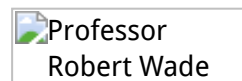


Living where you don't make the rules: Development in Palestine – one of the world's last colonies

This personal reflection on the economic occupation of the West Bank was originally written by Robert Wade in December 2013. An abridged version later appeared as **'Organised Hypocrisy on a Monumental Scale'** in the London Review of Books.

Israel is one of the great success stories of economic development. If it can be classed as “non-western”, it joins a very short list of non-western countries which have become “developed” over the past 200 years since the Industrial Revolution. The total – even stretching the categories of “non-western”, “country” and “developed” – is less than ten. Israel's current population of eight million has one of the highest life expectancies in the world, and its Human Development Index score puts it well into the category of “very highly developed” (though its income and wealth distribution is amongst the most unequal of the developed countries). It joined the OECD in 2010. The achievement is all the more impressive given that the state came into existence as recently as 1948.



Professor Robert Wade

Recently I spent some days in the West Bank, which together with Gaza and part of Jerusalem form the Occupied Palestinian Territories, occupied by Israel since the war of 1967. What follows is a reflection on my experience as an outsider. I had never before been to any of the territory known in earlier times as the Levant, between Anatolia and Egypt.

Population and Income

First, some figures. In the combined territory of Israel plus Palestine (“historic Palestine” or “British Mandate Palestine”), the population of Israeli Jews is just over six million (of whom about half a million live in east Jerusalem and in “settlements” or “colonies” in the West Bank). The population of Palestinian Arabs is about six million, of which some 2.7 million live in the West Bank, 1.7 million in Gaza, and 1.7 million in Israel. So the ratio of Palestinian Arabs to Israeli Jews in the combined territory is 49.8: 50.2. [1]

However, two qualifications have to be made. First, the population of Palestinian Arabs living as refugees in neighboring countries – “disappeared Palestinians” as they are sometimes called – is estimated at 6.8 million, bringing the number of Palestinian Arabs in the immediate region to nearly 13 million. Second, within the borders of Israel plus Palestine, the Arabs in the four territories where Arabs live (West Bank, Gaza, east Jerusalem, and Israel) have little exchange with each other; they are in no sense a unit.

The West Bank's population of 2.7 million is around a third the size of Israel's (including Arabs), but has a much higher birthrate.

Average income of Jewish Israelis (at market exchange rates) is around \$40,000; that of Arab Israelis, \$13,000; that of West Bankers, \$3,700. To put the figures in historical context: at the end of the Second World War, Jews accounted for about 34% of the population of historic or British Mandate Palestine; Arabs, 66%. The average income of the Jews was about twice that of Arabs. Today, the population ratio, noted above, is almost 50:50; while the average income of Jews is about 11 times that of West Bankers.

Few places in the world have a long land border with such a large average income disparity on the two sides. Palestine has fallen a long way behind. [2]

Encounters with Restricted People

Before I arrived in the West Bank, I had read about the Israeli system of control. One of the most eloquent accounts is by Ari Shavit in his new book, *My Promised Land*: [3]

The miracle is based on denial... Bulldozers razed Palestinian villages, warrants confiscated Palestinian land, laws revoked Palestinians' citizenship and annulled their homeland.

But reading about it is one thing; encountering the system at first hand is quite another.

Walking through the Old Souk, or market, of the ancient city of Hebron, I was struck by its eerie emptiness, virtually no people or goods in sight. Then I noticed netting strung over the street, and looking up towards the bright blue sky was puzzled to see garbage strewn above the netting. My hosts explained that Israeli "settlers" had occupied apartments of departed Palestinians above the souk, or built new apartments on top of the Palestinians'; and from this vantage point had taken to tossing their garbage on to the heads of passing Palestinians below. Hence the netting. I was told that a minister in the Palestinian Authority (as close as the West Bank has to a government) recently had a chamber pot emptied on top of her as she walked below. My hosts explained that the souk was like a ghost town because the Israeli government had closed off just about all access points to Palestinians, so as to ensure that the Israeli settlers could enter and leave the city by dedicated routes which avoided all contact with Palestinians.

