

[Tikun Olam- !\[\]\(c8d96c8885d3000a912c2582004aed63_img.jpg\)](#)

Promoting Israeli democracy, exposing secrets of the national security state

Settler Terror and Its Apologists- Commentary

{ 37 comments... [add one](#) }



- Andy December 11, 2015, 4:31 AM

The tripe they spew out is reminiscent of the language – the mindset – of gangsters sitting round in a bar wise-cracking, drinking, smoking, playing cards, after they just whacked someone. Unfortunately their whining crap can be round the world at the click of a button.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- diogenes December 11, 2015, 5:39 AM

You have written:

“UPDATE: To show you the power of the lobby, despite the fact that the Shabak could’ve held Porkovich for several more days legally, it just released him from prison before his detention order expired. It NEVER does this with non-settler security detainees. Just the opposite, it extends detention for weeks, months and sometimes years. ”

This UPDATE really proves that what you wrote about Porkovich before the UPDATE was most probably wrong – the shabak didn’t release any of the other suspects after such a short period which indicates that they had even less indicias against him than they have against the others.

It seems that in cases where the indicias are still plausible the Shabak will hold long standing detainees even longer and that despite being “settler – security – detainees”.

Still, being the know-it-all that you are, you continue to imply that the shabak released him in spite of having good reasons to continue the detention.

The only cause you held him as a suspect in the first place was his arrest. One might expect that being released will reinstate the detainee ’s innocence – too much to expect from your

agenda.

In other words: your circular logic is circular only as long as it confirms your biases.

[REPLY LINK](#)

◦ [Richard Silverstein](#) December 11, 2015, 2:16 PM

@ diogenetics: No, it proves that you're reading into Porkovich's release what you wish to read into it. It could just as easily mean the Shabak is satisfied that he only lent the car to the murderers and did nothing more and didn't know their intent when he lent it to them. He may've offered them all the information he could & cooperated with them. That may've persuaded Shabak to release him.

Further it might mean he's the least guilty of all, but that Shabak was told to release him due to the settler lobby.

you continue to imply that the shabak released him in spite of having good reasons to continue the detention.

This is a completely invented theory of what I believe. Something I never said and don't believe because, as part of the opacity of Shabak & the entire national security judicial process, I can't know.

At least you're not arguing for the innocence of the murder suspects. Small blessings ...

[REPLY LINK](#)

• Barbar December 11, 2015, 9:25 AM

[comment deleted: You have made false claims about my work. When such claims are made, especially if the commenter is already moderated, I do not waste time rebutting or correcting them. Such comments will not be published. As you have already been moderated, if you violate the comment rules again, you will be banned.]

[REPLY LINK](#)

• [pabelmont](#) December 11, 2015, 9:56 AM

RS may have meant the security folks should have held the alleged accomplice longer. But I suspect that he may also have been pointing to the utterly undemocratic habit of those same forces to hold Palestinians, without charge or evidence, for long periods and then for

even longer periods. If “diogenes” doesn’t like the suggestion that a man should have been held longer, then he should also denounce the usual system which holds Palestinian detainees for longer and longer period, all without (in many cases) evidence or fair trial, though not always without torture.

[REPLY LINK](#)

◦ [Richard Silverstein](#) December 11, 2015, 2:50 PM

@ Pabelmont: Yes of course i was pointing out the irony & hypocrisy involved, & the dichotomy bet. how Palestinian & Jewish suspects are treated ...among other things

[REPLY LINK](#)

• Barbar December 12, 2015, 5:40 AM

[comment deleted: read the comment rules. Every time you sling insults at me or other commenters your comments will not be published. Next time, you ’ll be banned.]

[REPLY LINK](#)

◦ [Richard Silverstein](#) December 12, 2015, 9:09 PM

@ Barbar: Your comment went into the moderation queue. Which means either you were moderated previously for violating comment rules & you used a new IP to post your comment (new IPs are automatically moderated). You posted lies about several of my posts. Rather than point out the lies I deleted your comment. And I will do the same every time you violate further rules.

UPDATE: I actually don’t find that I moderated you in the past. I don ’t know why your penultimate comment went into my moderation queue. But I ’m glad it did. Comments must be factual. If you make claims about my posts being false without supporting those claims, you will be moderated & the comment either will not be published (if moderated) or deleted (if I ’m too tired of responding to nonsense like yours). If you call me names your comments will be similarly moderated.

