

*The following statements were compiled by the Divestment Task Force of the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church. All articles and statements are used with permission.*

## **Jews Against the Occupation Open Letter to the Methodists**

October 4, 2004

We are writing as deeply committed Jews to urge the Methodist Church to act as a true friend to our people. We hope that you will follow the Presbyterian Church of the United States which decided on July 2 to condemn the wall Israel is building in the West Bank, to disavow Christian Zionism, and to begin selective divestment of holdings in multinational corporations doing business in Israel/Palestine. These decisions represent an important step forward in the struggle for Palestinian freedom. We are saddened, although not surprised, that they have been accused of anti-Semitism because of their principled actions.

All too often, when a non-Jewish group or individual speaks out against blatantly unjust Israeli policies and actions, they are accused of acting on that unreasoning hatred of Jews and Judaism that is commonly called anti-Semitism. Yet to an anti-Semite, Jews are inherently evil, and can only be improved by ceasing to exist as Jews. Issuing a moral rebuke such as a targeted divestment shows a respect for Jews and Judaism that is fundamentally incompatible with anti-Semitism. Such an act is predicated on the belief that the recipients of the rebuke are capable of reevaluating their actions and turning onto a more just path. We can think of no greater act of friendship than to risk being defamed in order to remind one's friends of their own ideals when they, themselves, have forgotten them.

In the book of Proverbs, revered by Jews and Christians alike, it is written, "A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you." (9:8). By choosing selective divestment, you show the integrity, and the courage, to rebuke the state of Israel for its bitter oppression of the Palestinians. Whether it was intended or not, this rebuke speaks also to the many Jews who support Israel's oppressive policies, or stand aside and leave them unopposed. Now we Jews must face the test of our own integrity, and our own courage: we must choose how we will hear the message of divestment. Will we be scoffers, hating our friends for challenging our misdeeds, or will we be wise, loving them for reminding us of the pursuit of justice that is our highest calling, and the expression of our better selves?

The answer, of course, is that the response will be mixed, and, at first, the scoffers may well predominate. Yet we believe that the day will come, be it in five years or fifty, when the Church's action in this matter will be remembered with love and gratitude by Jews around the world. We are proud to be among the first to say, "Thank you!"

Sincerely,  
Jews Against the Occupation, New York City

Saturday, March 18, 2006

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## ***Jewish Groups Back Divestment To Promote Peace***

[This from Ekklesia:](#)

Jewish and Israeli groups have written to the Archbishop of Canterbury, backing the call by the Church of England's General Synod to disinvest church funds from companies profiting from Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

In a letter seen by Ekklesia, and dated yesterday (15th March) the 16 groups assert that **sanctions against the Occupation have a 'solid moral foundation'** and urge the Archbishop of Canterbury to have the 'moral strength' not to back down from supporting the Synod's decision.

The motion, which was passed by the Church's 'Parliament' at the beginning of February provoked outcry from the Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, as well as a group of Conservative MPs who accused Synod of being 'politically motivated'.

In what was seen by many in a snub to Synod however, the Church's Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) subsequently said it would not recommend disinvestment, most notably from the controversial US company Caterpillar.

In yesterday's letter to Rowan Williams however, Jewish and Israeli groups say that they deplore those who have labelled Synod 'anti-Semitic' for their decision. They also express their hope that the 'unfortunate' decision by the EIAG will not undo the resolution that Synod made.

The letter states; "We, the undersigned representatives of Israeli and Jewish organizations, have witnessed the Occupation first hand. In our view, Israel's Occupation and settlement policies stem more from territorial claims than from genuine concerns of security, which can only be addressed through a complete end to the Occupation and peace with the Palestinians. Of the 12,000 Palestinian homes demolished by Israel in the Occupied Territories since 1967, less than 5% were demolished for security reasons (and even then we oppose demolition as a form of collective punishment, illegal under international law). In 95% of the cases the families involved were completely innocent of any security offence and were never even accused of or charged with any offence.

"We therefore extend to you and the Church of England our unreserved support of the synod's call to disinvest from Caterpillar and other companies profiting from the Occupation. This is an entirely appropriate moral stand for civil society to take."

The letter asserts that Caterpillar custom-makes its massive D-9 and D-10 bulldozers for the express purpose of demolishing Palestinian homes, and that these machines are sold to Israel as military equipment.

The letter further highlights that the demolition of Palestinian homes is prohibited by international law and that the Fourth Geneva Convention requires an occupying power to protect the well-being of vulnerable civilians under its control, and forbids collective punishment.

"In light of the ongoing and extremely severe human rights violations committed by the Israeli government in the Occupied Territories," the letter continues, "we believe that sanctions against the Occupation have a solid moral foundation. We can only hope that with your support the decision of the Synod to endorse divestment will not be undone by the unfortunate decision of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

"As Israelis and Jews, we also deplore the statements of those who have labelled the synod members, including yourself, as anti-Semitic. It is inconceivable to us - indeed, we find it grotesque - that Jews who have suffered displacement and exile could possibly defend the demolition of thousands of Palestinian homes or any aspect of the Occupation.

"We hope they come to understand that the **Occupation threatens to destroy the entire moral fabric of the Jewish community, in Israel as well as in the Diaspora. We hope that the call of your Church for divestment in Caterpillar will resonate with the Prophetic tradition of our own people**, so that the leaders of British Jewry will join with your initiative. What unites us is the understanding that either Israelis and Palestinians achieve a just peace or both peoples continue their downward spiral into violence and suffering. Your call for divestment in companies profiting from the Occupation represents an important brake on that downward spiral."

The letter is signed by Paula Abrams-Hourani, European Jews for a Just Peace; Gaby Belz, Just Peace Between Israel and Palestine (Switzerland) Paola Canarutto, Rete-ECO (Italy) Liliane Cordova Kaczerginski, Union Juive Francaise pour la paix; Jeff Halper, The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) Abe Hayeem, Just Peace (UK) Ruth Hiller, New Profile (Israel) Dan Judelson, European Jews for a Just Peace; Richard Kuper, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK) Vivien Lichtenstein, Joint Action for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (UK) Orna Neumann, ICAHD UK; Rachel Ostrowitz, Noga Feminist Magazine (Israel) Mitchell Plitnick, Jewish Voice for Peace (US) Fanny-Michaela Reisin, European Jews for a Just Peace - Germany Gila Svirsky, Coalition of Women for Peace (Israel) Sergio Yahni, The Alternative Information Center (Israel)

### ***The Other Israel***

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We have been asking our readers to send letters of support to the Presbyterians upon their courageous call for divestment as a mild form of economic pressure to end the lethal embrace in which Israelis and Palestinians are entangled. International commitment is needed for us to get out of this, and become neighbors, good neighbors, each in its own independent state.

**With the inaction of the international community's official organs, initiatives from the civil societies such as the campaign for divestment , are filling a vacuum.**

Adam Keller  
Beate Zilversmidt  
Editors The Other Israel & TOI-Billboard

Selected articles The Other Israel latest printed issue on site:

<http://otherisrael.home.igc.org/>

**For Immediate Release**

Monday, July 26, 2004

## ***National Jewish Group Applauds Presbyterian Church's Historic Stand Against Israel's Occupation***

***"Working to end the Israeli occupation is the best way to help the Jewish people build a future free from terror and anti-Semitism."***

San Francisco, CA – Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), the largest grassroots Jewish peace group of its kind in the United States, applauds the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) for its recent vote to explore divesting from companies who profit from the harming of "innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli." **Far from being an attack on Jews, the PCUSA decision to investigate selective divestment as a way to end Israel's 37-year occupation is in the best Judeo-Christian tradition of supporting universal human rights and justice.**

JVP supports PCUSA's decision because we believe that the US government has failed to be an honest broker for peace, and that targeted economic efforts by citizens' groups are therefore necessary to reach a lasting peace in the region.

JVP asserts that working to end the Israeli occupation, which is illegal according to international law, is the best way to help the Jewish people build a future free from terror and anti-Semitism. We believe that people who care deeply about the welfare of Jews, Israelis and Palestinians should take a similar stand against a military occupation which is harmful to all parties. Further, we deplore attempts to dismiss as anti-Semitic any legitimate criticism of the policies of the state of Israel.

Responsible investment by institutions, including churches, governments, corporations and individuals, is a vital tool in bringing a just peace to the troubled region of Israel-Palestine. When a 3-million member institution with the fiscal clout and moral credibility of PCUSA takes a stand, others will soon follow.

In the same spirit, JVP's campaign to persuade the Caterpillar Corporation to stop providing Israel with US-funded specialized bulldozers for destroying Palestinian homes is supported by groups like Amnesty International and the United Nations. Strong economies on both sides enhance the prospects for peace. Investment in Israel's occupation, in its illegal separation wall and its settlements can only harm both Israelis and Palestinians in the long run.

