

Revisionist Zionism: A Primer

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A necessary point of departure for any critical analysis is the establishment of the maxim by which it proceeds. The maxim for the present critique can be put simply: All human life is equal, and therefore human rights abuses are intolerable regardless of who the perpetrator is and who the victim is.

When universal principles are sacrificed in the name of tribal honor, when human rights are compromised in the name of nationalism, when civil society is subordinated to a select cadre's sacred agenda, humanity is betrayed.

When the agenda of one's in-group eclipses the wider goal of universal emancipation, universal enfranchisement, and universal human dignity, iniquity ensues. A worthy agenda can only be a unified *human* agenda.

Background of RZ:

The term "Revisionist Zionism" is almost as amorphous and multi-faceted as the term "Zionism" itself. Both have undergone metamorphoses over the last century, and have come to mean many different things to many different people. For the purposes of my exposition, RZ is synonymous with right-wing Zionism. This seems not to help either, however, as even "right-wing" is a complex qualification. An elaboration of what I mean by the term "RZ" is revealed in my description of the phenomenon throughout my critique.

The original idea of "Zionism" was relatively straight-forward: A haven for ethnic Jews that would serve as a sanctuary from oppression and persecution. This was a noble vision. It was first proposed by Theodor Herzl, and was the spirit behind Britain's Balfour Declaration. Such a vision remains to this present day—and should be embraced by all humans who endorse measures to protect minorities—whatever they may be—from racism and mistreatment. This vision, however, should be contrasted with a deviation that may be called, "Revisionist Zionism".

The meaning of Revisionist Zionism has changed since its genesis—from Ze-ev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin in the pre-War era, to the days of Irgun and Lehi, to today's Likud Party. To avoid confusion, I treat RZ as a social phenomenon (a general movement), not as any discrete organization or political party. To put it simply: RZ applies to precisely what I say it applies to in my discourse—nothing less, nothing more. One way to illustrate what I mean by RZ is to contrast it with that with which I propose to transplant it: Humanitarian Zionism (HZ). The juxtaposition is instructive, as it reveals the salient features of each.

To talk about "Zionism" without specifying exactly what one means is almost meaningless, as the term will elicit eleven different definitions from a room of ten commentators. So I refrain from using this loaded term pejoratively. Even within RZ, there is a range of radicalization, from *regular* right-wing (the Likud Party) to *even more* right-wing (Yisrael Beiteinu), to *downright fascist* (the Kach Party and the ultra-orthodox "Judean" settler movement). My indictments apply to anything right of center, from the moderate right to the fanatical right. RZ need not be caricatured by its most extreme cases in order to be critiqued. So I take care to avoid disingenuous caricatures. If a policy does not fit the description I give of RZ, then I'm not criticizing it.

The glaring irony of the Revisionist (right-wing) Zionist movement is that Israel was founded as a refuge from dispossession. That is to say: Israel was established for people who were fleeing persecution...only

for some of them to impose it upon others. This perversity is lost upon those who endorse RZ...simply because, in their deranged worldview, there exists a group uniquely favored by god, *they* are god's chosen group, god's chosen group is the only group that matters, and this confers upon them the license to do whatever they see fit to realize divine Providence. In this scheme, everyone else is a de facto subaltern.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS:

The theft of land, destruction of property, and forced expulsion of civilians (those who aren't in the designated in-group) is not only patently illegal, but morally reprehensible. (No wonder the Palestinians are pissed off. Anyone else in their shoes would be as well.) The Judean Settler Movement (RZ on steroids) is a despicable thing. The present analysis will show that it's brutal occupation must not only be stopped, but reversed...all the way back to (at least) the 1967 borders. The IG's support for this despicable movement is inexcusable.

We so often ask about "Israel security" yet fail to ask about "Palestinian Security". This asymmetry reflects a glaring hypocrisy: we care about the former yet seem not to care as much about the latter. Palestinians, after all, have been rendered the subaltern population: those who don't matter as much as the in-group. Consequently, THEIR "security" doesn't matter as much.

