

Noam Chomsky and BDS

The ‘responsibility of intellectuals?’

by Harry Clark

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Noam Chomsky’s attack on the boycott/divestment/sanctions movement against Israel, in support of the Palestinian people, attracted wide attention.¹ *The Nation*, where his article appeared in July, 2014, published five responses, to which Chomsky responded, and at least five appeared independently.² The discussion continued at a panel on BDS at Harvard in November which included Chomsky and Yosef Munnayyer, one of his interlocutors from *The Nation* exchange.³ Chomsky’s views were not new, but were first expressed during a BDS initiative in 2002, at Harvard and MIT. The wide attention his recent remarks earned was due to the growth of the BDS movement since.

Harvard/MIT 2002

The Harvard-MIT initiative was a response to Israeli suppression of the al-Aqsa intifada, the Palestinian uprising that began in September, 2000. It was provoked by the swaggering entrance to the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem of then-defense minister Ariel Sharon, accompanied by a thousand Israeli police. There was a demonstration, an Israeli massacre, and resistance across the West Bank that Israel attacked with utmost ferocity. The uprising expressed seven lean years of frustration with Israel’s exploitation of the 1993 Oslo accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization to further energe the occupied territories and suffocate Palestinian life. As prime minister, Sharon ordered “Operation Field of Thorns,” the lavishly violent *reconquista* of Palestinian areas of the West Bank, including the drunken bulldozing of the center of Jenin refugee camp, with inhabitants.⁴

Against this sanguinary backdrop, a Harvard-MIT petition called for “the US government to make military aid and arms sales to Israel conditional on immediate initiation and rapid progress in implementing the conditions listed below. We also call on MIT and Harvard to divest from Israel, and from US companies that

sell arms to Israel.”⁵ The petition called for Israel to comply with UN Resolution 242 and withdraw from the territories conquered in the June, 1967 war; stop torturing, as called for by the United Nations Committee Against Torture Report of 2001; comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibiting settlement and other practices in the occupied territories; and acknowledge in principle the Palestinian right of return as expressed in UN Resolution 194 (and related international law).

The petition garnered 443 signatures from Harvard and MIT faculty, staff, students and alumni, while a counter-petition garnered more than 3,200 signatures, amidst animated discussion.⁶ Then-Harvard President Lawrence Summers opined that “Harvard should not be an organ for advocacy on an issue as complex as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” He did exactly that by stating: “ ‘The suggestion that [Israel’s] defense against terrorist attacks is inherently immoral seems to me to be an unsupportable one.’ ”⁷ At a prayer meeting on campus at the start of fall term, Summers stated: “ ‘Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect if not their intent. . . Where anti-Semitism and views that are profoundly anti-Israeli have traditionally been the primary preserve of poorly educated right-wing populists, profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities.’ ”⁸

Chomsky could have defended divestment as amply justified by Israel’s conduct and denounced Summers as unfit to lead an institution of higher education. He would have been vindicated resoundingly by Israel’s ongoing atrocities, and by Summers’ later claims about women’s inability in science, faculty no-confidence votes, and his resignation in 2006 after the shortest presidential term at Harvard in 144 years.⁹ Instead Chomsky was as upset as Summers that Israel could be sanctioned. In November, Chomsky told a Harvard audience: “ ‘I am opposed and have been opposed for many years, in fact, I’ve probably been the leading opponent for years of the campaign for divestment from Israel and of the campaign about academic boycotts.’ ”¹⁰ One witness told this writer that the audience was “astonished.”

An editorialist in the Harvard *Crimson* called Chomsky’s statement the “greatest Hanukkah gift of all to opponents of the divestment campaign against Israel.”¹¹ Chomsky told the *Crimson* that a call for divestment is “ ‘very welcome gift to the most extreme supporters of U.S.-Israeli violence. . . It removes from the agenda the primary issues and it allows them to turn the discussion to irrelevant issues, which are here irrelevant,

anti-Semitism and academic freedom and so on and so forth.’” According to Chomsky, the result “was ‘totally predictable. . . [divestment] is the only thing that’s talked about. Not the main thrust. Nobody talks about the Geneva Conventions, nobody talks about any of the issues that matter.’”¹² Thus divestment was “‘a gift, a gift to the extremists who want to maximize U.S.-Israeli atrocities and crimes, and I don’t see any point in giving them that gift.’” Divestment was “‘a big mistake.’”¹³ Chomsky was particularly incensed by the phrase “divest from Israel” in the Harvard/MIT petition. As he explained in 2003:

As is well known in Cambridge, of anyone involved, I was the most outspoken opponent of the [Harvard-MIT] petition calling for divestment, and in fact refused to sign until it was substantially changed, along lines that you can read if you are interested. The “divestment” part was reduced to three entirely meaningless words, which had nothing to do with the main thrust of the petition. I thought that the three meaningless words should also be deleted.¹⁴

“Divest from Israel” is ambiguous, but not “meaningless”; the common sense interpretation is divestment of holdings in companies doing business within Israel, as the anti-apartheid campaign called for divestment from South Africa. Harvard, for instance, then held \$600 million in investments in companies doing business in Israel.¹⁵

Chomsky’s claim that “divest from Israel” was a “gift to extremists” was disingenuous. Mainstream Jewish opinion is extremist, as shown by Summers’ description of Israel’s crushing of the al-Aqsa intifada as “defense against terrorist attacks,” and his claim that divestment was “anti-semitic in effect,” that the views of “poorly educated right-wing populists. . . are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities.” Extremism is also apparent in the the 8-1 ratio of signatures on the negative and affirmative petitions. People opposed to divestment would not have favored cutting off military aid to coerce Israel. Chomsky lectured about “provoking extremism” while Ariel Sharon, renowned as an “Arab killer” from the early statehood days, was crushing the al-Aqsa intifada.¹⁶

The call to “divest from Israel” was a response to extremism. As one senior Harvard professor and divestment supporter stated, “‘What we have witnessed in the last months is a spiral of violence that cannot have a good ending unless we arrest it. I think now is a time when the citizens of the United States must act from their consciences.’”¹⁷ The fatal phrase did not distract from awareness, around Harvard and MIT, of Israel’s engorgement of the occupied territories and serial war crimes. It raised awareness from its normal

complacency, addressing which, and secondary issues about “academic freedom,” is presumably the task of activists, above all in an educational setting. As the Harvard faculty supporter put it, “ ‘I’m going to have a lot of colleagues who disagree with me. I don’t think we should shy away from’ ” the discussion.¹⁸

Chomsky’s limits

In Chomsky’s view BDS should be limited to opposing Israel’s “occupation” of Palestinian territory conquered in the June, 1967 war, which he emphasized after 2002. In his July, 2014 article, he cited approvingly the first goal of the BDS movement, “Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands occupied in June 1967 and dismantling the Wall,” Israel’s “separation barrier,” which effectively annexes to Israel parts of the West Bank.¹⁹ This “makes good sense: it has a clear objective and is readily understood by its target audience in the West.”²⁰

Chomsky found “the case” for advocating the second BDS goal, “Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality,” to be “ambiguous.” He acknowledged that Israel’s oppression of its Palestinian citizens violates international law, but found such criticism hypocritical. The call for equal rights for all Israeli citizens “at once opens the door to the ‘glass house’ reaction: for example, if we boycott Tel Aviv University because Israel violates human rights at home, then why not boycott Harvard because of the far greater violations of the United States?”²¹

Chomsky dismissed the third goal of the call, for the right of Palestinian refugees to return, as based solely in a non-binding UN General Assembly resolution, but the right is part of international law, not advisory, as legal scholar Susan Akram has argued.²² These limits are discussed in the later sections of this article.

Chomsky rejected the “S” in BDS, claiming that “sanctions, or state actions, are not on the horizon.”²³ Tom Suarez responded: “No, professor, the question is whether sanctions are justified, and if they are, they should be part of the strategy. Nor are sanctions against Israel as remote as Professor Chomsky suggests: Already in 2010, 26 ex-EU leaders argued for sanctions.”²⁴ Chomsky’s decree was followed by Israel’s Operation Firm Cliff against Gaza, whose savagery was condemned by Latin American countries and joint bodies. “Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru have withdrawn their ambassadors from Israel, and

Venezuela suspended diplomatic relations.”²⁵ Several Irish MPs called for expelling the Israeli ambassador from Ireland, and breaking diplomatic relations with Israel.²⁶ The vice-chair of the German Social Democratic Party has called for ending arms sales to Israel.²⁷ A *Haaretz* editorialist warns that the “Germans may no longer be the gift that keeps on giving.”²⁸ Other European politicians, officials and coalitions have advocated sanctions on trade and arms sales.²⁹ Sixty-three members of the European parliament have called for ending the EU-Israel treaty of association.³⁰ In Chomsky’s view, these officials believe that “they have attained their ‘South African moment’ but that is far from accurate. And if tactics are to be effective, they must be based on a realistic assessment of circumstances.”³¹

Ignorance and education

Chomsky discerned epic difficulties overcoming public ignorance of the need for sanctions, as if medieval Europeans were being taught atheism. In 2004 he argued that “sanctions against South Africa were finally imposed after years, decades of organization and activism until it got to the point where people could understand why you would want to do it. . . even if it were morally correct, which I don’t think it is.”³² Again in 2004, he found that “sanctions against South Africa did not become a really significant issue. . . until after years of education and organization.”³³ Ignorance continued in 2006. Sanctions “were implemented after a long period of education and organizing, which had led to widespread condemnation of apartheid, even within mainstream opinion and powerful institutions.”³⁴ Ignorance prevailed in 2012. “There could be circumstances in which a boycott of Tel Aviv [University] would be helpful, but first you have to do the educational and organizational work.”³⁵ Ignorance still reigned in July, 2014, when Chomsky found that

individual states and the UN had imposed sanctions [on South Africa] decades before the 1980s, when BD tactics began to be used extensively in the United States. By then, Congress was legislating sanctions and overriding Reagans vetoes on the issue.

Years earlier—by 1960—global investors had already abandoned South Africa to such an extent that its financial reserves were halved; although there was some recovery, the handwriting was on the wall. . . . While there is, finally, a growing domestic opposition in the United States to Israeli crimes, it does not remotely compare with the South African case. The necessary educational work has not been done.³⁶

Chomsky emphasized public ignorance, but could not avoid acknowledging that “public opinion in the US on these matters—which is highly critical—is effectively suppressed and unknown.”³⁷ The untutored public supports a balanced policy that favors neither side, with less US responsibility overall. In August, 2014, in response to the question, “Do you think the U.S. should favor one group over another?” 54% said “treat them the same,” while 34% said “Favor Israelis”.³⁸ In May 2011, when asked “In the Middle East conflict, do you think the United States should take Israel’s side, take the Palestinians’ side, or not take either side?” 31% said Israel’s side, 4% said the Palestinians’ and 65% said neither side.³⁹ This echoes polls from 2010 and earlier.⁴⁰ In July/August 2014, when asked “Do you think the U.S. has a responsibility to try to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, or doesn’t the U.S. have this responsibility?” 59% answered no, 35% yes, 6% unsure.⁴¹ A survey by the Institute for Research Middle East Policy, on the rarely polled matter of US aid to Israel, found that 60.7% felt that aid was “much too much” or “too much,” when told that it was over \$3 billion, and 9% of the foreign aid budget.⁴²

Elite opinion, not public opinion, is the problem, beginning, though not ending, with Jewish opinion. This factor underlies the media’s inability to depict conditions in Israel/Palestine accurately, not Chomsky’s “lack of education.” Professors Mearsheimer and Walt, authors of *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, found that the Israel “lobby’s perspective on Israel is widely reflected in the mainstream media in part because a substantial number of commentators who write about Israel are themselves pro-Israel.”⁴³ Media critic Eric Alterman found that for “reasons of religion, politics, history and genuine conviction the punditocracy debate of the Middle East in America is dominated by people who cannot imagine criticizing Israel.”⁴⁴ Their tabulations are dominated by Jewish writers, editors and publishers. It appears to be a qualification for *New York Times* Israel correspondents and op-ed columnists to have a son in the Israeli military, or be married into the Israeli establishment.⁴⁵

US support for Israel comes foremost from Jewish activists. “The bulk of the [Israel] lobby is comprised of Jewish Americans who are deeply committed to making sure that U.S. foreign policy advances what they believe to be Israel’s interests.”⁴⁶ The efficacy of boycotts depends, in Chomsky’s formulation, on their “education.” If these people were “educable” they would no longer advocate for Israel, US policy would no

longer support it, and BDS would be unnecessary. BDS is a response to the frustration of conventional politics. Chomsky adduces “many significant differences with South Africa,” but omits the most important, the absence of a powerful “Afrikaner lobby,” which could have “educated” the US like the Israel lobby educates about Israel today. This difference was complemented by a large, active African diaspora, compared with the weakness of today’s Arab diaspora.⁴⁷

Chomsky also claimed that Israel’s economic strength showed the ignorance of capitalists about BDS, and stated that the economic “handwriting was on the wall” in South Africa in 1960, but this is greatly exaggerated. According to a recent economic history, “the earliest calls for sanctions were made in the 1960s... but there was little effect until the mid-1980s.”⁴⁸ The “early 1970s marked the high point of South Africa’s economic performance,” but real GDP grew by 3.5% 1973-81, as inflation in gold and other export commodities fostered an illusory boom.⁴⁹ As late as 1980 the head of the South African Reserve Bank could state: “‘Because of the economy’s increased fundamental strength, the long-term secular trend of economic activity will probably be strongly upward.’”⁵⁰

By 1986-7, the apartheid regime was in terminal crisis, from the early 1980s deflation, from foreign debt service, from military defeat in Angola, all compounded by internal and international opposition, including financial sanctions. Real GDP growth averaged .8% 1981 to 1994, when the first democratic elections were held.⁵¹

Apartheid apologetics

Chomsky’s misuse of the South Africa precedent slides into apartheid apologetics. Chomsky warns that “concern for the victims dictates that in assessing tactics, we should be scrupulous in recognizing what has failed, and why. This has not always been the case.”⁵² He cites Michael Neumann, another philosophy professor, reviewing *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel*.⁵³ Neumann frets that a boycott would hurt the Palestinians, the same argument advanced on behalf of South African blacks by defenders of apartheid, by white South African liberals like Helen Suzman, who sat in the apartheid parliament, and by Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement, who were widely viewed as regime collaborators.⁵⁴ Neumann cited Albert Luthuli’s claim of unanimous support from non-white political organizations in South Africa, and contrived

a quibble, asking whether “organizations should make such decisions for individuals,” and praised the South African activist for “at least...squarely recogniz[ing] the existence of a problem.”⁵⁵ The “problem” is Neumann’s refusal to accept the majority of non-white opinion in South Africa.