The main access point to the souk had a revolving steel gate with an Israeli soldier on hand to allow or prevent access. As we passed through, two men on one side manned a stack of cartons of canned goods on a trolley; they lifted the cartons one by one high up over the top of the barrier, into the hands of two men on the other side, who lowered them onto their trolley, ready to move elsewhere. Think of the transaction costs of shifting those canned goods a couple of meters through the check-point.



Old City, Hebron – West Bank. Photo Credit: [Young Shanahan](#), via Flickr

The next day, on a dusty dirt road outside of the city of Nablus, with the Israeli security fence on one side and an olive grove on the other, I encountered two farmer brothers walking towards the town some three kilometres away, where they lived. They had been working on their (ancestral) land on the Israeli side of the

fence. They explained that the Israelis manned a gate closer to the town, but opened it for only one hour in early morning, one hour at midday, and one hour in late afternoon. Whenever they wanted to go or come from the land outside of these slots they walked or sometimes tracted several kilometres to the next gate, which had more extended opening hours. But the gate did not give them open access, even during open hours; for they also each needed a permit to cross the fence, and the permit lasted for quite a short period of time, which varied but was commonly about two months. Then they had to apply for another permit, which could take weeks. Last year they applied for a permit to cover the vital period of harvesting their greenhouse tomatoes, their main source of income. But the permit took 40 days to arrive, by which time the crop had rotted. They had two more brothers who were not allowed to cross the fence under any circumstances, because years before they had been jailed for protesting Israeli rule.

Onto a nearby herder community, where fifty households tend to several thousand head of sheep and goats on barren land. Herders are the poorest of the poor. In this particular community, electric power lines run overhead, water and sanitation pipes run below, but they are not allowed access to electricity, water and sanitation. They buy water from an Israeli-owned water depot some distance away. They can pay for an Israeli-owned tanker to bring water to their cistern; but it is – or was – cheaper for them to tractor their own water container to the depot, fill it, and pull it back home. In 2008, Israeli authorities confiscated their water container, saying that it did not meet standards. Now they mostly pay extra for Israeli-owned tanker delivery.

The Palestine Hydrology Group, an NGO, has been working for the past 20 years to improve water and sanitation facilities throughout the West Bank. The Nablus office has provided toilet facilities to some 50 poorer communities, including to this settlement of herders. In Israeli eyes the toilets are illegal, because they have been erected without a permit. The Palestine Hydrology Group knows from much experience that the chances of getting a permit are practically zero. So, backed by Spanish aid, it built quickly collapsable toilet cabins. With just a few minutes notice, the components can be spirited out of sight and re-erected when the soldiers are gone. [4] In Area C of the West Bank (more than 60 percent of the area) it is even illegal to rehabilitate a failing water cistern without a permit – which, again, the Israeli authorities rarely give. The same reason explains why neither the herders nor other communities get electricity from abundant solar energy – solar panels would require a permit.

Worse, the same restrictions mean that areas A and B of the West Bank (comprising 40 percent of the area), where Palestinians have larger scope for self-government, cannot be connected to scale-efficient infrastructure networks (for electricity and water, for example). The A and B areas are fragmented into small enclaves each surrounded by area C land, where such infrastructure projects require Israeli permits, rarely given. This too greatly increases the cost of infrastructure services and restricts their supply to most of the West Bank population.

Restrictions on Telecommunications

At the other end of the socio-economic ladder, I spoke to a senior Palestinian telecommunications executive. He related that the Oslo Accords explicitly said that the West Bank administration had the right to establish “separate and independent [from Israel] telecommunication networks”. What happened subsequently shows how Israel occupies not only land and water but also the airwaves. (The Oslo Accords of 1993, between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization, set the framework for the governance of the occupied territories.)

The small print said that Israel would allocate (or not) frequencies for the Palestinians – and frequencies are the key to telecommunications. Unsurprisingly, given the enveloping structure of rule, the Israeli government has not allocated anything like the required frequencies to the Palestinian side. This restriction results in the cost of building networks in Palestine being three times higher than they otherwise would be. Moreover, for all mobile phones are ubiquitous, Palestinians' are “dumb” phones, unable to access email, because Israel has not allocated the frequencies needed for 3G (for “security” reasons). Israel has allocated 3G frequencies to Israeli



companies for serving West Bank settlers and for giving seamless telecommunication access to Israeli citizens moving about the West Bank.