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Founded in 1996, California-based Jewish Voice for Peace is a national grassroots peace organization dedicated to promoting a US foreign policy in the Middle East based on peace, democracy, human rights and respect for international law. JVP teamed up with two groups of Catholic nuns at the recent Caterpillar annual meeting to introduce the first shareholder resolution in US history related to human rights violations in the Occupied Territories. JVP's board of Jewish American and Israeli advisors includes Pulitzer and Tony award winner Tony Kushner, actor Ed Asner, poet Adrienne Rich and other respected rabbis, artists, scholars and activists. JVP has 10,000 supporters from towns and cities across the country, and calls for the

suspension of all military aid to Israel until it takes down its wall, removes illegal settlements and ends its 37-year occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

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From Jewish Voice for Peace December Newsletter: [http://ga3.org/jvfp/December\\_newsletter.html#quote](http://ga3.org/jvfp/December_newsletter.html#quote)

### ***Ofra Ben-Artzi, in-law of Benjamin Netanyahu, supports divestment***

Ofra Ben-Artzi's son, Jonathan Ben-Artzi, is perhaps Israel's best known refusenik because he is the nephew of former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Both of Jonathan's parents, academics Matania and Ofra, as well as his siblings, are passionate voices for justice. Ofra, who is also a member of Machsom Watch and hails from one of Israel's original "Mayflower" families, recently sent us [JVP] these words in response to our position on divestment:

*Dear JVP:*

*I just wanted to thank & encourage you for your initiative. Under the circumstances, there are two ways to fight the occupation, even when there are some positive prospects, these are just talks and the reality on the ground is terrible. (I know it as an activist in Machsom Watch). The internal one is through REFUSAL. And the external one is divestment and sooner or later-BOYCOTT.*

***REFUSAL & DIVESTMENT are the most patriotic actions in order to save Israel, and are in the best interest of the welfare of Jewish communities around the world.***

*Best Wishes,*

*Ofra Ben-Artzi*

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## ***Speech to Chicago Presbytery by Liat Weingart February 8, 2005***

My name is Liat Weingart. I am a co-director of Jewish Voice for Peace, one of the largest and oldest grassroots Jewish peace organizations in the US. JVP has some 10,000 members and supporters, and a board of advisors that includes high-profile American Jews like Tony Kushner and Adrienne Rich and Israeli peace activists.

JVP was one of the first Jewish groups to publicly support the Presbyterian Church's decision to investigate selective divestment. The decision on selective divestment is an incredibly brave one. It is a strong statement that Americans will no longer continue to fund the humiliation and brutality that Palestinians suffer every day. I thank you for making that decision, especially given how painful the reaction from the organized Jewish community has been. The evidence of that is in the room

with us today, with the glaring absence of the three other panelists. But your decision to investigate selective divestment is evidence of your clear commitment to the Jewish people.

There is a silent majority of Jews in the US who feel completely alienated from mainline Jewish groups because those groups are no longer in line with their central beliefs of justice and equality. Most Jews in the US are not affiliated with the institutions that purport to represent us. Never in American history have so many Jewish groups sprung up outside of the mainstream of the Jewish community, in defiance of the flawed leadership of our community.

By making a decision to investigate selective divestment from Israel's occupation, you have made it clear that you recognize the core of what being Jewish is all about – respect for human life and dignity. I want to thank you for being brave enough to stand strongly as allies to Jewish people.

It's so difficult to be allies to Jews when Jews are accusing you of betraying them. But at the core of being an ally to us is understanding why some of us are reacting with great anger – and then refusing to be deterred by that anger. Actually, Jews are stuck in the middle of a cycle – because of how we've been oppressed, we've become oppressors.

I am an Israeli-American Jew and the grandchild of four Holocaust survivors. All four of my grandparents were forced to leave their homes and everything they knew because they were hunted by the Nazis. When my grandparents fled their homes, they left behind their entire extended family, most of who were killed. My great grandmother lost all nine of her sisters and brothers. In October of last year, I traveled to Poland to learn about how they lived and died. And I went to learn about what their murder means for people like me, the children and grandchildren of survivors.

In Poland, I stood on the soil that my family lived on for generations. It's the same soil that's stained with their blood and ashes. I walked into the crematoria and gas chambers at Auschwitz, where I think my family was murdered. Since October, I've had nightmares every night. When I close my eyes to sleep, I'll see a pile of burning human corpses. I have a recurring nightmare that I'm standing alone in front of a pile of corpses. I can't turn and run, and I can't scream, and I'm horribly alone, knowing that my family is somewhere in the pile. Or I dream that I'm surrounded by the ghosts of six million Jews, my family among them, angry beyond belief at everything that was taken from them. No scream is loud enough to express their anguish. (I'm not telling you this as a story, I'm telling you because this is my experience every night of my life.)

In fact the crematoria are in rubble. Outside of Israel, most Jews are as secure as most other human beings. However, the subjective experience of the millennia of persecution and genocide is quite another thing. Since my visit to Auschwitz last October, the constant fear that I and many other Jews live with has come to the surface of my consciousness. In some ways, my nightmares are a new phenomenon. But in reality, Auschwitz and the legacy of persecution and targeting that my family faced was always in my house as I grew up. No one talked about it, but you could feel it. A constant level of tension and anxiety that you wouldn't notice until you woke up with a stiff neck and sore muscles, not having any idea what you spent the night running from. I know this is a common experience for Jews. One of my Jewish friends wonders which neighbors will hide her children just in case there's a severe anti-Semitic outbreak. I've heard a number of Jews say that they think about having an extra suitcase packed, "just in case." My grandfather stocked our cabinets with pieces of bread wrapped in cloth, "just in case."

Since most of us have yet to heal from the traumas we have endured, most Jews do not feel safe. And many Jews feel homeless, no matter their level of material stability. We are prone to feeling and even acting as if the gas chambers in Auschwitz are still functioning. We're scared and ready to fight for our survival. Anyone who had our history would be. Today, in Israel-Palestine, terrified, nuclear-armed Jews rule over 3 1/2 million Palestinians who live without any kind of representation in the government that controls the most mundane details of their day-to-day lives. Both peoples suffer, but who is the victim, and who is the oppressor? For every Israeli Jew killed in a suicide bombing, four Palestinians are killed by an Israeli tank, helicopter, or bulldozer—probably operated by a scared young Israeli. (I should say an American helicopter, since they're built by Boeing, and an American bulldozer, because they're built by Caterpillar.) Every day, Palestinians encounter scared Israeli soldiers at hundreds of Israeli checkpoints that choke Palestinian roads. Palestinians live in fear that their homes will be destroyed at any moment by a Caterpillar bulldozer, and human rights groups in Israel say that 95% of home demolitions have nothing to do with security.

Why am I here? Because we need help from you, our allies. Yes, we need you to understand how the oppression of Jews has led to oppression by Jews. We need you to cleave to us. But we also need you to help us stop. Help us stop destroying Palestinian homes, subjecting Palestinians to random brutality, suppressing the liberty of another people. PCUSA's decision to investigate selective divestment from companies profiting from Israel's occupation is an important step in helping us to break that cycle of victim/oppressor.

The country of my birth is killing itself from the inside and Americans, mostly, are profiting from it. I've heard people say that divestment from Israel's occupation will hurt Israel's economy. There's very little evidence for that. 75% of the military aid that Israel receives from the US must be spent buying military equipment from American companies. So, selective divestment from the occupation wouldn't primarily affect Israeli companies but American ones. Many of those companies lobby our government for a warlike American policy towards Israel and Palestine. And at this moment, the Israeli economy is so heavily militarized that other industries, let alone programs to meet human needs, are neglected. Selectively divesting from the occupation means investing in brighter futures for Israelis and Palestinians.

I'm not asking you to selectively divest from Israel's occupation just because it's the right thing to do. But because we Jews need you to stand with us now as our allies. Cleave to us. But expect things of us. Don't let us get away with anything less than what we're capable of. We know you feel bad about what has happened to Jews. Sometimes this "feeling bad" has made our allies timid. It comes across like: we didn't keep the Jews of Europe alive, so we'll just keep quiet while they oppress and humiliate the Palestinians. We need you to stop feeling that bad. We need you at our side as partners in our liberation. And we will not be truly liberated as long as we are occupying and bullying the Palestinians. We need you to understand the history we've endured. But we also need you to persist in seeing the best in us and consistently expecting and demanding it of us.

There's a verse from Matthew Chapter 5 that I love. It's verse 14.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.  
No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house.  
In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**The General Assembly made an incredibly brave and powerful and right decision by choosing to investigate selective divestment from the Israeli occupation.** And the Presbyterian Church has been attacked since that decision was made. Cleaving to your Jewish brothers and sisters will not be comfortable now. It will not be easy. But don't let go of us, and don't let go of all that we're capable of. The time is now – set the lamp on the stand. Stick to the decision that the GA made to investigate selective divestment from the occupation.