In 1987 the African National Congress, the United Democratic Front and Archbishop Tutu, all adherents of the 1955 Freedom Charter, commanded majority support of 75% in urban areas and 60% country-wide.⁵⁶ The “Charterist” tendencies all favored sanctions, whether conditional, on the dismantling of apartheid and police rule by the regime, or unconditional ceding of power to representatives of the majority. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the smaller National Council of Trade Unions, and the National Union of Mineworkers all supported sanctions, with minor differences. COSATU argued that “over decades the policy of apartheid has created structural unemployment of a magnitude far greater than that which would be caused by sanctions... It follows that the regime which has caused this hardship needs to be removed rather than reformed.”⁵⁷ The Palestinian call was endorsed by a broad coalition of Palestinian organizations, including the trade union movement, itself a broad coalition of Palestinian labor and professional associations.⁵⁸

Chomsky has opposed the academic boycott of Israel from the outset, stating in 2003, “‘I think the action is wrong in principle.’”⁵⁹ Neumann shares his view, and is indignant that the academic boycott of Israel “is aimed at institutions, not individuals... as if hurting institutions cannot hurt the individuals who depend on them!”⁶⁰ American law professor Lawrence Davidson argued

that any successful academic boycott imposed upon Israeli institutions of higher education will assuredly have an impact on the academic freedom of Israeli scholars and teachers, at least in terms of its expression beyond their national borders. Is this acceptable?... it is not only acceptable but absolutely necessary...

... Israeli academic institutions and personnel have been intimately involved for nearly 40 years in their country’s systematic destruction of Palestinian educational endeavors (and thus Palestinian academic freedom) within the Occupied Territories. And even longer, if less dramatically, as regards the Arab-Israeli community within Israel proper. The vast majority of Israel academics have either been silent, or active participants in this process.

... Tanya Reinhart, formerly a professor of Linguistics at Tel Aviv University... tells us that “Never in its history did the senate of a any Israeli university pass a resolution protesting the frequent closure of Palestinian universities, let alone voice protest over the devastation sowed there [in the OT]... It is not that a motion in that direction failed to gather a majority, there was

no such motion anywhere in Israeli academia.” And then there is Professor Ilan Pappé of Haifa University, who estimates that the number of Israeli academics who have “raised their voices against occupation” is “roughly 100 out of 9000”...

... The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel has noted that “Israeli research institutes, think tanks and academic departments have historically granted legitimacy to the work of academics who advocate ethnic cleansing, apartheid, denial of refugee rights, and other discriminatory policies... Collaboration and cooperation with the intelligence services, the army, and other agencies of the occupation regime is part of the routine work of the Israeli academy.”

Thus, with the passive or active assistance of the vast majority of Israeli professoriate, Palestinian education at all levels in the Occupied Territory is often brought to a near standstill by closures and roadblocks while its teachers, students, and physical structures suffer repeated assaults by Israeli military and settler paramilitary forces...

... there is no evidence that the “free flow of ideas” enjoyed by Israeli academia over the last 40 years has ameliorated the systematic attack on their Palestinian peers in any way. Indeed... it may in fact have helped abet that attack...

... Israel’s academic community cannot be allowed to proceed as if it has nothing to do with the destruction of Palestinian society, including its academy and academic freedom... the placing of temporary limits on the freedom of 9000 Israeli academics is a necessary price that must be paid in the struggle to restore the fundamental rights of millions of Palestinians.⁶¹

Chomsky claims that a boycott of Israeli academia is hypocritical because US academics are equally complicit in the “far greater crimes of the United States.” Since the end of the Cold War Israel and its US supporters have been prime movers in US crimes: the 1991 Gulf War; “dual containment” of Iran and Iraq; provoking the 9/11 attacks and all their sequelae; and the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the present dissolution of the Middle East into medieval components.⁶² Chomsky’s charge is a gambit to protect Israel and its supporters, not to oppose the US.

‘Each country has its own way’

In a 2004 interview, Chomsky rejected the use of *apartheid*, the Afrikaans word for South African segregation, to describe Zionism within Israel. He acknowledged its existence. “There is a kind of apartheid structure, and it’s built into the system. It’s also built into the immigration laws and all sorts of other things.” Yet he stated, “these are just inflammatory terms... I think it’s just sufficient to describe the situation, without comparing it to other situations. Each country is going to have its own way: Jim Crow is different from

South African apartheid.” Chomsky recounted the anti-Semitism his family had experienced when he was growing up, and the fact that Harvard had very few Jewish faculty when he arrived on a post-doctoral fellowship in the early 1950s. “That’s not the same as South African apartheid, I don’t know what name you can give it, but it’s something, you have to describe it for what it is.”⁶³

Or what it was. Anti-Semitism declined rapidly after 1945, and Jewish socioeconomic ascendancy, ongoing since Jewish immigrants arrived on American shores, continued apace, with the result that US elites have been thoroughly Judaized and the situation Chomsky described reversed. It is a positive thing about US society that millions of Jews could emigrate from the most impoverished and oppressed conditions in Europe, and that their descendants could rise to the top. The Jewish chauvinism that has been awakened by Zionism is a very negative and destructive thing.

The racialism of Zionism and Israeli society is not just “another way” of discrimination. No other state today defines itself formally as racist, and insists that racialism is normative, as Israel demands to be recognized as the *state of the Jewish people*, with ever-escalating vehemence and violence. Most recently the cabinet sent to the Knesset legislation to ensure the “Jewish” character of Israel, which will “demote Arabic—spoken by the fifth of the population who belong to the country’s Palestinian minority—from its current status as an official language,” make “‘Jewish tradition’ and ‘the prophets of Israel’ a primary source of legal and judicial authority,” and formally define “Israel as belonging to Jews around the world rather than to its citizens, which includes 1.5 million Palestinians.”⁶⁴

This has been building since the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO. Israel envisioned a “peace without Arabs,” as Israeli ex-patriate scholar Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin put it.⁶⁵ The Oslo Accords did not recognize the Palestinian Arabs as equal inhabitants of historic Palestine, and the injustice done them by the establishment of Israel. Rather they expressed the idea of “separation,” which would remove the Palestinian Arabs from Israel’s midst and let it continue its separate, Zionist, Jewish destiny. The “reality of separation which was formed after the Oslo Accord actually diminished the differences between the main political powers in Israel concerning the future of the Occupied Territories.”⁶⁶ The “peace” and “national” camps differed only on how best to achieve “separation.”

The principle of “separation” also introduced “a new mood of intolerance towards the political ambitions of the Arab minority inside Israel.”⁶⁷ This led to increased repression, which escalated radically upon the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intidafa in September, 2000. Thirteen Israeli Palestinians protesting Israel’s attacks in the occupied territories were killed by draconian, militarized policing, including sniper units. Prime minister Ehud Barak and Sharon both argued that the internal protests were a “second front” against Israel, orchestrated by PA president Yasser Arafat.⁶⁸

The Israeli Palestinian public increasingly supported, not changing discriminatory laws, but constitutional reform to make Israel a secular state of all its citizens. Palestinian politicians had resigned from Zionist political parties and been elected to the Knesset as members of Arab parties. Israeli Jewish society reacted by attacking Palestinian political leaders physically, and with trumped-up investigation and persecution, resulting in imprisonment, exile and suspension from the Knesset.⁶⁹ Electoral laws were changed to effectively bar Arab political parties, which prompted a unified Arab slate for the March election.⁷⁰ Veteran journalist Jonathan Cook wrote of “Israel’s next phase of the Palestinians’ conquest. . . the crushing of these more than one million unwanted citizens.”⁷¹

The combination of Zionist “separation” ideology and irredentism precludes Palestinian sovereignty and culminates in expulsion of the entire Palestinian population. The first annual Herzliya Conference, in December 2000, where Israel’s elite brainstormed, had “examined the ‘demographic threat’ facing Israel, concentrating less on the problem of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and more on the country’s Arab citizens.”⁷² A subsequent report proposed swapping an area adjacent to the northern West Bank, and its Palestinian population of 250,000, a quarter of Israel’s minority, for settlements in the West Bank. Benny Morris, one of the cohort of “new historians” who had exposed the ethnic cleansing of Israel’s founding, concluded that “ ‘Ben Gurion did not complete the transfer in 1948. . . he left a large and volatile demographic reserve in the West Bank and Gaza and within Israel itself.’ ”⁷³ The job might have to be finished:

If you are asking me whether I support the transfer and expulsion of the Arabs from the West Bank, Gaza, and perhaps even from the Galilee and the Triangle, I say not at this moment. . . But I am ready to tell you that in other circumstances, apocalyptic ones, which are liable to be realized in five or ten years, I can see expulsions.⁷⁴

The new Yisrael Beiteinu (“Israel is Our Home”) party expresses this radical right politics. Cook described Our Home’s then-leader Avigdor Lieberman as an “avowed Arab-hater,” “every bit the populist and racist politician,” head of “Israel’s only unquestionably fascist party,” who favors an autocratic presidential government.⁷⁵ Lieberman has advocated expelling 90% of Israel’s Palestinian citizens, and called for Palestinian MKs to be executed.⁷⁶ The president of Israel, and former speaker of the Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, was moved to state: “It is time to honestly admit that Israeli society is ill—and it is our duty to treat this disease.”⁷⁷ For this he was vilified.⁷⁸

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s victory in Israel’s March 17 elections was preceded by a tumultuous campaign, including Netanyahu’s address to a joint session of Congress on March 3. This extraordinary event was arranged by the Republican congressional leadership without informing the White House, and allowed Netanyahu to attack President Obama’s Iran diplomacy. Despite this, for a time the Zionist Union opposition led for a time in the polls. Near the end, Netanyahu tacked hard right, warning that “the Arabs are voting in droves,” that any vote for any other rightwing party would be a vote for the opposition, and declaring that there would never be a Palestinian state. He won a convincing victory, with 30 seats to the ZU’s 25, and the right to attempt to form a government. Our Home declined to 6 seats, as some of its members supported Netanyahu, but their ideas determined the winning campaign, and Netanyahu may form a government from the far right alone. Netanyahu hollowly apologized for his anti-Arab remarks, and attempted to retract his statement about a Palestinian state.⁷⁹ The new Joint List of Arab parties increased the total Arab representation to 13 seats, but remained as isolated as before.⁸⁰

Nadia Ben-Youssef of Adalah, the Legal Center for Minority Rights in Israel, responded to Chomsky in *The Nation*, in a piece titled “How Chomsky Obscures Israel’s True Nature.” She stated that “by focusing almost exclusively, though with bracing accuracy, on the injustices and humiliations Palestinians face in the OPT, Chomsky’s analysis reinforces a false paradigm that deflects from the problematic nature of the single Israeli regime.”⁸¹

Thus, when the Arab political leadership in Israel calls for a “state for all of its citizens,” they and their parties face attempts to disqualify them from participating in the Knesset under the argument that such demands contradict the constitutional values of Israel as a ‘Jewish and democratic’ state. Just as in the OPT, the Israeli regime within the Green Line is predicated on

inequality and permeated with racism. It is this reality that Palestinians and their allies are aiming to change, and it is this that demands our attention.⁸²

Chomsky referred to his 40-year old foreword to Sabri Jiryis' book *The Arabs in Israel* and other dated work in which he discussed the nature of Israeli society, in responding to another *Nation* critic.⁸³ Yet he has ignored the convergence of the two regimes since the al-Aqsa intifada. To Ben-Youssef Chomsky still defended “distinguishing the situation in the OT (much worse than apartheid) from the situation within Israel (very serious, but not South African-style apartheid).”⁸⁴ The ominous impetus toward exclusion and expulsion make the Israeli regime worse, not better than apartheid. Chomsky nonetheless lectured her that the distinction “sharpens the framework within which to pursue the struggle successfully,” and warned disingenuously that activists should “evaluate the tactics that are used and their consequences, at least if we care about the fate of the victims—again.”⁸⁵

Anti-semitism

As Israel radicalized its oppression of its Palestinian citizens, Chomsky nonetheless mounted his accusation of hypocrisy toward critics. The call for equal rights for all Israeli citizens “at once opens the door to the ‘glass house’ reaction: for example, if we boycott Tel Aviv University because Israel violates human rights at home, then why not boycott Harvard because of the far greater violations of the United States?”⁸⁶ “We know the answer, and it is not an attractive one, undermining the integrity of the call for boycott.”⁸⁷

The claim is familiar from the anti-apartheid struggle, when it was dismissed by American philosopher Robert Wolff.