Israel and Palestine seem to be in a situation of intractable conflict. The power asymmetry entails that the weaker of the two parties retaliates for the incessant oppression, relentless persecution, egregious crimes, and brutal occupation they endure at the hands of the more powerful party. Meanwhile, the more powerful party continues their appalling policies (including a brutal occupation, a forcing of the civilians into Bantustans, and systematic human rights abuses) in the name of effecting its own security.

So does this predicament pose a catch-22? Certainly not.

The scenario is analogous to a large, strong, grown man roughly pinning down a small, weak, young girl while smacking her even as she claws back in vain at his wrists—efforts of futile retaliation as she struggles in desperation to free herself—and insisting that he persists in keeping her pinned because she keeps clawing at his wrists in protest.

Common sense seems to elucidate the resolution of the predicament: If the I.G. genuinely desires for the Palestinians to stop retaliating, then it need only cease the brutal oppression and heinous, incessant persecution of that people...which is the BASIS OF that retaliation. It's not rocket science.

Currently, the biggest enemy of Israeli security is the Israeli government (esp. the flagrantly racist, reprehensible cult known as the Likud Party). If Israelis want to be safer, they need only stop electing Zionists who create the problem that puts them in danger.

An analogy to this perfectly avoidable predicament is Russia's handling of Chechnya. Like Israel with Palestine, the Russia government has relentlessly oppressed the native population, not by forcing them into Bantustans, but by installing a tyrannical puppet regime that has agreed to brutally repress the civilians in order to "keep them in line and under control"...in the name of "Russian security". Naturally, this has elicited more and more militant protest, in the form of terrorist acts on Russian soil. The parallels are quite clear.

Retribution is a human reaction, and becomes ever more militant and fanatical the more severely the oppression / persecution that is endured. Everyone has a breaking point. People will resort to extremist when they become sufficiently resentful and desperate. Indeed, seething resentment and desperation has characterized both the Chechens and the Palestinians. The vicious cycles continue, perpetuating reciprocal vilifications and mutual antagonisms.

It is well-known that relentless oppression pushes people toward extremism—as extremist measures become more appealing as people become more and more desperate—and increasingly resentful. (For more on this, see my essays on Reciprocal Radicalization.) People are often obstinate and defiant if for no other reason than that we homo sapiens have pride, and nobody wants to appear weak. So feuds often become a game of chicken: both parties want to preserve their pride (i.e. save face), which means digging in one’s heels once one has committed to a position.

For the last four decades, Israel has essentially served as a de facto U.S. military base of tremendous strategic importance—largely due to its location in the Middle East. It is one of the states that, like Turkey and Egypt, controls the region militarily...in the interests of the U.S. government (read: U.S. corporate interests). Meanwhile, the Palestinians offer absolutely NOTHING in this grand scheme: They don’t have any power or any money...and, so, are—by default—relegated to subaltern status. It is no coincidence that the above three client states are the three states in the region that have received extensive military support from the U.S...even as they systematically perpetrated unjust acts. The same went for Iraq (until 1991), and still goes for Saudi Arabia.

Thus, in the so-called “Israeli-Palestinian” conflict, we have a tremendously powerful client state that serves vital U.S. (read: corporate) interests (on the one hand)...and a weak pseudo-state with a disenfranchised population—that promises to be of little use in the ordained scheme (on the other hand). It comes as little surprise, then, that one party in this conflict is allowed to exercise its power with impunity. The endorsement of this state of affairs is often predicated on Revisionist Zionism.

Indeed, Israel abuses the Palestinians horribly, but so long as the IG is a well-placed, offshore base for the extension of U.S. power, they can do whatever they want. In the Middle East, Israel serves as the Pentagon’s most reliable and strongest base. By now it’s so integrated into the U.S. military economy, it’s become almost indistinguishable from the D.O.D. The narrative RZ employs doesn’t include this pivotal factor when explaining the IG’s actions.

