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Religionen für Gerechtigkeit in Palästina-Israel Jenseits von Luthers Feindbildern)**

Interreligious Solidarity for Justice in Palestine-Israel – Transcending Luther's Negation of the Other

edited by Ulrich Duchrow

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0. Preface

Luther's call for crimes against humanity – for the burning of synagogues, schools, houses and books as well as for the ethnic cleansing of the princedoms – bore fruit during the climax of the persecution of Jews in Europe under Hitler and his willing helpers. The resulting Holocaust finally moved Christian churches and theologies to review and revise the history of the age-old anti-Judaism initiated by Constantine's imperialization of Christianity (after 312 CE). There has been no official abrogation by Lutheran churches in Germany of Luther's pamphlet „Against the Jews and their Lies“ but this should be done in the year 2017 in commemoration of 500 years of Reformation.

2017 also marks *50 years after the occupation of Palestinian lands by the state of Israel against internatiuonal law*. In this context, the Holocaust increasingly is instrumentalized in order to slander and suppress critique of the state of Israel. Recently more and more cases have occurred in which offices of the state of Israel and their lobby groups – in Europe and particularly in Germany – have organized opposition to events and efforts to expose what is occurring in Palestine and Israel. Here freedom of speech is in danger. The chief editor of the newspaper *“Frankfurter Rundschau*”, Arnd Festerling, rightly spoke of a blow against democracy, when in Frankfurt the “Eco-House” cancellled a meeting where a former Palestinian Minister, three members of the Israeli Peace Movement and a German politician of the “The Left” Party where going to speak. This happened without a court judgement, purely on the basis of a campaign with hateful mails.[1] The reason given was anti-Semitism, referring to the Holocaust. This can only be regarded as *mockery of the victims of the Holocaust.* Those who produce victims in the name of the Holocaust turn its remembering into its opposite.

A similar scandal is the slander against the BDS-Movement (boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel). This is not against the existence of Israel but struggles for the end of occupation. The BDS movementIt is also equated with the Nazi Slogan “Don't buy from Jews”. This is an offense against the citizens, suggesting that Gandhi equals Hitler. Whoever struggles for justice in Palestine/Israel also works for the people in Israel. Only together do Israelis and Palestinians have a future. It cannot be obtained by violent oppression.

Those who say they repent of the sins of Luther, Christian history and Nazi crimes, and at the same time are silent regarding injustice done to the Palestinians make them pay for calming their own conscience. This is pure hypocrisy, because the Holocaust also produced injustice against the Palestinians and still is legitimating the impunity of Israel's violation of human rights and international law. Peace is possible only on the basis of justice.

What does this mean theologically? This question has been raised by the participants of the international project “Radicalizing Reformation – Provoked by the Bible and Today's Crises”. For their final international conference scholars and activists with the background of the three Abrahamic faiths from four continents presented their analyses and reports as basis for the “Wittenberg Declaration 2017”. This Decalaration opens this volume followed by the perspective of life experience and theology in Palestine, represented by Munther Isaac. Brigitte Kahl demonstrates how the Apostle Paul can help to overcome not only Luther's error but also the silence of Christians vis-à-vis the injustice in Palestine. Charles Amjad-Ali reflects on the historic links between Luther, National Socialism, Zionism and today's Islamophobia in Germany and elsewhere. Junaid Ahmad analyzses from a Muslim perspective how the West has dealt with Islam and Palestine. The Jewish North American Mark Braverman calls upon the Christian churches to understand and act about the

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1 Vgl. FR 22. März, S. D3.

situation in Palestine/Israel as a matter of faith. The Jewish liberation theologian Marc Ellis challenges the participants in Christian-Jewish dialog in Germany to realize how what was originally necessary legitimates injustice today. The critical Israeli economist Shir Hever proves how only the economic and moral support through the USA and Europe enables Israel to keep up the injustice of occupation. Ulrich Duchrow reflects on this theologically.

With these articles the authors hope to stir up a critical public debate in church and society in order to see what is really going on and thus from below to put pressure on the responsible actors eventually to create peace based on justice in Palestine/Israel.

Heidelberg, May 2017 *Ulrich Duchrow*

1. **Wittenberg Declaration of January 10, 2017**
JUSTICE ALONE! Radicalizing Reformation Provoked by Today's Systemic Crises

"Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24)

….....

III: Interreligious Solidarity for Justice in Palestine/Israel

"To be vessels of mercy God has called us – not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles" (Romans 9: 24)

We believe with the Apostle Paul that in the Messiah Jesus the ethnic, religious, class and gender binaries and power asymmetries are overcome (Gal 3: 28). We believe that the post-Constantinian anti-Judaism in Christianity, and especially Luther's abominable and cruel pamphlets against Jews, used by Nazism as a basis for murdering millions of people, was a crime against humanity. But we strongly believe that Christians and churches cannot atone for this crime by failing to take a stand against the unacceptable violations of human rights and international law by the State of Israel in its colonization of historic Palestine beyond the UN-recognized borders and in its ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

We confess being part of the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and also of the silence of Christian churches vis-à-vis the unbearable oppression of Palestinians.

We reject all forms of anti-Semitism and at the same time all theologies that support and justify the dispossession and continuing oppression of Palestinians. We reject as well the church theology that underlies the churches' silence, preaching reconciliation and dialogue without justice.

We call upon the churches, including the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), to repudiate Luther's writings against the Jews and at the same time to clearly and publicly side with our sister churches and people of all faiths in Palestine/Israel and worldwide in challenging their governments to condition all aid for and cooperation with the State of **Israel** on the liberation of Palestine according to UN resolutions and fundamental principles of human rights. This will also liberate the State of Israel from being an oppressor and open paths for a shared City of Jerusalem. We ask that all follow the example of many churches in the USA, South Africa, and Scotland, by supporting the non-violent measures of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) called for in 2005 by Palestinian civil society. This call was affirmed in 2009 by the churches of the region in the Kairos Palestine Document. It should be reinforced today after 50 years of the illegal colonization of the West Bank and the inhuman blockade of Gaza. We also ask the churches to set clear standards for all church-sponsored travel to Palestine/Israel.

We commit ourselves to pray for peace and justice in Palestine/Israel, to work at all levels to live up to these theological and political commitments ourselves. This includes the challenge of becoming confessing churches, engaging in non-violent civil disobedience, welcoming of refugees from the region and working together with people of all faiths for developing a culture of life for all.

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2. *Munther Isaac*

Luther, Jews and Palestine

I write this paper fully aware of the complexity of identities that are at play within me. I am a Palestinian, and the Israeli occupation and the plight for freedom are my context. At the same time, I am a Christian, an ordained minister with deep and strong convictions about God and theology; a Lutheran (by choice), who is fully aware and troubled by the history of anti-Semitism within my Christian and Lutheran traditions.

The theme of this paper is "repenting from Luther's sins". We need to remember, after all, that Luther was human. Like all of us, he is capable of committing hideous atrocities. And he did. Plenty. (Luther is famous for saying: if you sin, sin boldly). Luther's failings serve as a call to humility and as a caution, specially when it comes to dealing with those with whom we disagree.

Today I will consider Martin Luther's relationship to people of other faiths, whether be it Catholics, Anabaptists, Calvinists, Muslims, or Jews. For the nature of our discussion, I will focus on Luther's relationship with the Jews, without undermining the affects his words had on other people of faith. Luther had some nasty things to say about these traditions. What was behind Luther's "sins"? What are the roots behind his attacks on the Jews and other peoples? What were the premises that led Luther to saying these things and having these attitudes? Answering these questions will help answer a more important question: Did we *really* repent from Luther's sins?

Part 1: Behind the Sins of Luther

Religious Wars

The Christian anti-Jewish environment Luther inherited is well known to all. "Luther lived within a culture of Christianity that saw Jews as rejected people, guilty of the murder of Christ, and capable of murdering Christian children for their own evil purposes".[2]

Luther lived in a hostile and polemic environment. His life was a struggle for survival, which was mainly because of his beliefs. Sixteenth century Europe did not tolerate diversity. Conformity was the norm. This is surely reflected in how Rome treated Luther, and in return in Luther's rejection for those who disagreed with him – even fellow reformers. Just look at what Luther had to say about Zwingli, with whom he disagreed on the nature of the Eucharist.

God and Religion – that is the "right understanding" of God and religion – were everything to Luther. For him, it was first and foremost about "heaven and hell". Who is "in" and who is "out". Who is "saved" and who is "damned". This polarizing perspective on life and humanity was further intensified with Calvinism's emphasis on the "chosen" and "damned".

When it comes to the Jews, it is important to remember that Luther's issue against them was primarily a religious one, and not racist:

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[2] Younan, Mounib. Beyond Luther: Toward a Prophetic Interfaith Dialogue for Life. In Helmer, C., 2009, *The Global Luther: A Theologian for Modern Times,* Fortress Press, Minneapolis, p. 54.

> Luther was not an anti-Semite in the racist sense. His arguments against Jews were theological, not biological.[3]
> [O]ne must be clear as to what he was recommending and why. His position was entirely religious and in no respect racial.[4]

For Luther, the issue then is bigger than the right interpretation of theology. It is about the most crucial question in life: who God is and how to be sure one is in a right relationship with him. It is a "zero-sum" equation, and what is at stake is of utmost importance.

Further, as bishop Mounib Younan explains, Luther looked at all of this as a cosmic battle between forces of good and forces of evil:

> So Luther understood his disagreements with all of his opponents in terms of a cosmic struggle between God and Satan. When he attacked the Jews or the Catholics or the Turks or the "fanatics," he was not attacking mere human beings. Rather he was attacking Satan himself, who, as the spirit behind the false church was motivating these opponents. The issues separating the true from the false church were not semantic: They distinguished the saved from the damned. For Luther was convinced that he was living on the eve of the last judgment.[5]

Orthodoxy and Prejudice

We could argue that Luther's vicious attacks on the Jews were a reflection of the belief or worldview that "if I am right, I am inherently superior". It is a typical self-righteous and prejudice approach that ultimately leads to dehumanizing the "foolish" other for not getting the truth. Younan noted that Luther was probably influenced by Augustine (and other church Fathers) who condemned the Jews for missing Christ in his first coming.[6] They rejected the Son of God and as such they are enemies of God himself. In addition, Luther saw in the perceived Jewish dependence on the Law *for salvation* a parallel to the Catholic's view of "good works", something he strongly fought against. This added to the level of resentment he had towards the Jews.

The other is "damned", and they deserve divine retribution. For Luther, it is the responsibility of the ruler to execute divine judgment. Luther thus writes:

> that their synagogues be burned down, and that all who are able toss in sulphur and pitch; it would be good if someone could also throw in some hellfire. That would demonstrate to God our serious resolve and be evidence to all the world that it was in ignorance that we tolerated such houses, in which the Jews have reviled God, our dear Creator and Father, and

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3 Eric W, Gritch. *Was Luther Anti-Semitic?* Christianity Today, Issue 39: Martin Luther: The Later Years, 1993. Web article. Weblink: http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-39/was-luther-anti-semitic.html; last visited January 3rd, 2017.

4 Roland Bainton. *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1978, p. 297.

5 Younan, p. 53.

6 *Ibid*., p. 52.

> his Son most shamefully up till now, but that we have now given them their due reward.[7]

The Church and Power

The Church and Ruler had a relationship of mutual dependence. This gave power to the position of the church leader. Indeed, it was coveted to become a bishop or archbishop and priests were willing to bribe and use deceit to reach such a position of privilege and power.

Even though Luther fought against power and the Empire of his day, he ended up aligning with the authorities and rulers to protect his new movement. Luther needed the support and protection of politicians. Interestingly, when Luther was persecuted by the Catholic church, and when he was still a fugitive and a "rebel", he criticized the Catholic church for not treating the Jews properly. In 1523, he wrote:

> If we really want to help [the Jews], we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, hear our Christian teaching...[8]

These positions, which were probably at the time motivated by a missionary zeal towards converting Jews to Christianity, changed over time into hostility and full rejection. Is it possible that Luther's relationship to power has a role to play in this change of attitude? (This reminds us of the Quran's attitude towards Christians and Jews before and after the *Hijra*).

Those in a position of power often fear diversity, and seek a society that is marked with uniformity and conformity. Luther was not only troubled by the presence of Jews in Lutheran territories, he did not look favorably to Catholics and Anabaptists as well. And he allied with power to make sure it happened.

A Merciful God?

When of the biggest ironies in our discussion is the fact the Luther's *intifada* was triggered with his search for a "merciful God". He wanted a loving God who accepted him and did not condemn him for not doing enough. Luther discovered and indeed championed the idea of a merciful God who accepts us in Christ. For him, mercy is the first work of God:

> This is the first work of God—that He is merciful to all who are ready to do without their own opinion, right, wisdom, and all spiritual goods, and willing to be poor in spirit.[9]

Herein lies the tragedy: After Luther discovered that God is not a God who condemns and judges, but indeed a God who offers himself to us in love and grace – a merciful God, Luther failed to

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7 Martin Luther: The Jews and Their Lies. In *Luther's Works*, Volume 47: The Christian in Society IV, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971, pp 268293.

8 Gritch.

9 Luther, Martin. *What Luther Says.* 3.176.

consider whether this love and mercy could extend beyond Christians (or even beyond those who followed his reforms). God *is* a merciful God, *but that mercy is limited in its scope*.

Anti-Semitism

> *Anti-Semitism is the prejudice, discrimination and hatred of Jews as a national, ethnic, religious or racial group*[10]

In addition to the hostility towards Judaism as a religion, anti-Semitism functions from within an *ethno-centric* premise. Religious prejudice against the Jews now takes a new dimension – a racist one: Jews as a *race* are inferior. Furthermore, Judaism as a *culture* is dangerous. In return, white, enlightened (Christian) Europeans are superior.

It is important to note that the ethno-centric premise was rejected by Jewish leaders in Europe. They were more comfortable with national definitions.

Part Two: Palestinians Paid the Price in Post-Holocaust Theology

After the holocaust, Christians rightly reevaluated their relationship and even theology regarding the Jewish people. "Post-holocaust theology" developed as a response to centuries of persecution to the Jewish people in the West, a persecution that tragically culminated in the Holocaust. It is a theology that looks very positively towards the biblical covenants with Israel and argues for their continuation with the Jewish people today, even after the Christ-event. In other words, the covenant with biblical Israel has *not* been *superseded*. The church has *not replaced* biblical Israel.[11]

This approach, which developed in the West in response to the tragedies of the holocaust, posed a challenge for Palestinian Christians, who found themselves having to endorse this theology, and its direct implication that the Jews have a divine right to the promised land, or else they will be accused of anti-Semitism. Palestinian Christians must now conform to this theology or else they are not entitled to speak about their narrative or theology. Replacement theology today is a slogan that gets thrown at Palestinian Christians or any theology for that matter that disagrees with post-holocaust theology. This, I believe, reflects a colonial mentality of superiority, which raises questions on to whether Western Christendom has really repented for Luther's sins.

In addition, it seems that Western Christians were willing to repent for their sins as long as someone else pays the price. Palestinians paid and continue to pay the price for this repentance. And again, theology is playing a role in all of this. I echo the words of Palestinian theologian Fr. Paul Tarazi:

> What puzzles us Middle Eastern Christians is that Western Christians, who say at least that they consider Western Christendom largely responsible for the Nazi holocaust and go on backing -- very often unconditionally -- the actual state of Israel, still want to convince us

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10 Jewish virtual library http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/antisem.html

11 For a good representation of this theology, see R. Kendall Soulen, 1996, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.

> that they are not imposing any theology on us and that we are free to have our standpoint concerning biblical interpretation. How can they say so when they are repenting on our ground over a deed which happened on theirs -- all this based on a premise we reject? This is a rare combination of both theological and political imperialism[12]

Indeed, it is ironic that the West, which has a long history of anti-Semitism, wants to educate us and even rebuke and correct us now and teach us the right way.

One of the common phrases we hear today in many Christian circles is the reference to the "Judeo-Christian" tradition or values. There is no time to consider the roots of this phrase. At first glance the phrase seems to affirm the common roots of Christianity and Judaism. Clearly, such an affirmation was and is needed in response to years of anti-Judaism.

The problem, however, is that the term is used today in such a way that it communicates superiority and prejudice. The use of this term today has come to refer to cultural superiority. Mitri Raheb says "It is utilized theologically and implicitly against the Palestinian people and within the context of the clash of civilization against Islam".[13] This is why it is perfectly acceptable today to say that Christians and Jews worship the same God, but not acceptable to say that Christians and Muslims worship the same God – even though both Jews and Muslims do not believe in the deity of Christ or the doctrine of the trinity.

Jewish Liberation Theologian Marc Ellis is known for his strong critique on Jewish-Christian dialogue, which he argues have been used to silence any criticism to the State of Israel. Arguing about what he calls the "ecumenical bargain", he calls for Christian to move beyond their guilt, as this guilt is causing them to be silent over the injustice that Palestinians suffer from today. The integrity and credibility of the dialogue, Ellis argues, is maintained only when the Palestinian suffering is addressed.[14]

Similarly, there is a reference in some Christian circle about an unbreakable bond Christians have with the Jewish people.[15] (This begs the question: what kind of bond do Christians have with Palestinians? Or with Palestinian Christians?)

Raheb calls Western theology that is supportive to Israel and the Christian-Jewish dialogue "the software" that allows Israel to continue the occupation. Raheb argues that just as the church provided the theological justification for anti-Semitism in Europe, it is doing the same today for today's empire.

Palestinians Dehumanized

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12 Tarazi, Paul. Covenant, Land and City: Finding God's Will in Palestine, *The Reformed Journal 29*, 1979, p. 15.

13 Raheb, Mitri. *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes.* Orbis Books, 2014.

14 Ellis, Marc. Jewish-Christian Impasse, *The Tablet*, 1990, p. 71ff.

15 See, for the example, the official statement of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (Protestantse Kerk in Nederland) on the church and Israel and Palestine.

In repenting from the theology of Luther, post-holocaust theology today too often privileges the Jewish people and indirectly produces prejudice and even bigotry towards Palestinians. In this theology, Palestinians are often viewed as an irrelevant after-thought. They are secondary to the interest of Israel. From the very beginning, even before the birth of Zionism, Lord Shaftesbury (who was president of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (now known as CMJ)) argued for: "A country without a nation for a nation without a country". I often wonder, did he know that the country had a nation? I am sure he did, but these people were *irrelevant* in this line of thinking. There was something more important.

The same applies to Lord Balfour, the one who made the infamous declaration. He echoed the same mentality:

> For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of *consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country*… The Four Great Powers are committed to Zionism. And Zionism…is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of *far profounder import than the desires or prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs* who now inhabit that ancient land.

In this mentality, the Palestinian Arabs were a "complete irrelevance". For the Zionist and Christian Zionists, Palestine was 'empty'; Ben White argues, not literally, "but in terms of people of equal worth to the incoming settlers".[16]

This, I believe reflects a typical colonial – dare I say even Christian – mentality. The land had people, but they can be easily moved.

Today we still hear: "Why don't you go to Jordan?" In addition, many Christians around the world continue to talk the land as if it is empty. We still hear claims like: "Jews have a Divine right to Israel's Land", and "The creation of Israel is a sign of God's faithfulness to the Jewish people".

The question is: What about the people of the land? Does our opinion matter? What should we do? Leave the land? Live as second-class citizens in our land? Where do we fit in post-holocaust theology? If the creation of Israel is a sign of God's faithfulness to the Jewish people, then it is a sign of _____? to the Palestinians?

This attitude towards Palestinians is also reflected among many well-intended Christians, who want to be "fair" towards Palestinians. They may speak positively about Palestinians, but they are not in the same category of the Jews. This is done when we are referred to as "children of Ismail" (God loves them as well, but they are not chosen). Sometimes we are the "strangers" in that God commended the Israelites in the Old Testament to be kind to the strangers. Other times we are the Samaritans.

My answer is always: we are not looking to sympathy or charity. We simply want to be viewed with the same lens that you view the Jews: Both created in the image of God. Both loved by God. Both deserving to live in dignity and pride.

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16 White, Ben. *Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner's Guide*. Pluto Press, 2014.

Part Three: Kairos Palestine

In 2009 Palestinian Christian lay leaders, theologians, pastors, and activists from all church backgrounds issued an important document called "Kairos Palestine" (KP). The document is bold and prophetic. It rightly calls the Israeli occupation to Palestinian land a "sin against God and humanity" (2.5).

With regards to our discussion, there are few points that need to be highlighted. KP identifies anti-Semitism as racism and condemns it an unequivocally:

> We condemn all forms of racism, whether religious or ethnic, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and we call on you to condemn it and oppose it in all its manifestations (KP 6.3)

This is because:

> We believe in God, one God, Creator of the universe and of humanity. We believe in a good and just God, who loves each one of his creatures. We believe that every human being is created in God's image and likeness and that every one's dignity is derived from the dignity of the Almighty One. (2.1)

Realizing that the West is trying to make amends for the sins committed towards Jews in Europe, KP reminds the West that one cannot correct injustice with injustice:

> The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice. (KP 2.3.2)

Kairos Palestine has strong words against not only the occupation, but against Christian theology that supports and justifies the occupations and the injustice that Palestinians go through.

> Therefore, we declare that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transform religion into human ideology and strip the Word of God of its holiness, its universality and truth. (2.4)

Kairos envisions a future in which Palestinians and Israelis, Jews Christians and Muslims, are reconciled and live together in peace. For this to happen, the occupation must come to an end. In addition, all sides must put aside any religious or divine claims or rights to possess the land, any exclusive claims to the land, and also to put aside the notion of a religious state:

> Trying to make the state a religious state, Jewish or Islamic, suffocates the state, confines it within narrow limits, and transforms it into a state that practices discrimination and exclusion, preferring one citizen over another. We appeal to both religious Jews and Muslims: let the state be a state for all its citizens, with a vision constructed on respect for religion but also equality, justice, liberty and respect for pluralism and not on domination by a religion or a numerical majority. (KP 9.3)

Kairos promotes religious dialogue and sees it as a sign of hope. But it must a dialogue that is based

on rejecting the occupation and injustice:

> We can add to this [as a sign of hope] the numerous meetings for inter-religious dialogue, Christian–Muslim dialogue, which includes the religious leaders and a part of the people. Admittedly, dialogue is a long process and is perfected through a daily effort as we undergo the same sufferings and have the same expectations. There is also dialogue among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as different dialogue meetings on the academic or social level. They all try to breach the walls imposed by the occupation and oppose the distorted perception of human beings in the heart of their brothers or sisters. (KP 3.3.2)

Dialogue and engagement must be built on the concept of seeing God's image in the other:

> This is a call to see the face of God in each one of God's creatures and overcome the barriers of fear or race in order to establish a constructive dialogue and not remain within the cycle of never-ending manoeuvres that aim to keep the situation as it is. Our appeal is to reach a common vision, built on equality and sharing, not on superiority, negation of the other or aggression, using the pretext of fear and security. (KP 9.1)

In short, the theology of Kairos is against "favoritism" of any religion over the other. It rejects and exclusive claims to the land or any theology that has signs of "exceptionalism". It is also against any ethno-centric approaches. Kairos promotes a theology in which all are equal and are treated the same. This is based on the theology of being created in God's image. Kairos shows respect to the three religions of the land without shying away from the Christian distinctive beliefs (like the death and resurrection of Christ), and calls for dialogue and co-existence.

Conclusion:

We began by posing the question: did Western Christendom really repent for Luther's sins? This is not a question about motives or intentions. This is not a question that attempts to raise questions about the sincerity of sorrow and remorse. In other words, this is not to say that Western Christendom is not sorry for Luther's sins. *The question is: did they fully learn from the mistakes of Luther?*

1. First, there are still signs of anti-Semitism in Europe! The extreme Right and the neo-Nazis groups is on the rise, and this serves as reminder that there is still work to be done.
2. There are still theologies that privilege people groups. There are still theologies that promote a worldview of "us" vs. "them".
3. There are still questions about the church's relationship with power.
4. There are still signs of prejudice: If a theology comes from Europe, then it is "proper theology", but if it comes from us, it is still "contextual" and interesting.
5. There is still an ethnocentric premise in approaching the Jews. Jews continue to be a distinct category (positively this time).
6. Finally, as long as Palestinians are under occupation, then a case could be made that the repentance is not complete! Many Christians still turn a blind eye to the misery of Palestinians.

Anti-Semitism is, at its core, an *ethical* issue. It reflects a mentality of prejudice and bigotry. In addition, *insisting on classifying and relating to people based on their race is the real issue here*.

This is one of the core presuppositions of Europe's anti-Semitism in the nineteenth and twentieth century: that the Jews do not belong to the ethnocentric nationalism of the modern states and as such they deserve to be persecuted. Sadly, Christendom has treated the Jewish people as a race or an ethnicity and not as people of faith – in a time when the Jews themselves rejected this classification.[17]

Our relationship as Christians with Jews should not depend on what we believe their fate as a people will be –based on our understanding of our Scripture. The worst of these approaches is that of some evangelical Christians who look to the Jews according to the place they play in their eschatological scenario.[18] Our attitude towards the Jewish people should not depend on our belief of their role in the unfolding of the end-times. We *must reach to a point where we relate to Judaism as significant in its own right*. *How we relate to the Jewish people should not depend on their place in our theology*.

We must relate to the Jews first and foremost as *people of faith*. Needless to say, we share with them and are indeed indebted to them for a big part of our Scripture. We must always seek to dialogue and build bridges with Jews (just like we do with other faiths), taking our common ground as a basis. Together, we can unite around the "prophetic" elements in our common tradition. As we do so, we must be vulnerable to being challenged and even corrected. There are things we can and should learn from the Jews. We should not also shy away from humbly challenging them when we see fitting. Above all, we must continue to proclaim and model to them and all the world the supremacy of Jesus, his death and resurrection, in a humble and respectful manner. God is the ultimate judge – not us. We must worry about ourselves first, and be faithful in our testimony to the world, in service and love.

In short, I would like to propose the following theology for the Jewish people: "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself". Had Luther been consistent, he would have applied this principle to the Jews of his time, for he had said:

> What is it to serve God and to do His will? Nothing else than to show mercy to our neighbor. For it is our own neighbor who needs our service; God in heaven needs it not.

Luther's search for a merciful God triggered the Reformation. Ironically, the Palestinians are the ones searching today for a merciful God today. "The 'good news' in the Gospel itself has become 'a harbinger of death' for us" (KP 2.3.3). One hundred years after Balfour, and 50 years after the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the Palestinians are still searching for justice and freedom, and seeking the end of the occupation. The church in Europe, and specially in Germany, has been slow to react, and often indecisive when speaking against the occupation.

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17 Jewish historian Shlomo Sand writes how when Zionism was created, Jewish leaders in Europe opposed it because "Zionism was beginning to look more and more like the flip side of Judeophobic nationalism: both streams of thought refused to see Jews as patriots of their resident homeland and both suspected them of dual loyalty". S. Sand, 2012, *The Invention of the Land of Israel*, Verso, NY- London, p. 185.

18 See for example the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

3. *Brigitte Kahl*

On Jews, Muslims, and other Others: Paul and Luther debating Justification by Faith

(Preliminary text , final text in German publication)

1. *Stating the problem: Protestant Justification Theology and the anti-Other trap*

Luther's "sola fide" and "sola gratia" has inscribed itself into the Protestant and cultural DNA of the Occident by means of a fundamental "contra": the faith-righteous Self stands in opposition over and against its work-righteous Other. Justification by faith and grace alone as the theological core of the Reformation thus is marked and marred by an essential antagonism that defines the *gospel of faith/ grace* through its irresoluble counter-stance against the *law of works*.

Derived largely from his reading of Galatians, this antithetical configuration became a powerful weapon in Luther's fight with the papal church. Yet Luther attributed the false righteousness from law-works not only to Catholicism, but directed the exclusionary thrust of "faith alone" with equal fervor against Jews, Muslims, Turks, and other Others. Despite their enormous diversity all these groups were subsumed under the theological label of "operarii" ("worklers") and thus branded as enemies of faith and grace.

This both homogenizing and antagonizing power of justification theology should give us pause. It is one of the biggest liabilities for an ongoing re/transformation of church and theology 500 years after Luther. Rooted in the theological deep grammar of Protestantism, it cannot be treated as a "slip of tongue" that can be revoked or corrected as such. Rather, in light of large-scale eruptions of Islamophobia and xenophobia in present-day Europe and the United States, alongside prevailing anti-semitism and other anti-…isms, this profound anti-Other flaw in the innermost fabric of Reformation theology needs to be acknowledged, analyzed and, if possible, repaired.

The hierarchical dichotomy of Self versus Other, however, was not invented by the Reformation. It goes back a long way in history to the early 5th century BCE when the Greeks in the context of the Persian Wars started to define the Self of civilization over and against the Other of the barbarians, and the Occident in contradistinction to the Orient. This binary model became fused with Christianity in a new way after emperor Constantine's conversion. Luther drew on it and in the cultural fabric of the "Christian Occident" Protestantism over the past centuries has become one of its pillars and strongholds - and it quoted Paul and particularly Galatians as its scriptural basis. The question for our exploration here is whether Paul and Galatians were and are properly quoted. In other words: Does the *sola scriptura* –another core formula of reformation theology- support the anti-Other reading of its *sola gratia* and *sola fide?*

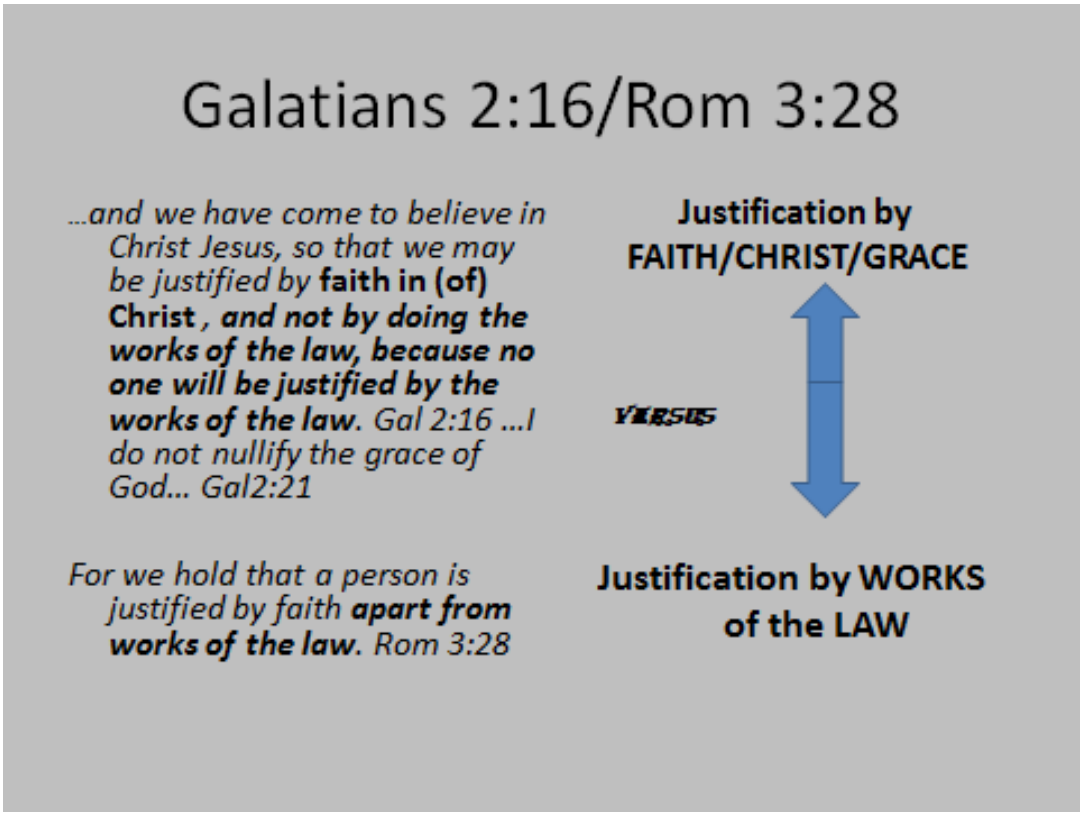
Developments in Pauline Studies over the past 50 years, in the wake of Krister Stendahl , New Perspective and liberationist/empire-critical/post-colonial approaches have strongly challenged the basic reading model of Paul on which Luther relied and Protestant theology still is dependent. One of the most promising and challenging discoveries is the insight that Paul's theology of justification by faith is not the fortification, rather the radical dismantling of Greco-Roman binary thinking. Justification implies reconciliation with the Other *as other,* which for Paul means that circumcised Jews and uncircumcised Gentiles – separated by an "absolute" marker of mutual foreignness, exclusion, and enmity - enter into a new body where they have to learn community-building and co-existence as "one in Christ" (Gal 3:28).

2. *Faith versus works – spelling out the grammar of Paul's justification discourse*

Does Luther's anti-Otherism draw its scriptural foundation and legitimacy from Paul? Yes and

No.

