
Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters: [http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/](http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/)  For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change.

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Contents of #3
GLOBAL MARCH TO JERUSALEM MARCH 30, 2012

WE, the Advisory Board of the Global March to Jerusalem, are alarmed and deeply troubled by the continuing repression of Palestinians in Jerusalem and by the deliberate and systematic attempts to expel and reduce the Christian and Muslim Palestinian population of the city as part of the policy called "Judaisation," which is being applied to every part of historic Palestine.

This policy is inconsistent with all relevant United Nations resolutions on Jerusalem and contrary to the most basic principles of international law. Its purpose is plainly to ethnically cleanse Jerusalem of its non-Jewish population and transform a once proud symbol of international tolerance and religious and cultural diversity into an exclusionary and racist enclave.

Jerusalem is our common universal heritage. It is the centre of spirituality and ideological significance for all of the monotheistic religions, and a beacon of emancipation and hope for the downtrodden. This historic city is venerated across the world for enhancing the spiritual heritage of all humanity; it has been a symbol of unity and equality, with a message of love, mercy and compassion.

However the entire world is now witnessing a threat to the sovereignty, sanctity and inviolability of
Jerusalem. The plan is not only to destroy the Muslim and Christian presence, but also to change and dismantle the social structure of Jerusalem, obliterating its indigenous Arab identity and changing the character of the city.

The people of the world have therefore taken it upon themselves to prevent this abomination, by mobilizing themselves in every part of the world and representing all religious, humanitarian, and cultural backgrounds in a global march to Jerusalem (GMJ) aimed at guarding the City of Peace from becoming a wasteland of intolerance. We therefore lend our names to support the convergence of people from all countries and continents of the world to Jerusalem, and to the nearest points to which they are able to approach, both inside Palestine and at the Palestinian borders with Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, as well as in their own countries, in a peaceful march towards Jerusalem.

We therefore support this effort, and encourage all of humanity to support it, by making the pledge set forth below, that all participants in the Global March to Jerusalem have agreed to accept.

We assert the importance of Jerusalem politically, culturally and religiously to the Palestinian people and humanity as a whole. We call for the protection of the Holy Places and all archeological sites and consider all the efforts done to change its Arabic & cultural identity as a crime against humanity. We call on all international institutions to do their duties towards the city.

The defense of Jerusalem and its liberation are a duty of all free people around the world and we call on all institutions, organizations, and individuals to participate in this duty.

We condemn the Zionist campaign of ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine including all ongoing policies intended to change the demographic and geographic situation in the city and aimed at its Judaisation. We also condemn the continuation of the Zionist occupation forces in building the apartheid wall that aims to expropriate more Palestinian lands and convert the occupied areas into shrinking cantons isolated from each other.

We support the right of the Palestinian People to self-determination, to liberate their lands and to live on them in freedom and dignity like all other people on earth.

We support the non-negotiable & inalienable rights of the Palestinian People, including their families, to return to their homes and lands from which they were uprooted.

We reject all racist laws that distinguish between people based on ethnicity or religion and call for their cancellation and criminalization.

The Global March to Jerusalem does not represent any one faction or political party, but we call for participation of all social forces, political factions, and ideologies.
The Global March to Jerusalem is a global peaceful movement, which does not use violence to achieve its goals.

The Advisory Board of the Global March to Jerusalem

Nonviolent Resistance is More Effective April 18, 2012

An Interview With Dr. Mustafa Barghouti by ELSA RASSBACH


On March 20th, I interviewed Dr. Mustafa Barghouti about the plans for a new international initiative for Land Day, March 30th: a Global March to Jerusalem, to bring together in one nonviolent action all of the Palestinian political parties and civil society organizations in historic Palestine as well as in the diaspora, with supporting actions around the world.

Then on March 27, Mustafa’s distant cousin, Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, issued a letter from the Israeli prison where he has so far served ten years of five life sentences. In it, Marwan Barghouti called on the Palestinian Authority to end peace negotiations and all coordination with Israel, to institute a total boycott against Israel, and to turn to the UN General Assembly to advance the bid for statehood. He also called on the Palestinian people to begin a new a popular nonviolent uprising in the spirit of the Arab Spring: a third intifada. As punishment, the Israelis put him in solitary confinement.