The telecommunication restrictions do not end there. Telecommunications equipment can only be imported through Israeli ports. At customs, the equipment may be held up not just for months but for years. Several years ago, the Palestinian telecommunication agency imported equipment from Ericsson, identical to Ericsson equipment imported at the same time by Israel. The Israeli equipment passed through customs in two weeks; the Palestinian equipment was held up two years for “security checks”, all the time paying daily storage fees. Moreover, Israel also sets the standards for the equipment allowed to be imported into Palestine – and insists on the same equipment standards as for Israel, despite Palestine’s average income being one eleventh of Israel.

Restrictions on International Trade

Israel systematically blocks Palestinian external trade beyond Israel. The case just described, of long delays to imports of telecommunications equipment through Israeli ports, is typical. The only alternatives to the ports are two land bridges to Jordan, one of which Israel often closes, while the other is often choked by insufficient infrastructure. Meanwhile, Israel also levies forms of murky protection against Palestinian exports (some 70% of the West Bank’s exports are sold in Israel). Health and safety standards that are impossible for Palestinian producers to comply with are a favourite form. Israeli law requires a wide range of products, including pharmaceuticals, to receive certification before entering Israel; but Israeli security law also typically prohibits Israeli citizens from performing inspections in the Palestinian territories. Therefore, Palestinian-made products subject to these rules cannot be exported to the Israeli market, because they cannot be inspected by Israelis before entering Israel.

From Israel’s perspective, it is convenient that Palestine is not a member of the WTO (Israel has steadily blocked its bids for membership, despite EU support and US no-objection). This prevents Palestine from lodging complaints against Israel’s restrictions on Palestine’s exports via the WTO dispute settlement mechanism. So, on the one hand, Israel is unconstrained by WTO rules in its dealings with Palestinian trade. On the other hand, the Palestinian economy bears the brunt of the free trade policies – unrestricted imports – instituted by the Palestinian Authority in compliance with the rules of the customs union with Israel and with the prescriptions of the World Bank and IMF. [5]

No surprise, then, that Palestine’s exports to GDP ratio has steadily declined over the past two decades. One need not believe in free international trade as a magic bullet for development to believe that Israel’s restrictions on Palestine’s international trade – even just to Israel – are a major obstacle to Palestine’s economic development. Above all, they block the learning effects and **scale economies** that often come from being able to access the large demand of international markets.

Restrictions on Government Revenue, and on Universities

Around 70% of the revenue of the Palestinian Authority comes from customs and other fees collected by the Israelis on behalf of the Authority. The Israelis take a sizable collection fee and pass on the balance – or not. If some Palestinians behave badly in Israeli eyes, such as strike back against the occupation or pressing for membership of international organizations, they may hold back the revenue, starving the Authority of funds and making it difficult to provide even minimal public services. They have done so many times over the years, creating periodic financial crises which threaten the continued existence of the Palestinian Authority and erode confidence in its governance.

The several universities on the West Bank can employ visiting academics from outside Palestine for only one month before a permit is required; and the permit may take not just months but **years**

to arrive. It is widely said among the Palestinian elite that the quality of university education is deteriorating. To get a quality university education, young people must leave.

Remarkably, the same Israeli government that operates this all-penetrating regime to restrict Palestinian access to the material means for a flourishing life also declares that it wishes to foster economic development in Palestine. In November 2013, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman told a conference, “We can talk seriously about a political settlement with the Palestinians when their per capita GDP reaches \$10,000 – not a day before that” (because only then will Palestinians have enough at stake genuinely to want peace). [6]

This is organized hypocrisy on a monumental scale.