Galatians, Martin Luther's favorite letter, is the first scriptural location to search for. Gal 2:16, next to Romans 3:28 are Paul's two key statement about justification by faith rather than by works of the law:



The whole scriptural grammar of Lutheran justification theology indeed rests on the juxtaposition of *faith/grace/grace* versus *works of the law*. It is well known that the dramatic controversy behind Galatians is about a group of people - variously classified as opponents, agitators or teachers in Pauline scholarship – who try to convince Paul's Gentile communities to adopt circumcision for their male members. Circumcision is a clearly Jewish practice and a well-known marker of Jewish identity all throughout antiquity. Tacitus e.g. writes about the Jews:

They adopted circumcision (*circumcidere genitalia*) to distinguish themselves from other peoples by this difference. Those who are converted (*transgressi*) to their ways follow the same practice... (Hist V,5)

With this, "works of the law" seemed to be clearly identified as Jewish practices based on Torah, as opposed to justification by faith alone. The root binary of Christianity/Self versus Judaism/Other emerges as inerasably and incurably embedded into the innermost core of justification theology. [19]

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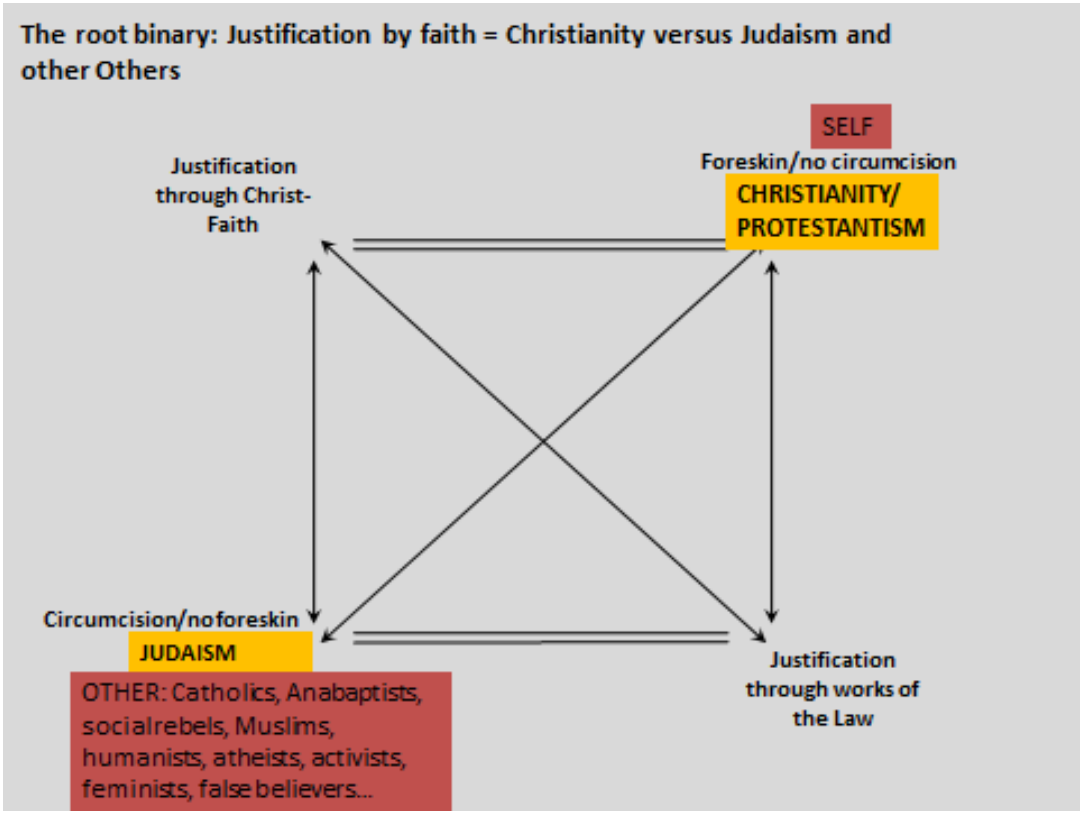
The following diagram is a modification of Greimas' "Semiotic square" that shows the chief meaning making positions of a text as four "corners" of a quadrangular space. Two of these positions are aligned to one another in complementarity at the top and bottom (A===B, non-A === non-B) the other positions are oppositional (A←→non-A, B,← →non-B, A← →non-B, B← → non-A).



Martin Luther in his fight against papal Rome strongly drew on the antithetical force of this root binary that nowhere else in Paul's letters builds up as much rhetorical momentum and exclusionary thrust as in Galatians, Paul's most combative and polemical letter. The double Anathema that Paul right at the beginning in 1:8.9 hurls against the proponents of an "other gospel" (presumably the gospel of circumcision) was re-directed against Catholicism. Paul's passion and relentless zeal in defending the gospel of Christ and faith against the Galatian-Jewish circumcision heresy fueled the battles of the Reformation; it gave birth to Protestantism founded on the Pauline/Lutheran justification theology of grace, faith, Christ alone as the "article on which the church stands and falls."

At the same time, works of the law as stand-in for Jewish circumcision in Luther's interpretation developed an astounding versatility and applicability to all types of other "Others": It was not only the medieval church that was anathematized as "work-righteous", but also as heterogeneous groups as Muslims, rebellious peasants, Anabaptists, and Turks. The core binary of works/law versus faith/grace could be "weaponized" with terrifying ease and versatility, often with deadly and mass-murderous consequences. Later on, all kinds of "new" work-righteousness in terms of "faithless" social activism were added to this list – like humanism, socialism, feminism and other heresies critical of the societal status quo. Faith and the ethics of social transformation were seen as mutually exclusive. With this, justification by faith apart from works of the law as Magna Charta of the Protestant Reformation had become not only the Magna Charta of anti-Judaism, anti-Islamism, Other-condemnation in general, but also of social conservatism .

3. *Reading Paul against Luther: Faith and grace versus the law of binarism*

Can the Reformation be exorcised from this birth defect of an anti-Other binarism that profoundly taints the ethical credibility of the *sola fide, sola gratia, and solus Christus,* yet appears as solidly scripture-based*?* Can scripture, and can faith and grace in Paul be read differently? This is a question that obviously has implications far beyond Luther and challenges –yet potentially can transform and restore - Protestant identity in its most pivotal

doctrinal foundation.

It is also a question that points to a fundamental deficit in present-day discourses about Paul on the one hand and Luther on the other. They are virtually disconnected. Exegesis and theology, firmly connected at Luther's time, nowadays mostly don't talk to each other, and insights of biblical scholarship that could be drawn on by theologians stay unnoticed. This is the more deplorable as within the past 50 years new approaches have emerged that dramatically change the field of Pauline Studies and provide stepping stones towards a radical re-envisioning of justification theology from a scriptural perspective.

The first game-changing impulse came in the mid/late sixties from a Lutheran Swedish New Testament scholar teaching at Harvard who later would become the bishop of Stockholm: Krister Stendahl. The "Stendahl Revolution" was based on two chief exegetical insights: Paul was not moving among Jews and Christians, but among Jews and Gentiles. And the main thrust of his theology was not to set up one group against another – neither Jews versus Christians, nor Jews versus Gentiles – but the community building of Jews *plus* Gentiles. The famous statement of justifiction theology from Gal 2:16-21 quoted above is not an abstract dogmatic formula rather belongs into the concrete context of a contested community that brought Jews and Gentiles together at a common table.(Gal 2:11-14) This table community across boundaries of religion, ethnicity, status and gender, however, broke apart in Syrian Antioch after a clash with Peter (Gal 2:11-14), and Paul develops his justification theology precisely to "de-justify" this separation of Jews and Gentiles into two caucuses neatly sealed against each other. From another vantage point, this segregation would also have been reinforced through the circumcision of the Galatian Gentiles that would make them "proper" Jews, thus confirming the unbridgeable gap between Jews and Gentiles. Stendahl's provocative thesis: Justification was hammered out for no other purpose than to defend the rights of the Gentiles as full heirs of the promises to Abraham and "honorary Jews," without undergoing circumcision. He criticizes that this concrete contextuality of Jewish-Gentile community got completely lost in the history of interpretation , thus paving the way for the prevalent spiritualization, individualization and de-contextualization of justification theology in the post-Augustine Western tradition that eventually lead into Protestantism.[20]

If we try to integrate these insights into our Faith-versus-Works diagram, a completely new picture emerges:

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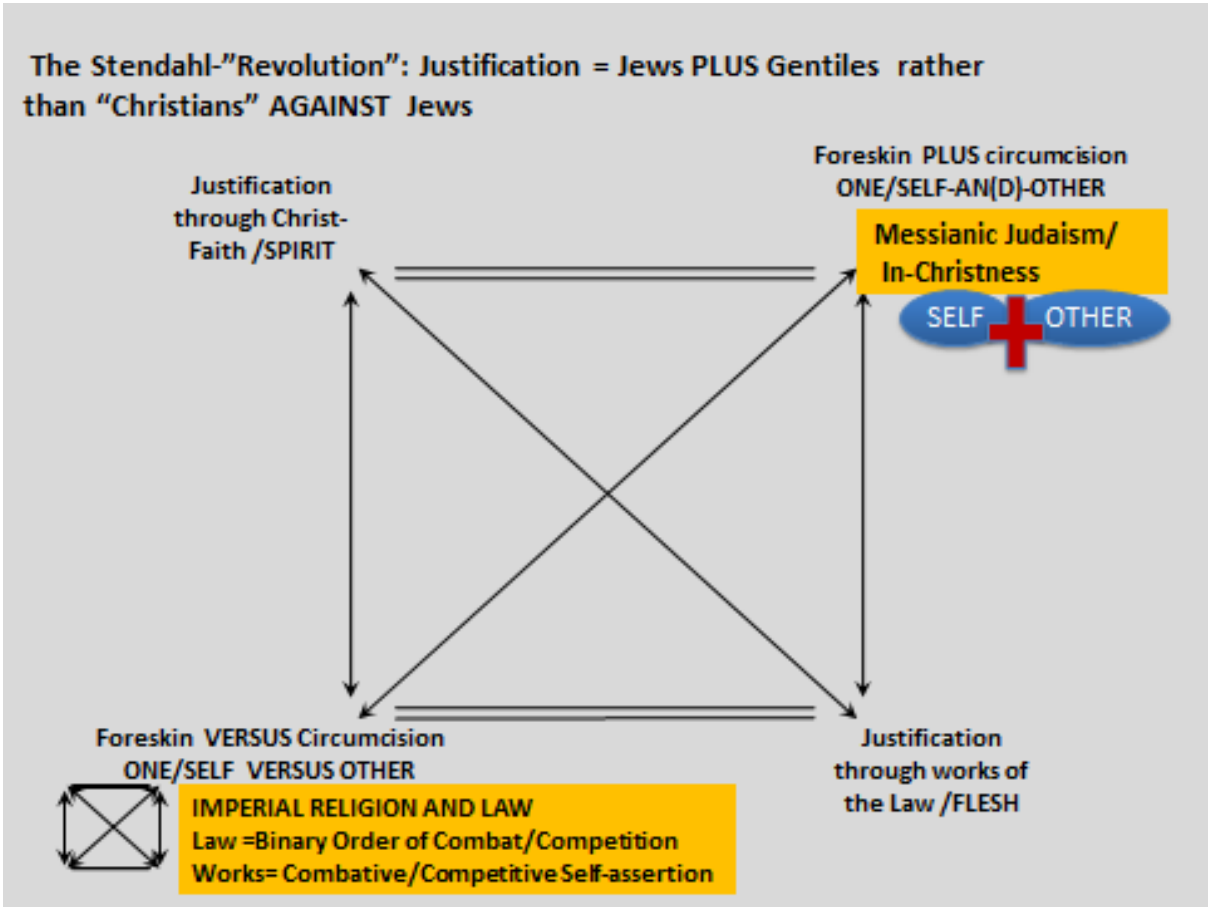
Krister Stendahl, Paul among Jews and Gentiles, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1976, 1-7



The basic theological antithesis of faith justification versus justification by law of the works stays, and so do foreskin and circumcision as referents. But Paul's rejection of foreskin no longer is the rejection of Judaism as such; it ceases to imply a "Jew-free," i.e. uncircumcised Christianity, rather aims at a diverse and non-uniform community of Jews and *Gentiles* that makes Abraham's lineage the basis for a reunification of humanity "in Christ," across all its diversities. (Gal 3) Self and Other become one in Christ by bearing one another's burdens, not by waging holy wars against one another (Gal 6:2). Rather than by subjugating, conquering, colonizing, they gain their freedom by doing slave-service to one another and thus fulfilling the law of neighbor-love (Gal 5:13-14). Faith is no longer the antithesis of works as "practice," rather it is faith as "working through love" between ones and others that becomes the identity marker of a trans-identitarian community (Gal 5:6)

It matters that Paul never uses the terms "Christian" or "Christianity" at all. His famous baptismal formula on unification in Gal 3:28 doesn't say: "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, free nor slave, male and female, for you are all Christians." Rather it says: "…but you are all one in Christ." In-Christ-ness describes a hybrid or "queer" bridge identity that is based on mutuality as one-an(d)-otherness. We may call it "messianic Judaism", replacing the somewhat misleading term "Christian" by its Hebrew-based equivalent "messianic."[21] In-Christ-ness is not the re-invention of the binary order of Self- against- Other in its Christian (and thus necessarily anti-Jewish/anti-other version), rather for Paul it implies the complete dismantling of the binaries.

As a result, the opposite of "in Christ" is no longer Judaism per se, rather any kind of imperial religion that asserts the position of a dominant Self over and against an inferior Other by

21 The Greek "Christos" is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew term for "messiah"- anointed one.

claiming God and the law, and scripture as "ours", whereas "they" are godless and lawless. It is the kind of religion that ultimately worships the Self as God – in other words: idolatry. Paul at his own time was massively confronted with an imperial idolatry that propagated Caesar universally not just as world ruler but also as world god. Deeply embedded in the prophetic tradition of the First Testament, Paul challenged imperial religion and its law by preaching the *One* God who was *Other*, i.e. the crucified god in solidarity with the others. In a similar way the prophets had continuously denounced the false religion of imperial idolatry in its shameless alignment of unjust, self-serving power with God.

The transformative and peace-building potential of justification theology is its power to declare those as righteous who are criminalized and unjustly punished by the dominant interpretation of law. At a closer look this law, even if it quotes the letter of Torah, for Paul is much more the law of empire and with its essential binary-production than the law of God. God's move to the side of the officially lawless and godless, in the Exodus-event and at the cross, neutralizes the boundless potential of binaries to generate weaponize -able Self-versus-Other dichotomies in the service of power over and empire.

Louis Martyn to my knowledge was the first one to see the binary order of the "old cosmos" as the core target of the messianic transformation towards a new creation.[22] There is only a single and last binary remaining, that is called the "apocalyptic antinomy" by Martyn: The binary order itself in its irreconcilable antithesis with the messianic order of reconciliation. In Paul's language this is the antithesis between *flesh* and *spirit*. The "flesh" in endless variations pits Self against Other, and as superior over the Other, thus producing sin: This is the "law" and the order of competition and conquest that requires each Self to prove itself as superior and "boast" of its righteousness, its status, and its authority by defeating, downgrading or abusing an Other.[23] "Works of the law" as signature of the "flesh" for Paul implies this whole logic of defeating, downgrading, abusing the Other for the sake of upgrading and boosting the Self before either God or humans. Works of the law in this sense are not the exclusive marker of Judaism but of any religion caught in the "Constantinian captivity" of imperil religion and power/Self idolatry.

Theologically and textually, this relectura of Galatians marks the end of any possibility to read "Christian" or "faith" in terms of anti-Judaism, anti-Islamism or any other anti-…ism, and the beginning of a new re/transformation that starts with the self-critical (rather than other-critical) question what it means today not to be justified by works of the law but by faith alone .

(Unfinished: Part 4 and 5 will be presented at the conference)

6. Conclusion (preliminary)

Justification by Faith in Paul and Galatians is the demilitarization and de-fortification of the Self-righteous Self in its effort to establish its superiority and inviolability by pointing to an un-righteous (Gentile) Other that is stereotyped e.g. as godless, sinful, uncivilized. Christ died for *our* sins, not against *them* as sinners. This makes the erasure of Self-Other binaries a matter of trusting grace and practicing faith. Luther, in a way, despite his prevalent binarism in reading Paul understood this very well when he used the Turks not just as an example of the evil Other but also, in a prophetic –Pauline countermove, as the "'writing on the wall" that demands repentance from us – for "we" ourselves are worse than the "Turks" ….

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22 J. Louis Martyn, "Apocalyptic Antinomies in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, " NTS 31 (1985):410-24; see also id., Galatians,: A new Translation with Introduction and Commentary, AB 33A, New York: Doubleday, 1997

23 For a comprehensive re-reading of Paul's letter to the Romans along these lines see Robert Jewett, Romans: A Commentary, Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2007

In contrast, the mindset of binary combat configurations – us versus them, citizens versus immigrants, Christians versus Muslims, Israel versus Palestinians - today justifies wall-building and militarization all over the world, e.g. in the United States and in Israel. Its dichotomist rigidity leaves no space for any "third." It turns, to name just two examples, pro-immigration into anti-American, or pro-Israel into anti-Palestine and pro-Palestine into anti-Israel, with the menacing verdict of anti-semitism threatening any legitimate critique of Israel's policies towards Palestine.

To recover Paul's construct of justification, grace and faith as a theology of boundary-crossing and justice-based peace-making in the body of the crucified , as the mutual recognition of trauma on both sides, as love not just of the neighbor but the perceived enemy as well : All that could be a signifier of "costly grace" and a genuinely reformatory intervention of Protestantism in the deadly combat zones of binarism today.

4. Charles Amjad-Ali

From the *Judenfrage* to Palestinian Diaspora

1. **Introduction**

> No people should be denied their rights and, certainly, no people should be denied their rights for generations. The unresolved conflict in Israel and Palestine is primarily about justice, and until the requirement of justice is met, peace cannot be established. As Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza nears the 50-year mark, generations have been suffering under this reality... 50 years is also a milestone in terms of the Biblical year of Jubilee, reminding us all of the need to seek proper times to re-establish justice so that people can live... (Leviticus 25:10).

Thus begins the latest joint ecumenical ecclesial document of the WCC and NCCCUSA dealing with the issues surrounding Palestine and Israel. It goes on to say that,

> too often religion has been used to justify the occupation. Too often, religion has been used by Christians, Jews, and Muslims to further hatred and violence. We have seen religion similarly misused in countless other circumstances and we see parallels between the crisis in Israel and Palestine and the struggles for racial justice in the United States and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa... As followers of Christ and as people of the Abrahamic tradition, we are spiritually wounded by the continuing hatred and animosity between Jews, Christians, and Muslims and yearn for a new era of peace, harmony, and cooperation so that the land we all call Holy will be shared by and cared for by all who live there.[24]

Though this is a very fine sentiment, it does not cover all of the political, colonial, religious, mythological, ethical, and theological, etc., issues at stake. My chapter in *Radicalizing Reformation*, entitled "Prejudice and Its Historical Application: A Radical Hermeneutic of Luther's Treatment of the Turks (Muslims) and the Jews,"[25] deals with the issue of Turks and Jews in Luther. It also points to the use and abuse of Luther's texts by Hitler and the Nazi regime against the Jews. I then go on to explore the contemporary anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic rhetoric in Europe, and particularly in Germany, which may once again draw upon Luther's highly bellicose anti-Turk/Muslim statements and how they could be used in a similar manner to those employed against the Jews. It is in this context that my paper on Palestine and Israel should be read and understood.

II. The Reformation's anti-Jewish Rhetoric: A Fillip to European Long Mistreatment of the Jews

It is now universally established that the Reformation and its rhetoric had a direct and lasting effect on the treatment of the Jews in Europe, with its most vile and debilitating manifestation during the Nazi regime duly elected by the German people.[26] What took place in Germany during the Nazi

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Statement by General Secretaries Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit (World Council of Churches) and Jim Winkler (National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA) NCC/WCC Consultation on the Holy Land September 14, 2016, c.f. http://www.globalministries.org/ncc_wcc_consultation_on_the_holy_land

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See, *Liberation from Violence for Life in Peace*, 4th volume of a 6 volume work entitled *Radicalizing Reformation* commemorating the 500 year anniversary of Luther and the Reformation, ed. by Ulrich Duchrow and Craig Nessan, (Berlin, Germany: Lit verlag Dr. Hopf, 2015), pp. 105-142.

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In the March 1933 Reichstag election the Nazi party won the election with 43.91%, (more than double that of the next party, the SPD with 18.25%). Prior to this election the Nazi party had already seized the chancellorship, with Nazi storm troopers committing a campaign of violence against the Communist party (KPD), trade unionists, the Social

control was a systematic, highly technically engineered, and physically very efficient killing process set into motion against a people who were different and seen as the permanent other in Europe. As Daniel Goldhagen has articulated so well, the culpability for the abhorrent crimes of the Holocaust is much wider than just the governance processes in Germany and the ruling elites (i.e, the Nazis and the SS officials), most of the German society was fully complicit in them.[27] However, the culpability extends to a much larger European historiography. Scapegoating the blame exclusively on the German people, nation and structure, though obviously true for Hitler and his cronies, allows a certain amount of deflection, self-righteousness, and self-justification for the other European states who were also culpable.

There is a clear causal link between this long-standing mistreatment and abuse of Jews in Europe and the creation of the state of Israel. However, despite the horrific history of persecution, it is also the case that from its Zionist roots, originally justified as an extension of the European colonial pattern in the Middle East and as the most western nation in the Arab world, to later arguments about a Jewish state based on religious and theologically defined parameters, the state of Israel is a troubling phenomenon. One of the major problems we have is that while we accuse Islam of mixing religion and politics, we do not apply the same critique, analytical tools, or critical epistemic lens when examining the creation of the state of Israel, and its character as a state since 1948.

Out of guilt the Western nations allowed, enabled and facilitated the establishment of the state of Israel. At my most cynical moments I must say this was in fact, nothing other than a clear execution of the "final solution," in that it did get rid of almost all the Jews in Western Europe. After the prejudice, discrimination, ghettoization, pogroms, concentration camps, and ultimately the Holocaust, those Jews who did remain were now "generously" allowed to go and form a state outside of Europe, thus finally solving the European *Judenfrage*.

III. Settler Colonialism

Importantly this new state operated on a similar program to that of all colonial enterprises, of excluding the natives who had lived in that land for millennia, claiming an "empty" land for European immigrants. This makes Israel a country similar in nature to the European immigrant states like the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. All these new colonial states are part of what is now correctly called *settler colonialism*. This form of colonialism fundamentally entails a large-scale migration of Europeans to "new" lands, comprehensively displacing the native populations and usurping their lands, thus claiming them as their own.[28] Russell King writes that, "Between 1800 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the European powers – Britain, France, Germany and to a lesser extent the Netherlands – added more than 15 million square miles (40 million square km) of land to their colonial portfolios. The golden age of

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Democratic Party (SPD) and even the centre-right party the Centre Party. Even if we take this into account, we cannot forget the previous three elections from 1930 onwards which put them in the position of power to do so. In 1928 the Nazi party had only 2.6% of the vote, coming in at 9th place, but by the next election in 1930, they secured 18.25% coming in second only to the SPD at 24.53%. In 1932 they won the election with 37.27%, although they were unable to form a coalition government to give Hitler the chancellorship. For election details c.f. http://www.gonschior.de/weimar/Deutschland/Uebersicht_RTW.html

27 For the comprehensive involvement of the German populace in this morally dark period in German history, see, Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). This book, by the way, was launched in Germany in 1996 during the Frankfurt Book Fair while I was here, and caused quite a furor.

28 This is of special significance in light of recent developments (some call it crisis) in Europe over the settling of displaced, war-spawned, and economic, as well as other rights-based immigrants arriving in Europe. In the context of this seminar our concern deals mostly with the large Muslim migrant populations and the growing intolerance, bigotry and hostility this is generating towards them, which is then expanded to include all Muslims and Islam itself.

imperialism was the impetus for a variety of people movements, as migrants traveled abroad while empires grew, or returned to the motherland when they inevitably fell."[29] Such migration and settlement therefore initially involved the oversight by some imperial power who already controlled, or desired to control, those lands and the people originally residing there.

Settler colonization inevitably involves a highly immoral and fraudulent, sometimes even genocidal, depopulation of the original inhabitants by the new settlers. The land is then rather cynically defined as being vacant or empty of people and thus as *Terra nullius*, "nobody's territory," and therefore not subject to the sovereignty of any state, or at least the previous residents have expressly or implicitly relinquished sovereignty over it. Such was the case with Palestine, which was famously described by Christian Zionists throughout the 19th century as "a country without a people, for a people without a country." Arguably this phrase was most famously used by the Zionist Israeli Zangwill, who wrote that "Palestine is a country without a people; the Jews are a people without a country."[30] Ironically, Zangwill later discovered that Palestine was not, in fact, a land with no people: Rather it had a population that, at the time, was twice as densely populated as the United States. Thus he later argued for the Uganda scheme – the creation of a Jewish state in East Africa (actually Kenya) – and when that was rejected by the 7th Zionist Congress in 1905, founded the Jewish Territorialist Organization (ITO), which searched for a Jewish homeland outside of Palestine.

The other central characteristic of settler colonialism is that the settlers generally regard themselves as being culturally, religiously, and racially superior to the original inhabitants. This superiority clearly validates their migration itself – usually also justified on the grounds of some higher calling. Thus their concomitant economic and political demands are justified as having ontological validity. This invariably entails the deprivation of life, liberty, and land of the original inhabitants. All these abhorrent acts seemingly have no moral consequences, because of the "righteousness of the cause" of the immigrant Europeans and the "uncivilized depravity" of the original native people. The colonizers then establish political orders which engender a distinct sovereignty for themselves, with the operational conviction that for such a "high moral sovereignty" it is imperative that the original indigenous people simply vanish, but not before their labor is utilized to the fullest.[31]

Settler colonialism generates new myths and tries to establish the legitimacy of the new order through rational and scientific validity. They especially try to establish their right to other people's land through a moral justification which nobody but they themselves accept. They do so by laying claim, categorically and adamantly, to their own high efficiency, integrity, honesty, and therefore by extension, virtue. Thus anybody who negates them and challenges their fundamental assumptions are seen, obviously, to be locked in tribalism, superstition, and under-development, thus clearly, uncivilized, incapable of knowing or acknowledging truth, and therefore backward vis-à-vis globality and rationality.[32] Thus the most prevalent myth that America was established for religious

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29 See his *Atlas of Human Migration* (Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2007), p. 112.

30 Israel Zangwill, "The Return to Palestine," in *New Liberal Review* (Dec. 1901), p. 615.

31 For the above composite presentation, I am indebted to Edward Cavanagh and Lorenzo Veracini, 2010, https://settlercolonialstudies.org/about-this-blog/ and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Settler_colonialism]; see also, Maxine Rodinson, "Israel, fait colonial?" *Les Temps Moderne*, 1967, republished in English as *Israel: A Colonial Settler-State?* (New York, Monad Press, 1973); and Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society*, (London: Pluto Press, 2006).

32 See, for such an essentialist binary, among others, the following highly popular books like, Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1995); Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997); and Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (New York: Farrar,

freedom, rather than economic opportunity, and that it was a nation which was called as a part of divine destiny and divine manifestation was based mostly on sacralizing the Puritan migration story as a national religious myth.[33]
Israel, as a colonial settler nation, follows this pattern completely, including by developing its own foundational myth. Specifically, the founders of the state of Israel generated the concept of "return," as if to say that a mythical majority of Jews had somehow been in continuous residence in Palestine for a very long time and were forced out of it for a short time. In fact, this "short time" was actually almost two thousand years. Because of this mythical "long continuing presence" in Palestine, Jews have a right to "return" to it with impunity, while the people who have been living there from time immemorial are illegitimate occupiers and therefore can justly be kicked out with impunity, with categorically no right to return.

It is on the basis of this myth that the pro-Israel lobby challenges the use of the term "settler," (as used in the theory of settler colonialism). They argue the term "settler" is valid only if it is assumed that the settlers have no indigenous roots and rights in the area. "The notion of 'settler' dismisses any historical or biblical connection of Jews to the area. Hence, the importance of denial of Jewish rights, history, and claims to the area. Lest there be any confusion about what a 'settler' is, those who use the terminology 'settler-colonialist' against Israel clearly mean the entire Zionist enterprise, including the original territory of the State of Israel in 1948. The 'colonial Israel' charge is thus rooted in an ideological denial of any Jewish connection to the ancient Land of Israel."[34]

To respond to this, I will give a series of quotes from Theodor Herzl who popularized the term "Zionism," coined first by Nathan Birnbaum. Herzl is often considered the first real Zionist activist, though people like Yehuda Bibas, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and Judah Alkalai promoted Zionist ideas before him. Herzl, however, did form the World Zionist Organization and promoted Jewish migration to Palestine in an effort to form a Jewish state (Israel). He did this by arguing:

> … I cannot quite see how an attempt to create a homeland for a part of a people that feels superfluous, how the acquisition of a territory by means of a public discussion, could have a harmful effect on the rights of those who want to remain where they are. Don't you know what a colonial age we are living in? As a consequence of overpopulation, and of the resultant ever more acute social question, many nations are endeavoring to found overseas colonies in order to channel the flow of emigration there. This is the policy which England has been pursuing for decades, and which has been regarded as exemplary by many nations. ... Well, what is a state? A big colony. What is a colony? A small state. Mankind seems never to have seen

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Straus and Giroux, 1999).

33 Ironically this Puritan myth is the least defensible myth on the grounds of freedom of religion, as it is at heart an exclusionary story, and ensured the exclusion of people representing other faith dimensions. The Puritans had indeed experienced serious persecution after Charles II and the restoration of the monarchy, so it is further ironical that a failed project in Europe was seen as the cornerstone of this new American originary myth of being "a city upon the hill and a light unto the nations" (Matthew 5:14), given the sectarian divisions among themselves and the exclusion of everyone who was different. Freedom of religion surely requires an inclusionary story, in which case, the Quakers provide a far better model for such an originary myth. William Penn and Pennsylvania itself became a model of inclusion, with its inclusionary allowances of Lutherans and different Anabaptist groups who migrated from Europe to Lancashire County especially after the latter's total dislocation in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 with its *Cuius regio, eius religio* clause, Anabaptists having no prince of their own.

34 Irwin J. Mansdorf, "Is Israel a Colonial State? The Political Psychology of Palestinian Nomenclature" March 7, 2010, in *Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs*, No. 576, March-April 2010
http://jcpa.org/article/is-israel-a-colonial-state-the-political-psychology-of-palestinian-nomenclature/

anything terrible in that.[35]

In 1896 Herzl wrote the famous pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*) with the subtitle *Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Proposal of a Modern Solution for the Jewish Question), which is considered one of the most important texts of early Zionism. Herzl envisioned the founding of a future independent Jewish state, encouraging Jews from all across Europe to purchase land in Palestine. He argued that this would be the best way to avoid anti-Semitism in Europe, which he experienced especially as a journalist in France during the Dreyfus affair 1894-1906. He argued that:

> Anti-Semitism is a highly complex movement, which I think I understand … I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor a religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, and to solve it we must first of all establish it as an international political problem to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council... Let sovereignty be granted to us over a portion of the globe adequate to meet our rightful national requirements; we will attend to the rest. To create a new State is neither ridiculous nor impossible. Haven't we witnessed the process in our own day, among nations which were not largely middle class as we are, but poorer, less educated, and consequently weaker than ourselves? … Is Palestine or Argentina preferable? The Society will take whatever it is given and whatever Jewish public opinion favors. The Society will determine both these points. …Palestine is our unforgettable historic homeland. The very name would be a marvelously effective rallying cry. ... We should there form a part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism. We should as a neutral state remain in contact with all Europe, which would have to guarantee our existence.[36]

IV. The „Final Solution" to the „*Judenfrage*"

The West has a long and continuing history of persecution and horrific treatment of the Jews throughout its Christian history. In order to deal with this, and the ultimate guilt of the Shoah, it has completely legitimized and justified Israel's originary myth and its concomitant occupation of others' land. The West, after 1939, even generated a totally new lexicon of "Judeo-Christian" common virtue and morality, etc., which after the events of September 11, 2001 has been used most proficiently against Muslims and Islam. Prior to 1939 the Jews were simply referred to as "Christ Killers," and therefore were a people to be reviled. Thus, even when we accept, at our most liberal and just moments, the proposed concept of a two-nation structure for the land of Palestine, we simply demand that Israel move its territorial borders back to its original pre-occupational state, prior to Israel's great victory in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Six Day War of September 1967. Israel

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Theodor Herzl's "Who Fears a State" (1898), from Theodor Herzl, *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, vol. I, January 1896-June 1898, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1973), 211-15, as quoted in Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents* (4th edition; Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), pg. 56, emphases added.

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Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State)* 1896, from Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader,* (New York, 1960), pg. 204-09, 215-23, as quoted in Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents* (4th edition; Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), pg. 53-4, emphases added. Lorenzo Veracini interestingly argues that "Israel could celebrate its anticolonial/anti-British struggle exactly because it was able to establish a number of colonial relationships within and without the borders of 1948," *Borderlands*, vol. 6, No. 2, 2007.

gained East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt as part of the Camp David peace treaty in 1979. Then invoking the area's strategic importance, it effectively annexed the Golan Heights in 1981. East Jerusalem was also annexed. This victory thus laid the foundations of the contemporary stalemate. And the West lets this state of affairs continue to exist as the *status quo ante*, justifying it by the elapse of time, i.e., which is only some 50 years since 1967, hardly significant when one places that argument next to the timeline in the Zionist argument for the right of return.

In other words, a new state, with a completely new identity, was fabricated and put in place geographically, where some 1.85 million people were already living in 1946.[37] The majority of them were forced out and did not have the right to return to their own land, but a people who had been away "for around 2000 years" had an ontological birth right to return. This is what you call a very dubious prejudiced historiography and is a continuing myth as an indirect product of the Reformation biases, and its continuous vulgarities vis-à-vis both the Jews and the Turks.