From the U.S. government’s point of view, things are quite straight-forward: For any activity that transpires ANYWHERE, especially the oil-rich Middle East, the Pentagon’s litmus test is as follows: “How does it affect U.S. (read: corporate) interests?” The question is almost NEVER: “Is the activity JUST?” or “Is the policy FAIR for ALL people involved?”

In the first Rwandan genocide (in the late 70’s, between the Hutu and Tutsi, including in Burundi), hundreds of thousands of Hutu civilians were slaughtered. Nobody cared then, just as nobody cared two decades later during the second Rwandan genocide when the Hutus slaughtered the Tutsis in a horrific rampage of reprisal. WHY? The litmus test is quite simple: We didn’t care...because it *didn’t pay* to care. In the present scheme, it all boils down to R.O.I.

In the late 90's, few cared to notice the MILLIONS of people killed in the Congo. Such things don't matter because they don't directly affect U.S. (read: corporate) interests. They don't interfere with the anointed agenda, so why bother? (In the case of the Congo, the U.S. government turned a blind eye because vital materials for cell phones are mined there...and we needed to stay in the Congolese junta's good favor to take advantage of that resource.)

This is standard: Big Business trumps human rights.

The native Americans on the frontier during westward expansion? They were just in the white man's way. Europeans mattered; the dark-skinned indigenous population didn't. The gage was simple: humans vs. sub-humans. The Kurds in southeast Turkey? Don't care. The civilians in East Timor? Their lives were disposable. Peasants in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the 60's and 70's? Irrelevant. The lives of the farmers in Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador, or Honduras? Why should we care if they can be exploited for corporate profits? Black people in Apartheid South Africa? They don't matter as much as the white folk who can use Bantustan dwellers for cheap labor. The reasoning is the same in every case: The well-being of the subaltern doesn't play a role in the anointed scheme. So he isn't afforded full human rights. If he WAS treated the same, it would be stupendously inconvenient—not to mention bad for business.

Likewise: The plight of the Palestinians *doesn't matter*. The reasons are all the same. Perhaps the scenario plays itself out in a different place, but the perverse logic is no different. After all, power is power.

RUDIMENTARY ANALYSIS:

There is a simple law: Antagonism and demeaning incursions cause radicalization. Any / all radicalization in Palestine is exclusively due to the crimes against humanity, the incessant oppression, the relentless persecution, and the brutal occupation they're forced to endure, year after year, decade after decade.

Of any movement, it is incumbent upon all of us to ask: What are its ultimate goals? Does its goal have any inherent value?

If the agenda succeeds, cui bono? If the answer to this paramount question is anything other than “all humans involved”, then iniquity is most likely afoot. (If only certain people benefit, *at who's expense?* Would it be any different if the roles were reversed? Why? Based on what standard?)

From behind a Rawlsian “veil of ignorance”, the humanist must be able to say: “This is acceptable to even those who will—due to sheer circumstance—end up being worst off as a consequence.” Generally, we can ask: What should be the sumum bonum of ANY political effort? Is it good for ALL humans involved or for just a select group? Who gets left out in the cold? Is any group marginalized? How? Based on what criteria?

We should have learned by now: When a movement's sine qua non is the aggrandizement of the movement itself, problems invariably arise. A legitimate humanist movement is never an end in itself; it is a means to a higher end—an end where *all humans matter*. Such a maxim is anathema to RZ.

The glaring hypocrisy of Revisionist Zionism is entailed by its ultimate end: The establishment of a narrowly-defined Zion...without regard for collateral damage amongst the out-group. Here, goyim are rendered a subaltern population. If the roles were reversed in this equation, the movement's proponents would—rightly—scream, “Anti-Semitism”. Alas, when the shoe is on the other foot, suddenly the story changes.

The intransigence of RZ is astonishing to behold if for no other reason than that the adherents can't seem to recognize the glaring hypocrisy required to lend their mission credence. A tribal ideology despises a mirror because its adherents are averse to subjecting themselves to the very criticisms they eagerly foist on *the other*. If the adherents were to do so, they would be forced to acknowledge *their own* crimes in the same terms that they articulate the alleged crimes of the out-group.

