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Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters: http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/ For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and:

ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change.
Welcome to the website of the Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), a wide coalition of the largest Palestinian organisations, trade unions, networks and NGOs.
Netherlands becomes latest country to act against trade with illegal Israeli settlements

The Dutch government has announced that it will introduce new guidance calling on retailers to label fresh produce from illegal Israeli settlements in a way that distinguishes it from products originating inside Israel.

- Call to Action: Join Addameer’s Global End Administrative Detention Campaign!
- Protests in Gaza and 40 European cities urge end to trade with Israeli agriculture firms
- Netherlands becomes latest country to act against trade with illegal Israeli settlements

WHAT IS BDS?

In 2005, Palestinian civil society issued a call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights. A truly global movement against Israeli Apartheid is rapidly emerging in response to this call.

Learn more
Read the 2005 call in full

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BDS Movement

BDSmovement #BDS actions in solidarity w/ Palestinian #LandDay mobilisations include march in Tunis at #WSF2013 and 6 countries bit.ly/167P6bH

BDSmovement As Palestinians demonstrate for #LandDay, int’l #BDS protests at #WSF2013 and in cities across 6 countries bit.ly/167P6bH

BDSmovement Demonstrations across Palestine and International BDS actions mark
Palestinian #LandDay bit.ly/167P6bH #BDS #Israel#Palestine

BDSmovement Demonstrations across Palestine and international BDS actions mark Palestinian Land Day bit.ly/XOmroE #BDS #Palestine

Join the conversation

Academic and Cultural Boycott news from PACBI.org

- Major defeat in case claiming union was anti-semitic
- Union Defeats Legal Challenge Alleging Antisemitism
- Depeche Mode: Do Not Entertain Apartheid!
- Morgan Freeman: Don’t accept an award tarnished with apartheid and colonialism
- Roger Waters Calls for Boycott of Israel

STATEMENTS

Demonstrations across Palestine and international BDS actions mark Palestinian Land Day March 30, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

Palestinians are today commemorating with action Land Day, a day in 1976 when Israeli military forces shot and killed six young Palestinian citizens of Israel. These brave youth were among thousands protesting the Israeli government’s expropriation of Palestinian land. International supporters of the Palestinian struggle for freedom, justice and equality are marking Land Day with actions and initiatives to further campaigns for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.
Land Day: Celebrate Resistance and Intensify BDS  March 14, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

BNC letter to Japanese Prime Minister on arms export to Israel  March 4, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

Palestine mourns Stephane Hessel  February 27, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

New Balance and InterContinental Hotel Group: drop sponsorship of Jerusalem apartheid marathon or face international boycotts  February 26, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

BDS Movement Position on Boycott of Individuals  February 21, 2013 by Palestinian BDS National Committee

**ANALYSIS**

Israel, Obama, and other people’s oil  March 20, 2013 by Nadia Hijab on Al-Jazeera English

The US, the European Union and other donor nations effectively subsidise Israel’s exploitation of Palestinian resources

The BDS movement explained  March 8, 2013 by Omar Barghouti NY Daily News

How the JCRC inspired New York officials to fight BDS  February 18, 2013 by Phan Nguyen at Mondoweiss

Brooklyn College battle reveals hidden agenda of “liberal Zionism”  February 12, 2013 by Max Blumenthal at Electronic Intifada


Ten reasons to vote for G4S as the World’s Worst Company  January 10, 2013 by BNC

**NEWS**

Vermonters Call on Ben & Jerry’s To End Complicity with Israel’s Occupation and Settlements  March 26, 2013 by VTJP

Most everybody knows that Ben & Jerry’s makes premium ice cream and champions “Peace” and “Love.” What they don’t know is that this socially responsible business and strong supporter of Occupy Wall Street is making ice cream in Israel and selling it in illegal settlements in Occupied Palestine.

