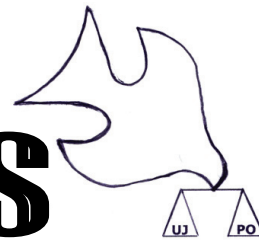


# UJPO News

The United Jewish People's Order is a national, nonpartisan, socialist-oriented, secular organization.



Serving Canada's progressive Jews in individual organizations since 1926 and collectively as the UJPO since 1945!

May 2011 - Volume #31, Issue #2

## ISRAEL - PALESTINE

SPECIAL EDITION

Welcome to this special edition of the UJPO News focusing on Israel. Following the recent events in Toronto resulting from the "Never Again for Anyone" panel discussion at the Winchevsky Centre (see the Winter-Spring 2011 edition of UJPO News), the editors think it is important for our members to know more about the history of UJPO's position on the State of Israel, to promote internal discussion and dialogue, and to give you more information on recent events there.

We hope you will find this special edition useful and look forward to your letters to the editors.

Most articles in this issue are edited, with sources given so you can read the originals if you wish.

### THE DECLARATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL - MAY 14, 1948

[Clause 13]

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

*The complete declaration is available on Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.*

### UJPO POSITION ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL OVER TIME

#### EXCERPTED FROM 60TH ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR 13TH NATIONAL CONVENTION - OCT. 17-19, 1986

By Albert Abramowitz, UJPO-National Vice-President

We hailed the establishment of the State of Israel as a justified, significant, historical event. We presented the Israeli Red Cross with an ambulance bearing our name. Our annual financial campaigns support four progressive, peace-loving Israeli institutions. We support the "Peace Now" movement in Israel. We believe that a peaceful political solution is the road to peace in the Middle East, and that the Palestinian-Arab question is resolvable by granting them the right to self-determination and the establishment of their own state on the presently occupied territories. Only this will bring peace to the Middle East, security and longevity to the State of Israel.

#### UJPO AIMS AND PURPOSES 2009:

We support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, under which both peoples would live side by side as peaceful neighbours in secure and viable states.

#### UJPO AIMS AND PURPOSES 2011:

We support serious negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians with a view to ensuring equality, peace, justice, security and prosperity for both peoples. We campaign for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and its siege of Gaza. We have organized and sponsored educational and fact-finding tours to that region.

### UJPO DENOUNCES ITAMAR MURDERS

March 2011 – UJPO Canada unequivocally denounces the slaughter of the five Fogel family members in their Itamar settlement residence. The taking of innocent lives cannot be justified no matter what the underlying circumstances. In addition to the denunciation of others which mass media reported, Palestinian Authority's Minister of Religious Affairs, Mahmoud Habbash, was quoted in the Jerusalem Post as stating "this is a big crime against civilians in their homes, an inhuman crime... we are against such crimes from both sides, and against any murders, whether from the Palestinian or Israeli side. We want to see all the civilians living in peace in the holy land."

### PRO-PALESTINIAN AND PRO-ISRAELI

by Jessica Montell, Tikkun Magazine, Winter 2011

Living in the polarizing atmosphere of the Middle East, I feel the need to reassert the very basics -- like affirming that Palestinians and Israelis are all human beings. I say this only somewhat facetiously, as dehumanizing, collective rhetoric justifies violations of many individuals' basic rights.

In Israel, for example, Gaza is understood in the most simplistic and dehumanizing terms: Gaza = Hamas = terrorists. This equation forms the rhetorical justification for a slew of Israeli policies, from massive force causing extensive death and destruction, to the crippling siege that has rendered Gaza isolated and desperate. The response of the vast majority of Israeli people has been to unquestioningly support these policies. After all, if Gazans are all terrorists -- and thus in some

fundamental way less human than we are -- then anything can be justified.

Yet this dehumanization does not take place only on the Israeli side. Many champions of Palestinian rights advance their agenda through a dehumanization of Israelis, particularly when it comes to Israeli settlers. The stereotype of the violent, gun-toting fanatic serves as a shorthand for over half a million people who live in Israeli settlements. This civilian population is often portrayed as a legitimate military target.

And so, invariably, those around the world mobilized for Israel/Palestine fall into two camps: pro-Israel and pro-Palestine. There is of course much debate among Jews as to what constitutes pro-Israel, with many of us arguing that critique of Israel and efforts to improve the country constitute pro-Israeli behavior par excellence. Yet the binary, mutually exclusive identities of pro-Israel and pro-Palestine remain.

What would it take to break down this paradigm? At the risk of sinking into platitudes, I would like to propose we embrace a philosophy that is both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli -- note the shift from supporting the nation to supporting the people who make up that nation. Such a philosophy prevents the solidification into opposing camps. It requires us to acknowledge that human beings exist on all sides: people with much in common and much that differs, but all individuals struggling to build a life of safety, dignity, and meaning.

Not that this we're-all-human paradigm allows us to excuse injustice. Precisely the opposite. All human beings have equal rights, and we all have the same obligation to respect the rights of others. All must be held to the same standards. Once we acknowledge the universality of our principles, we can apply them uncompromisingly to injustice wherever we see it. Whether it is Israeli attacks on Gaza, Palestinian attacks on settlers, or violence and injustice within our respective communities.

This, then, is my proposal, perhaps banal yet essential nonetheless: we must take one step back from our collective identities and reassert that we are first of all individual human beings. Only a paradigm that is pro-justice and pro-humanity can ensure that all people living in this area will one day enjoy their rights.

<http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/pro-palestinian-and-pro-israeli>  
Jessica Montell is executive director of B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

## **RATTLING THE CAGE: A TABOO QUESTION FOR ISRAELIS**

By Larry Derfner, The Jerusalem Post

30/12/09 — There's a question we Israelis

won't ask ourselves about the Palestinians, especially not about Gaza. The question is taboo.

Not only won't anyone ask it out loud, but very, very few people will dare ask it in the privacy of their own

minds.

The question we have to ask ourselves is this: If anybody treated us like we're treating the people in Gaza, what would we do? We don't want to go there, do we? And because we don't, we make it our business not to see, hear or think about how, indeed, we are treating the people in Gaza.