The reproach to foreigners who are accused of seeing the mote in South Africa's eye but not the beam in their own can be dismissed as the merest *ad hominem*. All oppressions, exploitations and expropriations should be fought, those at home and those abroad. It is not necessary to debate which is the greatest evil, nor to anguish about which should be fought first. . . social change is a broad avalanche. . . any work one does in opposition to social injustice anywhere is a worthy contribution, about which one can feel confident and proud.⁸⁸

Since the end of the Cold War, Israel and its US supporters have been prime movers in US crimes, as noted. Yet debating the point obscures Wolff's principled argument that such tactics are “the merest *ad hominem*.”

In his recent appearance at the United Nations, sponsored by the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Chomsky noted that Israel's one-time UN ambassador, Abba Eban, had advised American Jewry

that they had two tasks to perform: to show that criticisms of the policy of the state of Israel... were anti-Semitism... if the criticism was made by Jews, their task was to show that it's neurotic self-hatred... We have to be treated for our psychiatric disorders, and non-Jews have to be condemned for anti-Semitism if they're critical of the state of Israel... We ought to understand that there is no sensible charge, no sensible charge, there is nothing to respond to. It's not a form of anti-Semitism, it's simply criticism of the criminal actions of the state.⁸⁹

Chomsky basically echoed Wolff's dismissal of "the merest *ad hominem*," yet he makes the accusation when it suits him, just like Eban. Journalist Philip Weiss has attributed Chomsky's adamant deprecation of the Israel lobby to anti-gentilism.⁹⁰

Chomsky has also claimed that sanctions cannot be imposed on Israel because Israeli Jews would object. "In the case of South Africa, I think [sanctions] were legitimate because it was clear that the large majority of the population of South Africa was in favor of it... You don't impose them unless the population is asking for them. That's the moral issue. So, the first point in the case of Israel is that: Is the population asking for it? Well, obviously not."⁹¹ "We agree that the Jewish population of Israel overwhelmingly opposes sanctions. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no meaningful call for sanctions among the non-Jewish population of Israel. So I think it is fair to say that opposition to sanctions would range from substantial to extremely strong across the Israeli spectrum."⁹²

Chomsky's claim, in 2004, that no non-Jewish Israeli citizens had called for sanctions was premature. The 2005 call from the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel was endorsed by "Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations... represent[ing] the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel."⁹³ Israel Palestinian endorsers included Ittijah, an umbrella group of Palestinian NGOs, whose director, Ameer Makhoul, was later imprisoned.⁹⁴ Israel's 2011 law effectively proscribing BDS is being contested by Adalah.⁹⁵ The Israeli Palestinians also advocate something much more fundamental, a state of its citizens, for which they are persecuted as traitors. In Chomsky's view their advocacy is apparently

premature; they should first embrace the two-state logic of “separation,” even at risk of expulsion, and advocate a democratic state only after some unspecified period of “education.”

Damage to the cause

As the BDS movement gained momentum after 2005, Chomsky’s rationales for restricting BDS became more and more convoluted. In a 2010 interview he claimed that

Whatever crimes Israel commits are committed to the extent the US not only tolerates in them but participates in them, and playing a decisive role in Israel’s crimes is a very minor footnote to US crimes. So therefore, boycotting an Israeli dance group, immediately, apart from the question of selectivity, immediately offers jingoist, hard-line supporters of Israel an opening. It says, look, you’re a total hypocrite, and unfortunately they have a case, and I’m not in favor of giving support to hard-line supporters of Israeli atrocities.⁹⁶

Palestinian-American journalist Ali Abunimah responded:

Israeli government ministers have said it publicly many times, that Israel is using tours by dance groups and other cultural groups sponsored by the Israeli government to burnish the image of Israel. If we’re saying we’re not going to protest those groups... then what we’re saying is, we should give free reign to Israeli government propaganda, and allow them to use dance and other forms of art and film as a way to whitewash Israel’s image.⁹⁷

Chomsky compared advocates of BDS beyond his limits to people who break store windows during protests. “We have to make a distinction between feel-good actions and do-good actions. We can do things that make us feel good, but may be harmful to the victims.” “Take the Vietnam war. I was very much involved in protest, and in resistance to the war, however there were acts of resistance that I opposed, so for example, breaking windows in stores is a feel-good action, but it harms the Vietnamese.”⁹⁸ Abunimah countered that the BDS movement “has been very careful about calling for actions which are not only morally justified, but likely to be effective,” and found it “quite misleading, and I would say disrespectful, to dismiss the BDS movement and all the work it’s done, being somehow just a feel-good movement.”⁹⁹

US support for Israel is a world-historical catastrophe, not “a very minor footnote.” Even apart from that, it is ludicrous to claim that Israeli war criminals and their US supporters would defend themselves by admitting that, yes, they commit terrible atrocities, but their patron, the US commits far more, and therefore the critics are hypocrites.

While Chomsky accused advocates of BDS beyond his narrow limits of hurting the Palestinians, Israeli think tanks, cabinet ministries and the prime minister were apprehending damage to Israel's image and the threat of worse. One think tank urged that Israel "sabotage" and "attack" the BDS movement. That language was scrubbed when it became notorious, but the Israeli government monitors Palestine solidarity activity on and off-line.¹⁰⁰ In 2013 responsibility for Israel's anti-BDS efforts was moved from the foreign ministry to the Ministry of Strategic Affairs.¹⁰¹ While addressing the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in March, 2014, prime minister Netanyahu "launched a frontal assault on the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement."¹⁰² In January, 2015, a classified foreign ministry report, sent to Israeli diplomatic missions world-wide, warned of "worsening international isolation," citing economic and security consequences from European actions, and also erosion of US support, from the academic boycott.¹⁰³ Opinion polls in Israel's current election campaign show that Jewish voters fear international isolation, which is due in part to the BDS campaign.¹⁰⁴

All that said, the BDS movement can be criticized, in this writer's view. Campaigns against "the occupation" often proceed as if the overwhelming and crucial US official (and semi-official Jewish) "support for Israel" is taking place on a different planet. Focusing on Israel at least names the culprit and implicitly raises questions about US policy. Omar Barghouti, the leading Palestinian spokesman for BDS, spoke at Columbia University on December 2, in a program entitled "Palestine's South Africa Moment?" with several Columbia faculty.¹⁰⁵

The present writer asked a question about the Israel lobby. I noted that there was no comparable "Afrikaner lobby," and asked how would BDS actually affect US policy? Or was the Lobby not a problem, as some thought? Barghouti answered that corporations were a powerful lobby for South Africa, but they were not; they were a lobby for their own investments, defending their economic value to South Africans, and signing on to token measures like the Sullivan principles, devised by a clergyman on GM's board. They did not flood US culture with propaganda extolling apartheid and Afrikaner "self-determination," and they did not vilify critics as "anti-Afrikaner." It's unlikely that they lobbied the US executive and Congress in support of the apartheid regime, beyond implicitly supporting it by defending their investments.

Barghouti then said: “Neither Chomsky nor Mearsheimer/Walt are correct. Sometimes the tail wags the dog, sometimes the dog wags the tail. But they are part of the same animal.” At another point he said that “supporting Israel benefits the 1%”, a vaguely Marxist political economy argument. This contradicted his response to a question asked just before mine, in which he said that much of the investment in Israel was “ideologically driven,” meaning by Zionist motives, apart from economic opportunity. Barghouti had no real idea how BDS would affect US policy, but it is not mainly his place, as a non-US citizen, to analyze and confront the forces at work here. That is the task of US citizens, who presumably know the territory. Barghouti is doing what he can, developing BDS, which is limited but constructive.

The historian Rashid Khalidi, the Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia, introduced the panel. He later said that BDS affects public opinion. He said that politics will “remain impervious” to change, a phrase he repeated; the straight media will “remain impervious,” X will “remain impervious,” Y will “remain impervious,” strongly emphasizing “impervious.” BDS addresses US policy indirectly and is thus incomplete.

The Ugandan historian Mahmood Mamdani, who is also at Columbia, was on the panel with Barghouti. He denied for various reasons that Palestine’s “South Africa moment” has arrived. He acknowledged the much greater difficulty of the Palestinian struggle and stated:

The Palestinian challenge is to persuade the Jewish population and the world, just as in South Africa, the longtime security of a Jewish homeland in historic Palestine requires the dismantling of the Jewish state. The lesson for Palestine and Israel, is that historic Palestine can be a homeland for Jews but not for Jews only. Jews can have a homeland in historic Palestine, but not a state.¹⁰⁶

It is not a Palestinian challenge but a challenge to the world that empowers Israel’s genocidal oppression, above all a challenge to the citizens of the United States. The response is to address Zionism, in keeping with the classical liberal traditions descended from the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation that rejected it. This critique would explore Zionism’s roots as Jewish racialism, its power in the US today, and its cost to the country, as well as to Palestine and the world. This requires a major cultural shift, to overcome the obfuscation of the minimal “anti-occupation” critique of Chomsky and his followers over the last 50 years. The reader may decide whether Chomsky or the BDS movement has been “harming the Palestinians.”

US support for Israel

In his July, 2014 attack on BDS, Chomsky stated the obvious fact that US support for Israel enables its policies and blocks an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, and faulted BDS for “occasionally—but not sufficiently—reaching to the crucial matter of US support for Israeli crimes.”¹⁰⁷ He had sounded this theme since the MIT/Harvard initiative. In 2004 he exclaimed indignantly: “We ought to call for sanctions against the United States! If the U.S. were to stop its massive support for this, it’s over. So, you don’t have to have sanctions on Israel. It’s like putting sanctions on Poland under the Russians because of what the Poles are doing. It doesn’t make sense. Here, we’re the Russians.”¹⁰⁸ Chomsky argued as if Israel were conquered and occupied by the US military and operating under a US puppet government, rather than one elected by its people, and enjoying overwhelming and decisive support from a powerful US lobby. In 2006 Chomsky used this ploy to accuse BDS advocates of anti-semitism. “For the most part, Israel can act only within the framework established by the Great Power on which it has chosen to rely. . . . So, if there are to be boycotts, why not of the US. . . we know the answer, and it is not an attractive one, undermining the integrity of the call for boycott.”¹⁰⁹

In his July, 2014 article, Chomsky cited the US-Israeli rejection of a 1971 Egyptian peace initiative. What Chomsky insists is “US-Israeli rejectionism” and undifferentiated “US support for Israel” may be better understood as the adaptation by US elites to Jewish *faits accomplis*. A study of the period by a former AIPAC legislative aide and Defense Department employee found that

Congress played a key role in shaping the course of American-Israeli relations during the 1969-1976 period. . . . Congress was willing at times to exert its authority by blocking measures that the administration contemplated but Congress believed would threaten Israel’s security. This willingness helped keep United States policy within certain pro-Israel boundaries. For example, the May, 1975 letter of seventy-six senators to President Ford virtually forced the executive branch to abandon the option of imposing a Mideast settlement which Israel considered to be potentially detrimental to its security. Similarly, Congressional and interest group [AIPAC] activity in response to the 1969 Rogers Plan “virtually insured that no further pro-Arab initiatives would be undertaken” by the Nixon administration.¹¹⁰

President Nixon’s national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, had opposed the 1969 Rogers Plan for a two-state settlement, for fatuous notions of Cold War strategy, from his own biases, and from a desire to

control foreign policy. As the study cited argued, in effect, this was making a virtue of necessity. Nixon was wary of the Israel lobby after the firestorm over the Rogers Plan, but he still viewed the Arab-Israeli conflict as critical. Shortly after winning re-election in 1972 he told Kissinger, “ ‘Henry, the time has now come to squeeze the old woman [Israeli prime minister Golda Meir]. . . we can’t just let the thing ride and have a hundred million Arabs hating us and providing a fishing ground not only for radicals, but of course the Soviets.’ ”¹¹¹ In talks with Egypt in early 1973 Kissinger simply presented Israel’s position, from personal affinity for Israel and his knowledge “that the Israelis were not going to be easy to budge.”¹¹² US-Egypt contacts came to nought, leading to the October, 1973 Arab-Israeli war. The end of hostilities left Israeli and Egyptian forces entangled in place, and Israel’s obduracy in disengaging frustrated even Kissinger. In 1975 he persuaded President Ford to agree to a “review” of US-Israel relations. The result was the “letter of seventy-six senators” referred to above, not the first or last time three-quarters of the US Senate endorsed Israel’s desires, with or against the US executive.

Chomsky claims that the US-Israel relationship is due to US “strategic interest,” that the “Israel lobby” is powerful only when it pursues policies the US would have pursued anyway. “Domestic pressure groups tend to be ineffectual unless they line up with significant elements of state-corporate power, or have reached a scale and intensity that compels moves to accommodate them. When AIPAC lobbies for policies that the state executive and major sectors of corporate America intend to pursue, it is influential; when it confronts authentic power, largely unified, it fades very quickly.”¹¹³ Chomsky wants to suggest, intimate and convey, to hint, insinuate and imply, that US policy would be the same absent the Israel lobby, but he is careful not to state that directly.