There is absolutely no reason not to publish Porkovich ’s wife’s image. It is published at the family Facebook account. That account remains publicly accessible. If they didn’t want to image published they would remove it or make the account restricted, none of which they’ve done.

Save your faux outrage for something worthwhile.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Free Palestine December 12, 2015, 9:23 AM

Barbar – like her husband, she is a settler and a thief. She is probably also an accomplice to the murder crime. Richard has any reason to put her picture up.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 12, 2015, 11:11 PM

Why did Amos Elon, referring to what is going on on the West Bank, talk about “crappy colonialism”. What is crappy about it? Isn’t colonialism crappy by definition? Not quite.

In twentieth century colonialism of the British, French, Dutch variety etc. there was at any case some official concern with the welfare of the indigenous population. Israeli colonialism however harks back to an earlier 17th and 18th Century form of mainly Iberian colonialism which sought to remove or extirpate the local population. Israeli settler colonialism seeks to make life impossible for the local population. As such it is grossly anachronistic as Tony Judt already remarked of the whole Israeli enterprise.

It is unlikely that Israel will get away with this in the long term. But as Keynes remarked in the long term we will all be dead.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Yehuda December 12, 2015, 11:46 PM

I know you despise many of the positions I have written here, but for the record, I think what some of the settlers are doing is repugnant. The so-called rabbis who give them religious and moral backing should be put in jail, just like inciting imams. The police and Shabak should treat these suspects no differently than they treat any other terrorist suspect.

Where we part ways is your willingness to use a broad stroke to paint all settlers as inciting and violent criminals. No different than calling all Palestinians terrorists.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- [Richard Silverstein](#) December 13, 2015, 3:14 AM

@ Yehuda: Do NOT put words in my mouth. Do not misconstrue my beliefs. I take such things very seriously. I never said “all settlers ” were “violent criminals.” I said

they were thieves because they lived on stolen land. What they are doing is a violation of international law, and hence a crime.

What I did say is that the majority of settlers support, either tacitly or explicitly the violence of the worst of the settlers. Take a look at the good Rabbi Yisrael Ariel's recent homily promoting genocide not just against Palestinians, but all Muslims & Christians. His Sanhedrin also blessed the Dawabsheh murders. This is a guy who's salary is funded by the Israeli government. You say settlers & Israelis don't support him? OK, get him fired. Till then, you're talking a load of rubbish.

And it hardly matters whether these settlers are violent or not. The net effect of their thievery is to destroy Palestine and in the process destroy Israel as well.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Rafi December 13, 2015, 5:59 AM

You make serious allegations:

- 1.) Rabbi Yisrael Ariel's recent homily promoting genocide not just against Palestinians, but all Muslims & Christians – what is the source (other than Electronic Intifada)?
- 2.) His Sanhedrin also blessed the Dawabsheh murders – where and when ?
- 3.) This is a guy who's salary is funded by the Israeli government – Machon Hamikdash is not part of the Israeli government and I have been unable to find funding for it in the national budget.
- 4.) OK, get him fired. – I don't employ him, therefore I can't

[REPLY LINK](#)

- [Richard Silverstein](#) December 13, 2015, 4:16 PM

@Rafi: This is directed at all my hasbara readers. READ THE MATERIAL LINKED. It will answer all your questions. If it's a video, WATCH THE WHOLE THING. If you don't, you will waste my time & yours explaining why your comment is nonsense.

It is not my job to certify or support or satisfy you that sources are accurate. I've already done that to my own satisfaction. It's your job, should you doubt them, to prove the source is wrong or false. I don't do your job for you. So don't expect me to.

First, David Sheen says in his post that he was THERE at the event & recorded it. Are you claiming it's not Rabbi Ariel? Or that David Sheen wasn't there or that he

tikun

invented the video footage? If so, please let us know why & how the video is fabricated.

The blessing of the Dawabsheh murders is in the EI post & quoted. Again, if you're claiming that's not what he said or the quote is fabricated, prove it.

Second, Sheen notes in his post which you apparently didn't bother to read that the Temple Institute & Ariel's salary is funded to the tune of hundreds of thousands of shekels. If David found it you can. If you can't ask him. He'll tell you. Till then, again, don't waste my time.

So yes you do employ him. You pay his salary. Fire him or don't come complaining when people say Israel officially endorses Palestinian genocide.

I have known David Sheen's work for many years. It is credible, thorough & well-researched. But I'm open to you proving him wrong. Go ahead.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Barbar December 13, 2015, 12:16 PM

@Arie

"It is unlikely that Israel will get away with this in the long term. "

Maybe. Maybe not.