## ***Not In My Name Supports Selective Divestment as a Tool to Oppose the Israeli Occupation***

JANUARY 16, 2005

Not In My Name is a predominantly Jewish group that was established in 2000 to organize opposition to Israel's illegal and unjust occupation of the Palestinian territories it seized in 1967. We continue to add our voices to the growing anti-Occupation movement and make it clear that Israel neither speaks nor acts in the name of all Jews.

We believe that the Israelis and Palestinians deserve a chance to live together in peace and we support self-determination for both peoples. We oppose the obstacles that prevent the creation of a just and lasting peace, and believe that the Occupation and the U.S. support for it are primary obstacles. We also oppose such things as the illegal Jewish-only settlements and bypass roads in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, home demolitions, all forms of collective punishments, and extrajudicial assassinations. We also oppose the Wall that imprisons entire Palestinian villages and separates Palestinians from their farmlands, schools, religious and economic centers, and their water.

As Americans, our opposition is focused on the role of the U.S. government in supporting Israeli policies. This support includes massive amounts of military aid as well as diplomatic support, such as using its veto to block UN Security Council Resolutions that condemn actions of the Israeli government.

We believe that only organized actions by large numbers of informed people can change the policies of the U.S. government. Therefore, among our many activities, we have supported the progressive position of the Presbyterian Church, which is investigating whether it should divest some of its funds from corporations whose activities in Israel are an obstacle to peace.

We do not believe that such divestment plans are, by their very nature, either anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli. On the contrary, the Occupation is destroying Israeli society by increasing poverty, violence, and insecurity. Therefore actions that oppose the Occupation are, in fact, pro-Israeli. Furthermore, we believe that such actions are in keeping with our vision of a Judaism that is based on the principle of justice.

Well designed divestment campaigns can help focus public discourse on the Occupation. They can also have a positive material impact, as has been shown by such projects as the grape boycott to support the United Farm Workers and the opposition to South African apartheid. Therefore, NIMN supports selective divestment and/or selective boycott campaigns that target corporations that profit

from the Occupation. A prime example is the Caterpillar Corporation, which manufactures the D-9 bulldozers that are used to destroy Palestinian homes, farms, and orchards.

We underscore our belief that the Occupation is not only destroying Palestinian society, but Israeli society, as well. Selective divestment from companies that profit from this destruction is not only appropriate, it is both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli. Therefore, NIMN urges its members and supporters to investigate and actively support selective divestment and boycott campaigns that target corporations that profit from the Occupation.

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## ***European Jews for a Just Peace, EJJP***

European Jews for a Just Peace, EJJP, is a federation of 18 Jewish groups from nine different European countries. Its principles are formulated in the Amsterdam Declaration.

### **Amsterdam Declaration**

"We, representatives of eighteen Jewish peace organisations from nine European countries, gathered together at the conference "Don't say you didn't know" in Amsterdam on the 19 and 20th of September 2002, call upon:

- A) the Israeli government to change its current policy and implement the the proposals in the following declaration and
- B) all other governments, the United Nations and the European Union to put pressure on the Israeli government to implement the proposals in the following declaration:  
We believe that the only way out of the current impasse is through an agreement based on the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian state and the guarantee of a safe and secure Israel and Palestine. We condemn all violence against civilians in the conflict, no matter by whom it is carried out.

We call for:

1. an immediate end of the occupation of the occupied territories: West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem with recognition of the 4th June 1967 borders;
2. complete withdrawal of all Jewish settlements in all the occupied territories;
3. the recognition of the right of both states to have Jerusalem as their capital;
4. the recognition by Israel of its part in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. Israel should recognise in principle the Palestinian right to return as a human right. The practical solution to the problem will come about by agreement between parties based on just, fair and practical considerations. It will include compensation, the return to the territory of the State of Palestine or of Israel, without endangering Israel's existence. We call upon the international community, especially Europe, for political and financial support". (The Amsterdam Declaration, as amended by the Convention of EJJP held in Paris in May, 2004)

**European Jews for a Just Peace: EJJP 2005 Annual Plenary Session calls for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against the Occupation**

Specifically, EJJJ:

- Expresses its continuing concern with the grave situation for the Palestinian people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,
- Emphasizes the inadmissibility of the annexation of territories that were conquered and occupied by the Israeli army during the course of the War of 1967, contravening international law,
- Emphasizes the illegality of the perpetuation of the war by keeping the Occupied Palestinian Territories under the command of the Israeli military forces,
- Emphasizes the illegitimacy of settling and thereby colonizing the Occupied Territories and separating them according to colonial needs by the construction of annexation walls in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip
- Emphasizes the illegality of establishing a new status quo by the occupying power, according to the Charter of the United Nations and all United Nations resolutions subsequent to the War of 1967
- Recalls that the fulfillment of the principles of the United Nations Charter requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace between both Israel and the future Palestinian state which must be based on the preconditions that were expressed in the EJJJ Amsterdam Declaration in 2002.

All Member States of the United Nations in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter. Israel, as a powerful state occupying the land of another people, is an equal member of the international community and must be held accountable for its policies and actions in the light of accepted international norms as are all other nations. Any other approach to the State of Israel would indeed imply the kind of intolerable distinction that inevitably must be termed "anti-Semitic".

Furthermore, if the international system of justice is to keep its authority and meaning for the international community Israel must be compelled by all political means, including non-violent pressure, to end the Occupation.

If Israel succeeds in Defying the Fourth Geneva Convention and in making its Occupation permanent, Locking an entire population behind walls that have been judged illegal by the International Court of Justice, Perpetuating the denial of the Palestinians' right of self-determination, Reviving colonialism and illegal territory annexation i. e. if Israel succeeds in abusing international law systematically and continuously, then the power of the rule of law as such will be jeopardized and the trust in its superiority over power politics and militarism will necessarily decrease.

Therefore, the 2005 Annual Plenary Session of the EJJP declares that the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian land is an international issue.

We all have a stake in ending it.

We are no longer willing to accept the blindness of the so called super powers, the indolence of the United Nations, the apathy of the "Quartet", and finally, the indifference of the nations of the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

We are no longer willing to be silent about the fact that the occupying power, Israel, claims to be carrying out its policy of war and injustice on behalf of our ancestors, who were victims of the Nazi genocide, and supposedly for the sake of all victims of anti-Semitism and racism. In particular, it is using our names illegitimately as Israelis or Jews.

We are no longer willing to witness passively a policy course that has already caused too many casualties, unbearable destruction, and constant pain. Regarding ourselves as European citizens and, hence, believing that human rights is the political basis of European civil society, we share the responsibility for peace and justice with our friends and sister organizations in Israel, in Palestine, and in all countries of the international community.

We are determined to take a major stand against the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian territories, i. e. against the course of hatred and hostility that by necessity will culminate in a catastrophe - not only for Palestinians and Israelis but in all likelihood, for humanity itself.

There is no other way!

The time has come to support our criticism of and opposition to the Israeli governments and policies by effective, non-violent means.

**We are convinced, that the only political, non-violent measures that are likely to affect the Israeli government** -- inasmuch as the dissemination of information, protest campaigns, demonstrations, legal actions and lobbying have not succeeded -- **are Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions against the Occupation**. These measures represent powerful international responses that arise not only from our opposition to an intolerable situation in Palestine, but also from the belief that time has come for every person in the international civil society who is concerned about the international law and human rights' system to take responsibility and to apply any non-violent measure that might help to cease this injustice.

.....The call for civil boycott actions for economic and institutional divestment as well as for legal sanctions on the national and international level is directed against the Israeli Occupation.

It is based on the conviction that the Israeli leadership and decision makers, as well as most of Israel's civil society, although having the power to alter the intolerable situation, are reluctant and/or unwilling to do so. For this reason, it is impossible to end the Occupation without pressure from outside. Palestinians, on the other hand, are too weak to shake off the Occupation without assistance from outside. International, non-violent but effective pressure is the only way to achieve a breakthrough of this deadlock.

.....The Federation of the European Jews for a Just Peace and many of its affiliated groups will be supporting and pursuing an interwoven campaign of boycott, divestment and sanction actions against the Occupation on all levels, local, regional, national, European and intercontinental.....

At the same time, we would like to paraphrase our sister organization, the Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) in the United States and state clearly that we reject completely the accusation that general divestment or boycott campaigns are inherently anti-Semitic. On the contrary, we believe that condemning the Israeli governments and military forces for their abuse of state power and increasing non-violent pressure from abroad and from within are more likely to make them halt, thus preventing the Israeli and Palestinian people from descending into an irreversible catastrophe.

In no way are non-violent boycott, divestment, and sanction campaigns against the Occupation the same as attacking people for being Jewish.

