

SELECTIONS FROM THE PRESS

This section includes articles and news items, mainly from Israeli but also from international press sources, that provide insightful or illuminating perspectives on events, developments, or trends in Israel and the occupied territories not readily available in the mainstream U.S. media.

MIKO PELED, "SIX DAYS IN ISRAEL, 45 YEARS AGO," *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, 6 JUNE 2012

In early June 1967, as I covered with my mother and sisters in the "safest" room of our house near Jerusalem—the downstairs bathroom—we feared the worst. None of us imagined that the war that had just begun would end in six days. It was inconceivable that the Israeli army would destroy three Arab armies, kill upward of 15,000 Arab soldiers (at a cost of 700 Israeli casualties), triple the size of the state of Israel and, for the first time in two millennia, give the Jewish people control over the entire land of Israel, including the crown jewel, the Old City of Jerusalem.

Many believe now, as they believed then, that Israel was forced to initiate a preemptive strike in 1967 because it faced an existential threat from Arab armies that were ready—and intending—to destroy it. As it happens, my father, Gen. Matti Peled, who was the Israel Defense Forces' chief of logistics at the time, was one of the few who knew that was not so. In an article published six years later in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*, he wrote of Egypt's president, who commanded the biggest of the Arab armies: "I was surprised that Nasser decided to place his troops so close to our border because this allowed us to strike and destroy them at any time we wished to do so, and there was not a single knowledgeable person who did not see that. From a military standpoint, it was not the IDF that was in danger when the Egyptian army amassed troops on the Israeli border, but the Egyptian army." In interviews over the years, other generals who served at that time confirmed this, including Ariel Sharon and Ezer Weitzman.

In 1967, as today, the two power centers in Israel were the IDF high

command and the Cabinet. On June 2, 1967, the two groups met at IDF headquarters. The military hosts greeted the generally cautious and dovish prime minister, Levi Eshkol, with such a level of belligerence that the meeting was later commonly called "the Generals' Coup."

The transcripts of that meeting, which I found in the Israeli army archives, reveal that the generals made it clear to Eshkol that the Egyptians would need 18 months to two years before they would be ready for a full-scale war, and therefore this was the time for a preemptive strike. My father told Eshkol: "Nasser is advancing an ill-prepared army because he is counting on the Cabinet being hesitant. Your hesitation is working in his advantage." The prime minister parried this criticism, saying, "The Cabinet must also think of the wives and mothers who will become bereaved."

Throughout the meeting, there was no mention of a threat but rather of an "opportunity" that was there, to be seized.

Within short order, the Cabinet succumbed to the pressure of the army, and the rest, as they say, is history. The Six-Day War began three days later and was over on June 10, 1967. When the guns fell silent, one general saw yet another opportunity, one that would take most of Israel's other leaders some decades to recognize. This was my father. A 1995 newspaper profile reconstructed the first weekly meeting that the IDF general staff held after the war. When it came his turn to speak, my father said: "For the first time in Israel's history, we have an opportunity to solve the Palestinian problem once and for all. Now we are face to face with the Palestinians, without other Arab countries dividing us. Now we have a chance to offer the Palestinians a state of their own."

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His position was well known. He argued in 1969 that holding on to the territory gained in the war was contrary to Israel's interests: "If we keep these lands, popular resistance to the occupation is sure to arise, and Israel's army will be used to quell that resistance, with disastrous and demoralizing results." Over the years, he argued repeatedly that Israeli control in the West Bank and Gaza would turn the Jewish state into an increasingly brutal occupying power (he was right) and could eventually result in a binational state (he may yet be right, as events are moving in this direction). Allowing the Palestinians an independent state of their own, he maintained, would lead to stability and calm.

For 45 years, successive Israeli governments have invested billions of dollars in making the 1967 conquests irreversible, and they have eliminated any chance for the two-state solution to become a reality. Cities, highways, malls and factories have been built in the West Bank in order to settle Jewish Israelis there, while a reign of terror was put in place to govern the Palestinians whose lands were being taken. From denying access to water and land and obstructing free travel, through a maze of discriminatory laws and restrictions, to full-on military assaults, Israel has dedicated huge resources to the oppression and persecution of the Palestinians.

Now once again Israel is faced with two options: Continue to exist as a Jewish state while controlling the Palestinians through military force and racist laws, or undertake a deep transformation into a real democracy where Israelis and Palestinians live as equals in a shared state, their shared homeland. For Israelis and Palestinians alike, the latter path promises a bright future.

Miko Peled is an Israeli activist living in San Diego and the author of the recently published book, The General's Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine.

RAPHAEL AHREN, "THE NEWLY CONFIDENT ISRAELI PROPONENTS OF A ONE-STATE SOLUTION," *THE TIMES OF ISRAEL*, 16 JULY 2012 (EXCERPTS)

MK Tzipi Hotovely knew her audience well. The last of nearly a dozen

speakers at a conference advocating Israel's annexation of the West Bank and the end of the two-state solution, the young Likud lawmaker described for the crowd a scenario very familiar to right-wing pundits in Israel: being challenged by the media about their views on the Israeli-Palestinian impasse.

"After having proven with signs and miracles that a Palestinian state would be a catastrophe and would just increase terrorism, the question that scares right-wingers interviewed by the media the most is this—the ultimate left-wing question: 'So what is your solution? What's your plan?'" Hotovely said. Raising her voice, she continued: "Friends, everybody here today knows that there is a solution—applying sovereignty [over the West Bank]. One state for the Jewish people with an Arab minority, lest any right-winger say there's no solution!"

To the raucous applause of more than 500 conference-goers squeezed into the visitors' center of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron on Thursday, Hotovely warned against advocating merely the annexation of the West Bank's Area C, which is under Israeli control and where most settlers live, an idea recently spread by some on the right. "We need to demand sovereignty over all of Judea and Samaria, and nothing less than that," she declared.

There's nothing new about far-right groups holding events in which speakers fantasize about "Greater Israel." But Thursday's conference was different: It indicated that the idea of the one-state solution has become respectable within a larger segment of society, including the ranks of Israel's ruling party.