In the 1940s, the nascent Israel lobby “reached a scale and intensity that compelled moves to accommodate it” and imposed US support for partition of Palestine and a Jewish state on the US government, against the opposition of the State Department, the Pentagon, and the international oil companies. Roosevelt’s enthusiasm for Zionism did not survive his meeting with Saudi King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud in Egypt in February 1945, during his return from the last wartime summit conference at Yalta. After hearing Ibn Saud’s forceful views FDR resolved to “ ‘reexamine our entire policy on Palestine.’ ”¹¹⁴ Truman reluctantly assented to

Zionism, but resented the overwhelming pressure, and continued to feel that a 1946 Anglo-American plan for federated Arab and Jewish cantons was the best solution.¹¹⁵

In 1944 the Zionist lobby “wrung support from the conventions of both parties” for a Senate resolution supporting abrogation of the Palestine immigration limits in the 1939 British white paper, and the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth.¹¹⁶ In 1945, the Zionist lobby secured Truman’s endorsement of a Jewish Agency proposal for the entry of 100,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine.¹¹⁷ In fall of 1946 it obtained a statement from Truman on the eve of Yom Kippur in effect endorsing partition of Palestine.¹¹⁸ In November, 1947 Zionist pressure ensured US lobbying at the UN for partition of Palestine, and in May, 1948, US diplomatic recognition, within minutes of the state’s proclamation in Tel Aviv.¹¹⁹ US Jewish Zionists illegally purchased war surplus materiel, including aircraft and ships, and munitions-producing machinery, and smuggled it to Palestine. They were detected by US authorities but were not prosecuted for political reasons.¹²⁰

The chief concern of the US foreign policy establishment was the nascent Cold War, whose first flash-points were in Iran, Turkey and Greece. Loy Henderson, as director of Near East and Africa Affairs in the State Department, was deeply involved in Cold War strategy, and in Palestine policy.¹²¹ “Marshall, Acheson and Lovett were relatively unversed in the politics of Palestine, so they relied on Henderson to guide them.”¹²² Following the partition recommendation by the UN Special Committee on Palestine in August, 1947, Henderson stated to Undersecretary of State Robert Lovett that a “hostile attitude on the part of the Arabs would threaten from the rear the position we are desperately trying to hold in Greece, Turkey and Iran.”¹²³ He stated to Secretary of State George Marshall that it “would not be in the national interests of the United States for it to advocate any kind of a plan at this time for the partitioning of Palestine or for the setting up of a Jewish State.” Such advocacy would jeopardize “our efforts to support world stability and to prevent further Soviet penetration,” damage “relations with the peoples of the Near East and with Moslems everywhere,” impede plans to use “the resources of the area... for the reconstruction of Europe,” encourage “violent Arab nationalist uprisings,” etc.¹²⁴ In a private letter in March, 1948, Henderson stated that the “Zionists would ‘win the first few rounds’ but be unable to establish anything like lasting peace and stability.

The American people... would find themselves increasingly drawn to the Zionists' defense. Anti-western elements would batten on the chaos... The region would experience 'the rise of fanatic Mohammedanism' of an intensity 'not experienced for hundreds of years.'¹²⁵

The Joint Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces argued that support by the US for the partition of Palestine "would prejudice United States strategic interests in the Near and Middle East," possibly lead to "serious disturbances throughout the Near and Middle East" with the result that "the USSR might replace the United States and Great Britain in influence and power." The US might have to fight an "oil-starved war" without its "maximum potential power" if it did not "retain the good will of the Arab and Moslem states." The Joint Chiefs also feared that forces required to implement partition would "invalidate entirely current estimate of required strengths" of the US military, and absorb the "extremely small strategic reserve."¹²⁶

The Arabian American Oil Company, which held the Saudi oil concession, warned the State Department that "United States is jeopardizing the good will of 30,000,000 Arabs and 220,000,000 Muslims, risking the loss of its cultural and educational leadership in that part of the world, the sacrifice of many hundreds of millions of dollars of investments... and the strategic loss of access to air and naval bases throughout the Moslem world."¹²⁷ After the UN partition resolution in November, 1947 a crowd of 2,000 attacked the US Legation in Damascus, and in Baghdad the office of the US Information Service was attacked.¹²⁸ Aramco was constructing the Trans-Arabian Pipeline from the Saudi oil fields to the Mediterranean coast. Tapline would fuel the recovery of Europe, relieve demands on western hemisphere supplies and tankers to transport them, greatly reduce the cost of moving Saudi oil to market, and increase Aramco profits, to the benefit of the American partners and to Saudi Arabia. Syria initially refused to ratify a transit agreement for the Tapline route over US Palestine policy.¹²⁹ When partition was announced, "Tapline field parties in Syria and Transjordan had to be evacuated because of anti-American violence, and the companies began to fear that the pipeline might not be constructed at all."¹³⁰

In the end, Ibn Saud's kingdom was too weak and too dependent on the US for him to jeopardize relations over Palestine, no matter how insistently he protested. Henderson himself observed that in "the recent setback suffered by all American interests in the Near East as a result of our stand on Palestine business

firms have seemed to suffer less than either U.S. Government or American cultural interests. . . It may well be that the oil companies are in a position to recover lost ground. . . sooner than the U.S. Government.’ ”¹³¹ Yet, indisputably, in such critical circumstances, US support for Zionism would never have been conceived, let alone implemented, absent the ruthless Zionist orchestration of US politics, including the inner circle of the Truman White House, both political parties, campaign finance, Congress, governors, gentile notables, the media and the Jewish vote.

The maturation of the Zionist lobby in the 1940s was a familiar historical event, a rising socioeconomic elite bidding for political power. Even in the 1940s, Jewish organizations and the Jewish public had the political influence and the financial resources to prevail on a major foreign policy decision, like a commercial or industrial bourgeoisie imposing its interest. This elite was motivated not by a class interest, but by a purely ideological one, the aggrandizement of the *Zionist Jewish people*, with fanatical appetite.

Nor can this be considered independent of “US interests.” As Ambassador Chas Freeman put it: “We need to begin by recognizing that our relationship with Israel has never been driven by strategic reasoning. It began with President Truman overruling his strategic and military advisers in deference to personal sentiment and political expediency.”¹³² The establishment of Israel revealed the quasi-sovereign power of the nascent Israel lobby. The US did not create Israel for its own purposes, rather Israel was created despite US purposes, and its specific and virulent racialism, belligerence and irredentism has influenced the US ever since. This has rigorously precluded some outcomes and powerfully encouraged others, greatly radicalizing US policy and culture. One may argue that Zionism has turned the Middle East into the eastern front of the US empire, like the eastern front of Nazi Germany, site of its most depraved deeds and ideology.

The Lobby’s frustration of politics has led to the BDS movement, which establishes the principle that Israel needs to be sanctioned. Chomsky’s charge that BDS does not address “US support” for Israel is the reddest herring in the sea. Palestine supporters need to learn how to deal with the pro-Israel complex, which they have not because Chomsky and his followers have suppressed the issue, an ongoing effort. The strategic asset school aren’t about to acknowledge the precedent of Zionist influence in the 1940s, but are trying to backdate the strategic asset argument to that time.¹³³

***The Nation* exchange, continued**

Chomsky and Yousef Munayyer spoke on a panel on BDS at Harvard in November, 2014, with three others.¹³⁴ The organizer and moderator, Ahmed Alkhateeb of the Harvard School of Public Health, introduced the panel, which was part of Harvard Arab Weekend. Alkhateeb surveyed the history of the Palestinian BDS movement, referred to some of the issues from *The Nation* exchange, explained that the first part of the panel would discuss specific BDS campaigns, and that the second part would address “the theoretical framework of BDS with specific focus on tactical approaches.”¹³⁵ The first three speakers discussed academic, cultural and church-based BDS initiatives. Munayyer then spoke, followed by Chomsky.

Munayyer began his remarks with three questions: “Why is BDS necessary?” “What is the goal of BDS?” and “What form should it take?” To the first question, Munayyer answered that “BDS, a civil society initiative, is necessary today” as “a result of the failure of the state and inter-state system to deliver for Palestinians.”¹³⁶ He elaborated on that failure compellingly. To the second question he responded that there were two goals, “to create pressure on the state of Israel” by raising the cost of its policies and ending its immunity, and a second, of “education and raising awareness.”¹³⁷ Munayyer cited the widespread discussion of Palestine arising from BDS initiatives.

Munayyer observed that the form of BDS, whether it should be directed against “the occupation” or against Israel itself, “has perhaps invited the most debate.”¹³⁸ He argued that it is not possible to separate the occupation from the state, which idea fosters the illusion of Israeli democracy, and obscures the historical oppression and increasingly tenuous status of Israel’s Palestinian citizens. The travails of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, within Israel, and as refugees abroad, “all stem from a single system of settler-colonial control.”¹³⁹ He noted that “some will argue, and some on this panel may have, that even if this is true. . . BDS efforts would be more successful if they are aimed only at the occupation or the settlements.”¹⁴⁰ He argued that BDS should “redouble its efforts to explain the interconnectedness and inseparability of those three” populations, the Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation, and Israel’s Palestinian citizens. In concluding, he stated that “while BDS victories focused on the occupation and settlements might not be based on all three demands, they should still be welcomed by the BDS movement in general. At this stage,

any efforts that could be made. . . are efforts in the direction of peace and justice.”¹⁴¹

Chomsky was introduced as, inter alia, one who “had written an op-ed in *The Nation* criticizing BDS tactics.” Chomsky began:

It’s interesting that I was introduced as someone who wrote something criticizing BDS tactics. That tells you something about the BDS movement. Actually I wrote something advocating BDS tactics, strongly advocating them. But I didn’t support every proposal that had been made. This movement is quite different from other solidarity movements I’ve had to do with over the last 50 years. Either you accept everything or you’re a critic. Every other activism I’ve ever been involved with took for granted that tactics were going to be debated. You were going to ask if they worked. If they didn’t work you were going to change them. There was internal discussion, internal criticism. It goes on all the time. If that’s not done, it’s not going to be a success. That’s worth thinking about.¹⁴²

Chomsky’s long criticism of BDS dates from initiatives at Harvard and MIT in 2002, and includes accusing those who reject his limits of “encouraging extremism,” of hypocrisy and anti-Semitism.¹⁴³ The reader may decide whether such views constitute “strongly advocating BDS tactics” or trying to limit and control them. And whether they are comradely “debating of tactics” that “every activist movement takes for granted,” or sectarian obstruction. Perhaps the marked “difference” of the Palestine movement in the US is not an unwillingness to debate tactics, but Jewish Zionist sectarianism, and its minimal, truncated critique of “the occupation,” etc., rather than Zionism, in the US as well as Israel.

Chomsky acknowledged the South Africa precedent for the BDS movement, and argued that “we should pay attention to what it was, not what we wish it was, what it actually was. That’s important.”¹⁴⁴ He emphasized the support of the US for the apartheid regime, and the international opposition that included the UN in the 1970s and the US Congress in the 1980s. He stated that “by about 1990 the US changed its position, and apartheid collapsed within a few years.”¹⁴⁵ By 1990 Nelson Mandela had been freed, and the African National Congress unbanned; the US was lagging events, not leading them.

Chomsky called Israel “a close ally” and noted that during Israel’s summer, 2014 attack on Gaza Israel had resupplied itself from munitions “pre-positioned in Israel for the use by American forces when they carry out aggressive actions in the region. That’s one of many indications of extremely close military and intelligence collaboration. These are parts of the real world. We can’t ignore them.”¹⁴⁶ However, as

Mearsheimer and Walt note, “prepositioning U.S. supplies in Israel is actually an inefficient way to prepare for this contingency and the Pentagon has never been enthusiastic about it. . . The real purpose of the stockpile program has been to enhance Israel’s materiel reserves.”¹⁴⁷ During the 1991 Gulf War the US offered to augment the stored arsenal in order to induce Israel not to attack Iraq and to assent to arms sales to Saudi Arabia.¹⁴⁸

Ambassador Chas Freeman argued that Israel is “useless in terms of support for American power projection” because “Israeli participation in our military operations would preclude the cooperation of many others.” Allies “store weapons for our troops’, rather than their own troops’ use,” among other functions that Israel does not fulfill. Freeman cited Israel’s provocation of hatred of the US over Palestine and its incitement of terrorist attacks on the US, including 9/11, and the role of Israel’s supporters in starting US wars abroad, and found it “remarkable that something as fatuous as the notion of Israel as a strategic asset could have become the unchallengeable conventional wisdom in the United States.”¹⁴⁹

Philip Giraldi, a retired CIA counterintelligence officer, argued that not only is Israel “no ally. . . it is not actually a friend, because it does actual damage to the United States through using its considerable access to Congress and the media to promote policies that are neither good for the United States nor for Israel.”¹⁵⁰ Another retired CIA officer, Paul Pillar, argued that “the relationship on security matters has been more of a liability than an asset.”¹⁵¹ Intelligence and military personnel, diplomats, members of the congressional foreign relations committees, and international relations scholars like Professors Mearsheimer and Walt are the presumed stewards of “US interests.” Chomsky implies that these people don’t know their jobs in failing to perceive Israel’s “asset value” to the US.

In the 1940s, the nascent “Israel lobby” overwhelmed US diplomatic and military opposition and secured US support for partition of Palestine and a Jewish state. The present configuration of the Israel lobby dates from the 1970s, when the alliance between the neoconservatives and the gentile right formed. The neoconservatives were a Jewish movement of former left of center writers and activists, who moved rightward largely over Israel after the wars of 1967 and 1973. The alliance led to a Jewish transformation of American conservatism.