A SYNOPSIS OF SUBALTERNS:

People not in the “chosen” group (those who *don't matter*) are often *poor* people: those who's well-being doesn't play a pivotal role in the anointed agenda. Such humans are deemed acceptable collateral damage whenever they suffer or die. They are summarily dehumanized—sometimes even vilified and demonized. Because of this, their lives are considered less valuable than those within the scope of concern.

Therefore, if the subaltern is in the way of the in-group's agenda, it is perfectly acceptable to do whatever one sees fit to marginalize them—or to simply delete them from the equation. If they stand in the way, they are no longer afforded the inalienable rights afforded to *those who matter* (i.e. those in whom the in-group has a vested interest). Consequently, they may be persecuted with impunity—a process justified by the self-righteousness of the in-group.

The subaltern, then, is defined by where one stands in the grand scheme: subaltern status is a function of the vested interests of the in-group. If one is going to oppress or kill members of the out-group, step number one is to dehumanize them in some way. A handy rational for doing this is to forget they exist as PEOPLE: to refuse to recognize them as fellow humans. If that isn't adequate, then they can be vilified / demonized—thereby painting any aggression against them as some noble act of self-defense—a necessary measure undertaken by “the good guys” against “the enemy”.

We've seen this venal formulation employed numerous times throughout the 20th century: by Hitler/Himmler, Lenin/Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot. The examples seem endless: The Hutus' treatment of the Tutsis in Rwanda, the Turkish government's treatment of the Armenians (and then the Kurds), the treatment of the Indians in British-occupied India, the Baathists' treatment of the Iraqi Kurds, the treatment of black people in the pre-civil rights south here in America, the treatment of black people in (pre- and post-Apartheid) South Africa, and now with the treatment of Palestinians by the Likud Party. It takes a concerted effort to ignore the obvious parallels.

Were such a movement to apply the same standards to itself that it applies to the out-group (as if from a Rawlsian “original position”), it would be forced to confront the hypocrisies that are otherwise obfuscated. We shouldn't allow the variation in the identity of the perpetrators and victims mislead us. The underlying logic remains the same independently of such identities. After all, tribes are only social / psychological constructs.

This grand scheme divides the world into two types of people:

A) When certain people suffer, it is patently unacceptable. Such an occurrence is thereby condemned as unjust. These are the subalterns.

B) When certain OTHER people suffer, it IS—though perhaps “regrettable”—acceptable. Such an occurrence is summarily glossed over, whitewashed, ignored, or even depicted as a legitimate means to a noble end. These are those who MATTER.

Though despicable, this taxonomy is magnificently straight-forward—accounting for its tragic appeal. **A** corresponds to those in whom the in-group has a vested interest; **B** corresponds to those who don’t have a useful role in (or stand in the way of) the in-group’s anointed agenda. The notion of *acceptable collateral damage* is a standard part of the picture. It is a deplorable idea that mustn’t be tolerated. RZ is based on this very notion.

Appallingly, this disturbing taxonomy consistently corresponds (almost perfectly) to the following simple demarcation: those who are conducive to U.S. corporate interests *vis a vis* those who are *not* conducive to U.S. corporate interests. This iniquitous alignment of categories reveals all we need to know about the underlying motives at play in any right-wing worldview. RZ is an archetypical example.

Thinking of all people on the planet in terms of **A** and **B** makes perfect sense to the tribalist. Indeed, dividing the world up in this way enables the parochial, simple-minded, and credulous to make sense out of a complicated world—an otherwise bewildering world of nuances and inconvenient truths. The Revisionist Zionist revels in this worldview because—in his mind—it’s all just a matter of divine Providence...so who are YOU to question it.

But those of us who have a basic grasp of elementary morality must take pause, step back, and survey what is really happening here. The powerless often don’t have the luxury of being seen *as humans* by the powerful. After all, the powerful dictate the terms by which the rest of us ascertain who matters and who is expendable. For any given person in the world, we can use the lens—provided to us by those in power—to ascertain whether that person’s suffering is patently unacceptable OR is acceptable collateral damage as we pursue our divinely ordained agenda. (We see the same routine with large corporations’ treatment of “externalities”.)

