

CORNERSTONE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY SABEEL ECUMENICAL LIBERATION THEOLOGY CENTER

“...and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

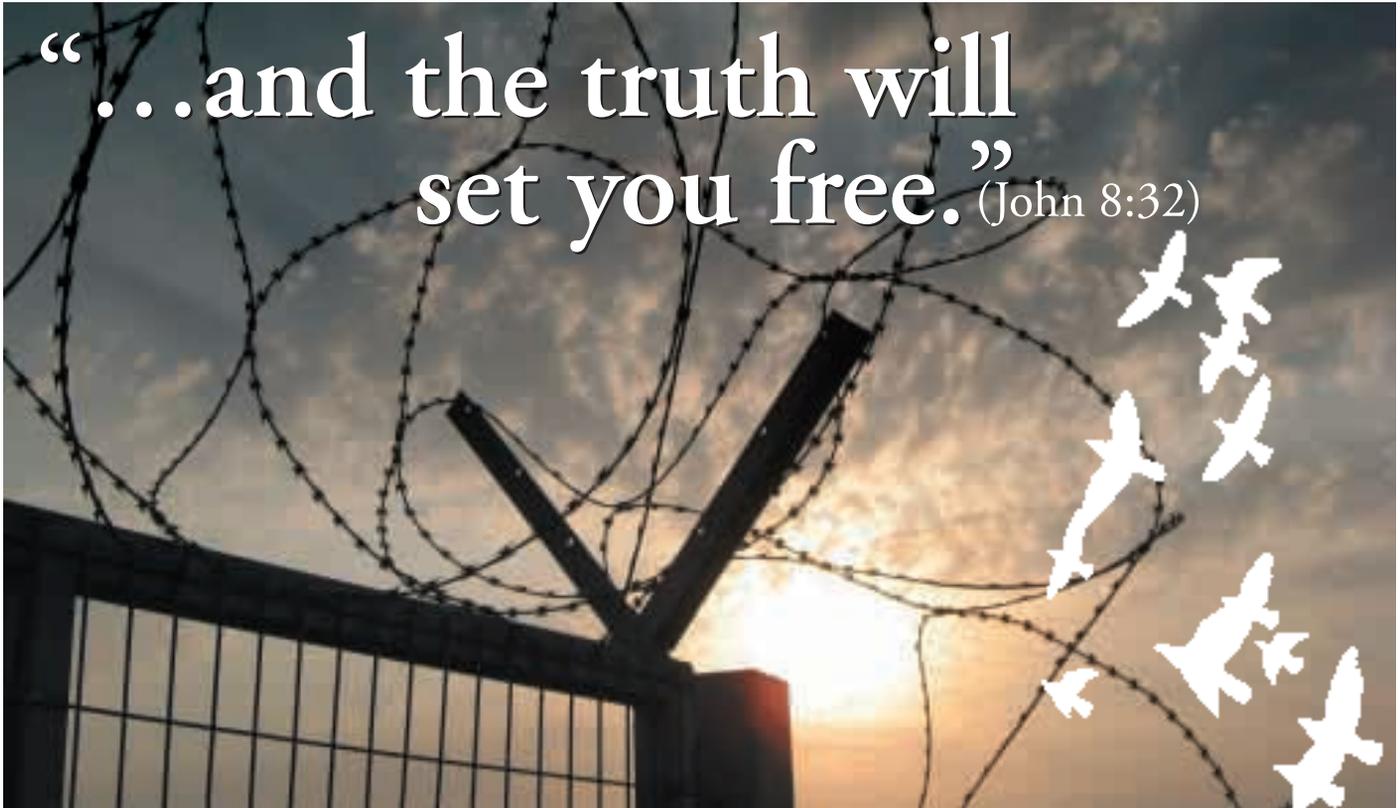


Photo by Sabeel

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The Laundering of Words and the Oppression of Palestinians

by: The Rev. Naim Ateek

“... so also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth

come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so” (James 3:5-10).

Words are powerful instruments that people use for good and evil. Someone once said that people need to handle words carefully because they have more power than an atomic bomb. The letter of James in the New Testament, from which the above quotation is taken, is only one example of the power of words which we all use and abuse. For James, the tongue is a small member but it is capable of great exploits. Words can be “a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” With words we can bless God and one another and with words we can curse them. If words are not controlled, they can consume people like fire. This phenomenon is not new. From time immemorial, human beings have discovered the power and subtlety of language and the use and misuse of words.