All these shocked dignitaries, all these reports, these details, these numbers - thousands of destroyed this and tens of thousands of destroyed that. Rubble, sewage, malnutrition, crying babies, humanitarian crises - who can keep up? Who cares? They did it to themselves. Where to for lunch?

IT'S NOT that we can't imagine life in Gaza. It's that we are determined not to try to imagine. If we did, we might not stop there. Next we might try to imagine what it would be like if our country were in the condition in which we left Gaza. And sooner or later we might try to imagine what we would do if we were living over here like they're living over there. Or not even what we would do, just what we would think - about the people, about the country, that did that to us and that wouldn't even allow us to begin to recover after the war was over. That blockaded our borders and allowed in only enough supplies to keep us at subsistence level, to prevent starvation and mass epidemics.

What would we think, what would we do, if somebody, some country, did that to us?

A lot of people here, I'm sure, would reply angrily: So why won't the Gazans try making peace?

But is that how we would react? If another country sent F-16s, Apache helicopters, white phosphorous, drones, tanks and battalions into Israel, if any nation bombed and killed over here like we bombed and killed in Gaza, then rubbed our noses in it afterward, would we want to make peace with them?

I'M SURE a lot of people would argue: What about Sderot? Didn't the terrorists in Gaza bomb and kill in Sderot? Let's turn the question around: What would the Gazans have done if another country did to them what they did to the people in Sderot?

Fair enough. Yes, they would have hit back, too. They're not pacifists, either, to say the least. In fact, their elected leaders are fanatical, murderous Jew-haters sworn to Israel's destruction. That's extremely important to remember, and we do. But what we don't want to remember, what we make 100 percent sure to forget, is that we do all sorts of hateful things to Gaza that they don't do to us, and that this is the way it's been since 1967.

We also blockade Gaza's airspace, preventing planes from flying in or out. Does anybody stop planes from flying in and out of Israel? Would we stand for it if someone did?

For 37 years, between 1967 and 2005, our soldiers and settlers were the overlords of the Gaza Strip. If foreign soldiers and settlers tried to come in and take over Israel, what would we do?

And how would we react? If we Israelis could go to Gaza and see in person what we've done to that place and its people, would we be capable of empathy? If we thought of our children living in a country that was just like postwar Gaza, would we allow ourselves to think what we might do?

We can't go to Gaza, but we have to start using our imagination. We have to dare to put ourselves in those people's place. And we have to stop doing to them what we would never allow anyone to do to us. Otherwise, we Israelis have no conscience, and little by little we become capable of anything.

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=53863>



Larry Derfner

## THREATS TO ISRAELI DEMOCRACY

By Letty Cottin Pogrebin, The Jewish Week

08/03/11 — The irony is as painful as it is obvious: while democracy is spreading in the Arab world, in Israel, “the only democracy in the Middle East,” it is shrinking.

When I was in Jerusalem last month, most Israeli Jews were, understandably laser-focused on Tahrir Square. They were worried about what would happen if Egypt’s young leaders refused to honor the 1979 Sadat-Begin peace treaty, how the new Egyptian government would relate to Hamas, whether the border between Gaza and the Sinai would become porous, or the freedom fervor catch fire on the streets of Iran, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, or the West Bank.

However realistic those concerns, potential external threats to Israel should not be allowed to eclipse real internal threats. American Jews need to pay closer attention to attempts by right-wing and ultra-religious forces to muzzle free expression and hobble civil society.

Democracy had a narrow escape Feb. 21 when Prime Minister Netanyahu released Likud members of Knesset to vote their conscience on two McCarthyite proposals that would have established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the activities and funding of Israeli human rights and civil liberties organizations.

But the Israeli cabinet already has approved a law requiring new citizens to pledge their loyalty to “the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.” The police already are threatening journalists, harassing demonstrators, and arresting people without cause. State agencies already are summoning political activists for “warning talks.” And a variety of repressive initiatives already are working their way through the legislative process in the Knesset – and, distressingly, public opinion polls suggest that many of these erosions of democracy meet with majority approval. (When asked to rank three values – democracy, peace, or the protection of Israel’s Jewish majority – most Jewish Israelis put the third item first.)

The danger is not an end to free elections in Israel but the hijacking of democratic processes to reify anti-democratic practices. Though all democracies are vulnerable, several developments have contributed to the flurry of right-wing activity in Israel. Netanyahu’s 2009 speech at Bar-Ilan University, in which he articulated for the first time his support for a two-state solution, was viewed by many as a treacherous abandonment of the Likud’s bedrock nationalist ideology. The Goldstone Report, the United Nations document published last year that condemned Israel’s conduct in the Gaza war of 2008-09, and the proliferating Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which aims to make Israel a pariah state like pre-Mandela South Africa, are both considered traitorous by most Israelis, and are frequently cited to justify legal actions against human rights groups and other NGOs that fund projects critical of Israeli society.

Meanwhile, the volatile combination of international criticism, perceived anti-Semitism and the so-called campaign of “delegitimization of the Jewish state,” has stoked Israeli paranoia and fueled a siege mentality that feeds on hyper-patriotism.

And where security doesn’t trump democracy, religion would finish the job. Some Israeli rabbis have forbidden Jews to rent property to non-Jews. And the Chief Rabbinate continues to hold potential converts to the highest religious standards, creating a societal problem for the several hundred thousand Russians who might otherwise choose to join the Jewish people.

Eighty percent of the Palestinian and Israeli populations have never known anything but occupation. For Palestinians, the price of 44 years of Israeli control is obvious: checkpoints, military law, political nullification, continuing humiliation, and economic hardship. For Israelis, the price is less clear but equally corrosive: a malfunctioning moral compass, a coarsening of civic behavior, and a betrayal of the nation’s democratic ideals.

It’s past time to make individual rights as urgent a priority as national security and for the government to safeguard Israel’s democratic institutions as zealously as it guards its borders.