Boycott spreading in Scotland: Clackmannanshire Council joins W. Dunbartonshire and Stirling in boycott of Israel  March 20, 2013 by Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign

"Just as individual sanctions against apartheid in South Africa led ultimately to its demise there, so individual and collection sanctions against the state of Israel will end apartheid and suffering in Palestine," says local government motion
Red Card Israeli Racism action hots up in UK
March 20, 2013 by Red Card Israeli Racism UK
The UK will become the focus of intense campaigning action as UEFA holds its annual congress in London on Friday May 24

After hard-fought battle, students celebrate divestment vote victory at UC San Diego
March 18, 2013 by Ali Abunimah at Electronic Intifada
The resolution, proposed by Students for Justice in Palestine, is similar to recent resolutions passed at UC Irvine and UC Riverside

RTOP calls on International Criminal Court to investigate Israeli crimes
March 17, 2013 by BNC
The Russell Tribunal on Palestine ends its 4-year examination of third party complicity in Israeli violations of International Law

British organisation ends relationship with charity supporting Israeli settlements
March 13, 2013 by Corporate Watch
CFOIC Heartland is an ideologically motivated Christian Zionist charity that supports projects in illegal Israeli settlements

New cross-Canada student coalition looks to build on BDS victories
March 13, 2013 by Charlotte Kates at Mondoweiss
The Canadian Student Coalition for Palestine emerged from a weekend conference organized in
London, Ontario in late February

23 MEP’s call for suspension of EU-Israel Association Agreement | March 13, 2013 by European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine (ECCP)

In a letter sent to the chief of EU foreign policy Catherine Ashton, 23 members of European Parliament called for the suspension of EU-Israel Association Agreement.

UEFA should cancel football tournament in Israel, says former French sports minister | March 13, 2013 by Adri Nieuwhof on Electronic Intifada

Former French sports minister Marie-George Buffet has asked European football’s governing body to cancel its plan to hold this year’s under-21 championship in Israel.

Australian student university drops SodaStream competition | March 10, 2013 by Students for Palestine Australia

La Trobe University Student Union has decided to drop a competition giving away a device from occupation profiteer SodaStream in line with its BDS policy.
LEARN

- What is BDS?
- The call for BDS
- Apartheid, colonisation and occupation

CAMPAIGNS

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- Military Embargo
- Veolia and Alstom
- JNF
- Student
- Trade Unions

RESOURCES

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The first of our seven Unitarian Universalist principles affirms and promotes the inherent worth and dignity of every person, while the second endorses justice, equality and compassion in human relations. These values are at the heart of who we are as Unitarian Universalists. They have guided us throughout our history in our work for social justice and human rights.

These Unitarian Universalist values lead us to oppose Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands and the human rights violations involved in establishing and maintaining
As of June 2012, Palestinians have endured 45 years of Israeli military occupation or control of the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as well as the West Bank, where Muslim and Christian Palestinian communities live under Israeli military law with few legal rights or protections while Jewish settlers living nearby on forcibly confiscated Palestinian land enjoy the full protection of Israeli civil law.

Israel's violations of Palestinians' human rights under the occupation have been extensively documented. They include: seizure of water and other natural resources of an occupied territory, construction of Jewish-only colonies and separation walls on occupied territory, annexation of occupied territory (East Jerusalem), transfer of its own population into occupied territory, collective punishment of civilians such as the blockade and siege of Gaza, demolition of homes, indefinite incarceration without due process, confiscation of Palestinian land, and construction of roads on which Palestinians are not allowed to drive or even cross. Many of Israel's actions are also violations of international laws such as the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The occupation of Palestinian lands and denial of Palestinians' human rights have tragic consequences not just for Palestinians, but also for the Jewish people of Israel-Palestine. Israeli Jews live in fear of violent Palestinian and regional resistance, while Israel devotes vast resources to military and security efforts to counter this resistance and maintain the occupation, acting in ways and using means that often violate the fundamental human values of Judaism itself.

Ending the occupation of Palestinian lands and achieving justice for Palestinians are essential for reconciliation and lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. They are also essential for removing the threat that continuation of the injustice holds for regional and world peace. Only a peace that includes full recognition of the rights of both peoples can bring enduring security to the people of Israel-Palestine.

Unfortunately, the major powers of the world, particularly the United States, have consistently failed to correct the injustices suffered by Palestinians. The US government has, to the contrary, used our tax dollars to provide extensive military, economic, and diplomatic support to Israel that helps perpetuate the occupation and other abuses.

In 2005, in light of the continuing violations of their human rights and the inaction of the international community, representatives of Palestinian civil society called for a boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaign along the lines of the international campaign against South African Apartheid as a non-violent means of achieving peace with justice in
Socially conscious divestment from companies that violate human rights or degrade the environment is a time-honored means of bringing about positive change while also aligning our investments with our values.