Hotovely was right: For years, moderate right-wingers tiptoed around the question of what they envision for the future of the territories Israel captured in 1967. Only hardliners openly admitted what perhaps many others secretly desired, but knew to be politically too incorrect to openly demand. . . .

Katsover and Matar . . . invited a broad range of speakers who lectured on different aspects of applying Israeli sovereignty to the West Bank, but all

had one thing in common: stressing the necessity of that step, backed by the conviction that Israel's inherent right to Judea and Samaria—whether derived from the Bible or international law—is nonnegotiable.

. . . Minister Daniel Hershkowitz, the head of the Jewish Home faction (the new National Religious Party) . . . quoted a famous Torah commentary that says that the Biblical narrative starts with Creation to demonstrate that the earth belongs to God and that it is his right to bestow the Holy Land on his Chosen People. If only the Israelis truly felt the land belonged to them, the entire world would feel the same, he asserted.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is on record saying that he does not want to rule over the Palestinians and is ready to accept a Palestinian state. But that no longer prevents some members of his party from openly demanding a one-state solution. MK Miri Regev, speaking on a recorded video clip, boasted that she recently founded the Knesset Lobby for the Application of Israeli Sovereignty over Judean and Samaritan Communities. The Likud constitution requires the application of sovereignty over the settlements, she said. . . .

Most speakers focused on Israel's right to The Land—all of it—and tried to reassure the audience that they need not fear the so-called demographic threat. Israel would not lose its Jewish majority if it annexed the West Bank and granted citizenship to the Arabs living there, nearly all the speakers promised.

Estimates of how many Jews and Arabs live in the West Bank vary. Right-wingers claim that fewer than two million Palestinians and about 350,000 Jews make their homes in the area. Others reckon the number of Palestinians in the West Bank to be around 2.4 million, compared to 310,000 settlers.

Former Israeli ambassador Yoram Ettinger used his 15 minutes—the organizers strictly enforced every speaker's time limit—for a slideshow in which he presented a lot of data ostensibly proving that there are a million fewer Palestinians in the West Bank than generally assumed. How come? Because the Palestinian officials

dealing with statistics are either incompetent or lying, he said.

Ettinger's graphs made it easier for subsequent speakers to dismiss the demographic argument against a one-state solution as left-wing demagoguery. Gershon Mesika, the head of the Samaria Regional Council, for instance, called the demographic threat a "big bluff." Even most Arabs don't believe the idea of two states for two people would work, he added.

And so the evening went by, with speaker after speaker preaching to the choir, rarely challenging the audience with provocative questions about, for example, Palestinian national aspirations. "This is not Arab land. This is the holy land of God," said Hebron Rabbi Uzi Sharbaf, adding that it was "absolutely forbidden" by Jewish law to retreat from any centimeter of the Promised Land.

Lawyer Yitzhak Bam said Israel's extension of legal authority to the Golan Heights was probably illegal under international law, as there was a previous sovereign before Israel conquered the area. On the other hand, there was "a legal vacuum" in the West Bank before Israel captured it, since the Jordanians had renounced their claims. But since the international community didn't intervene in Israel's takeover of the Golan Heights, surely there shouldn't be a problem with Israel annexing Judea and Samaria, Bam argued. . . .

It remains unlikely that any Israeli prime minister in the foreseeable future would move to unilaterally annex all or part of the West Bank. But Thursday's conference was a clear indication of a political trend that is becoming more visible every day: the annexationists are growing in confidence, demanding in outspoken fashion what they always dreamed of but have never dared to say quite so publicly.

NATHAN THRALL, "THE THIRD INTIFADA IS INEVITABLE," *NEW YORK TIMES*, 22 JUNE 2012

Earlier this month, at a private meeting with the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his security advisers, a group of Middle East experts and former intelligence officers

warned that a third Palestinian intifada was imminent. The immediate catalyst, they said, could be another mosque vandalized by Jewish settlers, like the one burned on Tuesday, or the construction of new settlement housing. Whatever the fuse, the underlying source of ferment in the West Bank is a consensus that the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, has reached a dead end.

Mr. Abbas's political strategy was premised on the notion that security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government would make Israel feel safer and remove its primary justification for continuing to occupy the West Bank, thereby clearing the way for a Palestinian state. Ironically, owing to the success of his efforts, many Israelis have had the luxury of forgetting that there is an occupation at all.

Thanks to the American—and European—financed peace that Mr. Abbas's government has been keeping in the West Bank, Israelis have come to believe they can eat their cake and have it, too. A majority of citizens polled earlier this year said their state could remain Jewish and democratic without relinquishing any of the West Bank. Years of peace and quiet in Tel Aviv allowed hundreds of thousands of Israelis to take to the streets last summer to protest the high price of cottage cheese, rent and day care without uttering a word about Palestinians in the West Bank. The issue has ceased to be one of Israel's primary security concerns. Mr. Netanyahu would have to be either politically suicidal or exceptionally forward-thinking to abandon a status quo with which a vast majority appears satisfied.

By contrast, Palestinians today see their leadership banging its head against a wall, hoping against reason that a bit more good behavior will bring about an independent state. As a result, longstanding debates over how to achieve national liberation—by comforting Israel or confronting it—have now been resolved. Palestinians of all political stripes are no longer arguing about whether to make Israel's occupation more costly, but how.

During the 1990s, Mr. Abbas was one of the key architects of the Oslo peace

process, which envisioned a phased Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank leading to a permanent peace agreement (though not necessarily to a Palestinian state). Today, he is perhaps its last remaining believer. He has been forced to pay lip service to the demands of those who advocate confrontation by issuing repeated pledges to confront Israel—by dismantling the Palestinian Authority or refusing to negotiate unless Israel freezes settlement construction—only to renege on each one.