[http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial\\_opinion/opinion/threats\\_israeli\\_democracy](http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial_opinion/opinion/threats_israeli_democracy)  
Letty Cottin Pogrebin, a founding editor of Ms. Magazine and the author of nine books, is a past president of Americans for Peace Now.

## I LOVE MY COUNTRY

By Noam Raz, ynetnews.com

02/02/11 — A volley of bullets tears through the quiet night. I’m in an IDF outpost opposite Tulkarm in the West Bank and the bullets ring out as they strike the outpost wall. Moments later, I find myself holding a grenade launcher – a weapon that fires dozens of grenades minute, reaching as far as two kilometres away. I cock the launcher and, without giving it a second thought, open fire at houses in Tulkarm.



Noam Raz

It’s 2001, the height of the second intifada, and we see red. It doesn’t occur to me that I might be doing something wrong, that I might hurt innocent people. I’ve received an order and that’s all there is: they fire at us and we fire back.

Maybe, back then, someone in B’Tselem filed a complaint and demanded an investigation into what I had done. Now, I am that someone. As data coordinator, one of my responsibilities is to demand that investigations be opened into suspected offenses committed by soldiers and police officers against Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Yet my reality is gradually becoming inconceivable. On one hand, some are calling me and others who do similar work “accomplices to terror.” On the other hand, I still do regular reserve duty in the army, even in the occupied territories. Some of my colleagues at B’Tselem may disagree with this choice; I won’t deny that I, too, am uncomfortable with being another bolt in the machinery of the occupation. Yet, regardless of this internal conflict, when the order arrives in my mailbox, I put on my uniform and report to base. Rather than refusing to do reserve duty, I prefer to try and make a change from the inside. That’s how I was brought up.

### Future prevention

When I research an incident for B’Tselem, I feel bad

whichever way I turn it. I am full of sympathy for the civilian or civilians, usually Palestinians, who have been harmed by actions of Israel's security forces or other authorities. Yet I also think about the soldiers – those young men sent out on the psychologically destructive mission of policing a civilian population, and end up acting badly or committing outright criminal offenses.

Don't get me wrong – under no circumstance can I accept or justify soldiers destroying property, beating, degrading and abusing persons or shooting them for no reason. Israel has the right to defend itself and must do so, but security needs can't be used as justification for reprehensible acts. Such acts must be condemned and investigated, and the perpetrators prosecuted.

The harm to the victim cannot be undone, but publicizing the case can help prevent similar incidents in the future by causing soldiers - and more importantly, the commanders and politicians who send them - to think twice before harming civilians for no reason. The public has the right to know what is being done in its name.

It is clearly to thwart this goal of ours that Foreign Minister Lieberman and his party are now working to establish a Knesset committee to purportedly investigate foreign funding to organizations that monitor human rights violations by the IDF. Clearly, the aim of this move is to silence B'Tselem and other organizations seeking to advance human rights in the occupied territories.

I find it ironic that Lieberman has chosen to push the spin that we aren't transparent about funding, of all things. Not only is this an outright lie, but it directly contradicts the very essence of transparency: informing the Israeli public of what the authorities are doing in their name in the territories. As long as free speech is still permitted in Israel, I can wonder aloud: Where will the line be drawn? Will the next step be to block the media from telling Israelis and the world about human rights violations in the territories? What about the Judge Advocate General's Office in the military? Maybe we should bar it from investigating suspected offenses committed by soldiers? Is the Judge Advocate, too, collaborating with the enemy?

I was born and raised in Israel and I have built my home here. I want to live here and nowhere else. I criticize my country because I love it so much, and I'm sick of having to apologize for that.

*Noam Raz is a data coordinator at B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories  
<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4022620,00.html>*

## **ISRAEL MANIPULATES TRAGEDY TO ADVANCE ITS OWN HARASSMENT OF PALESTINIANS**

By Dr. Hanan Chehata, Middle East Monitor

15/03/11 — It now seems possible that the already infamous "Itamar massacre" last week may not have been the work of a Palestinian but could have been the act of a disgruntled worker from Thailand who was furious after a dispute over unpaid wages. According to reports emerging today the

Thai worker had apparently threatened to kill a settler family after he was not paid 10,000 shekels in wages which he believes he was owed. Local reports also claim that Thai workers in Israel are being "rounded up", which suggests that the authorities know the truth, although the reports have not been confirmed because the Israelis have placed a "gag order" on the investigation. Sadly, this revelation has come too late for hundreds of innocent Palestinians who have been targeted and harassed severely in response to this crime over the past few days.

On the night of Friday 11th March five members of an Israeli settler family in the illegal Jewish settlement of Itamar in the West Bank (near the Palestinian city of Nablus) were murdered. The "mother, father and three children, aged between three months and 11" of the Fogel family "were attacked with knives" and killed. Despite having no evidence at the time to indicate who the murderer was, the Israeli government wasted no time at all in using the gruesome crime to target and brand all Palestinians as criminals. In the last few days it has been used by the Israeli government and army as a pretext to harass, arrest and abuse local Palestinians.

The reaction has been imitated by groups of settlers "armed with guns, clubs and knives" who have been attacking local Palestinians across the occupied West Bank in front of Israeli soldiers who are doing nothing to stop the assaults. The following illustrates how the state of Israel, the so-called bastion of democracy in the Middle East, is reacting to this brutal crime and is attempting to turn the tragedy of one family to its political advantage.

The Israeli authorities have sworn vengeance and in doing so have put aside all pretence of legal due process. At least 300 villagers in Awarta have been arrested so far. According to reports by International Solidarity Movement volunteers who have been staying with some of the targeted families in the village, "soldiers are beating people and continuing their house raids: destroying houses from the inside, cutting off electricity, and polluting the drinking water by throwing mud in the water-tanks. Thirty homes were occupied by soldiers last night. Computers and phones have been destroyed and money and property stolen by the soldiers. In the last two days soldiers have been throwing sound grenades inside and outside the houses, and shooting in the air."