From the beginning of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the propaganda machine of the state of Israel has coined words, created myths, produced stereotypes, and crafted propaganda tools in order to justify and legitimize the Zionist narrative, while at the same time, it has managed to cast doubt upon and negate the Palestinian narrative. Through the power of laundered words Israel has been successful, to a large extent, in presenting itself to the West as the victim in the conflict over Palestine and not as the victimizer. Through the power of

words, Israel has smeared the Palestinians as a bunch of warmongers, innately violent, and by nature, enemies of peace, while presenting itself as peace-seeker and peace-loving. What the government of Israel has done is to write and propagate the history of the conflict through its own prism and with laundered words.

Consequently, many Israelis have grown up believing the image of the Palestinian and the Arab that has been fashioned by Israel. In addition they have been given a powerful vocabulary of laundered words that they employ whenever they refer to the Palestinians and Arabs. It is important for the reader to realize that the words that are used have been laundered by the strong detergent of the Israeli propaganda machine and are intended not only to hide reality,

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but also to change it. In this issue of *Cornerstone*, Sabeel’s objective is to help the reader to discern the truth because the truth is capable of setting people free. Jesus said: “You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32)

The main article in this issue is written by Gideon Levy, a well known Israeli journalist to whom we are deeply grateful. In this editorial, I am introducing the theme from my own experience with Israel as well as from the writings of others.

It is important to note that before 1967, the Arab citizens of Israel could not refer to themselves as Palestinians; it was taboo. They were known as Arabs and collectively as the Arab minority in Israel.

The first identity cards (ID) issued



Who am I? All that I am is defined in my Palestinian identity card. This 1948 refugee from Akka (Acre) district later died in Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon.

by the new state of Israel after 1948 used the word “Palestinian” to describe their nationality. Later the Israeli government issued new ID’s and replaced “Palestinian” with the more generic term “Arab.” After that, the word “Palestinian” could not be used. It was revived only after the 1967 war when Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

From the beginning, the Israeli state recognized the power of words and their psychological effect. By laundering words, Israel hoped to change reality, create new realities, erase memory, and induce a change in people’s vocabulary. This was achieved partly by the laundering of words and partly through the use of the newly imposed Hebrew language on the Palestinian Arabs who became citizens of Israel. Avraham Burg, in

his book, The Holocaust is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes, writes: “...the modern Hebrew language employs word laundering to mask an arrogant, violent and even racist attitude toward the Arab enemy. In everyday spoken Hebrew, the adjective Arab has a bad connotation.”¹ “Israel’s word laundering is among the most advanced in the world....” (Burg, 61).

Laundered words are deceptive and intended to hide and suppress the reality and truth of the situation. They create misconceptions that aim at softening injustice and oppression, and attempt to justify and rationalize mistreatment. In short, laundered words blame the victim as being the actual perpetrator of the injustice and acquits the guilty party. As an example, the government of Israel has never admitted any responsibility

for the 1948 Nakba when, directly or indirectly, it displaced over three quarters of a million Palestinians from their homes and refused to allow them to return, thus violating the terms of international law and UN resolutions. Israel then turned around and created myths and lies about the Nakba. Israel has always maintained that it did not drive the Palestinians out of their homes in 1948; they simply fled of their own volition. Despite the scientific and well documented research that has been done by Israeli Jewish historians, which prove that the expulsion of the Palestinian people was clearly planned by the Zionist leaders, the government of Israel continues to ignore and deny such irrefutable evidence.² This explanation has been one of the oldest myths used by Israel, despite the personal testimonies of tens of

thousands of Palestinians who were forced at gunpoint to leave their villages, like my family, which was driven out of Beisan.

Similarly, for the government of Israel, East Jerusalem is not “occupied” it is “liberated.” Israel does not use the word “occupation” for the West Bank because it believes that all the land is the “Land of Israel.” The usual Israeli reply is: “How can you occupy your own land?” By doing this, Israel lives in its own illusory world creating false realities and giving its people false hopes. In the Israeli Jewish psyche and logic, if there is no occupation then there is no oppression and no injustice. The Palestinians are only foreigners who are resident aliens who create trouble, commit violence and terror against the Jewish owners of the land. Therefore, when the army kills Palestinians they are only uprooting the violence and the terrorists. Killing terrorists is not murder; it is self defense. Thus, soldiers need not feel guilty when killing Palestinians. It is a sick psychology that rests on false premises and deceptive words. Indeed, the international community talks about a belligerent Israeli occupation while Israel marches



Photo by Sabeel

The Catholic Church in Beisan, Naim Ateek’s hometown, has been converted into local Likud Party headquarters, disguising its original function.

through history talking about liberating and redeeming the land.