Thus “urban, Jewish erstwhile Democratic proponents of the welfare state took over a conservative movement that has been largely in the hands of Catholic, pro-[Joe]McCarthy and (more or less) anti-New Deal Republicans. That the older movement collapsed into the newer one is a demonstrable fact.”¹⁵² In the early 1970s, “ ‘the movement consisted of perhaps two dozen individuals. Their numbers today [2005] have increased to hundreds of individuals threaded throughout the news media, think tanks, political life, government and the universities. . . their influence has been felt everywhere.’ ”¹⁵³ They have taken over existing funding, think tanks and media, developed their own, and rewritten the history of American conservatism, and US history, in light of their ascendancy.¹⁵⁴ It is claimed that “ ‘Ronald Reagan would not have been elected and would [not] have been able to govern. . . successfully without some of the prominent neoconservatives.’ ”¹⁵⁵ In the 1980 election the neocons and their establishment connections “prevented Reagan from being characterized as a zany right-wing warmonger, as had often been the case with previous conservative leaders.”¹⁵⁶ In Republican foreign policy the neocons “replaced not only the traditional conservative figures, but also the more moderate establishment wing that was identified with the elder George H. W. Bush.”¹⁵⁷

Chomsky instead blames evangelical Christians for the radicalization of the Republican Party, as in a radio interview in February, 2014.¹⁵⁸ Professors Mearsheimer and Walt call Christian Zionists “an important ‘junior partner’” for whom Israel is not the sole or most important issue, and who do not have the lobbying ability, policy analysis and financial resources of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, evangelical Christian support has declined sharply due to Israel’s atrocities.¹⁶⁰ Speaking of Congress, former AIPAC staffer and congressional aide M. J. Rosenberg stated,

In general. . . the conservatives don’t matter much on matters relating to Israel. One, even for the most zealous defender of Israel in the Republican caucus, Israel is not central to them or their fund-raising, not central the way that fighting against gays, or abortion, or Obama, or illegal immigration, those are all their big issues. Yes, there is Sheldon Adelson, and a few others who give money to right-wing candidates, but given that 80% of Jews are Democrats, and so are most of Jewish donors, these Christian conservatives are pretty insignificant in terms of the big picture. . . In all my years on Capitol Hill, I never heard a single staff member say, that they had to vote for some ‘Palestinians don’t exist’ resolution that was on the House floor, because they were afraid of the Christians. No, they’re afraid of AIPAC, and AIPAC is not a Christian organization. The fear is awesome to behold.¹⁶¹

Yet in a response to a telephone questioner after that interview, Chomsky stated:

I agree with you completely about the neocons, but that's not AIPAC. The neocons are a mainstream force within conservative American thought. They go way back, strongly rooted in the Reagan era, right to the present. And you're quite right that the neocons were a highly, the dominant force in the George W. Bush administration, and they pushed through the Iraq war over plenty of objections, huge public objections, even objections in the government and Congress. So sure, the neocons are tremendously important.

The caller, James Morris, argued that there was crossover between neocon organizations and AIPAC, that they were "one and the same basically," citing Richard Perle and others. Chomsky replied that "Rumsfeld and Cheney are not part of AIPAC. And they were way more significant than Richard Perle. As far as AIPAC's concerned, sure, you're right, it's a lobby, an ethnic lobby, has some power, but I think Walt and Mearsheimer greatly misinterpreted its role."¹⁶²

Chomsky misrepresented the relationship between the neocons and the gentile right, which dates from the early 1970s, when the neocons began their takeover of American conservatism. The neocons plotted the invasion of Iraq from the late 1970s, when Paul Wolfowitz first served in the Pentagon; they advocated it in the 1990s while out of office; and they staffed the government offices which advocated the 2003 invasion, notably Vice-President Cheney's office, and the Office of Special Plans in the Pentagon, among other positions.¹⁶³ Chomsky also misrepresents the relationship of Rumsfeld and Perle, which dates to battles against detente in the 1970s. Rumsfeld greatly admired Perle and wanted him in the Pentagon when he became defense secretary in the George W. Bush administration. Perle stayed in the lucrative private sector, while taking a volunteer appointment on the Defense Policy Advisory Board, with access to classified information.¹⁶⁴ The Jewish Zionist ascendancy on the right, following its domination of liberalism, "are parts of the real world. We can't ignore them," to repeat Chomsky's admonition about US-Israel military and intelligence relations. But Chomsky ignores their domestic basis, except to deprecate and dismiss it, and has for 50 years.

Chomsky stated that on university campuses "there are changes, very significant ones. Fifteen, twenty years ago, literally, you had to have police protection even to talk about this topic on campus, even at my own university, down the street. That's totally changed."¹⁶⁵ At a "talk about Gaza, two or three weeks ago,

there were probably seven or eight hundred students there. Palestinian solidarity in the last fifteen or twenty years has become one of the main issues, commitments and engagements on college campuses. That's important. This is pretty normal." Actually, overwhelming support for Israel from university administrations and Zionists on and off-campus is pretty normal, a sharp contrast to the South Africa case.

When in 2007 a British academic union voted to boycott Israeli academics, American academics, oblivious to Israel's devastation of Palestinian higher education, and the complicity of Israeli universities, manned the ramparts. "Scholars for Peace in the Middle East" claimed that 10,000 academics signed a petition opposed.¹⁶⁶ The Anti-Defamation League published an ad in the *New York Times* carrying the signatures of hundreds of university presidents, proclaiming "Boycott Israeli Universities? Boycott Us Too!"¹⁶⁷ Lawrence Summers' successor at Harvard, Drew Gilpin Faust, did not sign the petition or the ad, but "wrote directly to Sally Hunt, the First General Secretary (president) of the UCU [University and College Union], stating my strong opposition to this measure. I expressed my conviction that such a move subverts the academic values and freedoms necessary to the free flow of ideas that are the lifeblood of universities and, ultimately, that of the societies and world we serve."¹⁶⁸ The political attitude of university administrations is the overt expression of the power of Jewish Zionist donors, and of the views of many Jews in higher education.

Palestine activists endure persecution by university administrators and Zionist groups on and off-campus, such as the Amcha Initiative, which "has repeatedly intimidated, spied on and harassed students and faculty."¹⁶⁹ Amcha founder Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, a Hebrew lecturer, is "a notorious anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim activist" who has made recorded "virulently racist" attacks against student activists and faculty, which the UC administration has not sanctioned, "an attitude that undoubtedly emboldens groups like Amcha to escalate their attacks on academic freedom."¹⁷⁰ Amcha's extended campaign against one UC professor was unsuccessful, and its activities have been protested by Jewish Studies faculty.¹⁷¹ Yet "Amcha appears to be escalating its campaign by publishing what amounts to a target list of 'anti-Israel' professors."¹⁷² Campus Watch monitors and defames academic critics of Israel by misrepresenting their work and encouraging harassment of them.¹⁷³

When students at UC Irvine protested a speech by Israeli ambassador Michael Oren, the Muslim Stu-

dents Union was suspended after pressure from Jewish organizations, and 10 students were convicted on dubious grounds of disrupting the meeting.¹⁷⁴ The Northeastern University Justice for Palestine chapter was in 2014 suspended, then reinstated after protest, and in early 2015 again came under attack from the student government as part of a national campaign coordinated by wealthy off-campus Zionist groups, especially against the global Israel Apartheid Week.¹⁷⁵ Megan Marzec, student senate president at Ohio University, was vilified after emulating the “ice bucket challenge” for a medical cause by dumping a bucket of fake blood on her head to protest Israel’s summer 2014 assault on Gaza.¹⁷⁶ Yale chaplain Reverend Bruce Shipman resigned under pressure after the *New York Times* published his three-sentence letter linking increased anti-Semitism in Europe to Israel’s policies vs. the Palestinians.¹⁷⁷

This scratches the surface. At the second annual conference on the Israel lobby, organized by American Educational Trust and the Institute for Research: Middle East Policy, Dima Khalidi, of Palestine Legal Support, founded expressly to defend Palestine activism on campus, gave a comprehensive overview of Zionist aggression against campus activism, and referred to a “Palestine exception to the First Amendment.”¹⁷⁸ Khalidi was seconded by two activists and writers who recounted their campus experiences, Amani Alkhatahtbeh, alumna of Rutgers, and Ahmad Saadaldin, alumnus of the University of South Florida.¹⁷⁹

Professor Stephen Salaita’s appointment to a faculty position at the University of Illinois was cancelled by the chancellor and then rejected by the board of trustees in August, 2014, apparently under pressure from a Zionist donor. The administration’s action destroyed his career, led to his lawsuit against the university, and national controversy, including possible censure of the University of Illinois by the American Association of University Professors.¹⁸⁰ The University of Illinois has been subjected to a boycott by other academics, an action supported nobly by faculty at UI itself, at very high cost.¹⁸¹ Salaita’s persecution follows those of Debbie Almontaser, Norman Finkelstein, Terri Ginsburg and other victims of Zionism in education.¹⁸²

There is, inevitably, a campaign against the “new anti-Semitism on campus.” As Rabbi Brant Rosen observes, “throughout the organized Jewish community, the mainstream media and academia, were hearing increasing talk of a sharp increase in anti-Semitism on American college campuses.”¹⁸³ Rosen had earlier resigned from his pulpit in Evanston, Illinois, stating that his activism for Palestine had become a “lightning

rod for division. . . This crisis has taken an increasingly emotional toll on our community—and it has taken a considerable toll on my own well being as well.”¹⁸⁴ As Marc Ellis observed, “No one who is really going to look Israel in the eye need apply.”¹⁸⁵

Rosen knows who is persecuting whom. After reviewing the alleged “incidents,” and the “heavy-handed interventions of off-campus advocates of Israel [Jewish individuals and organizations] into student politics” and the defense efforts of Palestine Legal Support, he stated:

In the end, I would suggest this concern over the new campus anti-semitism is really a red herring. Anti-semitism, like all forms of racism should certainly be condemned and stood down in no uncertain terms. But for all the concern over anti-Jewish attitudes, it is worth noting that Jewish students and Israel advocates face absolutely no institutional restrictions to their cause or to their freedom of speech on campus.

It is far from clear that the same could be said for students who advocate on behalf of Palestinian rights.¹⁸⁶

The first reason for the growth of activism on campus is clearly Israel’s Judeo-Nazi atrocities. Chomsky’s upbeat account suppresses the concerted campus counter-offensive, of which he is perhaps the far left flank. Chomsky insisted at length that BDS be limited to “the occupation” and claimed that

the efforts that have in fact had real consequences are those that are directed against the occupation. Overwhelmingly that’s true. And there’s a good reason for this. The occupation is very strongly opposed. . . recognized as illegal by almost everyone. The US objection is a partial exception. So it’s pretty natural that these policies can be successful, and it has worked.¹⁸⁷

It is perhaps more plausible that the apprehension of BDS by Netanyahu, the Israeli foreign ministry and even the White House is due more to general BDS measures, not those limited to “the occupation.” Chomsky referred to a European Union directive “banning any interactions with Israeli institutions that are involved any way with the illegal occupation. That’s quite significant. That’s the kind of thing that can have a major impact, it means a lot to them, it’s their biggest trading partner.”¹⁸⁸ This is probably the 2013 directive which prohibits “the issuing of grants, funding, prizes or scholarships unless a settlement exclusion clause is included.”¹⁸⁹ The directive did not apply to trade, but “was seen in Israel as a penalty that could in future extend to settlement produce and goods destined for European markets.”¹⁹⁰ However, it was criticized as full

of loopholes and ambiguities which could facilitate evasion, and was called inconsequential.¹⁹¹ Jonathan Cook observes:

In fact, a ban on goods made by Jewish settlers on land stolen from Palestinians should be entirely non-controversial, but it is not even on Europe's agenda.

Further, the export of settler goods is a tiny fraction of Europe's trade with Israel, which is governed by a special agreement that has made the EU Israel's largest export market. Even were Europe to consider banning settler products, it would make no impact on the Israeli economy.

What would hurt Israel—and force it to rethink its policy towards the Palestinians—would be threatening to revise or tear up the trade agreement. That could decimate Israeli exports. But such a prospect is so far off, no Israeli politician seriously entertains the possibility.¹⁹²

Israel-EU trade is governed by the Association Agreement of 2000, and after Israel's epic summer, 2014 atrocity in Gaza, over three hundred European political parties, trade unions and activist campaigns called for suspension of the agreement.¹⁹³ Sixty-three members of the European parliament called for an end to the Association Agreement.¹⁹⁴ European BDS campaigns boycotting all Israeli products, not just settlement products, took off, to the consternation of Israeli exporters.¹⁹⁵ Such activity belies Chomsky's assurances and obvious desire that mainly "the occupation is very strongly opposed." Twelve years ago a poll found that "nearly 60 percent of European citizens believe Israel poses the biggest threat to world peace."¹⁹⁶

In 2014 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA approved by 310 to 303 a resolution divesting from three US corporations whose products were used in Israel's occupation. Chomsky praised this as "a major case here, aimed at the occupation, and crucially aimed at American corporations. That's very significant. If you want to change US policy, the people who are significant in determining US policy, are the corporate sector. . . that's Caterpillar, Motorola and others."¹⁹⁷ Chomsky spoke as if the limited portfolio decision by the PCUSA had the import of an EU directive.