Furthermore, in addition to the mass arrest of the men of the village, "while the soldiers were searching the houses, the families, including women and small children, were forbidden to eat or drink. It has been reported that an 80-year-old woman who suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure was beaten by the soldiers". She was taken to the Rafidia hospital in Nablus. Children have, it is alleged, also been arrested in this brutal crackdown.

While this sort of collective punishment is nothing new against Palestinians, the international community should be outraged that it is happening yet again and the perpetrator is the state of Israel, yet again. Collective punishment is a crime under the Geneva Convention and yet it is being meted out against Palestinians all over the Occupied Palestinian Territories. If this is how they react to crime, albeit a brutal crime, questions must

be asked about how rational, democratic and law-abiding the authorities in Israel actually are.

In another ridiculous act, "Israel's Interior Minister has called on the government to start building 5000 new settlement units in the occupied West Bank. Eli Yishai says that this will be 1000 units for every settler of the five who were killed in the illegal settlement of Itamar."

If, after days of violence and intimidation of innocent Palestinians, it emerges that the killings were carried out by a disgruntled Thai worker, it should be a source of great embarrassment to Israel and its vociferous supporters who have demonised the Palestinians even more than usual in their blogs and websites; one "strategic advisor and crisis management expert" by the name of Roni Rimon has called the Palestinians "animals" in response. Such people are shameless. From the very beginning Palestinians have denied involvement in the killings: "The militant wings of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah have all denied involvement in the murders, with the Al-Aqsa Brigades saying on Monday that they 'oppose the targeting of civilians and killing of children no matter what the pretext may be'."

Regardless of whom the Itamar killer turns out to be, Israel has exposed itself through its reaction to this incident as the definitive rogue state. While the killing of one family is undoubtedly a crime, the persecution of an entire people and occupation of their land under the pretext of justice is surely a crime beyond comparison.  
<http://www.middleeastmonitor.org.uk/articles/middle-east/2149-israelmanipulates-tragedy-to-advance-its-own-harassment-of-palestinians>

## **IM TIRTZU HIDES BEHIND RESPECTABLE MASK OF "ZIONISM"**

By Gideon Levy, Haaretz

02/07/10 — Binyamin Ze'ev is turning in his grave once again: A McCarthyite movement has taken his best-known slogan for its name. Im Tirtzu, which deceptively calls itself a "moderate, centrist movement," gives a bad name to Herzl, a democrat and liberal, who coined the phrase "Im tirtzu, ain zo agada" (If you will it, it is no dream). The group's latest trick: a dirty war against the New Israel Fund for its funding of 16 organizations that provided documentation used in the Goldstone report.

Oy, gevalt! There are nongovernmental organizations that want Israel to be a better, more just state, and that the New Israel Fund dares to underwrite. Cities were plastered with posters featuring a caricature of NIF president Naomi Chazan wearing a horn - that's the level that the "movement" behind the campaign sinks to - and with the last name of that reviled figure, Goldstone, added to hers.

Maariv, the tabloid daily that never shrinks from McCarthyism, hastened to publish a ludicrous "expose" that is nothing more than a copy of Im Tirtzu's report. The Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee created a subcommittee to "examine the sources of funding," media personality Avri Gilad called for Chazan's dismissal and the Jerusalem Post has already fired her as columnist for the

newspaper. It's exactly how McCarthyism operated.

There's no lack of fascist movements in Israel and the wider world, nationalist, militarist and racist organizations that don't pretend to be anything but. Im Tirtzu hides behind the respectable mask of "Zionism." Under this camouflage people hunt down all signs of democracy and critical thought. Quiet, we're shooting, all the time. That is their "second Zionist revolution," an Israel without the High Court of Justice and without B'Tselem, militarist with neither criticism nor supervision. If that is Zionism, then it's better to be anti-Zionist.

Just as Richard Goldstone must be thanked for formulating the IDF's next code of ethics, whether or not we admit it, so, too, the NIF must be thanked for reinforcing democracy. With an atrophied political system, a thwarted justice system, media outlets that engage mainly in brainwashing and an indifferent public - the nongovernmental organizations have become the last keeper of the seal of Israeli democracy. True, they are funded from abroad; no less, by the way, than Im Tirtzu or the right-wing NGOs that expel Palestinians from their homes and award prizes to rebellious soldiers from the right, but Im Tirtzu will not take action against them.

How can we truly know what happened in the Gaza Strip without Breaking the Silence, and how can we know what is happening in the West Bank every day without B'Tselem? But Im Tirtzu doesn't want us to know; it wants to cover our shame. That, to it, is patriotism, but in reality that is treason.  
<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/im-tirtzu-hides-behind-respectable-mask-of-zionism-1.262891>

## **DARK STAINS ON THE LAW BOOKS**

By Debbie Gild-Hayo, Haaretz

2/03/11 — It's not by chance that Israel's newest, and poorest, pieces of legislation - the Nakba Bill and the Acceptance Committees Bill - were voted into law only this past Tuesday.

As the Knesset's winter term nears its March 30 close, the parliament is giving way to last-ditch attempts to dot our law books with new and dark stains. Throughout the stormier-than-usual six-month term, about a dozen bills were introduced that are distinguished by how they sanction violations of fundamental human rights and civil liberties. The prime targets of some of these bills are Israel's Arab citizens, but they are not alone, as much of the legislation sets far broader goals in its attempts to delegitimize, weaken and silence those who do not conform to the majority's expectations.

The "Foreigners' Courts Bill," for instance, which few have heard of, was further advanced last week during a meeting of the Knesset Interior & Environmental Affairs Committee. If passed, non-Jewish foreigners seeking to obtain legal status in Israel would need to turn to special courts, which would operate under the jurisdiction of the Justice Ministry rather than the judicial branch.

In light of Israel's lack of clear and transparent immigration policy vis-a-vis non-Jews, the Supreme Court has time and again had to step in to provide aliens with protection from attempts to deny them due process. This bill is meant to circumvent the court, and considering current trends in the

Knesset, it stands a chance of being further advanced in the next session.

