

Profiles of Peace

Forty short biographies of Israeli and Palestinian peace builders who have struggled to end the occupation and build a just future for both Palestinians and Israelis.



Haidar Abdel Shafi

Palestinian with a long history of working to improve the health and social conditions of Palestinians and the creation of a Palestinian state. Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Abdel Shafi has been the director of the Red Crescent Society of Gaza, was Chairman of the first Palestinian Council in Gaza, and took part in the Madrid Peace Talks in 1991.

Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi is one of the most revered persons in Palestine, whose long life has been devoted to the health and social conditions of his people and to their aspirations for a national state. Born in Gaza in 1919, he has spent most of his life there, except for study in Lebanon and the United States. He has been the director of the Red Crescent Society in Gaza and has served as Commissioner General of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens Rights.

His passion for an independent state of Palestine is matched by his dedication to achieve unity among all segments of the Palestinian community. Although Gaza is overwhelmingly religiously observant, he has won and kept the respect and loyalty of the people even though he himself is secular. Though nonpartisan he has often been associated with the Palestinian left, especially with the Palestinian Peoples Party (formerly the Palestinian Communist Party).

A mark of his popularity is his service as Chairman of the first Palestinian Council in Gaza (1962-64) and his place on the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (1964-65). His independence led him to resign often from official PLO bodies, though he always remained loyal to its aims of liberating Palestine.

Dr. Abdel Shafi won world-wide attention in a famous ABC Nightline debate in Jerusalem in 1988, in which he was part of a panel of Palestinians who directly addressed an Israeli audience, making a strong case for Palestinian self-determination. Subsequently he led the Palestinian portion of the Jordanian delegation at the Madrid Peace Talks in 1991, following up this as the head of the Palestinian negotiating team that met in Washington.

Unfortunately, his work there was compromised by the PLO's secret talks in Oslo. When the Oslo process began he correctly predicted its failure in part because of the Oslo avoidance of insisting on a settlement freeze. His disagreement with the PLO leadership however did not force him out of politics. He was elected to the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) in 1996, and later resigned to work with all the factions in Gaza to create an organized resistance movement.

While by no means a pacifist, Dr. Abdel Shafi has championed a defensive posture in combating the continuing Israeli occupation. He is firmly against suicide bombings and armed operations in Israeli civilian areas, but believes in the legal and moral right for Gazans to defend themselves and for Palestinians generally to struggle against the Israel military and settlement activity.

"There is no problem of co-existence; the Jewish presence is a reality to be acknowledged," he says.

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Jean Zaru

Palestinian Quaker who was a founding member of Sabeel, an ecumenical Palestinian Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Friends International Center in Ramallah.

Jean Zaru was born in 1940 to a Quaker family in Ramallah, Palestine. When she was eight, Zaru witnessed the Palestinian “Nakba,” when 750,000 Palestinians were made permanent refugees during the creation of the State of Israel.

“We must work hard to find nonviolent ways of overcoming political, social, economic, ecological, and religious violence and to join hands with all those who are committed to fighting the forces of darkness. In order to hope for justice and to hope for peace, we must work for peace.”

At the time, her father rented a truck, filled it with bread and water, and distributed it to the refugees. He also befriended several families who were unable to continue walking because of thirst, pain, and heat. He invited them to stay in his home. For six weeks, 50 people lived in Zaru’s home. One family lived with them for the next two years. Thus began Zaru’s life-long commitment to the liberation of both individual Palestinian peoples and Palestinian society as a whole.

Zaru has been a leader in the Palestinian Quaker community and a pioneer for women’s equality. In addition to serving as clerk of the Ramallah Friends Meeting, Zaru was a founding member and vice-chair of Sabeel, an ecumenical Palestine Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.

She wrote the books: *A Christian Palestinian Life: Faith and Struggle* and *Structural Violence: Truth and Peace-Keeping in the Palestinian Experience*. Zaru also served on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and on the Working Group in Interfaith Dialogue of the WCC. In addition, she has been a member of the International Council of the World Conference for Religion and Peace. She served as president of the Board of Directors of the Jerusalem YWCA, member of national board of YWCA Jordan and YWCA Palestine, and was vice president of the World YWCA. She is a volunteer consultant for the Middle East Council of Churches, especially on the topic of Islam and human rights, as well as other church organizations.

Most recently, Zaru has been instrumental in the establishment of the Friends International Center in Ramallah, which works to “lift up and nurture a Quaker presence in Ramallah; find ways to enrich and support the local community; and hold up and further peace and justice issues in the community.”

For more information about Jean Zaru and Palestinian Quakers, please see www.ramallahquakers.org.

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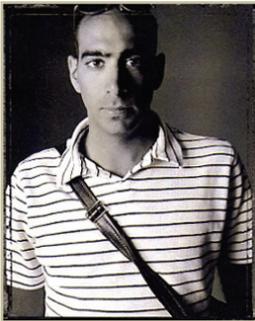


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Ali Abunimah

U.S.-based Palestinian journalist and media analyst who frequently writes and comments on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Abunimah also co-founded and edits the Electronic Intifada, an alternative media website focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Ali Abunimah was born in Washington, D.C., to a Palestinian refugee mother from the village of Lifta and a father from Battir in the West Bank. Abunimah grew up in the United Kingdom and Belgium and watched the events of the first intifada from school. Understanding that he came from a privileged position relative to the Palestinians living in camps and under occupation, he became frustrated with his inability to contribute in some way.

Abunimah obtained degrees from Princeton University and the University of Chicago. His first experience with activism in the United States began at Princeton, where he faced repeated efforts to intimidate him for being outspoken.

Later, while at the University of Chicago, Abunimah became active in the Chicago Arab community. He took a job as a researcher in a community-based organization in Chicago's neighborhoods, where he found the Arab community by chance, most of who worked in social services. This was Abunimah's first introduction to the Arab American Action Network, a group for which he would later serve as vice president and still serves as a board member.

In 1996, Abunimah became committed to engaging the broader U.S. media on the topics related to Israel and Palestine. That year, Abunimah began a correspondence with National Public Radio regarding their coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He began sharing his media correspondences with some friends, which later expanded to a network of hundreds, and then thousands.

Abunimah is still a media analyst who regularly appears for interviews and debates on national and international news programs, commenting on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"People get it backwards. They say that Israelis and Palestinians can never live together because they hate each other so much," Abunimah said during one interview with The Madison [Wisconsin] Times. "What I say is that they hate each other because they've never been allowed to live together in a way where everybody can have a dignified life."

Abunimah has published articles in The New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, Jordan Times, Lebanon's Daily Star, and Ha'aretz. Most recently, Abunimah wrote the book *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*.

He has appeared on television talk shows, including those on the CNN, MSNBC, and PBS networks, and in several films about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including *Collecting Stories from Exile: Chicago Palestinians Remember 1948*, a documentary produced by AFSC's Chicago office in 1999.

In addition, Abunimah co-founded and edits the Electronic Intifada, an alternative media website focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that reaches about 10,000 people daily. The website features on-the-ground perspectives of political developments and includes arts and culture articles.

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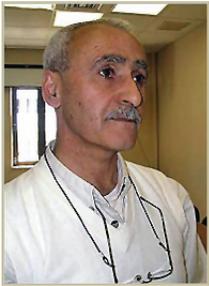
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To learn more about the Electronic Intifada see www.electronicintifada.net

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Ghassan Andoni

Palestinian co-founder of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People and the International Solidarity Movement. He has been a proponent of nonviolent resistance for decades.

Ghassan Andoni is a physics professor at Birzeit University who has combined his teaching with peace activism since 1988. He is best known for co-founding the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People, but his peace activities began much earlier.

While a college student in Iraq, Andoni dropped out to work in refugee camps in Lebanon during the civil war there. Returning home from Lebanon he was arrested and jailed for two years for his supposed involvement in the military conflict. His Israeli judge refused to believe that he was a hospital worker and sentenced him for alleged membership in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

During the first intifada, 1987-1993, Andoni was an active participant in the tax resistance movement that took place in Beit Sahour, a town in the West Bank. He expanded his understanding of nonviolence from being a personal position to a public one that, if successfully employed, could lead to a mass movement of liberation.

In 1988, after another jail term for his participation in the tax revolt, he co-founded the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People. The center's aim was to allow those in conflict to acknowledge each other's humanity and to work together for a world in which they could peacefully coexist. It did this through dialogue and joint activities between Israelis and Palestinians. As the Israeli military occupation wore on, Andoni and the Rapprochement Center moved from dialogue to direct nonviolent action intended to end the occupation.

As part of this work he co-founded the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), coordinating international volunteers with Palestinians and Israelis in nonviolent actions that called attention to the oppression created by years of occupation. In working with ISM he has insisted that all international participants commit themselves to nonviolence, both physical and verbal.

"Conflicts are fueled by the tendency of the powerful to exploit the power and the anger and frustration of the powerless, which turns into violence," Andoni says. "ISM activists are attempting to confront the exploitation of power and to bring back hope to the powerless."

As he continued his peace work and organizing among Palestinian youth, Andoni demonstrated an ability to think strategically and tactically. He realized that a nonviolent movement must always be creative and experimental, not staying with patterns of behavior that once may have been successful but that, if made routine, run the risk of becoming rigid and mechanical.

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His creative, proactive responses contributed to a growing prominence within the peace community, even as he turned from international work back toward a focus on Palestinian civil society. For this work, the AFSC nominated him and Israeli activist Jeff Halper for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. He currently works for Birzeit University as Director of Communications.

For more information about Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between People see www.pcr.ps.

For more information about the International Solidarity Movement see www.palsolidarity.org.

Read Andoni 's statement after being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize: www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/news/Ghassan-Andoni-Statement.html



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Huwaida Arraf

Palestinian co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement, which focuses on grassroots community nonviolent organizing to resist the Israeli occupation. The organization has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Huwaida Arraf is a co-founder of the Palestinian-led International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which focuses on grassroots community nonviolent organizing to resist the Israeli occupation.

The founders of the ISM believed that bringing international volunteers to support the Palestinians under occupation would reduce the risk of violent repression of Palestinians by the Israeli military. Since its creation in April 2001, some 3,500 activist volunteers from more than 30 different countries have joined the ISM. The organization has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize twice, in 2003 and in 2004.

“The Palestinian Intifada, the ‘uprising for freedom,’ has got to be an international struggle. . .,” Arraf says. “[It] is a struggle for freedom, a struggle for basic human dignity and human rights. Anyone who believes in freedom, believes in justice, believes in equality for all people not based on religion or nationality, can join in the struggle.”