**We note that many Jewish and Israeli organizations support the idea of selective boycott and sanctions on Israel: ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against House Demolition), the Jewish Voice for a Just Peace (JVP/US), Not in My Name (US); Mazpen (Israel/International), Matzpun (Israel/International); New Profile (a Refusenicks, feminist and antimilitaristic organization in Israel), Jews Against the Occupation (NYC Chapter); the petition of South African government minister Ronnie Kasrils and legislator Max Ozinsky, which has gathered more than 500 signatures of South African Jews; Jewish Voices Against the Occupation (US); Jewish Women for Justice in Israel and Palestine (US); Gush Shalom (Israel); Jews for Global Justice (US); and Visions of Peace With Justice (US), among others.**

## ***Israel must be treated as South Africa was: sanctions, boycotts***

*by Prof. Ilan Pappé*

Prof. Ilan Pappé is one of Israel's most prominent "new historians". In May 2002, Pappé was threatened with expulsion from his university, the University of Haifa, for supporting a Jewish graduate student whose dissertation documented a massacre of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers. (More than 24 such massacres have been documented.) The expulsion proceedings were suspended due to a protest by international academics. Writer Nick Everett spoke with Pappé during his recent visit to Australia.

Q: What brought about the current intifada (uprising) in Palestine, and what is the Israeli government's policy towards it?

The intifada is the result of Palestinians' frustration [with] the intolerable gap between the discourse of peace and reconciliation and the actual reality on the ground. While the diplomats involved in the 1993 Oslo accords were talking about peace and independence, on the ground the occupation continued. In fact, it became worse — more settlements were built, more roadblocks were introduced and the Israeli policy in general became harsher and more cruel.

Ever since the outbreak of the second intifada, the Israeli politicians and generals are using it as a pretext for trying to affect by force their own idea of how the Palestine question should be solved. It is wrong to look at the Israeli government as an "aberration", as a dramatic shift in Israeli policies. The government led by PM Ariel Sharon epitomises Israeli policies rather than deviates from them.

[Sharon has] also learned something that he failed to understand in his first government — if you employ words such as withdrawal, Palestinian state and "peace", you ... can present your own middle way — annexing parts of the West Bank to Israel in a way that does not sound fanatical or extreme, but is the only way to peace.

And this is [why] the UN and of course the US and the EU are supporting Sharon's "peace plan". And the Sharon peace plan is very clear — he was very honest about this — he does not want the Gaza settlements, he wants only half of the West Bank.

The Labor Party has found the rationalisation to explain why most of its members are now supporting the Sharon government, with a huge demonstration in Tel Aviv supporting Sharon. The peace camp came to the big demonstration in Tel Aviv to support Sharon. This is unbelievable. But the reason is because [Sharon] succeeded in mesmerizing them as well with the words of "peace", "withdrawal" and "Palestinian state".

There is a consensus within the Israeli political centre about what this settlement should be: which is mainly taking over as much of Palestine as possible and moving Palestinians off it. Which means that the Israelis are building walls on what they see as the borders of Israel, which will leave the Palestinians only 10-15% of original Palestine. They would divide what is left of the original Palestine into two areas — the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — and put on it walls and barriers. It would amount to two prison camps. I don't think the Israelis mind calling these two Bantustans — or prison camps — Palestine and claiming this is the

solution. I think that the Israeli government feels that it has a window of opportunity now with the US government [of President George Bush] and it may not have such a window of opportunity in the future. This is why I think that the present policies are directed at solidifying such a “solution” or settlement.

Another problem [for the Israeli government] is that ... it feels that it has lost the demographic battle. In other words, it doesn't matter how it shapes the border — whether 1%, 2% or 10% of the West Bank is annexed — the demographic balance, which obsesses [Israeli leaders], is going to change rapidly.

If you compare the growth of both populations, you can see that in 10 or 15 years, the Israelis are going to lose their majority. [They realise that] however you juggle; however you play with all this power, at the end of the day [the Israeli government is going to represent] a minority.

Once, talk about transfer and expulsion was the property of extreme right-wing politicians and was taboo. It has moved to the centre. Distinguished scholars, politicians talk openly about the need to expel Palestinians. They argue that that is the only way for Israel to survive.

We have an Israeli government that is not going to negotiate with the Palestinians a final settlement, but is going to dictate by force what is Israel and what is Palestine.

Q: What is your reading of the mood amongst the Palestinian people and their response to this policy?

Two agendas are very important here. One is [because of] the total collapse of the social, political and economic infrastructure of the Palestinian territories under occupation. This means that there is a need for non-government organisations and civil society to rebuild society from below. It is being done, but it is being done under occupation — an almost impossible task. That is one very serious challenge.

The second agenda is democratising the institutions that would allow the refugee communities to take a major role in the decision making in the future. The Oslo accords totally excluded the Palestinian refugee community — almost half of the Palestinian people — from any say in their future.

Q: What is the present impact of the international volunteers in Israel, coordinated by organisations like the International Solidarity Movement (ISM)? Are there prospects of a renewed peace movement in Israel and what kind of international solidarity can we offer?

The ISM is a very important movement, especially in the role [of] making people outside Israel and Palestine aware of what is going on. I don't think it can stop the occupation, nor is it having a great deal of effect on Israeli public opinion.

We need to have a stronger political edge with regard to Israel's position in the world; much of the effort should be directed to exerting pressure on Israel. The hope for a peace movement from within [Israel] to change things is admirable, but is not very feasible. The

dangers facing the Palestinians are so serious and so grave that it would be helpful if some energy would go towards helping exert pressure on [Israel] from outside world.

There are two agendas that should be put forward by activists around the world, and also inside Israel. I don't want to confuse the two agendas.

The first agenda is not a peace agenda. If you are in the business of protecting the cause of Palestine you are not just on the business of peace — you have a much more urgent agenda, which is saving the Palestinians in Palestine. I'm not sure that you can prevent the Israeli government from taking its next steps in its policies of destruction and expulsion by talking about dialogues for peace.

I think you should start thinking about what an activist group can do to create an atmosphere in which Israel is a pariah state as long as these policies continue. **Talk about sanctions, talk about boycotts, talk about anything that drives home the message that enough is enough, that such behaviour cannot be tolerated from a state that claims to be part of the family of civilized countries.**

This is an agenda that requires a lot of coordination and thinking. **There is an impressive movement of disinvestment now in the US that has been gathering momentum and which should be looked at as one possible model.** The boycott on South Africa started in an Irish supermarket, where [an employee] refused to do the bill for shoppers who had South African goods in their trolleys.

The second agenda is the agenda of the long-term solution in Palestine. It is important to rethink the whole idea. Whether we like the idea of a two-state solution, or whether we don't like the idea, I think the reality on the ground in a few months is going to prove that the two-state solution is not feasible anymore.

What does it mean? How do we go forward? We need to work on the right of return [for Palestinian refugees to Israel] as a symbolic idea and as a practical idea. You cannot have a solution to the question of Palestine if the refugees are not part of it. And you cannot have a solution if the Palestinians in Israel are not part of it.

Q: What do you see as the significance of the hunger strike of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails? The hunger strike of the political prisoners in Israeli jails — following the example of Irish hunger strikers in British jails — is a very important development. First of all, it is a Palestinian strategy of non-violence. It is very difficult to practice non-violent tactics in Israel. I am very fearful of the Israeli reaction to this hunger strike. The Internal Security Minister, Tzahi Hanegbi, has said, “They can strike until death”.

Israel is being let off for policies that no other country in the Western world could do. [The hunger strike] is not enough, but it is a move in the right direction. I don't think suicide bombs are the right way, either militarily or politically. As a non-violent strategy it is the right way to go, but it has no chance unless we create an international atmosphere in which Israel is treated as South Africa was.

*\*Pappe has written numerous books. His latest is A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples.*

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## ***ICAHD issues a statement on sanctions***

### **The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions**

January 27th, 2005

#### SANCTIONS AGAINST THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION: IT'S TIME

"If apartheid ended, so can the occupation. But the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction." -- Bishop Desmond Tutu

You can't have it both ways. You can't complain about violence on the part of the Palestinians and yet reject effective non-violent measures against the Occupation that support their right to self-determination, such as economic sanctions. You can't condemn the victims of Occupation for employing terrorism while, by opposing divestment, thereby sheltering the Occupying Power that employs State Terror. You can't end the isolation and suffering of people living under Occupation while permitting the Occupying Power to carry on its life among the nations unencumbered and normally, by withholding a boycott of its economic and cultural products.

#### **The Case For Sanctions**

**Sanctions, divestment and boycotts are absolutely legitimate means at everyone's disposal for effectively opposing injustice.** As penalties, protest, pressure and resistance to policies that violate fundamental human rights, international law and UN resolutions, they are directed at ending a situation of intolerable conflict, suffering and moral wrong-doing, not against a particular people or country. When the injustice ends, the sanctions end.