This reminds me of what happened at the time of the prophet Jeremiah. The political situation in the country was extremely tense. There was an impending Babylonian military threat against Jerusalem. Some people, however, were taking things very lightly and spreading rumors that since God was on their side no harm would come to Jerusalem. They were crying out: “peace, peace, when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:14). Jeremiah called such words

deceptive: “Do not trust those deceptive words” (Jer. 7:4).

Deceptive words are received by some people. They give comfort and assurance but, ultimately, they deceive because they convey false realities and create false hopes. Sooner or later, people discover the deception and deviousness.

In a section of his book, Avraham Burg focuses on Israeli use of laundered words. He writes that in the Nazi documents one seldom finds words like “destruction,” “elimination,” “murder,” or “killing” to describe what the Nazis were planning to do to Jews. What one finds are words like “evacuation,” “special treatment,” “relocation,” “work in the East,” “residential relocation,” and “final solution.” He continues: “The special terminology was developed to allay the

“Laundered words are as devastating and damaging as the physical oppression of the occupation itself. . . the primary target of laundered words is to hurt the spirit and the soul and to break the will and morale of people.”

fears of Jews so that they would go easily to the centers of death, believing they were going to work in the East....” (Burg, 58).

Burg adds: “A civilization that employs laundered words uses a false language to represent a false culture and allows a state to wash itself clean of any responsibility for acts done in their name. ‘I didn’t know,’ ‘I wasn’t told,’ ‘It can’t be, the newspaper didn’t report it’ are common manifestations of responses to laundered language.” Burg believes that the reply should be: “They did tell you, but in words that allowed you to not acknowledge their true meaning. They told you, but in a way that enabled you to not know what you did not want to know” (Burg, 59).

With the presence of a right-wing government in Israel there is fear that the laundered words, the inflammatory language, the deception and the lies might begin to affect people at the center. Burg says, “Inflammatory language arouses passions but creates false warmth. They allow themselves to speak words that should not be spoken in respectable places. Extremism moves from the fringes of xenophobic nationalism to the more moderate right and from there on to the cultural and political mainstream. The circles of influence almost always parallel those of indifference” (Burg, 63). The racist views of a person like Avigdor Lieberman, the foreign minister of Israel, might be rejected as extremist



Photo from abijay.wordpress.com

An Israeli soldier points his gun at a Palestinian child in Hebron.

in the beginning, but with time, the same words might be accepted and eventually affect others at the center.

We must witness to the fact that laundered words do not contribute to peacemaking. On the contrary, they inflame anger, hate, and revenge. Laundered words are as devastating and damaging as the physical oppression of the occupation itself. Whereas the first target of the occupation is to hurt the body, the primary target of laundered words is to hurt the spirit and the soul and to break the will and morale of people. It is our duty and responsibility to expose the destructive phenomenon of laundered words. It must be resisted

and confronted as an evil that must be rooted out. It is an ugly form of racism that we all detest.

Ultimately, it is truth and not lies that will endure. It is light and not darkness that will prevail.

- 1 Burg, Avraham. *The Holocaust is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- 2 See Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 and Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications Limited, 2006.

The Rev. Naim Ateek is the Director of Sabeel, Jerusalem.

GLIMPSES *of* Our ACTIVITIES



Children watch actors portraying the Passion of Christ at an Easter event at Nazareth Village hosted by Sabeel Nazareth.



Sabeel brought local Christians together to participate in a walk along the Via Dolorosa, using the Contemporary Way of the Cross, a liturgy created by Sabeel, which remembers the suffering of Jesus and relates it to current day sufferings of the Palestinian people.



A group from The Netherlands spent ten days touring Palestine-Israel on a witness visit hosted by Sabeel and the Protestant Church of the Netherlands.



A joint program between Sabeel Jerusalem and Sabeel Nazareth, brought women together to reflect on the meaning of Jesus' first miracle in the town of Kufr Kana.



Young Adults join Sabeel for a volunteer work weekend. Here they are heading off with tools to begin cleaning up the village of Ma'lul; a village depopulated in 1948, but with buildings still standing.

The Factory of Words

by: Gideon Levy

In the summer of 1967, I was a fourteen year old child, born and raised in Tel Aviv, of those days. A typical product of the Israeli education system, a good boy of Tel Aviv. Frightened to death before the war, fearing that Israel was about to be destroyed, and excited by the miraculous victory. David did it again! He had beaten Goliath in six days. At six o'clock after the war Israel was in a nationalistic and religious orgy. Almost everyone participated in this orgy – orthodox and secular, Ashkenazi and Sephardic, young and old. The land of Israel was liberated and the people of Israel, the chosen people, were saved.