All these conquered areas, still under Israeli control, are mostly populated by Palestinian Arabs, who are *de facto* and *de jure* in the purely political category non-Jewish. Whatever its current status, the territorial integrity of Israel, if at all acceptable in itself, was carved out by the United Nations' Resolution 181 of 1947, which mandated the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. But then came the declaration of the state of Israel in May 1948 which completely destroyed the Palestinians and made a large number of them into refugees in different Arab lands where they still live in dislocation.
If at all there is a historical justification, which I do not think exists as such, for the territoriality of the state of Israel, it has to be based on that UN mandate. Even after 68 years, the same UN is unable to produce a binding resolution and concomitant retributive teeth, and the powerful member states do not allow any serious punitive actions against the state of Israel in spite of its open confrontational violation of a huge number of UN resolutions demanding it return to its original territorial structures as established by the UN's own mandate in 1947. "As of 2013, Israel had been condemned in 45 resolutions by United Nations Human Rights Council since its creation in 2006 – the Council had resolved almost more resolutions condemning Israel than on the rest of the world combined. The 45 resolutions comprised almost half (45.9%) of all country-specific resolutions passed by the Council ... The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a number of resolutions saying that the strategic relationship with the United States encourages Israel to pursue aggressive and expansionist policies and practices. The 9th Emergency Session of the General Assembly was convened at the request of the Security Council when the United States blocked efforts to adopt sanctions against Israel."[38] The sheer inability to enforce any of these mandates, and the total destruction of the Palestinian people and their dignity, all challenge the UN's larger legitimacy and credibility, thus challenging the very grounds upon which the UN has the right to create a new state (viz., Israel) in the first place and why the world should accept it, the only country ever to be created by the UN.
If we look at political reasons – sans religious legitimation – for the state of Israel, then the punitive, retributive and restorative justice would have seriously penalized the state of Germany which

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37 C.f., "Population Statistics" in the Report of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), September 1947. See, https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/9a798adbf322aff38525617b006d88d7/07175de9fa2de563852568d3006e10f3?OpenDocument

38 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_UN_resolutions_concerning_Israel_and_Palestine

conducted the most horrific and now universally acknowledged Shoah, generated in no small part by the anti-Jewish sophistry of Luther.[39] Thus perhaps Bavaria should have been the location of the new state of Israel, carved out of Germany as compensation for its war crimes against humanity generally, and the Jewish people in particular, in the name of the superiority of the Aryan race. And even more importantly as a punishment for the whole political edifice and its related efficient fatal technology that was generated to simply wipe out a people who were the other. Or perhaps Poland should have been granted to the Jews as retributive justice for what had been done to them across Europe because they were perceived throughout Europe as not worthy of living in Europe, even though they had dwelt there for well over a millennium (thus the perennial, and multi-national, infamous *Judenfrage* vis-à-vis their citizenship). And if the US wanted to be a great champion of the Jewish cause after releasing whatever was left of the Jews in Europe, they should have given any of the following states to them, which even according to the latest census data of 2013 have less than a million people living in huge territories: South Dakota (844,877); Alaska (735,132); North Dakota (723,393); Vermont (626,630) and Wyoming (582,658) – all these states are several times larger than the current state of Israel, which today has an estimated population of 8,541,000 (which is almost three times the population of the above five states combined) living in a 8,522 sq.m. territory. I wonder what would have been the reaction of the Europeans and the Americans to such a retributive and compensatory settler state rather than passing the buck of their criminality on to the now much maligned Palestinian victims. Instead of having a retribution and punitive action taken against us, we transferred this punitive action and this retributive action to the people of Palestine. Here we replaced our ethnic guilt with a new form of ethnic prejudice, now against Arab speaking people, saying at least the people who are migrating and creating the state of Israel, had some links with Europe. It was like Afrikaans had some links with Europe. *By settling them in Palestine, the "final solution" that Hitler was searching for through the Shoah, actually took place. So the Jews are no longer a part of European citizenship, but are members of "their own state" and Europe is finally rid of them. Where the Holocaust did not succeed, the creation and backing of the state of Israel has been very successful, but the victims of all of this have been the innocent Palestinians.* And there is no avoidance of the criminality of this occupation on a purely temporal legitimacy, i.e., because such a long time has passed it is legitimate to possess this land on the squatter's right claim – shooting and killing the local residents as a part of the squatters claim de-legitimizes that claim completely. To claim squatter's rights of 50 years on the one hand, and then to claim historical rights based on some kind of original mythical territoriality of the "Promised Land" which is at least 4000 years old, on the other hand, is akin to trying to have cake and eat it too, and everything else with it. You simply can't have it both ways.

V. Religious legitimation for the State of Israel.

Religion then remains the only *raison d'être* to justify the creation of the state of Israel in Palestine after the sheer tragedy and the related guilt of the holocaust. And very specifically the only justification for this is the religious argument that this was the land that God promised the Jews. We who have been critically trained in theology, despite our epistemology, and methodology as historical critical scholars, were very quick to use mythical, traditional, and superstitious texts as determinative of foreign policy in 1948. So that instead of seeing the Jews of Europe as invading colonialists, we saw them as "the Return": people returning to their homeland after 1,813 years.[40]

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39 See my "Prejudice and Its Historical Application: A Radical Hermeneutic of Luther's Treatment of the Turks (Muslims) and the Jews" in *Liberation from Violence for Life in Peace*, 4th volume of a 6 volume work entitled *Radicalizing Reformation* commemorating the 500 year anniversary of Luther and the Reformation, ed. by Ulrich Duchrow and Craig Nessan, (Berlin, Germany: Lit verlag Dr. Hopf , 2015), pp. 105-142. The current paper is a further outlining of the issues discussed there in the context of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

40 The Great Revolt (66-70 CE) led to the destruction of the Temple and much of Jerusalem, and the exile of

If that is the operating rationale, then we do have to ask an even more fundamental epistemological question: Why are religion and politics being used in such a symbiotic way to justify a settler colonial state? Further, why are we all engendering and enabling a new holocaust, being perpetuated this time against the existing inhabitants of Palestine who were not in any way part of the original persecution which led to the formation of Israel? One of the most virulent attacks on Islam and Muslims in the West is the former's inability to separate religion and politics, an epistemological foundation negated by all "civilized" (read western) people who negate it on the basis of a very poor hermeneutics of Luke 20:20-26, and their concomitant mantra of *Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's*. Yet in the case of Israel, we are willing to justify this state on religious grounds, even though those religious arguments are highly dubious and, I believe, even false.

If the premise for Israel is based on the biblical story itself, then it is a troubled premise. Briefly, in Genesis 12.1-3 God initiates the promise of land to Abraham: "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'" In verse 7, God promises Abram the land of Canaan, specifically. By verse 10, however, there is a famine in this promised land, so Abram and his family are forced to move to Egypt. While there, Abram through highly dubious means (rather than as a part of God's promise), acquires huge wealth from the Pharaoh (Gen 12:11-16), who then kicks him out of Egypt on moral grounds (Gen 12:17-20), and he comes back to Canaan. If then the land now belongs to Abraham and the Jewish people, as promised by God, why does he negotiate to buy the land for the burial of Sarah in Genesis 23? Why does he have to buy the land when the Canaanites are willing to give it to him, "The Hittites answered Abraham, 'Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead.' (Gen 23:5-7). But Abraham insists on buying this piece of burial land at full price (Gen 23:13-16). So is the field and burial plot that Abraham bought, the promised land of Israel? Or is it the land that was later generated as part of the kingdom of Saul, David and Solomon (not your most ideal leaders, as one was paranoid, the other was a voyeur and killer of his lover's husband and even after God's demand never marries her, and the last had some 1000 wives and 400 concubines for whom he also built pagan temples)? That "halcyon" united Israel only lasted for the reign of these three kings, before it was divided. Even those divided kingdoms are conquered and the inhabitants exiled, not once but twice, the first occupation and exile of Israel under King Tiglath-Pilesar of Assyria (2 Kings 15:29), and the second and more comprehensive, of Judah, under Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-17). And when they do return, it is because of the dictates and under the aegis of a Zoroastrian Persian king, Cyrus the Great, and not as part of their own struggle or as any visible intervention of God. Cyrus decrees that they can return to their lands (2 Chr 36:23), and that they should rebuild the Temple, even dictating the template of that Temple (Ezra 6:3-5). His successor, Darius, continues to fund this effort (Ezra 6:8ff), giving them the means, tools and manpower to reestablish the Temple. There is thus essential gentile input in the very structure of the Second Temple which is the *shekinah Yahweh* in Jerusalem. Later the area is invaded by the Romans, and they are finally completely displaced from the land in 135 CE.

Thus, they have endured famine, occupation, enslavement, and several exiles. If there is any place in the Torah in which they have had compensation for God's blessing it is in Egypt, to which they run in their times of trouble. So is Egypt, in fact, the promised land?? Certainly, Canaan does not seem to be that promising: once Abraham comes to Canaan, because of famine there he immediately moves to Egypt, then he returns to Canaan, upon the duress of the Pharaoh, not God,

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many Jewish leaders, but it is the Bar Kochba revolt (132-136) which resulted in Jews being expelled and entirely banned from the area in 135 CE under Emperor Hadrian.

and his family stays for a generation and a half before they return, again because of famine, to Egypt, then they stay for 430 years in Egypt in large part even as slaves (Exodus 12:40ff). So a generation and a half versus a dwelling for a period of 430 years, which is the promised land? In all this one has to ask is everyone's hand against them and their hand against everyone else? The only other time that that issue emerges is under the united Kingdom (as mentioned above), and God does not even want to appoint a king for them but they insist (cf., 1 Samuel 1:7ff).

So I think we have to be extra careful about the kind of myths we generate in order to justify occupying a land as settler colonialists and dislocating, imprisoning within walls of oppression and humiliation, another people, thus enslaving them with the ultimate goal of their disappearance in the name of God. Contrary to this, however, this God states that, "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:21-24), and who requires for those who believe in this God, "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).

VI. Conclusion

We do not seriously question the justification for the creation of the state of Israel – the only moral justification that we have is our own guilt in the West for treating Jews constantly as the Other, even in our most profound and moral moments, like the Reformation. We have treated them not simply as an other, but as a people prejudiced against, negated, and violated repeatedly. A people against whom we have pejoratively slandered as "usurers" and "incredibly narrow and bigoted and do not fit in our society," etc. It is the kind of calumny we did when we called them Christ killers while praising Pontius Pilate, the Roman colonial master, for "not finding Christ guilty and washing his hands." While getting Christ killed, Pilate placed the guilt of this political and legal crime at the doors of Herod, his priests and the temple hierarchy, rather than where it belonged – with the imperial colonial Rome who alone had the right to mete out capital punishment. Very similar epithets are now applied with impunity to Muslims and Islam, without them having the protection that the Jews and Judaism have in the West today. No universal application of a virtuous, hospitable tolerance, or neighborliness here. For this connection, one of the better books that has been written is *Islamophobia* which shows the images of Jews before 1945, and the current images of Muslims in parallel structures.[41] So they could be kicked out, killed and treated always as foreigners, however long they had lived there. We do not have the generous hospitality of Goethean tolerance which argued for linguistic identity rather than the more racist markers of a biological, religious, and ethnic identity of the Germans. This has affected us seriously in the subsequent political theory until very recently, so that given the horrific history generated because of these markers we were reluctant to discuss ethnic and biological politics even though we continue to practice them in most of our political, economic and social contexts.[42]

The most cogent arguments that I have come across for the creation of the state of Israel are that it

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41 Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

42 See, for example, the situation of blacks and Hispanics in America and treating white immigrants as natural Americans and the First Nation people as either restricted to the reservation or having no rights, well-being and security. Even after writing several treaties which we have violated with impunity whenever needed, we are conducting similar politics even today as is so obvious in the Native American resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Similar practices are now daily routine against the Palestinians in the state of Israel, and any rational moral critique of Israel on these grounds is immediately tarred by the much-abused brush of being anti-Semitic placing you morally with Hitler, being a Semite myself, I find this highly objectionable and vile.

is a land for the victims of the most horrific and vile acts perpetrated by the most rational society generated by the Kantian/Hegelian Enlightenment universe. That a *vernünftige* and *wertfreie* scientific rational society was capable of this most devastating expression of racial, biological, ethnic, and religious prejudices is in itself horrifying, and worrying for the rest of the world. So much so, that we drafted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure that that kind of expression "does not take place in the world again;" as was the case for the final establishment of the World Council of Churches, both of which occurred in 1948. And yet, even today, in the name of our interests we have allowed, enabled, supported, funded, perpetuated, and backed oppressive racist regimes like the South African apartheid until 1994.[43] And today the developments in countries like France, Belgium, Germany and Holland, where there is open hostility against people who are different, so that we can "preserve our way of life," sounds very much like the operational principle behind Nazism – "our way of life."

A resolution to the Palestine-Israel problem cannot be reached unless one recognizes the violation that caused it in the first place. Without confession there is no remission of sins, and without confession and penance for sins committed in history there is no salvation, expiation, and forgiveness of sins. So we keep accepting as a moral discourse (and keep classifying as immoral those who challenge it) a definition of the Palestinians as terrorists, as uncivilized, with no rights to their own homeland, whereas the migratory colonist settler people were running away from a persecuted and centrally genocided community to practice some of the practices of their killers and victimizers.

There is no way we can accept the religious argument for the creation of the state of Israel. We should continue to demand a level of theological condemnation of Europe, and specifically Germany, and question its projected goodwill and intentions which generated the state of Israel. For the most unfortunate part of this goodwill is that Europe has been denuded of its Jewish population which even Hitler with all his most vile and technical ability could not achieve. This actually fulfilled Theodor Herzl's belief that anti-Semitism was never going to go away and that the only answer for the Jews of Europe was to have a nation of their own with the help of Europe and as part of European colonial interests and expansion into another part of the world. In order to support the victims of their major vile and calumnious act, Europe is yet again blaming the other: the Palestinian victims, and by extension all Muslims – these are the classical psychology and social practice of the oppressor.[44]

Until we actually confess our sins, to generate our absolution and salvation, we cannot create a just resolution and reconciliation. By blaming the victims and others we hope to create an impression of justice and peace – but both escape us. Theologically we have to ask whether operational prejudice against anybody is or is not a serious and fundamental violation against the Triune God: the Creator God who is the creator of all; the saviour God who reconciles the whole world (*kosmos*) who is not willing to count <u>their</u> transgressions against them (2 Cor. 5:19ff); and the Holy Spirit which is to be poured out on all flesh (*sarx*) and requires from all of us a prophetic, just, and fully participatory plurality (Acts 2), rather than a prejudice against people who don't look like us, believe like us, act like us, behave like us, or are culturally different – and this list can be expanded. Either we believe

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Even when the rights of equality were given to the African Americans, including the full right to vote, after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, these are being gradually stripped away by what Michelle Alexander rightly calls the New Jim Crow. Well over a million African Americans are put into the American prison systems taking away their rights to vote and black youth are being killed by the law enforcement agencies every day in the US for the most minimum of reasons (see the Black Lives Matter movement). c.f. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

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See William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim*, revised updated edition (New York: Vintage books, 1976) for a brilliant exposition of this theme.

in the crucified God who does not exercise his power so that the peace is brought about even if it means dying rather than continuing to arm ourselves and show our power – to hold any other position is to say the Roman Empire has actually won the moral and virtuous discourse and that the foundational grounding in the Cross for any such discourse is irrelevant. That is blasphemy and sacrilege!!!

Junaid Ahnad

The Relevance of Contemporary Calls for "Islamic Reformation" and Inter-religious Solidarity for Palestine

Since 9/11, there has been a desperate search for a 'Muslim Martin Luther' to usher in some Christian form of 'Reformation' in the Muslim world. This perspective is entirely ahistorical and ignores the radical differences that have existed between the histories of Western Christianity and the world of Islamdom.

When reading dominant narratives about the Muslim world today, we are at pains to escape the imagery of beheadings, stonings, suicide bombings and ‘senseless’ violence in general. The picture has obtained its most concrete manifestation in the form of ISIS. The ‘Islamic State’ seems to embody all that is wrong with a people who have clearly not kept up with the pace of history, and in fact now are trying to offer an atavistic, medieval alternative to it.

However, a critical unpacking of the ideology behind ISIS — however millenarian and myopic it may be — reveals legitimate grievances rooted in an unjust global political architecture which exploits, dehumanizes, and fuels violence among Muslims the world over.

While political expressions of Islam have existed over the past century, the vicious, reactionary, and most obscurantist forms of such currents got their steroid injections through the Western-backed “jihad” against the Communists in Afghanistan in the 1980s. This is clearly the first period of ‘radicalization’ — cradled, nurtured, and advanced by the powerful for their narrow, secular realpolitik.

The second period that dramatically increased terrorism — and not reduced it — has undoubtedly been engendered by post-9/11 ‘War on Terror’ politics. Its ‘impressive’ framework of solutions include: torture techniques such as waterboarding and sexual humiliation, wars and occupations, unchecked surveillance and spying, human rights violations, and so on. Its premise has been twofold: that Muslims only understand the language of force, and that there are deep religio-cultural features of theirs that need to be revamped and remolded in order to cater to the demands of their powerful neo-colonial overlords.

Missing in the War on Terror’s assessment in tackling the phenomenon of terror, however, is the West’s own involvement in a brute legacy of subjugation and oppression rooted first in European colonization and now American empire. With such a historical context in mind, it is clear that a people’s belief in Islamist, rather than secular politics, is not the root cause of terrorism, but rather a hegemonic world system dependent on continuous warfare and economic exploitation. Religion — and Islam specifically — has become a convenient scapegoat for power-holders post-9/11, which explains the radical attempts to dismantle and adulterate Muslim identity and agency.

In this context, one project is declared supreme by the gatekeepers of Western secular liberal democracy: the desperate search for the moderate Muslim. The objective has been pursued vigorously throughout the Muslim world, and generous funding and support has been offered to those who present themselves as being the moderate, modernist, liberal, or progressive, alternative to radical or fundamentalist Islam. Such a reductionist binary — in which Muslims are categorized as either "moderate" or "radical" — is not a new phenomenon, but rather reminiscent of the colonial "divide and conquer" policy.

The search for the 'moderate' Muslim takes place as the voice of the people advocating a middle path — the Islamic call to liberation — is dehumanized and reprimanded as incompatible with the standards of western secular rationality. Grounded in the foundational concept of human reason, Enlightenment philosophy derides epistemology, which does not recognize the omnipotence of human intellect. Mainstream western political discourse might not view such an axiom as problematic. However, one must question how such discourse impacts non-western societies that ground at least some of their intellectual and political traditions in scripture or religious based knowledge.

Secular liberal thought, which traces its origins back to the Enlightenment era, similarly problematizes Islamic discourse while simultaneously trying to restructure it along secular ideology. Not only should such a re-framing of an Islamic ethos be of concern from an anti-war and anti-empire perspective, as it coincides with post-9/11 War on Terror narrative, but also from the perspective of a collective Muslim consciousness that compels Muslims to intellectual honesty and authenticity. The project of the 'moderate' Muslim must thus be seen in light of imperial expansionism and as a challenge to even the possibility of a collective Muslim identity and political consciousness.

The hegemony of the post-9/11 liberal or moderate Islam project also ignores the deep-seated issues of structural injustice that perpetuate an environment of violence and conflict. When this discourse of 'moderation' or 'enlightenment' is divorced from a systemic critique of institutional subjugation and oppression, then most ordinary people in the Muslim world see little relevance in its function. It is no wonder, then, that the architects of the liberal Islam project advance a watered down, apolitical Islam that ignores state sponsored structural matrices of patriarchal, racial/ethnic, and class hierarchies of society and the global order.

ISIS and all such brutal groups will continue to thrive in the Muslim world as long as grotesque social conditions, such as class inequality, warfare, and extreme poverty, persist in these societies. Western political elites must recognize the consequences of colonial/neo-colonial expansionism and take responsibility for, directly or indirectly, engendering extremist, reactionary ideologies such as those espoused by ISIS.

This would entail very simple steps which could be undertaken immediately: halt all invasions, bombs, drones, and occupations, end support for dictatorial regimes, and support meaningful development that privilege the needs of the local populations rather than foreign multinational companies.

The various religious expressions emerging in contemporary times in post-colonial Muslim societies also make themselves irrelevant as they cater to the demands of local elites (and very often, their Western backers) and not to those of the bulk of the population who yearn for a praxis-based theology offering a better existence in the here and now. In such conditions, Muslims must dig through the Islamic canon for a discourse far more liberating than merely

the negation of beheadings or senseless violence or intolerance.

A theology of liberation exists within Islam, which advocates a Divine consciousness as the basis for challenging various forms of injustice. This Islamic tradition provides political agency through which not only is speaking truth to power prioritized, but also the necessity to engage in a concrete struggle for social transformation. The emancipation of the oppressed and suffering people ought to be the objective of such a theological discourse. The imperative is to respect global diversity and simultaneously assert an Islamic social responsibility that challenges the foundations of injustice and domination in the world. Though it may seem like a pipedream, it is probably only in the praxis of liberation theology that the Muslim world will find a way to disentangle itself from the grip of foreign powers, local despots, and reactionary social forces.

6. Mark Braverman

A CONFESSING CHURCH FOR THE PRESENT KAIROS
An Ecumenical Movement for the 21st Century

This paper reviews the theological, sociological and political issues related to the global church movement in response to the Palestinian call for liberation from Israeli oppression. Well into the second decade of the twenty first century, the global community faces an urgent threat to humanity and to the earth itself. An increasingly globalized economy controlled by supra-governmental corporations has led to a steady rise in poverty, conflict, dislocation, and to a process of global climate change with catastrophic implications. Fortunately, the previous century has also given us a legacy of prophetic action for human rights, pursued by denominational and ecumenical church bodies in solidarity with national liberation movements. Following the model of the South Africa Kairos document, the paper presents a political and social analysis of the current situation, describes the "church theology" that has supported the Zionist project, and discusses the challenge to the church in confronting Israeli Apartheid as a manifestation of the global neoliberal order. Concrete action steps are proposed.

This is the moment of grace and opportunity, when God issues a challenge for decisive action.
- Kairos South Africa "Challenge to the Church," 1985

Theology itself is not the fighting part here; it stands wholly at the service of the living, confessing, and struggling church.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

By leaving out the steps from confession to resistance, one ends up tolerating crimes, turning confession into an alibi, and, in view of the injustice committed, an indictment of the confessors.
- Eberhard Bethge

Any declaration of a status confessionis *stems from the conviction that the integrity of the gospel is in danger. It is a call from error into truth. It demands of the church a clear, unequivocal decision for the truth of the gospel.*
- World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 22nd General Council, Seoul, 1989

INTRODUCTION

In 1935 Dietrich Bonhoeffer sat at Finkenwalde, a seminary established in defiance of the Third Reich's prohibition against the teaching and preaching of the Confessing Church. Driven underground politically and theologically marginalized by the "German Christians" who had thrown in with the Nazi Regime, at Finkenwalde Bonhoeffer produced some of his most important work on the nature and mission of the Confessing Church and the meaning of the ecumenical movement. "Truth bears within itself the power to divide or it is itself surrendered," he wrote, acknowledging the power of the Confessing Church to challenge and unsettle the prevailing ecclesial order, the theological imperative necessitating its actions, and the sacrifice required of those obedient to its call. In a passionate appeal not only on behalf of the soul of his country, but for the integrity and faithfulness of church he loved, Bonhoeffer made it clear that the "Confessing Church does not confess *in abstracto*,..but *in concretissimo*," in this case against "the government of the National Church in Berlin." It was specific and it was urgent -- "a confession in which it is really a matter of life and death."[45] Although the arena of his original struggle was his native Germany, Bonhoeffer

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perceived early on that the implications were global, not only politically but ecclesially, and he began to write and speak increasingly about the ecumenical church.

Today civilization confronts a challenge as urgent as that faced by Bonhoeffer. Well into the second decade of the twenty first century, we as a global community face an urgent threat to humanity and to the earth itself. An increasingly globalized economy controlled by supra-governmental corporations has led to a steady rise in income inequality and to a process of global climate change with catastrophic implications. Civil wars, insurgencies and counterinsurgencies have devastated infrastructure and created unprecedented mass migrations, leading to increasing impoverishment, conflicts, and dislocation. Upsurges in nationalism and xenophobia are the highly disturbing accompaniments to these events. Governments pursue campaigns of invasion and colonial conquest, including against their own citizens, in violation of international law and covenants forged in the aftermath of the horrors of the twentieth century. The institutions, contracts and resolutions created by the global community to end war, poverty and hunger appear to count for little as governments and civil society institutions, including the churches, ignore or actively support this march toward global catastrophe.

Lamentably, the institutional church has often partnered with governments in the implementation of oppressive and racist policies, the cases of the Protestant church in Germany during the Third Reich and the great majority of the English and Afrikaans-speaking churches of South Africa being the most well known in recent history. Fortunately, the previous century has also given us a legacy of prophetic action, pursued by denominational and ecumenical church bodies in solidarity with national liberation movements. At critical times in the previous century, the church has roused itself and taken on the true mission of the church of Jesus Christ. Led by Christian theologians, clergy and laypersons at the grassroots, and ultimately by leaders of national, denominational and ecumenical church bodies in response to historical events, church actions have had a direct impact on human affairs on a global level.

This proud record began with the 1934 Barmen Declaration authored by German church leaders speaking out against a church in active collusion with the racism and hyper-nationalism of the Nazi regime. In midcentury, African American pastors and laypersons changed the political and social landscape of America in the struggle to end legal racism. The true church mobilized in 1968 in Uppsala, Sweden, when the World Council of Churches established the Programme to Combat Racism, affirming in word and deed that combatting institutionalized racism was the primary mission of the ecumenical world body. In 1977 in Dar Es Salaam the Lutheran World Federation declared a *Status Confessionis* in regard to apartheid, followed in 1982 in Ottawa with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' declaration of apartheid as heresy. In 1985, an ecumenical group of South African pastors and theologians took an unequivocal stand against Apartheid, declaring that the apartheid regime was illegitimate and that it was a Christian duty "to refuse to cooperate with tyranny and to do whatever we can to remove it."[46] Arising from and speaking with increasing insistence through these actions was the idea of one church in conciliar unity, transcending denominational and national divisions -- in South African

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[46] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Confessing Church," in Green CJ and DeJonge, MP, *The Bonhoeffer Reader*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 409.

"Challenge to the church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa," https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2011/05/08/the-south-africa-kairos-document-1985/, accessed March 19, 2016

theologian John de Gruchy's words, "the church as the community within which God manifests in history."[47]

THE PALESTINIAN CALL

Even as these momentous developments in the global church were unfolding, the church, in the thrall of theologies that have upheld Jewish privilege over the rights of the indigenous people of Palestine, and at the effect of geopolitical forces supported by neoliberal economic and political theories, slumbered through the relentless taking of Palestinian land and Israel's violent suppression of two Palestinian uprisings. Then, in 2009, the church was re-awakened by a new Kairos call, authored by an ecumenical group of Palestinian clergy, theologians and civil society activists. The Palestine Kairos document, entitled "A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering" has once again called the global church to its universal mission, summoning the power of the church to move governments and societies. Kairos Palestine articulates a theology that calls for non-violent resistance to the evil of occupation: "resistance with love as its logic." Naming the Israeli occupation a sin, it calls out to the international community, reserving its final appeal for the church itself: "What is the international community doing? What are the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel and in the Arab world doing? *What is the Church doing?*" (emphasis added) [48]

The church is called to lead now as it was in kairos moments past, embodying the social justice imperative of the first kairos, an indigenous struggle against a tyrannous occupation. Answering this call is not without cost. Today, as in previous struggles, prophetic action creates a conflict within the body of the church, surfacing the tension between its prophetic core of compassion for the oppressed and the vulnerable, and the caution so often exhibited by the institutional church, often in complicity or overt alliance with temporal power.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS: TOPPLING THE PILLARS OF SUPPORT

In their 2016 *This is an Uprising* activists and organizers Mark and Paul Engler argue that authoritarian and unjust regimes maintain power through the preservation of seemingly immutable beliefs and assumptions as well as through the actual political structures that maintain tyrannous systems. Political scientist Gene Sharp called these "pillars of support." Governments and systems of power rest on these pillars for the maintenance of the status quo. Racist and authoritarian regimes in particular function in this way: for example, colonial powers on the belief in the inferiority of the colonized and enslaved; tyrannous governments on the divine or natural right to wield supreme power over subject groups. Movements for change succeed by challenging and ultimately removing these supports. "Movements succeed," write the Englers, "when they win over ever-greater levels of public support for their cause and undermine the pillars of support." [49] Following Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr. and other leaders of grassroots liberation movements, the Englers further maintain that the creation of division within and disruption of established institutions and systems is not an unintended consequence but a necessary ingredient for

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47 John de Gruchy, *A Theological Odyssey: My Life in Writing*, Stellenbosch, Sun Media, 2014, 175.

48 "A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering," http://www.kairospalestine.ps/content/kairos-document, accessed March 19, 2016.

49 Engler M and Engler P, *This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt is Shaping the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Nation Books, 2016, 193.

achieving the sought-after social or political goals.

Toppling the ideological, theological and political pillars that supported the apartheid regime was precisely the aim of the authors of the South African kairos document. “The first task of a prophetic theology for our times,” reads the document, “would be an attempt at social analysis or what Jesus would call “reading the signs of the times” (Mt 16:3) or “interpreting this KAIROS” (Lk 12:56). The South African church leaders and activists presented a “social analysis that would enable it to understand the mechanics of injustice and oppression.” They described what they termed the “church theology” that through the false use of words such as justice, nonviolence and reconciliation, served to justify and uphold the political reality that was at the root of the injustice. They held that the system could not be reformed, because as long as these pillars of support remained in place, so too did the fundamental ideological and political structures of tyranny. Kairos South Africa called for an end to rule based on a supremacist political ideology supported by the pillars of ethnic nationalism, belief in the historic right to supreme power, and a theology that granted divine authority to this political program.

Israel’s settler colonial project rests on two pillars.

Pillar 1, political: the Snare and the Delusion

Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has argued that what is commonly known as the “Israel-Palestine conflict” is best understood not as a struggle between two powers, indeed not as a “conflict” at all, but as a settler colonial enterprise: the project to ethnically cleanse the indigenous population of historic Palestine in order to establish a Jewish state. The offenses against the Palestinians have been sanitized, indeed effectively denied -- cast as a narrative of national liberation, with Israel as the victim in need of protection from an implacable enemy. For half a century, this pillar of mythology and deception has supported the political theater of a “peace process,” a supposed negotiation between equal parties for the division of the territory into two independent, autonomous sovereign states. Despite what has been officially put forward by diplomats and politicians, this outcome of two states sharing the territory of historic Palestine was never intended by Israel or its U.S. backer. Indeed, the endgame has already been reached in the reality of a single apartheid state, in which a Jewish minority rules over a subject population of Palestinians. The protests of the international community have had no effect on the relentless progress of this cynical and deceptive process. Despite the growing recognition that the “two state solution” is dead, that it in fact was an illusion from the beginning, governments and supporters of Israel, from both liberal and conservative camps, continue to call for it. The church has been deeply complicit in this tragic and criminal process. By and large recognition of this reality has been absent in the statements of denominational, national and ecumenical bodies, who, even as they decry the abridgement of the rights of Palestinians by the State of Israel, continue to strengthen this pillar of support for the Zionist colonial settler program by repeating the “two states for two people” mantra.

Pillar 2, theological: A Modern Heresy

Alongside the political pillar of support stands the pillar of a theologically-informed ideology deeply embedded in our Western culture, its origins dating back to English Protestantism. This theology has been expressed in several forms of Zionism, which although conceived as a political ideology, has become completely interpenetrated by theology. Since 1948 and even more powerfully after Israel’s 1967 conquest of the remainder of historic Palestine, Zionism has merged with mainstream Judaism, affirmed across the Jewish theological and cultural spectrum as essential to Jewish identity and belief. Similarly, Zionism has been woven into the warp and woof of

Christian theology because of the deeply felt Christian responsibility for Jewish suffering at the hands of the church. Christian self-perception has become strongly associated with Christian penitence and the quest for reconciliation with the Jewish people. Christian Zionism, as it is called, is expressed across the spectrum of Christian thought and belief, from progressive to the most conservative. In mainline Christianity, it effectively grants the Jewish people a right to the land on the basis of their past suffering and confers innocence to the Jewish people for any sins committed in implementing that privilege. Informed by so-called "Post-Holocaust" theology, liberal Christians tend to accept unquestioningly the equation of criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. Unwritten rules dictate that although Jews and non-Jews alike may pay lip service to the cause for Palestinian rights and to the concept of a Palestinian state, they may not advance any arguments or efforts that challenge fundamental Zionist assumptions. In Christian fundamentalist thought, the Jewish claim to land is grounded in literal interpretations of Biblical promises/prophecies. This eschatology was strengthened by the 1967 conquest, the Jewish possession of all of Jerusalem seen as a signal of the imminent return of Jesus. Absent the End Times component, fundamentalist Christian Zionism is shared by liberal Christians with respect to accepting the Old Testament promise of land as literal and in force. Christian Zionism in both these forms is heretical and unbiblical because it negates the core of gospel teachings against territoriality and ethnic triumphalism.[50] Nevertheless, until recently [51] it has remained unchallenged across the ecumenical spectrum and has powerfully influenced political support for Israeli expansionism at the expense of Palestinians.

Liberal Zionism

Mention must be made of what has become known as "liberal Zionism," which might be considered a "third pillar." The aim of liberal Zionism is to salvage the Zionist project through (1) efforts to ameliorate discrimination within "Israel," (i.e. the state established within the 1949 cease-fire lines that served as a *de factor* border until June 1967) against Arab citizens of Israel and people of color, and (2) collusion with the fiction that Israel and its Western allies are working toward the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. As a moderate, reformist response, liberal Zionism exhibits the key features of "church theology" as described in the 1985 South African "Challenge to the Church:" a theology, in the words of the document, that is in "a limited, guarded and cautious way critical of the oppressive system but that in its superficiality and lack of an adequate analysis of the situation, serves to shore up rather than to challenge the injustice." Indeed, the "two states" championed by Israel and the Western powers as a political solution bears disturbing similarity to the black homelands proposed by the Apartheid government in the 1980s and the accompanying proposals to "share power" with blacks in the federal legislature. The liberal Zionist response to criticism of Israel represents a major challenge for the church and is an important component of both the political and theological pillars of support. It is championed by institutional Jewish interests and supported by many Christians reluctant or unwilling to create a rift with Jews on personal, professional, and institutional levels.

Standing firmly on their pedestals, these pillars together have served to support Israel's illegal and

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It is also heretical for Jews because Zionism in its modern incarnation justifies domination, exploitation and dispossession on the basis of race. This negates the transformation of Judaism from a territorial, cult-based national religion into its modern form born in the diaspora, a faith expressing the social justice principles of its monotheistic core.

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See Burge, Gary M, *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic) 2010 and Davis, Walter T, Wagner Donald E, *Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land* (Eugene: Pickwick) 2014.

immoral actions. Challenge the idea of a Jewish state and you are answered with the objection that Zionism requires it. Challenge Zionism, and you are confronted with the reality of the Jewish state that depends on the acceptance and legitimization of Zionism as both a theological principle and a political program. Like Samson standing between the columns upon which rested the house of his oppressors, both must be toppled in order to bring about the required change in the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians.

False church, true church

In his struggle against the heresy of the racist ideology that had taken possession of the German church, Bonhoeffer often spoke of the division between "false" and "true" church He maintained that the boundaries of the true church emerge in its response to the ideas and practices pursued by a church that has strayed from the core principles of the gospel. Bonhoeffer discovered in his struggles with the ecumenical movement that this is true not for theology that blatantly sides with racism and tyranny, but when church bodies attempt to accommodate to injustice through a blurring of the distinction between right and wrong. The theological and ecclesial pillars that support oppression and tyranny are built of outright lies and deception, but also of fraudulent representations of truth and justice. This is the thrust of Kairos South Africa's exposure of the "reforms" undertaken by a regime struggling to maintain itself in the face of increasing resistance to injustice. "There have been reforms and, no doubt, there will be further reforms in the near future," wrote the authors of the South African "Challenge to the Church" in 1985. "They seldom do more than make the oppression more effective and more acceptable. If the oppressor does ever introduce reforms that might lead to real change this will come about because of strong pressure from those who are oppressed." [52] Thus is the false church unmasked and false theologies exposed.