As the gap between the Palestinian president's words and actions has grown, so has the distance of his policies from public sentiment, leading to his government's turn to greater repression: torturing political opponents, blocking Web sites and arresting journalists and bloggers critical of Mr. Abbas. Even Mr. Abbas's close advisers confide that he is at risk of becoming another Antoine Lahad, the leader of Israel's proxy force during its occupation of southern Lebanon. The chief steward of Mr. Abbas's policies, the unelected prime minister, Salam Fayyad, has acknowledged, "I think we are losing the argument, if we have not already lost." And Mr. Abbas himself has admitted that the peace process is "jammed" and that his government had merely helped create "a good situation" for Israel, which, enjoying years of unprecedented cooperation with Palestinian forces in the West Bank, lacks incentives to agree to any change.

But these days, Palestinian security forces have little reason to believe their efforts are advancing national goals, and Israel can't assume that the Palestinian Authority will provide security indefinitely. Last month, as gunfire returned to the streets of Jenin, and 1,600 Palestinian prisoners entered the fourth week of a hunger strike, Mr. Abbas said: "I cannot control the situation. I am afraid, God forbid, that the security system here will collapse." That sentiment echoed remarks by Yuval Diskin, the recently retired head of Israel's internal security agency: "When the concentration of gas fumes in the air is so high," he said, "the question is only when the spark will come to light it."

The root cause of this instability is that Palestinians have lost all hope that

Israel will grant them a state. Each attempt to exert what little leverage Palestinians possess has been thwarted or has proved ineffective. Boycotts of settlement jobs and products haven't gained mass support, and would not stop settlement growth even if they did. The Palestinians could have pushed for a vote last September in the United Nations General Assembly—a move that frightened Israel and America because of its implications for Palestinian accession to the International Criminal Court. Mr. Abbas abandoned that effort in favor of a petition for statehood at the Security Council, which was always guaranteed to fail, and then deftly sold his capitulation as defiance.

These failures have left Palestinians who hope to make present conditions untenable for Israel with only two options: popular protest and armed resistance. The first option faces enormous obstacles because of political divisions between Hamas in Gaza and Mr. Abbas's Fatah in the West Bank. Each faction regards mass mobilization as a potential first step to its overthrow, as well as a means of empowering a new generation of leaders at the expense of existing ones.

If mass demonstrations erupted in the West Bank, Israel would ask Palestinian security forces to stop any protests near soldiers or settlers, forcing them to choose between potentially firing on Palestinian demonstrators or ending security cooperation with Israel, which Mr. Abbas refuses to do. As he knows and fears, mass protests could quickly become militarized by either side. For that reason, his government has offered little more than rhetorical support for the small weekly protests so beloved by foreign activists and the Western press, and has actively prevented demonstrators from approaching any Jewish settlements.

The second option is armed confrontation. Although there is widespread apathy among Palestinians, and hundreds of thousands are financially dependent on the Palestinian Authority's continued existence, a substantial number would welcome the prospect of an escalation, especially many supporters of Hamas, who argue that violence has

been the most effective tactic in forcing Israel and the international community to act.

They believe that rocks, Molotov cocktails and mass protests pushed Israel to sign the Oslo Accords in 1993; that deadly strikes against Israeli troops in Lebanon led Israel to withdraw in 2000; that the bloodshed of the second intifada pressured George W. Bush to declare his support for Palestinian statehood and prodded the international community to produce the Arab Peace Initiative, the Geneva Initiative, and the Road Map for Middle East Peace. They are also convinced that arms pressured Ariel Sharon, then Israel's prime minister, to evacuate settlers and troops from Gaza in 2005. That pullout also had the effect of freezing the peace process, supplying "the amount of formaldehyde that is necessary," as a Sharon adviser put it, "so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians."

For more militant Palestinian leaders, who never believed in the peace process, the lesson was clear: "Not an inch of Palestinian land will be liberated," Mousa Abu Marzook, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, told me, "while Israelis feel that controlling it exacts few costs." Matti Steinberg, a former senior adviser to Israeli security chiefs, described Mr. Abbas as the most obliging, nonviolent Palestinian leader Israel has encountered and warned of taking him for granted. "The Israeli center is caught in a vicious cycle," he said. "It argues that it cannot make peace while there is violence, and when there is no violence it sees little reason to make peace."

History may credit Mr. Abbas with reigning over the more virtuous phase of this cycle, but he has likely laid the groundwork for the uglier one. Hamas, meanwhile, has already moved on. "Israelis had a golden opportunity to sign an agreement with Abbas," Hamas's health minister, Basem Naim, told me in Gaza last November. "But the chance has already passed. They will not get it again."

Nathan Thrall is a Middle East analyst at the International Crisis Group.

LINAH ALSAAFIN, "HOW OBSESSION WITH 'NONVIOLENCE' HARMS THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE," *THE ELECTRONIC INTIFADA*, 10 JULY 2012 (EXCERPTS)

In recent years, western discourse surrounding the Palestinian cause has employed a few new—and superficial—adjectives to describe Palestinian resistance: Palestinian “nonviolent” resistance, Palestinian “peaceful” resistance, Palestinian “popular” resistance, Palestinian “unarmed” resistance. And the ever so popular Palestinian “Gandhi-style” resistance.

This discourse has been adopted by the Palestinian popular struggle committees, born after the success story of the occupied West Bank village of Budrus that embarked on popular protests and managed to regain 95 percent of its lands that were expropriated by Israel’s apartheid wall in 2003. However, the obsessive, fetish-like concentration on a specific type of resistance has in one way or another contributed to the delegitimization of other forms of resistance, while simultaneously closing off open discussion on what popular resistance actually is. . . .

No Need To Explain

Nowadays, Israelis and internationals and unfortunately even some “enlightened” Palestinians champion “nonviolent resistance” and consider throwing a rock to be a violent act. The argument goes that throwing rocks tarnishes the reputation of Palestinians in the western world and immediately negates the “nonviolent/peaceful” resistance movement. This argument falls into the trap of western—(read, colonizer) dictated methods of acceptable means to resist.

Oppressed people do not and should not have to explain their oppression to their oppressor, nor tailor their resistance to the comfort of the oppressors and their supporters.