I was fourteen and my parents took me on the first trip to “the liberated land.” We had then a small German car, an NSU1000, and a few weeks after the end of the war we all went on a family ride to see the places which we had read about in the Bible: Abraham’s tomb in Hebron, Rachel’s tomb in Bethlehem, of which we had a small copper sculpture at home, and above all, the Wailing Wall. I remember each detail from this unforgettable trip, from Nablus to



In the 1967 war, Israel occupied and annexed the Palestinian sections of Jerusalem.

Hebron via the Old City of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We hardly saw any people on this trip, we only saw white sheets hanging from the roofs of the houses, meaning surrender. We were on top of the world.

Twenty years later and I am already an established journalist. I started to go back to those places. It took me twenty years to see what I didn't see on that first trip with the NSU1000 of my parents. Astonished I found out

that there are many hundreds of thousands of human beings living in what I thought was “the liberated lands,” living under a brutal military occupation in inhuman conditions. In the twenty years that have followed my second trip to the territories I have dedicated my career to documenting for my readers of *Haaretz* the dark side of the '67 orgy, to tell them about what is going on in their own backyard, only half an hour from their homes. I am trying to tell my

readers about the checkpoints, the killings, the pregnant women who can't get to the hospital in time, the unemployed people who can't find a source of income, the families which were torn because of the separation wall, the young people who have no future, and the small children who wake up horrified almost every night, when the soldiers knock on their doors, or shoot.

Israel has now existed twice as many years with the occupation as without. The big blessing of the occupation became the great curse of Israel. The direct victims are the Palestinians, but the occupier is also paying an enormous price for its illegal, immoral, and brutal behavior.

Forty years later and I go again and again to the same places. The holy places of '67 have, for me, become cursed places. Armed soldiers and policemen at the entrance of Abraham's tomb and an apartheid wall which separates Rachel's tomb from Bethlehem are sights that don't leave much room for holiness and historical heritage. In those sights people are suffering on a daily basis only because of the occupation, only because they are Palestinians. For people like me, this is unforgivable.



Photo by Sabel

Israel became bigger and stronger, the Palestinians became weaker and weaker, but this is only a limited perspective. "The only democracy in the Middle East," Israel, is no longer a democracy. No democracy in the world is a democracy when in its backyard there is an aggressive military occupation. Democracy cannot be partial; it cannot be limited by a demographic or a territorial line. Either you are a democracy or you are not. Israel is not. Being a liberal, free democracy for its Jewish citizens, which it is, is not enough to keep it really democratic. Occupation can never coexist with democracy. The endless occupation is present in all fields of life, not only in the lives of the Palestinians, obviously, but also in the lives of the Israelis. The fact that they are too blind to see this does not make the damage any less. On the contrary, every single Israeli carries a direct responsibility for the

occupation and not only soldiers and secret service agents are involved in maintaining it. Israeli engineers build the separation wall and the settlements. Israeli judges, legal advisors and lawyers are part of the discriminating legal system of the occupation. Israeli physicians are serving in the detention camps, interrogation cells and prisons, and Israeli journalists are part of the big cover-up, using a huge word laundry to prevent the Israelis from really knowing what the occupation really looks like.

It all started with an oxymoron. "The liberal occupation" or "the human occupation." Oh, how much we loved this contradictory combination of words! So contradictory that it hurts. We always loved these kinds of expressions, contradictory and paradoxical, and functioning as an effective laundry of words, long

“The state of Israel was not only established with blood and fire, but also with an army of words.”

before the occupation began. Israelis have always liked to have their cake and eat it too. Israelis invented all kinds of oxymorons like this. “The purity of arms.” “Be silent – shoot.” “The most moral army in the world.” Or even, the “War for the Peace of the Galilee,” which is the official name for the first war that Israel launched against Lebanon in the year 1982. Purity and weapons, silence and noise, morality and soldiers, war and peace – occupation and humanity. All going hand in hand, conveniently collected in one basket in the industrial word laundry, which the Zionist project has supplied us Israelis with from its very beginning. Back then, in the very very beginning, the slogan “Hebrew work” was a cover-up for taking the jobs from Palestinians. Everything we cleaned with words. They have covered up all kinds of crimes of war and crimes of the occupation, like the forests of Keren Keyemet L’Yisrael, which were planted on the ruins of some of the four hundred destroyed Palestinian villages of 1948. Words covered up the atrocities. The state of Israel was not only established with blood and fire, but also with an army of words.

Furthermore, the occupation was established with brigades of words.