[link to tabletmag.com](#)

[REPLY LINK](#)

- [Richard Silverstein](#) December 13, 2015, 4:06 PM

@ Barbar: YOU're quoting Edward Luttwak? Really? That guy was a neoncon warhawk even before the terms were invented, back in the Reagan era. Also, I consider Tablet Magazine to be better named Tabloid. Their quality is closer to Arutz 7 or Algemeiner than anything credible.

If I need someone to pimp guys or publications like these I'll know who to call. Till then, don't darken my door with this crap.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 13, 2015, 12:47 PM

Barbar, I scanned this jingoistic article, and it seems to be written by someone who is 'desperately hopeful'.

Do you really think the Chinese or the Indians will back Israel in the devoted way that Europe and the US have been doing (and are still doing)? China and India have no religious or cultural loyalties to Israel. They will throw that little country of no economic importance under the bus in a minute.

Good luck with China etc., while the public opinion in democratic countries is increasingly turning against Israel. That at least should worry you, even when morality in itself doesn't seem to be one of your concerns.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 13, 2015, 4:59 PM

The history of Indian-Israeli relations should not inspire much confidence in those who believe that Israeli occupation and oppression can be maintained also without the support of the US. India did not vote for the UN partition plan in 1947. It voted against Israel's admission to the UN in 1949. It recognised Israel in 1950 but relations remained informal until the early nineties. It has on more than one occasion condemned Israeli military actions against Palestinians. The Muslim vote there has to be taken into account. Muslims constitute almost 15 % of the Indian population (up from 10 % in 1951) and they have a higher fertility rate than the Hindu population.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Israeli December 13, 2015, 6:01 PM

I am a secular Israeli, an atheist Jew, and I was shocked by your article. I understand that you claim to publish 'secrets' about Israel, but I am sorry to tell you Mr. Silverstein, it seems you are writing about a country that exists only in your head, and no, I am not naive. I know my country as well as my people quite well, for the good and for the bad ...

Obviously, I do not belong to the settlers' lobby, and I hope that those who are guilty for committing these awful deeds will rot in jail and suffer until their last breath. Yet, you are being unfair toward Israel and the Israelis, since you are drawing a very twisted picture of the Israeli society, and of the religious Jews in particular. I hope you will be fair enough to post my comment.

[REPLY LINK](#)

◦ [Richard Silverstein](#) December 13, 2015, 7:45 PM

@ Israeli: Yes, yes, you're a good man, a liberal man. You love your people, your religion. You hate bad people wherever they may be, even a few bad apples in your own midst. And with a few waves of the hand you've cleared your conscience & resolved all the problems Israel faces. Because despite a few of those nutcases Israel is really a country of good honest souls trying the best they can, but beset by crazy lunatics who force you to do things you really, really don't want to do. But how can anyone think any of this is our fault?

Sorry, chum. You're a fraud. You don't fool me or anyone else here (except yourself). Your country, especially its leadership, is sick. Very sick. You remind me of the guy who comes to the hospital with a headache and leaves the next day on a gurney to the morgue. You were fine when you got there, just a bit of a headache. You weren't aware what you were feeling was the early warning signs of massive stroke.

[REPLY LINK](#)

• Yehuda December 13, 2015, 11:56 PM

We who argue with you accept that you have taken a position in the conflict, and you will continue to freely express those opinions in this blog in an uncompromising manner. I understand that those positions will continue to color every bit of news, event or bit of information that appears. You make no attempt nor claim to be objective.

As you know, so-called "facts" can be patched together to form whatever picture or narrative we have in our minds. Fortunately for those of us who generally support Israel, your views are so far away from the mainstream, and don't really reflect the thinking (or at least the actions) of most decision makers (or at least the ones we care about)

The question is, is your tactic of unrelenting criticism and angry defamation of Israel serve the purpose of actually making Israel better? Rather, I think it just serves as a forum for various shades of deligitimizers and haters of Israel who aren't looking to "promote Israeli democracy" as you claim but rather hope to eliminate Israel as a country. I don't know if anybody has told you this, but the articles come off as an grumpy, angry, and bitter, with an ax to grind. It's like you once loved Israel, and having been disappointed for whatever reasons, you have taken upon yourself to batter and criticize Israel in every opportunity. And the Israel bashers out there feel legitimized because a knowledgeable Jew expresses many of their sentiments. (I may have called you many things but ignorant is not one of them). It reminds me of the numerous ex- frum blogs out there. (BTW I am a "skeptic" myself). They lose all perspective and proportion, in an attempt to express their anger and

disappointment.