Both Barghoutis are calling for increased Palestinian popular resistance, which is an implicit criticism of the old-guard Fatah leadership. Both Barghoutis have called for unity between Fatah and Hamas and all other Palestinian parties, yet the two might well compete against each other in a new Palestinian election: Marwan as leader of the more activist second generation Fatah activists and Mustafa as leader of the Palestinian National Initiative party (Al-Mubadara). During the 2005 elections, as candidate for president of the Palestinian Authority, Mustafa Barghouti won 19 percent of the vote. The Israelis thereupon banned him from entering Jerusalem, where he was born and had worked as a medical doctor for fifteen years.

In the Global March to Jerusalem this year, Palestinians and their supporters planned to march as close to Jerusalem as they could get: whether at the borders of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, at the checkpoints in Gaza and in the West Bank, or at Israeli embassies around the world. The closest point Mustafa Barghouti could reach was the Qalandia checkpoint between Ramallah, where he now resides, and Jerusalem. At Qalandia he was injured and brought to a hospital, amid conflicting reports regarding the cause of his injury.

Reports on the success of the Global March to Jerusalem were also mixed. Far fewer demonstrators amassed on the borders of Lebanon and Jordan than had been predicted by some, and, as far as is known, no one attempted to cross over into Israeli controlled territory. Yet the organizers have stated
that they had achieved their most important goals.

I recently spoke with Mustafa Barghouti again by Skype.

What was your response to the call that Marwan Barghouti issued from prison?

I agree with him that Israel is trying to make the Authority a security sub-agent while Israel continues occupying and oppressing us. Thus all this coordination with the Israelis should stop. I think we also share the same opinion about popular nonviolent resistance. That’s what we’ve been working on for the last ten years. And I am personally proud and happy that now all political forces that in the past did not consider nonviolent resistance effective are recognizing it and adopting it. This is the biggest success that can happen. And I believe that this is now a good opportunity for all of us to conduct a unified struggle.

Did this nonviolent approach arise from the villages in the West Bank and their struggle?

Already back in 1936 there was in Palestine a nonviolent resistance movement, a strike which went on for six months. There is a tradition, and the best example is the first intifada. But the new nonviolent resistance in its most purified form started in villages like Budrus and Safa, then moved to Bil’in and then Nil’in and then to other villages, then to Jerusalem, then to Hebron and now it’s spreading everywhere. If you go back to statements we made three or four years ago, we were anticipating that this nonviolent resistance would spread. People believe in it now for three reasons: first of all, the total failure of the so-called peace process, which became nothing but a substitute to peace and a cover for Israeli expansionist policies; second, because many people understand and realize now that nonviolent resistance is much more effective than military actions; and third – and this is very important – it is a very good way of linking the Palestinian struggle to international solidarity with a clear aim, which is to change the parameters of the struggle and of the conflict and change the balance of power. We believe that so far the Israeli occupation has been profiting from occupying us, and this popular nonviolent resistance is going to make the occupation costly. The nonviolent resistance takes multiple forms, and that is good. One of the most important acts we did was to try to break the siege on Gaza: I remember in 2008, when we went in a small boat and managed to break the siege, how much this affected many leaders in Gaza regarding their belief in and acceptance of nonviolent resistance. But there are many more forms: hunger strikes, demonstrations, and the very important form of boycotting Israeli products, which we are planning to increase in the coming weeks.

Why is nonviolence more effective?

It works better because it allows everybody, and not just a small group of people, to participate. It works better because it does not allow the Israelis to claim that they are victims in this conflict. It reveals and exposes them as they are in reality: the oppressors, the occupiers, and the creators of an apartheid system.

This year on Palestinian Land Day, March 30, there was a new nonviolent initiative, the Global March to Jerusalem, of which you were a principle supporter. What role did your political party, the Palestinian National Initiative, and the other political parties play in this initiative?
I represented all political parties in the West Bank in the coordination committee of this March. In the West Bank all the political parties were completely involved in the organization of the Global March to Jerusalem, along with the civil society institutions and other structures. And we all agreed that we would come to the March with Palestinian flags as well as with our political party flags. The idea was to encourage party members to come in big numbers, and it worked. There was a long effort to bring all the Palestinian factions together, and so the Global March to Jerusalem seems to be at least a symbolic step towards unity. During the demonstrations in the West Bank, all of the leaders of the political parties marched in front. It’s of course our duty to be in the front, because we cannot have young people to be hurt by the Israelis and wait behind and direct them from the comfort of an office. The Palestinian Initiative had a lot of its supporters from different regions of the West Bank participate in the March.