Sanctions, divestment and boycotts represent powerful international responses that arise not only from opposition to an intolerable situation, but also to the complicity of every person in the international civil society that does nothing to resolve it. Because they are rooted in human rights, international law and the will of the international community, and because they are supremely non-violent responses to injustice, sanctions carry a potent moral force. A campaign of sanctions, even if it proves impossible to actually implement them, mobilizes what has been called "the politics of shame." No country wants to be cast as a major violator of human rights. Precisely because it is so difficult to enforce international humanitarian law, holding up its oppressive policy for all to see is often the only way of pressuring it to cease its oppressive policies. The moral and political condemnation conveyed by a campaign for sanctions and the international isolation it threatens sends a powerful, unmistakable message to the perpetrator: cease your unjust policies or suffer the consequences.

Rather than punishment, a campaign of sanctions rests upon the notion of accountability. A country threatened by sanctions stands in violation of the very principles underlying the international community as articulated in human rights covenants, international humanitarian law and UN resolutions. If we go by Amnesty's annual report, virtually every country could be "called on the

carpet” for their human rights violations. A campaign of sanctions constitutes an extraordinary step, however. It is invoked when injustice and suffering have become so routinized, so institutionalized, so pervasive, so resistant to normal international diplomacy or pressures, that their very continuation compromises the very validity of the international system and the moral standing of its members, countries, corporations and citizens alike. And it targets the strong parties. The very basis of a call for sanctions is that the targeted country has the ability to end the intolerable situation. A campaign of sanctions embodies a fundamental principle of the international system: that each country must be held accountable for its policies and actions in light of accepted international norms. The message to all countries must be: Participation in the international community depends upon conformity to the “rules of the game.”

Campaigns of sanctions are in essence educative, and that is part of their power. Since the reasons for taking such drastic action must be explicit, weighty and compelling, it forces those calling for sanctions to make a strong case for them. The very act of initiating such a campaign, then, raises awareness not only of the injustice itself, but of the principles it violates, thus strengthening the understanding of the international system itself. And since a campaign of sanctions must be accepted by the international community in order to succeed, it necessitates discussion and dialogue. The considerations behind the demand for sanctions are made transparent, and the targeted country given an opportunity to present its case. The likelihood, then, is that a campaign of sanctions initiated by civil society will express broad-based international consensus if it is to take hold.

Again, at issue is a serious violation of international law and norms. Just as in a case of an individual caught breaking the law, what is in question is what acts have been done, not who the country or the individual is. To paraphrase Jefferson, who spoke of “a government of laws, not men,” here we are speaking of “an international system of laws and not only countries that do whatever they want.” Thus, when the violations end, the sanctions cease and the country in question rejoins the international community.

### **The Case for Sanctions Against Israel**

In line with the principles just discussed, **economic sanctions against Israel are not invoked against Israel per se, but against Israel until the Occupation ends. With this proviso it is Israel’s policy of occupation that is targeted, its status as an Occupying Power, not Israel itself.** When South Africa ended its system of apartheid, sanctions ceased and it fully rejoined the international community. When apartheid ended, so did the boycott of its sports teams, one of the most potent measures employed to impress on the South African government its international isolation. The divestment campaign currently directed against Caterpillar has gained considerable momentum among the international public, effectively educating people about Israel’s policy of demolishing Palestinian homes. It has generated calls for other sanctions, such as the Presbyterian Church’s initiative to divest from companies profiting from the Occupation. The European Parliament has also called for trade sanctions on Israel given Israel’s violation of the “Association Agreements” that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the “Made in Israel” label. The American Congress should take similar steps, since Israel’s use of American weapons against civilian populations violates the human rights provisions of the Arms Control Exports Act. The boycott of California grapes in the 1960s played a key role in gaining employment rights for migrant workers. The current boycott of settlement products is intended to express moral opposition to the very presence of settlements while making it economically and politically difficult for Israel to maintain them.

Once it builds momentum, there is probably no more effective means for civil society to effectively pursue justice than a campaign of sanctions. Its power derives less from its economic impact – although, with time, that too can be decisive – than from the moral outrage that impels it. Sanctions themselves seriously affected the South African economy. Following massive protests inside South Africa and escalating international pressure in mid-1984, some 200 US companies and more than 60 British ones withdrew from the country and international lenders cut off Pretoria's access to foreign capital. US Congressional pressure played a crucial role as well, an element totally lacking vis-à-vis the Israel-Palestine conflict, which makes the possibility of actually imposing sanctions on Israel that more difficult. In 1986 Congress – with a Republican-controlled Senate – passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over the Reagan's veto. The Act banned new US investment in South Africa, sales to the police and military and new bank loans.

Although the Act was not strictly enforced by the Reagan and Bush Administrations, although European governments found ways of quietly doing business with Pretoria (while Israel, by the way, was helping South African businesses by-pass sanctions by peddling their products in the US and Europe under a "Made in Israel" label, as well as by continued involvement in military development in South Africa, including nuclear; Hunter 1986), it did generate a climate – moral and economic – that made it increasingly difficult to maintain business-as-usual with the apartheid regime. The moral dimension led to a delegitimization of the very apartheid system that left no room for "reform." Carried over to Israel's Occupation, the moral element in a larger political condemnation of Israel's policies could delegitimize the Occupation to the point where only its complete end is acceptable. A campaign of sanctions which highlights the moral unacceptability of Israel's Occupation could have a great impact, eventually impelling governments to impose economic sanctions while creating a climate difficult for businesses (beginning with Caterpillar) to continue function.

It is not only the political unacceptability of Israel's Occupation which makes the call for sanction urgent and obligatory, it is the massive violations of Palestinian human rights, of international law and of numerous UN resolutions that the Occupation entails. If Israel as the Occupying Power is not held accountable for the intolerable situation within its ability, indeed, within its responsibility to end, the entire international system of justice is rendered meaningless and empty. And that is what makes the Occupation an international issue. If Israel succeeds in defying the Fourth Geneva Convention and making its Occupation permanent, if an entire population is literally locked behind walls and its right of self-determination trampled, then the ability of human rights to win out over an international order founded on power politics and militarism is jeopardized. We all have a stake in ending the Occupation; the implications of occupation actually prevailing and a new apartheid regime emerging are chilling. Since the Palestinians do not have the power to shake off the Occupation on their own and the Israelis will not, only international pressure will effectively achieve a just peace. A campaign of sanctions represents one of the most efficacious measures.

### **ICAHD'S Position on Sanctions**

In principle ICAHD supports the use of sanctions against countries engaged in egregious violations of human rights and international law, including the use of moral and economic pressures to end Israel's Occupation. An effective approach to sanctions operates on different levels, however, and requires a number of strategic considerations as to its scope and focus.

First, the generic term "sanctions" actually includes three main types of economic and moral pressure:

(1) Sanctions, defined overall as “penalties, specified or in the form of moral pressure, applied against a country guilty of egregious violations of human rights, international law and UN resolutions, intended to bring that country back into compliance with international norms.” Since they must be imposed by governments, regional associations (such as the EU or SEAC) or the UN, the power to actually apply sanctions falls outside of civil society. Nevertheless, governments can be prodded in that direction – and the “prodding” itself constitutes an important form of consciousness-raising and moral pressure.

(2) Divestment, the withdrawal of investments in companies doing business with the offending country or directly involved in violating human rights and international law;

(3) Boycott, the voluntary refraining from purchasing the products of the offending country or allowing its companies, institutions, representatives or even professionals from participating in international intercourse.

Now sanctions, divestment and boycott can be applied either totally or selectively, the decision involving a strategic mix of efficacy and moral stance. In the most successful case of sanctions, apartheid South Africa, the call was for total sanctions, since the entire system was considered illegitimate. In the case of Israel and the Occupation, it is the Occupation which is considered illegitimate, illegal and immoral, not Israel per se. Although there are those who would argue that a Zionist Israel whose ongoing policy is to displace Palestinians from the country or confine them to reservations is, indeed, as illegitimate as apartheid, this is a position from which it would be difficult to generate mass support. Most advocates of a just peace – including the Israeli peace movement, ICAHD included – support Israel’s right as a recognized member state in the UN to rejoin the international community when the Occupation truly ends and a just peace is attained. Since governments must be induced to impose sanctions, on a purely pragmatic level it is difficult to imagine the international community, with the US at its head, actually agreeing to blanket sanctions.

More do-able would be a campaign for selective sanctions. This could be no less principled and focused than a call for total sanctions, but it targets Israel’s Occupation rather than Israel itself. A campaign of selective sanctions can be effective if the choice of targets is strategic: refusing to sell arms to Israel that would be used to perpetuate the Occupation, especially in attacks on civilian populations, for example, or banning Israeli sports teams from competing in international tournaments, especially potent in the South African case. (Israel is currently the European basketball champion and is scheduled to play in the World Cup of football/soccer). These and other selected measures could have a great impact upon Israel, as well as the ability to mobilize international opposition to the Occupation. Yet, with strong civil society advocacy, they also have a reasonable chance, over time, of being adopted.