So I think your writing (and others like it) is being cynically used as a tool. You call for Israelis, including myself, to do chesbon nefesh, I think you should do the same.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 14, 2015, 12:29 AM

“... for those of us who generally support Israel, your views are so far away from the mainstream, and don't really reflect the thinking (or at least the actions) of most decision makers (or at least the ones we care about) ”

That is a huge problem.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Barbar December 14, 2015, 1:44 AM

@Richard

“You're quoting Edward Luttwak? Really? That guy was a neoncon warhawk ”

You can shoot the messenger, just so long as you heard the message.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- [Richard Silverstein](#) December 14, 2015, 11:28 AM

@Barbar: I would never willingly read anything Luttwak writes. I do read some articles in Tabloid. But very selectively.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Yehuda December 14, 2015, 1:53 AM

@Elisabeth- Perhaps this is because most people in the US and Europe responsible for decisions are practical and realize that they have normal relations with countries that have far worse human rights records, and nobody feels the need to go around and deligitimize them. There simply isn't an obsession about them like there is about Israel. I don't see too many protests or blogs dedicated, for example, to the human rights violations of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the PA, Gaza or Russia, and calling for boycotting these countries.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 14, 2015, 4:15 AM

Really, Yehuda?

The Logic of Israel's anti-European Propaganda

Despite the government's claim of being singled out for punishment, all the EU has done against the settlements is take away their advantages. By comparison, it imposes economic sanctions on fully 36 countries.

Roy Peled Nov 30, 2015 6:57 PM

A supermarket in London. The European Union recently passed a directive requiring the labeling of products from settlements. Bloomberg

EU foreign affairs chief asks Netanyahu to clarify suspension of ties related to Palestinians

Netanyahu to EU: Shame on you for decision to label settlement goods

Europe should demand Israeli apology for abusive response to settlements labeling spat

There are two basic conditions necessary for public brainwashing. The first is the continued feeding of the public with baseless information, a well-known method that was developed into an art by dark regimes, in which repeating a lie enough times turns it into the truth.

The second is the blocking of credible alternative information. If the public runs into the same information time after time and there is no one to undermine it, the chance to succeed in engineering public consciousness is high.

These two conditions clearly exist in the way Europe's relations with Israel are being presented here, as a result of the decision on labeling products of the settlements. The great majority of the Israeli media have taken a stand alongside the government to carry out this mission. A unified chorus has sounded the hysterical cry, free of all doubt, which none can challenge. European anti-Semitism has once again arisen. Once again the Europeans have isolated Israel, and once again acted according to their familiar double standard.

On Channel 1's Mabat news program, shoppers in a Jerusalem grocery store were asked if, in response to the "boycott," they are planning on boycotting European Union products – even though there is no European Union boycott of Israel, not even of the settlements.

Northern Cyprus and Western Sahara rolled off people's tongues on every street corner, even off the tongues of those who a minute earlier did not know that Nicosia, too, was divided by a Green Line and afterwards they were to find Western Sahara on a map. The flock of commentators enlisted to present the hypocrisy of Europe, which does not label products from these occupied territories, which remains silent in the face of regimes that violate human rights such as China and Iran, and it is only Israel they "boycott."

These lies were showered on the public with such intensity, until between the huge

headlines about the poor, mistreated prima donna, there was no room left for the basic facts that would have refuted them. Citizens who were nonetheless interested in formulating their own opinions on the basis of facts were forced to conduct an independent investigation on the Internet.

What can we discover through such an inquiry? For example, that the Europeans (those anti-Semites) gave nearly 2 billion shekels (almost a half-billion euros) in support to projects in Israeli industry and academia just in the last year.

We could learn that to the credit of the free trade agreement with the Europe Union, which very few countries outside the continent enjoy, trade with Israel will reach 200 billion shekels a year – a third of Israel's foreign trade. The European Union donates millions of shekels a year toward making Israeli government ministries more professional in their fields.

Yes, the government of the State of Israel is also EU-funded.

Whoever bothered to check certainly found that the reason why the Europeans do not label the products of occupied Northern Cyprus is that they are simply boycotting it completely, and do not buy its goods, labeled or not. At a time when Maccabi Tel Aviv competes in the Champions League, athletes from Northern Cyprus are unable to participate at all in international competitions under the flag of their "country."