The last time we truly had a genuine, grassroots popular resistance movement in Palestine (before the protests against Israel’s apartheid wall in the West Bank village of Budrus in the early 2000s) was during [the] first three years of the first intifada.

In 2005, people in the village of Bilin began their weekly protests against

the wall Israel built on their land. The Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC) was formed in 2008, touted as the rebirth of popular resistance as more and more West Bank villages started their own weekly protests and were effectively swept under the wings of the PSCC.

Mohammed Khatib, one of the founders of the PSCC, told me in an interview that the committee “sought to undertake creative direct action as a result of the low numbers in the protests.”

Bailed Out By PA

The model of the PSCC is built around generating international support and media awareness, and on this front it has proven to be highly successful. Yet the use of the term of “popular resistance” is unfair and quite simply an inaccuracy as these demonstrations are built around no mobilizing strategy or goal, do not include the majority or even half of the villagers, and some of those who do take part prevent their wives and daughters from joining in.

The structure of the committee is built on an undemocratic basis, with self-appointed figures from the various villages fulfilling the leadership roles. The unelected Palestinian Authority prime minister, the darling of Europe and the US, Salam Fayyad funds the committee with more than half a million shekels (\$125,000) each year.

“Since October 2009, we have been getting 50,000 shekels per month from Fayyad,” Khatib said. The money ostensibly goes to paying the bails of Palestinians arrested during the protests, logistical needs and administrative purposes.

“The financial costs could not be covered except from the support and donations of official bodies,” Khatib explained. “During one month in 2008, fifty Palestinians were arrested from Bilin. Fifty people needed to be represented by a lawyer and have their bail paid. Donations from supporters were just not enough.”

Fayyad carries an agenda with him, which he has no qualms in making public. During the seventh annual Bilin conference in April this year, he spoke about how these “popular protests are the steps toward an economically

independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders.” This is in stark contrast to the popular chants at these same demonstrations of “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.”

More concretely, of course, Fayyad nominally commands the security forces that work with the very same Israeli occupation army that is carrying out the theft of land from the villages.

Khatib is aware of the criticisms relating to an alleged popular committee accepting funds from politicians. “I’ve personally met with Salam Fayyad several times since April 2011 and told him that the popular committees do not want his money, but he didn’t listen,” Khatib added.

The PSCC is also funded by non-governmental organizations who [that] come in with their own schemes and plans. For example, the Spanish group NoVA seeks, according to its website, to “offer support for civil society in conflict areas in the field of violence prevention, peace building, mediation and nonviolent conflict transformation” (*novolencia.nova.cat*).

NoVA supports a study program called the Executive Diploma for Leading Change. According to participant Beesan Ramadan, the Spanish deputy consul Pablo Sanz was brought into one of the classes to lecture about the “proper way to resist” and then proceeded to say that Palestinians should be “pragmatic” and to consider not throwing rocks in protests. Sanz argued that it makes the consuls’ jobs harder if they encounter rock throwing when they attended protests with European officials.

Mired in Apathy

This is the root problem for the protests that internationals and Israelis so love to participate in. The PSCC is not reflective of Palestinian society, one that is mired in deep apathy due to a number of factors: the dependency of large numbers of people on loans from banks, the illusion of a “state” as introduced by Fayyad’s neoliberal agenda of “state-building,” the high cost of sacrifices already made and the exhaustion of 64 years of increasing and incessant occupation and colonization.

Overshadowing all of it are the Oslo accords of the 1990s, which only

legitimized and entrenched the Israeli occupation instead of getting rid of it.

A Need for Mobilization

Meanwhile, efforts are made to bring in European and international delegations and show them around the villages engaging in the weekly protests, and in establishing solidarity links that lead to speaking tours during which leaders of the popular committees talk about “nonviolent resistance.”

However, equal effort is not made toward mobilizing Palestinians. The failure to do so is indicative of the prevalent attitude in Palestinian society, one that hasn’t changed since Bilin’s first protest in 2005. Seven years of weekly protests and the general attitude is again one of apathy, contempt for “Fayyad’s resistance” and despair regarding the uselessness of it all, of how the youth are bravely risking their lives week in, week out and how that won’t change the *status quo*.

By criticizing this model of protests, I am in no way seeking to belittle or cast doubt on the courage of men and women who protest against the occupier, or the sacrifices made by numerous villages, particularly by those whose sons and daughters have been martyred or injured by the Israeli forces.

The psychological and physical stresses that villagers suffer from frequent night raids on their homes, multiple arrests of their family members, and the helplessness of not being able to give their children a better future are all to be taken into consideration, as well as their admirable steadfastness and conviction that these protests are an effective means to challenge the occupation.

No Such Thing as “Joint Struggle” with Israelis

In addition to questions about the strategy behind and efficacy of these forms of protests, the participation of Israeli activists is certainly a topic of great debate. Today’s dynamics of “Palestinian resistance” have drawn more and more Israelis to the protests and made it an attractive prospect, almost like a tourist destination.

Unless explicitly stated by villagers or the Palestinian community involved

in demonstrations, no one is refusing to allow Israelis come to the protests. With that in mind, it is also helpful to acknowledge that the majority of Palestinian society does not trust Israelis from the outset. So what exactly should the role of Israeli activists be?

It goes without saying that Israeli activists must never take a decision-making or leadership role in the Palestinian struggle, but instead must remain on the periphery. In my experience, most of the Israeli activists already know and understand that. Once establishing their presence in Palestinian protests, their primary responsibilities are documenting the Israeli occupying army's crimes, facilitating legal proceedings in the case of Palestinians getting arrested by the Israeli army and diverting arrest, which means placing themselves in front of Palestinians who are about to get arrested to allow the Palestinians more time to escape arrest.

Eltezam Morrar from Budrus, who led the women in her village to protest against the occupation army, shared her fear that the present-day reality is not totally led by Palestinian voices.

"Any international or Israeli who wants to join us in our demos is welcomed," she told me. "But as my father once said, we are the ones who put the agendas for the resistance and the Israeli or international supporters follow it. Nowadays I am not really sure if the agendas are 100 percent Palestinian."