ICAHD, then, supports in principle a multi-tiered campaign of sanctions against Israel until the Occupation ends. We believe that a selective campaign is most effective and we would incorporate into that campaigns that other organizations have already launched. At this stage, ICAHD supports:

- Sanctions: Sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate the Occupation or violate human rights and international humanitarian law, violations that would end if governments enforced existing laws and regulations regarding the use of weapons in contravention of human rights. Rather than adopting new policies of sanctions, ICAHD calls on

the governments of North America, Europe and Asia to stop selling arms to Israel that are used in perpetuating the Occupation in accordance with their own laws prohibiting sales of weapons to countries engaged in serious human rights violations. No new policy of sanctions has to be adopted; the existing laws prohibiting such sales must simply be enforced. In addition existing international law must be applied against Israel for using its weapons illegally: against civilian populations, for example, or in campaigns of extra-judicial executions, to name but two. Sanctions that comprise implementation of international and domestic laws should include a ban on purchasing Israeli weapons as well.

ICAHN is currently investigating Israel's involvement in the world's arms trade, including weapons development, joint production and coordinated sales with other countries. We believe this is a hidden element that underlies the broad support Israeli receives from governments, including those outwardly critical of its occupation policies. We hope that advocates for a just peace will use our information to expose their own country's complicity in policies that perpetuate the Occupation. We also call on activist groups to investigate and publicize the forms of aid their country – and especially the US – is giving Israel. Components of that aid that support occupation or settlement, whether military, technological or economic, should be opposed. We also call on Jewish communities to oppose the use of their donations to Israel – to the Jewish National Fund, for instance, or to the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bonds and other channels of funding – in the Occupied Territories.

- Trade sanctions on Israel due to its violation of the “Association Agreements” it has signed with the European Union that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the “Made in Israel” label, as well as for violations of their human rights provisions.
- Divestment in companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation. Here ICAHND supports the initiative of the Presbyterian Church of the US to divest in “multinational corporations that provide products or services to...the Israeli police or military to support and maintain the occupation,...that have established facilities or operations on occupied land,...that provide services or products for the establishment, expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements,...that provide products or services to Israeli or Palestinian organizations/groups that support or facilitate violent acts against innocent civilians,...that provide products or services that support or facilitate the construction of the Separation Barrier.” We certainly support the campaign against Caterpillar whose bulldozers demolish thousands of Palestinian homes.

**We join with the Jewish Voice for Peace in the US whose statement in support of the Presbyterians says in part:**

**At JVP, we fully support selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. This includes American companies like Caterpillar who profit from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes and orchards. It also includes Israeli companies who depend on settlements for materials or labor or who produce military equipment used to violate Palestinian human rights.**

**We believe that general divestment from Israel is an unwise strategy at this time. We believe that economic measures targeted specifically at the occupation and the Israeli military complex that sustains it are much more likely to produce results.** However, we absolutely reject the accusation that general divestment or boycott campaigns are inherently anti-Semitic. The

Israeli government is a government like any other, and condemning its abuse of state power, as many of its own citizens do quite vigorously, is in no way the same as attacking the Jewish people. Further, it is crucial not only to criticize the immoral and illegal acts of the Israeli government, but to back up that criticism with action.

We also note with satisfaction the many Jewish and Israeli organizations who support the idea of selective sanctions on Israel: European Jews for a Just Peace (a coalition of 16 Jewish groups from eight European countries); Not in My Name (US); Matzpun (Israel/International); Jews Against the Occupation (NYC Chapter); the petition of South African government minister Ronnie Kasrils and legislator Max Ozinsky, which has gathered more than 500 signatories from South African Jews; Jewish Voices Against the Occupation (US); Jewish Women for Justice in Israel and Palestine (US); Gush Shalom (Israel); Jews for Global Justice (US); and Visions of Peace With Justice (US), among others.

- Boycott of settlement products and of companies that provide housing to the settlements or which play a major role in perpetuating the Occupation, a campaign initiated several years ago by Gush Shalom.

These campaigns, it seems to us, build on existing initiatives. They are capable of garnering broad international support, are focused, raise public consciousness over the economic aspects of the Occupation and expose the complicity of the international community in it. They bring significant moral pressure to bear on Israel, while moving towards effective forms of economic sanctions designed to end the Occupation.

We believe that Israel as a powerful state occupying the territory of another people should be held accountable for its policies and actions. We would therefore add to the list of sanctions the following element:

- Holding individuals, be they policy-makers, military personnel carrying out orders or others, personally accountable for human rights violations, including trial before international courts and bans on travel to other countries.

Since sanctions are a powerful non-violent means of resisting the Occupation, ICAHD supports this burgeoning movement and calls on the international community – civil society as well as governments – to do all that is possible to bring a swift end to Israel's terrible Occupation so that all the peoples of the region, and especially Israelis and Palestinians, can enjoy the benefits of a just and lasting peace for the generations to come. The time has come; sanctions seem the next logical step in a global campaign to end the Occupation.

## ***Jewish groups urge Archbishop to have 'moral strength' over disinvestment***

[Ekklesia](#) - March 16th, 2006

Jewish and Israeli groups have written to the Archbishop of Canterbury, **backing the call by the Church of England's General Synod to disinvest church funds from companies profiting from Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.**

In a letter seen by Ekklesia, and dated yesterday (15th March) the 16 groups assert that sanctions against the Occupation have a 'solid moral foundation' and urge the Archbishop of Canterbury to have the 'moral strength' not to back down from supporting the Synod's decision.

The motion, which was passed by the Church's 'Parliament' at the beginning of February provoked outcry from the Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, as well as a group of Conservative MPs who accused Synod of being 'politically motivated'.

In what was seen by many in a snub to Synod however, the Church's Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) subsequently said it would not recommend disinvestment, most notably from the controversial US company Caterpillar.

In yesterday's letter to Rowan Williams however, Jewish and Israeli groups say that they deplore those who have labelled Synod 'anti-Semitic' for their decision. They also express their hope that the 'unfortunate' decision by the EIAG will not undo the resolution that Synod made.

The letter states; "We, the undersigned representatives of Israeli and Jewish organizations, have witnessed the Occupation first hand. In our view, Israel's Occupation and settlement policies stem more from territorial claims than from genuine concerns of security, which can only be addressed through a complete end to the Occupation and peace with the Palestinians. Of the 12,000 Palestinian homes demolished by Israel in the Occupied Territories since 1967, less than 5% were demolished for security reasons (and even then we oppose demolition as a form of collective punishment, illegal under international law). In 95% of the cases the families involved were completely innocent of any security offence and were never even accused of or charged with any offence.

**"We therefore extend to you and the Church of England our unreserved support of the synod's call to disinvest from Caterpillar and other companies profiting from the Occupation. This is an entirely appropriate moral stand for civil society to take."**

The letter asserts that Caterpillar custom-makes its massive D-9 and D-10 bulldozers for the express purpose of demolishing Palestinian homes, and that these machines are sold to Israel as military equipment.

The letter further highlights that the demolition of Palestinian homes is prohibited by international law and that the Fourth Geneva Convention requires an occupying power to protect the well-being of vulnerable civilians under its control, and forbids collective punishment.

"In light of the ongoing and extremely severe human rights violations committed by the Israeli government in the Occupied Territories," the letter continues, "we believe that sanctions against the Occupation have a solid moral foundation. We can only hope that with your support the decision of the Synod to endorse divestment will not be undone by the unfortunate decision

of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group.

"As Israelis and Jews, we also deplore the statements of those who have labelled the synod members, including yourself, as anti-Semitic. It is inconceivable to us – indeed, we find it grotesque – that Jews who have suffered displacement and exile could possibly defend the demolition of thousands of Palestinian homes or any aspect of the Occupation.