Arraf works in the occupied Palestinian territories with local leaders and groups, training international activists to face the Israeli military forces unarmed. She has been arrested more than a dozen times for nonviolent protests in the Occupied Territories, including once for delivering food to the people stranded in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, the oldest of five children, Arraf attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she obtained degrees in Arabic, Hebrew, and Judaic Studies, as well as political science. As an undergraduate, Arraf co-founded and facilitated an Arab-Jewish dialogue group on her campus and was active in other conflict resolution and co-existence groups. As a junior, she attended the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and studied the Hebrew language on a Kibbutz. After graduating, Arraf worked at the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C., promoting the rights of Arab Americans.

In the spring of 2000, Arraf traveled to Jerusalem to serve as program coordinator for Seeds of Peace, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that promotes dialogue and interactions between young people in regions of conflict, in her case, Palestinians and Israelis. While working at Seeds of Peace, Arraf met her husband, Adam Shapiro, another co-founder of the ISM.

In 2004, Arraf co-edited the book *Peace Under Fire*, a collection of personal accounts by ISM volunteers, and is currently co-editing a book about the Palestinian resistance. She is a law student at the American University’s Washington College of Law, where she is focusing on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, with a special focus on war crimes prosecution. She also co-chairs the Students for Justice in Palestine at the Washington College of Law, serves on the advisory boards of KinderUSA and Imagine Life, and is a member of the steering committee for the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

In 2006, Arraf traveled to Lebanon with her husband to coordinate civilian relief efforts in Lebanon and provide company for refugees returning to the south of Lebanon.

For more information about the International Solidarity Movement see www.palsolidarity.org.

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Arik Ascherman

Rabbi-activist for the rights of Israelis, Palestinians, and foreign workers in Israel

Arik Ascherman is Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel. His personal journey has evolved from acquiring a Harvard education to standing trial in Israel for blocking home demolitions.

Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Ascherman graduated from college in 1981. From then until 1983, he worked for Interns for Peace, a community work program in Israel involving Jews and Arabs. For most of this time, Ascherman lived in the Arab village of Tamra.

In 1989, he was ordained as a rabbi in the U.S. at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. During his training, he worked with soup kitchens and homeless advocacy in Israel. Following his ordination he worked as a rabbi and with Hillel chapters in the U.S. In Israel, he was director of Congregation Mevakshei Derech and was the part time rabbi of Kibbutz Yahel, a Reform kibbutz near Eilat.

He became a citizen of Israel in 1994, where he lives with his wife, Einat Ramon, the first Israeli-born woman to be ordained as a rabbi, and their two children.

Beginning in 1995, Arik Ascherman became co-director of Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR); becoming executive director in 1998. RHR is the only organization in Israel made up of rabbis and rabbinical students from all denominations of Judaism. It promotes justice and human rights for Israelis, Palestinians, and foreign workers. In May 2006, RHR received the prestigious Niwano Peace Prize.

Over the next few years, his commitment to human rights led him to nonviolent resistance to block bulldozers from destroying Palestinian homes. As a result of his actions, Ascherman was charged with “interfering with police performance of duties on two different occasions in 2003, and the intention to commit acts to prevent police from performing their duties.” During his trial Ascherman explained his actions, “I arrived at the homes for which I am on trial today carrying in my heart all the families in whose name I stand before you – the families that suffered and continue to suffer because of the home demolition policy. I held in my heart the looks of the children in Shufafat who had gone off to school in the morning and returned to discover their home demolished, with a toy or book peaking through the rubble ... I held in my heart the frightened looks of families sitting on packed suitcases waiting for the bulldozers to arrive, the grown men crying and the tens, if not hundreds of families whom I have spent time with before, during and after home demolitions.”

In March 2005, a magistrate court found Ascherman guilty but said that he wouldn't have a criminal record. Upon his conviction, Ascherman said that he was disappointed the court did not address the injustice of home demolitions in its verdict.

“For us, this trial really was about the people who have no voice here, the victims of home demolition,” Ascherman said. “And that's why we're going immediately from the courthouse...to begin the rebuilding of one of these homes.”

“Sometimes, when you have tried everything else, and particularly when you see the values that we are sworn to uphold as rabbis being trampled on, you have no choice but to stand in front of the bulldozers, to exercise that democratic right of civil disobedience to try to have the opportunity in court to show that it's the law, the policy, that's really illegal and immoral.”



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Recent protests by Ascherman and Rabbis for Human Rights have focused on the separation wall. In 2006, RHR achieved a major victory when it won a lawsuit to prevent the wall construction from dividing the village Sheikh Sa'ad.

For more information on Rabbis for Human Rights, see www.rhr.israel.net/.

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Hanan Ashrawi

Palestinian teacher, scholar, and writer who is also an activist working on women's issues, human rights, and for the independence of Palestine. Ashrawi founded and is currently a board member of MIFTAH (The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy), which monitors human rights abuses committed both by Palestinians and Israelis.

Hanan Ashrawi, born in Ramallah, Palestine, was educated at the Friends Girls School there and later received her B.A. from The American University of Beirut. After completing her Ph.D. in Medieval Literature at the University of Virginia, she moved back to

Ramallah and became head of the Department of English of Birzeit University. Later, she served there as Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

A distinguished teacher, scholar, writer, and poet, Hanan Ashrawi has also been a social activist, working on women's issues, human rights, and for the independence of her homeland. Her 1995 memoir, *This Side of Peace: A Personal Account*, chronicles her many activities as a scholar/activist.

“ . . . You cannot have peace without justice and you cannot deal with justice only as an abstraction but as an operative principle that would involve the recognition, the safeguarding, of all [human] rights.”

Ashrawi became heavily involved in Palestinian politics while teaching, an involvement that culminated in her role as official spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation at the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and at subsequent discussions in Washington, D.C. She was elected in 1996 to the Palestinian Legislative Council and was appointed Minister of Higher Education and Research. Always an independent thinker, she grew disenchanted with the direction the Palestinian Authority was taking under President Arafat and resigned as minister.

That same year, 1998, she founded and directed MIFTAH (The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy). Her flourishing organization has kept its independence as it has monitored human rights abuses committed both by Palestinians and Israelis. Its analysis of the current realities of the Palestine/Israel conflict has been widely read and trusted by the international community.

For her work Ashrawi was awarded the 2003 Sydney Peace Prize, the 2005 UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Medal and several honorary degrees. She was recently elected as an independent member of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

To learn more about MIFTAH, please log onto www.miftah.org.

“ . . . You cannot have peace without justice and you cannot deal with justice only as an abstraction but as an operative principle that would involve the recognition, the safeguarding, of all [human] rights,” Ashrawi says.



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Naim Ateek

Palestinian founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, which has become a center for international efforts to work ecumenically and nonviolently for justice for Palestinians.

Rev. Naim Ateek is the founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. Ateek was born in the town of Beisan in what is now northern Israel, and became a refugee at age 11 during the 1948 war. He was ordained an Anglican priest in 1967, two weeks before the June war.

After that war he went to the United States to pursue graduate work in 1971-72, and started to develop a theology of liberation that culminated in a 1989 book, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. He describes his purpose in writing his book as follows:

“What was needed was a theology of liberation, a theology of the land, that can help my people maintain and strengthen their faith in God. To help them be empowered to work for justice and peace by following Jesus in his nonviolent path. To have the courage to stand up and say that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza must end that there has to be a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel.”

Ateek put these words into practice when he founded the Sabeel Center in the mid-1990s.

Sabeel means “the way” as well as “springs” in Arabic, and the center has been a center for international efforts to work ecumenically and nonviolently for justice for Palestinians. Although the Christian community in Palestine represents less than two percent of the population, Sabeel’s influence, especially in its espousal of a nonviolent resistance movement to Israeli occupation, has been spreading.

Sabeel has organized several international conferences in Jerusalem that have brought the plight of the Palestinians to a wider world audience. Branches of Sabeel now exist throughout Europe and the United States. In recognition of his work, Ateek was awarded the 2006 Episcopal Peace Fellowship Sayre Award.

“Nonviolence is not one option out of many. It is not one strategy out of many. For us, Palestinian Christians, it is the only option, and the only strategy. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus Christ and believe or condone the use of violence and terrorism...,” Ateek says. “We are looking for the time when the Israeli occupation of Palestine will end. Without this kind of justice there cannot be peace.”

To learn more about Sabeel please see: www.sabeel.org

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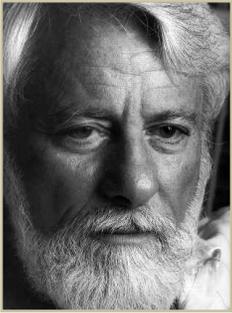


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Uri Avnery

Israeli activist, journalist, and former member of Israel's Knesset who founded Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc), one of Israel's most influential peace organizations.

Uri Avnery, tireless activist, legislator, and journalist, was born in Beckum, Germany, in 1923 and immigrated to Palestine at the age of ten with his family. Avnery was one of the first Israelis to establish contacts with PLO representatives. In 1993, together with his wife Rachel, he founded Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc), one of Israel's most influential peace organizations.

In 1938, Avnery joined the Irgun underground in order to take part in the fight against British colonialism. He became disillusioned with the group's tactics and left it in 1942 in opposition to terrorism and anti-Arab ideology. He also served as an Israeli Defense Force commando in the 1948 war.

Having developed journalistic skills during the war, he worked at the Ha'aretz newspaper, which he left because he could not voice his opinion on key issues, including opposition to expropriation of Arab lands. For the next forty years, he was the publisher and editor of Israel's now-defunct newsweekly, Haolam Hazeh, which was one of Israel's leading alternative-media publications.

He served three terms in Israel's Knesset, where he became known as one of its leading parliamentarians. Avnery became well-known for meeting with Yasser Arafat during the "Battle of Beirut" during the war in Lebanon in July 1982.

Since its founding in 1993, Gush Shalom has called for creating a Palestinian state in all of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, releasing all Palestinian political prisoners, dismantling all Israeli settlements, and recognizing Jerusalem as the joint capital of both states.

Since its creation, Gush Shalom has organized hundreds of demonstrations, many in conjunction with Palestinian activists. Other actions have included an ongoing boycott of the products of the settlements and the issuing of a manifesto, "Our Jerusalem," which was written by Avnery. It calls for the recognition of Jerusalem as the joint capital of the two states: Israel and Palestine.

In 2001, Gush Shalom and Rachel and Uri Avnery received the prestigious international The Right Livelihood Award, "for their unwavering conviction—in the most difficult circumstances—that peace and an end to terrorism can only be achieved through justice and reconciliation."

"Ours is but a small part in a worldwide struggle for peace, justice and equality between human beings and between nations, for the preservation of our planet," Avnery says. "It can all be summed up in one word, which both in Hebrew and in Arabic means not only peace, but also wholeness, security, and well-being: Shalom, Salaam."

For more information about Gush Shalom, please see www.gush-shalom.org.

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Khulood Badawi

Palestinian citizen of Israel who advocates for Palestinian civil rights and organizes activities that bring together the Palestinian and Jewish communities in order to bring about a better future and real peace in Israel/Palestine.