This issue is exacerbated by the absence of a truly representative Palestinian leadership able to lay out a strategy for resistance and mass mobilization, instead of busying itself with creating a police (non)state in the West Bank bantustans, or autocratic rule under Hamas in Gaza.

Some Israeli activists speak explicitly of a "joint struggle" between Israelis and Palestinians (see, for example, Noa Shandlinger's 24 June article "Thoughts on a joint, but unequal struggle" on the website +972).

But to put it bluntly, there is no such thing as a "joint struggle". . .

No Symmetry under Occupation

The term "joint struggle" implies a degree of equality or at least symmetry, and that is definitely not the case

between Israelis and Palestinians, even if they are dodging the same rubber bullets and inhaling the same tear gas.

Israeli activists are solidarity activists, just like their international counterparts. There is no clear role for solidarity activists precisely because there is no clear Palestinian resistance strategy within Palestine.

If there was an aim to the protests, then solidarity activists would join the villagers from, for example, Nabi Saleh and trek down the hill to where the stolen village spring lies, instead of habitually hanging back and philosophizing on the inhuman nature of the occupation soldiers.

The fact that Israeli activists live on Palestinian colonized land spurs them to want to do more and be considered as more than solidarity activists, as they claim that they are connected to the Palestinian cause, which is true enough. The problem lies with what sort of actions are implemented, and what these Israeli activists can do to chip away at the occupying, colonizing system.

Israeli Activists Should Focus on Changing Their Own Society

Israeli activists must work within their own societies and communities. Of course this will be a very difficult and even dangerous task, as one would expect in a society where racism and fascism are so institutionalized.

To Palestinians, that would make the difference, not swamping weekly protests that don't hold much credibility with Palestinians in the first place, and sometimes even outnumbering the Palestinian participants.

Complaints from some Israeli activists of how horrible they are treated and of the persecution they receive at the hands the army can come off as self-indulgent, especially when arrests or injuries of Israelis and internationals are already far more likely to be widely reported anyway than the routine and horrifying abuses suffered by Palestinians on a far larger scale.

Israeli activists sometimes despair about how pointless and ineffective their efforts are in creating more awareness about the realities of the occupation within their own communities but that should only spur them to be more

creative in coming up with strategies to confront and challenge their society.

For now, Palestinians must also work within their own societies in order to mobilize and inject the society with the spirit of volunteerism and social community that is now fragmenting due to neoliberal economic policies that widen inequality, aid dependency, debt and consumerism.

No one is rejecting Israeli anti-Zionists, but simply calling yourself an anti-Zionist, and even coming to protests is not enough. Israeli activists who do so claim, for the most part, to understand the privileges they enjoy due to being white and Jewish in a colonial situation. But it is not always clear that they understand in practice how these privileges continue to manifest themselves in their interactions with Palestinians.

Toward a Truly Popular Resistance

Despite the good intentions of the internationals and the Israelis who come to protests, their presence can also buttress the notion that Palestinians need someone to speak in their name. Not only is this model of resistance hugely ineffective in terms of outcome and mobilizing Palestinians, it also helps maintain the *status quo* that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority strive to protect.

Bassem Tamimi, one of the leaders of the popular struggle committee in Nabi Saleh, acknowledged that the reality on the ground is not a popular resistance.

“We are still in the preliminary stages. I would even say the stages behind the preliminaries behind the first step to be taken toward a popular resistance. There are a lot of faults with the current model. When we first started out on these weekly protests we used the term ‘popular resistance’ as a way to mobilize so that in the near future, it could be just that. Now we’re at a stagnation point.”

Building From the Ground Up

Revolutions and successful resistance do not take place overnight. It takes months, years for a movement to establish itself. The struggle must be brought back to the Palestinians themselves, and one sure way to mobilize is not through protests or speeches, but through social

community work (which incidentally is what made Hamas so popular from its establishment, especially in the refugee camps).

Get to know the people on the street. Ask them what they need, what they are suffering from. It could be a broken roof or not having enough money to pay their daughter’s university tuition. Trust begins to be built up in different communities, and with that awareness and the spark to rekindle a true resistance movement on the ground.

As Paolo Freire rightly pointed out, “No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption.”

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AKIVA ELДАР, “ISRAEL ADMITS IT REVOKED RESIDENCY RIGHTS OF A QUARTER MILLION PALESTINIANS,” *HA’ARETZ*, 12 JUNE 2012

Israel stripped more than 100,000 residents of Gaza and some 140,000 residents of the West Bank of their residency rights during the 27 years between its conquest of the territories in 1967 and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

As a result, close to 250,000 Palestinians who left the territories were barred from ever returning.

Given that Gaza’s population has a natural growth rate of 3.3 percent a year, its population today would be more than 10 percent higher, had Israel not followed a policy of revoking residency rights from anyone who left the area for an extended period of time. The West Bank’s population growth rate is 3 percent. Many of those prevented from returning were students or young professionals, working abroad to support their families.

The data on Gaza residency rights was released by the Defense Ministry’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories [COGAT] this week, in response to a freedom-of-information

request filed by Hamoked – The Center for the Defense of the Individual. In its letter, COGAT said that 44,730 Gazans lost their residency rights because they were absent from the territory for seven years or more; 54,730 because they did not respond to the 1981 census; and 7,249 because they didn't respond to the 1988 census.

It added that 15,000 of those deprived of residency are now aged 90 or older.

In May 2011, Haaretz obtained the figures on West Bank residents who were stripped of their residency rights. The report noted that Israel had, for years, employed a secret procedure to do so. Palestinians who went abroad were required to leave their identity card at the border crossing. Unlike those from Gaza, who were allowed to leave for seven years, these Palestinians received a special permit valid for three years. The permit could be renewed three times, each time for one year. But any Palestinian who failed to return within six months after his permit expired would be stripped of his residency with no prior notice.

Former senior defense officials told Haaretz at the time of that report's publication that they were unaware of any such procedure.