It is the role of the true church to serve as the conscience, the mouthpiece, and the organizing body for resistance to oppression and the bringing about of necessary change in human affairs. It does so not as the church of brick and mortar, structures of authority, and institutions set off from one another through doctrinal and national divisions, but in a return to its beginnings as *ekklesia* – as Bonhoeffer laid out early in his ecumenical writings, above all else a community of people committed to the Lordship of Christ in the world, a church, as he wrote, that is truly the church "only when it exists for others."[53]" Charles Villa Vicencio, writing during the tumultuous final years of Apartheid, describes this "alternative church…seek[ing] its theological center outside of itself…seeking to rediscover a gospel identity, reactivating the dangerous memory of its revolutionary beginnings. It is a church within the church and a church beyond the church which carries within it resources which are capable of transforming the dominant structures not only of the church but of society." [54]

Bonhoeffer has written that "[i]n times which are out of joint…the gospel will make itself known." [55] Baldwin Sjollema, the first Director of the World Council of Churches' Programme

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52 "Challenge to the church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa," https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2011/05/08/the-south-africa-kairos-document-1985/, accessed March 19, 2016

53 Bonhoeffer, DBW 8, 560.

54 Charles Villa Vicencio, *Lost in Apartheid,* 193

55 John de Gruchy, Bonhoeffer and South Africa, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmanns, 1984, 60.

to Combat Racism, echoes this principle in his 2015 memoir *Never Bow to Racism*: "…the struggle against racism" he writes, "is not only a struggle against injustice, it is also a struggle for the integrity of the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ. At that moment, racism becomes an ecclesiological issue because the integrity of Christian faith and praxis is at stake." [56] This is the "necessary bondage" of the church of which Karl Barth spoke, the challenge posed by the Confessing Church, perhaps particularly to those pastors who chose to remain "neutral" rather than to take the radical stand pursued by Bonhoeffer. De Gruchy has suggested that "liberal indifference" or passive compliance of church leaders represented the "false church" even more than the outright racist and collaborationist *Deutsche Christen.* [57]

The lessons of the past speak clearly to the challenge of the present kairos. How can the church learn from and remain faithful to that legacy in confronting the conditions of today? How will it meet the challenge of this kairos? Can a new and renewed ecumenical movement, responsive to the ecclesiological and political conditions of our times, provide the setting and the platform for this work?

THE NEW ECUMENICISM: TOWARD A GLOBAL KAIROS

Ecumenism: accommodation or prophetic challenge?

"The question has been posed," wrote Bonhoeffer in the critical year of 1935, asking whether the ecumenical movement would step up to "pronounce judgment on war, racial hatred and social exploitation." "This is not an ideal," wrote the young pastor, summoning his European and American colleagues to fulfil the mission of the nascent international church movement, "but a commandment and a promise."[58] The implications for us today are as deep, as broad, and as urgent, if not more so, than they were for Bonhoeffer. The question has been posed: words, or action? Obedience, or equivocation? The emergence of the Palestinian struggle as a cause that unites the church recalls Bonhoeffer's struggle to articulate the meaning of the *oikumene*. Early on, Bonhoeffer addressed the conflict between two very different notions of the nature and purpose of the ecumenical movement. In the first, the ecumenical movement serves as a deliberative body, committed to bringing disparate churches together for mutual understanding and "non-binding" dialogue. The second, in line with Bonhoeffer's own uncompromising vision, was of the ecumenical movement as "a community of faith placing itself under the word of God and therewith coming to an authoritative *decision* on where its obedience to Christ lies."[59] Indeed, Bonhoeffer arrived at the conclusion that the ecumenical movement did not exist to serve the churches, but was in fact a form of the church, indeed *the form* of the true church. "The Confessing Church, he wrote, "stakes its identity and existence on its *confession.* "There is only a Yes or a No to this confession," wrote Bonhoeffer, speaking of the proclamations that had emerged from Barmen and Dahlem in response to the heresies of the German church under the Third Reich. In Bonhoeffer's case the confession was in reference to the heresy of the Reich Church, but it is ever so through changing

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56 Sjollema, B., *Never Bow to Racism: A Personal Account of the Ecumenical Struggle,* WCC Publications, Geneva, 2015, 184.

57 De Gruchy, op cit, 23.

58 Clements, K, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ecumenical Quest,* Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2015, 172.

59 *ibid,* 169.

contexts. What became known in the Germany of Bonhoeffer's time as the *church struggle* has manifested as such at other critical times: the black liberation movement in the U.S., the South African church struggle against Apartheid, and now Palestine. In every instance, the cry of those calling for resistance to injustice is answered by forces within the church that seek wish to muffle those voices, not through outright suppression but through appeals to reason, arguments for caution, and proposals of compromise.

The question of the identity and mission of the church is one that has followed, one might say productively vexed, the ecumenical movement throughout its history. It was the subject of World Council of Churches General Secretary Willem Visser 't Hooft's address to the Fourth Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968. As one who interacted with Bonhoeffer during the years of Bonhoeffer's struggle with the ecumenical movement, it is more than likely that Visser 'T Hooft had the young German's struggle very much in mind as he spoke these words to the assembled a generation later, as the world body prepared to focus its attention on the anti-racism and anti-colonial movements that were gaining momentum in the decade of the 60s.[60] "So many conceive of unity in terms of uniformity and centralization," Visser 'T Hooft pointed out -- but for the church "the great tension [is] between the vertical interpretation of the Gospel as essentially concerned with God's saving action in the life of individuals, and the horizontal interpretation of it as mainly concerned with human relationships in the world." Visser 'T Hooft, however, rejected this division as a false dichotomy -- a failure to understand the true nature of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ. Rather than being separate from or in conflict with it, the vertical dimension of "God's saving grace in the life of individuals" was inseparable from the horizontal imperative for action in the world. "True unity" for the church, he maintained, is found rather in "faithfulness to God's proclamation of the unity of humankind and His incarnation in the life, ministry and sacrifice of Jesus Christ and through the church as a fellowship of faith acting directly in human affairs."[61] In the words of Keith Clements, chronicler of Bonhoeffer's ecumenical quest, the ecumenical movement finds its true mission not as a functional organization to serve the churches, but rather, as "a community of faith placing itself under the word of God and therewith coming to an authoritative *decision* on where its obedience to Christ lies."[62] When the pillars of tyranny are toppled, what remains is not rubble or destruction, but justice and compassion, carried out by a community committed to the Lordship of Christ, the word of God incarnate in the affairs of humankind.

A new ecumenism: returning to the church struggle

Clearly, the need for the ecumenical power of the church is as great or greater now than it was in the previous century. But what will serve as the heir to the ecumenical movement in its proudest moments? Sjollema, writing in 2015, acknowledged the World Council of Church's diminished ability to achieve the consensus necessary to mount prophetic actions such as the Programme to

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Martin Luther King Jr. had been the scheduled key speaker. Following his assassination in April, he was replaced by James Baldwin. In his address, Baldwin said: [quote about how the church must make fighting racism its top issue or it will be totally irrelevant].

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Visser 'T Hooft, W, "The Mandate of the Ecumenical Movement," Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, 1968, in Kinnamon, M and Cope, BE, *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices,* (Geneva, Grand Rapids: WCC Publications, Eerdmans), 38-43

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Ibid, 169

Combat Racism, initiated in 1970 following the Uppsala assembly. It has, in fact, retreated into the comfortable "functional" role of supporting the stability and coexistence of church institutions across denominational and national divisions, the very role against which both Bonhoeffer and Visser 'T Hooft had argued. "After 65 years of existence," laments Sjollema, "the WCC has lost its pioneering role;" its original mandate has changed. It has become a bureaucracy. It no longer takes initiatives on its own; it now depends on its member churches for that."[63] Although the World Council of Churches has taken the Palestine issue on directly over the past two decades, its ability to mobilize action with respect to Palestinian suffering and Israeli crimes is constrained because it has declared its function to be representing the heads of churches, who as such are primarily concerned with preserving long-term relationships and staying faithful to the Post-Holocaust penitential agenda. There is verbal commitment to social justice, there is concern about misuse of the Bible and the perversion of Christian principles and of liberal concepts of democracy and equality, but the formal agenda of the world body today appears to be about serving the interests of the national churches and global denominations, and on finding ways to bring them together in consensus -- to "acting together or not at all" as expressed at a recent WCC symposium on Palestine. *The institutional ecumenical "body" does not have a body in an incarnational sense.* It is very far from manifesting costly discipleship. This is why we must revisit Uppsala, Ottawa, Cottesloe, and the letter from Birmingham Jail. Bonhoeffer writes that it is in the *Gemeinde,* the community in which the true spirit of the church resides, that the church can fulfill its mission to be obedient to the word of God, to indeed *be the church* in the area of human affairs. It is as true today as it was for Bonhoeffer in his time, that this is achieved through struggle -- in Bonhoeffer's formulation, achieving unity through disunity:

> Neither unanimity, uniformity, nor congeniality memokakes it possible, nor is it to be confused with unity of mood. Rather, it is a reality precisely where the seemingly sharpest outward antitheses prevail… there unity is established through God's will… the more powerfully the dissimilarity manifests itself in the struggle, the stronger the objective unity.[64]

These same issues confront us today in embracing an ecumenical vision for the church. Never have the issues that divide and the "antitheses" been more acute and more deserving of direct, unswerving gaze. Writing in the 1980s, German theologian Ulrich Duchrow observed that the emergence of the ecumenical movement in the 20th century required a "new language" for the church, which had been dominated by the "political and legal principle of territorialism…[its] unity conceived of in terms of imperial law, on the Centre-peripheral principle."[65] For a church freed of the constraints of historically validated models of social and political organization and modes of thinking, conflict with the institutional church is inevitable. A church that focuses on the urgent realities of the present context will confront the "historical" church that will act to maintain the status quo, seeking to avoid "its own death, which every organized structure, like every individual, fears…." [66] This emerged dramatically in the reluctance of churches in the industrialized West to act on the Lutheran World Federation's call for a *status confessionis* with respect to Apartheid in

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63 Sjollema, *Never Bow to Racism,* 199

64 Clements, K, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ecumenical Quest,* Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2015, 62.

65 Ulrich Duchrow, *Conflict Over the Ecumenical Movement,* World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1980, 298-299 (also in de Gruchy, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Witness to Jesus Christ,* 143)

66 Duchrow, *op cit,* 305

1977, because it threatened financial interests in South Africa. [67] In his letters from prison Bonhoeffer focused in particular on the urgent need for the church to be liberated from its investment in the institutional church itself, on how the fear of division paralyzes its ability for prophetic action. Bonhoeffer related this specifically to the question of the ecumenical. Clements writes of Bonhoeffer's expressed aversion in his final words from prison "to any notion of privilege in religion and nothing speaks more loudly…of privilege than do confessional differences and the self-justifying pride and the largely fictional identities they generate to sustain and reproduce themselves, a dynamic which constantly vitiates ecumenical commitment."[68]

Holy restlessness

This fear-based conservatism on the part of church bodies supports the very conditions that threaten human and environmental survival. Duchrow describes a church limited to viewing "the present and the future as a linear extension of the past" and as such instrumental in bringing "the whole human family…[to] the edge of destroying itself and its natural basis by the aimless growth of fragmenting systems of science and technology."[69] We have again arrived at a pass in which we must ask, as did Charles Villa Vicencio in 1988, "Can religion truly break the iron cage of history? Can religion produce a qualitatively different kind of society? Is the Kingdom of God a real possibility?"[70]

Villa Vicencio's question has theological as well as ecclesial implications. Bonhoeffer, the consummate and passionate theologian, understood this as the crisis grew in his own life and within that of the German church. He came to understand that in the crucible of history, it ultimately comes down not only to how theology is understood, but how it is practiced within the community charged to bring the Kingdom of God. "Theology itself is not the fighting part here;" wrote Bonhoeffer in the 1935 "The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement," "it stands wholly at the service of the living, confessing, and struggling church." "The Confessing Church," he continued, "stakes its identity and existence on its *confession.* There is only a yes or no to this confession. Is it a place for coming to an authoritative decision on where its obedience to Christ lies? Or is there to be endless discussion of possibilities, forever, evading a division of the spirits?" And finally, the question that is posed even more strongly today: "Who can say that the ecumenical movement will not emerge more strongly from the struggle, prompted more strongly and more authoritatively precisely by this disruptive challenge? [71]

Clements describes Bonhoeffer as "a disturber of the ecumenical peace," his passionate, at times agonized appeal to the ecumenical movement of his time lying at the heart of his ecclesiology: "Bonhoeffer's call, resounding through the years 1932-34, for the ecumenical movement really to believe in itself and to anticipate as much as possible what it means to be the one church of Christ in and for the whole world, is a call to risk taking, which is what confessing always involves…There is for Bonhoeffer a holy restlessness which can never be satisfied with a minimizing ecumenism

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67 Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* Translated, David Lewis, (Geneva: WCC Publications), 1987, 102

68 Clements, op cit, 265

69 Duchrow, *op cit*, 305

70 Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 201.

71 Bonhoeffer, in Duchrow, *ibid*, 320

basically content with cooperation, dialogue, and lazy theories of 'reconciled diversity.'" [72]

May we be possessed by this holy restlessness as we rise to meet the challenge before us.

CHALLENGING EMPIRE

The Kairos Palestine Document has engendered a global response to the Palestinian cause. It has spawned documents from kairos organizations worldwide, responding to the Palestinian call while standing squarely in the contexts of their own local cultural and political struggles. [73] In a 2012 paper, "Bonhoeffer's Legacy and Kairos Palestine," John de Gruchy draws a straight line from Germany, to South Africa, to Palestine. "Bonhoeffer's influence," he states, "is clearly evident in the Kairos Palestine Document just as it was in the original South African Kairos Document in 1986. His personal example of resistance to oppression, his insistence that there can never be security without justice, and his ecumenical commitment to peace, immediately suggest that what he had to say on such issues during the 1930's is of critical importance today." [74] Steve de Gruchy has observed that the abiding influence of South Africa comes increasingly into focus as we become more aware of the global scope of the current struggle. Reflecting on the South African experience, in which the interchurch struggle figured prominently even as the church strove to find a common voice, de Gruchy notes that "[t]he global focus on apartheid facilitated much of [the] international networking" that led to the downfall of the regime.[75] Raising the issue of globalization, de Gruchy argued that ecumenism is key to the emerging role of the church as a force for social justice, citing again the struggle against apartheid, in which "historic confessional differences were shelved in favor of united witness." [76] The importance of Palestine beyond its own context is also evidenced in the increasing recognition of the intersectionality of the Palestinian cause with other liberation and human rights struggles, and the inseparability of each local struggle with the environmental, social justice, economic and political issues that bear directly on the fate of the Earth. This has most recently emerged in the recognition of the powerful connections between Palestinian liberation the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S., and popular struggles for rights and equality in South America, Asia, and Europe, where the Palestinian story has taken on powerful symbolic value with respect to colonialism, economic oppression, and state-sanctioned racism.

The 2015 "Dangerous Memory" conference held in Johannesburg on the 30th anniversary of the South African "Challenge to the Church" provided direct and concrete expression of these principles. Naming the "Empire Theology" undergirding the realities of the present kairos, a direct line was drawn from South Africa, to Palestine, to the global struggle: [77]

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72 Clements, op cit, 290

73 Braverman, M., "The Moment of Grace and Opportunity: The Global Kairos Movement for Justice in the Holy Land," *Theologies and Cultures* Vol. XI, No. 1, June 2014, 42-83.

74 John W. de Gruchy, "Bonhoeffer's legacy and Kairos-Palestine," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 143, July 2012, 67-80.

75 John de Gruchy, with Steve de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 2004, 194.

76 Steve de Gruchy, *Church Struggle in South Africa*, 257.

77 Kairos 30th Anniversary Statement: Dangerous Memory and Hope for the Future. https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2015/08/20/kairos-sa-30th-anniversary-conference-statement/. Accessed

> In our time, we find that various sites of pain and struggle are joined in a Global Kairos, a shared quest for justice. In our discussions, we named our shared struggle against the scourge of this global empire of our times. Empire is an all-encompassing global reality seeking to consolidate all forms of power while exploiting both Creation and Humanity. The empire we face is not restricted by geography, tribe, language or economy. Empire is an ideology of domination and subjugation, fueled by violence, fed by fear and deception. It manifests itself especially in racial, economic, cultural, patriarchal, sexual, and ecological oppression. Empire deceptively informs dominant, white supremacist, capitalist paradigms controlling global systems and structures. Global empire is sustained by weapons and military bases along with ideologies and theologies. [78]
>
> The dangerous memory of the South African Kairos document provided a prophetic critique of State Theology, theologies that validate and confirm forms of state terror. It identified as heresy theologies that justify Apartheid. In our time, we are called to expand this critique and rejection of state theology to address Imperial Theology, the 'software' that justifies imperial exploitation and oppression. We were encouraged to find that, although Empire seeks to divide communities from one another, peoples' resistance can unite us across religious, ethnic and culture divides.

In its global scope, its call for a community of resistance across national, religious and ethnic lines, and its focus on theology, "Dangerous Memory" has set the stage for the work of building an ecumenical movement for our time.[79]

KEY ISSUES FOR AN ECUMENICAL RESPONSE TO THIS *KAIROS*

Several key issues emerge from the preceding analysis, and serve as a guide in formulating an action plan:

Church struggle. Change originates from the grassroots. Inevitably, actions that challenge the domination system's oppression of the disadvantaged and vulnerable will put communities of the faithful in conflict with the efforts of the institutional church when its effort to preserve the status quo, involves support of oppressive regimes or practices -- a church, as Bonhoeffer wrote from prison, that will "fight for its own preservation, as if this were an end in itself." [80] But it is this very struggle that Bonhoeffer saw as key to the vitality, usefulness and essential nature of the church. This, he wrote, is also a key aspect of the ecumenical movement, which must embrace this struggle, even as it "shudders before the gravity of a cleavage in the church,"[81] "Separation is at hand,"

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78 Compare with Duchrow's summary of Gross' description of the "new fascist order…an exploitative combination of imperial expansion, domestic repression, militarism and racism.." which Gross claims to be the *status quo* of the world order in the post WWII global reality. (Duchrow, 1987, 115)

79 cf. the Harare Assembly of the WCC in 1998, quoted by Steve de Gruchy in *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, p 252: "The vision behind globalization includes a competing vision to the Christian commitment to the *oikumene*, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth…"

80 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Thoughts on the Day of Baptism of Dietrich Wilhelm Rüdiger Bethge, in Green CJ and DeJonge, MP, *The Bonhoeffer Reader*, 787.

81 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement, in de Gruchy, JW, *Dietrich*

Bonhoeffer wrote to a friend in September 1933 after Nazi regime barred pastors of Jewish descent from serving their churches, expressing, in retrospect, more wish than reality. Writing in the early years of the Confessing Church, as he began to articulate the concept of the ecumenical movement, Bonhoeffer declared that in this clarity and willingness to differentiate itself from the institutional church, the church ecumenical becomes the "living, confessing, and struggling church." [82]

Duchrow observes that in situations where the question of a *status confessionis* has emerged, the appearance of what he has termed "discipleship groups" are necessary for reminding the church of the justice imperatives that have been betrayed by false theology. Perhaps at no time since the global fight against nuclear armament has the church been mobilized in discipleship groups the way it has for Palestine. This is occurring at multiple levels of the church, and organizations appearing at congregational and community levels, within denominations, and in networks of local groups such as Kairos, the German Palestine solidarity network, and Sabeel. Costly discipleship is emerging at national and global levels in the mobilization of campaigns against companies involved in specific human rights scandals (Caterpillar, G4S, Motorola Systems), and in the growing response to the 2005 Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions.[83] It is particularly important to see the growth of education and action at congregational and local levels. This is a strong example of how, in Duchrow's words, "The local church is the scene of mission and of training in Christian faith and practice...the congregations are really the starting point for the training of the church institutions in discipleship." [84]

The neoliberal challenge. Today, the church struggle is characterized increasingly by the confrontation between the actions of church groups at the grassroots, in alliance with non-faith based liberation struggles, and the forces of neoliberalism. The latter are often disguised as efforts designed to promote the welfare of the masses. In reality, they are intended to preserve and advance the status quo of the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many. Today, the institutional church is joined by Jewish religious and advocacy groups on national and international levels, as well as governments, in support of Israel's colonialist project. This is perhaps the greatest challenge that the church movement for Palestinian liberation will face in the current struggle, encountering an even steeper gradient than that faced by previous global movements. Few outside the Third Reich or among those directly subject to its tyranny questioned the evil embodied in the authoritarian and racist nature of its program. Decades before the fall of the South African apartheid regime, the world at large had soundly condemned the racist and brutal realities of Apartheid South Africa. Even those secular and church leaders in South Africa who refrained from active resistance acknowledged the political and theological unacceptability of Apartheid and were not misled or confounded by the "reforms' proffered by the regime. In the case of Israel, however, the world, on popular as well as official levels, has by and large accepted the fiction of Israel as a society committed to human rights and equality for all its citizens.

Bonhoeffer, Witness to Jesus Christ, 144.
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Ulrich Duchrow, *Conflict Over the Ecumenical Movement*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1980, 321 (also wjc 143)
83

https://bdsmovement.net
84

Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* Translated, David Lewis, (Geneva: WCC Publications), 1987, 65

The trappings of a liberal democracy and a recent escalation of public relations efforts by Israel have helped to perpetuate this myth. Supporters of the status quo of Jewish hegemony in historic Palestine employ classic "reform" strategies, including support for minor, incremental improvements in the human rights situation inside Israel, lip service to the idea of a sovereign Palestinian state, and an attempt to co-opt the Palestinian call for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions through a parsing and gutting of its three demands -- for example limiting boycott to products produced in West Bank Settlements. [85] "Liberal Zionism," discussed above, has thus emerged as one form of the neoliberal response to efforts to put an end to Israel's colonial project.

Challenging the interfaith deal: From post-Holocaust to post-Nakba

For almost two millennia, the church defined itself through negation of the Other -- the barbarians, unbelievers, and rejecters of the true faith vilified in a "binary logic of Us vs. Them." [86] Brigitte Kahl has described how "nominal Christianity" has authorized "imperial globalization" through the "aggressive justification of the Western Self and the mentality of conquest." [87] This worldview found particularly toxic expression in the Reformation, with Luther's demonization of the Jew, the "Turk," and the "Papists," with far-reaching and disastrous effects on church doctrine and action through the centuries. Then, in the mid-twentieth century, a remarkable turnabout occurred. In a paroxysm of horror, shame and guilt following the Nazi genocide, the church, beginning in Germany and spreading West, undertook a project of penitence through a stunning reversal of its stand on the Jewish people. Instead of being despised for rejecting the foretold Messiah, the Jews were restored as the most beloved of God, the original, exclusivist covenant now reinstated and with it the conditional but irrevocable promise of the land. [88] This "Post-Holocaust" formulation stood replacement theology on its head. Instead of seeing itself as the triumphant replacement of the Jewish people and inheritor of the covenant, Christianity in its mainline Protestant form has now defined *itself* negatively in its confession of *the* Christian sin of anti-Judaism.[89] But Christians are not left out in the cold in this new order -- as "guests in the house of Israel" they take their place as fellow inheritors of the divine covenant.[90] Thus, the opportunity to confront the Christian sin of

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85 The three demands are: (1) Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967 and dismantling the Wall; (2) Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; (3) Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194. https://bdsmovement.net/bdsintro, accessed July 22 2016.

86 Brigitte Kahl, *Galations Re-imagined: Reading with the eyes of the vanquished,* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 10

87 *ibid,* 6

88 Bertold Klappert describes how, confronted with the scale of the crime against the Jewish people, the focus of German Protestant theology in the postwar era shifted from the faithfulness of the church to its theological core as opposed to the demands of the state, to a penitential focus on Christianity's culpability for the Nazi genocide. Klappert quotes his teacher and member of the original Confessing Church, Hans Joachim Iwand, who, in a 1959 letter discussing the Church's "academic and theological guilt" for Auschwitz, asks: "Who is going to take this guilt away from us and our theological fathers – because there it started? … How can the German people that has initiated the fruitless rebellion against Israel and his God become pure?" (Didier Pollefeyt, 1997. *Jews and Christians: Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God?* Louvain: Peeters Press. 43)

89 Mark Braverman, *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land* (New York: Beaufort Books, 2010)

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triumphalism was squandered. In its focus on restoring the divine blessing to the Jewish people, Christian postwar penitence has not led to obedience to the Lordship of Jesus, who asked – and answered – "who is my neighbor?" Instead, in their preoccupation with correcting historic church anti-Judaism, Christians have compounded the sin by enabling the Jews in their present project of conquest and domination. Historic Christian triumphalism has thus been replaced by a *Judeo-Christian triumphalism*, and its language is Zionism.

Recognition of this requires a shift from the focus on Christian responsibility for Jewish suffering to the church's responsibility to respond to the call of *today's* victims. Theologically, we have left the "post-Holocaust" era and entered the "post-Nakba" era*."* [91] The issue facing Christians today is not how to atone for their sins against the Jews, but how to confront today's urgent human rights issues, of which the crime against the Palestinian people is the exemplar of a global system of economic and political oppression. This requires a profound and wrenching paradigm shift for Christians. It threatens treasured relationships and in many cases the loss of support – financial and otherwise – on institutional levels. On institutional as well as personal levels, Christians are accused by Jewish colleagues of betraying the project of postwar reconciliation and trust building when questions are raised about Israel's human rights behavior. "We will continue to work with you to repair the damage of the past," is the message, "as long as you leave the issue of Israel out of the conversation." This is the so-called "ecumenical deal," more accurately the "interfaith deal." It has been used to hold Christians back from faithful witness and action since the surfacing of the Palestinian narrative challenging the popular image of Israel as heroic and untarnished. [92] The consequences of breaking this implicit agreement can be severe. *This is without doubt a cross to pick up,* but this is to be expected with any prophetic endeavor. It places this effort firmly in the tradition of the struggles referenced above.

It will be difficult to achieve this shift in focus within the current framework of Jewish-Christian relations on ecclesial and institution levels, because under the unwritten rules, these activities must conform to the guidelines of the interfaith deal. The still powerful forces that are brought to bear to suppress Christian witness with respect to Israel in order to preserve peace between Christians and Jews necessitates that the church be willing to act on this issue as the church and *only as the church*. Meanwhile, the Jewish community is experiencing its own internal struggle, between the established institutions of denominational, advocacy and philanthropic organizations that oppose meaningful criticism of Israel and voices within the Jewish community that support nonviolent action to stop the oppression of Palestinians. Indeed, there is a growing movement within the Jewish community in which theologians, clergy, journalists and activists argue for a "post-Zionist" future for both the Jewish people and the State of Israel. These Jewish voices have joined with those of Christian and Muslim counterparts in the common search for a shared theology that will provide, in Kahl's words, a "source of spiritual, social and ecological restoration… border-transgressive peace building and justice seeking." [93] Likewise, there are examples to be found of active collaboration between church groups and Jewish and Muslim organizations, scholars, and

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The Roman Catholic church officially repudiated its anti-Jewish doctrine in the mid- 20th century. Although partially – and grudgingly – backing off from the charge of killing Jesus, the Catholic church did not go as far as relinquishing its exceptionalist and exclusivist claims.

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Nakba, Arabic for "catastrophe" is the term adopted by Palestinians for the dispossession and ethnic cleansing of 1947-1949.

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The term "ecumenical deal" was first used to describe this phenomenon by Rosemary Ruether and by Marc Ellis {provide cites]. See also Braverman, *op cit.*

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Kahl, *op cit,* 6

leaders committed to a just peace in Israel/Palestine.[94] These are very hopeful signs. But within the mainstream context, they are still the exception, not the rule, and are customarily dismissed as being the activities of "fringe" groups. This caution regarding "interfaith" conversations, therefore, is not meant to be prescriptive or normative, but it is a necessary caution given the still considerable power of the interfaith deal to vitiate or even neutralize the power of the church as a force for political change with respect to Israel. This is a cross that remains to be picked up -- it embodies the willingness of Christians to pursue a faithful course with respect to Palestinian liberation, even when this means proceeding without the accompaniment, and in some cases in the face of the active opposition, of Jewish colleagues and friends.

COSTLY WITNESS: OUTLINE FOR ACTION

"Whenever a community of peace endangers or suffocates truth and justice, the community of peace must be broken and the battle must be declared" Bonhoeffer said to an ecumenical conference in 1932, addressing directly the elevation of "peace" as an absolute good in and of itself. "Should the situation arise," he continued, "*the struggle* can protect the openness for the revelation of Christ better than the *external peace* in that it breaks the hardened, self-enclosed order." [95] (emphasis added) These issues are as acute today as they were for Bonhoeffer. In his concluding chapter, Clements writes about the "journey the ecumenical community still has to make in earnest, that is, the discovery and teaching of spirituality which undergird and sustain effective social and political engagement as distinct from cheap statements and easy posturing."[96]

Where is the global church today regarding prophetic action?

We have witnessed persistent, growing activity at multiple levels of the church in support of equal rights for Palestinians and in opposition to Israel's policies. This has been true on a global level. A vibrant grassroots church movement has arisen in Germany, where the Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network has called on the Evangelical Church in Germany (the Lutheran and Reformed Churches) to account for its cautious and temporizing response to the 2009 Kairos Palestine document, in effect adhering to the "Staatsräson" of the German government that places the "security" and stated interests of the State of Israel before universal principles of human rights. This position violates not only principles of democracy and human rights, but fundamental Christian values. The grassroots in Germany has raised its voice in protest. In the U.S., organizations at the church grassroots organize pilgrimages of solidarity with nonviolent resistance in Palestine, sponsor resolutions for the study of the Palestine Kairos document, and call for a reassessment of U.S. policy. At the denominational level, examples include the divestment of U.S. Protestant denominations from companies profiting from and aiding the dispossession and oppression of Palestinians, and educational programs on regional and congregational levels. Globally, through nationally-based Friends of Sabeel organizations, Kairos networks, student organizations, and Jewish activist groups, nationally and globally-based boycott campaigns have received significant support. Also worthy of mention is the high level of direct support for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through civil society projects and witness pilgrimages on the part of denominational missions and congregational

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94 Examples include Jewish Voice for Peace and American Muslims for Palestine in the U.S., Judische Stimme in Germany, Jews for a Just Peace in the UK and in South Africa, and the work of South African Muslim scholar and activist Farid Esack.

95 in Clements, *op cit,* 77

96 in Clements, *op cit,* 293

initiatives. These have helped keep Palestinian civil society alive under terrible and worsening conditions. It also supports the courageous work of Jewish Israeli organizations, in the face of increasing suppression and even persecution, to call their own government to account. On a global ecumenical level, the World Council of Churches has maintained a focus on the issue, notably in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel, the 2007 International Peace Conference "Churches together for Peace and Justice in the Middle East" that produced the "Amman Call," [97] and the 2008 "Promised Land" conference in Bern sponsored by the WCC's Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF).[98] In the work of PIEF and the output from these international meetings, we see the beginnings of a challenge to the theological climate that has supported the abrogation of Palestinian rights and has failed to honor the distinctive, contextual theology that has emerged from the churches of the Holy Land.

But the global church has not yet acted. The "step from confession to resistance," as Bethge warned, has not been taken.

"There is still no theology of the ecumenical movement," Bonhoeffer stated famously in 1932. By this he did not mean that there was no theology, but that the ecumenical movement was at risk of being at the effect of false theology, a theology that limited the actions of the movement to "cheap statements and easy posturing." "'They abolish Christ by preaching him,' Luther said of those who failed to follow their faith with acts of obedience."[99] With respect to a theology that compels to action, Bonhoeffer's statement still holds true for the ecumenical movement of today. In his embrace of the necessity for church struggle Bonhoeffer set the stage for the work of theology and accompanying ecclesiology that will compel to effective action that is to be done in our time. Despite the recognition of the urgent human rights issues and the advances in the theological discourse with respect to Palestine, the focus of the institutional church on denominational, national, and ecumenical levels on the question of Palestine has remained on bringing the churches together and on not disturbing the waters. "Dialogue," "interfaith reconciliation," and a celebration of "diversity" continue to trump prophetic action. In a press statement addressed to the Bishop's Conference of the Protestant Church of Germany, the German Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network took the Bishops to task for the statement they issued following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land that passed over the true impact of Israel's occupation on the Palestinians, hiding behind a screen of "balanced" condemnation of violence on both sides. The statement reads in part:

> Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said: "The truth is concrete." We deplore this resort to comforting generalizations designed to be acceptable to a wide audience but which do nothing to advance peace. Rather, these statements serve to obscure the truth and obstruct an understanding of the real situation. They reduce the capacity for empathy with the real suffering and sacrifices occurring today. Such proclamations might lead to an ecumenism in which formerly separate churches are 'reunited,' but in this way become irrelevant to the suffering world.

