

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/08/01/the-pariah-state/print>

The Pariah State

A Short History of Israeli Impunity

by EVAN JONES

AUGUST 1-3, 2014

‘From abroad, we are accustomed to believe that Eretz Israel is presently almost totally desolate, an uncultivated desert, and that anyone wishing to buy land there can come and buy all he wants. But in truth it is not so ... [Our brethren in Eretz Israel] were slaves in their land of exile and they suddenly find themselves with unlimited freedom ... This sudden change has engendered in them an impulse to despotism as always happens when “a slave becomes king,” and behold they walk with the Arabs in hostility and cruelty, unjustly encroaching on them.’

Ahad Ha’am, 1891; cited in Shlomo Sand, The Invention of the Land of Israel, 2012.

‘If Lord Shaftesbury was literally inexact in describing Palestine as a country without a people, he was essentially correct, for there is no Arab people living in intimate fusion with the country, utilizing its resources and stamping it with a characteristic impress; there is at best an Arab encampment.’

Israel Zangwill, 1920; cited in Naseer Aruri, ed., Palestinian Refugees, 2001.

‘[the Haganah] should adopt the system of aggressive defence; during the assault we must respond with a decisive blow: the destruction of the [Arab] place or the expulsion of the residents

along with the seizure of the place.’ ‘The war will give us the land. The concept of ‘ours’ and ‘not ours’ are peace concepts, only, and in war they lose their whole meaning.’

David Ben-Gurion, December 1947, February 1948; cited in Aruri.

‘The conquest [of Deir Yassin by Irgun and Stern Gang forces, supported by Haganah operatives, in April 1948] was carried out with great cruelty. Whole families – women, old people, children – were killed ... Some of the prisoners moved to places of detention, including women and children, were murdered viciously by their captors.’

Yitzhak Levy, Haganah Intelligence Service; cited in Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited, 2004.

‘[Of the massacre at al-Daway(i)ma in May 1948] Cultured and well mannered commanders who are considered good fellows ... have turned into low murderers, and this happened not in the storm of battle and blind passion, but because of a system of expulsion and annihilation. The few Arabs remain the better.’

Account of a participant soldier who Morris claims ‘appears to have based himself largely or completely on hearsay’ but who elsewhere is described as an eyewitness; cited in Uri Davis, Apartheid Israel, 2003.

‘One Friday night in September 1967 ... we were left alone by our officers, who drove into Jerusalem for their night off. An elderly Palestinian man, who had been arrested on the road while carrying a large sum in American dollars, was taken into the interrogation room. While standing outside the building on security detail, I was startled by terrifying screams coming from within. I ran inside, climbed onto a crate, and, through the window observed the prisoner tied to a chair as my good friends beat him all over his body and burned his arms with lit cigarettes. I climbed down from the post, vomited, and returned to my post, frightening and shaking. About an hour later, a pickup truck carrying the body of the “rich” old man pulled out of the station, and my friends informed me they were driving to the Jordan River to get rid of him.’

Sand himself, in The Invention of the Land of Israel

“‘We take the land first and the law comes after’ [claimed Yehoshafat Palmon, Arab affairs adviser to the Mayor of Jerusalem to the author]. ‘The law comes after ...’. In fact, for most Arabs it did not come at all.’

David Hirst, The Gun and the Olive Branch, 1977

Let’s not mince words. Israel is an abomination. One is hard pressed to find words in English powerful enough to describe the grotesqueries. There are numerous bread-and-butter tyrannies – some of which (foremost, Saudi Arabia), curiously, we have as friends. But Israel is unique. Israel was conceived as necessitating ethnic cleansing, and was created and is sustained by ethnic cleansing. Israel was created and is sustained by terrorism. Israel is, sui generis, a force for terrorism and ethnic cleansing.

There is the view, fashionable amongst middle-of-the-road optimists harbouring a two-state solution pie-in-the-sky, that the problem is that the state has been appropriated by the political Right and the Far Right. The good Israel has been hijacked by the nasties. On the contrary. The current Israel is the natural heir of its origins and subsequent entrenchment of ethnically-based legal and cultural structures. Israel now produces racists as a majority voice, with citizens imbued with universalist values reduced to near powerlessness.

As a consequence, Palestinians, having been designated as without humanity, can be deprived of their residual dogged hold on their existence, deprived of their property and murdered at will. The current mass murder of Gazans is merely par for the course. It has become a spectator sport. Sadism against the non-people is a rite of passage.

Moshe Menuhin, famous by association as father of Yehudi and Hephzibah, appears to be now neglected as a resolute anti-Zionist. His 1965/1969 *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time* explains why. His 'almost preferred' original title, "*Jewish*" *Nationalism: A Monstrous Historical Crime and Curse*, better conveys the book's contents. It retains its pertinence. In *Decadence* we read:

'As to Zionist Israel of the present day, I prefer the truth as fearlessly told by one honest repentant Israeli, Nathan Chofshi, in reply to all the sordid and revolting propaganda, brazenly and inhumanly and hypocritically told by such tribalistic barbarians as Ben Gurion, Moshe Dayan, Shimeon Peres, Levi Eshkol, Abba Eban and the entire lot of the military gang that runs poor misguided Israel. Said Nathan Chofshi [in 1959]: "We came and turned the native Arabs into tragic refugees. And still we dare slander and malign them, to besmirch their name; instead of being deeply ashamed of what we did, and trying to undo some of the evil we committed, we justify our terrible acts and even attempt to glorify them ...".'

The 'entire lot of the military gang', now fronted by the sociopath Benjamin Netanyahu, is still in charge.

Nazi parallels

It is forbidden by the censors who channel acceptable opinion to draw parallels with the Nazis' *modus operandi*. But if the shoe fits ...

There is Israel's Mengelian experimentation on caged Gazans, apart from saturation bombing, with nerve gas, depleted uranium, white phosphorous and flechette shells. More, the model of the Reichstag fire false flag has been readily replicated, not least in the 1954 Lavon Affair and, most spectacularly, in 9/11 (whence the five dancing Israelis at Liberty Park?). Practice makes perfect with false flags. Add extra-judicial murders made to order.