Industrial Non-Development

Everywhere I went I encountered despair about the Palestinian Authority and its effectiveness, even allowing for the tight Israeli constraints. A common image is of heads of departments appointed by cronyistic criteria who busy themselves with their own private affairs while in office and pay little attention to what their subordinates are doing or not doing. Some 70% of the revenues of the Palestinian Authority go on salaries to public officials. Members of parliament, ministers and president pay themselves extremely generously compared to average income. The average salary of these officials compared to average GDP is about 24, one of the highest ratios in the world, compared to Lebanon at 15, Bolivia, 10, Saudi Arabia 5, USA, 5, Norway, 2. [7]

I visited a factory making high-end shoes in Hebron and a soap factory in Nablus. They are both supply- rather than demand-constrained; they could sell more, mainly for export, if they produced more (though in the case of the shoe factory this would entail an increase in imports of materials, with all the transaction costs that would incur). But the factories are a mess – like something out of Dickens – in bad need of modernization not just of equipment (which would have to be imported) but even just in terms of basic layout, storage of materials, cleanliness and lighting.

I recall how the industrial extension engineers of Taiwan's Industrial Development Bureau (which I studied in the 1980s for my book *Governing the Market* [8]) were required by their job description to spend a minimum of several days a month visiting factories within the purview of their sector team, coaching factory owners and managers on improving production layout, investing in new equipment, exploring links with foreign-invested firms in Taiwan, exploring export markets. Industrial Development Bureau coaching or nudging at factory level was going on year after year, decade after decade.

I asked the shoe factory and soap factory owners whether they had received any visits or support from officials of the Palestinian Authority. “No”, was their emphatic answer. Later, I asked a senior official whether the Authority had any such industrial development coaching or extension service. Yes, he said – we have PalTrade (a trade promotion agency). I pointed out that what I had in mind was quite different from trade promotion. “Well”, he said, we have a Labor Ministry which looks after work conditions in factories.

His response illustrates what happens when a state is barely able to support itself, constantly at the mercy of its neighbor's willingness to hand over its due revenue and to allow imports and exports. No state so constrained can sustain a strategy of development, and it is no wonder that – especially given the huge remuneration payouts they give themselves relative to the average income – many PA officials and ministers become focused above all on survival – survival of themselves in elite positions and survival of the structure of power from which they and their families benefit. Then, the Washington-Brussels Consensus – that market liberalization is the route to development – can be used to sprinkle justification on passivity.

The fact that Chinese textile makers in China can profitably sell the classic Palestinian scarves made famous by Yassar Arafat in Palestine for only 10 shekel, undercutting Palestine-made

versions at 25 shekel (the former of nylon, the latter of cotton) can be interpreted as a simple gain for consumer welfare; with the hope, inspired by the theory of comparative advantage, that redundant textile workers will find employment in higher value-added activities elsewhere.

As unsupported Palestinian industry is being squeezed out by imports, the anticipated re-employment in “emerging” sectors is happening to only a small extent. Unemployment is high and rising, especially among youth – the most volatile and fastest growing segment of the population.

Having spent time with a highly (intrinsically) motivated official from the Palestine Hydrology Group, I wondered whether an NGO might be able to recruit several dozen engineers with expertise in industrial processes to staff up an agency to provide the kind of coaching supplied by Taiwan's Industrial Development Bureau. But while it might solve the motivation problem, the drawback is that it would have no direct influence over government policy, including to induce a slightly more entrepreneurial Palestinian state.

The Structure and Logic of Restrictions



Palestine 2011. Israel's Wall in Bethlehem, West Bank. Photo Credit: [Montecruz Foto](#), via Flickr

The restrictions or choke points which the Israeli state imposes on Palestinians in the West Bank (to say nothing of Gaza, which I did not visit) are most visible in the Wall and security fence, which divides the whole length of the country, including deep intrusions into the West Bank to “annex” additional land for Israel. But as I learnt, the restrictions cover movement of people, import and export of goods and services, but also investments and access to basic infrastructure like electricity, water and sanitation.

They are so pervasive and systematic as to make one wonder whether there is a central brain in the Israeli state which has mapped the whole Palestinian economy in terms of input-output relations, right down to the capillary level of the individual, the household, the small firm, the large firm, the school, the university, so as to find all possible choke points, which Israeli officials can tighten or loosen.