Khulood Badawi was born in Nazareth, in the Galilee region of Israel, in 1976, and is a Palestinian citizen of Israel. As a young school student, she learned about the history of the Jewish people, Europe, and the Arab world, but nothing about Palestinian history. She noted that, “As a Palestinian, you’re not mentioned anywhere—it is as if you do not exist.”

Instead, she gained much of her political awareness growing up in Nazareth. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, a Jewish-Palestinian political party, had a strong presence there. Through their work, Badawi grew up with an awareness of her identity.

“As Palestinians inside Israel we have a big role in the conflict and should be the link between the two sides. We should be more active because we are part of a society that struggles for its freedom and at the same time we are citizens of Israel.”

At the University of Haifa, she studied the history of the Jewish people and the Arabic language. In 1996, she began her activism as a student at the University of Haifa. Badawi was first active in the Arab Students’ Committee and later was a founding member and elected chair of the Association of the Arab University Students in Israel. Her campus work ranged from educating Arab and Jewish students alike about the Israeli occupation and Palestinian rights, as well as improving the status of the Palestinian Arab students of the Israeli University and defending their rights to freedom of speech and expression. Badawi was expelled from the university and banned from entering the campus for two years for organizing demonstrations that lasted about four months.

Badawi currently works for the Association for Civil Rights in Israel as a field researcher, focusing on the issue of the Separation Wall. She is also a member of several civil rights groups including Ta’ayush, a joint Arab-Jewish movement, the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace, and Bat Shalom. These groups work nationally and internationally on many different initiatives which include organizing demonstrations, supporting young Israelis who refuse mandatory military service, creating alternative trips to expose Israelis to occupation and discrimination, and civic activities engaging Palestinian and Jewish communities.

During the summer of 2006, Badawi helped organize peace protests against the Israeli war on Lebanon. Together with an Israeli Jewish woman of Russian descent, she chanted slogans in Russian, Arabic, and Hebrew to make the point that Arabs and Jews can live together. Badawi strategically staged these protests in Tel Aviv to demonstrate that Palestinian citizens of Israel would not be silenced.

“As Palestinians inside Israel we have a big role in the conflict and should be the link between the two sides,” she said during an interview with Just Vision, a nonprofit organization that informs local and international audiences about under-documented Palestinian and Israeli joint civilian efforts to resolve the conflict nonviolently. “We should be more active because we are part of a society that struggles for its freedom and at the same time we are citizens of Israel. We enjoy the geographical position and the unique possibility to be part of a pioneering leadership for a better future and real peace. We speak two languages and have two voices.”



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To read a full interview with Khulood Badawi please visit the Just Vision website here - http://www.justvision.org/interview/khulood_badawi.php

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Azmi Bishara

Palestinian politician, philosopher, human rights activist, and novelist.

Azmi Bishara, politician, philosopher, human rights activist and novelist, is a Palestinian citizen of Israel, born in 1956 in Nazareth into a Greek Orthodox family. He, however, is secular in his outlook, and indeed bases his entire political philosophy on the idea of a secular democratic state.

Bishara was first elected to the Israeli Knesset in 1996, after a teaching position at Birzeit University in the West Bank. As part of the National Democratic Assembly in Israel Party (also known as Balad), Bishara has championed the idea that Israel should be a state of all its citizens as opposed to being a Jewish state in which Palestinian citizens are tolerated but not given equal rights and status. His unwavering struggle for equal civil rights has been recognized internationally in his receiving the Averroes (Ibn Rushd) Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002 and the Global Exchange Human Rights Award in 2003.

Azmi Bishara's work for equal rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel and his advocacy of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza has put him on a collision course with various right-wing political groups in the Israeli government.

"What Israel wants to separate itself from is the largest possible number of Palestinians living on the smallest possible area of land," Bishara has written about the Separation Wall. "The self-rule plans negotiated with Egypt in January 1980, the Oslo Accords, the Camp David proposals, the unilateral withdrawal schemes by Sharon and Olmert, the Geneva initiative by the Zionist Israeli left, and the Separation Wall, are merely different manifestations of such thinking."

"What Israel wants to separate itself from is the largest possible number of Palestinians living on the smallest possible area of land,"

Israel's Central Elections Committee attempted to disqualify Bishara and his party from running in Israeli national elections for the Sixteenth Knesset, but their decision was overturned by Israel's Supreme Court and he was reelected. Bishara's attempts to establish a dialogue with Arab groups in Syria and Lebanon have led several of his fellow Knesset members to call for a criminal investigation of his activities. The safety of his life and the life of his family has sometimes been very precarious due to allegations that his actions have been treasonous since they represented contact with enemy states with whom Israel was still at war.

In the face of the violent attacks against him, Bishara has consistently maintained that he has never advocated violent struggle, but will continue to fight nonviolently for universal civil rights for all the citizens of Israel.



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Eitan Bronstein

Israeli educator and activist who works to build an Israeli understanding of al-Nakba and the history Palestinian refugees, as a key step toward reconciliation.

Eitan Bronstein was born in 1960 in Argentina and his family immigrated to Israel when he was five years old. They lived in Kibbutz Bahan between Tel Aviv and Haifa and close to the “Green Line,” the armistice line from the 1948 war and Israel’s internationally recognized border.

Bronstein has been an educator and activist who bridges the two through his current work with the Israeli organization, Zochrot. (The name is a Hebrew that translates as “remembering” or “those who remember.”). Since its founding in 2002, Zochrot has focused on al-

Nakba – the Arabic word for catastrophe, and the Palestinian term for the displacement of Palestinians in 1948. In that year, during the creation of the State of Israel, 750,000 Palestinians were made refugees.

Zochrot believes that there cannot be a true peace and reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians in region until Jewish Israelis accept responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee crisis, and come to terms with al-Nakba.

The inspiration for Zochrot began when Bronstein was searching on the Internet and came across the history of Qaqun, a village in the Tulkaram region of historic Palestine. He found that Qaqun was located near Kibbutz Bahan where he grew up. Bronstein remembered exploring that area as a child, never realizing he was playing in the ruins of a destroyed Palestinian village. Learning this history connected Bronstein to a history that he thought had nothing to do with him. He created Zochrot to help Jewish Israelis face the history of al-Nakba, using educational forums, tours of destroyed Palestinians villages, oral histories, dialogue projects, and commemorations and protests.

“The question is not where you live but what you do in order to take responsibility.”

One example of Zochrot’s work was the Canada Park campaign. The park was created by the Jewish National Fund with Canadian donations. The park was built on the ruins of three Palestinian villages - Yalu, Imwas and Beit Nuba – that Israel destroyed in the aftermath of the 1967 War to extend its control over the strategic corridor between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. During a tour of the park, Bronstein was surprised to find no mention of the area’s recent history in the printed park guide or on the signs offering the history of the area. Zochrot began a campaign to add signs to the park that reflected the Arab communities who had lived there. After several years of effort – which ranged from posting homemade signs in the park to taking a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice – Zochrot was successful in getting the signs placed in the park.

Previous to founding Zochrot, Bronstein served three jail sentences for refusing to serve in the Israeli military during the first Lebanon War in the early 1980s and in the West Bank during the first intifada in the late 1980s.

In 1991, he began working with the School for Peace at Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam, a joint Jewish-Arab village halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Neve Shalom - Wahat al-Salam is a “village, jointly established by Jewish and Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, that is engaged in educational work for peace, equality and understanding between the two peoples,” and Bronstein helped facilitate educational programs to further this mission.

To learn more about Zochrot please see: www.nakbainhebrew.org/index.php?lang=english



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Elias Chacour

Palestinian Archbishop of Galilee for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church who urges nonviolent change in Israeli society. Chacour founded a school for students in the Israeli village of Ibillin—a school that accepts students regardless of religious affiliation. Chacour has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize a number of times.

Elias Chacour, Archbishop of Galilee for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, is a Palestinian citizen of Israel. Chacour was born in the village of Biram, in the upper Galilee, and was exiled from that village in 1951. Abuna Chacour has chronicled his life and the development of his ministry in two books, *Blood Brothers* and *We Belong to the Land*, which have been read by thousands of people worldwide. (Abuna is Arabic for Father, and is a respectful and affectionate term given to priests.)

Chacour started his ministry in the Israeli village of Ibillin, near Haifa, where he initially lived by sleeping in his car at night and building his small congregation. His care for his flock included working for civil rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel. As an apostle of nonviolent social change he has endeavored to be an activist for peace. “Peace needs no contemplators, it needs actors, people who are willing to get their hands dirty, to get up and do something,” he says. “The same is true for justice.”

The great project of his life has been to create a school in Ibillin. From a modest beginning, his Mar Elias Educational Institutions now provides schooling from kindergarten through university, enrolling yearly more than four thousand students, regardless of their religious affiliation. His persistence in getting building permits from Israel led him to Washington, D.C., where he engaged Secretary of State James Baker and his wife in his project and secured the permit with their help.

While tirelessly raising funds worldwide to support and expand his school, Abuna Chacour has used his speaking engagements to urge nonviolent change in Israeli society, working for a time when Israel will be a true democracy for all its citizens. For these efforts at reconciliation he has been nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize and has been granted the World Methodist Peace Award as well as Japan’s Niwano Peace Prize.

“And if you have been enlightened enough to take the side of the Palestinians - oh bless your hearts - take our sides, because for once you will be on the right side, right?” he says. “But if taking our side would mean to become one-sided against my Jewish brothers and sisters, backup. We do not need such friendship. We need one more common friend. We do not need one more enemy, for God’s sake.”



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Sami Shalom Chetrit

Poet, academic, filmmaker, and social justice activist.

Sami Shalom Chetrit was born in 1960 in Qasr as-Suq in Morocco. His family immigrated to Israel in 1963 and he grew up in a working class immigrant neighborhood of the port city of Ashdod, 30 miles south of Tel Aviv.

Chetrit's experience as a Mizrahi

Jew (a Jew of Middle Eastern descent) has motivated and informed his life as a poet, academic, and activist. His works reveal the contradictions of being both Jewish and Arab while living in a region where these are commonly understood as communities in conflict.

Historically, Israel has been dominated politically and socially by the Ashkenazi (Jews of European descent) community, who were at the forefront of the Zionist movement. The Mizrahi community has struggled for equal rights since the founding of the State of Israel.

Chetrit has revealed this history through writing and film. His doctoral dissertation from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was titled Mizrahi Politics in Israel – Between Identification & Integration to Protest & Alternative and was published in 2004 in Hebrew as the book *The Mizrahi Struggle in Israel, 1948 – 2003*.

Additionally, Chetrit has brought the story of the Mizrahi struggle for equal rights within Israel to film with the documentary *The Black Panthers (in Israel) Speak* which was completed in 2003. The film discusses the Black Panther movement within Israel that organized and protested for equal rights for Mizrahi community during the 1970s. It was one of the first organized movements to openly challenge the Ashkenazi economic, political, and social power in Israel.