The privilege of being treated as a full-fledged human is a limited commodity, it seems—available only to the chosen. Such a privilege is generally apportioned BY the privileged, according to the interests OF the privileged. The salient interests are typically a matter of PROTECTING the privileged. Through this vulgar prism, we see things as we’re supposed to: Ignoring egregious human rights abuses is rationalized whenever it’s convenient for those who set the terms: “Certain people matter, certain other people don’t. Deal with it.”

A world comprised of **A** and **B** provides us with very clear-cut answers. Tribalists thereby only look outward, never inward. Self-criticism is *heresy*—it is seen as betrayal (in the case of RZ, the epithet of choice is “Anti-Semitism”). “If you accuse US of doing wrong, then—by definition—YOU are the bad guy.” The tribe’s mission is—by definition—sacrosanct. “How dare you question the sanctity of our actions?” They will therefore accuse the critic of committing the very crime that they themselves are committing.

The hypocrisy of RZ is lost on those who’ve immersed themselves in the ideology. Right-wing Zionists engage in their own strain of racist ideology, becoming the mirror image of the very thing they vociferously indict. They eagerly condemn those who would thwart their agenda. They are blind to their own duplicity. They bask in their own self-righteousness even as they engage in atrocities that—when committed by others—they denounce. Here, *the mode of*

indictment itself becomes an *alternate version* of the very thing being indicted.

Alas, by indicting as they do, they engage in racism.

Alas, ideology hates mirrors, so this hypocrisy goes utterly un-recognized.

PLAYING THE “VICTIM” CARD:

The act of exploiting victim-hood in order to justify aggression goes back thousands of years. An analogy to the IG’s treatment of the Palestinians is the Ottoman Turks’ treatment of the Armenians a century ago. Here, Anatolia was the Turks’ “Israel”. Going from a self-identification of “we’re the victim” to the role of oppressor is often a quick step that goes unacknowledged: the self-identity “victim” persists in spite of the new role. Indeed, this odd transition is a common ploy used to justify iniquitous policies. The Armenians were to the Turks what the Palestinians are now to the Israelis. History offers many other examples of the same gambit.

The “we’ve been an oppressed people” ploy no longer holds water for Jews in Israel. The plea is dated. The IG is now the oppressor—the embodiment of the very thing it was established to prevent. Lost on them is a basic insight: Having been persecuted in the past does not give one the license to now persecute others—nor does a history of being oppressed absolve one of moral responsibilities in the present.

“But we need to defend ourselves.” Accepting this excuse from the IG requires ignoring the gigantic power asymmetry between Israel and Palestine. Pretending that there is parity of culpability (or of guilt) between the two parties in this land-dispute involves wantonly disregarding obvious facts.

PLAYING THE “NATIONAL SECURITY” CARD:

It is no secret that, for the last century, the most egregious crimes against humanity have been perpetrated in the name of “national security”. “National security” is the close cousin of “the national interest”, euphemisms that are invoked to rationalize appalling acts by the more powerful party in a dispute. It thrives whenever there is a large power asymmetry—as the disparity in power allows the more privileged side to exploit its advantageous position. The claim is employed as if the pretense of “defense” were sufficient to imbue even the most despicable policies with a sublime patina of righteousness.

The pathological recalcitrance of the RZ movement is often veiled in noble-sounding calls for “national security” (i.e. security for Jews, *not* for goyim). By invoking “the national interest”, of course, those who are “in the way” are ipso facto subalterns. Problem solved. When one’s own bigotry is declared divinely ordained, it is magically given a pass. Then, mendacity is given free reign. One can indulge in duplicity with impunity so long as one wields superior power over one’s victim. The colossally disproportionate responses issued from the IG each time an errant Palestinian militant attempts retaliation only succeed in exacerbating the problem the IG claims to be deterring.