"We hope they come to understand that the Occupation threatens to destroy the entire moral fabric of the Jewish community, in Israel as well as in the Diaspora. We hope that the call of your Church for divestment in Caterpillar will resonate with the Prophetic tradition of our own people, so that the leaders of British Jewry will join with your initiative. What unites us is the understanding that **either Israelis and Palestinians achieve a just peace or both peoples continue their downward spiral into violence and suffering. Your call for divestment in companies profiting from the Occupation represents an important brake on that downward spiral.**"

The letter is signed by Paula Abrams-Hourani, European Jews for a Just Peace; Gaby Belz, Just Peace Between Israel and Palestine (Switzerland) Paola Canarutto, Rete-ECO (Italy) Liliane Cordova Kaczerginski, Union Juive Francaise pour la paix; Jeff Halper, The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) Abe Hayeem, Just Peace (UK) Ruth Hiller, New Profile (Israel) Dan Judelson, European Jews for a Just Peace; Richard Kuper, Jews for Justice for Palestinians (UK) Vivien Lichtenstein, Joint Action for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (UK) Orna Neumann, ICAHD UK; Rachel Ostrowitz, Noga Feminist Magazine (Israel) Mitchell Plitnick, Jewish Voice for Peace (US) Fanny-Michaela Reisin, European Jews for a Just Peace - Germany Gila Svirsky, Coalition of Women for Peace (Israel) Sergio Yahni, The Alternative Information Center (Israel)

## ***Know When To Say "No": A Call For Divestment From The Israeli Occupation***

Shamai Leibowitz, The Electronic Intifada, 24 March 2005

The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has led to an explosion of "people power" in the streets of Beirut, in which hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens have called for an end to Syria's occupation of their land. These calls have been celebrated and echoed in other capitals, and nowhere more so than in Washington. However, there is another area in the Middle East where a struggle to end foreign occupation has brought the natives only death and destruction. For decades, Israel has crushed the 3.5 million Palestinians living under military domination, beating them into submission while taking away their civil rights and their land.

As an Israeli Jew committed to peace for Israel and our neighbors, I was shocked and disgusted by the recent terror attack in Tel Aviv, which took the lives of innocent Jews. Such acts of terror have made headlines and been rightfully condemned by the international community. However, deadly Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians have not received significant press attention in the West or led to appropriate, decisive international action. For decades the Israeli army, equipped with US

arms and technology, has killed, maimed, beaten and tortured tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians. Clearly, America could have put an end to this. Instead, however, it chose to allow Israel to continue with the brutal oppression of the Palestinians, and never demanded from Israel to stop committing war crimes.

From 1986 to 1991 I served in the Israeli army in the occupied Palestinian territories. During this period I was shocked and disgusted at what my comrades and I were repeatedly ordered to do to Palestinian civilians. To crush the uprising for independence and statehood, we were ordered to brutalize them. In one of our army bases in the West Bank, there was a mysterious room. Every day we watched Palestinians being led into it. After a couple of days our commanders would lead the Palestinians out, black and blue from bruises and their faces swollen. They resembled sacks of potatoes more than human beings.

We later realized this room was a torture chamber. On some days, we could hear screams coming from the room. It was a sickening experience. However, we continued participating in the occupation because Israeli politicians persuaded us that we were in the midst of a "peace process." So effusive were they in their lectures on how Israel "only wants peace" that we were blinded from seeing the reality of how the state is brutally oppressing, subjugating and dehumanizing the Palestinian people.

As many Israelis realize today, when Israeli governments talked about the peace process during the Oslo period, they were pulling the wool over the world's eyes. Israel continued colonizing the West Bank and Gaza with its Jewish-only settlements and, at the same time, entrenching a cruel military regime over Palestinians.

The same is true today with Ariel Sharon's "disengagement" plan, which is being marketed by Israeli propaganda as a "painful concession" toward peace. Many of us who live in Israel and visit the occupied territories recognize the truth: Israel is continuously intensifying its military rule in the West Bank while stealing more Palestinian land and building more illegal Jewish-only settlements.

After years of failed political efforts by the Israeli and international human rights community aimed at ending the occupation, it is clear that new approaches must be implemented. For years, American taxpayer money has funded the occupation--the torture chambers, the military apparatus, the bulldozers used in house demolitions, the building of settlements and now the construction of the West Bank wall, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is high time that American companies and institutions united in a multi-tiered campaign of strategic, selective sanctions against Israel until the occupation ends.

The first step for American civic institutions is to engage in selective divestment--withdrawal of their investments from companies that are, directly or indirectly, funding the occupation. First and foremost, states, cities, universities, churches, unions, banks and pension funds should divest from Israel Bonds, which finance the occupation, and from any company that sells arms, ammunition or other military equipment to Israel.

This should include companies like Caterpillar, which manufactures and sells the bulldozers that have flattened thousands of Palestinian homes, and General Dynamics, General Electric, Lockheed Martin, Northrop-Grumman, Raytheon and other corporations, because these companies play an active role in enabling Israeli forces to engage in practices that violate international humanitarian law.

Second, the West should hold Israeli military personnel and political leaders personally accountable for human rights violations, including trial before international courts and bans on travel to other countries. This strategy has been implemented in other conflicts (Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and South Africa, for example), proving its deterrent value and effectiveness.

Prohibiting the sale of arms and military equipment to Israel is, in fact, called for by existing US law. According to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 USC S2304), "No security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights."

The current hypocritical American Administration is not enforcing this law with regard to Israel. It is, therefore, up to American civil society to uphold the law and prevent the sale of any military equipment to Israel by pressuring the government, filing complaints against companies that violate this law and withdrawing all investments from such companies.

The Presbyterian Church took a positive step in this direction when in July 2004 its General Assembly passed a resolution calling for selective divestment from companies that profit from the occupation. This past February the World Council of Churches, which brings together more than 340 churches worldwide, issued a similar resolution. While criticizing the severe human rights abuses inherent in the occupation and the construction of the illegal West Bank wall, these resolutions also affirm the right of the State of Israel to exist securely and peacefully, and they categorically reject the tragic cycle of indiscriminate violence perpetrated by both sides against innocent civilian populations.

Sanctions are a powerful and nonviolent means to insure that the Israeli government abides by international law and ends its appalling human rights violations in the occupied territories. We have witnessed the power of worldwide economic pressure in the collapse of the South African apartheid regime. If American civic institutions follow the same strategy, we could see the end of the Israeli occupation in our lifetime. Americans should stand up for human rights and justice, follow their own law and take the most productive step toward peace and security in the Middle East.

*Shamai Leibowitz is a human rights lawyer from Tel Aviv who has represented asylum seekers, migrant workers, Palestinians and human rights activists in the Israeli courts. He is a reserve tank gunner with the rank of staff sergeant in the Israeli army, and part of a group of over 1,400 soldiers who have refused to serve in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He can be reached at legal@012.net.il. A longer version of this article was first published in The Nation magazine on 16 March 2005.*

# **Matzpun**

*Matzpun* = Hebrew for Conscience

## **An Appeal**

*The authors of the following appeal are Israeli citizens and Jews of other nationalities whose families have been victims of racism and genocide in past generations, and who feel they cannot remain silent.*

*The appeal below was posted in April of 2001. Since then, the situation in the Israeli-occupied territories (OTs) has progressively worsened.*

*In the West Bank, the Palestinians have been imprisoned in ghettos separated by the Wall and numerous roadblocks. In Gaza, The Sharon government executed its "unilateral separation" plan, which turned the entire area into a huge prison camp, under daily bombardment by Israel, now lacking in essential services.*

*The Olmert government started a massive war of destruction in Lebanon. It then used the international focus on Lebanon to increase the oppression in the OTs. This time, the war machine is being run, once again, by a "dovish Labour" minister.*

*Internationally-supervised elections in the OTs resulted in a popularly elected Hamas government. The democratic result then led to an Israeli-American move to boycott this government and hamstringing it completely, by collectively punishing the population.*

*As the Israeli government continues to make life with honour and freedom impossible for all Palestinians, reducing their existence to bare survival and depopulating more territories, it is now more important than ever for world public opinion to put the pressure of grass-roots boycott on Israel. We call on all decent-minded people all around the globe to support our call for a boycott of Israeli exports and tourism. (17 October 2006)*

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### **Appeal (April, 2001)**

After six months of relentless military oppression of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories, the government of Israel has made daily life even more intolerable for the Palestinians by imposing a physical siege on their villages and towns. This siege has brought upon the Palestinians a complete cessation of "normal" life. For the majority of them there is no going to work, no shopping for food and other necessities, no medical services, and in many cases no water or electricity.

In 1948 the state of Israel dispossessed the Palestinians, evicted hundreds of thousands of them from their homes into refugee camps and did not allow them to return when the war ended. The same state is now preventing the victims of 1948 from having even the most basic services in their refugee camps and remaining villages and towns.

The inhumane oppressor hopes that starving will help force the Palestinians to surrender, without having any "negative public opinion problems" that live ammunition may have had in Western media. Indeed, public opinion in the West has largely relaxed any protest against the Israeli government's policies of killing civilians --men, women and children-- since much of the killing is now being done away from the TV cameras. Human rights violations by the Palestinian Authority have also helped Israel to falsely portray itself again as the righteous victim.

We call on the world community to organize and boycott Israeli industrial and agricultural exports and goods, as well as leisure tourism, in the hope that it will have the same positive result that the boycott of South Africa had on Apartheid.

This boycott should remain in force as long as Israel controls any part of the territories it occupied in 1967. Those who squash the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians must be made to feel the consequences of their own bitter medicine.