He repeated his emphasis on "the corporations" after the panel. Before audience questions, the moderator asked: "How can BDS affect US policy? So far it has succeeded in raising awareness and engaging the public. But there are as yet no hints that US policy is changing. Or are there? And if you don't think so how can BDS be used to change US policy? This is directed to Dr. Chomsky."¹⁹⁸ Chomsky replied: "It's very straightforward, it's given by the Presbyterian Church decision, which targeted US corporations, Caterpillar and Motorola, those are major US corporations. Targeting them is. . . they own those profits, they own those

business, they don't want to be exposed. . . they have the power, it shouldn't be this way, it would be nice if it were a democracy, it isn't a democracy, it's a plutocracy, we ought to recognize it, by going after the centers of power."¹⁹⁹

"The corporations" are not attempting an extra-constitutional coup against President Obama's Iran diplomacy. "The corporations" opposed the 1990s "dual containment" of Iran and Iraq in favor of lifting sanctions and recovering markets, but were no match for the Israel lobby.²⁰⁰ The Israel lobby, not "the corporations," furiously opposes the mildest BDS measures. In 2010 an anti-occupation divestment resolution passed the student senate of the University of California at Berkeley, but was vetoed by the senate president. In the campaign to override the veto, student senators were lobbied by representatives of national Jewish organizations and the Israeli consul in San Francisco. One senator complained of intimidation, and three changed their votes from pro to con; the override failed.²⁰¹ A 2013 divestment resolution attracted comparable opposition, but passed, and was not vetoed.²⁰² In April, 2012 twelve hundred rabbis signed a letter opposing an anti-occupation divestment measure by the Methodist Church.²⁰³ The Methodists rejected divestment at their annual meeting that month, but did divest holdings in a single company later that year.

The 2014 Presbyterian divestment initiative was attacked as anti-Semitic by American Jewish organizations from J Street and the *Jewish Daily Forward* newspaper rightward, and denounced by Israeli prime minister Netanyahu.²⁰⁴ The divestment resolution reaffirmed "Israel's right to exist as a sovereign nation within secure and internationally recognized borders in accordance with the United Nations resolutions," which is a veiled endorsement of Israel's status as a Jewish state. The resolution also stated: "This action on divestment is not to be construed or represented by any organization of the PC(USA) as divestment from the State of Israel, or an alignment with or endorsement of the global BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) movement."²⁰⁵ As Marc Ellis noted, a "victory is a victory. . . But to say that the Presbyterians have signed on to divestment is disingenuous."²⁰⁶

Clearly, half of the Presbyterian membership (and most of the leadership, as noted below) were terrified of Jewish opposition.²⁰⁷ Chomsky's limited "anti-occupation" critique and focus on "the corporations," leaves the churchpeople defenseless against the onslaught. The assurance that their actions are "not anti-

Semitic” is a condescending sop that hides the failure to condemn the mobilization of organized Jewry as Zionism, the *Jewish people*, an historical fiction and racist construct, an abuse of their American citizenship, and a source of immense damage to the US and the world.

Despite Chomsky, some US activists are beginning to address Zionism, including the PCUSA. In January, 2014 the Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the PCUSA produced *Zionism Unsettled. A Congregational Study Guide*, designed to explain “not only the humanitarian crisis or the specific policies involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also to examine the basic framework that lies behind these policies and crises.”²⁰⁸ Also at the 2014 PCUSA General Assembly, in a 54-8 vote, the Commissioners, the highest church body, disavowed *Zionism Unsettled*. “The 221st General Assembly (2014) declares that *Zionism Unsettled* does not represent the views of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and directs all Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entities to express this statement in all future catalogs, print or online resources.”²⁰⁹ *Zionism Unsettled* is still sold on the Israel/Palestine Mission Network web site, but not on the church’s main web site.²¹⁰

As Chomsky ignored the realities of US politics and of Zionism, he lectured the panel on another favorite theme, the Palestinian failure to accept the “international consensus” of the two-state solution. “For the past 40 years there has been an overwhelming international consensus in support of a two-state settlement on the international border with guarantees for the rights of each state to live in peace and security within secure and recognized borders.”²¹¹ He cited a “general debate on all sides” between the alternatives of a two-state settlement, or a single binational state from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River, ruled by Israel. This would afflict Israel with its “demographic problem” of too many Palestinians, and, he claimed, would be welcomed by “many Palestinians. . . as an opportunity for an anti-apartheid civil rights struggle on the South African model.”²¹² He claimed

The two alternatives are quite different. One of them is the international consensus. The other is that Israel will continue to do exactly what it is doing. . . Gaza is separated, a mere prison, for survival, separated from the West Bank. In the West Bank Israel is systematically taking over areas that it wants to maintain, that means greater Jerusalem, and the corridors to the east which cut off the surrounding territories, everyone within the separation wall, the Seam [between the wall and the Green Line], the Jordan Valley, which Israel is gradually settling. . . and that’s maybe fifty percent of the West Bank. And of course the Golan Heights. The areas Israel is

taking over, none have a heavy Palestinian population concentration, and many of those who live there are being driven out. The end result of these policies is a greater Israel which will have no 'demographic problem'. There will be a higher percentage of Jews in greater Israel, Palestinians will be left in unviable cantons.²¹³

Thus:

The one-state option I think is a good idea, in the long run, but there is only one way that I can imagine to reach it, and that's in stages, with a two-state settlement as the first stage. If there's another possibility, it's yet to be proposed. It's okay to say 'I'd like it, but that doesn't help.' You have to show how we get there, how we get from here to there... That's what activism's about, not I like this solution.²¹⁴

Chomsky's "realism" omitted Israel's ever-escalating aggression against its Palestinian citizens, what Cook referred to as "Israel's next phase of the Palestinians' conquest... the crushing of these more than one million unwanted citizens."²¹⁵ Chomsky lectured on "showing how we get from here to there" but he did not show a path to a two-state solution on the Green Line, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital. He did not show how Israel's annexation and Judaization of East Jerusalem, its absorption of Greater Jerusalem, its settlement blocs Judaizing the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, its ghettoization of Gaza, and the monstrous "separation barrier," would be undone. He did not propose how Israel's Judeo-Nazi politics, and the US politics that sustains Israel, would be overcome. Nothing suggests that the current rift between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will lead to Israel's withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 border.

Jonathan Cook argued that "the tensions are kind of a theatre of distraction, necessary for the US and Europe to maintain their image as actors desperately trying to corral Israel into doing the right thing by the Palestinians. In fact, the dispute between Netanyahu and Obama is not really about the Palestinians at all; it is about Netanyahu's failure to play his part in the sham peace process the US has presided over for the past two decades."²¹⁶ Cook argued that "the White House could quickly reshape the domestic discourse about Israel and the occupation. It would simply need to start talking, as it did very briefly when Obama entered office, about how Israel poses a threat to US interests in the Middle East, endangering Americans lives in the region and inflaming global terrorism that will rebound on the US at home."²¹⁷ The ongoing extra-constitutional coup attempt by Israel and its US partisans against the president's Iran diplomacy shows the difficulty of such a course.

The veteran foreign correspondent Eric Margolis noted:

The US media is full of stories about how the Obama administration is going to punish Israel for re-electing Bibi Netanyahu in an election marked by demagoguery and arrogant racism.

The *New York Times* EVEN warns President Barack Obama may back a series of UN resolutions demanding that Israel withdraw to its narrow 1967 borders and there create a viable Palestinian state.

Hardly. “King Bibi’s” re-election makes Israel virtually unassailable and master of all it surveys.

Who is going to force Israel to follow this sensible, two-state solution to the misery of the Palestinian people? Obama could not even stop Netanyahu from coming to Washington and humiliating him before Congress. Is Obama going to force Israel and its 650,000 armed settlers out of the West Bank?

Not so long as Israel and its American advocates control both the Congress, the Republican and Democratic parties—and Hillary Clinton.²¹⁸

The humiliation Margolis referred to was of course the invitation by Speaker of the House of Representatives John Boehner, immediately following President Obama’s State of the Union address in January, to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress, during the annual American-Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in early March. The invitation was arranged by the congressional Republican leadership and the Israeli ambassador without consulting the Administration, an extraordinary breach of protocol. Netanyahu’s address to Congress, an attack on US-Iran negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program, was boycotted by 60 or so Democrats, but the remainder were “ecstatic. . . verging on the delirious. Maniacal, almost.”²¹⁹ A quarter of the time taken up by the speech consisted of applause and standing ovations. This extraordinary congressional collusion in an attack on the president by a foreign leader was followed by a letter to the government of Iran signed by 47 Republican senators, advising them (incorrectly) that any US-Iran agreement could be revoked by future presidents or revised by Congress “at the stroke of a pen.”²²⁰ The career of Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, who organized the letter, had been groomed and lavishly funded by the neoconservatives.²²¹

Netanyahu was unable to upset US-Iran diplomacy, and an agreement in principle was reached, but the agreement, or what is known about it, is ambiguous and incomplete, with great potential for interference by Israel’s US supporters.²²² Israel’s supporters in Congress received information on the negotiations obtained through Israeli espionage, perhaps electronically, or possibly through a member of the US negotiating

team.²²³ Israel has long cultivated false impressions of the military intentions of Iran's nuclear program, and demanded changes in the agreement.²²⁴ President Obama pleaded with Jewish leaders to support it.²²⁵ Senator Charles Schumer of New York, Israel hawk and heir apparent to Harry Reid as Senate minority leader, and several other Democratic senators, betrayed their president, their party and their country by supporting Republican legislation allowing Congress to veto the agreement.²²⁶ Senator Ben Cardin, ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, negotiated with the Republican sponsor of the bill to narrow its scope slightly.²²⁷ An Israeli official called it “‘an achievement for Israeli policy.’”²²⁸ Cardin is now sponsoring a bill that requires the US to oppose BDS against Israeli firms in trade agreements with Europe.²²⁹

M. J. Rosenberg observed:

The Iran agreement is something the Israelis and the Lobby will not tolerate, which is why they are going to the mat to defeat this deal. If they succeed in defeating this agreement, and simultaneously President Obama, with the support of two-thirds of Congress, that they induce to support Netanyahu, they will be viewed correctly as stronger than ever. . . If however they lose, if however, Obama succeeds in putting over this agreement, the Lobby will be badly damaged, not only because they lost, but because in the process they are exposed as an ally of right-wing Republicans, not the bipartisan organization they claim to be. . . I can say that I'm optimistic, but not too optimistic.²³⁰

Veteran Israeli journalist Gideon Levy, preceding M. J. Rosenberg at the Israel lobby conference, referred to

the United States of Israel. Because many times when someone looks at the relations between Israel and the United States, one might ask, who is really the superpower between the two? And those questions become much more valid in recent days, when you see what is going on with Iran. And really I'm not in a position to tell Americans what to feel, but would I be an American. . . I would really be embarrassed. When you see a title in *Haaretz*, in my newspaper, which says, two days ago, “Israel to pressure Congress to thwart Iranian nuclear deal.” And than an Israeli official says to *Haaretz*, “Israel will lobby the US Congress to pass legislation that would make it difficult or even impossible to approve a comprehensive deal with Iran.” Can you imagine if it would be the opposite, if someone had written that the Americans are trying to act in the Israeli parliament to change its decisions? We are dealing now with almost questions of sovereignty. . . needless to say, no state in the world would have dared to do it, and no statesman in the world. And I must tell you frankly it's not Israel's fault. Israel is doing whatever it can. It's the one who enables it.²³¹

In the name of “realism” Chomsky attributes US policy to “the corporations,” and distorts even the mild

consciousness-raising efforts of BDS. His “realism” proffers the two-state solution against Israel’s nearly 50 year engorgement of the occupied territories, and its escalating oppression of its Palestinian citizens. Jewish racialism and anti-gentilism were the basis of Zionism, including Israel’s opposition to a Palestinian state after 1967, the “separation” logic of the Oslo Accords, Israel’s demand to be recognized *as a Jewish state*, and its virulent attacks on challenges to that status, by Palestinians within and without the Green Line. This is Munayyer’s “single system of settler-colonial control,” Zionism. In a discussion with Chomsky in January, 2014, Ilan Pappé argued that

the alternative of the two-state solution will always be implemented the way Israel understands the two-state solution.

This version actually means the creation of [Chomsky’s] Greater Israel. Despite the international support for allegedly two distinct states the end result will not be two very different models. . . the basic relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians will not change.

I do not see much logic in supporting something that would actually legitimize the Greater Israel option. The two-state solution in 2014 can only go one way—toward the international legitimization of the two-state solution. The international community is looking for someone like Abu Mazen to accept an Israeli notion of a two-state solution that it supports, and this, if successful, can perpetuate a Greater Israel through international legitimacy.

Against the already existing Greater Israel one has to conduct a campaign of regime change based on human and civil rights equality and hope the regional and international developments would help it to mature.²³²

Chomsky rephrased this as “what are the probabilities that the international consensus or something like it can be realized, not just the Israeli version of it? . . . My feeling is, you might be right, maybe it’s water under the bridge, but it is also possible that this still remains a live option. . . maybe something like the Geneva proposals” of twenty years ago.²³³

Israel’s determination to preserve Zionism would have to be confronted in any constructive diplomacy, just as Zionism must be confronted within the US. Chomsky’s tragicomic contrary pretense is due to his abandonment of the classical liberal heritage of the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation, which rejected Zionism categorically, for a *völkisch* idealism that cripples dissent, even as it acknowledges Israel’s oppression of the Palestinians.

Conclusion

The classical liberal traditions descended from the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation rejected Zionism and its conceit of *the Jewish people* categorically. American Reform Judaism once stated: “We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and, therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor... the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state.”²³⁴ In the 1940s Rabbi Elmer Berger and others organized a heroic rear-guard action against the Zionist statehood campaign, as the American Council for Judaism.²³⁵ The ACJ wavered amidst the hysteria of the June, 1967 war, and in 1968 Berger founded a new organization, American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism. Berger co-drafted, with his friend diplomat Faye Sayegh, who presented it, the 1975 UN General Assembly resolution 3379, determining that “that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.”²³⁶ If Berger had had the opportunity to address the UN on the question of Palestine, he would undoubtedly have attacked Zionism comprehensively, and probably the Israel lobby, which he fought his entire life. When Chomsky addressed the UN, he criticized solely the undifferentiated “United States” for violating international law, and repeated his criticism of BDS.²³⁷ Berger continued to speak and write as a principled opponent of Zionism and an advocate for Palestine until his passing in 1996.