What RZs fail to recognize is that radicalism of the in-group alienates—and thus radicalizes—members of the out-group. To relentlessly oppress, viciously persecute (and slaughter) innocent civilians in the out-group—day in and day out, year after year—will naturally precipitate the radicalization of those who’ve been slighted. Throughout human history, when A brutally occupies B’s land, then oppresses them mercilessly for good measure, members of B invariably become radicalized—and *resort to drastic measures*, in kind. When A claims it is assailing B for its own “security”, the Reality for B doesn’t change: Humiliated, it must lash out in desperation. The process of mutual antagonism continues, recriminations

and seething vengeance feeding off of one another ad infinitum.

When B engages in any reprisal, A is consequently provided with its ersatz reason to continue the offensive in the name of “national security”. This vicious cycle can only be broken by exposing its deranged logic.

DISCONCERTING EXAMPLES:

It would seem appropriate to start with the Likud Party—the embodiment of RZ in Israeli politics. The most extreme case within this movement is the notorious proto-fascist, Avignor Lieberman. His militant racism is reminiscent of a KKK Grand Wizard. It is no exaggeration to say that—qualitatively—he is the mirror image of Heinrich Himmler (though—of course—there is no parity quantitatively). The glaring irony here is lost on most RZ apologists.

Meanwhile, the Shas Party rabbi, Ovadia Yosef, demands the annihilation of the Palestinian “Amalek”...on Talmudic grounds. The settlers in the occupied territories who call themselves “Judeans” are motivated by a reprehensible religious fanaticism: a seething contempt for all goyim—thus forming a kind of de facto Semitic Supremacist movement. (Indeed, anti-goyim-ism is the mirror image of anti-Semitism. But don’t point this out to an RZ. No mirrors allowed!)

Dictatorship over the human mind is not limited to Salafist madrasahs or Pentecostal bible studies; the rabbinic dictatorship of ultra-orthodox Judaism is a worthy archetype. Fanaticism comes in many colors—and it is important to recognize the common thread underlying seemingly disparate cases. The parallels between Wahhabism, Nazism, and Revisionist Zionism are palpable to any impartial observer. Such movements require people to commit intellectual suicide while abdicating any sense of moral decency.

In case the parallels aren’t crystal clear, let’s spell it out. Each case mentioned above involves an attempt to realize the security of one group by way of depriving another group—the subalterns—of human rights. “We must ensure OURSELVES of security by depriving YOU of YOUR security.” Therefore, if I insist that the “chosen people” are comprised of an exclusive club of white men born in New Hampshire who have proclaimed fealty to the Magical Zucchini Deity, that’s my prerogative. If I then specify that this in-group is more important (more valuable) than the rest of mankind, then acted on that accordingly (by persecuting and oppressing anyone in the out-group that stood in the way of the in-group’s agenda), I would rightly be denounced.

BUT...if the Almighty Zucchini worshippers were far more powerful than those they oppressed, suddenly the denunciations would be muted. After all, WE would be setting the terms, not the subalterns. Typically, the powerful set the terms of the debate, and define who is the “freedom fighter” and who is the “terrorist”. Needless to say: the taxonomy is rigged in their own favor.

No other group claiming to be “the chosen group” and undertaking a similar endeavor is any different. (Employing Rawls’ veil of ignorance from an original position is helpful here.) To inconsistently apply this common-sense standard is to engage in hypocrisy. If it’s categorically wrong for me to do X, then it’s wrong for any other human being to do X. If it’s categorically wrong for any other human being to do X, then it’s wrong for me to do X. Meanwhile, if I’m categorically entitled to do Y, then all other parties must be as well.

Demagogues have always depended on tribal exceptionalism to carry out their morally dubious agendas. Since time immemorial, crackpots have concocted seductive rationalizations for atrocities perpetrated by their in-group cohorts.

PRESCRIPTIONS:

There IS a humanitarian version of Zionism available: a noble effort to ensure that Jews the world over have sanctuary from oppression...IN CONCERT WITH ensuring that ALL humans have sanctuary from oppression. This is a unified goal, and mustn't been seen as a quixotic reconciliation of mutually exclusive goals. It is predicated on the recognition that security can only subsist in fidelity to universal human rights.