Many civic and religious organizations have given their support to the Palestinian BDS campaign by taking steps to divest from Israeli and multinational companies that profit from the occupation. Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East (UUJME) asks our fellow UUs to do likewise, and to affirm our cherished tradition of non-violent activism on behalf of vulnerable or oppressed peoples by taking action to end the occupation and its human rights abuses.

In particular, UUJME asks UUs to support the We Divest campaign. This campaign calls on the investment giant TIAA-CREF to divest from multinational companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. The campaign is endorsed by more than 50 peace and justice organizations and is administered by Jewish Voice for Peace, Adalah-NY, the American Friends Service Committee, Grassroots International, and the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. The We Divest campaign specifically targets five companies that profit from the occupation: Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, Northrop Grumman, Veolia, and Elbit. TIAA-CREF has large holdings in all of these companies and does not offer an occupation-free portfolio.

Veolia is a France-based multinational company that profits from the construction and expansion of Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank. Elbit is Israel’s largest arms manufacturer and has had an integral role in building the separation wall that has been declared illegal by the International Criminal Court. A US subsidiary of Elbit is part of a consortium that has just received a large contract for technology to identify threats and apprehend intruders along the US borders with Canada and Mexico. See http://www.wedivest.org for a more complete description of the roles of these companies in the occupation.

TIAA-CREF prides itself on socially responsible investing (SRI), stating that such investing is “consistent with our nonprofit heritage and unwavering mission to serve those who serve the greater good.” For example, in 2009, TIAA-CREF divested from companies involved with the government of Sudan because of its human rights violations in Darfur.

The TIAA-CREF campaign is especially relevant for UUs since most UU congregations, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Unitarian Universalist Service
Committee have all invested their staff retirement savings with TIAA-CREF. Moreover, in May of 2010, the Unitarian Universalist Association moved $178 million in retirement accounts from Fidelity to TIAA-CREF because of "a growing commitment by the UUA to genocide-free investing coupled with its disappointment in Fidelity’s persistent refusal to consider Human Rights in their investment choices."\(^5\)

Unfortunately, TIAA-CREF continues to invest in companies that profit from the Israeli occupation and its associated abuses of Palestinian rights. Until it divests, TIAA-CREF violates its own ethical principles and remains complicit in Israel’s breaches of international law and violations of human rights.

As Unitarian Universalists, we do not wish to be complicit in these violations of human rights and international law. UUJME is therefore circulating a petition among Unitarian Universalists asking them to urge TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that profit from the occupation of Palestinian land. A printable copy of the petition may be obtained at [http://www.uujme.org](http://www.uujme.org) and the petition can be signed online at [http://tinyurl.com/uujme-tiaacref](http://tinyurl.com/uujme-tiaacref).

UUJME is sensitive to the intense emotions surrounding this issue and is aware that some of our fellow UUs may feel anguish over the position we are taking, which saddens us greatly. However, the gravity of the human rights violations in Israel-Palestine prevents us from remaining silent and compels us to act.

Notes:


2. Palestinian BDS National Committee - [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net)

3. Such targeted campaigns have been either mounted or proposed by faith groups, including Sabeel, the National Executive Council of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, the Church of England, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church, the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the American Friends Service Committee; and secular groups such as US Campaign To End the Israeli Occupation. For a summary of international BDS initiatives see: [www.bdsmovement.net/2011/middle-east-online-round-up-of-bds-initiatives-8144](http://www.bdsmovement.net/2011/middle-east-online-round-up-of-bds-initiatives-8144)


Palestinian Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad calls for a boycott of Israeli products, in protest against Israel’s withholding Palestinian Authority funds, $100 million in taxes it collects on behalf of the Palestinians. The Israelis had blocked the funds to protest the UN giving Palestinians non-state observer status. --Dick

What the American Media Won't Tell You About Israel
By Noam Chomsky, Alternet 04 December 12, 2012  RSN

The savage punishment of Gaza traces back to decades ago.

An old man in Gaza held a placard that read: "You take my water, burn my olive trees, destroy my house, take my job, steal my land, imprison my father, kill my mother, bombard my country, starve us all, humiliate us all, but I am to blame: I shot a rocket back."