Then there is the collective punishment. In late 1966, three Israeli soldiers died near the then Jordanian border when their vehicle ran over a land mine. Menuhin summarizes the Israeli response:

‘The war [June 1967] actually began earlier, at Es Samu, on November 13, 1966. Like Deir Yassin before the big war in 1948, like the shelling of Gaza in September 1955, the capture of El Auja Triangle in the Sinai desert, and other “Small Wars,” Es Samu was a diversionary attack, a good exercise for brave soldier boys. Es Samu, a peaceful, undefended civilian village in Jordan, was attacked at dawn on November 13, 1966 by twenty Patton tanks, eighty armored half-track personnel carriers and jeeps with 4,000 Israeli troops, which rumbled across the frontier, overwhelmed an eight-man police post, swept into Es Samu, demolished 125 houses, 15 stone huts, destroyed the mosque, shops, an elementary school and a medical clinic, killed 26 Jordanians, wounded 54, and captured three Jordanian soldiers. Three tanks reduced the local mosque to rubble. It was wanton, indiscriminate murder and destruction, just to teach the Arabs a preliminary lesson about the real thing to come.’

And finally there is *lebensraum*, the *idée fixe*. Menuhin again:

‘The “fixed idea” – the “Ingathering of the Exiles” ... became a Territorial Imperative. The evolved idea of Prophetic Judaism that “God did ‘Tshakah”” (justice, salvation, charity) to Israel (the Jews) by dispersing them among the nations of the world and that the core of their religion was universalism, humanity, ethics above all, was discarded in favor of a new religion, newly learned from the European political nationalists, – *Lebensraum*, statism, expansion, and thus a Greater Eretz Israel was what the Shertocks[Sharretts], Ben Gurions, Moshe Dayans and the rest of the military junta of Israel insisted on, cost what may to themselves and to their victims, the Arabs of Palestine ... All this will explain the Big Wars (1948, 1956, 1967) and the many “Little Wars” which have taken place from 1948 to this day, wars of “Redemption” and Expansion to satisfy the demands of the “fixed idea”.’

Menuhin provides a minor but telling case study under the heading ‘The “Little Wars” in the Scheme of the Fixed Idea’. Citing General Carl von Horn, UN Mediator, reflecting in a 1966 book:

‘[The Israelis] developed a habit of irrigating and plowing in stretches of Arab-owned land nearby ... Gradually, beneath the glowering eyes of the Syrians, who held the high ground overlooking the zone, the area had become a network of Israeli canals and irrigation channels edging up against and always encroaching on Arab-owned property. This deliberate poaching was bitterly resented by the Syrians ...’

Menuhin expands on the outcome:

‘The time came to give the Syrians a typical “reprisal” attack. On February 1, 1962, the village of El-Tawafiq was razed to the ground. The Arab farmers of the Lower and Upper Tawafiq used to [citing von Horn] “observe with alarm the Israeli kibbutznik (cooperative farmers) tractor-drivers as they speeded up on each turn at the eastern boundaries of their fields, making the plows swerve out, thus slowly but surely extending their previous cultivation eastwards into [very fertile] Arab land.” ... by destroying the Tawafiq villages, the Israelis got what they wanted, what the “fixed idea” dictated.

And from Uri Davis (*Apartheid Israel*) citing an interview of a settler, in response to the stance of Yeshaayahu Leibowitz, renowned Riga-born Israeli academic, Orthodox in the necessity of state-religion separation and opponent of the post-1967 Occupations:

‘Leibowitz is right. We are Judeo-Nazis, and why not? ... Even today I am willing to do the dirty work for Israel, to kill as many Arabs as necessary, to deport them, to expel and burn them ... Hang me if you want as a war criminal ... What you lot don’t understand is that the dirty work of Zionism is not finished yet, far from it. True, it could have been finished in 1948 ...’

And Davis citing Leibowitz in 1982, echoing Israel Shahak:

‘If we must rule over another people, then it is impossible to avoid the existence of Nazi methods. The [Shabra and Shatila] massacre was done by us. The Phalange are our mercenaries, exactly as the Ukrainians and the Croats and the Slovaks were the mercenaries of Hitler, who organized them as soldiers to do the work for him. Even so we have organized the assassins in Lebanon in order to murder the Palestinians.’

Israel and the United Nations

The cheer squad makes much of Israel’s legitimation at the hands of the United Nations, so why then has the UN been treated by Israel with comprehensive contempt?

The initial Partition Plan of the special committee, apart from being outrageously favourable to the Jewish community (envisaged to accommodate refugee intake), was a dog’s breakfast – entirely predictable, given the absurdity of the ambition. For example, Arab opponents claimed that, with upward adjustment for the size of the Bedouin population, the proposed Jewish state would have an Arab majority. A slightly modified plan passed the General Assembly on 29 November 1947 with more than the needed two-thirds majority.

The vote was devoid of principle – it relied on the US succumbing to the seeming electoral advantages of garnering the domestic Jewish vote (and in opposition to all but one of President Truman’s myriad Cabinet and bureaucratic advisors), the Soviet Union (with its satellites in tow) pursuing purely a *realpolitik* agenda, and other countries bribed or threatened by Jewish lobbyists.

Menuhin evaluates the process thus:

‘Then came *Partition*, on November 29, 1947, the most illegal and inhuman giving away to outsiders of land that belonged to the indigenous Christian and Muslim Arab population, through political manipulation and pressure, as well as through the Christian guilt complex vis-à-vis the Jewish people, – all at the expense of the innocent Arabs.’

Alison Weir neatly summarizes the story in a *Counterpunch* article, October 2011. The General Assembly recommendation was never implemented by the UN Security Council. Rather Israel was established by means of terror on 14 May 1948.

The notion, implicit in the cheer squad's defense, that the Zionist leaders would have been satisfied with the Partition Plan's boundaries if the Arab armies had not attacked is ludicrous. Jerusalem was to be governed by international forces – out of the question for the Zionists. More, Israeli leaders were having nothing to do with the General Assembly Resolution 194 (III), 11 November 1948, which '... Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date [etc.]'