Without them it would never have lasted over 40 years. The morning after the occupation of 1967, Israelis did not know what to call the new territories that within seven days had been added by force to their relatively tiny piece of land. What will we call those territories, Israeli journalists, writers and politicians asked themselves. The right-wingers had a very clear answer; they called them “the liberated territories,” exactly as

they called the Palestinian and mixed Palestinian and Jewish cities which they conquered in 1948. Liberated from whom? Liberated for whom? There was never a clear answer to this. But for the Israeli nationalists those territories are still today the liberated territories.

The very radical small left-wing of Israel had another definition. The morning after the Six Day war; they



Photo from umkahilil.blogspot.com.

In order to preserve Rachel’s tomb as a holy site exclusively for Israel, the government rerouted the separation wall into Bethlehem. It now surrounds Clair Anastas’ house, on the other side of the wall from Rachel’s tomb, on three sides.

called the conquered lands the “occupied territories,” as anyone else in the world would have done. But in those days, over forty years ago, to call the West Bank and Gaza “occupied territories” was almost criminal in Israeli dialogue. Between leftist and the rightist camp there was the mainstream, who called the territories “the seized territories,” as if to show that this is not a permanent situation – that the territories are merely on hold, that the occupation is not eternal, and that in times of peace, Israel will be willing to return the territories. After over forty years of occupation this theory has collapsed. Today, Israel has existed many more years with the occupation than without it; the occupation is part and parcel of Israel and to call the territories the “seized territories” is nothing more than a joke. The Israeli solution was to call Palestine “the territories,” hiding their true nature and identity under the carpet. The territories. Just the territories. In order not to remind anyone that they are occupied. This omission was the first service of the war of words, the aim of which was to make it possible for Israelis to live in peace and comfort with what is happening in their dark backyard, only half an hour away from their homes, in the occupied



Photo by Sabeel

Remnants of the village cemetery of Suffurya; a village depopulated in 1948. Other ruins of the village are covered up by the pine forest on the hill in the background, which was planted by Keren Keyemet L'Yisrael, the Jewish National Fund.

territories. Right-wingers will call the West Bank, Judea and Samaria, in order to emphasize the Hebrew and Jewish nature of those territories, as if Hebrew names can turn Palestine into a Jewish land.

Israel could never have maintained the occupation for so many years without the laundry of words and the Israeli media as the main agent of the occupation propaganda. Israelis, of which the majority are people with values, could never live in peace with the thought that so many atrocities are being made on their behalf. On their behalf, 3.5 million people are living without any basic human and civil rights; on their behalf, Israeli society is today the only democratic state which has kept up such a cruel occupation for so many decades. If the occupation had been imposed without the cover-up of words – softening, legalizing and minimizing – then many more Israelis would have become anti-occupation activists. Therefore, it is not possible to exaggerate the role of words, when it comes to maintaining the occupation, dehumanizing the Palestinians, and leaving Israeli society without any moral hesitations about the occupation.

One of the main sources in the laundry of words is the IDF, the Israel Defense Forces. Even the name, Israel Defense Forces, is meant to give the picture of an army, which is preoccupied with defending the country, while in fact, in the last 42 years, the IDF has turned into a military occupation force. From the IDF, via its recruited, faithful agent, the Israeli media, the Israelis are served all kinds of phrases, which aim to cover up the bloodshed, the house demolitions, the ruling of peoples' daily lives, the preventing of their freedom of movement, and the taking away of most of their other freedoms. It starts with the names of the military operations, which are usually poetic, even idyllic. Purple Rain, Summer Rain, Autumn Clouds, Warm Winter, Locked Kindergarten, and even Cast Lead, the official name of the military offensive in Gaza earlier this year, which were taken from a poem by the Israeli national poet Chaim Nachman Bialik. All so pastoral and so cruel at the same time. Demolition of houses or uprooting of trees is called, in the IDF jargon, *chisuf*, which means clearing, or exposing something that is hidden.

The military administration of the occupation is called "the civil



Photo from www.thewe.cc

“In those forty years which have passed since my parents took me on that first tour to the ‘liberated land,’ Israel has strengthened its belief in the official main religion of the state, the religion of ‘security’ – another product from the factory of words...”

administration.” *Keter*, which also means crown, is what a siege on a Palestinian city is called. “Bypass” means a road only for Jews. “Administrative detention” means illegal detention without court hearings and legal trial. “Closed military zone” means a territory which is open only to settlers. “Detention of wanted people” usually means kidnapping. “Humanitarian cases” refers only to extreme cases of dying people – implying that all other situations of people in need are not

humanitarian. “Humanitarian needs” are comprised entirely of flour, rice and cooking oil, as if human beings do not need more than this. “Illegal outposts” pretends that all other settlements are legal. “Open spaces” is usually an area in which tens of children and other innocent civilians are being bombed. “Senior in the Jihad” can be a boy of fourteen. “The commander of the local military branch of Hamas” can be changed on a daily basis, according to the last assassination. “Targeted assassinations” usually kill tens of

bystanders – and so on, and so forth – terms from the word factory of the army, which are faithfully used by the media.