The old man's message provides the proper context for the latest episode in the savage punishment of Gaza. The crimes trace back to 1948, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled from their homes in terror or were expelled to Gaza by conquering Israeli forces, who continued to truck Palestinians over the border for years after the official cease-fire.

The punishment took new forms when Israel conquered Gaza in 1967. From recent Israeli scholarship (primarily Avi Raz's "The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War"), we learn that the government's goal was to drive the refugees into the Sinai Peninsula - and, if feasible, the rest of the population too.

Expulsions from Gaza were carried out under the direct orders of Gen. Yeshayahu Gavish, commander of the Israel Defense Forces Southern Command. Expulsions from the West Bank were far more extreme, and Israel resorted to devious means to prevent the return of those expelled, in direct violation of U.N. Security Council orders.

The reasons were made clear in internal discussions immediately after the war. Golda Meir, later prime minister, informed her Labor Party colleagues that Israel should keep the Gaza Strip while "getting rid of its Arabs." Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and others agreed.

Prime Minister Levi Eshkol explained that those expelled could not be allowed to return because "we cannot increase the Arab population in Israel" - referring to the newly occupied territories, already considered part of Israel.

In accord with this conception, all of Israel's maps were changed, expunging the Green Line (the internationally recognized borders) - though publication of the maps was delayed to permit Abba Eban,
an Israeli ambassador to the U.N., to attain what he called a "favorable impasse" at the General Assembly by concealing Israel's intentions.

The goals of expulsion may remain alive today, and might be a factor in contributing to Egypt's reluctance to open the border to free passage of people and goods barred by the U.S.-backed Israeli siege.

The current upsurge of U.S.-Israeli violence dates to January 2006, when Palestinians voted "the wrong way" in the first free election in the Arab world.

Israel and the U.S. reacted at once with harsh punishment of the miscreants, and preparation of a military coup to overthrow the elected government - the routine procedure. The punishment was radically intensified in 2007, when the coup attempt was beaten back and the elected Hamas government established full control over Gaza.

Ignoring immediate offers from Hamas for a truce after the 2006 election, Israel launched attacks that killed 660 Palestinians in 2006, most of whom were civilians (a third were minors). According to U.N. reports, 2,879 Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire from April 2006 through July 2012, along with several dozen Israelis killed by fire from Gaza.

A short-lived truce in 2008 was honored by Hamas until Israel broke it in November. Ignoring further truce offers, Israel launched the murderous Cast Lead operation in December.

So matters have continued, while the U.S. and Israel also continue to reject Hamas calls for a long-term truce and a political settlement for a two-state solution in accord with the international consensus that the U.S. has blocked since 1976 when the U.S. vetoed a Security Council resolution to this effect, brought by the major Arab states.

This week, Washington devoted every effort to blocking a Palestinian initiative to upgrade its status at the U.N. but failed, in virtual international isolation as usual. The reasons were revealing: Palestine might approach the International Criminal Court about Israel's U.S.-backed crimes.

One element of the unremitting torture of Gaza is Israel's "buffer zone" within Gaza, from which Palestinians are barred entry to almost half of Gaza's limited arable land.

From January 2012 to the launching of Israel's latest killing spree on Nov. 14, Operation Pillar of Defense, one Israeli was killed by fire from Gaza while 78 Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire.

The full story is naturally more complex, and uglier.

The first act of Operation Pillar of Defense was to murder Ahmed Jabari. Aluf Benn, editor of the newspaper Haaretz, describes him as Israel's "subcontractor" and "border guard" in Gaza, who enforced relative quiet there for more than five years.

The pretext for the assassination was that during these five years Jabari had been creating a Hamas military force, with missiles from Iran. A more credible reason was provided by Israeli peace activist Gershon Baskin, who had been involved in direct negotiations with Jabari for years, including plans for the eventual release of the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Baskin reports that hours before he was assassinated, Jabari "received the draft of a permanent truce agreement with Israel, which included mechanisms for maintaining the cease-fire in the case of a flare-up between Israel and the factions in the Gaza Strip."
A truce was then in place, called by Hamas on Nov. 12. Israel apparently exploited the truce, Reuters reports, directing attention to the Syrian border in the hope that Hamas leaders would relax their guard and be easier to assassinate.