UN Mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, appointed immediately in May to sort out the mess, was disbelieving (cited in Menuhin): "[The Israeli government] had shown nothing but hardness and obduracy towards these refugees. If instead of that it had shown a magnanimous spirit, if it had declared that the Jewish people, which itself had suffered so much, understood the feelings of the refugees and did not wish to treat them in the same way as it itself had been treated, its prestige in the world at large would have been immeasurably increased ...". Moshe Shertock/Sharrett replied to Bernadotte: "The Jewish government could under present conditions in no circumstances permit the return of the Arabs who had fled or been driven from their homes during the war ...".

(Shertock and Menuhin were contemporaries at the Zionist Jaffa-Tel Aviv Gymnasia Herzlia during 1909-13. Shertok learned his lessons well; Menuhin read the wind and immediately cleared off to the US, his own promised land.)

For his troubles, Bernadotte was assassinated – an event that Menuhin recounts with the most profound disgust:

'Bernadotte's Peace Plan, as well as his recommendations to the Security Council, made him a marked man in Israel. ... We must now go on to the date that will live for ever in infamy, September 17, 1948, when that incredible crime was committed by militant, inhumane, insane, political nationalists who worship a State that will expand their *Lebensraum*, in Nazi fashion. ... Murderer Nathan Friedman-Yellin was soon amnestied, and in 1950, the Israeli Government allowed the murderer to stand for election to the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) of which he became a member.'

The subsequent state of play is well summarized by Davis (*Apartheid Israel*, p.63ff.):

'The territory of pre-1967 Israel is classified by international law under two categories:

1. the territory allocated for the Jewish state by the UN partition Plan for Palestine;
2. the territory occupied illegally by the Israeli army in the 1948-49 war beyond the boundaries of the 1947 UN Partition Plan.

Under the UN Charter and resolutions, Israel has no legitimate rule in either category. Israeli rule over the territories allocated for the 'Jewish state' ... was subject to a number of important conditions, notably compliance with the terms of the steps preparatory to independence and future constitution and government, none of which has been upheld by the incumbent state.

Likewise, the Israeli occupation, in 1948-49, of territories beyond the [1947 Plan] boundaries ..., their colonization ... and their subsequent annexation to the State of Israel are in violation of both the UN Charter and of international law, like all colonial occupation. From an international legal point of view, Israeli claims to West Jerusalem, Safad or Jaffa, occupied in 1948-49, are as thoroughly invalid as Israeli claims to East Jerusalem, Hebron or Gaza, occupied in 1967. ...

The State of Israel has chosen to violate the constitutional stipulation posited by the United Nations General Assembly as a condition for its legitimate establishment. ...

... the elections for Israel's Constituent Assembly, stipulated in the 1947 UN Partition Plan, were held in July 1949. The Constituent Assembly was elected ... for the explicit purpose of endorsing Israel's constitution. ... Yet, when the Constituent Assembly convened, it became clear that an agreement had been reached by the major political parties represented by the Assembly to betray the mandate on which they had been elected ... the Constituent Assembly passed instead the Transition Law (1949) transforming itself by fiat into the First Knesset [to which a delegate cried out: 'This is a political putsch!'] ...

But most significantly, the State of Israel is guilty of flagrant violation of the constitutional principle regarding citizenship as stipulated by the UN General Assembly in the 1947 Partition Plan for Palestine. There is no question that under the stipulations of the said Plan all the 1948 Palestinian Arab refugees and their descendants, by now some four million people defined under Israeli law as 'absentees', are constitutionally entitled without qualification to Israeli citizenship.'

Israel has since treated the significant number of UN Resolutions that are adverse to its ongoing belligerence as of no consequence. And Israel has cause, for it has been endowed with immunity by the Great Powers.

And to ram home the immunity, Israel bombs whenever appropriate (Lebanon, Gaza) UN facilities. Old Testament stuff, with late modern weaponry.

Apartheid Israel

Is it or isn't it? Regarding the Occupied Territories, the answer is self-evident. Going where hair-splitters fear to tread, Davis goes to the nub of the matter behind the 'Green Line' (p.36ff.; 82ff.):

Racism is not apartheid and apartheid is not racism. Apartheid is a political system where racism is regulated in law through acts of parliament. ... In an apartheid state the state enforces racism through the legal system, criminalizes expressions of humanitarian concern and obligates the citizenry through acts of parliament to make racist choices and conform to racist behaviour. ...

Apartheid in Israel is an overarching legal reality that determines the quality of everyday life and underpins the circumstances of living for all the inhabitants of the State of Israel. ... The introduction of [the] key distinction of 'Jew' and 'non-Jew' into the foundation of Israeli law is, however, accomplished as part of a two-tier structure. It is this structure that has preserved the veil of ambiguity over Israeli apartheid legislation for over half a century. ...

The first tier, the level at which the key distinction between ‘Jew’ and ‘non-Jew’ is rendered openly and explicitly, is in the Constitutions and Articles of Association of all the institutions of the Zionist movement and in the first instance, the [World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund]. The second tier is the level at which this key distinction between ‘Jew’ and ‘non-Jew’ ... is incorporated into the body of the laws of the State of Israel, notably the body of strategic legislation governing land tenure. ...

The situation alters radically after the establishment of the State of Israel, in that now the exclusivist constitutional stipulations of the WZO, JA and JNF (for Jews only) are incorporated into the body of the laws of the State of Israel through a detailed sequence of strategic Knesset legislation ... Thus organizations and bodies that, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, could credibly have claimed to be voluntary have been incorporated ... into the legal, compulsory, judicial machinery of the state: ...

* 1950: Absentees’ Property Law; Law of Return; Development Authority Law

* 1952: World Zionist Organization – Jewish Agency for the Land of Israel (Status) Law

* 1953: Jewish National Fund Law; Land Acquisition (Validations of Acts and Compensation) Law

* 1954: Covenant between the Government of Israel and the Zionist Executive ...