Through this work Chetrit has joined other Mizrahi scholar-activists, such as Ella Shohat, in complicating the standard history of the creation of Israel and the Zionist movement by showing that no monolithic Jewish view

ACRID MEMORY

**At the train station a rabid crowd
Doles out yellow ribbons and flags
asking passersby to pledge their blessings
and give thanks to the boys coming home.
As for me, I put down:
miserable, pitiful souls.
And a stinging memory comes back.
Homecoming memory.
Driving through the streets of a strange city at full tilt
(the streets there weren't at all unfamiliar to us),
an old Arab stood by the side of the main road waving his cane
(now I think: that old man's grandfather once must have stood
by the side of that very road and waved that very cane).
We stopped to find the meaning of his wave.
The old man bent toward me (in his eyes I saw that he didn't get
the essence of human adulation,
the quality of victory or failure), and spit a yellow
glob of saliva in my face before turning back on his way.
And on that day I was purified.
If only for a fleeting moment was I purified.**



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of Israel or Zionism exists and that “Jewish” and “Arab” narratives and histories are often intertwined and overlapping.

Chetrit has explored similar themes and histories in his poetry, which also addresses the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and militarism in Israeli society. His poem “Hey Jeep, Hey Jeep” uses a popular Israeli song about the 1948 war to comment on the first intifada. In “Acrid Memory,” Chetrit reveals his experience as a soldier in Lebanon and challenges mainstream Israeli views of the military. Chetrit has written several books of poetry including *Openings* (1988), *Poems in Ashdodians*, poems from 1982-2002, and his poems were included in the anthology *Keys to the Garden: New Israeli Writing* (1996).

Chetrit has also been a figure in Mizrahi community activism and education. In 1993, he joined other Mizrahi educators and academics in starting the Kedma (“Eastward”) educational project. This project launched Kedma schools to give the Mizrahi community an education equal to Ashkenazi schools. The curriculum reflects the Mizrahi cultures and histories.

Later in 1997, Chetrit was one of the founders of Hakeshet Hademocratit Hamizrahit (The Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow Coalition), a social movement that continues the struggle for Mizrahi economic and social justice within Israel. Finally, Chetrit has also been a long time supporter of Azmi Bishara and his political party Balad, which primarily represents Palestinian citizens of Israel. This support comes from Chetrit’s belief that democracy is “all about the protection of the rights of the minority.”



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Alex Cohn

Israeli conscientious objector who spent 152 days in a military prison for refusing to serve in the Israeli military. Cohn has been active in the Shministim, a movement of Israeli high school students who refuse military service, and New Profile, an Israeli feminist organization that challenges the militarization of Israeli society.

Alex Cohn is a conscientious objector, a member of the Shministim (a movement among Israeli high school students who refuse Israel's compulsory military service), and has been active in New Profile, an Israeli feminist organization that challenges the militarization of Israeli society.

Cohn became politically active from a young age and was especially influenced by visits to the occupied Palestinian territories. He began to question whether he could serve in the Israeli military after working with Palestinian farmers to help with the annual olive harvest and seeing the Separation Wall in the West Bank. Through these encounters Cohn developed an emotional connection with the Palestinian people he met and he grew to question the narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that he was raised to believe.

Eventually, Cohn decided he would refuse to join the Israeli army at his initial induction when he turned 18 years old. Instead, he joined the Shministim.

"I chose to refuse after I saw the occupied Palestinian territories and realized that the occupation is not only unjust and unnecessary, but also horrible and destructive for both people," Cohn says.

In 2005, more than 300 Israeli teenagers signed a highly publicized letter from the Shministim to the Israeli Prime Minister and Minister of Defense stating their intention to refuse military. In that letter, the Shministim explained,

Our backgrounds are diverse, but we all agree that these values form the basis of a just society. Every human being has the right to life, equality, dignity, and freedom. We are bound by our conscience and as citizens of Israel to act in defense of these rights, by refusing to participate in the occupation and repression policy.

After refusing his induction in April 2005, Cohn was jailed and spent 152 days in a military prison.

Cohn does not view his refusal only as a protest against the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. He also is challenging the militarism that he believes dominates Israeli society.

"Militaristic society observes reality through the sight of the gun: everything is us or them, life or death, kill or be killed," Cohn explains. "In this way, every act of resistance to Israel becomes an existential threat. I see the Israeli refusal movement, in which I include the Palestinian citizens of Israel who do not have the chance to refuse, as an alternative to the militaristic way of life that leads Israel from one war to another."

For more information about the Shministim, please log onto www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/Shministim-letter.htm

"I chose to refuse [to serve in the Israeli military] after I saw the occupied Palestinian territories and realized that the occupation is not only unjust and unnecessary, but also horrible and destructive for both people."



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For more information about New Profile, please log onto www.newprofile.org/default.asp?language=en

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Mona El-Farra

Palestinian physician active in medical relief efforts in the Gaza Strip. Among many other activities, El-Farra heads the Rachel Corrie Children's Center in Gaza and writes a well-regarded blog, "From Gaza, with Love," that has attracted attention from journalists, activists, and academics around the world.

Dr. Mona El-Farra was born in Khan Younis, Gaza. Her family owned land in Gaza for about 900 years. In her lifetime, however, this land was confiscated by Israel and her family's home was demolished. After obtaining her medical degree, she dedicated her life to working for relief in the Gaza Strip. Today, among many activities, she works as a physician in Northern Gaza.

Some of her relief work includes creating programs that combine health services with community and cultural recreation services. She implements these programs as the Director of Gaza Projects for the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA). El-Farra is also a health development consultant for the Union of Health Work Committees in Gaza and Vice President of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza.

El-Farra heads the Rachel Corrie Children's Center, which is also in Gaza. The center is a project of the Union of Health Work Committees and is named after Rachel Corrie, an American activist who was killed by an Israeli Caterpillar bulldozer while protecting a home in Gaza from demolition. The Children's Center provides a haven for the children from the ongoing war and violence surrounding them. El-Farra explains that the violence in Gaza has devastating effects on both the children and the future prospects for peace.

The center also provides computer and internet services to the children so that they can communicate with the outside world. El-Farra states that the importance of this communication is to show the children of Gaza that there are international solidarity networks with the Palestinian peoples, ".... to grow up knowing that there are still in the world a place for people who respect justice and who are fighting to see the world full of justice, not hate and injustice." (Democracy Now! Interview with Mona El-Farra, by Amy Goodman, October 18, 2006.)

El-Farra's work extends beyond medical relief work. She is a human rights and women's rights activist. She releases reports on the internet about the deterioration of health services in light of Israeli aggression in Gaza and the lack of resources. She has written for The Boston Globe, Le Monde Diplomatique, The LA Times, and The Guardian. She also has been interviewed for Democracy Now! and the BBC.

In addition, her blog, "From Gaza, with Love," has attracted attention from journalists, activists, and academics around the world. Currently, El-Farra is co-authoring a book with Noam Chomsky. El-Farra writes about Gaza from different perspectives: as a physician, as a mother, daughter, and civilian. She reports on deaths, malnutrition, contaminated waters, lack of medicine, and the deterioration of health for the Palestinian people. She also talks about the effects of the Israeli aggression against Gaza on her children, and her separation from her mother and other family members, especially during the summer of 2006.

"Though we do not now live with ease, we live with resolve. Until the world pressures Israel to recognize our rights in our land, and to pursue a peace that brings freedom and security to Israelis and Palestinians, we both will continue to pay the price."



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“Though we do not now live with ease, we live with resolve,” El-Farra said in the Boston Globe article “My Life in Gaza.” “Until the world pressures Israel to recognize our rights in our land, and to pursue a peace that brings freedom and security to Israelis and Palestinians, we both will continue to pay the price.”

To visit Dr. El-Farra’s web site “From Gaza, with Love” see: <http://www.fromgaza.blogspot.com/>.

For information about a Middle East Children’s Alliance speaking tour featuring Dr. El-Farra see: <http://www.mecaforpeace.org/article.php?id=169>



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Nurit Peled-Elhanan

Nurit Peled-Elhanan is a lecturer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a peace activist, and one of the founders of the Parents Circle—Families Forum. In 2001, she was the recipient of the European Parliament’s Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

Born in Israel, Nurit Peled-Elhanan studied at the University of California in Los Angeles and the Sorbonne (University of Paris) and received her Ph.D. at Hebrew University. She specializes in Israeli educational materials, with emphasis on the visual and verbal presentation of Palestinian and Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Middle Eastern descent). Her current work analyzes the presentation of Palestinians in Israeli history and geography textbooks.

Peled-Elhanan’s family is active in the peace movement. Her father is the famous Israeli general-turned-peace activist, Mattiyahu Peled. Rami Elhanan, her husband, co-founded the Parents Circle—Families Forum. Her two sons are “refuseniks,” Israelis who refuse to serve in the occupied Palestinian territories with the Israeli military and are involved with Combatants for Peace, a movement of former Israeli and Palestinian fighters.

“For me, the other side, the enemy, is not the Palestinian people. For me the struggle is not between Palestinians and Israelis, nor between Jews and Arabs. The fight is between those who seek peace and those who seek war.”

In September 1997, Peled-Elhanan’s 13-year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. Following the death of her daughter, Peled-Elhanan commented, “My little girl was murdered because she was an Israeli by a young man who was humiliated, oppressed and desperate to the point of suicide and murder and inhumanity, just because he was a Palestinian.

“There is no basic moral difference between the soldier at the checkpoint who prevents a woman who is having a baby from going through, causing her to lose the baby, and the man who killed my daughter. And just as my daughter was a victim [of the Israeli occupation], so was he.”

The Parents Circle—Families Forum is made up of several hundred families, half Palestinian and half Israeli, who have lost immediate family members in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Peled-Elhanan has. Since its beginning, the organization has played a critical role in spearheading a reconciliation process between Israelis and Palestinians. Its programs include face-to-face reconciliation programs, art exhibitions, producing the TV series *Opening Hearts*, radio programs, and an international lecture series of bereaved family members.

One of the group’s most innovative activities is “Hello Peace,” a toll-free telephone service that connects Israelis and Palestinians. According to the organizers, more than 1,000,000 calls had been placed within the first 18 months of the project’s 2002 launch.

For more information on the Parents Circle—Families Forum, see <http://www.theparentscircle.com/about.asp>.

“For me, the other side, the enemy, is not the Palestinian people. For me the struggle is not between Palestinians and Israelis, nor between Jews and Arabs. The fight is between those who seek peace and those who seek war.”



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Rita Giacaman

Palestinian founder and director of the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University. Giacaman has chronicled the effects of the Israeli military occupation, and has advocated for women to have a prominent role in an eventual Palestinian state.