Throughout these years, Gaza has been kept on a level of bare survival, imprisoned by land, sea and air. On the eve of the latest attack, the U.N. reported that 40 percent of essential drugs and more than half of essential medical items were out of stock.

In November one of the first in a series of hideous photos sent from Gaza showed a doctor holding the charred corpse of a murdered child. That one had a personal resonance. The doctor is the director and head of surgery at Khan Yunis hospital, which I had visited a few weeks earlier.

In writing about the trip I reported his passionate appeal for desperately needed medicine and surgical equipment. These are among the crimes of the U.S.-Israeli siege, and of Egyptian complicity.

The casualty rates from the November episode were about average: more than 160 Palestinian dead, including many children, and six Israelis.

Among the dead were three journalists. The official Israeli justification was that "The targets are people who have relevance to terror activity." Reporting the "execution" in The New York Times, the reporter David Carr observed that "it has come to this: Killing members of the news media can be justified by a phrase as amorphous as 'relevance to terror activity.'"

The massive destruction was all in Gaza. Israel used advanced U.S. military equipment and relied on U.S. diplomatic support, including the usual U.S. intervention efforts to block a Security Council call for a cease-fire.

With each such exploit, Israel's global image erodes. The photos and videos of terror and devastation, and the character of the conflict, leave few remaining shreds of credibility to the self-declared "most moral army in the world," at least among people whose eyes are open.

The pretexts for the assault were also the usual ones. We can put aside the predictable declarations of the perpetrators in Israel and Washington. But even decent people ask what Israel should do when attacked by a barrage of missiles. It's a fair question, and there are straightforward answers.

One response would be to observe international law, which allows the use of force without Security Council authorization in exactly one case: in self-defense after informing the Security Council of an armed attack, until the Council acts, in accord with the U.N. Charter, Article 51.

Israel is well familiar with that Charter provision, which it invoked at the outbreak of the June 1967 war. But, of course, Israel's appeal went nowhere when it was quickly ascertained that Israel had launched the attack. Israel did not follow this course in November, knowing what would be revealed in a Security Council debate.

Another narrow response would be to agree to a truce, as appeared quite possible before the operation was launched on Nov. 14.

There are more far-reaching responses. By coincidence, one is discussed in the current issue of the journal National Interest. Asia scholars Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen describe China's reaction after rioting in western Xinjiang province, "in which mobs of Uighurs marched around the city beating hapless Han (Chinese) to death."
Chinese president Hu Jintao quickly flew to the province to take charge; senior leaders in the security establishment were fired; and a wide range of development projects were undertaken to address underlying causes of the unrest.

In Gaza, too, a civilized reaction is possible. The U.S. and Israel could end the merciless, unremitting assault, open the borders and provide for reconstruction - and if it were imaginable, reparations for decades of violence and repression.

The cease-fire agreement stated that the measures to implement the end of the siege and the targeting of residents in border areas "shall be dealt with after 24 hours from the start of the cease-fire."

There is no sign of steps in this direction. Nor is there any indication of a U.S.-Israeli willingness to rescind their separation of Gaza from the West Bank in violation of the Oslo Accords, to end the illegal settlement and development programs in the West Bank that are designed to undermine a political settlement, or in any other way to abandon the rejectionism of the past decades.

Someday, and it must be soon, the world will respond to the plea issued by the distinguished Gazan human-rights lawyer Raji Sourani while the bombs were once again raining down on defenseless civilians in Gaza: "We demand justice and accountability. We dream of a normal life, in freedom and dignity."

US CONTRACTIONS, Hypocrisy

The Anti-Empire Report by William Blum

June 10th, 2010  www.killinghope.org

The worst thing that ever happened to the Jewish people is the Holocaust. The second worst thing that ever happened to the Jewish people is the state of Israel.

Things internationally are so dispiriting there's nothing left to do but fantasize. I picture Turkey, as a member of NATO, demanding that the alliance come to its defense after being attacked by Israel. Under Article 5 of the NATO charter an armed attack on one member is deemed to constitute an armed attack on all members. [Dick: And the UN Charter’s central opposition is to national aggression, the worst of all war crimes.] That is the ostensible reason NATO is fighting in Afghanistan — the attack against the United States on September 11, 2001 is regarded as an attack on all NATO members (disregarding the awkward fact that Afghanistan as a country had nothing to do with the attack). The Israeli attack on a Turkish-flagged ship, operated by a Turkish humanitarian organization, killing nine Turkish nationals and wounding many more can certainly constitute an attack upon a NATO member.