A simple investigation would also have shown that a few European nations have made it clear that the free trade agreement between the European Union and Morocco does not apply to Western Sahara, similarly to the way it doesn't to Judea and Samaria. And this is without considering the enormous difference in the scope of human rights violations against people in Western Sahara and Northern Cyprus, compared to those against Palestinians in the West Bank: In the occupied territories in Cyprus and Morocco, local residents enjoy citizenship and nearly equal rights.

Whoever has managed to break through the information walls that the government maintains, aided by the media and obedient commentators, discovered that there are no less than 36 countries, including China, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon and Russia, that are under various types of economic sanctions by the European Union. And it is important to remember: Against Israel there are no sanctions, not even against the settlements. The tougher European treatment of them means only that they no longer enjoy the advantages accorded to Israel under the free trade agreement with the European Union.

This brainwashing we are being subjected to about Europe's relations with Israel is very effective, and it is just one example. The image and actions of Mahmoud Abbas as chairman of the Palestinian Authority are another example. So is the policy of U.S. President Barack Obama. This imaginary world that the government and media in Israel present to its

citizens works to justify Israelis ' feeling of victimization and the constant willingness to fight the entire world. It 's a shame that what gets lost along the way is truth and reality, which could offer people a somewhat more normal life in this country.

- *The writer is a lecturer in the law school at the College of Management and a doctoral student in law at Tel Aviv University.* Read more: [link to haaretz.com](#)

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Yehuda December 14, 2015, 12:42 PM

@Elisabeth

1. I have no problem with the EU labeling. The EU has every right to distinguish between products that originate in recognized borders and those that don 't. I don't consider it antisemitic. I don't buy into the hysterical rhetoric. A customer who chooses to boycott based on those labels is free to do so. Whether it is a smart thing to do is another matter – as it results in the loss of well-paying Palestinian jobs, as demonstrated recently by the Sodastream debacle. The other problem is of course the Golan heights, to whom there is nobody to return the territory.

2. Regarding the general question of oppressor vs victim, you know, and I know, and I know that you know, that numbers don 't really matter, nor who started what in a particular case. We fit the facts to our preconceived notions. Honestly, what really matters is who you naturally empathize with. In this conflict, do you empathize with the Israeli people, an imperfect but mostly western oriented, open, democratic society representing Judeo-Christian ideas, or with a mostly tribal, underdeveloped, conservative and repressive society which routinely tramples the rights of women and homosexuals, and where violence is routinely used to settle scores between families or for the sexual purity of its women. Who do you identify with more? This is about human nature and moral instinct, not about this or that fact that you can twist for your own purposes. I think you naturally empathize with the Palestinians, mainly because they are the weaker side. You therefore consider them perpetual victims no matter what they do or don 't do. They will always get a pass. Even children who get up one morning and decide to stab another child, because he is a Jew.

Ask yourself this question: If you woke up tomorrow morning, and there was an Israeli Jewish State and a Palestinian Arab state, would you be satisfied? Or would you still see Israel as illegitimate?

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 14, 2015, 5:58 PM

@Yehuda

You wrote:

“do you empathize with the Israeli people, an imperfect but mostly western oriented, open, democratic society representing Judeo-Christian ideas, or with a mostly tribal, underdeveloped, conservative and repressive society which routinely tramples the rights of women and homosexuals, and where violence is routinely used to settle scores between families or for the sexual purity of its women. Who do you identify with more? This is about human nature and moral instinct, not about this or that fact that you can twist for your own purposes.”

It is as if you are talking here about two different holiday destinations – completely ignoring the fact that that “western oriented, open, democratic society representing Judeo-Christian ideas” is stealing the land of that “tribal, underdeveloped, conservative and repressive society” and is submitting its population to one of the nastiest forms of oppression that a so-called “western oriented, open democratic society” blah blah blah ever engaged in. “Underdeveloped” huh? – and that in spite of the settlers’ assistance and aid? If the word “chutzpah” didn’t exist it should be invented now to cover your case.

Your continuous calls on Richard to be “objective” mean in fact: overlook that occupation, overlook that oppression.