* 1958: Prescription Law

* 1960: Basic Law: Israel Lands; Israel Lands Law: Israel Lands Administration Law

* 1961: Covenant between the Government of Israel and the Jewish National Fund

In subsequent years this body of strategic legislation governing the terms of tenure of 93 per cent of Israel lands was further refined in such pieces of legislation as the Agricultural Settlement (Restriction on Use of Agricultural Land and Water) of 1967 and the Lands (Allocation of Rights to Foreigners) Law of 1980. The list above, however, represents the mainstay of Israeli apartheid ...

... it is through this two-tier mechanism that an all-encompassing apartheid system could be legislated by the Israeli Knesset in all that pertains to access to land under Israeli sovereignty and control without resorting to explicit and frequent mention of ‘Jew’, as a legal category, versus ‘non-Jew’. ...

In other words, in the critical areas of immigration, settlement and land development the Israeli sovereign, the Knesset, which is formally accountable to all citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike, has formulated and passed legislation ceding state sovereignty and entered into Covenants vesting its responsibilities with organizations such as the WZO, the JA and the JNF, which are constitutionally committed to the exclusive principle of ‘only for Jews’, that legal apartheid is regulated in Israel. And it is through this mechanism of legal duplicity that the State of Israel has

successful veiled the reality of Zionist apartheid in the guise of legal democracy since the establishment of the State of Israel to date. ...

The same procedure has been applied by the Knesset in order to veil the reality of clerical legislation in Israel. Israel is a theocracy in that all domains pertaining to registration of marriage, divorce and death are regulated under Israeli law by religious courts. ...

The critical importance of these structures of veiling and obligation cannot be sufficiently emphasized. They represent one of the primary vehicles that made it possible for official representatives and various apologists of the Zionist movement and the Government of the State of Israel to deliver the claim that the State of Israel was a democracy akin to western liberal democracies, the Palestinian *nakba* notwithstanding. ...

Pointing to these facts alone [Arab Israelis having the vote, access to the Knesset as members (in principle), and equal access to the Israeli courts (in principle)] is tantamount to an exercise in misrepresentation, manipulating these significant features in order to veil the fundamental apartheid structures of the Israeli polity in all that pertains to the right to inherit property; to access the material resources of the state (notably, land and water); and to access the welfare resources of the state (for example religious services and child benefits) such as fully justify the classification of the State of Israel as an apartheid state. ...

In all matters pertaining to the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conflict between a settler-colonial state and the native indigenous population, namely, in all matters pertaining to the question of rights to property, land tenure, settlement and development, Israeli apartheid legislation is more radical than was South African apartheid legislation. ... Not insisting on petty apartheid has veiled Israeli apartheid from scrutiny by the international community ...

The annihilation of identity

Having denied the existence of a functioning Palestinian society before expropriation, Israel's founders of necessity confronted its existence. Facts on the ground. The myth of the non-existent Palestinian society had to be forged in reality. First, the population had to be cleared out, fragmented – thus the *nakba*. The ensuing diaspora naturally precluded a modicum of social and political integration. Next, the physical space had to be furiously appropriated – the landscape destroyed, built over; everything re-named.

In addition, pulverize the crucial intangible dimension – the cultural landscape: memory, history, identity and its artefacts. Nur Masalha's 2012 *The Palestine Nakba* provides an accessible summary.

'In 1948, the Israeli state appropriated for itself immovable Palestinian assets and personal possessions, including schools, libraries, books, pictures, private papers, historical documents and manuscripts [etc.]. ... several private collections of manuscripts and tens of thousands of books were looted by the Haganah and never returned [citing John Rose]. Parts of these private collections, including the diary and private papers of Khalil al-Sakakini (1878-1953), ended up

in the library of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Al-Sakakini was one of the country's leading Palestinian educators, linguists and authors. ...

In 1958, a decade after the Nakba, the Israeli authorities destroyed 27,000 books, most of them Palestinian textbooks from the pre-1948 period, claiming that they were either useless or threatened the state. The authorities sold the books to a paper plant. ...

For many years stateless and exiled Palestinians had to rely on the Beirut-based Palestinian Research Centre [founded in 1965 on the initiative of Dr Fayez Sayigh] and the Institute for Palestine Studies (also in Beirut) to preserve their national heritage. ... The resourcefulness and popular success of the [PRC] were resented by the Israeli state and Israeli academia. The Centre established and amassed Palestinian archives, disseminated historical and scholarly research on Palestine and preserved Palestinian popular culture and heritage. Before the Israeli invasion of Beirut in September 1982, two attempts were made by Israel, in July and August, to destroy the Centre completely [citing Cheryl Rubenberg].

In 1982, as the POL evacuated Beirut during the Israeli invasion, Palestinian institutions in the city were destroyed. In the mid-September, the Israeli army raided the [PRC] along with other Palestinian and Lebanese institutions. Nearly all Palestinian cultural institutions in Beirut were pillaged, including the Palestine Cinema Institute, the Samed Workshop and the Palestinian Red Crescent clinic. The contents of the [PRC] were systematically looted; its historical archives and a 25,000 volume library and microfilm collection were looted and carted away by the Israeli army [citing Rashid Khalidi]. ... [The army appropriated] precious documents, dating back centuries, that the Centre had purchased in Europe and restored to the cultural custody of the Palestinians. ... On 5 February 1983 the [PRC] was destroyed by a bomb that killed 20 people ...

In 2001 the Israeli government closed the Orient House (Bayt al-Sharq) in East Jerusalem and confiscated its archive and the collections of the Arab Studies Society housed in it. ... The Arab Studies Society Library and the archives of the Orient House were a piece of living history and a monument to the long and continuing Palestinian struggle for survival in Jerusalem. [From both the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the 1993 Oslo Accords] Israel promised that it would not violate the right of the House to continue to operate freely. ...