So, after the United States, the UK, Germany, France and other leading NATO members offer their ridiculous non-sequitur excuses why they can't ... umm ... er ... invoke Article 5, and the international media swallows it all without any indigestion, Turkey demands that Israel should at least lose its formal
association with NATO as a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue. This too is dismissed with scorn by the eminent NATO world powers on the grounds that it would constitute a victory for terrorism. And anti-Semitism of course.

Turkey then withdraws from NATO. Azerbaijan and five other Central Asian members of NATO's Partnership for Peace with Turkic constituencies do the same. NATO falls into a crisis. Remaining member countries begin to question the organization's policies as never before ... like please tell us again why our young men are killing and dying in Afghanistan, and why we send them to Kosovo and Iraq and other places the Americans deem essential to their endlessly-threatened national security.

**When Vice President Biden tells** the eminent conservative-in-liberal-clothing pseudo-intellectual Charlie Rose on TV that "We have put as much pressure and as much cajoling on Israel as we can to allow them [Gaza] to get building materials in," Rose for once rises to the occasion and acts like a real journalist, asking Biden: "Have you threatened Israel with ending all military and economic aid? ... Have you put the names of Israeli officials on your list of foreigners who can not enter the United States and whose bank accounts in the US are frozen, as you've done with numerous foreign officials who were not supporters of the empire? ... Since Israel has committed both crimes against the peace and crimes against humanity, and since these are crimes that have international jurisdiction, certain Israeli political and military personnel can be named in trials held in any country of the world. Will you be instructing the Attorney General to proceed with such an indictment? Or if some other country which is a member of the International Criminal Court calls upon the ICC to prosecute these individuals, will the United States try to block the move? ... Why hasn't the United States itself delivered building materials to Gaza?"

**When Israel justifies its murders** on the grounds of "self-defense", late-night TV comedians Jay Leno and David Letterman find great humor in this, pointing out that a new memoir by China's premier at the time of the 1989 Tiananmen Square violent suppression defends the military action by saying that soldiers acted in "self-defense" when they fired on the democracy activists. ²

**When Israel labels as "terrorists"** the ship passengers who offered some resistance to the Israeli invaders, the *New York Times* points out that the passengers who resisted the 9-11 highjackers on the plane which crashed in Pennsylvania are called "heroes". (As an aside, it's worth noting that the United States uses 9-11 as Israel uses the Holocaust — as excuse and justification for all manner of illegal and violent international behavior.)

Meanwhile, the *Washington Post* reminds its readers that in 2009 Israel attacked a boat on international waters carrying medical aid to Gaza with former congresswoman Cynthia McKinney aboard; and that in 1967 Israel attacked an American ship, the USS Liberty, killing 34 and wounding about 173, and that President Johnson did then just what President Obama is doing now and would have done then — nothing.

And finally, Secretary of State Clinton declares that she's had a revelation. She realizes that what she recently said about North Korea when it was accused of having torpedoed a South Korean warship applies as well to Israel. Mrs. Clinton had demanded that Pyongyang "stop its provocative behavior, halt its policy of threats of belligerence towards its neighbors, and take irreversible steps to fulfill its denuclearization commitments and comply with international law." ³ She adds that the North Korean guilt is by no means conclusive, while Israel doesn't deny its attack on the ship at all; moreover, it's not known for sure if North Korea actually possesses nuclear weapons, whereas there's no uncertainty about Israel's large stockpile.

So there you have it. Hypocrisy reigns. Despite my best fantasizing. Is hypocrisy a moral failing or a
failure of the intellect? When President Obama says, as he has often, "No one is above the law" and in his next breath makes it clear that his administration will not seek to indict Bush or Cheney for any crimes, does he think that no one will notice the contradiction, the hypocrisy? That's a callous disregard for public opinion and/or a dumbness worthy of his predecessor.

And when he declares: "The future does not belong to those who gather armies on a field of battle or bury missiles in the ground", 4 does it not occur to him at all that he's predicting a bleak outlook for the United States? Or that his conscious, deliberate policy is to increase the size of America's army and its stockpile of missiles?