The Israeli justification for comprehensive control rests on some or all of the propositions that:

1. God gave the land to the Jews, the original inhabitants;
2. the Holocaust and other pogroms demonstrate that Jews may be the target of extermination almost anywhere, and therefore must have their own defensible state to be secure;



3. Palestinians and other Arabs – and their states – want to “wipe Israel off the face of the earth”.
4. Palestinians in the occupied territories cannot infrequently strike out against and kill Israelis, whether with bombs or rockets or stones thrown against settlers.

It is true that some Arab and Persian leaders have called for wiping Israel off the face of the earth. As recently as mid-November 2013, in front of 50,000 militiamen, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei referred to Israel as the “unclean rabid dog” of the region and predicted its demise. His words were greeted with “Death to America” and “Death to Israel”. [9] These are disgusting sentiments, and should bring global condemnation on those who utter them.

It is also true that similar sentiments have been voiced and acted upon by Hamas, with its base in Gaza, and by Iran-armed Hezbollah, in next-door Lebanon. Residents of Gaza have fired (mostly primitive handmade) rockets into Israeli settlements located right up on the Israeli side of the border with Gaza, in a retaliation cycle with Israeli attacks in Gaza (which in late 2008, early 2009 and again in November 2012 killed an estimated 1,600 Palestinians).

But the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority have repeatedly made it explicit since the Oslo Accords that they accept the right of Israel to exist, and have acted consistently to uphold that recognition. Responding to international pressure and security collaboration with Israel, the Palestinian Authority has condemned Palestinian attacks on Israel. Indeed the PA leadership has arrested self-declared “freedom fighters” and had them tortured in Palestinian jails, before handing some over to the Israeli forces. There have been hardly any West Banker attacks in Israel since a wave of suicide bombings in 2004.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Israel's objectives are not only to do with the very elastic criterion of “security”, but also a strategy of long-term dispossession, with two main thrusts.

1. First, restrictions sufficient to keep Palestinians' access to the material means for a flourishing life very limited, and stop their resistance to the occupation.
2. Second, “facts on the ground”, in the form of relentless expansion of settlements or colonies in the West Bank.

Palestinians see signs of the flourishing Israeli life every day on the other side of the wall, in the well-maintained roads, the expensive cars, the affluent-looking settlements with their bright green lawns. Prompted by absolute and relative deprivation, more and more of them will hopefully – in Israeli eyes – give up and leave, vacating land and water for Israeli expansion.

This is all the more important because Israel prides itself on being a peace-loving democracy. So the much higher birth rate among Palestinians than among Israelis is a nightmare, given that the present population ratio of Palestinians to Jews is almost 50:50. (One response in the minority Orthodox and settler part of the Jewish population is a fertility rate even higher than among Palestinians.) Any prospect of a “one state solution” – Israel and the Palestinian territories in one unified state – poses the risk of the Jews finding themselves a minority in a state they regard as a quintessentially Jewish state and society. Israel is the only state in the world which defines itself not as the embodiment of its citizens but as the vessel of the Jewish people world-wide, and therefore obliged to give immediate citizenship to any Jew who wishes to settle there. To sustain this core mission, the state must have ample land and water for Jewish population growth. [10]

For the purpose of sustaining the “securitization” narrative, the distinction between an attack from Gaza and an attack from the West Bank is minor. A rocket from Gaza into a nearby settlement starts the narrative clock at that moment (as though the attack is unprovoked, with no pre-history), and the government tells Israelis and the world “the Palestinians have again attacked us and we must defend ourselves”, thereby justifying the continued repression and dispossession.

One recalls the remark of the Soviet ambassador to the United States as the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, “We are about to do you a terrible disservice” – meaning to deprive the US and



the West of a looming external enemy whose presence had provided the moral glue of the American empire.

How can they get away with it?

To an outsider it is puzzling that western states, led by the US and the UK, are so supportive of Israel's systematic marginalization or de-development of Palestine, its ignoring of multiple UN injunctions on Israel's behaviour in the occupied territories, and its violation of basic human rights – in the name of “security”. (We see just how elastic are “terror” and “security” from the way they have been used to justify most of the “wars of choice” that the British have been encouraged to fight in recent years, and also the almost unlimited scooping up and storage of citizens' private email and telephone communications by the US National Security Agency [NSA] and the UK Government Communications Headquarters [GCHQ].)