We urge every recipient of this appeal, irrespective of origin and nationality, to:

1. Start practicing the boycott on a personal level immediately, and make sure that the steps taken are known in the community (for example: tell your shopkeeper why you will not buy Israeli products; avoid leisure travel to Israel).
2. Add your name to the appeal, circulate it to your friends, and do whatever you can to have it endorsed by groups concerned about human rights.
3. Organize activities to put pressure on your government to cut economic and commercial ties with Israel and to rescind preferential economic treaties with Israel.

**This appeal has received 959 signatures as of 11 October 2006.**

## ***Why an Economic Boycott of Israel is Justified***

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*The moral burden to avert the impending catastrophe must now be borne by individual states that are prepared to respect their obligations under international law.*

**By Norman G. Finkelstein**

The recent proposal that Norway boycott Israeli goods has provoked passionate debate. In my view, a rational examination of this issue would pose two questions: 1) Do Israeli human rights violations warrant an economic boycott? and 2) Can such a boycott make a meaningful contribution toward ending these violations? I would argue that both these questions should be answered in the affirmative.

Although the subject of many reports by human rights organizations, Israel's real human rights record in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is generally not well known abroad. This is primarily due to the formidable public relations industry of Israel's defenders as well as the effectiveness of their tactics of intimidation, such as labeling critics of Israeli policy anti-Semitic.

Yet, it is an incontestable fact that Israel has committed a broad range of human rights violations, many rising to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include:

Illegal Killings. Whereas Palestinian suicide attacks targeting Israeli civilians have garnered much media attention, Israel's quantitatively worse record of killing non-combatants is less well known. According to the most recent figures of the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), 3,386 Palestinians have been killed since September 2000, of whom 1,008 were identified as combatants, as opposed to 992 Israelis killed, of whom 309 were combatants. This means that three times more Palestinians than Israelis have been killed and up to three times more Palestinian civilians than Israeli civilians. Israel's defenders maintain that there's a difference between targeting civilians and inadvertently killing them. B'Tselem disputes this: "[W]hen so many civilians have been killed and wounded, the lack of intent makes no difference. Israel remains responsible." Furthermore, Amnesty International reports that "many" Palestinians have not been accidentally killed but "deliberately targeted," while the award-winning New York Times journalist Chris Hedges reports that Israeli soldiers "entice children like mice into a trap and murder them for sport."

Torture. "From 1967," Amnesty reports, "the Israeli security services have routinely tortured Palestinian political suspects in the Occupied Territories." B'Tselem found that eighty-five percent of Palestinians interrogated by Israeli security services were subjected to "methods constituting torture," while already a decade ago Human Rights Watch estimated that "the number of Palestinians tortured or severely ill-treated" was "in the tens of thousands - a number that becomes especially significant when it is remembered that the universe of adult and adolescent male Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza is under three-quarters of one million." In 1987 Israel became "the only country in the world to have effectively

legalized torture" (Amnesty). Although the Israeli Supreme Court seemed to ban torture in a 1999 decision, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel reported in 2003 that Israeli security forces continued to apply torture in a "methodical and routine" fashion. A 2001 B'Tselem study documented that Israeli security forces often applied "severe torture" to "Palestinian minors."

House demolitions. "Israel has implemented a policy of mass demolition of Palestinian houses in the Occupied Territories," B'Tselem reports, and since September 2000 "has destroyed some 4,170 Palestinian homes." Until just recently Israel routinely resorted to house demolitions as a form of collective punishment. According to Middle East Watch, apart from Israel, the only other country in the world that used such a draconian punishment was Iraq under Saddam Hussein. In addition, Israel has demolished thousands of "illegal" homes that Palestinians built because of Israel's refusal to provide building permits. The motive behind destroying these homes, according to Amnesty, has been to maximize the area available for Jewish settlers: "Palestinians are targeted for no other reason than they are Palestinians." Finally, Israel has destroyed hundreds of homes on security pretexts, yet a Human Rights Watch report on Gaza found that "the pattern of destruction" strongly suggests that Israeli forces demolished homes wholesale, regardless of whether they posed a specific threat." Amnesty likewise found that "Israel's extensive destruction of homes and properties throughout the West Bank and Gaza" is not justified by military necessity," and that "Some of these acts of destruction amount to grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention and are war crimes."

Apart from the sheer magnitude of its human rights violations, the uniqueness of Israeli policies merits notice. "Israel has created in the Occupied Territories a regime of separation based on discrimination, applying two separate systems of law in the same area and basing the rights of individuals on their nationality," B'Tselem has concluded. "This regime is the only one of its kind in the world, and is reminiscent of distasteful regimes from the past, such as the apartheid regime in South Africa." If singling out South Africa for an international economic boycott was defensible, it would seem equally defensible to single out Israel's occupation, which uniquely resembles the apartheid regime.

Although an economic boycott can be justified on moral grounds, the question remains whether diplomacy might be more effectively employed instead. The documentary record in this regard, however, is not encouraging. The basic terms for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict are embodied in U.N. resolution 242 and subsequent U.N. resolutions, which call for a full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state in these areas in exchange for recognition of Israel's right to live in peace and security with its neighbors. Each year the overwhelming majority of member States of the United Nations vote in favor of this two-state settlement, and each year Israel and the United States (and a few South Pacific islands) oppose it. Similarly, in March 2002 all twenty-two member States of the Arab League proposed this two-state settlement as well as "normal relations with Israel." Israel ignored the proposal.

Not only has Israel stubbornly rejected this two-state settlement, but the policies it is currently pursuing will abort any possibility of a viable Palestinian state. While world attention has been riveted by Israel's redeployment from Gaza, Sara Roy of Harvard University observes that the "Gaza Disengagement Plan is, at heart, an instrument for Israel's continued annexation of West Bank land and the physical integration of that land

into Israel." In particular Israel has been constructing a wall deep inside the West Bank that will annex the most productive land and water resources as well as East Jerusalem, the center of Palestinian life. It will also effectively sever the West Bank in two. Although Israel initially claimed that it was building the wall to fight terrorism, the consensus among human rights organizations is that it is really a land grab to annex illegal Jewish settlements into Israel. Recently Israel's Justice Minister frankly acknowledged that the wall will serve as "the future border of the state of Israel."

The current policies of the Israeli government will lead either to endless bloodshed or the dismemberment of Palestine. "It remains virtually impossible to conceive of a Palestinian state without its capital in Jerusalem," the respected Crisis Group recently concluded, and accordingly Israeli policies in the West Bank "are at war with any viable two-state solution and will not bolster Israel's security; in fact, they will undermine it, weakening Palestinian pragmatists and sowing the seeds of growing radicalization."

Recalling the U.N. Charter principle that it is inadmissible to acquire territory by war, the International Court of Justice declared in a landmark 2004 opinion that Israel's settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the wall being built to annex them to Israel were illegal under international law. It called on Israel to cease construction of the wall, dismantle those parts already completed and compensate Palestinians for damages. Crucially, it also stressed the legal responsibilities of the international community: all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. They are also under an obligation not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction. It is also for all States, while respecting the United Nations Charter and international law, to see to it that any impediment, resulting from the construction of the wall, to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination is brought to an end.

A subsequent U.N. General Assembly resolution supporting the World Court opinion passed overwhelmingly. However, the Israeli government ignored the Court's opinion, continuing construction at a rapid pace, while Israel's Supreme Court ruled that the wall was legal.

Due to the obstructionist tactics of the United States, the United Nations has not been able to effectively confront Israel's illegal practices. Indeed, although it is true that the U.N. keeps Israel to a double standard, it's exactly the reverse of the one Israel's defenders allege: Israel is held not to a higher but lower standard than other member States. A study by Marc Weller of Cambridge University comparing Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory with comparable situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, East Timor, occupied Kuwait and Iraq, and Rwanda found that Israel has enjoyed "virtual immunity" from enforcement measures such as an arms embargo and economic sanctions typically adopted by the U.N. against member States condemned for identical violations of international law. Due in part to an aggressive campaign accusing Europe of a "new anti-Semitism," the European Union has also failed in its legal obligation to enforce international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Although the claim of a "new anti-Semitism" has no basis in fact (all the evidence points to a lessening of anti-Semitism in Europe), the EU has reacted by appeasing Israel. It has even suppressed publication of one of its own reports, because the authors -- like the Crisis Group and many others -- concluded that due

to Israeli policies the "prospects for a two-state solution with east Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine are receding."

The moral burden to avert the impending catastrophe must now be borne by individual states that are prepared to respect their obligations under international law and by individual men and women of conscience. In a courageous initiative American-based Human Rights Watch recently called on the U.S. government to reduce significantly its financial aid to Israel until Israel terminates its illegal policies in the West Bank. An economic boycott would seem to be an equally judicious undertaking. A nonviolent tactic the purpose of which is to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict cannot legitimately be called anti-Semitic. Indeed, the real enemies of Jews are those who cheapen the memory of Jewish suffering by equating principled opposition to Israel's illegal and immoral policies with anti-Semitism.