Sadly, recent meetings and pronouncements of the World Council of Churches with respect to

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97 http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/middle-east-peace/the-amman-call

98 http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/middle-east-peace/bern-perspective?searchterm=PIEF

99 Duchrow, *op cit,* 131

Palestine, which call for unanimity of church voices in actionless protest against Israel's crimes are also deserving of the Kairos Network's critique. The 2010 response to Kairos Palestine of the Evangelical (Reformed and Lutheran) Church of Germany, which lamentably meets the criteria for church theology set out by the 1985 South Africa Kairos document, similarly demonstrates the need for a prophetic movement that risks paying the cost in division and struggle within the church. Similar statements and attempts at accommodation to institutional stability and safety characterize the official positions of major Protestant denominations in the U.S., UK, the Netherlands and other Western nations in the face of the increasingly desperate Palestinian situation. The statement issued by German Kairos Network echoes precisely the issue that Bonhoeffer was addressing in his 1935 essay, "The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement," in which he describes how the Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement "had made an encounter and must question one another." That encounter, that very questioning, Bonhoeffer was saying, is at the heart of the church struggle and represents the hope for the church finding its power and claiming its truth. The still vivid South African experience continues to provide guidance. In his essay "Taking Sides," written in the last years of Apartheid, South African theologian and Kairos document author Fr. Albert Nolan emphasizes this very point: "The peace that the world offers us is a superficial peace and unity that compromises the truth, that covers over the injustices and that is usually settled on for thoroughly selfish purposes." For Nolan, Jesus' instruction to love our enemies continues to serve as a motivating and idolatry-shattering principle for practitioners of nonviolent resistance, providing the surest path to God's peace: "The ruling class as a whole cannot step down: we will have to pull them down from their thrones. Not in order to sit on those thrones themselves, or to put others on them, but in order to destroy the thrones."[100]

The social analysis and the critique of church theology have been accomplished. The description of the current state of ecumenism is part of that analysis. Together with Jesus' equally paradigm-shattering declaration that he had come "to bring not peace but division," (Lk 12:51) Jesus' enemy-loving commandment shows the way forward for resistance movements throughout modern times. There is only a yes or a no to this confession. There are no grey areas when it comes to declaring that an ideology or theology supporting racism and inequality constitutes heresy. As South African theologian Allan Boesak has written, "more than the liberation of the oppressed is at stake here…the integrity of the Gospel, and the credibility of the witness of the church are at stake here."[101]

RE-VISIONING THE REFORMATION

The emergence of the Palestinian liberation struggle has opened up a much-needed theological discourse on Zionism, one that has broad implications for the role of the church in the current world crisis. As discussed above, the Palestinian cause must be viewed in the framework of globalization and the growing dominance of the neoliberal order. A recent project has as its objective a reassessment of and challenge to the post WWII liberal theology that effectively abandoned the radical critique of capitalism to be found in the Reformed tradition. "Radicalizing Reformation" is a critical research and action project, to be officially inaugurated in 2017 on the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Based on an understanding of the church reform movement begun by Martin Luther as a scripturally-based critique of individualism and early capitalism, "Radicalizing

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100 Nolan, A, "Taking Sides," Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1990.

101 Allan Boesak, 'Kairos Consciousness.' *Kairos Southern Africa* (25 March, 2011). http://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/kairos-consciousness/

Reformation" describes the effects of the modern property and money-based economy in the cultural, structural, and direct violence inherent in the current global economic order. Advancing an interpretation of Paul away from the focus on personal salvation and toward a gospel message of social justice, "Radicalizing Reformation" seeks to reconnect Christianity to its Old Testament roots of Torah and the prophetic writings as a blueprint for just action in human society:

> Paul speaks about the beginning of an all-encompassing change of rule. He directs his hope towards God's final intervention, which for him has already begun with Jesus' resurrection. Although Paul has no direct political goals, his faith in Christ's rule and the hope for a final change of rule has deep political implications. Faith leads the faithful to live as liberated people, both in their faith community and in their common life with others. This is the beginning of a new life. This claim for liberation from totalitarian reality, such as under the Roman Empire, is more trenchant and empowering for all who live today under the domination of financial and violent markets than are traditional generalizations about sin. [102]

In its redirection of Reformed theology away from individual salvation and toward action in the world, "Radical Reformation" brings us firmly back, in the words of his friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, to Bonhoeffer's "welding of the theological and the sociological." Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology was wholly grounded in his Christology. The task of the church, he wrote, is "to express the being of Christ in the centre of life, not on its margins."[103] "The church," wrote Bonhoeffer, "is the church only when it exists for others."

In its call for the sharing of projects embodying this "fellowship of faith acting directly in human affairs," "Radicalizing Reformation" exemplifies the globally linked movement of which the Palestinian liberation struggle is a key component. The identification of Zionism as heresy and the call for the end of unjust rule in historic Palestine is both the lynchpin and the *sine qua non* for the current justice imperative facing the church. Zionism as an ideology that results in unjust, racist rule cannot be reformed, no more than apartheid as the foundation of rule in South Africa could have been reformed. The clear, uncompromising stand of the South African churches and ultimately the global church against apartheid was an act of love for all South Africans -- white and black, oppressor and oppressed. Following Bonhoeffer's example of confronting the cautious, ineffective ecumenism of his time, what calls to us today is the bold, prophetic act that will force the church to choose, that will create the division that manifests the word of God in the present *kairos*. The theology that will define and guide the ecumenical movement of our day will be costly -- *it will divide.* But in that division will be found the unity that Bonhoeffer sought and that must guide our actions today. Therein will lie the key to the renewal of the church in our time, a reclaiming of the radical spirit of the Reformation and the legacy of the ecumenical movement in its finest moments – the pursuit of peace not as the world gives but as embodied in the gospel. "There is," Bonhoeffer wrote, "no peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared."[104]

A STATUS CONFESSIONIS?

Duchrow notes that the term *status confessionis* originated in Luther's time in connection to situations where the church might come in conflict with the state, but never in matters "vital to

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102 http://www.radicalizing-reformation.com/index.php/en/, accessed October 29, 2016

103 Eberhard Bethge, *Bonhoeffer: Exile and Martyr* (New York: Seabury), 1975, 153

104 in de Gruchy, JW, "*Bonhoeffer's legacy and Kairos-Palestine*", JTSA, Vol 143, 2012, 67-80.

faith," or to political questions of any kind. [105] In 1933, in response to the Third Reich's actions against the Jews, specifically expelling all Jews (or Christians of Jewish ancestry) from civil service, Bonhoeffer radically repurposed the term and the concept. He elaborated that a *status confessionis,* under which the church would be compelled to act to protect its integrity and its faithfulness to the gospel, could be invoked under the following conditions: (1) the state interfering with the life of the church ("too much state"), or (2) the state failing in its duty to carry out lawful order ("too little state") -- in that particular case failing to protect the rights of its Jewish citizens. Bonhoeffer emphasized that the declaration of *status confessionis* should not become a matter of rigid theory, predicting the church's actions for future circumstances, but that it be applied to a concrete situation, calling forth the church's action at a specific time and place: "…not what is good once and for all, but the way in which Christ takes form among us here and now."[106] Bringing the concept into our contemporary context, Duchrow maintains that a *status confessionis* exists when it is necessary to challenge a church institution failing to fulfill its duty of obedience, i.e. to act in response to systematic violations of human rights at the state or global levels. It is when these urgent conditions apply that what Duchrow has described as the neo-Lutheran error of the so-called "Two Kingdoms" doctrine of the autonomy of the political and economic spheres must be confronted. The church cannot claim indifference or non-involvement in the presence of suffering and injustice. This is the *confession* of the *status confessionis.* This exactly what was later implemented by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in "a committed process of recognition, education and confession (*processus confessionis*) regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction" from 1997 to 2004, leading to the 2004 Accra Confession. [107]

We are in Bonhoeffer's debt for having revived the powerful notion of the *status confessionis* in his courageous stance with regard to the German state. At the same time, we are able to step away from his formulation of "too little state" or "too much state" (he was still operating from a frame of the church's duty to support in its divine mandate duty to preserve lawful order). We now say, very simply, that when the state is acting wrongly, the church confesses its active or passive complicity and takes action. This was true in 1977 for the Lutheran World Federation in Dar Es Salaam and in 1982 for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Ottawa. It held true in 1970 with the World Council of Churches' establishment of the Programme to Combat Racism, although the term *status confessionis* was not invoked, and similarly in 1985 when the South Africa Kairos "Challenge to the Church" called for the fall of Apartheid. Duchrow made the case in 1983 at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Vancouver that a *status confessionis* was called for in response to the disastrous impact of the world economic order on the wellbeing of millions. The response was to launch the "Conciliar Process of Mutual Commitment towards Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation." We must ask the same question today with respect to Palestine that Duchrow asked then in Vancouver – "whether Apartheid is not just the tip of the iceberg…" with the industrialized nations "exploiting the majority of the world's population just as systematically as the white South Africans exploit the majority of the people in South Africa." [108]

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105 Ulrich Duchrow, *Global Economy: A Confessional Issue for the Churches?* Translated, David Lewis, (Geneva: WCC Publications), 1987, p 88

106 Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, in de Gruchy, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Witness to Jesus Christ*, 231.

107 http://wcrc.ch/accra/the-accra-confession, accessed December 2, 2016

108 ibid, 92

WHY PALESTINE?

The Palestinian struggle has enormous power to summon the church to its mission. It surfaces the systems and ideologies that support white supremacy and colonialism on a global scale, as expressed in the 2015 "Dangerous Memory" statement: "Palestine is…a microcosm of global empire, a critical site of reflection that can bring experiences in other locales into sharper focus. Palestine does not eclipse other situations around the globe but instead intensifies the need for greater interconnection and mutual engagement."[109] As discussed above, the Palestinian call has awakened church movements at the grassroots around the world, each nationally-based movement responding from the context of its own human rights struggle, such as in the Philippines and Brazil, and in some cases, notably the U.S. and the U.K., from its own confession of sin.[110]

Palestine in the post-Oslo Accords era resembles South Africa in the 1980s: political systems, global in their origin and reach, outposts of the white supremacist order, devoted to strengthening the economic and cultural oppression of the subaltern population, supported by church institutions granting theological and historical legitimacy to these actions.[111] In the case of South Africa, the world came to recognize the political system and the ideology upon which the country was based for what they were. Given the powerful biblical/theological and historical narratives operating in the Israel-Palestine situation, the gradient is steeper -- in the South African case the theological support was limited to the English-speaking, Dutch Reformed and other Afrikaans-speaking churches of South Africa and to the cultural and historical narrative particular to the South African settler population – only the Afrikaners believed themselves to be the chosen people! But the moral, political and theological challenge confronting the world community is the same today. The battle is joined today between the neoliberal agenda, in which Zionism is brought into the service of the "contemporary globalized capitalism of modernity...manifest in exploitation, colonization, and genocide in Africa, Asia, and the Americas," [112] and the quest for equality, human dignity, and the survival of the natural environment.

Palestine is important because it fulfills Bonhoeffer's requirement that the confession be concrete, a

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Kairos 30th Anniversary Statement: Dangerous Memory and Hope for the Future. https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2015/08/20/kairos-sa-30th-anniversary-conference-statement/. Accessed March 16, 2016

110

See "Call to Action: A U.S. Response to the Kairos Palestine Document, a word of confession and faith from Christians in the United States, http://kairosusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Kairos-USA-Call-to-Action.pdf, accessed October 10, 2016, and "Time for Action, a British Christian response to A Moment of Truth, the Kairos Palestine document, http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Time-for-Action.pdf, accessed October 10 2016.

111

The 1993 Oslo Accords, which established the Palestinian Authority, was the cause of great optimism, especially on the part of Palestinians. But by 2000 it was clear that Israel was using the military and civil control ceded in the agreement to increase its outright annexation of Palestinian lands and to build the infrastructure of political and economic control over the remaining territory west of the Jordan River. The occupation was not ending; it was deepening, with the cooperation of the Palestinian Authority, operating effectively as a client government of Israel.

112

"Radicalizing Reformation – Provoked by the Bible and Today's Crises: 94 Theses" http://www.radicalizing-reformation.com/index.php/en/, accessed July 24, 2016.

response in a particular time and place. The historic and ongoing ethnic cleansing and colonization of Palestine represents the most longstanding systematic violation of human rights in the world today. This outrage is made more pointed given the support of the Western powers to the continuing colonization of Palestinian land and abrogation of human rights, with the backing of liberal Protestant theology. In the words of Rev. Edwin Arrison, General Secretary of Kairos Southern Africa: "There is much injustice in the world today, but there is only one that is justified by a misuse of the Bible" (*Sunday Tribune,* Nov 15 2016). We must ask: how does accommodation with, indeed, loyalty to Zionism serve to keep the church comfortably secure in its privilege, neutralizing it as a force for the liberation of humankind from the economic and environmental catastrophe now confronting us? When we take on the crime of the dispossession and the political and economic colonization of Palestine we split wide open the entire global system of triumphalism and tribalism, a system that represents a betrayal of Jesus' vision of universal dignity and equality -- a regression to greed, particularism, and territorialism. For Christians, this is the negation of the message of Pentecost, when the disciples, equipped with all the languages of the known world, were instructed to go out to the wide world to proclaim the good news to *all nations*: that God's love is for everyone, that the building of a house for God on a particular mountain has now become the work of building the Kingdom of God.

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

In conclusion let us review what we have outlined as the challenge and opportunity of the present kairos:

2. A continuing and intensifying condition of systematic human rights violations in Palestine, diplomatically and politically enabled and financially resourced by governments and theologically and culturally justified by church bodies, a condition now acknowledged by an increasingly broad sector of the secular and religious world community;
3. A model of prophetic theology set out in the "Dangerous Memory" statement, placing Palestine as the exemplar of a global system of economic oppression and racism;
4. The legacy of the ecumenical movement and church struggles in the 20th century, furnishing models of prophetic ecclesiology;
5. An emerging global network of grassroots church organizations on every continent in response to the Palestinian call.

A plan of action

Goals:

7. Mobilize the ecumenical church to call for the end of apartheid in historic Palestine through prophetic witness and direct action at local, national and global levels;
8. Gain active supporters and engender public sympathy for the cause for Palestinian human rights;
9. Establish lawful government in the territory of historic Palestine. [113]

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The phrase comes from Karl Barth, in Villa-Vicencio, *Between Christ and Caesar*, p 95: "…violent solutions of conflicts in the political community – from police measures to law court decisions, from the armed rising against a regime that is no longer worthy of or equal to its task (in the sense of a revolt undertaken *not to undermine but to restore the lawful authority of the state*) …must be approved, supported and in some cases even suggested by the Christian community." (emphasis added) Also see John de Gruchy's discussion of "From Confession to Resistance" in

Method:

4. Challenge the prevailing political paradigm of Israel and Palestine as a conflict between two national movements, to that of a settler colonial project;
5. Challenge the political model of negotiations for a "two state solution," describing it rather as a paradigm intended to preserve, advance and complete the colonization of Palestine and the legitimization of Zionism as a political ideology and political program;
6. Do the theology with respect to Zionism. Largely, this work has been done, primarily by theologians in Palestine, Europe, South Africa, Latin America and the U.S. This work should be reviewed, its implications analyzed, and a plan developed to bring it to various audiences -- lay, clergy, and academic. This should be carried out within the broader issue of false theology, a theme that carries over from the Confessing Church in Germany to the ongoing work of kairos theology on a global basis today.
7. Consider the initiation of a *processus confessionis*, similar in direction to that outlined by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Debrecen, Hungary 1997. [114]
8. Explore avenues for alliance with and support for campaigns and resistance organizations, e.g.
   a. BDS National Committee;
   b. Church organizations and networks, e.g. Friends of Sabeel and Kairos organizations at national levels, national networks such as the German Palestine Solidarity Network, Kairos Britain, Kairos Southern Africa, and Kairos USA, and denominational mission networks;
   c. Organizations of resistance and activism in Israel and Palestine;
   d. Trade and other economic actions at governmental (including the European Union and other transnational bodies) levels, including trade agreements, sanctions, and actions directed at banks;
9. Call on church bodies at local, denominational, national, and global ecumenical levels for specific actions, e.g:
   a. Authorize tourism to Israel and Palestinian Occupied Territories only to programs fulfilling certain criteria, e.g. working through Palestinian agencies (see South African and Nigerian examples of these actions on the part of churches and church groups.)
   b. Pursue divestment of church bodies from companies involved with and profiting from the destruction of Palestinian society and the colonization of Palestinian lands;
   c. Demand specific actions from governments (U.S. of course, but also Germany, UK, Norway, Sweden, South Korea, SA, Brazil, France, Philippines etc.) regarding military financial aid, trade policies, participation in international sanctions, legal judgments and other actions.
      6. Put in place methods for awareness building and education as a critical

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the chapter entitled "In Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer" in *My Life in Writing*, 64ff in which he discusses church opposition to unjust government. De Gruchy cites Bonhoeffer's "putting a spoke into the wheel" of the state in "The Church and the Jewish Question." Also relevant is Bonhoeffer's discussion of immanent righteousness in "After Ten Years."

114

From the 1997 WARC call: "…the question of *status confessionis* was raised at the WARC consultation in Kitwe in 1995. By committing themselves to a process of confessing, our churches are challenged to come to a common confession. In this regard, the WARC 22nd General Council, Seoul 1989, stated: 'Any declaration of a *status confessionis* stems from the conviction that the integrity of the gospel is in danger. It is a call from error into truth. It demands of the church a clear, unequivocal decision for the truth of the gospel…"

organizing strategy.

CONCLUSION

God leads us to responsibility and obedience through the call of the oppressed and the suffering. The concrete manifestations of this call in our world are as physical as Christ's wounds revealed to the apostles in the final chapter of Luke's Gospel: "Look at my hands and feet!" cries Jesus to his disciples -- "and have you anything here to eat?" My wounds are visible and my hunger is urgent, Jesus tells us today, with the same immediacy as on that day in Jerusalem. Our responsibility is made visible in the desecration of the landscape of the West Bank by illegal colonies and separation walls, in the misery of the checkpoints and the rubble and starvation of Gaza, in the pain and despair in the eyes of the oppressed and the desperation and fear in those of the oppressors. The confessional process allows the church to avoid the stumbling blocks of compromise, reform, and the resort to endless "dialogue." It calls the question, forcing the church to declare itself as the true church of Jesus Christ, requiring of Christians a decision for obedience -- to ask, as did Bonhoeffer, "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?"

7. Marc H. Ellis

Repentant Enablers – German Christians, the Holocaust and the Resurgence of German Power. Reflections from a Jewish Theology of Liberation

A reflection on the question: Is the Jewish-Christian dialogue in Germany hiding (German and Jewish) empire in plain sight or is it simply trying to forestall the "No Rescue" Jewish prophets at the end of Judaism and Christianity as we have known and inherited them?

On the German Christian/Jewish Dialogue/Deal

So where shall I begin thinking about touring Germany, as a Jew of Conscience, at least trying to be one, anticipating the heavy atmosphere of a Germany still caught between the Holocaust and enabling an ever-expanding state of Israel? I am not Judith Butler, whose fascinating and disarming philosophical discourse, a Jewishness that is so intertwined with its surroundings that at one moment it stares you in the face and the next moment disappears from view. No, I have a more mundane and direct sense of Jewishness – as the carrier of the indigenous Jewish prophetic, the great gift to the world, the embrace of which is the only reason to be Jewish.[115]

A long introductory paragraph, frowned upon in literature, and without mentioning the many intersecting layers of German and Jewish history. And here we are only beginning.

But, then, if we can avoid becoming stuck in history, where can we go from here? What is behind us, what is today, what is before us – can we sort out the road taken and the road that beckons us?

During my speaking tour in Germany, I will be making a variety of presentations, including one on Martin Luther and the Jews. As a scholar of sorts, I should try to be objective on Luther but my gut has always told me to avoid Luther, to put him behind me as if he had never existed. His treatise "On the Jews and Their Lies" makes Hitler, at least in his pronouncements, look like a child throwing sand in the face of an unsuspecting visitor. If you think this is alarmist read Luther on the Jews for yourself. I dare you.[116]

Though I would love for this to my last dealings with Luther, the continuing revelations about Heidegger's thoughts on the Jewish question in his most recently published Black Notebooks force Luther's obsession with Jews to the fore. There is no straight line from Luther to Hitler - this has been emphasized in the scholarly literature. There is no a straight line from Luther to Heidegger either – this has to be said. Yet one cannot help but notice that there seems little escape form the Jewish question in the ancient and contemporary arc of German history.[117]

Though German history shows a peculiar obsession with Jews, any Jew who has worked on the Issue of Israel and the Palestinians knows that hatred/ambivalence about Jews did not start or stop with Luther, Hitler or Heidegger. There is plenty of ambivalence about Jews to go around before and after the Luther/Hitler/Heidegger threesome. Nonetheless, ambivalence about Jews

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For the difference see Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University, 2013) and my *Future of the Prophetic: Israel's Ancient Wisdom Re-Presented* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

116 See *Martin Luther, the Bible and the Jewish People: A Reader*, ed. Brooks Schramm and Karl Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 164-176.

117

Jennifer Schuesler, "Heidegger's Notebooks Renew Focus on Anti-Semitism," *New York Times*, March 31, 2014.

exists on all levels in Germany and among Germans, even those who have migrated to the United States, and among German political progressives and feminists alike.

I experience this ambivalence and understand aspects of it. For Jews are in their primordial and present being deeply unsettling – at least I hope this is the case. It is a long, long story that I have tried to explore, however inadequately in my writing. This unsettling quality is about the ever subversive prophetic, the indigenous of the people Israel, coupled with the always unpredictable Jewish God.

This foundational instability of Jewish life and Israel's God leads to many reactions to Jews – even, of course, where Jews are not present except through the stability-seeking religions of Christianity and Islam. One of these reactions is anti-Semitism which, though significantly diminished, is alive in a variety of forms, including in the Israel-Palestine discussions that abound on the literary and lecture circuit. The other side of the story are Jews – especially Constantinian and Progressive Jews - who take this ambivalence about Jews as a license to deflect and demean Jews of Conscience and others who argue that regardless of the myths about Jews what Israel has done and is doing to Palestinians is wrong. So ambivalence about Jews works both sides of the street. It is used against Jews in a disguised way – in some critiques of Zionism – and is used by Jews as a disguise – in arguments that criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic. Exposing these disguises involves risk.

Anti-Semitism continues to exist. But, then again, Israel continues to expand. As Israel expands, Palestine disappears.

Individual Germans stand on different sides of the new Jewish question or, depending on one's point of view, the old Jewish question reborn. Yet in the main, a repentant Germany stands for Israel. A repentant Germany stands for the Jews they displaced and murdered. Aber dadurch, dass Deutschland Israels Expansion und Palästionas Verschwinden ermöglicht, wird die Vorstellung, dass Deutschland für seine Sünden Buße tut, in
zunehmenden Maße kritisch hinterfragt

Yet by enabling Israel's expansion and Palestine's disappearance the idea that Germany is somehow repenting for its sins is increasingly challenged. It's ludicrous really, when the suffering of Palestinians is factored in. How can the Palestine question not be so factored?

Repentance, of course, is always complicated. It can be for the Other whom you have sinned against. It can as well be for the sinner, as a humble confession. Yet a third function of repentance often comes into play – as rescue for sins, for getting back on one's feet, for hiding the sins of the present.

Think of Pope Benedict at Auschwitz and the concept of repentance. How did the Pope as head of traditionally anti-Semitic church, a German to boot and member, reluctant or not, of the Nazi youth movement, become the chief mourner of the victims of the Holocaust? What did his presence at Auschwitz actually represent to Jews, to Christians, to Germany?[118]

Confession and rescue are bound together and, in the mix of life, this is understandable. Altruism is often connected to self-aggrandizement – doing for others we do for ourselves. However, a time comes when the balance becomes unwieldy – what we do for others we do primarily for ourselves. Coming to understand this amalgam is a sign of maturity. What we do and refuse to do with our maturity defines our journey.

It is hardly a leap to apply this to the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Beginning in a renewed and serious way after the Holocaust, the dialogue was necessary and revolutionary. Had there ever before been such a bold attempt to redress the power and theological imbalance of Jews and

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See a report of Pope Benedict at Auschwitz in *Time*, May, 29, 2006 that focuses specifically on the Pope's prayer. http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1198976,00.html

Christians? Against great historical odds, it worked. Revolutionary forgiveness was in the air, that is forgiveness with justice, rather than piety, at the center. In the West, at least, where a majority of Jews live, and in the state of Israel, where an almost equal percentage of global Jewry lives, the Jewish-Christian dialogue bore fruit. Unfortunately, there were victims of the Jewish-Christian rapprochement – the Palestinian people. Collateral damage?

No, it was not intended, there was no conspiracy among Jews and Christians in the West to ethnically cleanse, demean and ghettoize a people outside of Europe. Yet, it was hardly a one-off proposition either. Over the decades, the Jewish-Christian dialogue gave way to a deal where the Palestinian question was silenced and the Jewish question was solved once and for all. "Solved" that is, outside of Europe as Europe often deals with its "problems" – on the backs of the Palestinian people.[119]

Has the state of Israel solved the Jewish question? Perhaps for those who celebrate Germany as a rescued now re-empowered enterprise it has. For those who see the Jewish question as solved in the state of Israel, it comes as a great shock that the issue arises once again. For just when the success of the Jewish-Christian dialogue is celebrated, it arrives at a dead-end. As over time the crimes against the Palestinian people became more known, many Jews became restless and indeed many Christians too. Soon there was an explosion of the Jewish prophetic – in league with a renewed Christian prophetic. This explosion, focused on the Palestinian question, is the other side of the Jewish-Christian dialogue become deal.

The "deal" aspect of the Jewish-Christian dialogue is simply put: Christians repent for your sins, hold fast to Israel and be silent on the Palestinian question. Silence on Palestinians is demanded, otherwise the accusation is that Christians have returned to their previously abandoned anti-Semitism.

No Jew or Christian in their right mind should want to return to the Christian/German ground of Luther and Heidegger. But what Jew or Christian in their right mind wants to leave anti-Semitism behind only to involve themselves with the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and the destruction of Palestine? In the best of all worlds we could leave one ground without entering the other. However, just as the Holocaust and Israel are bound together, the Holocaust, Israel and Palestine are bound together, too. To think that the Holocaust and Israel are bound together but the Palestinian issue is separate is a retreat from history. Such a retreat is an evasion based on a practiced sleight of hand.

Today there is no revolutionary forgiveness between Jews and Christians without the question of Palestine at the center. In this sense, Jews have been displaced as the focal point of the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal. Without Palestine and Palestinians at the center, Jews and Christians in the West are talking in an increasingly hollow space – filled with unannounced prejudice and self-interest.

Here I reference the Jewish links with empire in America and Israel – these are obvious enough. Did you notice that they are unspoken in the rarified atmosphere of the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal? I also reference the renewed German empire – again unspoken in the rarefied atmosphere of the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal. Though empire discourse seems inapplicable to post-World War II Germany with its limitations on military interventionism, Germany is again on the world scene as the most powerful nation in Europe, with all sorts of empire connections with American and NATO power, as well as an economic system that benefits from the unjust global economic order. Business deals with this and that corrupt regime including Israel proliferate.[120]

119

For the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians see Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London: One World, 2007.

120

For an interesting take on this subject of renewed empire see Ulrich Beck, *German Europe*

You do not have to unilaterally militarily intervene and occupy other countries to be enmeshed in and benefit from empire. Chastened by military adventuresome and its quest for empire in what became World War II, Germany uses the US, NATO and the European Union do pursue and leverage its affluence. The German comeback/rescue from its defeat in World War II has been paid for by Germany, it is true, but with much help as well. Repentance for the Holocaust has been essential. How else could Germany demonstrate its (once again) civilized status in the global community after the Holocaust?

Does Germany think that its renewed affluence, political clout and status can proceed unnoticed by continually bowing before the Holocaust and the Constantinian Jewish establishment? Paying billions in reparations to the state of Israel and arming it to the teeth with military hardware continues to be German state policy. But the question must be asked: Do the German political and economic elite think that repentance for the Holocaust and enablement of a conquering Israel forgives its past and present empire proclivities? Yes and yes, perhaps. So far, it has been working like a charm.

Here we move back into the theological arena. Does Christian theology in the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal especially in the West, America and Germany, pursue its reconciliation with Jews as a way of forgiveness *and* to hide its empire accountability in the present? Obviously Jewish Holocaust theology does this empire-hiding for Jews, at least for now. Like the Jewish-Christian dialogue, in the beginning Holocaust theology was an insurgent force overpowering the various orthodoxies of its time. Now its concentration on the Holocaust is regressive. Holocaust theology seeks to permanently discipline and banish Palestine and the Palestinians. Likewise, it seeks to discipline and banish the Jewish prophetic exploding in our time. To hide Jewish empire in America and Israel?

The Holocaust as Nostalgia Enabling German and Jewish Empire

Is this our German-Jewish relationship of the future – hiding behind political and theological banners of forgiveness and survival while guarding each other's empire present? Or is there another way, respecting past suffering and addressing suffering in the present?

Paradoxically, at least in the German-Jewish encounter, attention to present suffering brings us back to the past – to the Holocaust. But here it is not so much the history of the Holocaust, what really happened, but how the Holocaust functions in contemporary German and Jewish discourse. This brings us as well to how the Holocaust functions in contemporary German and Jewish politics. Because if anything is certain the Holocaust is not only a past historical event, it is employed in a variety of ways for political advancement and cover.

Understanding how the Holocaust functions in German and Jewish discourse and politics is a gateway to how the Holocaust functions in Christian and Jewish theology and the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal. Having drawn lines from history to the present an alarming coda must be addressed: However we judge the use of the Holocaust by Germans and Jews, the shelf-life for its use is rapidly approaching, if it has not arrived already. Rather than analyzing the functionality of the Holocaust, we are now facing the end of the Holocaust as a viable agent on any and all fronts. Over time the Holocaust is fated to disappear from public view. The history of the world moves on. Thus the Holocaust is entering the twilight of its public existence, appearing now more as nostalgia

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(Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013). If this seems farfetched, other eras have seen church leadership and theologians supporting German empire. For two previous eras in German history: Mark R. Correll, *Shepherds of the Empire: Germany's Conservative Protestant Leadership--1888-1919* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014) and Robert P. Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002). I shall return to this theme in the following pages.

for a world whose moorings were uprooted and, paradoxically, at least in the view from the present, more certain.

The Holocaust as nostalgia? Initially, this seems a shocking allusion, trivializing such a horrific event. But then over time the Holocaust has been trivialized by its very use to aggress against others, to be unaccountable and to disguise empire ambitions. The Holocaust as nostalgia is more than remembering old times in a wistful and melancholy way. It is reminiscing without critical thought, taking the sharp edges off massive suffering and using it for other purposes. Thus in a relatively short time, perhaps by the 1970s, the Holocaust entered its terminal phase as a reminder of the dangerous memory of suffering. Today the Holocaust too often functions as a bully, clearing out any and all that dare challenge the sacred Holocaust sphere established by German and Jewish authorities on diverse levels.[121]

This is the secret known all over the theological block, including in the Jewish-Christian dialogue/deal. The last innovative writing of Holocaust theology was penned by Irving Greenberg in 1988. Greenberg's essay title was provocative and telling: "The Ethics of Jewish Power." Its historical timing is likewise instructive, being written during the first Palestinian Uprising. Greenberg sought to respond to the critics outside and within the Jewish community who were dismayed, even horrified, at Israel's brutal crushing of the uprising.[122]

Greenberg, already a prominent Holocaust theologian, sought to respond to the challenge to Holocaust memory being raised in the brutality of Israel's occupation. He did this by addressing the sea-change in the Jewish condition – the movement of Jews from powerlessness to power. In doing so, Greenberg signaled the end of Holocaust weakness and the emergence of a Jewish power that he thought essential but one that must be tempered by Jewish ethics. With a Jewish state, Greenberg argued, that though difficult, the acceptance of power – with its inherent ethical compromises - as the new Jewish normal was crucial. For Greenberg, Jews were moving through the difficult transition of normalization. Jews might hold onto a sense of ethical difference in their behavior but that difference could only be marginal. Greenberg was specific – the state of Israel could only be 10% better than other communities/nations. Otherwise, the state of Israel would be found wanting or weakened to the point of collapse.

Greenberg's essay carried a stark warning. Criticism of Israel that crossed a certain line could endanger Israel's existence and thus throw the Jews of Israel into another Holocaust scenario. In this Greenberg joined other Holocaust theologians, indeed the Jewish establishments in Israel and America. Criticizing Israel at a certain level was akin to bringing on a second Holocaust.

What did Greenberg fear as Jews went through this difficult phase of normalization? Greenberg worried about the non-Jewish world judging Israel by a yardstick that no nation could survive with. Even more, though, Greenberg worried about the Jewish prophetic that consistently and assertively judged other nations that perpetuated injustice. If the outside world and the Jewish prophetic turned inward found Israel wanting, it was only a short distance from delegitimizing Israel's very existence.

Interestingly enough, Greenberg only superficially addressed the issue that shadows his entire argument of Jewish normalization. The great fear that Greenberg expressed about the prophetic was broached without specific details. Yet the Jewish prophetic, while thematic, has always been specific, especially when it turns inward. Inward, that is within Jewish history, and

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I first wrote about the Holocaust theology and its functions in *Beyond Innocence and Redemption: Confronting the Holocaust and Israeli Power* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 1-55.

122

Greenberg's essay can be found in *Beyond Occupation: Jewish, Christian and Palestinian Voices for Peace*, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Marc H. Ellis (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 22-74.

specific, judging Israel in graphic detail, is the natural home of the prophetic. Though held in abeyance for some time by the Holocaust in relation to the state of Israel, the explosion of the Jewish prophetic in our time represents a re-rooting of the primal and indigenous prophetic in Jewish history. In retrospect, Greenberg was attempting to hold back what he must have subconsciously known was right around the corner – a homecoming of the relentless and primal Jewish prophetic. Indeed, it was happening as he wrote.

The primal Jewish prophetic strips any pretense regarding Israel's innocence bare. Gone is the idea of innocence in Jewish empowerment – no matter how much suffering preceded it. Gone, too, is any Holocaust justification for committing injustice against Palestinians. Rather, the Jewish prophetic sees the expansion of Israel as a land grab and as a perversion of ethical accountability.

The contemporary Jewish prophetic is wide-ranging. It includes an expansion of Jewish covenantal obligation to include the Palestinians, albeit and perhaps necessarily in post-Holocaust/post-Israel secular language. The contemporary Jewish prophetic similarly includes admonishment of Christians who use the Holocaust to their own advantage, justifying Israel's injustice to whitewash their own history and present. As usual but not fit for the present times, the Jewish prophetic voice steers clear of Constantinian religion of any stripe, including and especially the new-found Constantinian Judaism or the remnants of Constantinian Christianity, even in its liberal incarnation.

So what does the Jewish prophetic do with ***liberal Christianity***'s attempt to distance itself from ***Constantinian Christianity*** and to grapple with the Holocaust, especially in Germany? Instead of honoring Christians for their struggle, the Jewish prophetic hammers away at German Christian guilt when it is used as a self-serving rescue. As well, it cites German Christian discourse and material enablement of Israel as a no-go area for Jews and ***Christians of Conscience***. It focuses as well on German prosperity in the present. Is that prosperity built upon the suffering of others? For using Jewish suffering in the Holocaust as a means of creating more suffering trivializes everything, including the very memory of suffering. Trivializing suffering, then or now, trivializes the rage against it. For the Jewish prophetic, trivializing the victims of the Holocaust by creating more victims is the ultimate transgression against the prophetic – and thus the Jewish indigenous.