Marxism upheld the international solidarity of the working class, viewed nationalism as reactionary, and Zionism as a colonial movement and tool of imperialism. Despite the collapse of the Second International upon the outbreak of World War I, and the Communist International’s role as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy, internationalism persisted as an ideal. Among people of Jewish background, it included Isaac Deutscher, Maxime Rodinson and the Israeli Socialist Organization, founded in 1962, known as Matzpen. Deutscher had a traditional Jewish religious education in Poland, and rejected it to become a literary and political writer and anti-Stalinist Communist.²³⁸ Rodinson was the son of Jewish immigrant radicals in France, joined the French Communist Party in 1937, was a loyal Stalinist, but in 1958 left the PCF, and later acknowledged his Stalinism. He did not follow the well-worn path to anti-communist apostate, but retained his critical politics and became a distinguished scholar of Islam and the Arab world.²³⁹

Matzpen was begun in 1962 by Moshe Machover and Akiva Orr, who questioned the views on Zionism

of the Israeli Communist Party, which was descended from the Jewish faction of the Palestine Communist Party. Matzpen emphasized Israel's founding in the conquest and dispossession of Arab Palestine. Matzpen had Arab and Jewish members, and tried to publish in Arabic, but was censored.²⁴⁰ Matzpen veterans are still active.²⁴¹ All these Marxists opposed Zionism in principle. Internationalism remains an ideal today, in the World Social Forum and other expressions.

Israel Shahak was born in Warsaw in 1933, survived the Holocaust, and emigrated with surviving family to Palestine as Zionists in 1945. He became a faculty member at the Hebrew University, and president of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights. Shahak and the Matzpen circle constituted the tiny, principled opposition within Israel to its triumphalism and policies in the occupied territories after 1967. While he was deeply interested in Jewish history, Shahak's political commitments were rigorously secular. His writings presented Zionism as a reaction against Jewish emancipation and liberal modernity, and a secularization of traditional Judaic obscurantism and anti-gentilism. Shahak rejected Zionism in the name of what he called the "modern, secular Jewish tradition." This he traced from Spinoza, the greatest of the 17th c. rationalist philosophers, who began the remarkable Jewish contribution to modernity.²⁴² He discovered Spinoza and the western liberal canon by himself, despite his background, from which others drew much different lessons. His was one of the remarkable moral and intellectual journeys of our times.

Obviously these liberal religious, Marxist and secular outlooks had widely different social bases (or none at all) and quite different politics on other questions. Yet they all rejected Zionism as incompatible with enlightened modern values. Chomsky did not, even as he knew Shahak and the Matzpen circle and hosted them in the US, occasionally lecturing them on their errors, and being lectured in return.²⁴³

Chomsky styles himself an anarchist. Anarchism had its own ideals of internationalism, and Chomsky's leading example, the Spanish revolution of the 1930s, was supported by the International Brigades of volunteers who defended the Republic in the Spanish Civil War.²⁴⁴ Yet Chomsky grew up with Zionist values, not just liberal ones. Chomsky's parents were teachers and scholars of Hebrew at Jewish institutions in Philadelphia. His father was a devotee of Ahad Ha'am, the first stylist of modern Hebrew prose and a proponent of secular Jewish culture. Young Chomsky shared this affinity, studied Hebrew linguistics himself,

and has never renounced this upbringing. Chomsky's radicalism uses anarchism's modes of decentralization and federalism to substitute Jewish identity politics and Zionism for internationalism and secularism.

Chomsky's first collection of articles on the Middle East, *Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationhood*, appeared in 1974. The first article in that collection, "Nationalism and Conflict in Palestine," was based on a talk to an Arab student organization at MIT in 1969. It neatly bookends his admonitions to the audience at the BDS panel during Harvard Arab Weekend, 2014. In that first article Chomsky recycled interwar Labor Zionist propaganda as "radical analysis." In this view Zionism was a revolutionary movement on behalf of Zionist Jews and Arab workers and peasants, against the British Empire and the Arab elite of landowners and clerics. In Chomsky's demure formulation:

A social revolution that would be democratic and socialist, that would move both Arab and Jewish society in these directions, would serve the vital interest of the great majority of people in Palestine, as elsewhere. At least, this is my personal belief, and a belief that was surely a driving force behind the Jewish settlement of Palestine in the first place.²⁴⁵

Chomsky wrote that passage in early 1969. On the eve of the June, 1967 war, Maxime Rodinson wrote, in *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*

the Palestine War [1948] was not seen by anyone in the Arab lands as a war of liberation led by anti-British, and hence anti-colonialist, Jewish revolutionaries against pleasure-seeking feudal lords who pushed stupefied and mule-like peasants in front of them to safeguard their own class interests—as the version widely accepted by the European left would have it (a version I challenged thirteen years ago, thereby winning insults in *Les Temps Modernes*).²⁴⁶

In a 1999 interview Chomsky referred to the "ideological constructions, which I recall very well. . . having been part of this indoctrination system when I was a teenager leading youth groups. The doctrine was that Jewish and Arab workers should be pursuing common interests in opposition to rich Arab landowners and British imperialists; a fine ideal, but very far from the reality."²⁴⁷ To be precise, it was a Zionist attempt to disguise its usurpation of Palestine in leftist terms.

In that early article Chomsky found it "characteristic of American ethnic minorities that they tend to support the right-wing forces in the national societies to which they often retain a cultural or economic connection. The American Jewish community is no exception."²⁴⁸ Nor are its leftist elements. In defiance

of the classical traditions and their latter-day exemplars Chomsky defined a *Jewish national right* to settle Palestine, an idea Rodinson also dismissed. Chomsky continues to idealise the kibbutz, contra Rodinson, Deutscher and Matzpen, and Zionist ideologue Ahad Ha'am's "secular Jewish identity," the basis of the Zionist *Jewish people*, despite all the scholarship on Zionism since he first wrote.²⁴⁹

For the classical traditions, Chomsky and his followers have substituted Jewish identity politics and a minimal, truncated critique of "the occupation," but not of Zionism as Jewish racialism, beyond acknowledging the injustice of the Jewish state; a discourse of diplomatic "conflict solutions" and false Zionist precedents, rather than one of opposition to Zionism; an ahistorical emphasis on "international law and human rights," rather than neo-colonial conquest; and the "strategic asset" view of US-Israel relations, the support of evangelical Christians (which has collapsed over Israel's atrocities) and others, over the "Israel lobby."

The classical traditions, by rejecting Jewish racialism and affirming liberal rights and freedoms, are our fundamental defense against Zionism, and also against anti-Semitism. Their abandonment by Chomsky and his followers, even as they accuse gentiles of anti-Semitism, confirms that the danger today is Jewish chauvinism, not anti-Semitism. In the view of many Chomsky's attack on BDS exposes more broadly his failings on Palestine, which are coming to overshadow the legacy of the scholar who once promulgated the "responsibility of intellectuals:" to "speak the truth and to expose lies."²⁵⁰

Notes

¹Noam Chomsky, “On Israel-Palestine and BDS. Those dedicated to the Palestinian cause should think carefully about the tactics they choose.”, *The Nation* July 21-28, 2014;

<http://www.thenation.com/article/180492/israel-palestine-and-bds> (August 24, 2014)

²“Responses to Noam Chomsky on Israel-Palestine and BDS,” Yosef Munayyer, et al. July 10, 2014

<http://www.thenation.com/article/180590/responses-noam-chomsky-israel-palestine-and-bds> (August 24, 2014)

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Tom Suarez, “Chomsky and BDS,” July 6, 2014

<http://mondoweiss.net/2014/07/chomsky-and-bds.html> (August 24, 2014)

Max Blumenthal, at 22:45 in this interview on *Russia Today* with Abby Martin, July 3, 2013;

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¹⁰⁸ Chomsky and Lee, "An Interview with Noam Chomsky" *Safundi*, April, 2004.

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¹¹⁰ Marvin C. Feuerwerker, *Congress and Israel: Foreign Aid Decision-Making in the House of Representatives, 1969-1976* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), p. 181

¹¹¹ Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Detente The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 245

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 257, see pp. 250-60 for US-Egypt talks in early 1973

¹¹³Noam Chomsky, "Middle East Diplomacy: Continuities and Changes," Z magazine, December, 1991
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¹¹⁴Wawro, *Quicksand*, p. 91.

¹¹⁵Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, p. 278.

¹¹⁶Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, p. 63.

¹¹⁷John B. Judis, *Genesis. Truman, America Jews and the Origin of the Arab/Israeli Conflict* (New York: Farar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), pp. 202-6

¹¹⁸Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, pp. 143-6; Judis, *Genesis*, pp. 240-6.

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¹²⁰Grant F. Smith, *Spy Trade. How Israel's Lobby Undermines America's Economy* (Washington: Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy, 2008), pp. 19-26; Grant F. Smith, *America's Defense Line. The Justice Department's Battle to Register the Israel Lobby as Agents of a Foreign Government* (Washington: Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy, 2008), pp. 69-74; Institute for Research: Middle East Policy,
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¹²¹H. W. Brands, *Inside the Cold War. Loy Henderson and the Rise of the American Empire, 1918-1961* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1991), Chs. 9-11, describe Henderson's service in Iraq and his early tenure at NEA; "The Present Situation in the Near East," *FRUS* 1946, V, pp. 1-6, is an early Henderson appreciation of the northern tier; a cover memo to Acheson is dated December 28, 1945. Matthew F. Holland, *America and Egypt. From Roosevelt to Eisenhower* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), pp. xxiv-xxix, also discusses Henderson's central role in US Middle East policy as NEA director

¹²²Judis, *Genesis*, p. 255.

¹²³*FRUS*, 1947, V, p. 800; Henderson to Undersecretary Lovett, August 28, 1947..

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¹²⁶Kenneth W. Condit, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume 2, 1947-1949* (Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Washington, DC, 1996), pp. 86-7, quoting a JCS memo, "The Problem of Palestine," to the Secretary of Defense, October 10, 1947.

¹²⁷Cohen, *Truman and Israel*, p. 98.

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¹³⁰*ibid.*, p. 174

¹³¹Anderson, *Aramco, the United States and Saudi Arabia*, p. 177.

¹³²Chas Freeman, "Is Israel a Strategic Asset or Liability for the United States?," July 20, 2010
<http://chasfreeman.net/is-israel-a-strategic-asset-or-liability-for-the-united-states/> (September 4, 2014)

¹³³See Irene Gendzier, "Why the U.S. Recognized Israel," November 9, 2011;
<http://www.israeli-occupation.org/2011-11-09/irene-gendzier-why-the-us-recognised-israel/> (August 11, 2013)

Gendzier is professor emerita of political science at Boston University. This article is an excerpt from her book *Dying to Forget: The Foundation of US Policy in the Middle East, Oil and Palestine/Israel, 1945-1949*, forthcoming from Columbia University Press, though there is not yet a CUP web page for it. See also Irene Gendzier, "U.S. Policy in Israel/Palestine, 1948: The Forgotten History," *Middle East Policy* Spring, 2011, v. xviii, n. 1,

<http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/us-policy-israel/palestine-1948> (August 11, 2013).

I have attended two talks by Gendzier about her forthcoming book, one at MIT in early 2013, and one at New York University in late 2014. In her articles and talks, against the account of Zionist influence, she adduces two main points, the Pentagon's recognition of Israel's military capabilities in the 1948 war; and a private, high-level, Zionist contact with the Interior Department (if memory serves), to argue for Israel's benignity for US oil interests. In my view she makes too much of the Pentagon's judgment, which was ephemeral; the US did not sell arms, it kept Israel out of regional military plans, and overall the US tried to balance its unavoidable commitment to Israel with its own interest. Zionism was all over US politics in the 1940s (and since); it is scarcely surprising that

they made a high-level presentation about oil. The question is, who was persuaded? The oil companies were not, then and later.

¹³⁴Harvard Arab Weekend, “The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement Against Israel”, panel at Harvard University, November, 2014, partial transcript by this author at

https://questionofpalestine.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/arabweekend_bds_panel.pdf (April 11, 2015)

video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmM3KIROP-c> (February 13, 2015); see also Sara Greenberg, “Reckless Sponsorship of Anti-Israelism,” *The Crimson*, November 18, 2014

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2014/11/18/harvard-bds-panel-support/> (February 15, 2015)

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<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2014/11/24/harvard-lte-bds-moderator-panel/> (February 15, 2015)

¹³⁵“The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement Against Israel”, author’s transcript, p. 3.

¹³⁶ibid., p. 3

¹³⁷ibid., p. 4

¹³⁸ibid., p. 5

¹³⁹ibid., p. 6

¹⁴⁰ibid., pp. 6-7

¹⁴¹ibid., p. 7

¹⁴²ibid., p. 8

¹⁴³Harry Clark, “Noam Chomsky and BDS: the ‘responsibility of intellectuals?’”