On Land Day, Amnesty International’s deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa called on Israel to stop using excessive force against demonstrators. Did the Israelis use an unusual amount of violence against the Global March?

It was unusual how early they started attacking us. I think they were hoping that somehow the demonstrations would be aborted, and when they realized they would not be, they immediately turned to severe violence. Not only was the violence disproportionate and extreme and excessive, but also – for example in Qalandia, where I was – they started shooting the tear gas and the metallic bullets covered with a thin piece of rubber when well before we reached the checkpoints, before we were even given any chance to approach them. Then this violence did not stop. And this has become a habit, the constant and disproportionate use of violence by the Israeli Army against nonviolent demonstrations. And I think this will continue for as long as the international community does not criticize and pressure them sufficiently. I really thank Amnesty International for directing attention to the excessive violence and force they used. On Land Day they injured at least 320 people, including one who was killed in Gaza with a high velocity bullet; a man in Bethlehem who was hit directly in the face, with a broken jaw; and I myself received one of their tear gas bombs that grazed my head.

On Land Day Amnesty International also cited reports that Palestinian Authority security forces tried to prevent protests in areas under their control and that Hamas security forces had beaten protesters in Gaza. Is the popular resistance in Palestine now facing Palestinian security as the first obstacle?

The Palestinian security forces did try to stop the demonstration in Bethlehem, but they could not, and people from Mubadara and Fatah and other groups managed to get past the security officers who were standing there to conduct their demonstration. In Qalandia, there was a mob that attacked the people participating in the demonstration and tried to prevent the demonstration from reaching the checkpoint. Of course these were people wearing civilian clothing. We don’t know them. We don’t know exactly who was directing them, but clearly there are suspicions that there were efforts to try to prevent the demonstration from proceeding. The Palestinian Authority officially declared that it supports popular nonviolent resistance. So we expect that no Palestinian should try to prevent or stop Palestinians from nonviolently, peacefully struggling for their rights, because we are struggling for the freedom of
everybody. They should support the popular nonviolent resistance rather than try to obstruct it or co-opt it. The authorities in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip have no right to stop Palestinians from participating in peaceful nonviolent resistance, whether it’s in Gaza or in West Bank or anywhere else.

On Land Day you were injured during the demonstration and brought to a hospital, and there are conflicting reports regarding the causes of your injury. Can you tell us what happened?

As Land Day this year was on a Friday, it began with two prayers, one in the street and one inside the mosque. When the one in the street finished, people started to move, with Mr. Alol who is a member of the central committee of Fatah and others and I leading. Then some guys said there are others waiting still in the mosque, so we stopped the demonstration and waited. After that everything went well until the Israeli Army attacked us. In the second wave of the tear gas bombs, one of the bombs hit me in my head. I was injured and a wound started to bleed. I was rushed to an ambulance. As I was trying to enter the ambulance, some of the people who had been trying to co-opt the demonstration and prevent it from moving tried to attack me. And when I got into the ambulance, they started attacking the ambulance, hitting it, and we were just lucky that they couldn’t break through. They assaulted not only the ambulance I was in, but also two other ambulances. The Palestinian Authority is investigating this matter now, and we are waiting for the results.

Who were these people?