Comrades, can the hypocrisy and the lies reach such a magnitude that enough American true believers begin to question their cherished faith, so that their number reaches a critical mass and explodes? Well, it's already happened with countless Americans, but it's an awfully formidable task keeping pace with what is turned out by the mass media and education factories. They're awfully good at what they do. Too bad. But don't forsake the struggle. What better way is there to live this life? And remember, just because the world has been taken over by lying, hypocritical, mass-murdering madmen doesn't mean we can't have a good time.
The first Russell Tribunal, chaired by Jean-Paul Sartre, met in Stockholm, Sweden in 1967 to investigate and adjudicate, on the basis of international law, U.S. military intervention in Vietnam. Further tribunals were held in the 1970s to address human rights violations in Latin America, particularly by the Pinochet regime in Chile, and in 2004 after the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The tribunals do not have official standing, but rather aim to increase public awareness. In philosopher Bertrand Russell's words, "May the tribunals prevent the crime of silence."

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine was established in March 2009 to address the failure of the international community to implement recommendations stipulated by the 2004 International Court of Justice's 1,067-page advisory opinion on the illegality of Israel's separation barrier, and the lack of any consequences for Israel following its 2008-09 assault on Gaza. The focus of the Tribunal is therefore not only on Israel's responsibility for the suffering it inflicts on Palestinians, but also the complicity of states, corporations and international bodies in Israel's violations of international law.

The first session, held in Barcelona in March 2010, addressed the European Union's failure to meet its responsibilities; the second, in London in November 2010, addressed corporate complicity; the third, in Cape Town in November 2011, considered the applicability to Israel of the Crime of Apartheid. The fourth and final session, which focused on the roles of the United Nations and the United States, took place this past Oct. 6 and 7 in New York. Next, the jury
will meet in Geneva to deliberate and present its conclusions.

In each tribunal, a panel of judges with legal, cultural or political backgrounds heard the testimony of expert witnesses and posed questions to each witness. In the New York tribunal, the 11-member panel included South African law professor John Dugard, former special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories; Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker; Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire; former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA); and Roger Waters of the band Pink Floyd.

Pierre Galand, president of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, chaired the New York sessions. Describing the proceedings as a "test of international conscience," Galand announced that one of the witnesses, the director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights Raji Sourani, and one of the initiators of the Tribunal, Palestinian ambassador to the EU Leila Shahid, were unable to be present because the U.S. had denied them visas.

Panelist and Holocaust survivor Stéphane Hessel, honorary president of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine and co-writer of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, greeted the audience that filled the Great Hall in Cooper Union. "This unfortunate population has been abused and abused," he said, "with nobody to help them to the statehood they deserve." Not only is the U.S. complicit, he emphasized, but the U.N. itself, which gave birth to the problem, has done nothing beyond pass resolutions. His hope for the Tribunal is that it be an impulse to end Israel's impunity and the Palestinians' impossible situation.

Israeli Prof. Ilan Pappé spoke about the impact of Zionism on Palestinians. Because daily events in Palestine are not catastrophic enough for the media to take notice, he stressed the importance of a cumulative, historical perspective. Contrary to the Israeli narrative, Palestine was a thriving society when Zionism entered, Pappé said. The early Zionists viewed Palestinians as "alien natives" living in an area waiting to be "redeemed" by Jews. But
Zionism during the Mandate period failed both demographically—by 1948 Jews were only one-third of the population—and geographically—Jews owned only 7 percent of the land, Pappé noted. "The inevitable result," he concluded, "was the 1947 decision to ethnically cleanse, a crime against humanity, beyond which is only genocide." He ended his testimony with a plea to the Tribunal: "Do not seek to reduce Palestine to 20 percent of its former land."

The U.N., through its 1947 Resolution 181 partitioning Palestine, has a central role to play on Palestine. Therefore, according to Prof. Vera Gowlland-Debbas, the General Assembly has a permanent responsibility until the issue is resolved. However, as former UNRWA head Peter Hansen noted, that resolution itself was unfair in allotting the majority of the land to the recently arrived minority Jewish population. The U.N., he continued, has been weakest in securing compliance with international law and its own resolutions, and strongest in humanitarian operations in the field. UNRWA, with a staff of 30,000, is the U.N.'s largest agency—but, Hansen asked, why does no one question the ongoing need for such a relief program? Is it dealing only with symptoms, rather like treating cancer with a band-aid? Yet Hansen admitted he sees no alternative, since Israel cannot be trusted to abide by the 4th Geneva Convention.