Everyone has to move forward in unison, based on a mutual recognition of our shared humanity...lest contentious divisions persist. This is about embracing a human-based solidarity—together, something that transcends tribal agendas.

The only progress worth talking about is human progress. This may require overcoming insularities, parochialisms, and prejudices by reinventing ourselves for the 21st century. After all, we must all look forward toward a common horizon—instead of looking backward to disparate pasts. A shared purpose can only proceed from a common ground.

The *Seeds of Peace* international youth program, held in Maine each summer, captures precisely what a Middle-East solution would involve: humanism. This wonderful program intermingles Palestinian and Israeli teens (among others), allowing them to collaborate in productive endeavors (i.e. projects requiring inter-ethnic teamwork and a shared purpose). Such exercises involve humans working with other humans, transcending superficial differences and petty divisions. They are thereby able to recognize their shared humanity via a common cause.

If teens can do it in New England, then adults should be able to do it in Canaan.

Also inspiring is the *March 15 Movement* in Palestine: a group that sets an example for how to address problems that plague all parties in the region. These are wise youths who approach issues as humanists, not as partisans.

The Humanitarian Zionism formulated on [masonscott.org](https://www.masonscott.org) is a new way of approaching the Israeli/Palestinian conflict...and perhaps the only manner by which it may be equitably resolved. Unlike RZ, HZ offers an approach that comports with a *shared purpose*—the only approach that is viable. It is an approach informed by *humanism*, and thus germane to the highest aspirations of probity. It is just because it is amenable to human rights. It can WORK because it is consonant with universal principles—that which transcends cultural divisions. It can be embraced by all parties because it conduces to human solidarity at its most fundamental level. It offers the common ground on which any fair resolution would be predicated.

REFERENCES:

Becoming educated on this topic is important. See works by Shlomo Ben-Ami, Avi Shlaim, Tom Segev, Ira Chernus, Benny Morris, Rashid Khalidi, Alan Hart, Shlomo Sand (e.g. *The Invention Of The Jewish People*), and Ilan Pappé (especially his *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*). These are the best sources on the topic. *Beyond Chutzpah* by Norman Finkelstein is a must-read. Also recommended are articles from Henry Siegman,

Edward Said, Naomi Klein, Justin Elliot, and Chris Hedges. Meanwhile, the following books are very important:

Israel/Palestine: How to End the War of 1948 –Tanya Reinhart

The Israel Lobby –John Mearsheimer / Stephen Walt

The Power of Israel in the United States –James Petras

The Dark Side of Zionism –Baylis Thomas

Palestine Inside Out–Saree Makdisi

The Holocaust Is Over; We Must Rise From Its Ashes –Avraham Burg

The Invention of the Jewish People –Shlomo Sand

The Goldstone Report

Judaism Does Not Equal Israel –Marc Ellis

Peace, Not Apartheid –Jimmy Carter

Finally, the numerous publications by Noam Chomsky are indispensable for anyone seeking to become well-informed on this topic—most notably, *The Fateful Triangle* and *Middle East Illusions*. (*Perilous Power* and *Gaza In Crisis* are two publications featuring extensive interviews on the topic.)

Headway has been made by such organizations as the US/Middle East Project. Also contributing to awareness are many Middle East Studies programs in universities across the world. Myriad human rights organizations (e.g. Amnesty International, the U.N. Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre) also play a crucial role in resolving this horrible conflict.

Meanwhile, it is important to be vigilant of RZ apologetics and right-wing (e.g. Neocon) propaganda. A judicious assessment of the intellectual honesty, the values, and the interests of the source is imperative if one is to separate the wheat from the chaff. (One must always evaluate sources by posing crucial queries: Are there ulterior motives at play? Does the source have an ax to grind? Are there conflicts of interest involved? Biases? Does this person REALLY know what the heck he's talking about?) A discerning reader needs to ask himself important questions, undertake meticulous *due diligence*, and carefully vet each source before lending it any credence.

Only then will an accurate picture of Reality emerge. Only then can genuine understanding inform a way forward.