The Boycott Bill, which passed its first reading two weeks ago, would criminalize boycotts “against the State of Israel ... including the area under its control.” Whereas it would still be permissible, for example, to organize a boycott of the cell-phone companies to protest their rates, commercial boycotts of products made in West Bank settlements would be considered a violation of the law. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel and other civil society groups have also pointed out how the bill would infringe upon freedom of expression and the right to protest.

The final vote, anticipated for next week - on a bill that would revoke the citizenship of persons convicted of terrorism or espionage - will possibly be the last piece of anti-democratic legislation to reach its final reading in the current session. If it becomes law, Arabs would be at far greater risk of being subject to its terms than Jews, who are rarely convicted on charges of terrorism. (For example, Yigal Amir murdered Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for political reasons, but would not lose his citizenship because he was not convicted on a terror charge.) In practice, few people would be affected by the bill, but its very rationale does harm to the concept that citizenship should be unconditional and that punishment for crime is prison time, not exile.

In contrast, the newly approved Nakba Bill will affect large groups in Israeli society. Similar to the Boycott Bill, it is another attempt by lawmakers to tell us what we can say and think. An amendment to the existing Budget Principles Law, the new law delineates cases where the state may reduce budgetary support of public institutions involved in activities described as “contrary to the principles of the state.” These include, among others, marking of Israel’s Independence Day as “Nakba” Day (the Arabic term for the events of 1948, meaning “catastrophe” ) and, in the words of the law, “denying the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”

But the chilling effect of the Nakba Law will extend beyond the Arab citizens of Israel. Public bodies of all types - including local governments, universities, schools, research institutes and cultural institutions - would be pressured to self-censor their discussions, performances and the art they produce, out of fear of losing their funding.

Similarly, the Acceptance Committees Bill, which passed into law on Tuesday, is also intended, first and foremost, to prevent Arabs from moving into Jewish communities, but its impact will be far greater. It legalizes a common practice, one that has been harshly criticized by the Supreme Court, that gives committees of private individuals the authority to reject people who seek to make a home on state-owned land, and whom it has been concluded, on the basis of loosely defined criteria, will not “fit” into the community. Past experience shows that excluded citizens include single moms and dads, people with physical or mental disabilities, individuals with lesser financial means, same-sex couples, new immigrants and even people of Mizrahi origin.

Together with a few other bills advanced during this

session - such as the Loyalty Oath Bill and the Bill to Protect Israel’s Values - the current trend we are witnessing seems to be an attempt to leave not a single stone in Israel’s democracy unturned.

*Attorney Debbie Gild-Hayo is the director of public advocacy for the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.*

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/dark-stains-on-the-law-books-1.351700>

## **ISRAEL’S PROBLEM IS THE SETTLEMENTS, NOT “J STREET”**

By Carlo Strenger, Haaretz

25/03/11 — The Netanyahu government’s refusal to meet with the leadership of J Street during its visit this week reflects a deep and truly worrying process, in which Israel’s government and the Knesset are progressively locked into a deep bunker with no communication with the outside world. The assumption is that J Street creates a problem for Israel, and that if Israel delegitimizes J Street, the problem will go away.

But Israel’s problem is not J Street. The problem is that an ever greater proportion of U.S. Jews feel that they are forced to choose between their values and their involvement with Israel. Their identities are defined by the idea of universal human rights and the equality of all human beings beyond race, religion and gender.

Since Israel violates these ideals, and demands unconditional support for its policies, these Jews basically have two choices: Either they adhere to their ideals or support Israel. The result, as Peter Beinart has argued in a much quoted essay, is that many Jews of the younger generation simply disengage from Israel.

J Street tries to solve this problem by giving America’s liberal Jews another option: you can be engaged with Israel, and it can be central to your Jewish identity even as you criticize Israel’s actions. It doesn’t take rocket science to see the logic behind this; true friendship often involves voicing frank and direct criticism.

But the Netanyahu government and many right-wing Knesset members throw sand in the eyes of Israel’s citizens by selling them an outright lie: that there is no connection between Israel’s policies and its isolation; that all criticism of Israel is equal to delegitimizing its existence. While it is true that there are anti-Semites who hate Israel no matter what, this is simply not the position of Europe’s mainstream, nor that of the many liberal-leaning Jews who criticize Israel.

The primal sin of the Netanyahu government is that it links Israel’s security concerns with settlement policy, with the expropriation of Palestinian property and the “Judaization” of Jerusalem, a tactic that the world perceives as nothing less than ethnic cleansing. What the world sees is a country that tramples human rights and seeks territorial expansion. And it doesn’t see any logical connection between Israel’s security concerns and the current government’s racist rhetoric and actions, because there is no such connection. The Netanyahu government has a vested interest in maintaining this confusion, because many of its members do not want the two-state solution.

If J Street wants to reach the hearts and minds of

Israel's citizens, it needs to tell Israel's citizens that its security concerns are legitimate. It also needs to tell the truth - that there are indeed no iron clad guarantees that there will never be any terror attacks after a final status agreement.

As opposed to that, continuing the occupation dooms Israel's long-term future, because it will drive Israel into ever deeper isolation. It will lose its friends in the free world, and will live in everlasting conflict with the Arab world. And this does endanger Israel's long term survival.

It needs to be made clear that the choice is not between a safe Israel that occupies the territories and an unsafe Israel alongside a Palestinian state. It is between an Israel that takes a limited security risk for long-term peace, and an Israel that threatens its own long-term existence.

It is this kind of straight talk that has been missing in Israel's discourse. Israel's left has disappeared because it never squarely addressed the risks involved in peace-making. If J Street commits to clarity of thought and an honest approach, it may create the model for a new Israeli left with a viable message.

<http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/strenger-than-fiction/israel-s-problem-is-the-settlements-not-j-street-1.351831>

## **SILWAN/ IR DAVID**

by Dr. Meir Margalit

From "Seizing Control of Space in East Jerusalem"

June, 2010 — The village of Silwan stands on the front line of the Israeli offensive to erase the Arab presence in the east of the city. Because of its historical importance, and its proximity to the Temple Mount (Haram Al Sharif), the right-wing has set itself the goal of redeeming the lands on which King David supposedly established his kingdom.