Rita Giacaman is the Director of the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University, a program she helped found in 1978. Giacaman also has been a seminal figure in the Palestinian women's movement, along with Zahira Kamal and many others.

Giacaman's two main interests, women's issues and public health, have led her to be one of the chief chroniclers of the effects of the Israeli occupation, especially since the Israeli reinvasion of the occupied Palestinian territories in 2002. At times in a statistical fashion and at other times in the voice of a passionate eyewitness, she has brought to the world's attention the deteriorating health and social conditions in her country. A very accomplished public speaker, she is sought out by conferences and groups all over the world.

"I do not think that after all these sacrifices, we will settle just for any state. We want the state we have declared to be progressive. That is what our work has been all about."

"What this population experienced in this unilateral war (2002) cannot be justified simply by the prerogatives of Israeli security," Giacaman says. "It can only point to a more insidious purpose for the reinvasion, a purpose that, in the Palestinian experience, could only have been the destruction of the structure and framework for the survival and the social development of the Palestinian nation."

"I do not think that after all these sacrifices, we will settle just for any state. We want the state we have declared to be progressive. That is what our work has been all about."

Giacaman's writing during the first intifada highlighted the leadership role women took in the nonviolence resistance movement. These writings were not only intended to educate audiences about the role of women in the Palestinian movement for self-determination, but also advocate for an important role for women in the Palestinian state as it develops.

The experience of women's leadership in the first intifada also influenced her public health work, which grew to include a more holistic view of the role that the public health sector in a potential Palestinian state should play. Rather than filling a strictly medical need, Giacaman feels the public health sector should take all of people's needs into account, including educational and environmental issues as well as gender and class issues.

Giacaman also provided important dispatches about life under occupation during the second intifada and has brought the realities of Palestinian suffering to a wider international audience. This has been especially important at a time when foreign journalists have had trouble getting access to communities devastated by violence and destruction.

Thus, in 2002, she published reports on the West Bank cities of Ramallah, Tulkarem, Nablus, and Jenin, carefully documenting the Israeli destruction of Palestinian infrastructures in places like the Ministry of Education, NGO offices like al-Haq, or Muwatin (the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy). These dispatches challenge the Israeli claim that they acted only to preserve their own security.



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"I do not think that after all these sacrifices, we will settle just for any state," she says. "We want the state we have declared to be progressive. That is what our work has been all about."

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Neta Golan

Israeli co-founder of the International Solidarity Movement, which brings international solidarity activists to the West Bank and Gaza to engage in nonviolence resistance. In 2002, Golan was voluntarily stranded in Yasser Arafat's compound that was besieged by Israeli forces. She wrote reports to the outside world about what she was experiencing.

Neta Golan was born in Tel Aviv and is a third generation Israeli. She describes her childhood as scary, loaded with fears instilled by her parents and fueled by the media. While she met Palestinian people working in construction and sanitation in Tel Aviv, barriers between the two peoples did not allow her to interact with Palestinian peoples as equals. She first heard of the occupation at the age of 15 during the first Palestinian Intifada.

This was her first venture into learning more about the Palestinian people and Israeli policies toward them. Having been raised with an awareness of oppression and dispossession in Jewish history, Golan's first instincts were to question how Israel could be maintaining the oppression of another people.

She started to enter the West Bank to facilitate dialogues and meetings between Palestinians and Israelis. Through these trips into and around the West Bank, she came to understand the reality of Palestinian life under the occupation, and her fear transformed into action to help the Palestinian people.

At the start of the second intifada between 2000 and 2001, Golan helped to found the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which brings international solidarity activists to the West Bank and Gaza to engage in nonviolent resistance. The international activists support the Palestinians in staging nonviolent demonstrations, confronting Israeli soldiers who violently suppress the Palestinians, and documenting human rights abuses and making those abuses public.

"What we want to do with the ISM is keep an avenue for popular struggle open," Golan said in an article in the magazine *Frontline* (Vol. 19, Issue 17) published in 2002. "When we accompany Palestinians, because of the racism of the whole system, the army doesn't treat us as targets the way they treat Palestinians. We want to expose the racist nature of the conflict by doing this, and also simply try to protect people so they can try to resist politically."

In 2002, Golan was voluntarily stranded in Yasser Arafat's presidential compound in Ramallah when it was besieged by Israeli forces. From within the compound, Golan wrote reports to the world outside of the compound about what was happening. She was hoping to reach the international community and move them to action, writing that "In the compound we are left wondering, not without fear, whether the international community will allow the permanent expansion of the already illegal occupation and the exile if not assassination of the Palestinian leader." (*Focus on Trade*, No. 76, 4/2002)

Some of her other actions include chaining herself to olive trees to stop the Israeli military from uprooting

"What we want to do with the ISM is keep an avenue for popular struggle open. When we accompany Palestinians, because of the racism of the whole system, the army doesn't treat us as targets the way they treat Palestinians. We want to expose the racist nature of the conflict by doing this, and also simply try to protect people so they can try to resist politically."



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them, and questioning the actions of Israeli soldiers at demonstrations,

While her family remains in Israel, Golan married a Palestinian man and lives with him and their children in the West Bank. She constantly deals with the ironies of her life: a resident of the occupied Palestinian territories, she can travel back and forth to Israel to visit with her family, but neither her husband nor her Palestinian friends can visit with their families if they are outside of the West Bank.

As she traveled to Israel to see her dying father for the last time, she recalled her Palestinian friend Amal, who “will never see her father again. Many thousands of Palestinians share her fate.” (Nablus to Tel Aviv, June 24, 2003).

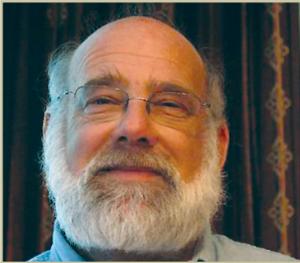


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Jeff Halper

Coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions. AFSC nominated Halper and Palestinian activist Ghassan Andoni for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

Jeff Halper has been a peace and human rights activist for more than three decades. Born in the United States, he participated in the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements of the 1960s. Halper immigrated to Israel in 1973 after attending rabbinical school and becoming a Vietnam War resister.

“We think, as Israelis, that Jews and Arabs should live together. Palestinians have rights of self-determination just like we have. We have to fight also for their rights. One of our slogans is ‘we refuse to be their enemies.’”

In Israel, Halper taught anthropology at Haifa and Ben-Gurion Universities. During his Israeli military service, he refused to bear arms or serve in the occupied Palestinian territories. In 1997, Halper co-founded the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHD). For this work, the AFSC nominated him and Palestinian activist Ghassan Andoni for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. He also serves on the steering committee of the UN Conference on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Since 1967 Israel has pursued a policy of expanding the settlement of Israeli civilians into the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which includes Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, while severely limiting Palestinian growth, confining the population to small enclaves. Under the guise of planning and the law, the natural development of Palestinian towns and villages is frozen by various means, including land expropriation, discriminatory planning and zoning policies, restrictive granting of building permits and the demolition of Palestinian homes. According to ICAHD, since 1967 more than 18,000 Palestinian homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been destroyed by the Israeli military or civil authority in defiance of international law.

“We think, as Israelis, that Jews and Arabs should live together,” Halper says. “Palestinians have rights of self-determination just like we have. We have to fight also for their rights. One of our slogans is ‘we refuse to be their enemies.’”

As the coordinator of ICAHD, Halper has led nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience against the Israeli occupation authorities. He has put his own personal safety on the line, facing bulldozers in front of Palestinian homes and confronting Israeli soldiers. He also organizes Israelis, Palestinians, and internationals to help rebuild demolished Palestinian homes.

A tireless writer and speaker, Halper travels extensively to build international support for ICAHD. He also raises important issues not covered in mainstream media, such as the “matrix of control” – the framework created by Israeli settlements, settler-only highways, and the Separation Wall. He has also spoken for several years about Israeli apartheid policies in the Occupied Territories. As Halper explains,

We are against the Israeli policy of the occupation and the displacement. If you create an apartheid situation, if you lock another people into prison, in the end, you cannot develop a healthy, normal, and prosperous society. The occupation, conflict, terrorism, settlements, all affects the Israeli society and economy. As long as the occupation continues, Israel itself can not be free.

For more information on ICAHD’s activities, see www.icahd.org/eng/ .



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For more information on house demolitions, see www.afsc.org/israel-palestine/learn/House-demolitions.pdf

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Amira Hass

Israeli journalist who lives and reports from the Occupied Territories. Author of two books about the situation in Israel/Palestine.

Born in 1956 in Jerusalem, Amira Hass is the daughter of two survivors of the notorious Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Hass has described one memory that has been central to her — her mother telling of being marched from a cattle train to Bergen-Belsen.

“She and the other women had been ten days in the train from Yugoslavia,” Hass says. “They were sick and some were dying. Then my mother saw these German women looking at the prisoners, just looking. This image became very formative in my upbringing, this despicable ‘looking from the side.’ It’s as if I was there and saw it myself.”

“To me, Gaza embodies the entire saga of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it represents the central contradiction of the state of Israel—democracy for some, dispossession for others; it is our exposed nerve.”

Hass attended Hebrew and Tel Aviv Universities. She began her work as a journalist in 1989 as a staff editor for Ha’aretz newspaper. In 1991, she began to report from the occupied Palestinian territories.

Hass’s reporting has been just the opposite of “looking from the side.” She lived in Gaza from 1993 and Ramallah, in the West Bank, since 1997.

“In the end, my desire to live in Gaza stemmed neither from adventurism nor from insanity, but from that dread of being a bystander, from my need to understand, down to the last detail, a world that is, to the best of my political and historical comprehension, a profoundly Israeli creation,” Hass says. “To me, Gaza embodies the entire saga of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it represents the central contradiction of the state of Israel — democracy for some, dispossession for others; it is our exposed nerve.”

“To me, Gaza embodies the entire saga of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it represents the central contradiction of the state of Israel—democracy for some, dispossession for others; it is our exposed nerve.”

Despite restrictions from both Israeli military authorities and from the Palestinian National Authority, Hass wrote courageously and compassionately about the daily hardships faced by the Palestinian people living under occupation. Hass became the first and only Israeli journalist to live in and report from the Occupied Territories.

Her reporting has earned her many international awards, including the Press Freedom Hero award from the International Press Institute in 2000, the Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Award in 2002, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 2003, and the Anna Lindh Memorial Fund award in 2004.

In awarding her the World Press Freedom award, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura said, “Amira Hass has been showing outstanding professional commitment and independence, as well as personal courage, over the past decade. If peace is to be established between Israelis and Palestinians it will be thanks to people like Ms. Hass who are able to look at the facts and understand them.”

Hass is also the author of two books, *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land Under Siege* and *Reporting from Ramallah: An Israeli Journalist in an Occupied Land*.