Gowlland-Debbas accused the Security Council of "manifest double standards" in a case where "the U.N. has special responsibility." Israeli policies and practices, she elaborated, resemble many cases that the Security Council has vigorously enforced, such as compensation for property rights in the former Yugoslavia and requiring Iraq to pay $52 billion in restitution following its occupation of Kuwait. The U.N. has imposed 19 sanctions regimes on four continents, and established a special tribunal in Lebanon after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Yet even when the International Court of Justice, in its advisory ruling on the illegality of Israel's separation barrier, called on the U.N. to take further action, and even when the Goldstone report requested the Security Council to report to the General Assembly about actions taken, the Security Council has done nothing.

The reason for the U.N.'s inaction leads directly to the second focus of the New York Tribunal: "The Role of the U.S. in supporting violations of Palestinian Rights." Half of the 82 vetoes the U.S. has cast in the Security Council have been to protect Israel from condemnation. The Bush administration included the U.N. in the Quartet to lend some legitimacy to the peace process, but, according to Hansen, this only damaged the U.N.'s standing and respect.
Discussing how the U.S. is undermining Palestine, Attorney Diana Buttu elicited the most responses from the panel of judges. She described Washington's actions as deliberately changing the rules of the game in order to make legal that which is illegal. The goal of the peace process, Buttu contended, has been to remove the stain of Israel as an occupier. Since it began, 34 countries have opened relations with Israel while the settlement population has tripled. Now the process aims to redraw the borders to accommodate illegal settlers. Moreover, the U.S. has flipped the role of occupier and occupied via the Oslo accords: most of the donor money to the Palestinian Authority is to enable the occupied to provide security to their oppressors, the occupiers.

Buttu was spokesperson for the PLO's Negotiations Support Unit during the negotiations at the end of President Bill Clinton's term in 2000. When Israel announced yet another new settlement, the Palestinian contingent complained. A U.S. adviser, whom Buttu would not name, responded, "We can't demand a freeze while negotiations are underway." When the second intifada broke out in September, that same adviser said, "We can't demand a freeze now that there's violence."

To the many questions from the panel as to why the U.S. supports Israel even when it makes no sense, and why Americans feel free to challenge all U.S. policies except those toward Israel, Buttu responded that no one element is sufficient to explain it. In addition to the Israel lobby, profits from militarization, and Christian Zionism, she pointed out that the U.S. has adopted many Israeli techniques: pre-emptive strikes, drones, administrative detention, the
Mairead Maguire asked the question that seems to be taboo in the U.S.: Why does President Barack Obama allow Israel to threaten Iran with war when Iran has signed the NPT and Israel has at least 200 nuclear weapons? Why does the president not demand that Israel sign the NPT? Katherine Gallagher, senior staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, could only respond that there is an absolute disconnect when talking about a nuclear-free Middle East.

David Wildman of the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries discussed the role of Christian Zionists in the Israel lobby. Theirs is a dualistic theology, he explained: the world is divided into good and bad. This explains why they do not see Gazans as civilians, Wildman added. Christian Zionists see truth as based on belief rather than facts, he continued. They believe that U.S. military expansion is part of God's plan, and that organizations that support human rights and international law are "not with us." Wildman also considers mainline churches as part of the Israel lobby, since they are silenced by their dedication to Christian-Jewish dialogue and their blindness to how Palestinians live. What is needed, he concluded, is to decolonize Christian philosophy.

Phyllis Bennis, co-chair of the U.N.-based International Coordinating Network on Palestine, urged the world community to reclaim the U.N. from U.S. domination. Rather than seeking to renew peace talks, she argued, the U.N. should lead civil society in taking up the slack of failed diplomacy. The discourse is beginning to open up and change, Bennis believes—the challenge is how to direct this toward a transformation of policy. She sees the way forward through the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which has united movements across the globe with flexibility. This is not about "Yea Palestine" or "Boo Israel," she stressed, or about trying to impoverish the world's 12th richest country. Rather, Bennis concluded, it is to compel Israel to comply with international law.

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