The Jerusalem municipality intends to demolish an entire neighborhood of 88 houses and a thousand residents in Silwan village.

The plan to demolish all the houses in the al-Bustan area is part of the plan to gain control over Silwan, to cut it off from its residents and to Judaize the area. The official pretext is its archaeological value for the Jewish people. Here Jerusalem begins, here walked King David, King Solomon and other Kings of Israel, and here are graves from the days of the First Temple.

The words were written in detail in an official document produced by the municipal engineer of Jerusalem in November 2004. This document contains within it the entire Jewish-Arab conflict in one page. The municipal engineer correctly represents the conflict between the two peoples as it is: a struggle between King David and Farhi Abu-Diab – the Chairman of the acting committee of the residents of al-Bustan. The struggle is focussed on whose rights take precedence: those who lived in the area 3,000 years ago or those who live in the area today. He uses only the Hebrew names of the site, as no village named Silwan existed, as if no human beings lived in it – only archaeological remains.

There are two goals behind this dangerous process: one is to create a strip of Jewish neighborhoods in the east of the city that starts in the Old City and includes Silwan (the City

of David), Ras al-Amud (Maale ha-Zayit), Abu Dis (Kidmat Zion) and from it to link to the E-1 area and Maale Adumim. In this way they will break the territorial contiguity between the northern and southern neighborhoods in the east of the city, they will isolate the Old City [of Jerusalem] from the rest of the cities of the Palestinian State when it is created, and render impossible any just solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict.

The second goal is the desire of the municipality to reassert its control over the east of the city after its residents began to show signs of impatience in the face of the intolerable hardships with which they have had to contend. The wall that cuts them off from their families in the Territories, restrictions of movement, the economic crisis, property-tax debts that lead to confiscations and arrests, abuses by Border Guard police, unprecedented house-demolitions, inconceivably large fines, cancellation of residency and National Insurance social rights, erasure from the Kupat Holim [health insurance] registry, the forbidding of unification with spouses from the Territories – all this changed the climate that characterized life in the east of the city and all this has started to leave its marks. If that were not enough, the demographic demon has raised its head and threatens to turn the Arabs into a decisive majority within less than a generation. Without understanding the struggle for control we cannot understand what stands behind this unprecedented measure.

Since the 1970s the State has been sparing no efforts to gain control of lands and buildings by any means possible through the "Elad" settler society; the latter thus enters into dubious deals on behalf of the state, that the State cannot enter into officially.

Elad's official publications reflect pride in having seized more than 70 percent of the area of "Ir David". We believe that the association is waiting for the most suitable moment - in political terms - to take possession of the many buildings that are still inhabited by Arab citizens.

In addition to the properties they have seized, the settlers also control archaeological compounds, and the National Park of Ir David. This is the only situation in Israel where the government archaeological authority has transferred control to a settler association, -i.e. to Elad. A number of "non-settler" archaeologists have expressed concern over what they call a "shallow and brutal archaeology", saying that the settlers retrieve only those artefacts that support their case, while destroying or omitting artefacts indicating a history of an ancient Muslim or Christian presence, (Greenberg R, 2009). Although the Israel Antiquities Authority claims to know exactly what is happening in these excavations, it exerts little influence or supervision over Elad, much less than it would over other Israeli archaeological digs. In May 2008, for example, as reported in the Ha'aretz newspaper, human bones excavated in the site of the Givati Parking lot, simply disappeared. Elad neither reported this find nor transferred the bones to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as the law requires.

Silwan is one of the locations outside the Old City where it is close to impossible to receive a building permit. Because of its archaeological sensitivity, building is not allowed,

neither on empty plots of land nor as additions to existing buildings. Arab citizens who attempt to enlarge their homes by building annexes, either on the property land or on the roofs, are dealt with forcefully by fines, and by the total demolition of the additions. In contrast, over the past few years several Jewish enclaves that never received building permits have sprung up, but surprisingly the municipality has not exercised its authority to halt the construction or return the situation to what it was. See also weekly demonstrations in Silwan, below.

## WEEKLY DEMONSTRATIONS IN EAST JERUSALEM AND THE WEST BANK

By Sam Blatt

ISRAEL: April, 2011 — Within the last 10 years Anarchists Against The Wall, in Israel, led the way organizing protests against the wall, beginning with Mas'kha in the West Bank, before the wall was a concrete structure. Though it was a chain link fence at that time, it nevertheless encroached on the village's agricultural land, keeping farmers from accessing their fields. Currently, the longest continuous weekly demonstration takes place at Bil'in, which attracts many Israeli peace activists and "internationals", from Europe and the Americas.

Writing about ongoing scheduled demonstrations is a bit of a moving target, as the governments, at various levels, find new and creative ways to harass, demolish, vacate, and in general violate the rights of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories – and also in Israel within the Green Line.

The demonstrations are most often relatively small in number, from 20 to 200. This is a constant worry, as the number of locations that are being harassed, houses demolished, lack of due process, and discrimination by the Israeli government and military, is forever increasing. And not unusual – groups of demonstrators will go from one location of protest to another, in a show of solidarity.

The following is a list of regularly "scheduled" protests and demonstrations, both in the West Bank and within the Green Line. I'm sure there are others, (e.g. at Dahamshe, near Lod) that I have omitted either because they have just recently been "activated" – or because I simply do not know about them!

### Sheikh Jarrah:

Sheikh Jarrah is an old neighbourhood just outside the wall that surrounds the Old City. The situation that gave rise to the demonstrations can only be called a farcical circus. Prior to 1948 Jews lived in this area, and at the end of the main street, called Shimon Hatzadik, there was in fact a tomb, assumed to be that of Shimon the Righteous, that was visited by Jews. Then, during the war of 1948, Jordan captured that area. The Jews fled. Meanwhile, in Talpiot, in what is now West Jerusalem, Israel secured that neighbourhood, which was inhabited by Arabs. The vacant houses were given to Jews by the government under the law of "absentee landlord". Jordan and UNRWA built additional houses for those Arabs, 1952-56, in Sheikh Jarrah, and rented it to them for a nominal amount to Jordan. For this arrangement, they had to relinquish their refugee status. As such, they never did receive ownership of the houses.