And then we get the old chestnut about “selective indignation”:

“There simply isn’t an obsession about them like there is about Israel. I don’t see too many protests or blogs dedicated, for example, to the human rights violations of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the PA, Gaza or Russia, and calling for boycotting these countries”

Almost seven years ago I wrote on this blog:

“February 1, 2009, 3:26 AM

Zionist apologists often come up with an argument on selective indignation. Why pick on Israel, they argue, whereas there are worse things happening elsewhere. In Darfur, in Congo, in Sri Lanka.

Michael Neumann has come up with some excellent arguments against this type of defense, mainly having to do with the fact that high trees catch a lot of wind. Israel has set itself up as the only democracy in the Middle East and as belonging to the pinnacle of human

civilisation . The discrepancy between these pretences and the actual reality of the place is just too flagrant.

But I believe that something else is coming in here. And perhaps I can illustrate that with the French writer Julien Benda's account of his main reason for becoming an active "Dreyfusard". It was not, he says, because Dreyfus' personal fate touched him very much. It was rather because he couldn't stomach the fact that General Mercier tried to impose the "truth" "with his big sabre".

Something similar explains a lot of anti-Israel activism, I believe. What happens in Darfur is terrible and so is the mess in Congo. The Sinhalese army is poised to eradicate the last of the Tamil Tigers. But neither the Sudanese nor the Sri lankan government, or one of the warlords of Congo, has set up a string of PR offices around the world and has thousands of pens at their command to 'explain' to the world that what they are doing is entirely justified and that, in fact, black is white.

People get angry about human rights violations but they get even more angry about being systematically lied to. Human rights violations generally happen to other people and unless one personally witnesses one of these one's concern remains a bit academic. But being lied to happens to (pre)activists personally and that arouses their rage and keeps it going. Mendacious propaganda, and being submitted to it, constitutes an assault on one's personal dignity.

That is why I believe Israeli propaganda to be in the long run quite self defeating. Those who have been lied to for years wake up one day and are enraged about having been fooled for so long. It happened to me and I don't believe that my experience was unique.

So let those hasbara warriors come. I have only one request: let them have a minimum of sophistication please because there is no satisfaction in rebutting the 'arguments' of the inept clods who seem to prevail in that camp. "

I can't say Yehuda that with your arrival here that request has been fulfilled.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 15, 2015, 12:39 AM

"I have no problem with the EU labeling. The EU has every right to distinguish between products that originate in recognized borders and those that don't. I don't consider it antisemitic."

That is mighty liberal of you! Thank you so much!

“I don’t buy into the hysterical rhetoric. A customer who chooses to boycott based on those labels is free to do so. Whether it is a smart thing to do is another matter – as it results in the loss of well-paying Palestinian jobs, as demonstrated recently by the Sodastream debacle.”

Israel’s occupation of the West Bank has destroyed the Palestinian economy. In October 2013, the World Bank estimated that the current loss to the Palestinian economy as a result of the occupation was \$3.4 billion.

As a result, jobs in the West Bank are scarce. Palestinians who had farmed for generations have had their farmland and grazing land stolen for settlement building, and also find themselves without work.

The result is that Israel’s occupation has forced Palestinians to look for jobs in the settlements which are eating up their land.

Forced to work for the occupier, they are seen as a source of cheap labour and exploited. Kav LaOved, the Israeli workers’ rights organisation, documents that Palestinian workers are underpaid, are not given holiday pay or sick pay, are forbidden from organising into unions or joining Israeli unions, must fend for themselves if injured at work, and have to obtain security permits to work in the settlements.

Under Israel’s apartheid, Palestinians are not allowed to live in settlements, and often leave home before dawn in order to travel for hours through checkpoints to their settlement-based workplace, arriving home late at night.

[link to palestinecampaign.org](http://link.to/palestinecampaign.org)

“The other problem is of course the Golan heights, to whom there is nobody to return the territory.”

Nobody, really?

Of the dozens of Syrian villages that were abandoned in the Golan Heights after the Six-Day War, Ramataniya is thought to be the best preserved. Apparently thanks to the brief period of Jewish settlement here in the late 19th century – and not because of its Byzantine history – it was declared an archaeological site right after the 1967 war and thereby saved from the bulldozers. But the fate of the rest of the Syrian localities in the Golan Heights was completely different: Apart from the four Druze villages at the foot of Mount Hermon, they were all destroyed, in most cases down to their very foundations.

Many of the houses crumbled over the years due to the ravages of weather and time. Others

were blasted by Israel Defense Forces troops during live-fire training exercises there. But most were wiped off the face of the earth in a systematic process of destruction that began right after Israel's occupation of the Golan. (...)