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Jad Isaac

Environmental expert and Director General of the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem, which is dedicated to “promoting applied research, technology transfer, sustainable development, and self reliance of the Palestinian people through greater control over their natural resources.”

Jad Isaac was born in the Bethlehem suburb of Beit Sahour and has lived there his entire life. After attending Cairo University, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom and joined the faculty of Bethlehem University, where he served as Dean of the

In 1988, during the first intifada, he undertook a project to help Palestinians resist closures and economic sanctions by supplying thousands of besieged Palestinians with seeds, trees, fertilizer, tubing for water irrigation, chickens, and chicken coops that enabled them to be more self-sustaining and maintain their dignity as free human beings. For these grassroots, nonviolent efforts that served almost 100,000 people, Isaac was arrested and jailed by Israel for six months in 1989.

“The Intifada is like a gene,” Isaac was quoted as saying in the book *To Rule Jerusalem* by Richard D Hecht and Roger Friedland (p. 329). “It is more than rock-throwing, more than not paying taxes, more than solidarity. It’s going back to the land. All our life is humiliation. Only the land will bring us back to self-respect.”

After his release, Isaac founded and has served as Director General of the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ) in 1990. This important organization is dedicated to “promoting applied research, technology transfer, sustainable development, and self-reliance of the Palestinian people through greater control over their natural resources.”

As author of *A Geopolitical Atlas of Palestine and the Palestine Water Crisis*, Isaac now monitors and assesses the “magnitude of environmental degradation caused by politically induced changes to Palestinian land and natural resources.”

In bringing these changes to the world’s attention through lectures, satellite photos and power point demonstrations, he has attempted to slow down the Israeli annexation of the West Bank through its land confiscation, settlement activity, and Separation Wall.

His reputation for environmental expertise has made him a valuable advisor to various Palestinian negotiating teams, especially during the negotiations that took place in Taba, Egypt, in January 2001 regarding the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

To learn more about the Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), please see www.arij.org.

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Zahira Kamal

Head of the Federation of Palestinian Women's Action Committee, part of the Women's Work Committee (WWC). The WWC, which Kamal helped found, addresses the problems women faced in a patriarchal society, including illiteracy and lack of job skills. She was put under town arrest from 1980 to 1986 for her affiliation with leftist groups.

Zahira Kamal was born in 1945, the eldest of eight children, in the Wadi Joz district of East Jerusalem. After completing her college education in Cairo in 1968, Kamal returned to Jerusalem and started her work at the Women's Teacher Training College with the United Nations Relief Work Agency (UNRWA) in Ramallah, teaching women how to prepare for jobs in teaching physics and other sciences.

Her activism began with a charitable organization, teaching women crafts and then helping them to sell their products. She eventually started to feel that this was not helping the larger problems that women faced in a patriarchal society. Therefore, in 1974, Kamal and some of her colleagues started to work on a project that would grow into the Women's Work Committee (WWC), founded in 1978. It was also around this time that she entered the realm of political activism, aligning herself with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Kamal was head of the Federation of Palestinian Women's Action Committees of the WWC. The Federation undertook several efforts. The first was to erase illiteracy, encouraging women to partake in discussions and idea sharing, and teaching them skills that would enable them to hold jobs and become self-sufficient. She believes that taking women out of the house is "the first step toward social liberation." Kamal also created a family planning program, started and maintained childcare programs for the newly working mothers, and taught time management so that the women would be equipped to handle their paid and domestic jobs.

"We like to stress that the women's movement is part of the national movement," Kamal says. "We believe that both personal and national liberation go hand in hand."

In 1979, Kamal was imprisoned in Israel for six months for her affiliation with leftist groups. Afterward, she was put under town arrest for six and a half years, from 1980 to 1986. Town arrest meant that she was confined to her home from sunset until one hour after sunrise, and was banned from leaving Jerusalem. Despite this, she continued to teach in Ramallah, sending papers to her students early in the morning with the first UN vehicle that left Jerusalem for Ramallah, and receiving the papers from her students with the last car to return to Jerusalem at 2:30 p.m.

While she shies away from the media spotlight, Kamal continues to be outspoken and open about her opinions concerning Palestinian women's double struggle: liberation from Israeli occupation and male domination.

In addition to participating on the Palestinian negotiating team during peace talks with Israel, Kamal was the General Director of the Directorate for Gender Planning and Development with the Palestinian Authority and served as the Coordinator of the Women's Affairs Technical Committee. Currently, Kamal serves on the boards of Jerusalem Link, a joint Israeli-Palestinian initiative, Women's Center for Legal and Social Counseling, and the Jerusalem Center for Women.

"We like to stress that the women's movement is part of the national movement," Kamal says. "We believe that both personal and national liberation go hand in hand."



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Laila Kanafani

Artist and educator, who established the Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Center in Lebanon to honor the memory of her father and to work with Palestinian refugee children.

Laila Kanafani is the daughter of the late Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani. After earning an art degree, she traveled to Denmark to work with children. There she read an article about holistic approaches to early childhood education that said a child has one hundred languages, but school and society deprive the child of 99 of these languages. Intrigued by this philosophy, Kanafani went to Italy and took a seminar in its teachings. In 1993, she returned

to Lebanon and introduced this theory to the children at the Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Center, established in 1974 to honor her father.

Close living conditions for the Palestinian refugees prompted Kanafani to find creative ways to establish spaces for the children's art projects. She transformed kitchens, hallways, and even bomb shelters into art spaces in six different refugee camps in Lebanon. These areas designated areas gave children an opportunity to thrive.

Kanafani does not impose limits on the tools with which the children can paint. They use anything they can think of, including forks, toothbrushes, and tissues. They are provided with a multitude of colors for their projects and can choose to paint in any way that is comfortable for them - sitting, standing, or lying down.

In 2000, Kanafani instituted a self-portrait project with her students. The process involved mirrors and magnifying glasses that the children used to study every aspect of their faces. The project lasted for about five years. It included a series of interviews, sketching, and miming so that the children would understand self-identity and perception. Kanafani edited and published a book of these paintings titled *Like Roses in the Wind: Self-Portraits and Thoughts*. The book documents the identity of fourth generation Palestinian Refugees.

Other themes for the children's paintings have included horses and the impact of the intifada on them and their families. Each year the artwork is exhibited inside and outside of the refugee camps, and offered for sale, bringing between \$50-\$250 a painting.

Laila Kanafani, and her Danish mother Anni Kanafani, were awarded the Gerda prize by Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 2006.

To learn more about the Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Center see http://www.kanafani.dk/gkk_main_eng.htm.



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Yehudit Keshet

Israeli co-founder of Machsom Watch, a human rights organization that monitors Israeli checkpoints and their effect on the Palestinians' daily lives.

Yehudit Keshet was born in Wales to Orthodox Jews who survived the Holocaust. She came to Israel in 1958, returned to the United Kingdom for a time, but settled permanently in Israel in 1974.

After the death of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, she became a political peace activist. In 2001, along with two other Israeli women, Ronnee Jaeger and Adi Kuntsman, founded Machsom Watch (machsom is Hebrew for "checkpoint"), a women's organization that documents the devastating effects of Israeli checkpoints on Palestinian society.

"There is no alternative but to end the occupation, retreat from all the territories, and dismantle the checkpoints. None of this can happen if we don't view the Palestinians as a nation with the right to self-definition, the right to exist with dignity as a nation, and the right of return as an equal value for both nations."

Checkpoints have become one of the defining features of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the end of 2006, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Jerusalem stated that there were more than 520 Israeli "permanent and temporary checkpoints and physical road-blocks disrupting all aspects of Palestinian life" in the West Bank. The checkpoints in many cases keep communities and families divided and have become the site of frequent Israeli abuses toward Palestinians trying to travel within the occupied Palestinian territories.

Machsom Watch, which now has a membership of more than 500 women, has been monitoring human rights violations at checkpoints on the West Bank. Keshet explains the goal of Machsom Watch as "our very presence challenges the security-oriented ideology of the state of Israel. Every single day we see with our own eyes that there is absolutely no connection between checkpoints and security. Checkpoints only provide Valium for the Israeli public, while they mean considerable distress and harassment for the Palestinian population."

The organization has documented hundreds of cases where, at checkpoints, the Israeli military prevented Palestinians from reaching a nearby hospital. In addition, they've noted how the structure of the checkpoints ensures that travelers must endure unwarranted humiliation and delay as they seek to move within the West Bank. Machsom Watch's work has brought these stories to Israeli and international audiences.

In addition, the presence of these Israeli women and their silent vigil at the many checkpoints on the West Bank and around Jerusalem has modified the behavior of the soldiers on duty. While witnesses watch attentively, soldiers try to avoid media attention for possible human rights abuses.

"There is no alternative but to end the occupation, retreat from all the territories, and dismantle the checkpoints. None of this can happen if we don't view the Palestinians as a nation with the right to self-definition, the right to exist with dignity as a nation, and the right of return as an equal value for both nations."



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Yehudit Keshet has recently published a book, *Checkpoint Watch: Testimonies from Occupied Palestine* (2006), a series of eyewitness reports, with a running commentary from Keshet herself.

Because of its high profile and success, Machsom Watch has recently attracted vehement accusations from Israel's settler groups. But even their notoriety is a sign that the organization's truth-telling is succeeding in building a growing awareness of Israel's military occupation.

To learn more about Machsom Watch please see <http://www.machsomwatch.org/>.



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Fatima Khaldi

Palestinian activist, social worker and community organizer, Khaldi is helping lead the nonviolent grassroots resistance to the Separation Wall in the West Bank.

Fatima Khaldi was born in Gaza, but her parents are refugees from pre-1948 Palestine. She is an activist and social worker who began her work in the women's movement against Israeli occupation during the first intifada. Along with the Union of Palestinian Women, she set up four kindergartens which functioned as a school for children during the day, and a meeting place for the Palestinian women in the afternoon.

The women used these centers to learn Palestinian history and to plan demonstrations. Eventually, all the kindergartens were shut down by the Israeli military.

"We carry out demonstrations to show the whole world that we reject Israeli violence and racism. We believe that the justice of our cause, and our determination, are stronger than any Israeli weapon, and that Palestinian women are capable of accomplishing what seems impossible for a better life."

Khaldi moved to the Shufat Refugee Camp in Jerusalem to work on rehabilitating drug addicts. She found that women were at the heart of the political movements there. Khaldi explains, "Palestinian women are deeply rooted in their land, and work hard to support our families. Women suffer greatly when families lose their land, often the primary source of income. We raise olive trees as if they are our children. When we lose them, we grieve deeply, and this grief affects everyone in the household."

Khaldi also worked as a journalist for a newspaper that was shut down by the Israeli civil administration in the occupied Palestinian territories. For a time, she worked with the blind, and then branched out, working with villages in the West Bank to build kindergartens, establish democratic women's committees, and create agricultural and sewing projects. She also worked as an organizer for the Working Women's Union, and with the mothers of children with psychological problems.