About two years ago, some settler families approached

the Israeli courts, claiming they are the rightful owners of two or three of the houses. The courts sided with them. The Palestinian families offered to pay the settlers a symbolic rent; the settlers turned down this offer, and the Palestinian families were evicted. The Palestinians responded with: "OK – if our houses revert to these Jewish owners, give us back our houses in Talpiot". Of course, that would never pass in Israel, and the evicted families now either live out of their cars on the street, or at minimum gather daily in front of the houses. In one unbelievable surreal situation, there is a "side by side" house, (i.e. a common wall with a living room on either side) in one courtyard. A Palestinian family was evicted from one of the houses, and a Jewish settler family moved in. So here we have a Jewish family and a Palestinian family living side by side. The evicted family has not moved from the courtyard, and daily people (mostly "young") join them in solidarity. Since then more Palestinian families have been evicted.

At 3:00 p.m. every Friday there is a demonstration of about 200-400 people, organized by "Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement (Solidariut) and the Sheikh Jarrah Committee". The demonstration is attended by Israeli Jews, Palestinians, and many "internationals"; and one can often see certain Israeli politicians, writers, and journalists, and it is often covered by the international press. It is generally noisy with a lot of drumming by "the youth", slogan shouting, yelling at the police, and attempts to cross the police line, resulting in various degrees of scuffles, violence, and usually some arrests.



*Demonstration in front of settler's house in Sheikh Jarrah.  
Ronnee Jaeger, front centre, with back to camera*

### Silwan

Silwan is a Palestinian town outside the Old City wall (Jerusalem), quite visible from the patio coffee-shop of the Jerusalem Cinemateq, a favourite of tourists and Israelis alike. Silwan has the bad fortune of being within sight of the temple mount, - and adding to that proximity, - having been defined at it's closest border with the Old city, as being the site of King David's temple and "City of David". This is highly questionable, but in an amazing political move, a religious settler group, Elad, was given the full authority of the Israel Antiquities Department to perform all excavations there. "City of David" is now a major Israeli tourist attraction, visited also by Jewish school children and army inductees. It is protected by armed guards, cameras, knapsack and purse checking – the usual "security" arrangements Israelis have come to expect – though it is within



the boundaries of Silwan, and not West Jerusalem.

Simultaneously, a neighbourhood in Silwan, called the Bustan, has received demolition orders for 88 houses! Whatever the excuse might be – including a reference going back to biblical times!! – it is beyond comprehension that an entire legal neighbourhood should be demolished, without compensation or any due process as we would expect in a democracy. Ten houses have been demolished to date. The residents organized a weekly demonstration on Friday afternoon, and many demonstrators at Sheikh Jarrah move from Sheikh Jarrah to Silwan. The blatantly discriminatory action by Israel has attracted world-wide attention, and there is a lull in the demolitions. However, the Jerusalem municipality has announced plans to continue with the demolitions in order to create a tourist centre of hotels, restaurants, and shops.

### **Hebron**

Hebron is a disaster! What was a lively market area, supporting hundreds if not thousands of families, is now an series of streets of shuttered stores and stalls. There are a few holdouts, that for some reason the Israeli army allows to remain open. On Shuhada street, shops have been welded shut by the army, and the square is pretty well devoid of Palestinians. Extremist settlers have actually invaded Palestinian homes overlooking the market streets, and throw garbage, heavy items, and waste, onto the market streets below. To protect themselves, shopkeepers have covered the market in netting to catch the falling debris. The Israeli army, whose function it is as an occupying army to protect the civilian residents, stands by, and as stated above, shutters more and more market stores.

*Because of space limitations, we are not including the other weekly demonstrations that are described in Sam's original article. These will be included in future editions of UJPO News. For your information, these take place at Bil'in, Al Arakib, Shuhada Street, Lod and Ramle, Jaffa, al-Ajami, Nabi Saleh, and Ni'lin.*

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION ON BOYCOTTING ISRAEL**

29/03/11 — Around 270 students at Edinburgh University voted in favour of a motion which described Israel as an apartheid state and called for a boycott of goods. However, the Jewish Chronicle reports that the Edinburgh University Students' Association has confirmed a proposed boycott of Israeli products will not be enforced.

Here is a strong argument against the boycott, written by an Edinburgh University alumnus:

I am an Edinburgh graduate (MA 1975) who studied Persian, Arabic and Islamic History in Buccleuch Place under William Montgomery Watt and Laurence Elwell Sutton, two of Britain's great Middle East experts in their day. I later went on to do a PhD at Cambridge and to teach Arabic and Islamic Studies at Newcastle University. Naturally, I am the author of several books and hundreds of articles in this field.

For apartheid to exist, there would have to be a situation that closely resembled things in South Africa under the

apartheid regime. The most obvious focus for apartheid would be the country's 20% Arab population. Under Israeli law, Arab Israelis have exactly the same rights as Jews or anyone else; Muslims have the same rights as Jews or Christians; Baha'is, severely persecuted in Iran, flourish in Israel, where they have their world centre; Ahmadi Muslims, severely persecuted in Pakistan and elsewhere, are kept safe by Israel; the holy places of all religions are protected under a specific Israeli law. Arabs form 20% of the university population (an exact echo of their percentage in the general population).

Arabs in Israel can go anywhere they want, unlike blacks in apartheid South Africa. They use public transport, they eat in restaurants, they go to swimming pools, they use libraries, they go to cinemas alongside Jews – something no blacks could do in South Africa. Israeli hospitals not only treat Jews and Arabs, they also treat Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank. On the same wards, in the same operating theatres.

In Israel, women have the same rights as men: there is no gender apartheid. Gay men and women face no restrictions, and Palestinian gays often escape into Israel, knowing they may be killed at home.