This is being investigated. We think anybody who attacks Palestinian demonstrators during a demonstration against occupation cannot be serving the interest of the Palestinian people. Only the occupation will benefit from such acts. I spoke with President Abbas on this matter three times. We met, and he condemned such acts against any Palestinian leader. He wished me recovery from the Israeli tear gas bomb injury. Many other officials came to see me in the hospital. And now there is an investigation to find out why some of these guys tried to block this demonstration, because we will not allow this to be repeated. We have to be unified. The Global March to Jerusalem on Land Day was organized in very close cooperation between my party, the Mubadara, and Fatah, PFLP, Hamas, everybody else. And when I was in the hospital, all the leaders of all parties — Fatah, Hamas, PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), PPP (Palestinian People’s Party), everybody — came to see me to express their respect. So we will not allow this to affect our unity. There was no conflict between the political parties. This was an act by a small group of people who instigated attacks on ambulances and on injured people and on some demonstrators. These people have to be investigated. We have to find out who directed them and who motivated them. And I think the Israelis are ridiculous when they try to take away the responsibility for injuring me. Would they also claim that they are not responsible for the other 320 others they injured on Land Day and for the death of the 19-year-old Mahmoud Zakout in Gaza?

What was accomplished on Land Day towards building Palestinian unity?

I think it consolidated this unity. And it was a great day because you had people participating at the...
same time in activities and in demonstrations inside Israel — the Negev and Galilee — in West Bank, in Gaza, in Jerusalem, and in the Diaspora. This was a great sign of regaining Palestinian unity again around common goals, and it was also a great merger between Palestinian popular nonviolent resistance with international solidarity.

But though there were solidarity demonstrations in more than 80 countries around the world, these activists mostly so far have not had much influence on their own governments to convince them to support the Palestinian cause.

This is not true. The activists are building very good influence in their countries. Our struggle is like the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. It takes time and it needs to be built gradually. We need to stop dreaming about getting the solution from the United States government, as some politicians do. Like the anti-apartheid struggle, people are working now at the grassroots level in many countries, and gradually it will have an impact on parliaments. It has already changed even the European Parliament a great deal. And after parliaments, governments will change. And the last to change will be the United States. We know that.

You don’t count on Obama, if he’s reelected, to help you?

No. Maybe there will be a miracle and he will change. But I count on the people of the United States, who will gradually learn and know, including the Jewish American community. I spoke the last week in March at a conference of a Jewish organization called J Street in Washington, DC, and it was amazing. And I think as more and more people understand the reality and the moral integrity of the Palestinian struggle, and how immoral the Israeli oppression is, the more we will prevail. And I believe in the people who will change their governments.

What about Germany?

People in Germany more and more understand the situation, and more and more of them are more enthusiastic for the Palestinian cause. I am sure you read the remarks that were made by the head of the Social Democratic Party when he went to Hebron and said this is apartheid. This is just one indicator. The more these leaders come to Palestine, the more they will understand the situation. People in Germany need to comprehend that our struggle to free Palestine does not negate or undermine the sufferings of Jewish people during the Holocaust, nor even during the pogroms in Russia or during the Inquisition in Spain. None of what we do negates this, but on the contrary, that suffering of the Jewish people should be a motivator to the government in Israel not to repeat the same mistakes, not to oppress the Palestinian people. Our nonviolent resistance is not only about freeing Palestinian people from the oppression, but it is also about freeing the Israelis themselves from the last colonial settler system in modern history and from the worst apartheid system in modern times. When the German people understand that, I think they will realize that supporting our struggle is also about supporting both people and preventing conflict for both people and saving lives on both sides. The Israelis themselves will not be free until the Palestinians are free.

Elsa Rassbach is a filmmaker and journalist from the United States, now based in Berlin. She is a member of CODEPINK, an organization that endorsed the Global March to Jerusalem.
HumanRights] UN condemns Israeli apartheid
Mazin Qumsiyeh mazin@qumsiyeh.org via uark.edu
2:41 AM (17 hours ago)to jbennet, Human
*In today's message: various UN and International bodies condemn Israeli policies of apartheid and targeting children. More on the truly inspiring land day events including pictures from demonstrations around the world. And volunteers and activists are still needed to work on the April 15-21 Welcome to Palestine Campaign *and the Nakba events in May and the Naksa evenmmts in June). Email us at info@palestinejn.org*

UN HRC votes 36-1 to probe Israeli Settlements. China & Russia FOR, United States AGAINST
UN rights body launches probe into Israeli settlements. (Reuters) - The United Nations launched an international investigation into Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories, with the United States isolated in voting against the initiative brought by the Palestinian Authority.
http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/03/22/un-israel-settlements-idINDEE82L0I920120322