<http://questionofpalestine.net/2015/02/12/noam-chomsky-and-bds-the-responsibility-of-intellectuals/> (April 8, 2015)

¹⁴⁴“The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement Against Israel”, author’s transcript, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ibid., p. 9

¹⁴⁶ibid., p. 9

¹⁴⁷John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), p. 33-4

¹⁴⁸Moshe Arens, *Broken Covenant* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), p. 160

¹⁴⁹Chas Freeman, “Is Israel a Strategic Asset or Liability for the United States?” speech at the Nixon Center, Washington, July 20, 2010 <http://chasfreeman.net/is-israel-a-strategic-asset-or-liability-for-the-united-states/> (February 14, 2015)

¹⁵⁰Philip Giraldi, “Is Israel a U.S. Ally?” talk at National Summit to Assess the US-Israel Relationship, National Press Club, Washington, March 7, 2014 http://natsummit.org/transcripts/philip_giraldi.htm (February 14, 2014)

¹⁵¹Paul Pillar, “Are threats to Israel’s security inflated to justify occupation and U.S. support?” talk at National Summit to Assess the US-Israel Relationship, National Press Club, Washington, March 7, 2014

<http://natsummit.org/transcripts/paul.pillar.htm> (April 12, 2015)

¹⁵²Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement* revised edition (New York : Twayne Publishers, 1993), p. 32

¹⁵³Sniegowski, *The Transparent Cabal*, p. 42, quoting Murray Friedman.

¹⁵⁴See *The Conservative Movement*.

¹⁵⁵Sniegowski, *The Transparent Cabal*, p. 37, quoting neocon writer Steven Hayward.

¹⁵⁶ibid., p. 37

¹⁵⁷Stephen Sniegowski, *The Transparent Cabal. The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel* (Norfolk, VA: Enigma Editions, 2008), p. 41

¹⁵⁸Phil Tourney interviews Noam Chomsky, February 24, 2013; remarks on the GOP begin around 34:30 at <http://republicbroadcasting.org/archives/index.php?cmd=archives.month&ProgramID=89&year=13&month=2&backURL=index.php%253Fcmd%253Darchives.getyear%2526ProgramID%253D89%26year%3D13%26backURL%3Dindex.php%253Fcmd%253Darchives> (April 12, 2015)

¹⁵⁹Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, pp. 132-39.

¹⁶⁰Robert W. Nicholson, “Evangelicals and Israel. What American Jews Don’t Want to Know (but Need to),” *Mosaic*, October 6, 2013 <http://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2013/10/evangelicals-and-israel/>

Ryan Rodrick Beiler, “The decline of Christian Zionism,” 972, January 15, 2015

<http://972mag.com/is-christian-zionism-going-out-of-style/101367/> (April 12, 2015)

See also Porter Speakman’s film, *With God on Our Side* (2010). which looks “at the consequences Christian Zionism has on the local people in the Middle East, especially the Palestinians,” and leads thoughtful Christians “to question some of the things they had always just taken for granted.” <http://www.withgodonourside.com/> (February 22, 2015)

Professor Stephen Walt introduced a showing of the film at Harvard and moderated a discussion afterward.

¹⁶¹American Educational Trust, publisher of *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, Institute for Research: Middle East

Policy, "The Israel Lobby: Is It Good for the U.S.? Is It Good for Israel?", National Press Club, Washington, D.C., April 10, 2015, video at

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU-PF_kgR1-wbpIvkWFMaaQ (April 15, 2015), panel 5

¹⁶²Chomsky commented on their 2006 article, John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby", *London Review of Books*, March 23, 2006;

<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n06/mear01.html> (December 28, 2014)

full paper at <https://research.hks.harvard.edu/publications/getFile.aspx?Id=209> (December 28, 2014).; see Noam Chomsky, "The Israel Lobby?", *Znet* March 28, 2006

<http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20060328.htm> (October 12, 2014). Chomsky's response was a rehash of familiar gambits. He adduced his faux-axiomatic definition of "US interests" apart from those of Israel, whose satisfaction "proves" the subordination of the Israel lobby. He drew lengthy and incorrect parallels between US actions world-wide to claim that there was nothing singular in US support for Israel. Both of these ploys divert attention from actual US policy-making and Zionist influence. He adduced his usual alternate suspects, the oil industry, which opposed Zionism in the 1940s and ever since; and the evangelical Christians, whose support has collapsed over Israel's atrocities. He claimed that general "liberal support" for Israel caused the lobby "thesis to lose much of its content," as if "liberal support" were separable from liberal Jewish support. He claimed quite falsely that only after 1967 was the lobby influential, ignoring its success in coercing US support for partition of Palestine and sponsorship of a Jewish state in the 1940s, against military, diplomatic and oil industry opposition. Chomsky's pronouncements must be contrasted with those who study and implement "US interests," including establishment scholars like Mearsheimer and Walt, but also national security alumni, who view Israel as a mortal threat to the US. In Chomsky's view they don't understand their jobs. See Harry Clark, "Overcoming the Passionate Attachment," for an account of the March, 2014 conference on the US-Israel relationship. <http://questionofpalestine.net/2014/03/16/ending-the-passionate-attachment-3/> (January 31, 2015)

¹⁶³see *The Transparent Cabal*

¹⁶⁴Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld. His Rise, Fall and Catastrophic Legacy* (New York: Scribner, 2007), pp. 102-108

¹⁶⁵"The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement Against Israel", author's transcript, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶<http://spme.org/campus-news-climate/more-than-10000-academics-sign-petition-against-u-k-boycott-bid/3584/> (January 10, 2015)

¹⁶⁷"Boycott Israeli Universities? Boycott Us Too!"

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¹⁶⁸Drew Gilpin Faust, "Statement on proposed boycott of Israeli universities,"

<http://www.harvard.edu/president/speech/2007/statement-on-proposed-boycott-israeli-universities> (October 18, 2014)

¹⁶⁹Ali Abunimah, "Zionist group publishes target list of 'anti-Israel' US professors," *Electronic Intifada*, September 9, 2014

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/zionist-group-publishes-target-list-anti-israel-us-professors> (March 15, 2015)

¹⁷⁰ibid.

¹⁷¹Sarah Irving, "Spying by Zionist group 'stifles' academic debate, say Jewish Studies scholars," *Electronic Intifada*, October 3, 2014

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/sarah-irving/spying-zionist-group-stifles-academic-debate-say-jewish-studies-scholars> (March 15, 2015)

¹⁷²Abunimah, "Zionist group publishes target list of 'anti-Israel' US professors"

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<http://mondoweiss.net/2015/03/scripted-expect-writes> (March 29, 2015)

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Phil Weiss and Annie Robbins, "Ohio student leader who dropped bucket of blood for Gaza receives vicious death threats," *Mondoweiss*, September 11, 2014 <http://mondoweiss.net/2014/09/received-vicious-threats> (April 4, 2015)

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¹⁸⁷ "The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement Against Israel", author's transcript, p. 12.

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²⁰⁵Item 4-04, “On Supporting Middle East Peacemaking—From the Presbytery of New Covenant,”

http://pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%28ggezrbcu55aovjis5metiht%29%29/Explorer.aspx?id=4595 (November 29, 2014)

The divestment resolution was introduced by the New Covenant Presbytery in Houston, and the two state language was strengthened by the Middle East Committee afterward. See the final report of the Assembly Committee on Middle East Issues, entered on September 16, 2014

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For the entire record of the 2014 General Assembly, including other Palestine resolutions, see Presbyterian Church USA Explorer, 221st General Assembly (2014)

http://pc-biz.org/PC-Biz.WebApp_deploy/%28S%28vwp2c0jzl2wogrixn34en0hp%29%29/Explorer.aspx (November 29, 2014)

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²⁰⁸Clifton Kirkpatrick, theologian and former Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)

<http://www.israelpalestinemissionnetwork.org/main/component/content/article/70/256-zionism-unsettled>

Zionism Unsettled is a condensed and edited version of a companion book by Christian and Jewish clergy and theologians. See Donald E. Wagner, Walter T. Davis, *Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014)

<http://wipfandstock.com/zionism-and-the-quest-for-justice-in-the-holy-land.html> (November 29, 2014)

The constructive, if incomplete *Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land* gives only passing mention to the anti-Zionism of classical Reform Judaism. See p. 123, in “The Vatican, Zionism, and the Israeli Palestinian Conflict,” by Rosemary and Hermann Reuther. It does not mention its best-known recent adherents, the late Rabbi Elmer Berger, the (still extant) American Council for Judaism, and American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism. They rejected the claim of Jewish nationality and upheld the ideal of Jews as a religious minority, against the rising tide of Zionism in the 1940s, and when it burst the dikes after the June, 1967 war. They also campaigned against US support for Israel and its policies toward the Palestinians and the region.

Zionism and the Quest for Justice in the Holy Land also mentions in passing Zionism’s origins in late 19th c. European racialism, as the counterpart to racist anti-Semitism. It does not mention Berger’s view of Zionism as anti-modern recidivism, a view he shared with Israel Shahak. See Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism. The American Council for Judaism, 1942-48* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) for an account of the ACJ’s high period.

For Berger’s view of Zionism see “The Unauthenticity of ‘Jewish people’ Zionism” in EAFORD and AJAZ (International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism), *Judaism or Zionism: What Difference for the Middle East?* (London: Zed Books, 1986) on-line at

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²³⁴Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity The History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), p. 383

²³⁵See Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism. The American Council for Judaism, 1942-48* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) for an account of the ACJ's high period. For Berger's view of Zionism see “The Unauthenticity of ‘Jewish people’ Zionism” in EAFORD and AJAZ (International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism), *Judaism or Zionism: What Difference for the Middle East?* (London: Zed Books, 1986) on-line at

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²³⁶United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/761C1063530766A7052566A2005B74D1> (January 3, 2015)

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²³⁷Democracy Now, “Noam Chomsky at United Nations: It Would Be Nice if the United States Lived up to International Law,” October 22, 2014

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²³⁸See Isaac Deutscher, edited and with introduction by Tamara Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), for his views on Zionism and Jewish history.

²³⁹See Maxime Rodinson *Cult, Ghetto, and State. The Persistence of the Jewish Question*, tr. by Jon Rothschild (London: Al Saqi Books, 1983); Maxime Rodinson *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, introduction by Peter Buch, tr. by David Thorstad (New York: Monad: 1973); Maxime Rodinson *Israel and the Arabs*, 2nd edition (New York: Penguin, 1982).

²⁴⁰See Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party, 1919-1948. Arab and Jew in the Struggle for Internationalism* (Chicago: R. Mass, 1939); Chapter VI discusses the break-up. Matzpen was founded in 1962; Akiva Orr, Moshe Machover *Peace, Peace When There Is No Peace (Israel and the Arabs, 1948-1961)* (Jerusalem, 1999)

<http://www.akiorrbooks.com/files/PEACE.pdf> is the Matzpen founding manifesto, revised. Machover's writing is collected in Moshe Machover, *Israelis and Palestinians. Conflict and Resolution* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012). A comprehensive record of Matzpen is on its web site, <http://www.matzpen.org/english/>. Ari Bober, ed., *The Other Israel. The Radical Case Against Zionism* (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), a Matzpen anthology, is on-line. This circle also published the quarterly journal *Khamsin* from 1975 to 1989, anthologized as *Khamsin, Forbidden Agendas* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1984). Many *Khamsin* issues are on the Matzpen web site, <http://www.matzpen.org/english/khamsin/> (December 30, 2014)

²⁴¹See Tikva Honig-Parnass and Toufic Hadad, eds., *Between the Lines. Readings on Israel, the Palestinians, and the U.S. “War on Terror”* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2007) and Tikva Honig-Parnass *False Prophets of Peace. Liberal Zionism and the Struggle for Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011). Honig-Parnass is a contemporary of Machover and Orr.

²⁴²His books include Israel Shahak, *Open Secrets. Israeli Nuclear and Foreign Policies* (London: Pluto Press, 1997); Israel Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion. The Weight of Three Thousand Years* (London: Pluto Press, 1994); Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2004). A collection of the work of the Israeli League is Adnan Amad, ed., *Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights (The Shahak Papers)* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973). Many Shahak articles are at the valuable Palestine with Provenance archive, kept by Irish activists

<http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/php/home.php> (December 30, 2014).

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<http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/1008> (December 30, 2014)

²⁴³ See Mordecai S. Chertoff, ed., *The New Left and the Jews* (New York: Pitman, 1971), p. 217; the "Israeli scientist" whose criticism of his failure to criticize Israel Chomsky acknowledges was likely Shahak. Contrast Maztpen, "The Third Round," July 5, 1967 <http://www.maztpen.org/english/1967-07-05/the-third-round/> (April 11, 2015)

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http://www.leftcurve.org/LC29WebPages/Chomsky.html?hc_location=ufi (April 12, 2015)

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²⁴⁴ Noam Chomsky, selected and edited by Barry Pateman, *Chomsky on Anarchism* (Edinburgh and Oakland: AK Press, 2005). Constance Bantman, "Internationalism without an International? Cross-Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880-1914". *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 84(4):961-981.

<http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/534407/1/Internationalism%20without%20an%20International.pdf> (January 4, 2014)

²⁴⁵ Noam Chomsky, *Middle East Illusions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), pp. 60-1, a re-issue with newer material.

²⁴⁶ Maxime Rodinson *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, introduction by Peter Buch, tr. by David Thorstad (New York: Monad: 1973), p. 70

²⁴⁷ Noam Chomsky, "Eight Question on Kibbutzim: Answers from Noam Chomsky Questions from Nikos Raptis", *Z Commentaries*, August 24, 1999,

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²⁴⁸ Chomsky, *Middle East Illusions*, p. 42.

²⁴⁹ See the section "Noam Chomsky," in Harry Clark, "The End of Modern Jewish History," *Left Curve* #38 <http://questionofpalestine.net/2014/04/05/the-end-of-modern-jewish-history/> (January 32, 2015)

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²⁵⁰ Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), p. 325, in "The Responsibility of Intellectuals"