The puzzle is doubled when one considers that the repression is not occurring in some far-away, inaccessible place. The details have been reported in numerous reports by international organizations such as the World Bank, by national governments, and by NGOs (including Israeli). The Middle East Quartet led by Tony Blair has repeatedly called for changes in Israeli government restrictions, including on international trade. Yet western military and civilian support continues unabated, with no sanctions.

In the end, you wonder about how the officials and soldiers tasked with carrying out the Palestine dispossession strategy feel about the morality of what they are doing, in the light of widely accepted global norms. [11] Also, about how the German and UK officials who blocked Palestine from becoming a member of the International Olive Council in November 2013 felt about their obstruction, presumably knowing full well how it would hurt the olive oil producing economy. And also about how the officials of the nine states (including the US, Canada and Israel) which voted to oppose Palestine becoming a non-member observer of the UN felt about their rejection. Just following orders?

I was reminded of the Klemperer Diaries, especially when visiting the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, whose inhabitants are daily besieged by settler encroachments on their property and lives. Victor Klemperer was a professor of literature at the University of Dresden, a Jewish-born convert to Protestantism. His diaries chronicle the daily life of Jews during the Third Reich, as a tightening succession of restrictions were officially promulgated for Jews – on finances, transport, medical care, household help, food, pets, ownership of appliances. They relate how in 1935 he was stripped of academic post, citizenship and freedom of movement, and forced to work in a factory. Few of his non-Jewish university colleagues gave any help. In 1942 he and his wife were required to kill their pet cat when the government declared that Jews were not allowed to own pets. He escaped being sent to a death camp because his wife was “Aryan”. But they were dispossessed of their house and forced to move to a “Jews' House” where they were subject to routine Gestapo humiliation. [12]

The diaries provide a case study in how to subhumanize a whole category, and how to block empathy from members of the occupying power. Of course, the parallels between the Third Reich and Israeli West Bank rule end *before* the “final solution” – because not even the maddest Haredim are calling for the final solution to Palestinians.





“Flag on the Wall.” Photo Credit: [Jack Zallum](#), via Flickr

I flew on a jam-packed plane back to London from Tel Aviv airport. The airport is out of bounds to Palestinians living in the West Bank. They must fly to or from an airport outside of Israel, normally at Amman, Jordan, which means that the journey from London to the West Bank or vice versa takes, instead of half a day, a minimum of one long day and can often take two full days. En route, I read a *Jerusalem Post* article by one of its columnists, Sarah Honig. She says:

“Massacring Jews has long been glorified in Mahmoud Abbas’s fiefdom [Abbas is president of the Palestinian Authority] and no one – least of all Barrack Obama, John Kerry and the screeching chorus of sanctimonious EU notables – have mumbled the slightest murmur of objection to the ongoing incitement and indoctrination [to massacre Jews]... What tells us apart [from the Palestinians] is our underlying culture of pluralism and tolerance versus their underlying culture of bloodlust and lies. To deny this is to wilfully distort history and, no less wilfully, to misrepresent the present... Arabs were among the first to latch on to Nazi ideology.” [13]

Next to me on the plane was an Israeli woman resident of Tel Aviv, a former dancer and now a teacher, who has travelled widely. I told her of some of the restrictions on Palestinians I had encountered. She explained that she intensely opposed the current Israeli government and hoped the Labor Party would win the next election. She went on to say, “But there are always two sides. Israel does not have all the blame. The Palestinians have equal blame. They fire rockets, they explode bombs, they kill us.” Just about all outsiders in the West would join her in condemning the anti-semitic sentiments uttered by leaders of Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Hamas’s and many Egyptians’ enthusiastic dissemination of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and accept that these patterns are bound to make Israel’s political behaviour highly defensive.

What tells us apart is our underlying culture of pluralism and tolerance versus their underlying culture of bloodlust and lies...

Sarah Honig

The whole situation is paralysed by a syndrome of mistrust – syndrome in the sense that each side interprets the behaviour of the other as confirming its negative expectations. I tried to point out to my seat-companion that Israel is vastly more powerful, more prosperous, more internationally economically integrated than Palestine, that it has plenty of ways to ease its



“capture” of Palestine and boost Palestinian prosperity and freedom without significantly impairing Israeli security. To break the syndrome of mistrust, Israel holds most of the cards.