The journalists are also making their own contributions in the game of words. You will never hear in the Israeli media that an Israeli soldier has killed a Palestinian child. A child will always “be killed” or “die from his wounds,” or “meet his death,” but not be killed by a soldier. Child? The media will usually say “youngster,” even if he or she is eight years old. Killed? The Palestinians are always “killed” in this war of words and the Israelis are always, always, “murdered.” Israeli terror organizations from the times before the establishment of the state of Israel will never be called terror organizations. Palestinian organizations, whose aims are as just as their Jewish predecessors and their means many times similar will never be called “liberation organizations,” like their Jewish counterparts. They are terrorists; we are freedom fighters. For years Israel did not recognize the PLO and some of our politicians, like the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin would not even call the organization by its name, the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Yassir Arafat was never defined as President in the Israeli media; only his

successor Mahmoud Abbas had the honor to be recognized in this authority by the Israeli media, even though he is serving in exactly the same position. Also the geography of the occupation is a map of words. According to the Israeli consensus, settlements in the Golan Heights, in the greater East Jerusalem area and in the Jordan Valley are not settlements, they are “neighbourhoods,” kibbutzim and moshavim, like in any part of Israel. With the assistance of words we have annexed them into Israel. Also, the apartheid wall is called in Hebrew the “separation fence” so as to keep its neutral innocent nature.

* * *

In those forty years which have passed since my parents took me on that first tour to the “liberated land,” Israel has strengthened its belief in the official main religion of the state, the religion of “security” – another product from the factory of words, which has now

assisted the occupation for two whole generations. In the name of this fundamentalist religion we think that we have the right to do anything, without any limitations, neither legal nor moral. This has corrupted Israeli society more than anything else. Morality is not a word in the Israeli dictionary anymore. The occupation never comes to a halt. By definition it is getting crueler and crueler, and Israeli society is sliding down the slippery slope of the mountain.

The summer of 2009 is around the corner. Israelis and Palestinians are older and when they look backwards they see only bloodshed, aggression, violence and humiliation, and all the other ingredients of the occupation. Forty years of occupation should have been enough time, not only for the suffering of the occupied, but also for the occupier to understand that the occupation cannot last forever and will not last forever. The summer of 2009 is a summer for great

“Forty years of occupation should have been enough time, not only for the suffering of the occupied, but also for the occupier to understand that the occupation cannot last forever and will not last forever.”

Photo by Sabeel



Palestinians wait in line to go through Huwara checkpoint in Nablus.

opportunities and perils. Will our children remember this summer in forty years as a summer of a big opening, the summer that changed

Israel and the Middle East, or just another summer of tears and bloodshed?

Gideon Levy is a columnist for "Haaretz," Israel's oldest daily newspaper, and a member of their editorial board. For the past twenty years, he has written the weekly column "Twilight Zone," which covers the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. He also writes political editorials, mainly about the relations between Palestinians and Israelis.

Pilate's question 'What is truth?' was a serious one, and one which many a judge has asked when trying to decide a case. It can refer to a statement or account. It can also mean conformity with fact, agreement with reality. More deeply still truth can mean reality, the ultimate meaning of existence, the primary source from which everything else derives. In modern life advertisement and propaganda may have little connection with the facts, while often a man wishes to create a favourable image of himself, whether this is true to his inmost being or not.

George Appleton,
Journey for a Soul



Photo by Sabed

Children created this poster at Mossawa center in Haifa.

Franciscan Blessing for Justice and Peace

May God bless you with discomfort ...
 at easy answers, hard hearts,
 half-truths, and superficial relationships.
 May God bless you so that you may live
 from deep within your heart
 where God's Spirit dwells.

May God bless you with anger ...
 at injustice, oppression,

and exploitation of people.
 May God bless you so that you may
 work for justice,
 freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears ...
 to shed for those who suffer from pain,
 rejection, starvation and war.
 May God bless you so that you

comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world and in your community, so that you will courageously try what you don't think you can do, but, in Jesus Christ you'll have the strength necessary to do.

May God bless you to fearlessly speak out against injustice, unjust laws, corrupt politicians, unjust and cruel treatment of prisoners, senseless wars, genocides, starvation, and poverty that is so pervasive.

