876- 1948' springs to mind.

Colin Osman besides having presented Jerusalem through the eye of the camera shows above all the thriving multifaceted and multicultural nature, which was brimming with human inhabitation, a far cry from the Zionist slogan of a land without a people for a people without a land.

Leicester **Abu Huzayfa**

Books Available For Review

1. Fateful Triangle by Noam Cnomsky.
2. The Palestinian Exodus 1948-1998. Edited by Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cotran.
3. Letters From Jerusalem –During the Palestine Mandate – Eunice Holliday.
4. Between Despair and Hope – Windows on my Middle East Journey 1967 to 1992. Margarita Skinner.

Interested individuals contact Friends of Al-Aqsa