But her mind had come to rest with the “they are equally to blame” argument. The same overlooking of the hugely asymmetrical power relationship lies behind Ari Shavit’s presentation of the tortuous choice: “If Israel does not retreat from the West Bank, it will be politically and morally doomed, but if it does retreat, it might face an Iranian-backed and Islamic Brotherhood-inspired West Bank regime whose missiles could endanger Israel’s security. The need to end occupation is greater than ever, but so are the risks”. And similarly for Richard Cohen’s *Washington Post* comment, “...when Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip it got a daily barrage of rockets by way of thanks”. [14] Both imply parity of power and parity of blame – which justifies continuation of the status quo, *faut de mieux*.

It may take several more decades before shame and outrage is sufficiently diffused through Israeli society to get support for a fundamental change of strategy; just as the growing sense of shame and outrage in segments of northern white American society and in the federal government helped to end the pervasive and long-institutionalized restrictions on black American, starting as recently as the 1960s. In the meantime, the Israeli state will impose the daily humiliation of Palestinians, not so dissimilar to the frequent humiliation of the Jews in much of Europe over the past century, prompting some Palestinians to leave and others to strike back in anger – further justifying the apparatus of repression and dispossession. All the while, the US and European states fail to use their leverage to rein it in.

Notes

[1] These figures come from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

[2] Thanks to Raja Khalidi for sharing these figures.

[3] Ari Shavit, 2013, *My Promised Land*, reviewed by Leon Wiesel in New York Times Sunday Book Review, 24 November. Shavit is a columnist who serves on the editorial board of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

[4] The Spanish aid agency asked that the toilet panels bear no sign of its role, while the PHG displays its name prominently.

[5] The rules are spelled out in the Paris Economic Protocol, an annex of the Oslo Peace Accords.


[6] Quoted in Danielle Spiegel Feld, 2013, “To get the Palestinians to \$10,000, let them trade”, *The Jerusalem Post*, Nov 29, p. 24.

[7] ALRAY Palestinian Media agency, 5 October 2013, citing Global Gini Index statistics.

[8] Robert H. Wade, 2004 (1990), *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[9] Quoted in Herb Klinon, 2013, “Cutting Iran some slack”, *The Jerusalem Post*, Nov 29, p.1.

[10] Mandy Turner, 2014, “Peacebuilding as counterinsurgency in the occupied Palestinian territories”, *Review of International Studies*.

[11] Disillusioned Israeli soldiers have created an organization and website, breakingthesilence.org.il, whose stated mission is to “break the silence” of Israeli Defense Force soldiers who return to civilian life in Israel and “discover the gap between the reality  they

encountered in the [occupied] territories and the silence which they encounter at home... [Its aim is] “to force Israeli society” [to face the truth about “abuse towards Palestinians, looting, and destruction of property that is familiar to soldiers”. See Wikipedia, “[Breaking the Silence \(non-governmental organization\)](#)”, accessed 14 December 2013. Nurit Deled-Elhanan, of Hebrew University, in *Palestine in Israeli School Books* (Library of Middle East Studies, 2012), describes how the Israel school system prepares young people for compulsory military service and active engagement in Israel-Palestine relations. It reveals “how the books might be seen to marginalize Palestinians, legitimize Israel’s military action and reinforce Jewish-Israeli territorial identity” (from the back cover). The book is based on research prompted by her 13-year-old daughter’s killing by a Palestinian suicide bomber.

[12] See “[Victor Klemperer](#)”, Wikipedia, accessed 1 December 2013.

[13] Sarah Honig, 2013, “Bloodlust and lies”, *Jerusalem Post*, 29 November, p. 22.

[14] Richard Cohen, 2013, “U.S. scholars are misguided in boycotting Israel”, *Washington Post*, Opinions, December 10. Cohen’s observation lends itself to the image of sophisticated Gaza rockets causing fear, damage and death across Israel. In fact, as noted earlier, the rockets are mostly primitive and homemade, their range limited to Israeli settlements and towns right up on the border with Gaza, where they have caused very few casualties.

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