In 1982, as the POL evacuated Beirut during the Israeli invasion, Palestinian institutions in the city were destroyed. In the mid-September, the Israeli army raided the [PRC] along with other Palestinian and Lebanese institutions. Nearly all Palestinian cultural institutions in Beirut were pillaged, including the Palestine Cinema Institute, the Samed Workshop and the Palestinian Red Crescent clinic. The contents of the [PRC] were systematically looted; its historical archives and a 25,000 volume library and microfilm collection were looted and carted away by the Israeli army [citing Rashid Khalidi]. ... [The army appropriated] precious documents, dating back centuries, that the Centre had purchased in Europe and restored to the cultural custody of the Palestinians. ... On 5 February 1983 the [PRC] was destroyed by a bomb that killed 20 people ...

In 2001 the Israeli government closed the Orient House (Bayt al-Sharq) in East Jerusalem and confiscated its archive and the collections of the Arab Studies Society housed in it. ... The Arab Studies Society Library and the archives of the Orient House were a piece of living history and a

monument to the long and continuing Palestinian struggle for survival in Jerusalem. [From both the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the 1993 Oslo Accords] Israel promised that it would not violate the right of the House to continue to operate freely. ...

... in the Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank in the spring of 2002, Israeli soldiers vandalized the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah, which was set up to preserve Palestinians' cultural heritage.' in the Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank in the spring of 2002, Israeli soldiers vandalized the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah, which was set up to preserve Palestinians' cultural heritage.'

Not only the latter, but at the same time, Israeli forces vandalized the entire Palestinian governmental bureaucracy. This act was under cover of 'Operation Defensive Shield', during the Second Intifada, as revenge for the deaths of Israelis at Palestinian hands. The comprehensive vandalization included the Finance Ministry and the Central Bureau of Statistics. Israel knows more about Palestinians (regarding data, as opposed to their mentality) than the Palestinian authorities themselves.

In July 2006, the IDF did it again in Nablus. Gael Toensing recounts:

'The site itself was a landscape of obliteration—the legacy of the Israeli Occupation Forces' three-day blitzkrieg on a complex of public buildings that included the muqata'a—an enormous command and administrative structure built in the 1920s by the British—a Palestinian security building, part of a prison, and the ministries of agriculture and the interior. ...

Buried and half buried in the ruins of the Ministry of the Interior were hundreds of thousands of file cases and documents—birth and death certificates, identification records, passports and other travel documents, ledgers of hand written information—a heritage of historical information about Nablus residents that covered more than 100 years of successive Palestinian occupations under the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate, the Jordanian kingdom, and the current Israeli regime.

"We offered to give the Israelis the keys of the building so they could search it to make sure there was no one hiding there, but that was not good enough for the Israelis, who insisted on demolishing everything," said Abed Al Illah Ateereh, the director of the Ministry of the Interior in Nablus. ... "There is 100 percent damage," Ateereh said. "They destroyed the building completely, but that wasn't enough for the Israelis. They then used their Caterpillar bulldozers to churn up everything and mix all the documents with the soil so that nothing is able to be preserved," Ateereh said.

The ministry had at least 175,000 individual case files each containing multiple documents. It will be impossible to recover an entire case file, Ateereh said. Some of the newer documents are backed up on a computer, but the old historical records are priceless and irreplaceable. "Passports, birth certificates, family information, identity records—all the kinds of information that an interior ministry would keep are all gone. These documents were used not only by Palestinians, but also by UNICEF and other agencies and foreigners who came to the ministry to do research," Ateereh said.'

In short, the strategic and systematic annihilation of identity.

The Hasbara

We read that student groups have been rekindled in Israel to whitewash on the netwaves the IDF's latest mass murder. A spokesperson, Bar David, who claimed "We want people abroad who don't know our reality to understand exactly what is going on here", is reported by the *New York Times* (so it must be true) as previously serving in the military spokesman's unit of the IDF.

Welcome to a microcosm of the Hasbara. The Hasbara would have to be the most spectacular propaganda machine in modern history (i.e. in all history). The legendary Goebbels (admittedly lacking latterday instruments) was a comparative lightweight. The Soviet Union's western defenders, although numerous, were ghettoized and lacked access to the mainstream media and officialdom.

The 2002 *Hasbara Handbook: Promoting Israel on Campus* is an exemplary representative of the art. It is a weighty 128 pages (including appendices). The Handbook was funded by the 'NGO' Jewish Agency for Israel. The Handbook conflates the criticism of Israel ('the haven and sanctuary of the Jewish people') with the de-legitimization of 'Jews everywhere' and of Judaism. The Handbook denies the Occupation; rather Gaza and the West Bank are 'disputed territories'. The Golan Heights and East Jerusalem have already been silently appropriated.

The Handbook provides two Communication Styles – point scoring and genuine debate.

'Central to point scoring is the ability to disguise point scoring by giving the impression of genuine debate. ... To disguise point scoring, comments need to seem to be logical, and to follow from what was said before. Use phrases that subtly change the agenda or reframe the debate to do this: "Well, that's not really the right question ..." [etc.]'

'Genuine debate' is reserved for those who know what's going on ('where listeners are mature and interested'). Here the Handbook recommends an element of subtlety – one is allowed to acknowledge that 'Israel is an imperfect country'. The object remains, however, to offer 100 per cent support for this 'imperfect' Israel in the face of its many enemies. Notes the Handbook, 'In private conversation and in friendly settings, it is reasonable to admit that Israel has made mistakes ['policy errors', never instanced] that she attempts to learn from (sic), whilst pointing out that other countries do this too.'

The Handbook also provides 'two main approaches to Israel advocacy ... "neutralizing negativity" and "pushing positivity"'. A standard response in the first category is 'The action was justified because ...'. Standard responses in the second category are 'Israel is a democracy' and 'Israel wants peace'.

Democracy and peace – hello? In that regard, an integral component of the Hasbara is the lie. Not so much a single Big Lie. Rather, multiple related lies, that combine to a multi-component Big Lie. There's the killing lies. Israel left Gaza in 2005. The IDF targets only terrorists, and does so with pinpoint accuracy. Hamas uses human shields. By using human shields, Hamas

forces us to kill children. And, by the way, Israel's shelling of the USS Liberty (in 1967) was an accident.