May God bless you that you remember we are all called to continue God's redemptive work of love and healing in God's place, in and through God's name, in God's Spirit, continually creating and breathing new life and grace into everything and everyone we touch.

An informed anger

People who are angry at injustice are compassionate people: they are filled with passion and they do not make docile citizens: angry people (slaves and free people) forced the end of slavery in the British empire; angry people (men and women) won the vote for women; angry people (black and white) brought an end to apartheid in South Africa. Angry people can change the rules...Compassion enlivens and empowers the heart and mind so that with an informed anger we ask questions.

Joy Mead, This Is the Day: Readings and meditations from the Iona Community



A boy in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani.

A Message from Jerusalem Christians

Delivered by Nora Carmi

Your Holiness,

We, the indigenous faithful Christians of Jerusalem, join our voices to those of our Palestinian Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters in the West Bank and Gaza, to welcome you on your much desired pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Your Holiness, your pilgrimage for peace comes at a very critical moment in the history of the Palestinian people. For this reason, religious institutions and members of the civil society have communicated to Your Holiness their concerns and aspirations prior to your arrival in the country. We, “the little flock” of Jerusalem, would have loved to celebrate with joy your presence among us, but as your experience in Jerusalem in the past few days has proved, we are not free and our rights are denied.

We are pleased that you have insisted on coming at this time to give spiritual support and guidance to the steadfast Christians of Jerusalem, the resilient faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ and His Church established in this city over 2000 years ago. Sadly to say, there are only about 9,000 Christians of various denominations left, but they form an integral part of the rich fabric of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, the city of peace anxiously awaiting a just peace for all.

Your Holiness, you have in the past two days, observed the ramifications of the 42-year old military occupation of this city, significant to all faiths. Christians and Muslims suffer the same violations of human and national rights because Jerusalem is under occupation.

As the Vatican has recognized: “the part of the city militarily occupied in 1967 and annexed and declared the capital of the State of Israel, IS OCCUPIED TERRITORY (as recorded and confirmed by the United Nations) As such, all Israeli measures which exceed the power of a belligerent occupant under international law are therefore null and void.” This courageous stand of the Vatican should be upheld and prayerfully acted upon in order to end the illegal monopolization and the unilateral judaization of Jerusalem, strangled by settlements, divided by road blocks and checkpoints. Families are separated because of the wall; residents lose their residency rights; married couples are denied family reunification and homes are demolished! Young people who raise their voices against injustice are thrown into prison and the sanctity of life is desecrated. The beautiful mosaic of Jerusalem is shattered under oppression and injustice.

How can your flock be spiritually empowered and guided when faced with the violation of their rights to worship, to move, to learn, and to return home. How can your flock remain steadfast and continue resisting non-violently? How can we secure jobs and housing for young people so that they will not lose hope and emigrate? How can we encourage our children in exile to risk coming back to their country and contribute to maintaining the uniqueness of the Christian presence without being denied entry?

Your pilgrimage, to the sites made holy by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, not only constitutes a rich



Photo by Sabeel

The Pope, assisted by local Palestinian Christians, performs a Mass in Jerusalem, attended by Sabeel staff, during his visit in May.

spiritual experience, but is made especially meaningful through the sharing of the sufferings of the people who also make this land holy. We count on Your Holiness to proclaim anew to the world the teachings of our Savior: “to bring good news to the poor...release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of God’s favor.”(Luke 4; 18-19)

Your Holiness, you come as a peacemaker to promote tolerance and reconciliation. We urge you to continue following in the courageous footsteps of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in daring to raise a prophetic voice and to state clearly that:

- Jerusalem must remain an open city to all faiths and be the shared capital of the two states.
- The occupation has to end.
- Israel has to abide by International Law and be held accountable to implement UN resolutions.

Two thousand years ago, from the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem, Jesus wept over the city; a city under occupation and torn apart by violence and dissent.

“You do not know the things that make for peace!” That cry resonates in Jerusalem today; a city still under occupation and shattered by the absence of tolerance, respect and love.

We trust that your prayers and your genuine desire for peace in Jerusalem will drive Your Holiness, and the world that looks up to your leadership, to work for a just peace for all. Only then can Christians, Muslims and Jews live in freedom and in harmony in the promising land for all. Only then can the inhabitants of this blessed land enjoy a just peace that they very much deserve.

In closing, we welcome Your Holiness with the Arabic greeting “Ahlan wa Sahlan,” which literally means you are among family and that your stay goes smoothly.

Nora Carmi is the coordinator of the women and community building programs at Sabeel. She represented Jerusalem Christians in this speech to the Pope during his visit in May.