Of course, some Jewish and Christian theological quarters seek to distance themselves from the Jewish prophetic by attempting to freeze it in its Biblical paradigm, thereby diluting its life's blood and its continuing evolution as the internal critique of Israel. How Jewish and Christian exegetes do this is a feat unto itself but the major thrust is quarantining the Jewish prophetic *as if it has ceased to exist except as a Biblical memory*. The usual excuse is the acceptance of the rabbinic paradigm as the Judaism of our time, a paradigm which itself seeks to discipline and banish the prophetic. Christian and Jewish theologians use the Holocaust/Israel axis to reinforce the rabbinic which, even though it is now entirely dependent the on Holocaust/Israel narrative framework for its existence. The hope is to silence the Jewish prophetic with its focus on what has happened since the Holocaust in the creation and expansion of Israel.

All of this is a last gap effort to keep the Rabbinic/Holocaust/Israel axis immune from the Jewish prophetic indigenous, thereby further stripping the evolving reality of both Jewish and Christian theology, the latter as well undergoing in some quarters a prophetic reinterpretation. Is this common assault on the prophetic precisely because Jewish and Christian theologians fear that when Holocaust repentance and Israel enablement ceases to be central to Jewish and Christian identity there may be little left of Judaism and Christianity?

(Forgiving) Jews and Christians After the Holocaust and After Israel

At the end, we begin again, or so it goes in the realm of poetry. Beginning again we see life from another angle, innocence filtered through experience. Theology likewise seeks renewal by returning but, in the theological realm, it may too late. The return to Jesus for Christians or the rabbinic era for Jews is misplaced. Christians in Germany cannot return to Jesus through Luther,

Hitler and Heidegger. Jews cannot move back before the Holocaust or Israel. In a strange way, then, German Christians and Jews are bound together in the present as they have been in the past. Both come after the Holocaust *and* after Israel – after Israel meaning after what Jews – with German political, material and theological enablement – have done and are doing to the Palestinian people.

After the Holocaust – this was immensely difficult for German Christians and Jews. After Israel – this may be more difficult. This is so because both communities seek to freeze history as if both communities were just emerging from the Nazi era, even as both communities have left the Nazi era completely behind. After the war years, Germany was once again experimenting with democracy, split in two and struggling to get back on its feet and survive the Cold War. Jews were also getting back on their feet, emerging on the American scene with success and a new found positive status and, of course, the state of Israel was just being established. In the early years after World War II few could have predicted Germany's economic success and Israel's prowess. Fewer still could have understood how closely bound Germany and Israel's success would be. But, then, who would have predicted the culpability involved and how their very success would help blind them, unintentionally at first and then intentionally, to the costs of their post-Holocaust empowerment?

That being done – and hopefully exposed – what is the future for the Jewish-Christian dialogue after the Holocaust and after Israel? Can German Christians disentangle themselves from Jewish empowerment? Can Jews disentangle themselves from German repentance/enablement and Israel's abuse of power over against the Palestinian people?

Obviously the peace process brokered by the United States and Secretary of State John Kerry, whatever its fit and starts, nowhere addresses the needs of the Palestinian people or Jewish culpability in the creation and expansion of the state of Israel. No Middle East peace process has. Instead, like German Christian and Jewish theology, the various peace processes have served as a cover for Israel's continuing expansion. If there are any doubts remaining, think of what the latest peace process promises Israel – more or less all the Palestinian land Israel has taken plus a release from any and all historical claims against it. Think, then, of what the latest peace process promises Palestine – more or less everything it has yet to lose and a bar against raising any and all historical claims against Israel for its crimes against the Palestinian people.[123]

But the peace process granting of immunity is more expansive than it seems. The historical release for crimes against the Palestinian people includes Israel's unannounced co-conspirators - Germany, the United Kingdom, Europe historically and the European Union more recently and the United States. For the claims Palestinians have against others involve more than Israel. They include Israel's enablers historically and in the present. Without them Israel may not have come into being and certainly would have had a more difficult road ahead after statehood was declared.

Did I leave out Christian anti-Semitism, the vital core of historic Christianity and the repentant variety of Christian Holocaust theology, as persistent and ardent enablers of the need for, birth and expansion of the state of Israel? The Christian enablement list is extended through the various movements of Christian Zionism. Taken together and with their influence on the politics of the enabling political entities, Christian enablement of Israel and disablement of Palestine may be the single greatest contributing factor to the dire situation that the Palestinians face today.

So if the Palestinian Authority signs on the dotted peace process line, the culpability that disappears is hardly limited to Israel. Rather the release is multidimensional. Broadly speaking, it involves the entirety of the West. It also involves much of the Arab world who have postured for

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For my commentary on the 2013-2014 peace process see my series "Exile and the Prophetic" published by Mondoweiss at http://mondoweiss.net/author/marc-h-ellis

their own benefit and who have done little, if anything, for the Palestinian cause they call their own. As a religion that claims universality, what does Christianity have to say about the Christian share of this culpability? German Christianity holds special importance here, as part of the Western Jewish question historically, as purveyor of the Holocaust and as enabler of an empowered Israel.

So the Jews function as a rescue for German complicity in the Holocaust – through repentance and paying up in cash, economy and military hardware – and now the much criticized Americans help rescue Europe from its history of anti-Semitism and its support for the state of Israel that ethnically cleansed Palestinians in its birth and has disappeared Palestine in its continuing expansion. If only Israel can be held back – from taking more than it already has taken – and if only Palestinians – will accept what is left over from Israel's birth and expansion – then all will be forgiven. The challenge to the West, to German Christians, to Israeli Jews and global Jewry who have also been enablers and to Jewish theology will be over as well. If the present or future peace process takes hold the German critics of the German Christian establishment will be silenced and the exploding Jewish prophetic will be sidelined. Will German Christians then return to the safe confines of grappling with Luther, Hitler and Heidegger as Jews return to the safe confines of the ancient rabbis now filtered through the disembodied tenure-seeking academic elite in Jewish Studies?[124]

On Committing Oneself (Prophetically) to No Rescue

It isn't easy to commit oneself to the possibility, indeed the necessity of refusing rescue. Obviously on the personal level rescue is essential. To refuse to rescue a person in need is universally understood to be unethical, even inhuman. Of course that rescue is refused everyday on the personal and, to be sure, on the communal level as well. How else to explain the unjust economic global economic order which is continually justified and tweaked, with soaring rhetoric that, nonetheless, reaches out but fails to reach a considerable segment of the global population?

Triage (Bestimmen *{n}* der Handlungsreihenfolge während einer Notlage, Selektierung) is the order of the day – medically, politically, economically and militarily. Religion is hardly exempt in the triage area, affirmations of our common humanity notwithstanding. Most often, religion offers up the millions – perhaps billions – to be prayed for, ministered to, and visited as the life of the affluent congregations – the already saved – carry on their daily lives as if injustice did not exist.

Even these disconcerting thoughts about the use of the Holocaust as a form of trivialized nostalgia serving as a cover for the crimes of Israel, Jews, Germans, Christians, and the West in general – can these really encourage those in leadership and those they "serve" to turn the corner of complicity into active engagement on behalf of justice? Hammering home the sins of commission and omission – without leaving out my own complicity as a Jew – is hardly the soil from which national, political, congregational and seminary outreach is accomplished. And if all is seen as corrupt, even and especially our confession and repentance, if all is hiding and the constant search for shelter from the storms of our history and desires, where is the place of turning? This raises another haunting question: Has my complicity as a Jew inadvertently confirmed the absolute fall that Luther preached so insistently and violently? Shall my end - our end - lead us to Luther, the sinfulness of everything under Luther's Two-Kingdom sun?

God forbid.

Here the prophetic may seem simply an indigenous Jewish rescue within the corrupt world, with the additional perk of repentance as a return to right relation with God. In the Biblical world, the refusal to respond to God leads to a suffering exile but then the bright light of return is held out

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For an interesting focus on Jewish Studies that studiously avoids this central question see David Cutler, Jewish Studies is Too Jewish," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 24, 2014,

and sometimes (provisionally) accepted by God. Could the prophetic function as rescue for all the indicted earlier, including German Christians and Jews, who finally strip themselves of their (functioning) Holocaust fig leaves?

Standing naked – and repentant – before God. Is there any gesture more humble and required than this for Jews and Christians? Giving up injustice and moving toward justice – embodying a revolutionary rather than a pietistic forgiveness – if that is unacceptable what else is there to be offered?

But, then, after the Holocaust, what is there to say about God? The question is even more difficult now. What is there to be said about God after the Holocaust and after Israel? After Luther, Hitler, Heidegger, Holocaust, Israel? True, the additions of demonizing theology and militant atrocity are endless. After Cambodia, Rwanda, the Congo? There seems no respite.

Nonetheless, both the Jewish and Christian canon is fixed on Jews, the people Israel, the Promised Land and the destiny of the Jewish people. Thus simply limiting ourselves to the immediate canonical context of Jewish and Christian life, what can we say about God – *after*?

The Biblical prophets are directly linked to God, though this connection is troubled and troubling. For after God's initial call, the prophet is often left on his own. So, too, the prophet's mission to Israel is fraught. In the main, God already knows that God's call for repentance will largely go unheard. The promise of return to God and right relation to one another and the land is fated. Rescue is possible. Rescue is out of reach.

Is that the plight of Jews today – and their sponsors – after the post-Holocaust Jewish return to the land has ended as a debacle? One might hesitate, since we do not yet know how Israel will turn out. Nonetheless, there is much evidence to go on already, beginning with the ethnic cleansing of over 700,000 Palestinians in the formation of the state of Israel. Only a belief in rescue could see the state of Israel's initial history and its subsequent course as redeemable. Only a final covering over the cycle of violence and atrocity could, even if a just peace was somehow negotiated, justify what happened to the Palestinian people.[125]

The Jewish prophetic cannot go the route of rescue, politically, the contemporary Jewish prophetic is too brutally honest. Neither can it go the route of rescue, theologically, today's Jewish prophets would feel foolish calling on the Holocaust-absent God. If anything is certain it is that the prophet – and the prophetic – is on her own. God is not calling, commanding or accompanying the prophet, at least according to contemporary Jewish prophets.

For some, this may seem an oversight, for how does a person sacrifice for justice absent a cause greater than self, one that is rooted in a transcendent reality? Whatever the theoretical constructs, the contemporary Jewish prophetic does not solicit resources outside of itself. For after the Holocaust and after Israel, how can one call on a God of justice without regressing to an infantilism that belies the struggle for a just world?

So there is no return to innocence and no return to God. Without either, however, does justice have a chance to be implemented and if so what kind of justice could that be?

There is no rescue for Christianity, German or otherwise either. Yet the question remains: Is Christianity a proper place for the Jewish prophetic to weigh in? Christians might argue their separate religious province but, having used the Holocaust, the recovery of Jesus' Jewishness, and the magnificence of the Hebrew Bible to their advantage, neglecting the contemporary Jewish prophetic "no rescue" critique would be returning to the historic Christian manipulative use of Jews for their own self-aggrandizement. If because of their birth origins and theological claims on the Hebrew Bible, as well as the now negotiated sense of being the New Israel, Christian cannot help themselves with regard to using Jews to inform their own identity, then at least listen to the different

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For a scathing indictment of the prospects within Israel see Max Blumenthal, *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel* (New York: Nation Books, 2013).

sides of Jewishness and allow Jews be real rather than imaginary interlocutors.

Yet as we see with Luther, Hitler and Heidegger whose imaginary Jews loomed so large they were consumed by them, there is no more difficult task than disentangling Christianity from its use of Jews. In fact, in the long arc of Christian history disentanglement from Jews, albeit mostly mythic constructs of Jews, has never been accomplished. Admittedly, prophetic Jews stretch innocence and rescue to the limit. Even most Jews and certainly most non-Jews fear for their "normal" lives in their presence.[126]

Elijah's shelter from the storm is scarcely to be found in the Jewish prophetic, especially when the prophetic is separated from God. Though, even when connected with God, the shelter the Biblical prophets' promise is so terrifying that Jews canonized the prophetic writings. Canonization of the prophets is a way of remembering by distancing the community from their traumatic force. But, then, are the contemporary Jewish "without rescue" prophets really any harsher in their critique than the ancient "with the remote possibility of rescue" prophets were?

Reading the Biblical prophets is a cautionary note when a Jewish contemporary prophet shows up on one's doorstep. So lauded in contemporary Christian discourse, the Biblical prophets are investigated, probed, with unparalleled linguistic and exegetical skills, in short they are taught and then preached – with computers whirring, pressed robes flowing and heads piously bowed – as a way of rescue. How impertinent it is for a Jewish prophet today to disturb this flowering of Christian renewal – *after* – by announcing that this post-Holocaust embrace of Jewishness is itself deeply culpable.

According to the contemporary Jewish prophets, the culpability moves in at least three directions. Toward Palestinians – enabling the destruction of Palestine and the ghettoization of the Palestinian people. Toward Israel – enabling its continuing expansion and thus evolution into a fascist state. Toward Jews – enabling the destruction of the Jewish ethical tradition. Thus under the guise of reconciliation, German Christians enable Israel's final assimilation to the Other Nations. Is this, perhaps subconsciously, yet another, though more benevolent, attempt to diminish Jewish particularity by making Jews and the state of Israel more like German Christians and Germany?

No rescue, no rest – for the wicked? But that is hardly the point of the "no rescue" prophets who are themselves culpable – and know themselves to be. For if anything clouds the picture or illuminates it most clearly is that many of these "no rescue" prophets are Jewish Israelis who have left Israel. That is, they have left the Jewish (and Christian) state of Israel "rescue" because of the initial and continuing injustice they and their state have done and are doing to the Palestinian people.

After their return, these Jewish Israelis have chosen exile, what perhaps is to be the last exile in Jewish history. In their own minds at least, they have left Israel and, to boot, their Jewishness too, even as both are celebrated. Obviously, though, one cannot leave one's background. Regardless of their self-understanding, even in their leave-taking, they remain Israeli and Jewish. It is best to see these prophets as Still/Former Jewish/Israelis.[127]

These Still/Former Jewish/Israelis are a tough bunch. They refuse the safe confines of a nuclearized Jewish ghetto and choose instead exile among cultures and nations that formerly persecuted Jews and remain profoundly ambivalent about them. Moreover, by leaving Israel they transgress Jewish and Christian Holocaust theology that sees empowerment of Jews in Israel as *the*

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The Jewish attempt to discipline and banish the prophetic is another theme of my book, *Future of the Prophetic*. I describe this phenomenon as Jews being on both sides of the "empire divide."

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Yet another theme of my *Future of the Prophetic*.

redemptive response to Jewish powerlessness that terminated in the Holocaust. Choosing instead to wander within and among the Other Nations, they are also alienated by their experience and language from traditional Diaspora Jews. Few Diaspora Jews want the real Israel at their doorstep. Like German Christians, Diaspora Jews prefer, indeed demand, an idealized version of Jewishness. Israeli Jews who have left Israel have little patience with the idealism vested in them. They know what they have done. They know what Israel has done.

These Still/Former Jewish/Israelis have been the Jewish boots on the ground. They have returned to the Promised Land, served in the military, done the dirty work of occupation and expansion and now refuse the rescue of their embracing religious and national ethos. This is because, unlike Jews who long to return to innocence, and their Christian counterparts who use Jews to return to their innocence, the Still/Former Jewish/Israelis know the score. Jewish and Christian Innocence is culpability. That culpability is endless.

On the German scene, one might think Dietrich Bonhoeffer a likely compatriot, a comrade in arms for these Still/Former Jewish/Israelis. After all, Bonhoeffer joined the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler and was executed for his part in the conspiracy. He also thought through his Christian faith and appraised its enablement of Hitler and the Nazis to the point where the only future he envisioned for Christianity was severely chastened. But the Still/Former Jewish/Israelis are too far gone even for Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer's reflections on faith are far too traditional, too Biblical and too traditionally Christian. After all, Bonhoeffer anticipates Christian renewal at another moment in history. The Still/Former Jewish/Israelis aren't going anywhere near Christian – or Jewish – renewal.

Is the "no rescue" Jewish prophetic, then, the last word on faith? After all, these Jewish prophets carry forward a tradition that, at least in its origins, is based on God's command. It could be that the contemporary Jewish prophetic has simply internalized God's command in a context where claiming God for prophetic witness seems unjustifiable, childish and, more, triumphalist. Is it then inappropriate for another faith community to speak what the Jewish prophetic cannot?

By interjecting various Christian liberation theologies that affirm critique of Christianity, work diligently for justice and retain a belief in God, can Christians who embrace this form of Christianity speak of their beliefs to today's Jewish prophets? Or should the Christian community, especially the German Christian community who has hid behind Constantinian Judaism as its rescue and its empire enablement, break with Constantinian Judaism, pursue justice for Palestinians and, in true repentance, be silent about God? Perhaps decades of embodying the prophetic – without rescue – is the needed ingredient to clear the German injustice account so that German Christians might approach God again.

But know, too, that these belated events – the explosion of the Jewish prophetic and perhaps the awakening of some German Christians to how the Holocaust functions on their behalf – occur at the end of Jewish history as we have known and inherited it. Unbeknownst to them, the Jewish prophetic can be viewed as a last gasp effort to retrieve Jewishness from the ultimate sin – to become like the Other Nations. It goes like this: Constantinian Jews have wanted and pursued assimilation with a desperation so blatant that is impossible to miss. Yet most of the world has missed what is obvious. This is because Constantinian Jews have mixed their material ascent with a fascinating focus on Jewish suffering and morality. However, anyone who observes Jewish post-Holocaust life from a dispassionate distance can see it for what it is – an interconnected web of ascendancy and power.

Being on the other side of empire power for so long, who can criticize Jews for deciding that is their turn for power, even if it is at the expense of another people's suffering. After all, Germany has made the same decision after the Holocaust and with help from these very same Constantinian Jews who, in their own self-serving way, limit their critique to the German past. And if the choice were theirs to make, who among the nations would choose any other route, regardless of the cost?

As a nation among nations, one cannot expect anything more or less from Germany or from

the state of Israel for that matter. National leaders and their enablers, from business people to the intellectual and religious elite, make straight the crooked path to national power. Through direct speech or silence on certain issues, they provide rationale, ethical green lights, and narrative structure to what otherwise would be seen as a naked grab for the holy grail of empire. Is that why so many Jewish philosophers remain enthralled with the anti-Semitic, Nazi, Martin Heidegger?[128]

The cover provided by Jewish academics – in the United States, Israel and Europe, including Germany – for the state of Israel and, more recently, their attempt to deflect the larger BDS movement that seeks justice for Palestinians by economically disarming the state of Israel, place them in too close proximity to the intellectual class that supported and were promoted in the Nazi era. For those who think this discussion is extreme, eliminate the death camps which Heidegger may have been ignorant of and perhaps would not have supported – though absent a confession from him in the post-war years, his opposition is conjecture. What is the difference between supporting a Nazification of Germany and defending/protecting an ethnic cleansing and continually expanding state of Israel which Palestinians experience as a form of racism – would they say fascism? - similar to the one experienced by Jews in the Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1938.

After this form of abuse of power, there is no future for an ethically-based Jewishness. Paradoxically, this may be the impetus for the explosion of the Jewish prophetic in our time. This explosion is not only for justice for Palestinians or even primarily so, though this is how most prophetic Jews would explain it. Contra their explanation, it is more accurately viewed as a last ditch effort to thwart the ultimate assimilation of Jewishness to unjust power, for which there is no rescue. Thus, as it turns out, the prophets are themselves entangled in rescue. Their "no rescue" sensibility is plea, more demand, to stop before it is too late.

The Jewish prophets thus embody rescue as they announce its impossibility. Do they at the same time embody God as they declare God's absence?

What is to be done?

Now that the 2013-2014 American-led peace process is dead – whether (provisionally) resurrected or not – what have we learned?

Though American-led, Europe in general, the European Union and Germany in particular were/are fully onboard with the 2013-2014 American-led John Kerry initiative. Fully onboard for what? The peace process was ostensibly mounted as a last ditch effort to save the possibility of a two-state solution, a secure Israel living side by side with a free and friendly Palestine. Yet the devil is in the definitional details. Kerry's definition of two-states – one accepted and promoted by his European partners – has a peculiar sensibility. It seems Kerry's view of a Palestinian state is Israel's left-overs. More or less everything should be given to Palestinians that Israel has not already taken.

Look at Kerry's map of Palestine. One finds there: Jerusalem under Israeli control; the major Jewish settlements in the West Bank remain; Palestine's borders to be patrolled by Israel, the United States and NATO. Though unannounced but again awaiting only the signature of the president of the Palestinian Authority to be accepted by the European Union and Germany, Kerry's peace plan leaves Palestine occupied by Israeli settlers and foreign troops, surrounding a permanently ghettoized Palestinian population.

But what a relief to the parties involved if John Kerry succeeds! Kerry promises Israel,

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See Aubrey L. Glazer, "What Does Heidegger's Anti-Semitism Mean for Jewish Philosophy? An Interview with Elliot R. Wolfson on the Occasion of the Publication of His Newest Book, *Religion Dispatches*, April 8, 2014.

http://www.religiondispatches.org/books/atheologies/7742/what_does_heidegger_s_anti_semitism_mean_for_jewish_philosophy/#.Uz4CiN_PoaY.facebook

Jews and their friendly enablers, the end of all historical claims against those who caused/sponsored/enabled the original and permanent displacement of the Palestinian people. Yet with all the goodies promised everyone on the victorious side, Israel balks. Israel is unable to accept a final victory which solidifies its place in the international nation-state system, represents a victory guaranteed militarily by the still colonial West and, at the same time, buries the West's post-Holocaust colonial history.

Why Israel refuses to accept the normalization Irving Greenberg wrote about in his 1988 essay – with all the land and resources it has taken since 1948 forgiven – is ripe for Jewish political and theological exploration. Obviously the willingness of the United States, Europe and Germany in particular to sponsor, hope for and pressure Palestinians to accept a permanent ghettoization is similarly suitable for exploration. But, for now, in the wake of this "Palestinian ghettoization as permanent" failure, the question remains as to what is to be done. Because as the permanent aspect of ghettoization as a signed and internationally legitimate agreement has been forestalled, the harsh reality of the ghettoized Palestinian situation remains and grows worse daily.

Here is what dissenting Jews and Christians – and people of conscience of all faiths and backgrounds – must understand about the proposed solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: there will never be – I repeat, never be – a two-state solution where a real Palestinian state emerges. By a real Palestinian state, I mean a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, all of the West Bank for Palestinians without any Jewish settlers and settlements, and with a protected link to a free Gaza. No political analyst worth his or her grain of salt believes that there will be a real Palestinian state and certainly no one anywhere, including the Palestinian negotiators, believe that this was on the table during the latest rounds of peace negotiations. So what are we left with?

Increasingly, the negative one-state solution is spoken about as the reality – that one state being Israel controlling the land between Tel Aviv and the Jordan River, with almost 6 million Palestinians under Israeli control by way of second-class citizenship within Israel proper, under occupation in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and border lock-down in Gaza. The more positive role of the one-state increasingly voiced Palestinians intellectuals would grant Palestinians equal citizenship within this state, thus the emergence of a unified, democratic Israel-Palestine.[129]

Whether through practical reality or utopian aspirations, the positive Israel-Palestine one-state solution is a non-starter for a variety of reasons, including Israel's absolute opposition to such a state, a position that Israel's American-European allies are in full agreement with. Refusing a real two-state solution, Israel correctly calculates that the American-European commitment to Israel is far more important to its history, politics and empire than Palestinians are or will be. No matter the pressure received, Israel knows the American-European coded language well. In the final analysis, the American-European alliance will not abandon Israel.

Since there will be neither a real two-state solution nor the positive one-state solution, where should Germans and German Christians stand in this seemingly unbridgeable gap? Despite the rhetoric, this gap is permanent in the political sense, for the foreseeable future and beyond. Israel will continue to expand. Palestine will continue to disappear. Flare-ups, Israeli incursions/crackdowns, Palestinian resistance/uprisings – the situation will be continually contested. Where can German justice-seekers stand within this gap and contestation?

For Germans and German Christians, a one-state depoliticized Jewish entity in the Middle East is almost impossible to contemplate. For German and German Christians, a Jewish permanent conquering of Palestinians – if it is admitted rather than disguised – is likewise almost impossible to contemplate. Both impossibilities have less to do with Jews and Palestinians than they have to do with German history in relation to Jews. No matter the rhetorical desire by Germany and German

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For a recent discussion of the positive one-state solution see *The Failure of the Two-State Solution: The prospects of One State in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. Hani A. Faris (London: I. B. Taurus, 2013).

Christians for Jews to decide their own fate, German control of the images of Jews is crucial to its own civilizational rescue from the Holocaust and its continuing political and economic ascendancy in the 21st century. Thus Germany and German Christians are limited and constrained by Jews as they appear in images and as they act politically. German freedom from the horrors of the Holocaust remains tied to Jews in the present.

Since Jews are on both sides of the empire Israel divide, Jews in Israel and around the world are rocking the German boat once again. On the one hand, a marauding and conquering Israel distorts the image Germans want and need of innocent Jews. On the other hand, prophetic Jews refuse to be boxed in by Germany's need for innocent, empowered Jews who are, for Germans, conveniently outside of Germany. Even today, the German and German Christian clash with real, living, troubling Jews is fraught historically. Perhaps this is why German Christians especially seek to relegate Jews to the Bible and a romanticized Israel.

Of course there is the long love affair among Germans with progressive Jewish Israelis. Book and political tours by Israeli writers such as Amos Oz and David Grossman have been the mainstay of the progressive Israel-issue circuit for decades. But, though these progressive Israelis have argued for a Palestinian state alongside Israel, in Germany they have functioned to retain the myth of Israeli power's innocence.

Following Oz and Grossman, neither explores the fraught terrain of Israel's birth. Instead they locate Israel's waywardness in the aftermath of the 1967 war. In short, Oz and Grossman – and others such as Gush Shalom's, Uri Avnery – consolidate for Germans, Israel's political and, as importantly, ethical legitimacy as a state by indicting Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory since the 1967 war. Arguing for the strict separation of Israel and the Palestinians, these progressive Israelis provide a relief valve for Germans torn internally – and historically – about the Jewish question. The strict separation of Israelis and Palestinians allows a retreat to Israel as innocent once the waywardness of Israel's occupation is resolved. Is this also the safe harbor retreat for Germans?[130]

Importantly, progressive Israelis who have occupied the German liberal sensibility lay blame on Israel's waywardness in the areas Germany knows well from its own history – on right-wing politicians and their followers that have recently come to power in Israel. Thus the Israel-German historical parallel is drawn even if it is unannounced. Jewish politics in an innocent Israel has been taken over by the right-wing just as an innocent Germany was taken over during the Nazi era.

To be sure, Germany lost its battle in the Nazi era but now that is being corrected. The German audiences listening to progressive Israelis, chastened by their Nazi era loss, have righted their course and thus are once again innocent. Moreover, Germans today are struggling with progressive Israelis to right their course, thus Jews are innocent. How good it is for Germans and Jews to work together in a common struggle to recover/retain their mutual original innocence!

But with the end of the two-state solution and without a positive one-state solution in sight, what are Germans and German Christians to do even with progressive Jews, Israelis and otherwise, who seek solidarity between, in their minds, a chastened/innocent Germany and a beleaguered/innocent/wayward Israel? If Germans continue to see themselves as chastened *and* innocent but cut through Israel and Jews as beleaguered/innocent/wayward, German feelings about Jews might then revert to the "perversion" of the anti-Semitic Nazi era. Here Germans may rediscover an ambivalence about Jews that remains beneath the surface of contemporary German – and German Christian – life. This wrestling with Jews attests once again to how German perception of Jews is at ground level an internal wrestling with German history.

Of course, there are some Germans who believe they have entered a new Germany and that

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130 For an example of progressive Jewish writing that captivated German audiences for decades see Amos Oz, *The Slopes of Lebanon* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

entanglement with Jews is old-hat. The issue Germany confronts today has to do with imported workers from different parts of the world and with different religious backgrounds. In a democratic, European Union-oriented Germany, the issue is the working out a diverse, multi-cultural Germany. In short, the Nazi-Jewish corner of history has been turned.

Yet isn't this simply another attempt to struggle for an innocence belied by history? If only Germany can turn this difficult present-day corner, then the past – especially its Jewish past – will be left behind as if it never happened. Ironically, the increase in the Jewish population in Germany provides such an opportunity, especially since these Jews are overwhelmingly non-German Jews and thus can be argued as fitting into the multi-cultural space of the new Germany.

These "replacement" Jews are convenient. But do they actually represent a turning of the corner? Was the problem in previous eras of German history the lack of appreciation of diversity or was specifically something to do with Jews? Turning one's gaze to diversity can be an advance. It can also be a cover, a sought after return to innocence that is not innocent.

On the German Christian front, the issue is equally complex. There is a tug of war between those who continue to see Jews as central to their faith and history and those who welcomes the new multicultural Germany as attention to the present lest the past repeat itself. While the former seeks to retain a Jewish focus, the latter see the past as about injustice, right-wing politics and the German refusal of diversity, rather than specifically about Jews. Though both wings of the German Christian community view themselves as focused on the right issue, they are shadowed by the Holocaust and Israel as it really is. No matter their hopes, German Christians cannot move beyond Biblical or Holocaust Jews. Nor can German Christians avoid the reality of contemporary Jewish life.

But if history cannot be left behind, especially a history so marked by violence and atrocity and one that the German state and German Christians continue to be so deeply entangled with, what is the road head? If Jews aren't – only – innocent or culpable, Germans aren't – only – culpable or innocent either.

In the end, we are left with the need to negotiate our histories – Diaspora Jews, Jewish Israelis, Germans and German Christians alike. But what can that negotiated sensibility be in a time of Jewish and German empowerment?

Perhaps it has to do with how Palestinians are viewed by Jews and Germans. If Israel – and Palestine – is seen as a German-Jewish drama, then the history and destiny of Palestinians is beside the point. That is the way Israel-Palestine has been understood. I doubt this foundational sensibility will change in the near future. But what if, even with this one-sided understanding, Palestinians are seen as the interlocutor of German-Jewish history, casting shadows upon and interrogating both? What if Palestinians point to the hypocrisy of German and Jewish claims to innocence after the Holocaust?

Palestinians surface the hypocrisy within the well positioned German-Jewish solidarity. Germans may believe that the enablement of Israel truly wipes its history of violence and atrocity clean and it can now move onto other more immediate issues – foreign workers for example. This presumes that the non-acceptance of the Other in German society is not Jewish-specific. Rather it is simply a cultural working out of difference as in many societies around the world. At the same time, Palestinians who experience the violence of a German-enabled Israel might uncover the mostly hidden Jewish anger of a Holocaust trauma that cannot be bridged by oppressing another people. This means that Israel-enablers are not really forgiven either.

Here Germans and Jews have arrived – no real two-state, no positive one-state. Here Germans and Jews will remain – hiding their self-serving empires with no lessening of trauma and no authentic forgiveness. How long can both the material and ethical situations hold injustice toward Palestinians together?

The boycott, divestment and sanctions movement (BDS) seems to present a way through this holding pattern, calling Israel to account for its occupation of the West Bank and Jerusalem,

albeit in a limited way. At least, this holding pattern works as a form of negotiation between Israeli power and the West's – indeed the world's – unwillingness to act decisively. For though it is rarely discussed, the BDS movement could be frozen or ended with the signing of any agreement, even an interim one, by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In the political world, BDS is a materially actualized movement but, whatever the movement's rhetoric, is limited to a two-state demand. BDS is not as some hoped and others rail against a threat to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Nor does it pose a real possibility of achieving a positive one-state reality. BDS is a witness, an important one, that injustice continues to be done to the Palestinian people and that business as usual should be discontinued as long as injustice continues.[131]

What awaits Israel-Palestine in the immediate future? When will German and German Christians break from tired middle that only enables Israel to continue its occupation? As I have argued in these pages, like most nations and communities, Germany and German Christians are mostly self-involved. That this self-involvement involves rescue from a horrific past is hardly peculiar to Germany and German Christians.

Nonetheless the Holocaust marks both with a permanent stain. The Palestinian people have and will continue to pay a horrific price for German and German Christian history. Against this tide the Jewish prophetic tradition is limited and humbled. It, too, has to face the Holocaust and the heirs of the Holocaust who use the Holocaust as a wedge of oppression. For German and German Christian history have done damage to the Jewish prophetic tradition as well. Dare contemporary Jewish prophets speak the outrage they feel unencumbered by the history they, too, inherit as Jews?

Perhaps this is why, yet again, this Passover and Easter season has been filled with the trite and the banal sentiments of a "risen Lord" and a "liberated people." For after the Holocaust and after Israel there is little left to proclaim other than the empty and meaningless proclamations from yesteryear. Only a concerted effort by Germans, German Christians, Jews – and Palestinians – will move us beyond holy day clichés. If it isn't already too late.

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The main and significant spokesperson of the BDS movement is Ali Abunimah, who assuredly would not accept my analysis. See his *The Battle for Justice in Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014).

8. Shir Hever

European Complicity with Israel's Occupation and Apartheid – an Economic Perspective

The Zionist movement and the State of Israel have European roots. The founders and leaders of the Zionist movement came from Europe and considered the project of the colonization of Palestine with Jews from the very start as a project of bringing advanced civilization, culture and technology to a backward and primitive frontier.

The project which continued with the establishment of the State of Israel. The ethnic cleansing of the native population of Palestine, the official "state of emergency" which is kept in place for 68 years, the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Syrian Golan in 1967, the mass incarceration of Palestinians, the torture of prisoners, the massacres of civilians by Israeli soldiers acting in impunity, all of these are not Israeli inventions, nor Jewish inventions. Other European colonial projects in numerous countries in every continent were no different. Visitors and scholars from Algeria, Brazil, India, Ireland, South Africa and many other countries recognize in Israel's policies the very same colonial policies which defined their own colonial histories.

The only difference, however, between Israel and the others is that direct colonial rule has almost disappeared from the world, and survives in Israel/Palestine only thanks to international support. Although the U.S is officially Israel's strongest ally, the importance of Europe and the European Union to Israel's military might, economic stability and most importantly: political legitimacy, is in fact even greater than that of the U.S.