Then there's the fundamental 'existential' lies. The land expropriated awaited productive utilization. Israel is a democracy (read ethnocracy). There is no such thing as Palestine. If the Arabs had accepted the UN Partition Plan and the Arab states hadn't gone to war against Israel there would be a Palestinian state already. Israel has no partner for peace. We were here first. It's our land by historical right (variation on the theme: God gave it to us). And so on.

Thanks to Shlomo Sand's 2009 *The Invention of the Jewish People*, the narrative of the indubitable historical lineage between then and now has passed its use-by date. The 'Diaspora' is a misnomer. Mass conversions into Jewry (and some out of it) puts the bulk of the Zionist migration and War refugee settlement of Israel as interlopers.

Thanks to Sand's 2012 *The Invention of the Land of Israel*, we learn that the myriad attempts to claim a 'natural and historical' right to 'the Land of Israel' (still ill-defined) are an incoherent and intellectually embarrassing mess. The biblical references from which one seeks legitimacy are inconsistent. The opportunist oil-and-water conflation of sacred and secular arguments is instructive of the charade. Ultimately, the various attempts to find legitimacy in historical right are all trumped by the practical necessity to leave the boundaries of 'the Land of Israel' undefined (emphasized by Ben Gurion), open to extension as dictated by the needs of a growing Jewish population.

But the Hasbara exists precisely to render testimony and scholarship like Sand's invisible. Who reads books, especially dense books on troublesome subjects? The object is to dictate the agenda of the mainstream media. More, the priorities of decision-makers and opinion-makers must be channeled. Thus the perennial sponsoring of the white-washing trips to Israel of elected national legislators and of journalists, who duly arrive home as significant repositories and replicators of the myths and lies.

Right on cue, here is the witless Australian Minister for Education, Christopher Pyne, the keynote speaker at the third Australia-Israel-UK leadership dialogue (sic) in Jerusalem. (Pyne is taking a holiday from privatizing Australian higher education.)

'Whenever there has been a congregation of freedom loving nations versus non freedom loving nations, Australia has always been prepared to be in the fight and always on the right side. And that's how we view the State of Israel that we are on the right side. ... It shows that Israel has existential threats that requires them to take firm action to protect those freedoms, firmer actions than Australia has had to take to protect our own existence [etc.]'

One of the commenters proposes: 'I and many others would vote to make you an Honorary Jew.' Frankly, we Down Under would be thankful if you'd take this wretched flunkey off our hands (take the whole Cabinet as a job lot *gratis*) before he does further damage.

I first came to this troublesome arena belatedly and by accident. It was the death of Arafat in November 2004. The Australian media went ballistic with domestic and international players of

the global Hasbara. Arafat as the consummately evil terrorist. Who never missed an opportunity to make peace. Arafat walked away from Barak's magnanimous offer at Camp David in 2000, etc.

Now hang on a minute. Didn't Arafat recognize 'the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security' in September 1993 as a prelude to the Oslo Accords, and accept the 1967 boundaries? Isn't it the case that Barak offered nothing at all at Camp David (as meticulously laid out by the late Tanya Reinhart in her 2002 *Israel/Palestine*)?

So here was the Hasbara brigade, frothing at the mouth, lying through its collective teeth. Uri Avnery, hardly an Arafat devotee, exclaimed at the time:

'The disgusting filth poured out over Yasser Arafat during the last few days in practically all the Israeli media makes one ashamed to be an Israeli. The demonization of the Palestinian national leader, which has been the center-piece of Israeli propaganda for decades, continues even after his death. It seems that 37 years as occupiers have bestialized our society and left it bereft even of common decency. Ministers and fishmongers, TV icons and university professors, "leftists" and outright fascists tried to outdo each other in utter vulgarity.'

Thus was my initiation into the Hasbara phenomenon. I concluded *rationally*, on the basis of the statements of the Hasbara crowd alone, that something was substantially rotten in the state of Denmark. And thus it has proved since that time.

If Israel is intrinsically 'a light unto the nations', why does it need the Hasbara?

The Triumph of Rambo Tribalism

Israel has an enviable fan base from people and groups who are citizens of other countries. It is most transparent in the groupings that percolate into the hierarchies of the 'representative' bodies of national Jewry. Without the support of these bodies, the ongoing barbarity of Israel towards the subject Palestinian people would cease overnight.

But there is also a litany of subaltern foot soldiers who man the press letters pages and the media comments sites in the defense of Holy Israel. They are particularly unfriendly to the defectors of Jewish ethnicity. The Australian noted anti-Zionist Antony Loewenstein is a case in point. His own Damascus moment arrived when the usual suspects unleashed another torrent of bile when Hanan Ashwari, senior Palestinian official, was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize in 2003. For his courage and forthrightness, Loewenstein has been perennially the recipient of odious abuse from the Hasbara cheerleaders. Enter the 'self-hating Jew' epithet.

An extraordinary dimension of Rambo Tribalism has been the Zionist simultaneous marginalization and appropriation of Judaism. Menuhin, in distress, calls it 'Napalm Judaism'. Menuhin's *Decadence* is an extended discourse, on precisely this issue:

'Advancing, evolving, universal and spiritual Judaism, which was the core of the Judeo-Christian code of ethics, is now becoming the tool, the handmaiden, of "Jewish" nationalism, so that the

ethical injunctions Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet have been transformed into the unethical, primitive and tribalistic “Covenant of the Chosen People” and “Israel First.” ...

The parochialism, tribalism and jingoism of contemporary “Jewish” nationalism, spawned and nursed by Ben Gurion and his junta, are one of the great tragedies of the Jews and of Judaism of our time. Here is where the real degeneration played havoc with an age-old civilized and ethical and universal people.’

Menuhin completes his book with an extended *cri de coeur* regarding the direction of his beloved American Council for Judaism. The ACJ was founded by the German Reform-influenced Rabbi Elmer Berger in 1942 as an anti-Zionist beachhead. In August 1968, several Directors of the ACJ instigated the expulsion of Berger from the Council. A tidal wave of muscular Zionism ensued from the easy Israeli victory in the June 1967 War, and that was the effective end of the AJC as an anti-Zionist force in the US. The current hegemony of AIPAC and like-minded Jewish organizations relegates the AJC and its orientation to ancient history.