UN Panel uses the strongest language to date to highlight Israeli racism and system of discrimination
United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), was "appalled" by Israel’s racial segregation policies and that an advanced version of an upcoming CERD report indicates that racial prejudice can be found in almost every facet of Israeli life.
http://www.docstoc.com/docs/116872593/CERDCISRCO14-16
Defense of Children International-Palestine branch: Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention
http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/report_0.pdf

Pictures from Land Day events around the world (inspiring)
http://gm2j.com/main/gmj-photos/

Our video of the Land Day event in Bethlehem was watched by hundreds but some indicated problem seeing content. Here it is again
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7U1qQVqVnsM

More videos of Land Day events
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=339Txk8sfNY
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bfJQSLnujw

UPDATE: Mustafa Barghouti stable after being struck in head at Qalandiya; Palestinian protester reports Barghouti attacked by fellow protesters


The Global March on Jerusalem–from Bethlehem by Skip Schiel

Stay Human, Get engaged, Come visit Palestine
http://bienvenuepalestine.com/
http://welcometopalestine.info/
http://www.palestinejn.org
Mazin Qumsiyeh, PhD
http://qumsiyeh.org
Dear Friends,

Every year at this season, we send out a letter underlining the connection between the values of the Passover season and the work we do at APN. This year, we’re pleased to send you a letter from the noted writer James Carroll. Carroll is a columnist for the Boston Globe and the author of the National Book Award winning An American Requiem; the New York Times bestselling Constantine’s Sword; House of War, which won the first PEN-Galbraith Award; Practicing Catholic; as well as his most recent book Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World, which was named a 2011 Best Book by Publishers Weekly. Click here to listen to a briefing call from last June with James Carroll about what Jerusalem means to Israelis and to Palestinians.

Carroll, a former priest, writes this APN letter primarily to a progressive Christian audience. We are proud to have this esteemed journalist and author help us reach out to all those who stand with us for a two-state solution. We hope that you will find his moving words inspiring, whatever your beliefs are, as we work together in the pursuit of peace.

May it be that this Passover/Easter season brings us closer to a just resolution for Israelis and Palestinians.

Debra DeLee

[NOW FROM JAMES CARROLL—D]  Dear Friend of Israel,

Christians of the West have long been the unnamed third party to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Most obviously, the ancient Church assumption that Jewish exile from the Jewish homeland was a proof of claims for Jesus still casts its shadow. Similarly, European colonialism, with its Christ-sanctioned underpinning, spawned what Edward Said called "Orientalism," a permanent factor in Palestinian dispossession from lands on which they
resided for centuries. In effect, Jews and Arabs confront one another in a corner, the walls of which neither created.

Recently, Fundamentalist Christians, championed by groups like Christians United for Israel, have been supplying uncritical support for Jews, while other Christian groups have emphasized the Palestinian narrative, readily casting all blame on Israel. Yet the burden on those of us who view this conflict from outside is to consistently affirm the rights of both peoples. Peace will come only when both stories are heard, both sets of grievances addressed - a process which Palestinians and Israelis themselves must lead.

This abstract principle is now, of course, a quite specific matter of territory, and no one has stated it more clearly than President Obama did last May: "The United States believes that negotiations should result in two states, with permanent Palestinian borders with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and permanent Israeli borders with Palestine. We believe the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both states." [bold by D]

The president here stated a formula long familiar to peace advocates, yet even with formal American and international support, the idea of a negotiated two-state solution, involving equitable land exchanges, is today an endangered consensus - and so is the hope for an outcome which both sides can embrace.

That is why the long proven commitment of the Israeli Peace Now movement (Shalom Achshav) is more urgently important than ever. I am writing to commend to you Peace Now, with its U.S. sister organization, Americans for Peace Now. Israel and Palestine - not to mention political hope and justice - need Peace Now more than ever.

Peace Now is a patriotic Israeli organization. Its well-known advocacy merits a renewed emphasis, especially after the recent period of political stasis and disappointment, when many other advocates of peace have become disillusioned and discouraged. Peace Now most emphatically affirms the Jewish and democratic character of the State of Israel. But that means, with equal emphasis, that Peace Now opposes the Occupation of the Palestinians, and absolutely rejects the continuing spread of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

For Peace Now, this is not a matter of mere rhetoric. The organization tracks and publicizes the ongoing Jewish settlement project in the West Bank. In 2011, Peace Now found:

A 20-percent rise in construction starts over the previous year. Of these, 5 percent (650 units) were in isolated settlements east of the planned route of the Separation Barrier, in areas that will certainly not be annexed to Israel once it reaches a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

The Israeli government recognized 11 illegal outposts as bona fide settlements.