Today, a similar procedure is applied to East Jerusalem residents: A Palestinian who lives abroad for seven years or more loses his right to return to the city.

GOGAT's letter to Hamoked regarding the Gaza natives said that there are various ways for Palestinians to get their residency restored, and in fact, some of those Gazans who lost their residency rights later regained them. However, it added, it lacks the resources to comply with Hamoked's request to be told the specific reason behind each such restoration.

Since many of those who lost their residency rights from 1967 to 1994 in both Gaza and the West Bank were students or young professionals, their descendants today presumably number in the hundreds of thousands. Of the original people affected by the policy—nearly 250,000—many have since died. But several thousands who were affiliated with the PA were granted the right to return in 1994; still other Palestinians

have since been allowed to return for a variety of reasons.

Among the more prominent West Bank residents who have been barred from returning are the brothers of the PA's chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, who went abroad to study and subsequently lost their residency. They now live in California. Erekat said that having learned from their experience, he was careful to return to the West Bank periodically while he was studying abroad, so as to keep his residency permit valid.

Hamoked, which learned of the existence of this policy by chance while investigating the case of a West Bank resident jailed in Israel, charges that stripping tens of thousands of Palestinians of their residency—and thus effectively exiling them permanently from their homeland—is a grave violation of international law.

AMIRA HASS, "THE OLD MAN AND THE 'STRIP AND SWIM' PROCEDURE IN GAZA," HA'ARETZ, 4 JUNE 2012

"Take off your clothes," ordered the soldier over his megaphone. The old man and his son removed their clothing. "Get into the water," the soldier continued shouting into the megaphone. The son, 18, entered the water from the fishing skiff and swam over to the Israeli navy gunboat.

Just 45 minutes earlier, when the fishermen were stopped at a distance of 50 meters from the gunboat, the first order had been, "Turn off your engine." They turned it off. "You and the boy come forward," the youthful voice ordered them. The man and his son advanced to the boat's prow. Mohammed Baker, 62, a fisherman since he was 17, said with concern in his voice: "Captain, we are not a danger [to you]."

The young soldier with the megaphone answered: "Shut up."

But the old man, easily the age of the soldier's grandfather, continued: "We fish here every day. We have not passed the line." He was referring to the line from the Gaza shoreline set by the Israeli military for Palestinian fishermen, beyond which they are forbidden to fish.

The soldier repeated into his megaphone: "Shut up. Stop talking."

The old man and his son stood at the prow for a half-hour. Only when another gunboat approached and stopped were they ordered to strip. The son swam over and climbed onto the gunboat. They soldiers threw a buoy attached to a rope to the father. He climbed down from his boat, his only source of income, as he told me on Sunday by telephone in a voice on the verge of tears.

Holding on to the buoy, he was pulled onto the gunboat. It was 9 o'clock in the morning, May 5. And the day had actually started out well; in an hour-and-a-half of fishing, they had caught two-and-a-half kilos of fish.

This strip-and-swim procedure is carried out several times a month: summer and winter, day and night, hot and cold, old and young, it makes no difference. More often, the gunboats shoot at the fishing skiffs. Al-Mezan, the Gazan human rights organization, has recorded 12 instances in May of the Israeli navy firing live ammunition at fishing boats that set out from the Gazan ports. The navy detained nine fishermen (all of whom were released within 12 hours) and confiscated four fishing boats and their equipment (which are returned, usually in damaged condition, after about a year).

Busy Month for Navy

On May 30, four fishermen were detained; on May 27, a little before midnight, our forces fired on a fishing boat in the vicinity of Rafah. Our soldiers told the two fishermen, aged 59 and 65, to undress, jump into the water and climb onto the gunboat. The older one was allowed to return to the boat. The second was detained and released the next afternoon. On May 22, our forces fired on a fishing boat near Dir al-Balah. There were no injuries to our soldiers. The enemy hurried to the shore without food or money for his family.

The Oslo Accords permit Gazan fishermen to sail up to 20 nautical miles from shore. In practice, the furthest they were allowed to fish was 12 miles. This was shortened to six miles after 2000, and since the Operation Cast Lead military onslaught conducted by Israel against Gaza during winter 2008/2009, the permissible limit is only three nautical miles.

Yellow buoys mark the line. Some people take the risk and cross it because pickings are slim within the limit, and sewage often reaches this area, raising the chances of pollution. According to the testimony of many fishermen who have acquired GPS navigation systems for the sake of accuracy, the Israeli navy often fires on their boats even when they have not crossed the line.

Compared to earlier months, the attacks grew in May, Al-Mezan reports. The organization surmises that there are two reasons for the escalation of such attacks: to reduce the three-mile limit further, and to supply the Shin Bet security services with people who can be interrogated and pressured for some kind of information.

High Blood Pressure

And so, after the strip-and-swim procedure, the handcuffed and blindfolded detainees are brought to the pier in Ashdod, according to the testimonies collected by Al-Mezan. They are dressed in disposable pants and shirts, and photographed, but not until their blood pressure and temperature are taken. "High, high," an examiner reprimanded Baker and referred to his blood pressure. "It's because of you," the 62-year-old man said. He and his son were held, handcuffed and blindfolded, for six hours. Afterwards they were taken to what was apparently a Shin Bet facility at the Erez crossing between Israel and Gaza. There, for the sake of security, our Israeli boys checked them with metal detectors and placed them in a room with a computer and a man in civilian clothing.

One of those interrogated reconstructed the investigation for Al-Mezan: "I told the interrogator that we did not go beyond 2.5 miles, which showed on the GPS, and the officer who detained us had fired without any warning." The man in civilian clothes answered, "I'm not familiar with the entire sea, and I'm here so that you can help me." The man in the disposable clothes said: "I can't help you. I am a fisherman who understands only the language of fishing, and I need someone to help me get back my fishing boat and personal belongings."

The interrogator asked about the Gaza policemen at the port, and the

interrogated answered, "I don't know about anything except for my boat." The Israeli said, "You trespassed. Let your government help you." The Palestinian explained to him that the Oslo Accords say the permitted fishing range is 20 nautical miles. The Israeli had had enough. "Your government should help you. Yalla, get out of here."