This experience of betrayal has most recently been expressed, rightly with fury, by Norman Pollack, 24 July, on this site:

‘... expressing my abhorrence to the war crimes committed by Israel, by convention, in world Jewry, THE representative of the Jewish people and religion, leading therefore to feelings of shame, alienation, and betrayal, that my religion, ancestral heritage, upbringing, could so distort the meaning of Judaism as I’ve known and loved it ...’

Yet in this long process of debasing Judaism for reasons of state, Israel is now seeking from the UN (similarly debased by Israeli contempt) agreement for the recognition of Yom Kippur as a globally-oriented UN holiday! Israel has raised the bar on Chutzpah.

A curious phenomenon of wanting a foot in both camps is the Jewish faith school system in Australia (possibly elsewhere). In their mission statements, it is not unusual to find a commitment to both the inculcation of Judaic (read, universalist) moral values and to a (seemingly uncritical) support of Israel. Some examples:

‘Our purpose is to cultivate in our students a passionate sense of Jewish identity, a sense of belonging to the worldwide Jewish community with special ties to the Australian Jewish community and the State of Israel. ... We build a sense of belonging and cooperation by promoting mutual respect, in line with our belief in the ideals of freedom of religion, speech and association, peace, openness, tolerance and social justice.’ (Sholem Aleichem College, Melbourne)

‘We strive to foster critical thought, cultural interests, tolerance, social responsibility and self-discipline. ... Moriah not only aspires to achieve excellence in academic standards, but maintains and promotes among its students an awareness of and a feeling for Jewish traditions and ethics, an understanding of and a positive commitment to Orthodox Judaism and identification with and love for Israel.’ (Moriah College, Sydney)

Bialik College (Melbourne) is of particular interest. The first Jewish school established in Australia, in 1942 (from *Wikipedia*) ‘... from its beginning it was intended to be a Zionist school, with the establishment of the State of Israel central to its identity.’ From its mission statement:

‘Centrality of Israel: We are a Zionist school that inculcates a love of Israel. We recognise the centrality of Israel and Hebrew to the Jewish people. We support Israel and are committed to its well-being.’

Bialik College is the school from which one Ben Zygier graduated as an accomplished student. He evidently took the school’s values to heart – he ended up moving to Israel and being employed in some capacity in Israeli intelligence. Zygier died, in still murky circumstances, in a high security cell in December 2010 – the unqualified love of Israel can have its down side it appears. Bialik takes its entire Year 10 class to Israel for 6 weeks. This year, the class is travelling via China for a cross-cultural experience. A visit to Gaza, as a potential location for ‘Bialik’s inclusive cross-communality’ appears to be not on the itinerary.

Perhaps the saddest reflection of Rambo Tribalism is the impulsion of Jewish people, citizens of various countries, to go and join the IDF, to participate voluntarily in ongoing repression as an occupying force and in mass murder of a subject people. Those who have left comfortable environments to become jihadis for some murderous Islamist outfit in the Middle East are (rightly) seen as unstable, perhaps deranged. Those who become jihadis for Israel’s ethnic cleansing are labeled spirited, courageous, ‘unsung heroes’.

Tribalism involves the suppression of one’s moral compass and integrity (abstract diffuse) for the close comforts of togetherness and acceptance. One can understand how it happens, and is sustained. But at what cost?

Being a compulsive newspaper letters page reader, a particular letter, from Ms X, in the *Melbourne Age*, 19 July 2005, remains a seminal experience:

‘Along with other progressive-minded Australians of Jewish descent, I signed a petition of support for Palestinian self-determination in 2001. Endorsing the petition is one of many endeavours to support any peoples, regardless of race or religion, struggling against occupation, dispossession and oppression. Such struggles include the Palestinian people against the Israeli state, the Iraqi people against the US and its allies, the Saharawi against Morocco and the East Timorese against Indonesia.

These state powers are from different religious traditions but are united in using the politics of hegemony and state terrorism. In 2001 the petition was published in both mainstream and Jewish newspapers. Only this week, I was told not to attend the funeral of a great-aunt as my “name appeared in the [*Australian*] *Jewish News* supporting Palestine”.

Now that I have the red star of Marx pinned to my breast, what does this mean? Am I now a non-Jew or simply a self-hater? Or maybe my Jewish heritage makes me more keenly appreciate the tragic consequences of racism and oppression.’

Nine years down the track the stance of Ms X and her family relationships remains unknown. A resolute handful of anti-Zionist Australian Jews regularly front the social media (by default of exclusion from the MSM). Meanwhile the myriad ‘official’ Jewish organizations in Australia remain unrepentant functionaries for a foreign pathologically criminal state.

Buying Governments, establishing Impunity

Israel has an uncountable number of governments in tow. In the ‘democracies’ (U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, etc.) it doesn’t matter which Party is in power, Israel has that country in tow. Some countries (notably Australia) render themselves servile indirectly via their servility to the U.S.

Israel owns the U.S., lock stock and barrel. On 17 July, all 100 Senators voted for a resolution supporting Israel ‘as it defends itself against unprovoked (sic) rocket attacks’. Beyond abject servility, it is a treasonous and criminal act. Beyond the armaments flowing from the U.S. for the continuation of the slaughter, mendicant Israel continues to enjoy billions of dollars each year courtesy of the hapless U.S. taxpayer. Vocal Congressional critics of Israel (Cynthia McKinney, Paul Findley, etc.) lose office with the Lobby funding their opponents, providing a clear warning to any hopeful seeking office to purportedly represent (a quaint idea) the American public interest.

In spite of the annual payola, the U.S. gets nothing in return. Israel treats the U.S. as its dogsbody. Thus Secretary of State John Kerry is forced to leave empty-handed from attempts at a ‘peace settlement’, with Israel subsequently belittling Kerry as weak. Which of course he is, because product of an American political structure that will not pull the plug.