The highest number in a decade of new Israeli construction and the highest number ever of planned

Peace Now also found that much settlement building, about one third, takes place on private Palestinian land in the West Bank. Such settlements also spring up amid hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in East Jerusalem - often with American Jewish and Evangelical Christian financial backing. Peace Now believes that these unending encroachments amount to present injustices and future obstacles to peace. They must be noticed. They must be
condemned. They must be reversed.

This is why I am writing to ask you to support Peace Now, and its sister organization in the United States. Americans for Peace Now provides nearly half of the funding for Israel's Peace Now and helps make possible the actions, research and legal advocacy that assist peace-seeking Israelis in taking back the middle ground.

APN's informative website (www.peacenow.org) offers a wealth of information and analysis for Americans to think more clearly - and pragmatically - about Israel's challenges.

The "app" that APN has released, an interactive map of the disastrous Israeli settlements in the West Bank, is accessible online http://peacenow.org/map.php and downloadable to iPhone or iPad devices.

I am writing this letter as an American, and as a Christian. I am aware that you are receiving it as the holy seasons of Passover and Easter approach - times when the echoes of history are heard, and when, as I began by noting, people like me can have no illusion of detached uninvolvement. Our texts, our doctrines, our End Time dreams, our habits of racial and religious contempt, even our too-innocent wishes for an easy peace - these are threads in the Holy Land's still untied knot. Historically part of the Israeli-Palestinian problem, we are obliged now to be part of its solution.

That is the invitation we have from Israel's Peace Now and its U.S. sister organization. Join me in supporting both Shalom Achshav and APN. Please make a generous tax-deductible contribution to Americans for Peace Now. This is how peace happens. Please commend Peace Now to everyone you know.


Defending Israel (and Waiting for a Miracle)
Eric Alterman April 25, 2012 | This article appeared in the May 14, 2012 edition of The Nation. [Defense of Peter Beinart's The Crisis of Zionism. D]

REUTERS/Baz Ratner

Those in the market for conspiracy theories might be pleased by the mainstream media reaction to Peter Beinart's The Crisis of Zionism. Not only has the book been widely
attacked but so too have its author’s motives for writing it. Beinart’s book is essentially a call for American Jews to challenge the professional Jewish establishment that has failed to stand up for the liberal values of the community it professes to represent and acts instead as an apologist for Israel’s rightward, anti-democratic drift toward permanent occupation. With an impressive uniformity of opinion, Beinart’s reviewers have by and large ignored the details of his critique. Jewish liberals, centrists, neocons and far-right chauvinists all apparently agree that Beinart has written the wrong book. Instead of focusing his attention on the shortcomings of Israeli and American Jewish institutions, he should be complaining about Palestinian rejectionism and suicide-bombing (as might be expected of former protégés of Marty Peretz), as it is obviously their behavior, rather than any action that Israel may have been forced to take in self-defense, that lies at the root of the conflict.

**Gilad Atzmon's New Book: The Wandering Who? A Study Of Jewish Identity Politics**

Jewish identity is tied up with some of the most difficult and contentious issues of today. The purpose in this book is to open many of these issues up for discussion. Since Israel defines itself openly as the ‘Jewish State’, we should ask what the notions of ‘Judaism’, ‘Jewishness’, ‘Jewish culture’ and ‘Jewish ideology’ stand for. Gilad examines the tribal aspects embedded in Jewish secular discourse, both Zionist and anti Zionist; the ‘holocaust religion’; the meaning of ‘history’ and ‘time’ within the Jewish political discourse; the anti–Gentile ideologies entangled within different forms of secular Jewish political discourse and even within the Jewish left. He questions what it is that leads Diaspora Jews to identify themselves with Israel and affiliate with its politics. The devastating state of our world affairs raises an immediate demand for a conceptual shift in our intellectual and philosophical attitude towards politics, identity politics and history.
You can now order the book on Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk

To read articles and reviews click here.

http://youtu.be/BFjejrGxFY4

ERIC ALTERMAN REVIEWS BOOKS BY BEINERT AND BAR-ON ET AL.