These relations between European colonial interests and Israel's can be traced back to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which Great Britain announced its intention to allocate land for a Jewish "national home," before conquering that land from the Ottoman Empire. In 1947 European governments voted in the UN in favor of the Partition Plan of Palestine, in preparation for mass immigration of Jews to Palestine, rather than taking responsibility for Jewish refugees from the Holocaust and helping them recover their rights as citizens of European countries. In 1956 Israel joined a colonial punitive war by Britain and France against Egypt in response to the nationalization of the Suez Canal. France became Israel's largest arms supplier following that war, until it was replaced by the U.S in 1967.

Moving on to more recent decades, Europe became Israel's largest trading partner, accounting for about a third of all of Israel's exports and imports. It also conducts large-scale military trade with Israel, not least of which is the billion-euro deal for purchasing German submarines, a purely offensive weapon adapted to be able carry nuclear missiles, which are the most expensive weapon in the Israeli arsenal. Europe also accounts for most of the aid money financing large aid projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) since 1994. The aid has allowed the Israeli government to dismantle the programs and institutions relating to the wellbeing of Palestinians under occupation. Much of this aid is used to buy goods and services from Israeli companies, effectively turning the occupation into a form of export for the Israeli economy. More importantly, the aid relieves Israel from its responsibilities under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to care for the needs of the protected population under occupation.

Between 1994 and 2000, donors have invested over US$ 7 billion in development aid to help build a viable Palestinian economy. European countries account for the majority of that amount. However, when aid projects funded by European countries were refused or outright destroyed by the Israeli military (such as the seaport and airport of Gaza), the donors did not ask compensations from Israel, and simply moved on. After the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, donors shifted their aid efforts from development aid to humanitarian aid. The Palestinian organization Aid Watch found that about 72% of the aid ended up in the Israeli

economy.
Although the rules of the European Commission clearly dictate that the European Association Agreement may not be upheld with countries which violate human rights, Israel is an exception and enjoys trade conditions with Europe that no other non-European state enjoys. The book *Europe's Alliance with Israel* by David Cronin from 2011 gives more detail on these warm relations and the European insistence to close their eyes to Israel's violations of international law.
The European Union also contributes to Israel's diplomatic efforts. European countries have facilitated Israel's negotiations with Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. The European Union regularly publishes announcement in support of Israeli policies (even the disproportional use of force against civilians in Gaza). In a world in which almost all of the states in Africa, Asia and Latin America have recognized the State of Palestine (134 countries in total), most European Union members have refused to recognize Palestine, with the exception of Cyprus and Sweden.
The dependency of the Israeli governments on European support is remarkable. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak called Israel a "village in the jungle," a statement encompassing how the Israeli elites view themselves as a European enclave in the Middle East. Very little trade exists between Israel and its neighbors (despite the fact that Israel shares a peaceful border with both Egypt and Jordan). Israeli sport teams compete in European tournaments and Israeli musicians participate in the Eurovision. Before the State of Israel was ten years old, it struck deals with Great Britain and France against Egypt in 1956. In the height of the Cold War Israeli governments declared Israel to be a "bulwark against the spread of communism" to justify its policies, not unlike Apartheid South Africa in those same years, pointing out that the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), just like the African National Congress (ANC), is an organization with socialist tendencies.
After the end of the Cold War and the fall of Apartheid in South Africa, justifying Israel's military occupation of the OPT and its racial policies and legislation became more difficult. The Oslo peace negotiations were an attempt on behalf of the Israeli government to restructure its control over the OPT while preserving its international legitimacy. Only after the September 11 attack sin the U.S, however, did the Israeli government find a new common enemy against which it can revitalize its alliance with the West. "Islamic terrorism" has taken the place of communism. Neve Gordon showed that since the attacks, Israel became the "global capital" of the Homeland Security industry, providing countries around the world with Israeli counter-terrorism technology, and training in security operations. Among the countries which pay for the "Israeli expertise" based on five decades of military occupation are: Belgium, Britain, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
It is self-evident that Israel needs the European support desperately and will go to great length to ensure its continuation. It is more challenging to understand the reasons for this support from the European perspective.
I believe that the rise of the extreme right in Europe can explain the most recent phase of European support for Israel. The Israeli security exports are not just in the forms of goods and services, but also in the form of legitimacy. The Israeli security forces regularly use racial profiling to single-out people according to the color of their skin, their accents, their clothes for more invasive security checks, while letting certain groups of people pas with minimal control. Nearly all right-wing parties in Europe are strong and vocal supporters of Israel and Israeli policies (Germany is an exception, where the left is sometimes a bigger supporter of Israel than the right). Right-wing leaders such as Marine Le Pen in France, Girt Wilders in the Netherlands, Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria and others wish to import Israeli policies to Europe, and create a brutal system of oppression against Arabs, Muslims, migrants and asylum-seekers. By

defending the legitimacy of Israel's policies, they make it easier for the people of Europe to accept them in Europe as well. Donald Trump's enthusiastic support for Israel is directly tied to Israel's racial policies. He told Fox News on September 19th, 2016: "Israel has done an unbelievable job, and they'll profile. They profile. They see somebody that's suspicious, they will profile."

The Israeli public has decided to trade away liberty in exchange for security. Political parties in Europe who wish to do the same use Israel as symbol, in a mirror move to the way that anti-imperialist and human rights groups around the world have been using Palestine as a symbol for their struggles.

However, despite the worrying rise of the extreme right in Europe and outside it, and with it unflinching support to Israeli racist policies, the view from Israel is completely different. The costs of five decades of military occupation of the OPT are not fully covered by international aid, and have taken a heavy toll on the standard of living of ordinary Israelis. The international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) against Israel is gaining momentum and becomes a regular topic in the Israeli media and the government's agenda. Israel is embroiled in a spiral of deep political and economic crisis, and yet the government and the media are afraid to discuss the true extent of this crisis, because of large numbers of young and educated Israelis who are leaving the country, disillusioned and disappointed with the future of the State of Israel.

European leaders from the three strong European states: Britain, France and Germany, have offered Israeli governments a lifeline since the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process with the second Intifada. They offered that if the occupation will end, European support for Israel will increase to even higher levels than today. This is a "carrot and stick" policy without the stick, and has therefore utterly failed. The Israeli governments are not willing to give up the occupation.

More recently (especially after the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2008/9), some tiny steps have been made in also adopting a "stick" and challenging the idea of an unconditional support for Israel. For example, the European Union adopted some moves towards a proper labelling of products from the illegal colonies in the West Bank, so that consumers will be aware that the true source of the product is not, in fact, from Israel. In response, the Israeli government announced that such moves are an attack on Israel's "right to exist."

This is more than just polemics. It is a clear admission by the Israeli government that occupation has become so dominant in Israel's political, economic and social life that it has become more important than Israel's self-definition as a "Jewish state." The colonization of the OPT has taken place in 50 out of the 68 years of existence of the State of Israel (73%). Colonists now comprise about 8% of the population, but command almost triple that in budgetary allocation. Many Israelis and even senior members of the Israeli government have already decided that they will hold on to the occupation and apartheid for as long as possible, but if international pressure will make that impossible, they will sooner give up the State of Israel as a Jewish state than give up the OPT. Even the current president of Israel Reuven Rivlin said that Israel must become a binational state.

The Palestinians have fought for their freedom for nearly a century, but they simply do not have the military strength to defeat the Israeli army. Eventually, like in all anti-colonial struggles, they will win and the Israeli regime will fall. I do not think that European politicians can change those simple facts. They can, however, have a great deal of influence on what shape the Palestinian struggle will take, and how long it will take. Europe has a unique position to smooth the unequal power relations between Israel and the Palestinians. It can implement its own existing laws and cancel the Association Agreement and apply sanctions are arms trade with Israel. Such actions would empower the Palestinian liberation movement, giving it hope that a

non-violent struggle for freedom is possible.

9. *Ulrich Duchrow*

Palestine/Israel exemplifies Colonial Capitalism: A Theological Perspective

In many countries it is difficult to deal with the theme Palestine/Israel politically and theologically in church and society. This is particularly true in Germany. Churches and theology were co-responsible for the German crimes against the European Jews. Especially Luther's pamphlet on "The Jews and their Lies" (1543) had called for crimes against humanity and was used by the Nazis and "German Christians" for legitimizing the Holocaust. In this context it was absolutely necessary after the end of World War II to overcome Christian anti-Judaism, which began with the imperialisation of Christianity by Constantine (312). It was essential to make a critical reassessment of the German guilt.

However, this work overlooked the effects of the German crimes on the Palestinians.. Yet we cannot seriously claim to compensate for our own guilt by letting others pay for it. So while honoring the attempts in church and theology so far to make up for the Holocaust, theological work still must honor both traumas: the Holocaust and the Nakba (Catastrophe) or the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians This began with the expulsion of more than 700 000 Palestinians after the creation of the state of Israel and is still executed by Israel, notoriously violating international law and human rights.

In order to deal with this problem it is first of all necessary, to understand the linkage between the issue of Palestine/Israel and the imperial system of transnational capitalism and also the role Germany is playing here.

1. Historical and systematic dimensions of the ruling global empire and their significance for the political economy of Palestine/Israel

This can only be understood from a historical perspective. How have economic, political and ideological powers interacted, leading to the present situation, the climax of modernity? This is the climax of more than 500 years of so-called western civilization.

A critical analysis of modernity as civilization shows that it is driven by money – structurally, culturally, and psychologically. This can be demonstrated by analyzing its legitimization narratives developed by John Locke, David Hume, and Adam Smith. The basic characteristics of modernity show that the whole of life is subjected to functional mechanisms geared toward the accumulation of capital, which can be defined as greedy money.[132] Indeed, the very definition of capital, as opposed to mere money (which could be used just as an instrument for exchange) is that it has to be continually (re)invested to

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Cf. DUCHROW, Ulrich/Hinkelammert, Franz: *Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

produce more money. The foundational invention for this "efficient" thinking is double entry bookkeeping, calculating everything according to the profit obtained after balancing input and output. This is connected to the reductionist rationality of means-end calculation, which in turn becomes irrational and totalitarian. It leaves out the reproductive rationality that puts life and the sustenance of life at the center of critical thinking. This explains why modernity with its science, technology, economy, and politics has ended up in a global crisis, putting at risk the survival of humanity on earth. This is the core of the thesis as to why western civilization is death-bound.

Beyond this basic economic and scientific-technical drive for accumulating capital is the symbolic drive of understanding Europe and Western civilization as superior to all others, which leads to *racism and arrogance*, also evident in Israel's behavior against the Palestinians. Shir Hever has expressed this in the title of his book: *The Political Economy of Israel's Occupation. Repression Beyond Exploitation.*[133] Interest in exploitation alone cannot explain the continuation of Israeli occupation – especially as this is linked to rising costs. Why does the majority of the Israeli working population vote for nationalist parties which put most money into military and colonies, while the underclass has to pay the costs of occupation with the dismantling of social welfare? There must besomething more than material advantages.

This is why Shir Hever introduces other theoretical concepts beyond those that are Marxist in order to explain Israel's continuing interest in repressing the Palestinian people. This is also important for devising strategies to overcome the oppression. The first additional category Hever takes from Institutional Economics, founded by Thorstein Veblen[134] ("Veblen maintains that as societies mature, conspicuous leisure gives way to 'conspicuous consumption'. Both are performed to demonstrate wealth or mark social status."[135] This can lead to the situation that people may forego material benefits in order to appear better than others – which would explain an Israeli worker voting for a nationalist party forcing occupation on Palestinians. "Sabotage" is a second institutional economic concept useful for analyzing the Israel/Palestine conflict. This involves a dialectic between profit and production. When you produce too much of one kind, profit may fall because demand decreases. So "sabotage" would put brakes on the production process in order to produce the optimum for profit. Israel's limiting of Palestinian freedom of movement can be interpreted with this analytic tool.

Another theoretician helping usto understand individual motivation beyond systemic economic mechanisms is the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.[136] He adds "cultural" and "symbolic" to economic capital. Both, symbolic and cultural capital can also be put together as "social capital" (Veblen). This means that there is not only economic

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133 I quote the pages from the German edition: HEVER, Shir: *Die politische Ökonomie der israelischen Besatzung. Unterdrückung über die Ausbeutung hinaus.* Köln: ISP, 2014.

134 Op.cit. 167ff.

135 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thorstein_Veblen.

136 Op.cit. 184ff.

competition around material goods, but also competition to gain prestige and power. This is not entirely new. The 17th century philosopher Thomas Hobbes developed a capitalist anthropology defining the human being as an atomic individual competing with other individuals for wealth, power and reputation in a limited space.[137] According to him, this leads to a war of all against all. In order to prevent the war becoming bloody there must be a strong sovereign guaranteeing private property and contracts. \

So, we have to always deal with at least three dimensions of human and social relations:

- wealth-poverty (economic capital)
- power-powerlessness (symbolic capital)
- reputation -humiliation (cultural capital)

With this expanded set of lenses, Hever can easily explain why on, both the Israeli and Palestinian sides, identity politics prevail over purely economic profits or losses. This is especially understandable because group identities are strongest formed by frustrations, sufferings and persecution, and also by accusing other groups of crimes. Bourdieu shows with the concept of "*habitus*" that group identities may engrave themselves into the bodies and souls of people and peoples so that decisions and actions might be shaped unconsciously without being screened by rational reflection about advantages, profits and disadvantages and losses.

However, what is most important is that Europe and later the global West always had a coalition between capital and territorial, military and imperial powers. They have been the political servants of capital, competing among themselves to become the first servant, the hegemon.[138] This is obvious from 1492 onward, when Genoa, the capital power,made the alliance with the territorial, military power of Spain. This opened the long cycles of capital accumulation regimes. The hegemony moved from Spain to the Netherlands in the 17th century, then to Britain in the 18th and 19th and finally to the USA in the 20th century up to now. Inherent in those alliances between capital and territorial powers has been the drive to link capital expansion with imperial expansion, always including ideological and cultural expansion.

It is in this context that the state of Israel came into being, which has been well researched.[139] At a time when Britain was not only the imperial colonial power in

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Cf. DUCHROW, Ulrich/Hinkelammert, Franz: *Property for People, Not for Profit: Alternatives to the global tyranny of capital.* London & Geneva: Zed Books & World Council of Churches, 2004, chapter 2.

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Cf. ARRIGHI, Giovanni: *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our 'Times.* London/New York: VERSO, 1994; DUCHROW, Ulrich: *Europe in the World System 1492-1992*. Geneva: WCC, 1992.

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Cf. among others SAND, Shlomo: *The Invention of the Jewish People.* London/New York: Verso, 2005; Id.: *The Invention of the Land of Israel: From Holy Land to Homeland.* London/New

Palestine but was also the hegemonic power of the capitalist world system, the Zionist movement was able to convince the British government to promise Jews a "national home" in Palestine. This was confirmed in the famous Declaration, which Foreign Secretary Balfour transmitted in a letter to Baron Walter Rothschild for the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland on November 2, 1917.[140]

There were several considerations behind this and subsequent actions of the British government. They re was an interest in financially supporting Jews worldwide. They sought to have a stronghold in post-war Palestine for petroleum transport from Iraq, and sought a buffer between Egypt and the Suez Canal. Later they wanted to discourage Jewish refugees from Russia and Germany immigrating into Britain and wanted them instead to go to Palestine. So, the later state of Israel was a colonial project with the help of the British Empire from the beginning.[141]

The other important feature of the project is linked to capitalism and nationalism. Zionism is not a child of Judaism but of 19th century nationalism.[142] The way to invade Palestine (before the UN produced a basis in international law) was by buying up land for Jews and prohibiting its subsequent sale to non-Jews.[143] This again shows that there is something beyond material profit guiding the Zionist project.

Another important linkage between Israel/Palestine and global political-economic developments is the parallelism of the two periods of welfare capitalism and later neoliberal capitalism. After World War II until the 1970s there was the New Deal in the USA and the development of the "Social Market Economy" in Europe, as well as "development" of the global South.

Between the two Israeli-Arab wars in 1948 and 1967, and even after 1967, the economic interaction between Palestinians and Israeli created some benefits for both sides. Certainly Israel was the dominating force, but the Palestinians too experienced some economic progress.[144] One key factor was the possibility for Palestinian workers

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York: Verso, (2012) 2014, both with rich literature. A succind summary of the devolopments between the emergence of Zionism and 2006 is presented in the Introduction of HONIG-PARNASS, Tikva/Haddad, Toufic (eds.): *Between the Lines: Readings on Israel, the Palestinians, and the U.S. "War on Terror".* Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2007.

140 Here is the text: "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." (http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration.aspx)

141 Concerning colonialism in this context among others cf. HALPER, Jeff: *An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel.* London: Pluto Press, 2008.

142 Sand, 2005 and 2014.

143 Sand, 2014, 227.

144 Hever, 2014, 23ff.

to get jobs in Israel and even in the rich gulf countries. Also Israelis were buying products from Palestinian territories because of lower prices. Yet Israel was preventing Palestinians from industrializing their economy in order to keep them dependent and avoid competition – a very bad legacy for the future. Palestinians also were not allowed to have their own financial institutions.

As in other parts of the world, the introduction of neoliberal policies in the 1980s also affected the Israeli and Palestinian economy and society very badly. Hever (26) mentions four trends contributing to decline and disillusionment:

1. Falling oil prices reduced the demand for Palestinian migrant workers in the Gulf states;
2. Israel suffered from a stock market crash, high inflation rates, and consequently, lower real income of Palestinians;
3. The colonizing in the OPT by settlers led to more and more loss of land;
4. Israel stopped all efforts to support the Palestiniwhich ean economy.

All this contributed to the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987, and ventually led to the Oslo process (1993-2000).[145] One result was the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations between Israel and the PLO (1994). Israel got control of customs and trade while the Palestinians got the right to work in Israel. However, this right was more and more restricted by Israel. So they broke the treaty. By contrast, Israel had huge income from the control of customs and trade. Only Israel is allowed to levy taxes, so the Palestine Authorities only get what Israel is willing to pay.

What about the Palestine National Authority (PA)? Hever concludesthat the usual accusation of corruption is overemphasized.[146] One of the main root causes for the existing corruption is the original practice of Israel, transferring the agreed funds directly to Arafat, in the hope that he would consent to compromises with Israel. Also the EU and other donors look for partners who support their interest. So there is no effective democratic process for the PA to responsibly manage the national funds – which are available only by the grace and favor of Israel. The internal discourse in the PLO and the Palestinian population is very critical of corruption.

Another important factor is international aid to Palestine.[147] The Paris Protocol gives Israel the right to impose customs for all goods and services of both international humanitarian and development aid. Many of the products involved are bought from Israel. About half of the aid eventually lands up in Israeli pockets – private and/or public.[148] On top of this, because of the international aid, Israel does not need to take responsibility for the population in theOcccupied Territories which otherwise would

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145 Cf. Hever, op.cit. 27ff.

146 Ibid. 30ff.

147 Ibid. 36 ff. the most interesting case study on international aid.

148 Ibid. 50.

increase the costs of the occupation tremendously.[149] What is even worse,since the second Intifada 2000ff. many of the development aid projects have been destroyed by military actions. The biggest scandal, however, is that international donors do not call Israel to account.

This is even topped by the fact that Israel continues to get direct support from the West in spite of its notorious breaking of international law and violating human rights. Here the USA is number one, supporting Israel with at least 3 billion dollars every year. Germany still feels obliged to pay compensation to Israel. For critical Germans this is particularly scandalous because the law says that there should not be arms trade with countries in conflict areas. But Israel gets a lot of German tax money for arms, particularly submarines on which atomic weapons can be deployed. Israel also gets privileges from the EU in terms of customs and trade conditions. Especially because of these factors it is necessary to deal with the interaction between the global system and Israel.

Looking further at the interaction between Palestine/Israel and the global political economy, onene crucial development was the neoliberal capitalism shock strategy in post-communist Russia under the leadership of Chicago economists.[150] While some people got extremely rich (the tycoons and oligarchs) the majority of the population got impoverished. These kinds of situations create racism and resentments in the population – particularly here anti-Semitism. So Israel offered tempting conditions for attracting impoverished Russians – whether ot not they had Jewish ancestors ,because the main factor was being white. About one million Russians fled the social disaster in Russia in the 1990s. By now they make up 18 % of the Jewish inhabitants of Israel. They have increased the pressure to establish further colonies for settlers. Some of them manage their communal affairs bilingually in Russian and Hebrew (e.g. the colony Ariel in the West Bank). This, in turn, made it less necessary for Israelis to engage Palestinian workers,who after Israel sealed the West Bank border in 1993, ,had already replaced to a large extent by Asians and other migrant workers. Since that time, the closing of the borders has been the single most detrimental factor for the Palestinian economy. According to Sara Roy, in 1996 about 66 % of the employable Palestinian workforce was unemployed or extremely under-employed.[151]

Another link between Israel/Palestine and the global system is war. Bichler and Nitzan have analyzed this connection.[152] Their theory of differential accumulation allows them

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Unbelievable that in spite of this profit Israel's policies and practices have a very negative impact on the effectiveness of foreign aid, see BRYNEN, Rex: *A Very Political Economy. Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in the West Bank and Gaza.* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000, 219.

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Cf. KLEIN, Naomi: *Die Schock-Strategie. Der Aufstieg des Katastrophen-Kapitalismus.* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag (The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, 2008), 2012., 607ff.

151

ROY, Sara: Why Peace Failed: An Oslo Autopsy. *In: Current History* 101 (January 2002) Nr. 651, p. 13.

152

to understand which companies under which conditions received "dominant capital". They compare companies which only look for maximizing profits with others which aim at differential accumulation. The latter try to influence politics to give them long-range chances for accumulation, even if they may lose from a short-term perspective. In the case of West Asia it can be shown that oil and arms industries were in a position to influence Israeli and US policies – at least during the Bush administrations.in the USA. When there was war the profits of these dominant industries were booming. So the combined interests of the US and Israeli governments at that time was and still is, to stimulate violence and war.

Another factor in this trend was that after the first Intifada 1987ff. Israel further reduced its need-related real economy and consequently Palestinian labor in relation to specialization in financial and high-tech products, particularly information technology. This brought a boom to Israel's economy in the 1990s – until the dot.com bubble burst in the year 2000. In 2001-2003 Israel suffered a deep recession. On the basis of several factors, among them developments in the security sector following 09/11, Israel would recover. The whole world started to look for anti-terror and surveillance technology and Israel could offer this most effectively by saying: "Look, we have tested our instruments at living people and can prove how effective they are." So since that time Israel has been able to market the oppression of Palestinians and, to this day, has increased this business. The USA and the EU are their best security business partners. Reports suggest that German government plans to send regular troops to Israel to be trained in techniques of street battles and house-to-house fighting.[153] If the German law only allows for a defensive military, how can the "Bundeswehr" train their soldiers by an army which notoriously violates international law and human rights, and which the UN accuses of havingcommitted war crimes? How can the government continue to support Israel's military? There has been no outcry in Germany about this.

Naomi Klein lists many examples how Israel has been able to organize very important public and private projects of security and surveillance in the US and Europe. The war on terror is the best that could have happened to Zionist Israel because it has produced more and more terrorists and thus profit. However: "Although Israel is one of the biggest arms exporters worldwide (per person even the biggest), its economy is not built on war alone. This is why the average Israeli suffers from the conflict."[154] In any case the booming security industry is one of the key reasons why Israel stopped serious peace negotiations after 2001.[155] Peace is no longer needed for the Israeli economy. The

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153 See above note 8. Cf. also Hever's summary of this analysis, op.cit. 218f.

154 Cf. http://www.**welt**.de/politik/ausland/article145789159/Bundeswehr-soll-in-Israel-den-Haeuserkampf-lernen.html and http://www.Israel/Bundeswehr%20in%20IL%20'Nahost%20ganz%20nah'%20%20Wildkatzen%20im%20H%C3%A4userkampf%20_%20tagesschau.de.html

155 Shir Hever in a personal letter, Sept. 17, 2015.

For this period 2000 to 2007 cf. especially the deep analyses in the book of HONIG-PARNASS, Tikva/Haddad, Toufic (eds.): *Between the Lines: Readings on Israel, the Palestinians, and the U.S. "War on Terror"*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2007.

country can profit more by selling goods and services to oppress and observe people. The more this security technology increases, the more catastrophe capitalism wins the day worldwide. Masses of people are impoverished, social cohesion is destroyed, making it necessary for the rich individuals, countries and sectors of societies to arm and protect themselves with weapons, walls and electronic security devices for Fortress Europe or between the US and Mexico. Israel is the pivot of the present form of the global imperial capitalist system. Within this logic it does not need the Palestinians.[156] On the contrary, they are superfluous. They just need to be fenced and chased away as much as possible while the colonizing of their land continues. Fencing and stealing the land, if not cleansing the land of their presence at all, is the most rational strategy of a Zionist Israel fighting Palestinians in a permanent war, sometimes hot but always with low and middle intensity.[157]

If it is true that Israel/Palestine represents the capitalist world system in a nutshell (Naomi Klein calls it the extreme example of the "catastrophe-capitalism-complex"), this is exactly what we said about the apartheid system in the context of the capitalist world system in the 1980s. There is a long debate whether it is correct to call Israel an apartheid state.[158] The March 2017 report of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)("Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid").[159] concludes that Israel has established an apartheid regime that dominates the Palestinian people as a whole (p.10). The criteria of the Apartheid Convention is that itconsists of discrete inhuman acts...that are crimes against humanity isofar at theythey intentionally serve the core purpose of racial domination (11). „'The crime of apartheid' means inhumane acts… committed in the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other racial group or groups and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime" (120). In this sense Israel/Palestine is a clear case of an apartheid system:

„The report concludes that the weight of the evidence supports beyond a reasonable doubt the proposition that Israel is guilty of imposing an apartheid regime on the Palestinian people, which amounts to the commission of a crime against humanity, the prohibition of which is considered jus cogens in international customary law. The international community, especially the United Nations and its agencies, and Member States, have a legal obligation to act within the limits of their capabilities to prevent and punish instances of apartheid that are responsibly brought to their attention" (15).

This apartheid need not exactly look like that in South Africa. And , indeed, there is a

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156 Except for esting weapons on them as demonstrated in the film "The Lab" by Yotam Feldman (http://www.gumfilms.com/projects/lab. I thank Shir Hever for this information).

157 Concerning these concepts cf. DUCHROW, U./Eisenbürger, G./Hippler, J.: *Total War against the Poor. New York* 1989.

158 This is being debated in its positive and negative aspects in e.g.: ABUNIMAH, Ali: *The Battle for Justice in Palestine.* Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014.

159 The code is: E/ESCWA/ECRI/2017/1, Palestine and the Israeli Occupation, Issue No. 1, www.unescwa.org

decisive difference between South Africa and Israel – comparable to the difference between welfare capitalism (New Deal) and neoliberal capitalism. Bothviolate basic human rights, yet differently. The South African apartheid system needed the black workers whom they fenced in townships and homelands. The logic of the Zionist systemdoes not need the Palestinians at all. Originally Zionism nurtured the myth of „a land without people looks for people without land“. But beginning with the Nakba one simply wants to get rid of them, cleanse the land of them, bully and harass them so that they leave the country. Neve Gordon has researched this change in Israel's occupation politics from exploitation after 1967 to segregation after 1993 and even more after 2000: „It appears as if Israel decided to alter its methods of upholding the occupation, replacing a politics of life, which aimed to secure the existence and livelihood of the Palestinian inhabitants, with a politics of death.”[160]

The context is the second Intifada, started by Ariel Sharon's provocation on the Temple Mountain and his subsequent electoral victory. So the original Zionist logic of exterminating the Palestinians by forced displacement, war and killings again emerged.[161] It is continued up to this day under Netanyahu.

In sum, we should not use the comparison between South Africa and Israel in a diffuse moral sense. Rather we should speak precisely and with clear analysis. South African apartheid was exploitative and oppressive. This is not enough for Israel's politics. Its intention is to get completely rid of the people it views as inferior with no rights, and to put those remaining into ghettos or reservations, Gaza, according to the UN, will be uninhabitable in 2020 and also foreshadows the lethal future of the West Bank itself – if there is no change.

Petra Wild goes even a step further. She understands her work as a “Buch über den zionistischen Siedlerkolonialismus in seinen verschiedenen Ausdrucksformen, zu denen – wie in allen siedlerkolonialistischen Staaten – Apartheid, ethnische Säuberung und schleichender Genozid gehören“ (a book about the Jewish settler colonialism in it different expressions, to which belong apartheid, ethnic cleansing and creeping genocide).[162]

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160 GORDON, Neve: *Israel's Occupation.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008, 2.

161 Honig-Parnass, op.cit. 49ff.

162 WILD, Petra: *Apartheid und ethnische Säuberung in Palästina. Der zionistische Siedlerkolonialismus in Wort und Tat.* Wien: Promedia, 2013, 9. From a book review:: “Da der zionistische Siedlerkolonialismus anders als der südafrikanische nicht auf die Ausbeutung der einheimischen Bevölkerung als billige Arbeitskräfte, sondern auf deren möglichst vollständige Ersetzung durch die Siedlerbevölkerung zielt, ist die schleichende ethnische Säuberung neben der Apartheid das Hauptmerkmal der zionistischen Kolonialpolitik.” (http://www.literatur.palaestina-heute.de/Bucher/Wild__Apartheid_und_ethnische_/wild__apartheid_und_ethnische_.html). As prove for this thesis there are sentences of two cabinet members of the Netanjahu administration: http://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2014/07/14/mothers-of-all-palestinians-should-also-be-killed-says-israeli-politician und http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/wahlkampf-in-israel-lieberman-will-arabischen-gegnern-den-kopf-abhacken-1.2386143.

It is very important to understand that Zionist Israel is not a singular phenomenon of a moral aberration. No, it follows the deepest logic of modernity. Franz Hinkelammert has analyzed this logic in many publications, including in "Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations".[163] The logic of limitless money accumulation, starting in antiquity, is an expression of a calculating logic of means-ends - of instrumental reason. You can use it for any end without reflecting the implications of the ends in terms of life. So the symbol of this logic is the picture of men sitting on branches of a tree competing to produce the sharpest saw for cutting the branch on which they sit. This is what Hinkelammert calls the murder-suicide complex. In terms of western imperial capitalist civilization you can observe this logic in many ways. The most obvious example is the climate catastrophe. Industry changes the climate until it makes life on earth impossible in the future. More directly related to the wars in West Asia: suicide bombers copy the logic of the West in trying to resist empire in Afghanistan, Iraq and Israel. And in the West itself the increased emergence of persons running amok represent the same logic. So Israel in the context of the western empire is just the extreme of the western colonial, capitalist, imperial, scientific, technological violent civilization of the last 500 years which is characterized by murder-suicide from a long-range perspective. This means that Israel is destroying its own basis for life.

It is not enough to say that the costs of the occupation are higher than the profit. This is true in purely economic terms, as Hever demonstrates.[164] However, in terms of symbolic power Israel still wins. With the the USA alone giving Israel about 3 billion dollars every year, plus the German contributions, the losses are matched. The aid that Israel gets from the west matches the costs of occupation. Israel can do what it does only on the basis of the still continuing manifold support and complacency of the West., but the costs are growing every year. Shir Hever, looking at earlier estimates, states: "... the net cost of the occupation to the Israeli society is 3 billion US$ annually for the civilian costs, and 6 billion US$ for the security costs (after the profits from the occupation have been accounted for). These numbers look terribly outdated today. Since 2010, the siege on Gaza has intensified and Israel has perpetrated two brutal attacks against it. The destruction of Palestinian life and property is unprecedented, but at the same time the price paid by the Israeli society has also increased, with the tourism industry paralyzed in the summer of 2014."[165].

We shall look later at other factors endangering the future of Israel by its own contradictions.

And there is another factor, which Bichler/Nitzan neglect: the role of the underclasses. What is their role in stabilizing or destabilizing the present balance of violence?

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163 DUCHROW, Ulrich/Hinkelammert, Franz: *Transcending Greedy, op.cit., see also idem, Property for People, op. cit.*

164 Hever, op.cit. 71-97.

165 Quoted from HEVER, Shir: The Cost of 48 Years of Occupation. *In: Cornerstone* (2015) Nr. 72, S. 8-9. He adds a note leading to http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4637746,00.html, where it says „The 50-day summer war between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip caused a 3.5 billion shekel (scil. more than 900 million US$) loss or 0.3 percent of GDP, according to a chapter published on Monday from the Bank of Israel's annual report."

However, before we look at the contradictions of the present violent system and possible ways to overcome it, let us turn to theology. What are the theological implications and possible liberation perspectives in relation to the political economy of the Palestine/Israel conflict?

2. Theology in the political-economic dimensions of Israel oppressing the Palestinians

First we have to clarify according to which criteria theological judgments can and should be made. All Jews and Christians will agree that it is biblical scriptures that are the final reference point for judging theologically. But which scriptures and according to which hermeneutics, i.e. which rules of interpreting the scriptures? [166]

I follow the Protestant tradition that the historical, literal meaning of Scripture has precedence over other dimensions of meaning (e.g. allegory) while realizing that finally humans cannot control the meaning of Scripture but this is dependent the inspiration given by God's spirit. On the other hand, the Spirit works in linkage with the concrete historic word. So it is in the dialectic between historical accountability and spirit that we have to communicate with each other. What does this mean in relation to our particular theme of political economy?

2.1 Political Economy in the Bible

Recent research has found out that between the 8th and the 6th century BCE a deep change of the political economy happened in the whole of Eurasia from Greece to China.[167] Money and private individual property started to penetrate daily lives. Probably this was facilitated by the professionalizing of soldiers. They looted precious metal like women's jewelry, temple treasures etc. and used it while moving from place to place.[168] Around 600 BCE the small metal pieces were transformed into coins, first in Lydia but quickly spreading to Greece and India and China. There were tremendous social effects, particularly through stimulating private debt among small farmers. Also the mentality changed from solidarity to calculating egoism. Greed for limitless accumulation of money was institutionalized by charging interest on loans – e.g. on seeds in case of a bad harvest. Small farmers lost their land to bigger and bigger landowners and had to go into debt slavery. Only as much money as possible gave

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166 Cf. DUCHROW, Ulrich: »Nur die Schrift«. Hegemoniales Prinzip oder Gegenkultur? *In: Texte und Kontexte* 37 (2014) Nr. 141-143, S. 104-119.