Joel Kovel (*Overcoming Zionism*, 2007) lists some key events in which Israel’s actions have significantly harmed U.S. interests. He continues:

‘Like the murder of Rachel Corrie, they manifest a self-reinforcing circuit, which begins with wanton disregard for the ordinary principles of humanity and ends with the granting of impunity for the “special” state, which, emboldened, commences the circuit anew. The same pattern obtains throughout the entire pattern of Israeli history, most notably in the flouting of scores of UN resolutions pertaining to the Occupation of Palestine.’

Remember that the University of Michigan Press went into meltdown with this book, after attack from the Lobby, over its contract to distribute Pluto Press publications in the U.S. And Kovel was subsequently sacked from his teaching job at Bard College. Remember also Norman Finkelstein, sacked from DePaul University for his forensic dismantling of the Hasbara narrative. The necessary complement of the Hasbara is the attempted censorship and silencing of its exposure as a fraudulent enterprise.

Kovel notes that the only occasion in which Israel has not got its way is in the U.S.’ continuing incarceration of the spy for Israel, Jonathan Pollard. Thus we have the squalid scenario of Israel attempting to blackmail President Clinton over its knowledge of the Lewinsky Affair to have Pollard released to enjoy the comforts of a hero’s residency in Israel. (How many in Congress

are being similarly blackmailed?) This atypical recalcitrance from the U.S. constitutes an intolerable affront to a state accustomed to fulfilling its ambitions without exception.

Symptomatic of this mentality is the fact that Israel can steal or counterfeit national passports for use in its espionage or false flag activities. States remain craven in the face of this lawlessness.

And the Future?

While addressing the emasculation of the American ‘Left’ in particular, Kovel articulates well the current impasse and its broader implications:

‘Acceptance of the “special” nature of Israel, often manifest in an appeal to just how horribly Jews have suffered, goes hand in hand with devaluation of Israel’s victims and minimization of its crimes. Given the indisputable fact that Israel’s conquest of Palestine radiates across the world and sets into motion so much hatred and disorder, the inability of progressives in the global superpower to come to grips with Zionism drags down everything they do, and makes it impossible to deal effectively with war and peace alike.

One thing that is truly special about Israel is continual moral embattlement. A seemingly eternal struggle over wrongdoing and justification dogs its every step. This has inner ramifications that cut to the heart of the Zionist project.’

The stark reality is that Israel’s ‘continuing moral embattlement’ is an attribution only for those still possessing a morality gene and thus prone to outrage. Israel holds all the aces. It possesses near absolute power, for the reasons outlined above. None of the key pillars that underpin that power – nation states, national lobbies – have cracked under the escalating Gaza death count one iota. There have been no *mea culpas* amongst longtime supporters. The Hasbara is going full bore, with the mainstream media on tap and the foot soldiers flooding social media.

Of significance, the situation in the Middle East has never been more favorable to Israel’s regional hegemony. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, two distinct tyrannies with their own agendas, are firmly allied with Israel. Iraq has been conveniently dismembered – the process pursued by the U.S. predominantly in Israel’s interests in the first place. Syria is in the process of being dismembered. Ditto. The U.S.-induced chaos in Ukraine has conveniently forced Russia’s attention away from Syria. Jordan is now a U.S./Israeli satrap. Iran is hobbled by crippling sanctions, again for Israeli interests. Only Hezbollah remains unchained – and that ‘impediment’ is currently being addressed.

Gaza is living, has been living, a nightmare. West Bank residents also, if to a lesser extent. The diabolical reality is that at present the forces capable of bringing Israel to heel lack the requisite morality gene in their DNA.

Thus the overwhelming and urgent *de facto* responsibility of the street – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. Israel at present experiences no ‘moral embattlement’. The effective embattlement has to come in a tangible form.

Afterword: Saving the Language Itself

Another casualty of the Israeli Hasbara machine has been language itself. Of course, language is intrinsically a vehicle of manipulation for purposes of persuasion – embodied in the personalized Rhetoric from the Classical Age to the industrial strength propaganda techniques devised in the hothouse of World War I and since imposed unstintingly on the hapless populace (thank you Edward Bernays).

There is one dimension of the propagandized structuring of language that has been brilliantly successful, because it has been applied in blanket fashion and has been rendered subliminally. It has been in the linguistic devices by which a dual world has been manufactured of ‘us’ versus ‘the other’. War propaganda fits naturally into the medium.

It is in the arena of the creation of popular support for (or the deadening of opposition to) Empire that the language of duality has been most successful. Thus Britain, in its painting the globe red, was engaged in a ‘civilizing’ mission to the great unwashed. The U.S.’s imperial thrust, massively assisted by the unprecedented propaganda machine of the Cold War, was rather an exercise in exporting ‘freedom’ to the variously oppressed.

Thus did we imbibe with Mother’s milk the verities of good guys versus bad guys, us versus them. This creed, instilled *a priori* and embedded in our language, has dramatically undermined our capacity for the perception and rational processing of information. Thus we might discover, no doubt by accident, that U.S. governments have knocked off the odd government, here there and everywhere, but such raw material is rendered as dissonance in our inherited mental and linguistic tool kit, and is readily discarded as unfathomable white noise. Ron Jacob’s recent piece, ‘US and Israeli Exceptionalism’, 15 July, highlights precisely this point.

With the good guys / bad guys duality hardwired, long impeding the critical faculties, along comes the Hasbara, elevating the manipulation of language to a new plateau. This is a qualitative leap. Moving beyond the difficulty of seeing the stye in our own eye, the Hasbara upends linguistic conventions. Black becomes white, evil is translated into righteousness. Victims of murderous ethnic cleansing become terrorists.

The conventions of language go completely out the door. Mass murder is self defense. The Great Wall is a barrier or a mere fence. Land grabs are voluntary relocations into disputed territories. And as Master Spinmeister for the Israeli mafia we have Mark Freiberg/Regev – unhappily an Australian export. The head spins. It is near impossible to think clearly. The jaw drops in disbelief.

When Israel is ultimately called to account, the optimists steeling the resolve, and the Hasbara machine is interred, perhaps we might be able to reclaim our language and to use it for purposes, albeit rusty for lack of practice, propelled by both reason and morality.