About the Author
Eric Alterman
Eric Alterman is a Distinguished Professor of English, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, and Professor of...

BEINART

Even were one to grant the substance of the anti-Beinart attacks, one would still be left with Lenin’s age-old question: What is to be done? Where are the alternatives to an all-out effort—risks and all—to end the occupation? While some of the reviewers profess distaste for the policies of the Israeli government, none propose a solution that involves anything much more than Palestinian surrender. And since that is not going to happen—indeed the political weakness of Palestinian “moderates” is often cited as yet another roadblock to a sustainable peace agreement—then what we are left with is the passive acceptance of Israel’s slow-motion destruction of its democracy coupled with an apparently endless (and brutal) military occupation.

As is always the case when Israel is criticized, discussion in that country has been far more open and self-confident in its press than in our own. Writing in the invaluable +972 webzine, Mairav Zonszein observes, “Beinart’s writing does not shed new light on the situation, but the
fact that he is making such waves reflects just how hard it is for American Jews to figure out their identity vis-à-vis Israel—and how, after 64 years trying to figure it out, it continues to be the mainstay of American Jewish discourse.” Her colleague Noam Sheizaf writes, “The panic with which the ‘Crisis of Zionism’ was met had nothing to do with the book’s not-so-new political message…but rather from the thought that Beinart does represent something real, that the Jewish establishment is indeed failing, not in terms of political effectiveness, but on a much deeper level that has to do with the moral values and the self-perception of the people it claims to represent.”

BAR-ON

In contrast to Beinart’s book, which has dominated discussion in Jewish literary circles since its publication, another book, *Side by Side*—edited by the late Dan Bar-On as well as Sami Adwan, the Israeli and Palestinian co-founders of Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME), together with Eyal Nayeh—has received virtually no attention. This is a shame, as it is at least as central to any possibility for Middle Eastern peace as Beinart’s book. One of PRIME’s projects, begun in 2002, was to try to construct a high school text based on a single narrative history of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. This goal has long been, in your columnist’s view, the single most crucial building block for a democratically based—and therefore politically stable—two-state solution. So long as every new “fact” merely confirms one side’s narrative that places all the fault on the other, rejectionists will continue to rule unchallenged.

Alas, it proved impossible. And so *Side by Side* instead tells the story of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an Israeli and a Palestinian perspective on alternating pages. This follows the example of PRIME’s series of three pamphlets, which included a third, blank section for
students to write their own histories. Perhaps predictably, however, neither side’s schools would use them. In 2004, in fact, far-right Israeli education minister Limor Livnat threatened to discipline teachers who taught from the booklets, and Palestinian teachers were threatened with violence when they tried. As Bar-On wrote, the failure, first to produce a single narrative and second to find educators willing to teach both versions to their students, demonstrated that “both the Palestinians and the Jewish-Israelis were not truly ready to move forward with the political arrangement because they were incapable of accepting each other’s ‘otherness.’”

American Jews could play a useful role in aiding our Israeli cousins to see that they are destroying what was noble and admirable in the creation of a democratic and egalitarian Jewish homeland over fears that are in some significant respects (albeit not entirely) driven by psychological rather than real-world factors. But as the ferocious reaction to Beinart’s book, coupled with the nonreaction to the PRIME project, demonstrates, the opposite is unfortunately going to be the case. As Sheizaf observes, the project of “Jewish establishment and members of the Jewish media—the manufacturers of ideology” is to do whatever is necessary “to relieve the pain of their community by blurring the existence of a problem. It is an ungrateful task, which will last as long as the occupation does.”

So again, the alternative? Kiddushin 39b in the Babylonian Talmud tells us, “And wherever the potential for harm is ever present we do not rely on miracles.” Yet that is exactly what the American Jewish establishment and its media apologists do when it comes to the preservation of a Jewish and democratic Israel. And therein lies the true “crisis” of Zionism.

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April 25, 2012
This article appeared in the May 14, 2012 edition of The Nation.