167 Cf. SEAFORD, Richard: *Money and the Early Greek Mind. Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; GRAEBER, David: *Debt. The First 5,000 Years.* New York: Melville House, 2011; SCHEIDLER, Fabian: *Das Ende der Megamaschine. Geschichte einer scheiternden Zivilisation.* Wien: Promedia, 2015, and Duchrow/Hinkelammert, 2012, chapter 1.

168 In Numbers 31: 50 we find an interesting example of spoils after a battle against the Midianites „...what each of us found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, ear-rings, and pendants..."

security in emerging markets. Soon the expansionism of money merged with the territorial expansionism of empires. They paid professionalized armies with money for conquering further territories in order to occupy mines. War slaves and debt slaves had to work in the conquered mines to produce the metal for the coins – in order to pay additional mercenaries and so on. An imperial money-war-slave-metal-money cycle was emerging reaching its climax with the Hellenistic emperor Alexander the Great, his successors and eventually the Roman Empire.

In this situation philosophies and religions in all of these regions and cultures were reacting – mostly critically but also by mirroring money. I limit myself to the reaction in Northern kingdom Israel and the southern kingdom Judah.[169] The first critical reaction can be observed in the texts of the prophet Amos at the end of the 8th century BCE. His central theme was the threat to the small farmers. They were losing their possessions through seizures, being sold into slavery for excessive debts, the women were abused as debt slaves etc. Listen e.g. to chapter 2:6-8:

"Thus says the Lord:
For three transgressions of Israel
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment;
because they sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals -
they who trample the head of the poor
into the dust of the earth,
and push the afflicted out of the way;
father and son go in to the same girl,
so that my holy name is profaned;
they lay themselves down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge;
and in the house of their God
they drink wine bought with fines they imposed."

Against the destruction of human and social relations through the mechanisms of money and private property, Amos puts justice into the center, correcting all power asymmetries (5:24):

"Let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

The other prophets of Israel and Judah follow the same line: Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah. The latter identifies the knowledge of God with doing justice to the poor when he critically addresses King Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah (22:16):

"Did not your father eat and drink
and do justice and righteousness?
Then it was well with him.
He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
then it was well.

169 More in detail see Duchrow/Hinkelammert, Greedy Money; Sand, op.cit. 2005 and 2014, also Raheb, op.cit.

Is not this to know me?
says the Lord.
But your eyes and heart are only on your dishonest gain,
for shedding innocent blood,
and for practicing oppression and violence."

The prophets and their followers were a minority in Israel and Judah. It was only King Josiah who made a difference in the second part of the 7th century BCE. It was under his rule that the message of the prophets started to be implemented in the form of legal reforms, that eventually led to the Torah. Central to this process is the Book of Deuteronomy, literally translated meaning "The Second Law". Here you find the Decalogue, presenting God as the liberator from slavery and therefore demanding and protecting just human relations because only in this way can freedom be secured (5:6-21). It is not by accident that the last of the Ten Commandments is about greed and accumulation:

"Neither shall you covet your neighbor`s wife.
Neither shall you desire your neighbor's house,
or field; or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey,
or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Deuteronomy presupposes an economy using money for exchange (Deut 14:24-26). At the same time, all its concrete laws aim at correcting, if not avoiding, the destructive forms and consequences of money and private property. A preventive measure is the prohibition of charging interest and pawning as well as the abolition of tribute to be paid for the court and the temple. Tithing now only serves the purpose of staging an annual people's festival and social benefits for those members of the community who have no land for their subsistence (widows, orphans and Levites, 14:22-29). Moreover, the harvesters have to leave grain on the fields for the poor to collect (24:19). When somebody falls into debt anyway, the debts have to be forgiven after seven years, in the Sabbath Year. Also the debt slaves have to be released after such period – receiving a certain sum of money, equivalent to the seven years' wages of a day laborer, for a new start in freedom. If the people follow God's life-sustaining instructions there will be no poor among them (Deut 15:4). Taken together, these amount to the first known social laws in world history.[170] The prophet Jeremiah, living at the same period, is hoping for a time when God's spirit will write these laws, protecting freedom and creating justice, in the hearts of the people (Jer 31:31ff.).

The Holiness Code later adds the theological foundation of these laws (Lev. 25:23). The earth belongs to God and, therefore, humans must not claim absolute ownership of the land by turning it into a commodity but they should use it as guests and stewards on earth. In economic terms, this means that property is only legitimate in its use value, not in its exchange value for accumulation. This is the basis for an economy, in which all may have enough for life (cf. Ex 16, the Manna economy).

When the political economy of greed and conquest becomes totalitarian in the Hellenistic empires the Jewish faithful (chassidim) react with apocalyptic underground

170 Cf. CRÜSEMANN, Frank: *Die Tora. Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes.* München: Kaiser, 1992.

literature characterized by resistance and hope for God's intervention. The classical text for this is the Book of Daniel. In chapter 3 we find the narrative of three Jewish men defying the emperor's demand that everybody should fall down and worship the golden statue. Chapter 7 tells about a vision of Daniel: The empires in the shape of greedy predatory animals are overcome by God's new order coming down from heaven in the shape of a human being. The message is: the human, image of God, will have the victory over the beast-like, destructive imperial order. That is the hope sustaining persistent resistance.

So Ancient Israel and Judah, according to the Hebrew Bible, react to the Axial Age context, characterized by growing economic injustices and suffering, with (1) prophetic critique of the economic mechanisms and encouragement of inner conversion, (2) theo-political legal reforms and (3) persistent resistance in the perspective of a new order of humanization.

This is the tradition on which Jesus, his movement and the early church are building new messianic communities in the context of the Roman Empire. This I understand as a second wave of the Axial Age faiths and philosophies. Jesus proclaims that God's new domination-free order with a human face, announced by Daniel, is beginning in his presence. It is the suffering, the poor, the outcast who become the first subjects of this new order which turns the imperial hierarchy upside down. The first will be the last and the last will be the first. He creates a spirituality of trust in God's care overcoming the external and internal rule of Mammon, the idol of collecting treasures in the form of the accumulation of money and property. “Strive first for the kingdom of God and God's justice, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt, 6:33). On this positive ground he challenges people to make a clear decision: “You cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matt, 6:24).

It is important to realize that Jesus does not only liberate the poor to change their own lives and build communities of solidarity but he also acts politically in relation to the existing institutions. He does not join the Jewish freedom fighters against Roman occupation, while he does not reject them. He simply looks for a more effective strategy in order to break the cycle of violence and exploitation, which is non-violent direct action. One of his key actions in this regard is the confrontation with the Jewish collaborators of the Romans, the priestly elites in the temple (Mark 11:15-19). The temple during that time was the economic center of Judea. It was not only a kind of central bank but also the center of trade and market transactions, built on a whole system of sacrifice exploiting the people. Here the central question is: Which god rules? Is it the gods legitimating exploitation and impoverishment? Or the biblical God protecting and liberating the poor, asking for justice, not for sacrifices? First of all Jesus confronts those who harm the poor by the monetary system, the money changers; secondly, those who profit from the market system, trading with pigeons, the sacrificial animals for the poor; finally he stops the whole liturgy of sacrifice altogether.

The key text of God's and Jesus' identification with the people impoverished by and suffering from economic injustice is found in Matthew 25:31ff. Here the victims, the hungry, the thirsty etc. are portrayed as the yardstick for all people and peoples to be accepted in the final judgment. The judge is the Human One of Daniel 7. This text is crucial for interfaith relations and interfaith solidarity for justice. Because those judged

are not being judged by the criteria of belonging to this or that religion but by providing for the basic needs of the least ones with whom Jesus identifies.

The early Christian communities followed Jesus on this path. The classical text is Acts 4:32-35. The community voluntarily shares property, especially those having landed property and houses. This balancing of the relations within the community is portrayed as fulfillment of the Deuteronomy Torah by quoting: "There was not a needy person among them" (cf. Deut 15:4).

The Apostle Paul adds two important insights to the Jesus tradition. The first is that reason can be co-opted by greed. In his First Letter to the Corinthians he shows that reason is folly, when it orientates itself to wisdom in the service of the strong, the rich and the mighty. (Today we know this very well when e.g. scientists work in the service of transnational corporations to smokescreen the ecological dangers of a product which destroys ecosystems). So wisdom is only true wisdom when it orients itself to the criteria of the weak, vulnerable, despised in order to be truly inclusive. Secondly Paul shows in the letter to the Romans that also the law, meant to serve life in community, can be co-opted by greed (Romans 6 and 7). In that case it kills. Today we can see this in the case of debt mechanisms: When the law that debt has to be repaid is made an absolute, it can kill by producing hunger and even death through Structural Adjustment Programs. Therefore, the overarching criterion for law must be love, and solidarity.

To summarize the core of the Hebrew Bible and the messianic Second Testament, the God of Israel and Jesus identifies with the impoverished and oppressed people. Therefore, justice in the hearts of people and in community relations and institutions is the key contribution of the biblical traditions towards interfaith solidarity for overcoming suffering.

2.2 Consequences of a biblical reading for Israel oppressing Palestinians

Thus the Bible rejects exploitation and limitless accumulation, racial arrogance and imperial conquest while asking for justice, an economy of enough, compassion and solidarity. How then do some Jews and Christians read the contrary in Scripture?

The most central argument is that, according to the Bible, God has chosen the Jews as his people, promised the land of Palestine for ever to settle there and not mix with the other inhabitants of the land which either have to be killed or at least kept at bay. The passages of the Bible which are taken as basis for this narrative are mainly from the book of Deuteronomy, but also Joshua and Judges. Hear Deut, 7:1-11:

1When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears
away many nations before you — the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the
Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations mightier and more numerous than you — 2and
when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them.
Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy. 3Do not intermarry with them, giving your
daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, 4for that would turn away your children
from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the Lord would be kindled against you, and he
would destroy you quickly. 5But this is how you must deal with them: break down their altars, smash their
pillars, hew down their sacred poles, and burn their idols with fire. 6For you are a people holy to the Lord
your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured

possession.
7 It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you—for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8It was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, 10and who repays in their own person those who reject him. He does not delay but repays in their own person those who reject him. 11Therefore, observe diligently the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that I am commanding you today."

This seems to legitimate the ethnic cleansing Israel has been trying to achieve since the Nakba in the whole of Palestine.[171] So how can we respond those today who read these texts as justification for land-grabbing, harassing and even killing people – means Israel is using against non-Jews in order to possess as much of Palestine as possible?

There are counter-arguments to this narrative which are not good enough. Some Jewish and Christian authors claim that this narrative comes from a tribal period of history feeding modern nationalism. Therefore it has to be regarded anachronistic after the development of universal values in human history through particularly Christianity and enlightenment.[172] Consequently, according to this view, the whole concept of "chosen people" has to be rejected altogether, because it has been misused so often in history as in the cases of settler colonialism (cf. the Americas for the genocide of the indigenous people and in Southern Africa for enslaving the original African population). This argument in final analysis, however, leads to the rejection of the whole Hebrew Bible, called Old or First Testament by Christians, because election is essential to its narratives. Marcion and the Gnosis were the first examples of this rejection, followed by many spiritualizing trends in later Christianity, while Constantinian Christianity used those texts for their own imperialism. If the concept of election is essential to the Bible in both Testaments and if, on the basis of this Bible, we want to remain critical of Israeli and Christian Constantinianism we have to distinguish between election and specific forms of implementing this belief that they have been chosen by God.

Another attempt to deal with this issue is *Mitri Raheb's* book *Faith in the Face of Empire.* He avoids the problem altogether but this does not seem to solve the exegetical problem..[173] He is right in claiming that the position of Palestine between the empires throughout history led to the biblical faith in the God of justice and love. But the pure geographic location on Palestinian land does not automatically lead to the biblical concepts of faith, hope and love. There have always been also other worldviews in Palestine, e.g. Baalism with its male and class approach of masters and slaves.

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171 Cf. PAPPE, Ilan: *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.* Oxford: Oneworld, 2006, and RAHEB, Mitri: *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes.* Martyknoll, N.J.: Orbis, 2014, 40.

172 Cf. e.g. BRAVERMAN, Mark: *Fatal Embrace. Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land.* Austin/Texas: Synergy Books, 2010.

173 Cf. RAHEB, Mitri: *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes.* Martyknoll, N.J.: Orbis, 2014.

So we have to find other interpretations and arguments to overcome the use of the Bible for ethnic cleansing today. Here I brieflylist the exegetical arguments for a different contextual interpretation of these verses and Deuteronomy as a whole.

1. The book of Deuteronomy has different historic layers,. This begins with some legal reforms under King Josiah (around 622 BCE), then self-critical reflections after the destruction of Jerusalem and deportation of the elites to Babylon around 568/7. Eventually there is a final editing at the time of the Persian governor Nehemiah and the priest Ezra who tried to build up the second temple and reconstitute a just covenant community. At this point the issue was not ethnic but (1). self-critically assessing the causes of the fall of Jerusalem, namely injustice, and (2). establishing a new society in equality and justice under Yahweh, the God who liberates from slavery and exploitation. When Deuteronomy speaks of separation from other peoples and other gods (the basic constitution of a given society) it means a separation from a social order of injustice, exploitation, slavery.[174] Also the original settlement in the highlands of Judea around 1250 BCE (see the books of Joshua and Judges) historically seem to have been revolutionary processes of former slaves and dependent peasants liberating themselves from empire and city state oppression. So in this sense we are talking about violent processes linked to resistance against oppression and beginning a more just society. This, however, is the exact opposite of today's reality in Palestine/Israel, where the stronger ones drive out the weaker ones and even justify this with those revolutionary texts.[175]
2. The text itself says that the cleansing of the land from other people with unjust systems is not done by military power but by God's intervention. It even stresses that the people of God is small and weak. This is the tradition of Yahweh wars related to the stories of liberation from slavery. It also includes the prohibition of looting and taking the possessions of the loser – all of this the opposite of the present Israeli practice.
3. The promise of the land is linked to the covenant.[176] This means that, just as God is faithfully keeping the covenant, the people also have to live God's alternative, which is justice. “In the canon and throughout Jewish history...justice resides at the heart of the covenant”, says the Jewish liberation theologian Marc Ellis.[177]

174

VEERKAMP, Ton: *Die Welt anders. Politische Geschichte der Großen Erzählung.* Hamburg: Argument/InkriT, 2012, 126.

175

Cf. GOTTWALD, Norman K.: *The Tribes of Jahweh. A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 B.C.E.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979 (1985 3rd ed.); id. And Horsley Richard A. (ed.): *The Bible and Liberation. Political and Social Hermeneutics.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993; DUCHROW, Ulrich: *Alternatives to Global Capitalism - Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action.* Utrecht: International Books with Kairos Europa (1995), 1998 2nd ed., 121ff. with more literature.

176

ISAAC, Munther B. I.: *From land to lands, from Eden to the renewed earth: a Christ-centred biblical theology of the promised land. PhD thesis.* Middlesex: Middlesex University (http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/), 2014.

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This is the biblical concept from the start.

After humanity fell prey to violence the climax of which is symbolized by the empire Babylon (Gen 1-11) God starts anew with the calling of Abraham to live alternatively in covenant with God and therefore become a blessing to all peoples (Gen 12ff.). So the particularity of God's calling (election, chosenness) aims itself at universality, more precise: to make justice universal. "Jewish particularity is constantly in conflict with the otherness of empire, whether it is somewhere else or in the land. For the prophets, empire in Egypt recalls empire in Israel. Biblically speaking, they are more or less the same."[178] In this way, it is not an abstract universality, but a concrete one; therefore it is linked to a concrete people and a concrete land – but not limited to this, because it universally aims at overcoming empire and at justice everywhere. This is reflected not only in the OT (Isaiah 2 and Micah 5) but in the NT when Jesus says "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world" (Matth 5:13f.). When the people notoriously breaks the covenant it loses the land because the land is only given in order to live the alternative of the liberating God. So the Deuteronomy speaks from the experience of exile and asks: Why did we lose the land?[179] It is a book looking at hindsight to explain why the land was lost. The answer is: because we have broken the covenant and done injustice. At the same time it is looking to the future of rebuilding Judah after return to the land in order to avoid the errors of the past and do justice, which is exemplified in the Decalogue and many social laws and rules: prohibition of taking interest, debt forgiveness and release of debt slaves every 7th year, Sabbath for the land etc. (cf. Deut 15:23 and passim). "You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Deut 16:20).

4. So the Israeli government today is justify its land-grabbing, oppression and killing of Palestinians by turning the biblical narratives and laws upside down. Israel is not a people oppressed by the Palestinians liberating itself with God's help in order to establish a just society. Yes, here came victims of the German crimes and persecution in many other countries. But: "the violence in Palestine started before the Holocaust, and the survivors of the Holocaust who arrived in Palestine were only a minority from among the Jewish colonists of the land. The survivors had very few positions of power and influence, and did not make the policies which led to the Nakba. It's the idea that Judaism can be seen not as a religion but as an ethnic nationality which turns the Jewish faith on its head."[180]

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178 ELLIS, Marc H.: *Future of the Prophetic: Ancient Israel's Wisdom Re-presented.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014, 70.

179 Ibid.

180 Cf. BECHMANN, Ulrike: Die Auslegung biblischer Landverheißungen: Ein Beispiel für die Ambivalenz kontextueller Theologien. In: ANSORGE, Dirk, Hg. (ed.): *Der Nahostkonflikt. Politische, religiöse und theologische Dimensionen (Beiträge zur Friedensethik 43).* Stuttgart u.a. : 2010, S. 54 -85.

Shir Hever, in a letter, dated 17 September, 2015, commenting on a first draft of this article.

> The colonizers did not come to ask for hospitality and peaceful living together.[181] Rather they came with the help of a terrorist underground army, on the wings of the colonial power, in order to expel the inhabitants of the land and later linking up with the only remaining superpower and stealing the land of the weaker group up to this day. This is neither justified by Deuteronomy nor Joshua and Judges. Here God's commandments (Deut 5:17,19,21) apply:
> You shall not murder.
> Neither shall you steal.
> Neither shall you covet your neighbour's wife. Neither shall you desire your neighbour's house, or field, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

It is evident that Zionist Israel is doing exactly the contrary of the justice the prophets and the Torah demand.[182]

All governments have to be challenged according to the criteria of the biblical commandments. But governments cannot simply quotie passages from their religious traditions – whether Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Buddhist – in order to legitimate their politics. They must be held accountable on the basis of the whole of their religious sources**.** Against this background it is not surprising that several Jews have demonstrated that the State of Israel is the opposite of what Judaism is according to the prophets and the Torah.[183] They call themselves Jews of conscience or prophetic Jews. Those who support the state of Israel in its Zionist form are regarded as "Constantinian Jews". Marc Ellis puts it this way:[184]

> "As in the days of old, Jews are found on both sides of the empire divide. There are these Israeli soldiers [i.e. those of the group "Breaking the Silence"]) representing Jews of Conscience. They know what has been done. Their testimonies serve as confessions. There must be another kind of logic. Is there something beyond living in fear and making others to fear you?
> There are Constantinian Jews who, like their Christian counterparts, choose empire as their salvation: After the experience of the Jewish people at the hands of empire, it is understandable to jump at the chance to do empire's bidding. Mostly this bidding is disguised in the religious rhetoric that emphasizes innocence. If you look closely, however, being its own religion, empire is also transported into the official

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181 Some Jews like Martin Buber wanted to organize the settlements in this way and spirit. Others even warned not to return to the land before the coming of the Messijah. But both groups were marginalized by the Zionists.

182 In Freiburg/Breisgau in Germany Zionist students demanded to prohibit Rolf Verleger, a Jewish psycholgist, critical of the politcs of Israel, from giving a lecture in the University. He replied with an open letter saying: "Nothing of my Jewish values can be found in the attitudes and actions of the Israeli government. They have robbed the land of the Palestinians, produce fantasies of being an eternal victim and draw the justification from this for violating international law and human rights – completely outside of Jewish tradition. Of course, passages like Deut 7: 1-11 can be misunderstood so easily that one would wish they were missing in the Bible. At this point it is evident that Jesus definitely clarified the Hebrew tradition by saying: „Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth" (Matth 5,5).

183 BRAVERMAN, Mark: *Fatal Embrace. Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land.* Austin/Texas: Synergy Books, 2010; LERNER, Michael: *Embracing Israel/Palestine. A Strategy to Heal and Transform the Middle East.* Berkeley: Tikkun books, 2012; ELLIS, Marc H.: *Future of the Prophetic: Ancient Israel's Wisdom Re-presented.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.

184 ELLIS, Marc H.: op.cit.

religious liturgy of the dominant religion. Even when religion is Judaism. Empire takes hold among theologians even when those theologians are Jewish."

The concept of "Constantinian Jews" is shaped in analogy to Constantinian Christianity, i.e. the form of Christianity which, starting with Emperor Constantine in 312 CE, has imperialized an originally empire-critical movement. This is a very appropriate concept because the Zionist state of Israel can only survive in symbiosis with the Constantinian "Christian" US empire.[185] Another possible concept would be Jews with "state theology". But also another concept of the Kairos SA document is relevant here: "church theology", which is complacent with the status quo by preaching reconciliation without justice. People of both categories are forcefully challenged by prophetic Jews like Ellis and Braverman.

At the same time it is of utmost importance that Palestinian Christian theologians raise their authentic voice when rereading the Bible from their experiences. This is not only extremely necessary for sustaining the resistance and endurance of the Christians in Palestine but it also helps in challenging and dismantling the theological positions of the Zionist and complacent parts of Christianity worldwide. In Germany the brother and sister Raheb have a growing influence on the discourse in the churches. Mitri Raheb's "Faith in the Face of Empire" has created a broad debate. It attacks the normal assumption that the present state of Israel has to be seen as the simple continuation of Ancient Israel whereas in reality it has chosen the side of empire – in Ancient Israel Egypt, Babylon and Rome. Naim Stifan Ateek, whose books have also been published in German, has a broad base in Germany, particularly through the Sabeel groups.[186]

So the basic question arises as to what Jews and Christians in the prophetic tradition of the Bible, i.e. in the spirit of the liberating God, could contribute together to a political economy of liberation and justice in Israel Palestine.

3. Strategies and steps towards a just political economy in Palestine/Israel

Because of the high importance of cultural-ideological and symbolic power, particularly in relation to Israel, theology plays a most important role in Israel's war against the Palestinians and also the struggle for a common future. This is the reason why the Kairos Palestine Document could have such an amazing effect around the world. On the other side, the Israeli government spends millions of dollars on PR in order to counteract its growing credibility crisis around the world: Journals try to discredit critique of Israeli policies and actions as anti-Semitic. Armies of lawyers threaten people with fines, harassment and persecution if they utter critique. Campaigns are launched against politicians who dare to publicly speak out against illegal practices of Israel. Yet still the criticism is growing. By contrast, the Kairos Palestine document

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185 Remember that US President Bush jr.called the illegal Iraq war which he waged because of oil and arms industry as well as geopolitical interests interests, a crusade – supported by the Moral Majority, Constantinian Christians and Zionists.

186 ATEEK, Naim Stifan: *Justice, and only Justice. A Palestinian Theology of Liberation.* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989.

with very little material means has moved a lot in the churches around the world. In Germany e.g. it has inspired us to form the Kairos Palestine Solidarity Network. It brought together many groups and networks working hard to make the reality in the "Holy Land" known to the congregations and churches, in this way to change the climate and thus to contribute to justice and peace.[187]

In Germany, there also is a theological working group trying to break the unconditional support of the state of Israel through the people engaged in the Christian-Jewish dialogue. They originally did a very important and necessary job to overcome the traditional anti-Judaism in Constantinian Christianity because this ideological base was fundamental for the crime of the Holocaust. Irreversible insights were gained through the rediscovery of the Hebrew and Jewish roots of the New Testament. The Christian biblical scholars in this dialogue were the same people who rediscovered liberation theology in the scriptures. Their basic perspective has been that of justice – justice in relation to Jews, justice in relation to the victims of social, economic and political oppression and gender justice. As they worked for so long with Jewish partners who mostly turned out to be unconditional supporters of the state of Israel they now run into contradictions. The two goals of justice to the Jews seem to come into conflict with justice to the victims of social, economic and political oppression. But as they feel a longstanding loyalty to their uncritical Jewish partners they have difficulties in giving justice in Palestine the priority. They cannot yet see that justice here is also the precondition for the long-range security and welfare of the Israeli people. So the key task is to demonstrate that justice will serve the Israelis in the long run. The only losers will be those who profit from war and violence.

So it is crucial for a strategy towards a just political economy in Palestine/Israel to break the symbolic power of the Zionist narrative in favor of a common humanity for which the Hebrew tradition is one of the most important sources.. The role of the faith communities is also crucial here – not only the Christian churches. As we have shown in the book "Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations" all major world religions and philosophies in the millennium from the 8th century BCE and 600 CE have reacted critically to the emergence of the imperial and egocentric form of money-economy. So in the case of Palestine Jews, Christians and Muslims can very well work together on the basis of their foundational scriptures in order to overcome the present systemic social, economic, political and cultural injustice and discrimination. This volume is an example of this.

What could be the concrete strategy and concrete steps to implement justice in Palestine and Israel in relation to the political economy? Of course, the first actors to answer this question are the Palestinians and Israelis themselves.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of Palestinians have realized that the most effective strategy against the enormous and overwhelming political, economic and military power of Zionist Israel is non-violent resistance. One of the best-known representatives of this approach is Sari Nusseibeh, the President of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. In his fascinating book Once Upon a Country he describes incredible non-

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violent campaigns which he co-organized – partly even with former intelligence officers from Israel.[188] Another very impressive field is the resistance against the building of the apartheid wall. Villagers organize it weekly, as in Bil'in, supported by Israelis and members of the international solidarity movement.[189]

In terms of the political economy, the starting point of reflection has to be the contradictions in the policies of the Israeli governments. The costs of the occupation are growing. They must be carried mainly by the underclasses while the elites are winning. This means that – as everywhere under neoliberal capitalist conditions – the gap between rich and poor is widening. Presently the "symbolic capital" of being Jewish still keeps the underclass from revolting. But what if the dismantling of social welfare continues and the affected people stand up? The other element of the present balance of occupation and profit is aid in different forms from the USA and Europe. What if this dwindles because increasing numbers of the citizens begin to open their eyes and look at reality? What are the consequences of both contradictions for a non-violent strategy?

The most effective non-violent strategy for further weakening of Israel's credibility and, therefore, economy in order to prepare the ground for change is undoubtedly the global BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions). In Palestine boycott has been a long-standing tradition since the first Intifada.[190] Internationally the experience of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa shows that BDS was one of the effective tools to make the government change policies. Business put more and more pressure on the political actors. But what may be more important. Boycott is not only an economic but an educational tool. Universities, churches, trade unions and schools in many countries start debating about the situation and its legitimacy – in former times related to South Africa, now increasingly to Israel/Palestine. This changes the power balance at the symbolic level which up to now has kept pace with the economic losses of the occupation. E.g. several churches in the US (and Canada) recently decided to join the BDS movement, the Presbyterian church, the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist and Mennonite Churches. Also the Church of Scotland created report challenging the Zionist narrative.[191] Under pressure the original report was revised, but the vote insisted that the church "should not be supporting any claims by Jewish or any other people to an exclusive or even privileged divine right to possess particular territory." So the message remains: Israel policies are losing support in the churches worldwide. In Germany we are far behind because the movements are countered by being accused to be neo-Nazis saying "Kauft nicht bei Juden" – boycott Jews. Evidently

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188 NUSSEIBEH, Sari with Anthony David: *Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life.* London and New York: Halban Publishers and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

189 Cf. e.g. REINHART, Tanya: *The Road Map to Nowhere: Israel/Palestine since 2003.* London: Verso, 2006, and http://www.bilin-village.org.

190 Cf. Nusseibeh, op.cit.

191 http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/14050/the_Inheritance_of_Abraham.pdf

the Israel Lobby wants to offend the population suggesting it cannot distinguish between Hitler and Gandhi. In any case this strategy loses ground as the BDS movement is growing even in Germany.

But there are other campaign possibilities in the USA and Europe. It was the pressure, even sanctions of the USA on Sharon threatening to stop delivering certain military goods forcing him to withdraw the settlements from Gaza.[192] TheBush administration did not do this out of insight but after being pressured again by public opinion. This example shows that Israel can be forced to stop illegal actions if the West is firm. So it is important that, in spite of the strong pro-Israeli lobby AIPAC and other action groups in the USA, more and more groups and movements mobilize against the unconditional government's support for Israeli policies, one of them being J Street. Also Netanyahu was not able to stop Obama's treaty with the Iran.[193]

If this trend continues or grows Israel might be less and less able to balance the costs of the occupation with US aid – inspite of the fact that President Trump may give Israel some more room to breathe. But positively, the Palestinian economy can only get on its own feet if the West holds Israel accountable for its constant violation of international law, as Sam Bahour, a leading Palestinian businessman, clearly says:[194]
"For Palestine's economy to stand on its own two feet and serve the emerging Palestinian state, what is required is that third states, the U.S. at the forefront, have the political will to act in holding Israel accountable for its daily violations of international law. Here, in addition to human rights, we speak of economic rights too: our rights to our economic assets and the ability to employ them within a Palestinian-defined economic development plan, free from Israeli or donor agendas."

The same applies to Europe. One sign of this is the insistence of the European Parliament and Commission to label settler products of the OPT and consequently not give them preferential trade conditions.[195] This helps the BDS movement to demonstrate that even the EU does not recognize settler products as legal Israeli goods. But this of course is not enough. The movements are putting pressure on governments and the Commission to take the Israeli government to account for the destruction of projects financed by humanitarian and development aid.

In 1976 Allan Boesak published the book *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Black Power*.[196] The German title is even better: "Unschuld, die

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192 Reinhart, op.cit 117ff.

193 There is a highly interesting analysis of the defeat of AIPAC in the battle on the Iran deal and the consequences of this for the Palestine issue by M.J. Rosenberg in: http://www.other-news.info/2015/09/aipac-spent-millions-of-dollars-to-defeat-the-iran-deal-instead-it-may-have-destroyed-itself/. He also reports how J Street was able to influence Obama.

194 BAHOUR, Sam: op.cit. 5f.

195 See Frankfurter Rundschau, Sept.12, 2015.

196 BOESAK, Allan A.: *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and*

schuldig macht" (Innocence making guilty). Another book today is needed with the same title, addressed to the people and governments of the USA and Europe. They let the Palestinians pay for their own guilt, namely the Holocaust, and in connection with this German crime, the closing of the borders to prevent Jewish refugees from entering their territories. They play innocent but these two crimes were some of the main reasons for colonizing Palestine and channeling the Jewish victims there.[197] And it is only because of these same countries that Israel is able to uphold the lethal oppression of the Palestinians. So prophetic Jews, Christians and Muslims in those countries, in cooperation with Palestinians and Israelis struggling for justice and peace in the Holy Land, hold the key for liberating the oppressed – and the oppressor from being oppressor.

As the consciousness and mood slowly changes in the USA and Europe (which has to be distinguished from anti-Semitism which is to be fought without compromise), Israel must realize that it cannot sustain the situation of oppression on its own without help from outside. It must realize that only together Israeli and Palestinians can have a future. While putting more and more weight on the pressure on Israel at the same time cooperative examples can be developed in order to show: living together is possible. There are a host of examples already. One especially important field is the psychological work of mutually overcoming trauma. One positive example is the Acknowledgment Project, a series of dialogues between Israeli and Palestinian mental health practitioners.[198] It tries to enable both sides to acknowledge having caused harm and injury and to recognize each other's suffering, while being aware of the power asymmetry and the need to come together in opposition to the Occupation, rather than being separated by it.

Theologically, economic, political and symbolic resistance against oppression and living out concrete alternatives of just relations are the two arms of a strategy found throughout the Bible. They are summarized in two crucial statements in Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians: "Do not be conformed to this world (system), but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect"; and Galatians 3:28 showing the victory over all dimensions of unjust dominion: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in the Messiah Jesus" – who was a (non-exclusive, prophetic) Jew.

Black Power. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976.

197 „At the end of the day, it was the cruel and horrifying blows sustained by the Jews of Europe, and the decision of the 'enlightened' nations to close their borders to the recipients of of those blows, that resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel" (Sand, 2014, 175).

198 Cf. BENJAMIN, Jessica: Acknowledging the Other's Suffering: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Trauma in Israel/Palestine. *In: Tikkun* (Summer 2015)

Authors

Junid S. Ahmad is a Professor in the Faculty of Advanced Studies, UMT, Lahore, Pakistan and the Director of Center for Global Dialogue. He is also the Secretary-General of the Kuala Lumpur-based International Movement for a Just World (JUST). His areas of interest are the Middle East, political Islam, and US foreign policy.

Charles Amjad-Ali, Prof. Ph.D., Th.D.
is the Martin Luther King, Jr., Prof. of Justice and Christian Community (Emeritus) and Director of Islamic Studies Program (Emeritus) at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN and was the Desmond Tutu Chair of Ecumenical Theology & Social Transformation in Africa at the University of Western Cape, South Africa.

Mark Braverman, Ph.D.

A Jewish American, is Program Director for Kairos USA, a movement to unify and mobilize American Christians to take a prophetic stance for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. He has been closely involved in the growth of the international church movement for Palestinian rights. In his writing and speaking Mark focuses on ecumenism, the role of theology in the current discourse, and the function of interfaith relations in the current search for a just peace

Ulrich Duchrow, Dr. theol.

Professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg/Germany, specialised in ecumenical theology and theology-economy issues; Co-founder and moderator of Kairos Europa, an ecumenical grassroots network striving for economic justice. Member of the Scientific Council of Attac Germany.

Marc H. Ellis, Professor

Is retired from Baylor University as University Professor of Jewish Studies, Professor of History and Founding Director of the Center for Jewish Studies. Previously he was a Fellow at Harvard University's Center for the Study of World Religions and Center of Middle Eastern Studies.

Shir Hever, Dr.

studies the economic aspects of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory. His first book *Political Economy of Israel's Occupation: Repression beyond Exploitation* was published by Pluto Press. He is a correspondent for the Real News Network.

Munther Isaac, Rev. Dr.

Is the academic dean at Bethlehem Bible College and an ordained minister at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. He is the author of „From Land to Lands, From Eden to the Renewed Earth. A Christ-Centereted Biblical Theology of the Land“• .

Brigitte Kahl, Dr. sc.theol.

Since 1998 Professor of New Testament at the Union Theological Seminary in New York; before 1998 Professor of Biblical Theology and Exegeses in Paderborn und Berlin.