I do not object to well documented criticism of Israel. We are going through the biggest upheaval in the Middle East since the 7th and 8th centuries, and it's clear that Arabs and Iranians are rebelling against terrifying regimes that fight back by killing their own citizens. Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs alike, do not rebel (though they are free to protest). Yet Edinburgh students mount no demonstrations and call for no boycotts against Libya, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Iran. They prefer to make false accusations against one of the world's freest countries, the only country in the Middle East that has taken in Darfur refugees, the only country in the Middle East that gives refuge to gay men and women, the only country in the Middle East that protects the Baha'is.... Need I go on? The imbalance is perceptible, and it sheds no credit on anyone who voted for this boycott.

Your generation has a duty to ensure that the perennial racism of anti-Semitism never sets down roots among you. Today, however, there are clear signs that it has done so and is putting down more. I have given you some of the evidence. It's up to you to find out more.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Denis MacEoin

*Above article was submitted by UJPO member Gord Meslin. Read more at: <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/47006/no-boycott-lse-or-edinburgh-union>*

### **David Abramowitz responded:**

An aside from me - I can tell that the letter's author had never experienced waiting for more than an hour to go through a check-point and watch how Palestinians are treated, or having a Christian-Palestinian Israeli-licensed tourist guide stopped in the street with his tourists behind him, and humiliated by an IDF soldier who tells the tourists not to worry because the Palestinian is a lower form of human. I experienced this in 2005. I felt ashamed.

## CJC/UJA CENSURES THE WINCHEVSKY CENTRE

By Julia Barnett

The Winchevsky Centre has recently landed in the public headlines by hosting "Never Again For Anyone", a tour featuring Dr. Hajo Meyer, which recently made two stops in Toronto. Meyer survived ten months in Auschwitz and is an author, violin maker, and an active member of the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN), Netherlands. One of the main purposes of these events is to honour those who perished in the Holocaust by advocating for the human rights of all people, including Palestinians living under Israel's military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza as well as Palestinians living in Israel. The tour is also a way to make links between the various forms of genocides that have occurred historically as well as those ongoing today.



*Hajo Meyer, Holocaust survivor and Palestinian rights activist*

On February 1, at the Winchevsky Centre, Meyer was joined by Lee Maracle, author and activist from the Sto: Loh nation, Khaled Mouammar, the national president of the Canadian Arab Federation (CAF) and Sara Kershner, one of the co-founders of IJAN. The night was well-attended, and drew a very mixed crowd from different communities. The tour itself was timed to coincide with the official United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, the day that Auschwitz was liberated. The United Jewish People's Order - Toronto and IJAN, Canada were the local co-sponsors. IJAN, American Muslims For Palestine (AMP), and the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) were the primary sponsors of the entire tour, which went through 12 U.S. cities as well as Toronto.

UJPO has a long history of sponsoring these types of events and engaging in a range of political views on the issue of Israel-Palestine. As a progressive venue, we feel it is important to provide opportunities for open political discussion. By hosting "Never Again For Anyone", we continued our proud tradition of providing democratic forums for people with varying political positions to take up the discussion. As a host venue in a diverse community, we offered an opportunity to bring progressive people together in a pluralist, non-sectarian, open space to

discuss Israel-Palestine, and a voice for those experiencing genocide on an international basis today. A number of participants have congratulated our organization for having such a needed discussion when so many refuse, or are intimidated to do so.

Intimidation takes many forms. In our case, the pressure to cancel the event came from the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Federation of Greater Toronto. There were several rounds of correspondence with the CJC and the UJA Federation, a subsequent article and letters to the editor in the Canadian Jewish News. As a result of hosting "Never Again For Anyone", the Winchevsky Centre was informed by the CJC and the UJA Federation that they "cannot continue their affiliation with the Winchevsky Centre", and that the Winchevsky Centre is to remove "all references to affiliation" with CJC/UJA from our website and promotional materials.

The United Jewish People's Order - Toronto stands by our original decision to co-sponsor and hold this important event based on our desire to be an open and pluralist organization, guided by the democratic principles of debate and dialogue, be it on Israel-Palestine or any other topic. We are grateful for the many messages of solidarity and support we have received during this affair. Thanks to you, our supporters, we will not be intimidated or silenced.

For all of those who attended this event or others that UJPO has presented, and any of you who support these principles, we encourage you to "strengthen your affiliation" and become a member of UJPO, work with us on the programs we currently offer and help create new, exciting, and relevant events independently, as sponsors and with partners.

### VENEZUELA FACT FINDING AND SOLIDARITY TOUR

There are only a couple of spaces left for UJPO's educational, solidarity and fact finding tour this fall!

Contact Ronnee and Sam at [ronneej40@bell.net](mailto:ronneej40@bell.net) or visit <http://www.ujpo.org/VenezuelaFact-FindingandSolidarityTour> for more details and to download registration form.

### United Jewish People's Order

585 Cranbrooke Ave,  
Toronto, ON, M6A 2X9

Phone: 416-789-5502

Fax: 416-789-5981

Email: [ujpocan@aol.com](mailto:ujpocan@aol.com)

-or-

[bblaser@winchevskycentre.org](mailto:bblaser@winchevskycentre.org)

Website: [www.ujpo.org](http://www.ujpo.org)

### Affiliations:

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO); Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA); International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ)

Edited By UJPO National Board Members

Volunteer produced

The United Jewish People's Order develops and perpetuates a progressive secular approach to social and cultural matters, our Jewish heritage, the Yiddish language and holiday and festival celebrations; we sponsor secular Jewish education, musical and cultural groups, concerts, lectures, public forums, and take part in social action and related community activities.

*Opinions expressed in signed articles are the authors' and not necessarily those of UJPO*

**Fair Use Notice:** This issue contains some copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of journalism, politics, human rights, democracy, social justice and other issues of concern to the public. We believe this constitutes a fair dealing and fair use of any such copyrighted material as provided for in Part III Section 29 of the Canadian Copyright Law and Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. In accordance with the sections titled Acts Undertaken Without Motive of Gain (Canada) and Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107 (U.S.), the material in this publication is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this issue for purposes of your own that go beyond fair dealing and fair use, you must obtain prior permission from the copyright owner.