In response, the army spokesman says that security regulations limit sailing because terror organizations make use of the sea, and in order to enforce the regulations, "the navy takes various steps to remove boats that sail beyond permissible limits, including orders to return to shore, and even detainment as needed. According to the rules of engagement, live ammunition is used only as a last resort, and in a considered and cautious manner."

GIDEON LEVY, "BOYCOTTING THE SETTLEMENTS IS JUSTIFIED," *HA'ARETZ*, 24 MAY 2012

I don't buy merchandise that comes from the settlements and I never will. To my way of thinking, those are stolen goods and, like any other goods that have been stolen, I try not to buy them. Now perhaps the South Africans and the Danes also will not buy them; meanwhile their governments have merely requested that products from the settlements be marked so as not to deceive their customers. Just as there was no need in the past to label merchandise from the British colonies as British products, so there is no need to mark products from Israel's colonies as Israeli. Anyone who wants to support the Israeli colonial enterprise can buy them; those who are opposed can boycott them. As simple as that, and as necessary.

Israel, which boycotts Turkey's beaches and Hamas, should have been the first to understand that. Instead we have heard heart-rending cries and angry rebukes. Not yet to the Danes, who are nice, but to the South Africans, who are less nice in our eyes. The decision was labeled "a step with racist characteristics" by the Foreign Ministry spokesman, referring to the country that waged the most courageous war against racism in the history of mankind.

Yes, the new South Africa can teach Israel a lesson in the war against racism; and yes, Israel can teach the world a lesson in racism. It has once again been proven that Israel's chutzpah knows no bounds: Israel, of all countries, accuses South Africa, of all countries, of being racist. Is there anything more ridiculous?

It was not by chance that the South African ambassador to Israel, Ismail Coovadia, seemed both amused and embarrassed at a reception for Cameroon's independence day, when the foreign ministry launched a ridiculous search for him, according to reports, after he failed to respond to its summons for what was described in advance as a rebuke. It is not difficult to imagine how many such reprimands Israeli ambassadors in different parts of the world deserve to be summoned to, if labeling produce from the settlements is a reason for rebuke and accusations of racism on the part of the Israeli government, which is so purely non-racist.

Labeling products from the settlements should have been an obvious move a long time ago, as a guide to the intelligent and involved consumer. A boycott of settlement products should also have taken place a long time ago, as a compass for law-abiding citizens. We are not referring only to a political or moral position; this is a question of upholding international law. A product produced in the settlements is an illegal product, just like the settlements themselves. Just as there is a growing public of consumers in the world who will not buy products made in sweatshops in southeast Asia nor "blood diamonds" from Africa because of their source and the conditions under which they are produced, so it can be anticipated that there are consumers who will boycott products produced in occupied territory through the exploitation of cheap Palestinian manpower whose opportunities to work are in the settlements.

The self-righteous, sanctimonious protests of Israeli factory-owners and farmers in the occupied territories who say they care so much about their Palestinian workers, who claim a boycott could endanger their employees' sources of income, are a cynical attempt to mislead people. Had the settlements

and the occupying forces been removed, and the lands on which these enterprises arose been returned to their owners, they would have had much more dignified sources of income.

A boycott of goods from the settlements is a justified boycott, and there is no other way to define it. Labeling these products is the minimum demand that every government in the world should make, as a service to its citizens.

Moreover, it is actually a lack of such labeling that can lead to a wholesale boycott of all blue-and-white products. After all, how can a Danish or South African consumer know whether the avocado he is buying did not grow on Palestinian soil?

Those who want to buy illegal products should buy Bagel & Bagel items, toilets made by Lipsky, cosmetics manufactured by Ahava, mushrooms from Tekoa, or wine from the Psagot or Golan Heights wineries. Those who want to bolster the settlement enterprise and reinforce it can buy these products and enjoy them.

But those who want to make a minimal act of protest against this sinful enterprise are invited to boycott it and refrain from buying from it. For my part, I shall continue to read the fine print on every product. The citizens of the world also have this right.

This right? This duty.

AMIRA HASS, "KEEPING BRITS WARM AND 25 GAZANS EMPLOYED," *HA'ARETZ*, 25 JUNE 2012 (EXCERPTS)

Senior British diplomats invested supreme efforts in the past year so that one truck could transfer 2,000 sweaters, to be sold in the United Kingdom. The future wearers of these sweaters must, first of all, thank their former prime minister, Tony Blair, who this week will be marking the fifth anniversary of his appointment as the Quartet's special envoy for Middle Eastern affairs.

As part of their job Blair and his team of experts, who are permanently stationed in our country, are doing everything in their power to share with the Israeli experts on terror and economics their astonishing discoveries: that unemployment (34 percent in Gaza) and poverty (44 percent of Gazans

suffer from food insecurity) harm society, and that without the export of merchandise there is no economic development.

It turns out that Blair and his team have the iron patience of a nation that has dealt for hundreds of years with the comprehension-challenged natives. Five years after Israel imposed the tight siege against Gaza, and two years after it loosened the siege by allowing more goods to get in (by a rare coincidence, that came after the interception of the Mavi Marmara flotilla), Blair's team still hasn't convinced Israel of the siege's harm. And the government continues to believe that the prohibition against exports from the Strip is the right way to fight the Hamas government, which meanwhile refuses to collapse.

Back to the sweaters: Equally warm thanks are sent from here to Lord Andrew Stone, who visited Gaza in June 2011 and was involved in his own way in bringing together Kamal Ashour, the owner of a sewing factory in Gaza, and the British retailer G.D. Williams & Co. Ltd.

Let's not forget the contribution of the British consul general in Jerusalem, Sir Vincent Fean, and of Her Majesty's minister for international development, Alan Duncan, whose ministry helped to rehabilitate the long-unused sewing plant. The two also helped secure funding to pay for modern equipment and to train tailors to work with the modern machines. . . .