In the first Israeli census of the Golan, conducted exactly three months after the end of the fighting, there were just 6,011 civilians living in the entire Golan region. For the most part, they lived in the four Druze villages that remain populated to this day. A minority lived in the city of Quneitra, which was returned to Syria following the Yom Kippur War. So, in less than three months, more than 120,000 people either left of their own accord – or were expelled.

You can read more about how they were prevented from returning here:

[link to haaretz.com](http://link.to/haaretz.com)

“Regarding the general question of oppressor vs victim, you know, and I know, and I know that you know, that numbers don't really matter, nor who started what in a particular case. ”

The only thing I know now, is that you have no morality whatsoever.

“We fit the facts to our preconceived notions. ”

We? Is this a majestic plural?

“Honestly, what really matters is who you naturally empathize with. In this conflict, do you empathize with the Israeli people, an imperfect but mostly western oriented, open, democratic society representing Judeo-Christian ideas, or with a mostly tribal, underdeveloped, conservative and repressive society which routinely tramples the rights of women and homosexuals, and where violence is routinely used to settle scores between families or for the sexual purity of its women. ”

I am sure Palestinian women and homosexuals are thankful to be expelled, homeless, or shot by an armed oppressor. Better that, than to live in such a “tribal, underdeveloped, conservative and repressive society”, hey? You are truly unbelievable!

“Who do you identify with more? This is about human nature and moral instinct, not about this or that fact that you can twist for your own purposes. ”

Human nature and moral instinct have nothing to do with each other.

“I think you naturally empathize with the Palestinians, mainly because they are the weaker side. You therefore consider them perpetual victims no matter what they do or don't do.”

There is no need to empathize with a weak people that is not being oppressed. As the Palestinian people are victimized, and have been for longer than I live, I consider them victims. Other human rights abuses, wars and conflicts pass, but this one has been with me for as long as I could read and open a newspaper.

“Ask yourself this question: If you woke up tomorrow morning, and there was an Israeli Jewish State and a Palestinian Arab state, would you be satisfied? Or would you still see Israel as illegitimate? ”

Ask yourself this question : Who is blocking the establishment of two states? And don 't presume to know what I think. Who said anything about 'delegitimization'? How would you react if you pointed out human rights abuses being committed by my country, and in response I started whining about how you were 'delegitimizing' my country, instead of addressing the issue at hand, and condemning those abuses myself as well?

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 15, 2015, 1:42 AM

Bravo Elisabeth.

The smug self righteousness of this guy is unbelievable indeed but, I fear, quite representative of the prevailing mentality there.

Perhaps the Israelis are not the worst human rights offenders but they are more hypocritical, smug and self righteous about it than parties in any other conflict I know of.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 15, 2015, 4:19 AM

As you said Arie, it is exactly the selfrighteous lying and 'better than thou' attitude which is insufferable. Examples from the Haaretz article linked to:

“In Davar’s magazine on the first anniversary of the conquest of the Golan, Ruth Bondy wrote: “The Arab villages along the roads are abandoned ... Everyone fled, to the last man, before the IDF arrived, out of fear of the savage conqueror. The feeling one gets upon seeing the abandoned villages shifts from contempt for the meager huts that the ‘advanced’ regime managed to provide its farmers, and sorrow at the sight of the relatively nicely tended houses of the Circassian village Ein Zivan ... Fools, why did they have to flee? ”

When in fact they were expelled.

More:

Davar reporter Idit Zertal wrote, from the Golan: “On a narrow dirt path, all of a sudden, this odd convoy appears ... Women, children, and a few old people on foot or riding on donkeys. They attached white fabric or paper to sticks as a sign of surrender. When they got to the main road, an Egged bus full of Israeli soldiers arrived. The people of the convoy, trembling with fear, crowded against the bus and reached out toward the windows. The weary and dusty soldiers who ’d fought here ... [against Syrian soldiers] hiding in the homes of the villagers who were now asking for mercy, turn their heads. They cannot look at this awful sight of humiliation and surrender. An Israeli officer tells the returning villagers to go back to their homes and promises an old man riding a donkey that no harm will come to them. Only an army with a tremendous sense of power, with a sense of destiny, could treat the vanquished this way.”

But soon they too were all expelled, even though these civilians took no part whatsoever in the military action. And when they tried to return they were shot as ‘infiltrators’ by western oriented, open, democratic soldiers representing Judeo-Christian ideas, who would of course never think of using violence to settle scores!