Currently, Khaldi works with the International Women's Peace Service (IWPS), and is the driving force behind Women for Life in Salfit, a region of the West Bank near the large Israeli settlement of Ariel. The latter group has mobilized against the Separation Wall since 2002. The protesters in the Salfit along with thousands of others from across the West Bank have nonviolently demonstrated against the Separation Wall. It is dividing Palestinian lands and natural resources, and having a heavy impact on Palestinian families. In addition to their protests, the women have traveled from village to village providing educational workshops on the effects of the wall. They have built relationships with Palestinian women citizens of Israel, who have joined the women of the West Bank during their demonstrations.

After a two week summer camp in July 2004, the group Flowers Against the Occupation was formed. Flowers Against the Occupation is a group for young girls who live in the occupied West Bank. This group meets

"We carry out demonstrations to show the whole world that we reject Israeli violence and racism. We believe that the justice of our cause, and our determination, are stronger than any Israeli weapon, and that Palestinian women are capable of accomplishing what seems impossible for a better life."



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once a week for workshops on topics including English, art, dance, music, girls' health issues, building girls' confidence and violence against girls.

With passion, Khaldi says, "We carry out demonstrations to show the whole world that we reject Israeli violence and racism. We believe that the justice of our cause, and our determination, are stronger than any Israeli weapon, and that Palestinian women are capable of accomplishing what seems impossible for a better life."

To learn more about Flowers Against the Occupation please see <http://www.needleinthegroove.org/flowers.htm>.

To learn more Women for Life and and the International Women's Peace Service please see <http://www.iwps-pal.org/en/index.php>.



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Samaha Khalil

Palestinian leader and founder of the Society of Ina'ash El-Usra, which empowers women by training them in skills they could use in their own homes. Khalil ran against Yasser Arafat in the first Palestinian presidential elections. She died in 1999.

Samaha Khalil was born in 1923 in the Palestinian village of Anabta in the West Bank where her father was mayor. She received her early education at the Friends Girls School in Ramallah and at the age of seventeen she married Salameh Khalil. Her life was a comfortable one until the War of 1948 when she and her family became refugees. Then, she lived in Gaza, selling her jewelry to survive until leaving by boat to Lebanon. The experience of war and of being a refugee shaped her life as she struggled to gain back her country by shaking off the effects of Israeli occupation and oppression.

Settling in Ramallah after she returned from exile in the Arab world, she founded the Society of Ina'ash El-Usra, (Arabic for "the preservation or renewal of the family") in 1965. The organization empowers women through vocational skills trainings. The center also offers residential child care and, through its sale of embroidery and crafts, helps preserve Palestinian heritage and culture during the years of occupation. From modest beginnings, Ina'ash El-Usra has grown to have a \$6 million annual budget, giving Palestinians the opportunity to maintain their dignity and hope as they struggle to maintain their presence in their historic home.

"I will not offer you a chair as long as you come as an occupier, but in the future, if you were to come in as a friend, I will slaughter a lamb in your honor," she once said to the Israeli military governor when he broke into Ina'ash El-Usra to search her files.

Samaha was also called "Um Khalil," meaning "mother of Khalil". (Um is Arabic for mother.) "Um" was an apt name for her, since she came to represent the mother of all of Palestine as far as the affection of her people was concerned.

Her political activity led her to become the only woman on the National Guidance Committee that set policy for the Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Her stature as a leader is best revealed by the fact that she ran against Yasser Arafat in the first Palestinian presidential elections.

By no means a pacifist, she gradually became reconciled to a two state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. She remained a major political force until her death in 1999.

"I will not offer you a chair as long as you come as an occupier, but in the future, if you were to come in as a friend, I will slaughter a lamb in your honor."

(On speaking to the Israeli military governor when he broke into Ina'ash El-Usra to search her files)



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Felicia Langer

Israeli lawyer and activist who has worked extensively for Palestinian human rights. She has written numerous books that describe Israel's widespread use of torture against political prisoners as well as human rights violations.

Felicia Langer was born in Poland in 1930 to a Jewish family who fled from Poland to Russia before the Nazi invasion of their country. As Jewish refugees, Langer's family lived in poverty as an underprivileged minority, and she lost her father due to the harsh living conditions. When the war ended, Langer and her mother returned to Poland to find that most of her extended family had been killed by the Nazis.

This traumatic childhood experience would haunt Langer and help shape her world view.

"When I met Palestinian refugees for the first time, I could feel their pain. You never forget the horrifying experiences of life as a refugee."

In 1949, Langer married Mieczyslaw Langer, a survivor of five Nazi concentration camps. Together the couple relocated to Israel where Langer studied law at Hebrew University. She received her law degree in 1965. The 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem was a crucial event for Langer. She opened a law office in Jerusalem to defend the Palestinians of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. In her professional career she fought against home demolitions, land confiscations, deportation, torture, and other abuses. Moreover, she documented these abuses and made them public. She was vice president of the Israeli League for Human Civil Rights.

Langer published many books that she based on notes from her diaries, including *With My Own Eyes* (1975), *These Are My Brothers* (1979), *From My Diary* (1980), *The Story Written by the People* (1981), *An Age of Stone* (1988), the autobiographical *Fury and Hope* (1993), and *Quo vadis Israel? The New Intifada of the Palestinians* (2001). These books describe Israel's widespread use of torture against political prisoners as well as human rights violations. She also traveled on speaking tours of the United States and Europe, spreading the stories of her clients about the suffering of Palestinians under the occupation and as political prisoners.

In more than two decades of legal aid to the Palestinian peoples, representing them in military courts, Langer was exposed to both verbal and physical abuses by her fellow Israelis, and she often received death threats. In 1990 she closed her law office as a public statement about the fallacy of Israel's legal system. Most of the clients she represented lost their cases to the Israeli military courts. She left Israel for Germany where she accepted a teaching position in a German university.

Langer received many awards for her work for Palestinian human rights and justice. In 1990 she received the Right Livelihood Award, which is an alternative to the Nobel Peace Prize, and also became an honorary citizen of the city of Nazareth. In 1991 she was honored with the Bruno-Kreisler Award for Outstanding Achievements in the area of human rights. In 2005, Langer received the Erich-Mühsam-Prize for her ongoing

"When I met Palestinian refugees for the first time, I could feel their pain," Langer said during an interview for The Daily Star newspaper. "You never forget the horrifying experiences of life as a refugee."



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Ruchama Marton

Israeli psychiatrist and founder and president of the Israeli activists' organization Physicians for Human Rights - Israel. Marton continues to advocate for Palestinian rights and is also the recipient of the Emil Grunzweig Award for Human Rights and the Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights.

Dr. Ruchama Marton was born in 1937 in Jerusalem, and was raised there. Marton became an activist at an early age while serving compulsory military duty in the Israeli army.

She became a women's rights activist at that time, and at age 19 was discharged from military service after she refused to obey an order she believed to be sexist. While attending Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Medical School, where female students comprised only 10% of the student body, she continued advocating for peace and women's rights.

"We see our work at Physicians for Human Rights not only as a form of cooperation and solidarity with Palestinians, but as a form of protest as well – we move and pass where it is forbidden, and we never ask for permits."

The shameful health situation she observed in Gaza moved her to found the non-profit organization Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-Israel) in 1988, which works to increase awareness of the health and human rights denied to Palestinians. They also provide medical care to Palestinians. They frequently sponsor mobile clinics in the occupied Palestinian territories, and have established a free clinic for migrant workers.

The restriction on the movement of medical equipment and patients in the occupied territories depresses the medical standards for Palestinians, and PHR-Israel works to rectify this. PHR-Israel also records the violations of the Geneva Conventions by the Israeli military.

"While the State of Israel has assigned the responsibility for medical care, education and other important aspects of life to the Palestinians, Israel simultaneously denies them the authority to attend to these matters," Marton says. "This approach, so disrespectful and morally lacking, is unlikely to succeed."

In the late 1990s, Marton focused her criticism on Israel's treatment of Palestinian prisoners. She brought to light the torture and the inhumane conditions of the prisoners, and the lack of care or treatment for psychiatric problems. In her essay, "The Struggle Against Torture in Israel: The White Coat Passes Like a Shadow," she described the role physicians played in allowing the torture to take place in prisons.

After several years of Marton's activism, the Israeli Supreme Court declared torture illegal in 1999. Later that year, the Supreme Court awarded her, and PHR-Israel, Israel's highest human rights honor, the Emil Grunzweig Award for Human Rights.

In 2002, she received the Jonathan Mann Award for Global Health and Human Rights along with Mr. Salah

"We see our work at Physicians for Human Rights not only as a form of cooperation and solidarity with Palestinians, but as a form of protest as well – we move and pass where it is forbidden, and we never ask for permits."



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Haj Yehya, who also works in PHR-Israel.

When asked what compelled her to found PHR-Israel and become an activist for Palestinian rights, she says, "I hate when people lie to me, the TV, the government. The truth of the oppression was so overwhelming that I had to do something. I thought that if the truth were known people would wake up and they would do something."

For more information about Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights-Israel see <http://www.phr.org.il/phr/>.



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Rela Mazali

Writer and lecturer who co-founded the New Profile movement. New Profile challenges militarism in Israeli society and supports those who resist serving in the military.

Rela Mazali was born in 1948 at Kibbutz Ma'ayan Baruch in the Upper Galilee. Her mother was an American from Kansas City who moved to Israel as a Zionist-Socialist activist eager to build an egalitarian homeland. Rela Mazali spent most of her childhood in Tel Aviv, where she stayed to study philosophy and comparative literature at Tel Aviv University.

Mazali is a writer and author of several books, short stories, academic articles, essays and educational curricula on topics including gender equality, children's rights, and peace education. She is the mother of two

Mazali is a major figure in the peace movement and the feminist movement in Israel. She co-founded the New Profile movement to de-militarize Israeli civil society in 1998. She has also worked for Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, consulted with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Ford Foundation, and was one of eight Israeli women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.

"Personally, I have felt for a long time that Israeli society will finally find its way to end the occupation when the price it's paying really begins to hurt. That is one of the reasons that New Profile welcomes and supports all forms of refusal to serve in the military," wrote Mazali in 2005.

"Personally, I have felt for a long time that Israeli society will finally find its way to end the occupation when the price it's paying really begins to hurt."

In their work, New Profile raises the question: "Are personal and political security truly achieved through military force?" They sponsor lectures, workshops, press events, educational conferences, and other public activities to bring attention to the ways that Israeli culture portray the use of force as an acceptable, normal means for solving political problems. They have shown how this is done in commonplace ads, children's literature, school books, magazines, billboards, and other media.