There is no question that the British sweater wearers will be happy to know that their taxes are paying for so many important hours of work, and that they enabled one truck to make history on May 14, 2012, when it delivered the aforementioned items of clothing from the sewing factory to the Kerem Shalom commercial checkpoint, to the Ashdod Port, and finally, to the British retailer.

Not in His Wildest Dreams

. . . This news is so exciting that not only did the website of Gisha – the Legal Center for Freedom of Movement report on it, but even the Knitting Manufacturers Association in Malaysia reported on it, as surfing the Internet reveals. Not only the Malaysian association, but in June, even a monthly Palestinian economic bulletin published the news,

which until then we had not heard about, to our embarrassment.

The following statistics will further emphasize the dramatic nature of the event in May: Last week not a single truck left the Kerem Shalom crossing to bring Palestinian products from Gaza to anywhere outside the Strip. Nevertheless, since the beginning of 2012, the weekly average has certainly been higher than zero: Seven (!) trucks left the commercial checkpoint with Made in Gaza products for export, as compared to a weekly average of 240 before June 2007, according to the statistics of the UN's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

These numbers can also be read like this, according to OCHA: Between January and May 2007, 4,769 trucks set out from the Strip crossings, carrying Palestinian products for export. Thanks to the efforts of Blair and others, Israel agreed to allow the exit of 187 trucks in the same time period last year. This year only 134 trucks filled with goods left the Gaza crossing, less than 3 percent of the figure prior to June 2007.

Those rare export trucks contained mainly agricultural produce for Europe. But even those were only sent after the European taxpayers paid for many hours of hard work on the part of their representatives, who had to convince the Israeli terror and economics experts that they need not worry: A few flowers, strawberries and peppers will not endanger world peace.

Ashour, we are told by *The Independent* correspondent Donald Macintyre, once employed 35–40 tailors who worked in three shifts. Today he employs them in only two shifts, and for only three months at a time. England was not Ashour's preferred destination, writes the British correspondent. . . . Ashour, like hundreds of other sewing factory owners in Gaza, preferred to export to the nearby Israeli market, with whose merchants—who also preferred his clothing to Chinese products—he can communicate in Hebrew.

Before the tight siege imposed by Israel on Gaza in 2007, Ashour exported about 6,000 items of clothing to Israel every week, in two trucks. Now merchandise for one of his former Israeli customers is accumulating dust in his

warehouses. Incurable optimists, both think that the truck to England is a swallow heralding the spring. . . .

AKIVA NOVICK, "TOURISTS VENTURE TO WEST BANK TO 'SHOOT TERRORISTS,'" *YNET NEWS*, 18 JUNE 2012

Summer Camp, Warfare Style

Like a frozen turkey plunged into boiling oil, a group of American tourists descend from an air-conditioned van into the scorching heat of the West Bank. Flashing smiles all around, they march into Caliber 3, a local shooting range.

"Move it!" the Israeli guide suddenly yells. "Destroy that terrorist," he orders them, and they charge, guns loaded, at cardboard targets.

Gush Etzion has become a hot destination in recent months for tourists seeking an Israeli experience like no other: The opportunity to pretend-shoot a terror operative. Residents of the nearby settlements, who run the site, offer day-trippers a chance to hear stories from the battleground, watch a simulated assassination of terrorists by guards, and fire weapons at the range.

The fact that the tourist attraction is located beyond the Green Line only intensifies the thrill for the visitors, who often appear disappointed when told by their guides that they are not in any danger.

'Mommy Can't Protect You'

Shay, a gray-haired guide with a throaty voice, demonstrates the best way to grab hold of an assailant, while shots sound in the nearby range. A variety of rifles and faux explosive belts lay on a desk in front of him, while the pictures of smiling "terrorist" targets line the walls.

"Grab me," he orders 19-year-old Michael, who finds himself on the ground within moments of touching his muscular instructor.

According to reports in the foreign media, Shay was one of the combat troops who took part in Operation Entebbe, the mission that rescued the passengers of a hijacked Air France flight in 1976. When the tourists hear about it, their eyes light up.

"Suppose that the terrorist in front of me has an automatic weapon," Shay

tells the captivated audience. "He can spray a cartridge within 2.8 seconds, which means I have less than three seconds to take him down. And that is what I will do."

He turns around and lodges a bullet in each target, prompting loud cheers all around.

But the tourists don't come out all the way to Gush Etzion for a lecture; they want to push the trigger as well.

Shay hands a dummy gun to the 14-year-old Brian, who excitedly blurts out, "Jesus!"

"Your mommy won't be here to protect you, so stand up like a man," Shay yells at the teen. "Are you ready to take out a terrorist?"

"Yes I am," Brian retorts.

One by one, the combatants-for-a-day don protective glasses and approach their Tavor or M16 rifles.

Five-Year-Old Sniper

Michel Brown, 40, a Miami banker, chose to take his wife and three children to the range with the purpose of "teaching them values."

Upon entering the range, his five-year-old daughter, Tamara, bursts into tears. A half hour later, she is holding a gun and shooting clay bullets like a pro.

"This is part of their education," Michel says as he proudly watches his

daughter. "They should know where they come from and also feel some action."

Sharon Gat, the range's manager, says all the instructors at the site have served in elite IDF units.

"This is a special program created due to popular demand," he says. "Travelers from all over the world come here to meet former combat troops and hear stories about elite units. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

"We heard on the news about shootings in the West Bank," the mother, Olga, says. "We came to see it in person."

Her son, Jacob, 24, puts down his rifle and exclaims: "This is an awesome experience. I learned how to stop a terrorist and how to rescue hostages. Now, when I find myself in distress, I will know how to deal."

Davidi Pearl, who heads the Gush Etzion Regional Council, notes that this kind of experience turns the district into a world-famous "tourist gem."

At the end of the thrill-filled day, the tourists get a diploma indicating they "completed a basic shooting course in Israel."

"Boom, boom," the 13-year-old Riley mutters on the way out of the range.

"Boom, boom!" Jacob responds, knowingly.