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Yehuda December 15, 2015, 4:30 AM

@Elizabeth – If relieving the oppression of the Palestinians means relieving Jews of their own country, then the Palestinians will be “oppressed” forever. That is far more morally justifiable than your topsy turvy position which suggests that the Jews surrender to the Palestinians and sacrifice their own country in order to satisfy the Palestinians “frustration” of not getting everything they want – all of Palestine and return of refugees. I would remind you that at present it is the Palestinians who refuse to negotiate.

I don’t know how old you are, but obviously before 1967 there were no WB and Gaza settlements. So is the oppression that you speak of, as long as you have been able to read, referring to Israel ’s very existence?

@Arie – don’t confuse smug with a forcefully stated argument that pisses you off. I ’m sorry if your offended, but its not my problem.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 15, 2015, 4:45 AM

You are so incredibly ignorant of the history and present political stance of Israel that it is hardly believable. Maybe I will enlighten you some more later, if I have the time, but frankly, I feel it is useless. You are so brainwashed that it would probably take years to deprogram you.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 15, 2015, 4:54 AM

“Forcefully stated argument ” my foot. Not to put too fine a point on it: you are just a silly liar. Your claims that the Palestinians are responsible for the lack of real negotiations and want “all of Palestine ” are the latest examples.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Yehuda December 15, 2015, 9:54 AM

Usually emotions lie behind name calling. Calling me ignorant, a liar, and brainwashed doesn't change anything. I would say that the problem lies in your own refusal to face up to what the Palestinians themselves say. Or, is this poll just Zionist propaganda

[link to pcpsr.org](http://pcpsr.org)

Now, I know that since no matter what, you consider the Palestinians as eternal victims, so if they support violence, its only a “natural reaction ” to Israel. Whereas when Israel uses force you attribute it to evil. That is just raw emotion, and bigotry.

But at least face up to the facts, the poll speaks for itself. A majority of Palestinians oppose a two state solution based on Geneva (meaning they support the destruction of Israel), and a majority support violence. They oppose negotiations. There it is, in black and white. And the mothers of the shahids proudly say this on TV. Bleeding heart liberals simply cannot digest these facts.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Elisabeth December 15, 2015, 10:31 AM

Talking about name calling: ‘Bleeding heart liberals ’?

You did not complain when all the ‘bleeding heart liberals ’ were still massively supporting poor little Israel, a country of brave Holocaust survivors, did you? It is Israel ’s own behavior which has changed the base of support from ‘bleeding heart liberals ’ to extreme rightists with Nazi sympathies.

And once again:

Stop putting words in my mouth.

I do not consider Palestinians ‘eternal’ victims. They are objectively victims since 1948 and until and in the present.

I do not attribute Israeli violence to ‘evil’ but to ignorance, fear and a disability to see and acknowledge what immense suffering and injustice Israel has visited on the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine/Israel.

As to the poll: Anyone can understand that after decades and decades of stalling, lying and continued stealing of land by Israel the Palestinians have exhausted their patience for the so-called ‘peace process’ and have concluded that the Israeli’s ‘only understand the language of violence’. Especially as Europe and the US continue to throw them under the bus, and they suffer daily violence by Israel on a scale that Israeli Jews have never experienced.

[REPLY LINK](#)

- Arie Brand December 15, 2015, 5:56 PM

@Yehuda

“Usually emotions lie behind name calling.”

No emotion involved dear chap – only a clinical observation. You know very well (though sometimes I wonder whether we can take any knowledge for granted as far as you are concerned) that it hasn’t been the position of Palestinian negotiators to demand all of Palestine, only the 22% of the mandate territory that has been left to them by Israel’s predatory wars. This has been so for over twenty five years.

And even the survey you referred to does not make clear that it is a common Palestinian wish to owe all of Palestine to the exclusion of those who presently monopolise the right to call themselves Israelis.

So if you believe you have the right to suggest on these shaky grounds that this is “the” Palestinian position” I reserve the right to call you a “liar”. Your claim is not an innocuous mistake. It belongs to those incendiary myths that you and your ilk spread around to justify your oppression.

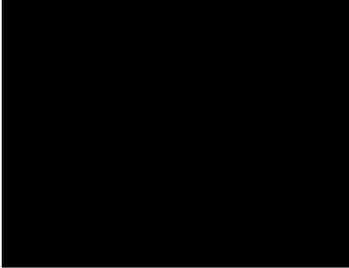
[REPLY LINK](#)

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