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS AND THE CHALLENGES OF TODAY

Sabeel's 4th International Young Adult Conference

July 22 – August 2, 2009

Our Vision

To gather, network, and further educate young leaders – Internationals and Palestinians – on the current situation facing Palestinian Christians and to train and equip them with the tools to advocate for Justice and Peace for all in the Holy Land.

- Visit Palestinian and Israeli Communities • Celebrate Palestinian Culture
- Worship and Biblical Reflections • Volunteer Experience
 - Advocacy Workshops and Nonviolent Protests
 - Sharing Together with Palestinian Young Adults

Registration: Total land cost is \$1050, including food, accommodations, ground transportation, speakers and activities. Airfare is not included.

Email: youth@sabeel.org

SABEEL FALL WITNESS VISIT

October 29 – November 6, 2009 (8 nights)

The Sabeel Fall Witness Visit offers a window into the daily lives of Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as into the experiences and challenges of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

- Meet with Palestinian Christian and Muslim leaders of civic and religious organizations and Israeli advocates for Justice.
- Learn the stories of Palestinian Christians and share the worship that sustains their faith.
- Share thoughts and reflections with others from around the world who are working to end the conflict.

This trip includes visits to communities in the Occupied Territories and Israel, with 3 nights in Jerusalem, 3 nights in Bethlehem, and 2 nights in the Galilee.

Payment: Land costs for the conference are \$1100 (\$250 single supplement)

To register visit: www.sabeel.org
Or email Maurine Tobin at [mmtobin38@gmail.com](mailto:mmmtobin38@gmail.com)

If you are unable to return the form via email, please fax or send via postal mail to:
Sabeel - P.O. Box 49084 - Jerusalem 91491 • Tel: 972.2.532.7136 • Fax: 972.2.532.7137

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center

P.O.B. 49084 Jerusalem 91491
 Tel: 972.2.532.7136 Fax: 972.2.532.7137
 E-mail: cornerstone@sabeel.org

Sabeel-Nazareth

PO Box 50278 Nazareth 16120 Israel
 Tel: 972(4)6020790
 E-mail: nazareth@sabeel.org



Visit our website at:

www.sabeel.org

E-Mail addresses

General E-mail: sabeel@sabeel.org;
 Clergy Program: clergy@sabeel.org;
 Youth Program: youth@sabeel.org;
 Local Programs: community@sabeel.org;
 International Programs: world@sabeel.org;
 Media: media@sabeel.org

Friends of Sabeel North America (FOS-NA)

(U.S. and Canada)
 Canon Richard Toll
 PO Box 9186, Portland, OR 97207
 USA
 Tel: (1)-503-653-6625
 E-mail: friends@fosna.org
www.fosna.org

Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS)

3 Sandstone Court
 Nepean, Ontario, K2G 6N5
 Canada
 E-mail: cfos@ca.inter.net
 Website: www.sabeel.ca

Friends of Sabeel United Kingdom (FOS-UK)

Ms. Jennifer Oldershaw
 8 Silver Street, Dursley
 Gloucestershire, GL11 4ND
 U.K.
 Tel: 01453 544655
 E-mail: info@friendsofsabeel.org.uk
www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk

Friends of Sabeel Ireland (FOS-IR)

9 Sycamore Road, Dublin 16
 Ireland
 Tel: 00-353-1-295-2643

E-mail: moynandg@iol.ie

Friends of Sabeel Scandinavia (FOSS)

Rev. Marianne Kronberg
 Centralvägen 21 A

S - 135 51 Tyresö

Sweden

Tel: +46 70 609 5010

E-mail: mkronberg1951@yahoo.se

www.sabeelskandinavien.org

Friends of Sabeel (Les amis de Sabîl) France

Gilbert Charbonnier
charbonnieri Gilbert@hotmail.com

Friends of Sabeel The Netherlands

info@vriendenvansabeelnederland.nl

www.vriendenvansabeelnederland.nl

Friends of Sabeel Oceania

Rev. Ray Barraclough (Secretary)

E-mail: sabeel@sabeel.org.au

Website: www.sabeel.org.au

Friends of Sabeel Germany

Canon Ulrich Kadelbach

Tel: +49 711 857 841

E-mail: ukadelbach@web.de

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PURPOSE STATEMENT *of* SABEEL

Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. *Sabeel* strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word ‘Sabeel’ is Arabic for ‘the way’

and also a ‘channel’ or ‘spring’ of life-giving water.

Sabeel also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

For more information on *Friends of Sabeel* groups in your area please contact our international representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.