



Talking about Justice and Peace in Israel / Palestine

A Dictionary for the Bewildered

Antisemitism: Antisemitism is racism, hostility, prejudice, vilification, discrimination or violence, including hate crimes, directed against Jews, as individuals, groups or as a collective -- because they are Jews. Its expression includes attributing to Jews collectively characteristics or behaviours that are perceived as dangerous, harmful, frightening or threatening to non-Jews. (from Independent Jewish Voices)

Criticism of Israeli government policies or actions – similar to those that might be leveled against the government of any other country – cannot be regarded as antisemitic. (from the IHRA statement issued at the Bucharest Plenary, 2016)

Apartheid: (from an Afrikaans word meaning “apartness”) Originally used to describe policy that governed relations between South Africa's white minority and non-white majority, which involved racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-whites. Apartheid is now used more generally to mean an institutionalized regime of oppression and domination by one group over any other group or groups.

BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice and equality. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity. Using the strategies of boycotts, divestment and sanctions, the BDS movement invites people worldwide to pressure the government of Israel to comply with international law.

Boycott: A boycott is a political action in which a decision is made not to purchase goods or services from a specified country or company, in an effort to change their policies.

Divestment: Divestment is the opposite of investment; and usually refers to the selling of any ownership interest in a specified company (or companies). Divestment is used to apply pressure for a change in policy, either by a company (e.g. Smith & Wesson), or a country's government (e.g. Israel).

Sanctions: Sanctions are diplomatic efforts against states or organizations to protect national security interests, to protect international law, or to defend against threats to international peace and security. A government-initiated sanction usually involves the temporary imposition of economic, trade, diplomatic, cultural or other restrictions. These are removed when the government or organization has changed the policies which led to the imposition of sanctions.

Colonialism: Colonialism is the policy of acquiring political control over another country or region and exploiting it economically. **Settler colonialism** is a specific type of **colonialism** that functions

through the replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that assumes control of the colonized region. Examples of regions that became colonial states include: North America (Canada and the USA), South America, Australia, New Zealand, Palestine, and South Africa. Of these colonial states, the indigenous population has regained human rights and political control only in South Africa.

Genocide: Genocide, or ‘ethnic cleansing’, is the intentional infliction of harm on a group in order to bring about its physical destruction. Genocide can include the killing of group members, preventing births within the group, transferring children from the group, or the deportation or forcible transfer of the members of the group.

Nation state law: The Nation State Law was passed in July of 2018 by the government of Israel. There are three parts to the law:

1. “The right to exercise national self-determination” in Israel is “unique to the Jewish people.” In other words, only Jewish citizens have the right to determine what kind of state and society they live under. Which means that by default, others — such as Palestinian citizens of Israel, some of whom are Muslim and some of whom are Christian — don’t have that same right;
2. Hebrew is the official language of the state (previously both Hebrew and Arabic had been official state languages); and
3. The law mandates that the “state views Jewish settlement as a national value and will labour to encourage and promote its establishment and development,” even though Jewish settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law (there are currently over 700,000 settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem).

Terrorism: Terrorism is the use of violence, generally against civilians, for political purposes. Terrorism depends on a point of view; Americans viewed the mujaheddin as freedom fighters when they attacked the Soviets, but as terrorists when the same mujaheddin attacked Americans. Nelson Mandela and Menachem Begin have both been viewed as terrorists and later lauded as statesmen.

Zionism: Zionism is a movement, established in 1897, for the establishment, development and protection of a Jewish nation in Palestine. Like many other political movements, there are many forms of Zionism, including:

Liberal Zionism, which supports a fully democratic state in which all people have equal rights, regardless of religion or ethnic background;

Labour Zionism, which founded the Kibbutzim movement, and was the dominant form of Zionism until the defeat of the Labour government in 1977; and

Revisionist or National Zionism, whose founder Ze’ev Jabotinsky believed that “Zionism is a colonising adventure and it therefore stands or falls by the question of armed force.” It was supporters of Revisionist Zionism who founded the Likud Party, which has adopted most of their objectives, including calling for Israeli control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and opposition to the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories.

Christian Zionism, espoused by some fundamentalist Christian communities, supports the Israeli occupation and full control of Palestine as a necessary precursor to the ‘end times’.