A key area of New Profile's work is supporting all men and women's right to resist the draft, conscientious objection, and refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories. Both legal and moral support is offered to conscientious objectors and others questioning military service. New Profile's also counsels women whose lives have been damaged by militarization, including those sexually harassed in the military.

Mazali's says that her direct involvement with young Israelis involved in resisting military service sustains her "real sense of energy and hope."

Mazali also frequently takes part in U.S. speaking tours. In the U.S., she highlights the work of New Profile and liaises with communities in the U.S. unfamiliar with the work of the Israeli peace movement. She has traveled with Palestinian women on some of these speaking tours, highlighting the joint efforts needed to end the military occupation.

Mazali also continues to be a voice in Israel bringing attention to conditions in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. At a December 2006 rally in Tel Aviv, organized to highlight the Israeli siege of Gaza, Mazali stated:



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“The siege of Gaza is fire in disguise. Its victims aren’t counted among Israel’s casualties. It creates a dominion of creeping, blind death; it doesn’t even pretend to distinguish combatants from civilians. But first of all it kills the helpless. Let’s be clear about this: Israel has made Gaza a death compound.”

For more information about New Profile please see www.newprofile.org.



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Forty short biographies of Israeli and Palestinian peace builders who have struggled to end the occupation and build a just future for both Palestinians and Israelis.



Jessica Montell

Executive director of B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights monitoring group.

Jessica Montell is the executive director of B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. The organization was created in 1989 to promote human rights by shedding light on human rights violations in the Occupied Territories and inspiring action and understanding amongst Israelis.

“Palestinian human rights is the challenge to Israel as a democratic, moral state.”

Montell was born and raised in Berkeley, California, in a Reform Jewish family. She visited Israel as a teenager and later for a semester while a sophomore at Oberlin College where she earned a degree in women’s studies and Judaic and Near Eastern Studies. She visited again as a recent college graduate when she volunteered with Hamoked, a human rights organization.

After a year in Israel she went back to the United States and started her graduate study at Columbia University, focusing her master’s degree work on human rights. In 1995, Montell became an Israeli citizen and began working as a Development Director of B’Tselem. She later became Executive Director in 2001.

“Palestinian human rights is the challenge to Israel as a democratic, moral state.”

B’Tselem’s work includes public education through reports and research on the realities of occupation. This includes detailed information about human rights abuses such as fatal shootings by the Israeli military, restrictions on Palestinians’ movement, settler violence, and the building of the Separation Wall to segregate Palestinian villages.

In a piece for the Los Angeles Times, published in 2004, Montell writes of the Wall, “It is obvious to anyone who studies the map that although the barrier was conceived for security reasons, the route is dictated by politics. In Jerusalem, the barrier divides Palestinians from each other, rather than separating Israelis from Palestinians, and does so in order to strengthen Israel’s claim to a united Jerusalem as its capital.”

B’Tselem’s work helps inform policymakers; it is regularly shared with Knesset members, some of whom help bring these matters to public attention. B’Tselem also works with journalists, providing them with important information on human rights violations.

In addition to its work within Israel, B’Tselem also works in the Occupied Territories by participating in protests, sharing information from their research, and responding to problems and requests from Palestinian leaders.

In the Oberlin Alumni Magazine, Montell says “My best hope for the future is that B’Tselem will be superfluous. ... I used to think this might be possible in 10 years; now that doesn’t seem likely. But I am still hopeful for the 50-year prognosis. If I wasn’t, I don’t think I could be raising children here. B’Tselem is part of building this hope.”

Montell lives in Jerusalem with her husband Avi Ben-Tzur, a planner at the Ministry of Environment, and their children.

For more information about B’Tselem see www.btselem.org.



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Ilan Pappé

Israeli “New Historian” who has used declassified Israeli government documents to publish new views related to the birth of Israel in 1948.

Ilan Pappé, an Israeli historian, was born in 1954 in Haifa of German-Jewish parents who escaped Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Pappé went to Hebrew University in the 1970s, and it was there that he says that “I was exposed to the plight of the Palestinians in Israel as an undergraduate in the department of Middle Eastern History. It was then and there that I found my love for history and developed my belief that the present cannot be understood and the future changed without first trying to decipher

its historical dimensions.”

He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Oxford in 1984, where he utilized newly declassified material in Israeli archives to analyze the 1948 war of independence. Using these documents, Pappé challenged many of the foundational Israeli assumptions about the war and described what happened that year as essentially an ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population. “This conviction informed not only my work as a historian but also affected significantly my political views and activity,” he says.

“[The end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip] can only be a first step because such a withdrawal does not solve the predicament of most of the Palestinian people, who live in refugee camps or are citizens of Israel,” adds Pappé. “The end of the occupation is not equivalent to the end of the conflict...it is a precondition for peace.”

Pappé has been a senior lecturer of political science at Haifa University and the Academic Director of the Research Institute for Peace at Givat Haviva. He is to become Chair of History at Exeter University in England.

Pappé is known as one of one of Israel’s “New Historians.” The New Historians is a loose classification of historians who have published new views related to the birth of Israel in 1948. As with Pappé, these individuals use declassified Israeli government documents to dispute the accepted narrative about the establishment of Israel, expulsion of the Palestinians, Arab intentions towards Israel, and the prospects for peace between Israel and the Arab states. Other Israeli New Historians include Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and Tom Segev.

Pappé’s books include:

- The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951
- The Israel/Palestine Question,
- A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples
- The Modern Middle East
- The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

To learn more about Ilan Pappé see his website www.ilanpappe.org.

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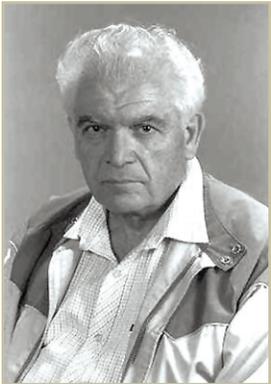


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Matti Peled

Israeli who was a military officer before becoming a leading peace activist and proponent of dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization and of Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Peled died in 1994.

Mattityahu (Matti) Peled evolved from being a Major General in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to a leading peace activist and proponent of both dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and a complete withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories.

Peled was born in 1923 in Haifa. Active against British rule in the 1940s, he became part of the group of military officers who led the newly-founded IDF in 1948. During the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip following the 1956 Israeli-Egyptian War, Peled served as the military commander of Gaza. This became a crucial turning point in his life as, in his own words, he was “lord and master” over hundreds of thousands of Palestinians without knowing their language or culture. This led him to a life-long interest in the study of Arabic.

Peled retired from the military in 1969. In 1975, he became a co-founder of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (ICIPP) and its chief coordinator. The ICIPP charter called for Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and the creation of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both Israel and Palestine. He took a leading role in establishing secret meetings between Israelis and PLO leaders.

With the outbreak of the First Lebanon War in 1982, Peled supported the reserve officers who refused to take part in the war. In 1986 he was elected to the Knesset on behalf of the Progressive List for Peace, an Arab-Jewish party. In 1993, he helped form Gush Shalom, the Israeli Peace Bloc. From this platform he criticized Israeli human rights violations in the Occupied Territories and expressed opposition to the growing settlement activity.

His final years were spent advancing mutual recognition and respect between Israelis and Palestinians. He was the first Israeli professor of Arabic literature to introduce studies of Palestinian literature into the academic curriculum. His translation of Saleem Barakat’s *The Sages of Darkness* won him the Translators’ Association prize. In 1994, he died of liver cancer, struggling until the end to continue to write—including *Requiem for Oslo*, his last article, in which he expressed his disappointment with the Oslo Accords.

“He was a soldier in the service of peace, one of those who run first and lay themselves down on the barbed wire, to let others pass over their backs,” said Aryeh Lova Eliav, an educator and veteran peace activist, upon Peled’s death.

Two and a half years later, in September 1997, Peled’s 14-year-old granddaughter, Smadar Elhanan, was among the victims of a Palestinian suicide bomber. Peled’s daughter and son-in-law, Nurit Peled-Elhanan and Rami Elhanan, became founders and organizers of the Parents’ Circle/Families’ Forum. This organization brings together Israelis and Palestinians who have lost love ones in order to support each other and to oppose further bloodshed.

“He was a soldier in the service of peace, one of those who run first and lay themselves down on the barbed wire, to let others pass over their backs.” (Aryeh Lova Eliav, educator and veteran peace activist.)

His son-in-law said, “I am sure that this is what Smadar’s grandfather would have wanted me to do.”

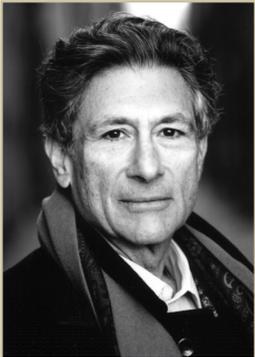


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Edward Said

Palestinian author, professor, and advocate for peace with justice in Israel/Palestine. Said was a former member of the Palestinian National Congress who also taught at Columbia University and wrote extensively on Palestinian rights.

Professor Edward Said was born in Jerusalem on November 1, 1935, to a wealthy, educated Palestinian family. At the age of 12, while attending the Anglican St. George's Academy in Jerusalem, his family became refugees when Jerusalem was annexed and became part of the State of Israel. He was sent to study in Massachusetts in a private college preparatory school at 15.

Said attended Princeton University from which he received a B.A., and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard University. While in college, Said was too preoccupied with his work to pay much attention to Palestinian politics and the problems of his homeland, as he was excelling as both a student and a pianist. However, the second wave of Palestinian refugees created by the 1967 war devastated him. After this, he would reconnect with his Palestinian identity.

“Once we grant that Palestinians and Israelis are there to stay, then the decent conclusion has to be the need for peaceful coexistence and genuine reconciliation—real self-determination. Unfortunately, injustice and belligerence don't diminish by themselves; they have to be attacked by all concerned. Now is the time.”

In 1963 he joined the faculty at Columbia University as Professor of English and Comparative Literature and in 1992 he became University Professor—Columbia's highest academic rank. His most influential book, *Orientalism*, was published in 1978. In it, he argued that Western writings about the East are permeated with a bias that is founded in the deeply rooted colonial structure between East and West, and that the East is always identified as a weak and feminized “other.” *Orientalism* had a major influence on the fields of literary theory, cultural studies, human geography, and history, as well as the general academic discourse concerning Palestine and Israel.

Said became one of the most influential advocates for Palestinian rights in the United States, beginning in the 1970s and continuing until his death in September 2003 at the age of 67.

“Once we grant that Palestinians and Israelis are there to stay, then the decent conclusion has to be the need for peaceful coexistence and genuine reconciliation—real self-determination,” Said remarked in 1999. “Unfortunately injustice and belligerence don't diminish by themselves; they have to be attacked by all concerned. Now is the time.”

He was an independent member of the Palestinian National Congress from 1977 until 1991, when he resigned in protest over the process leading up to the signing of the Oslo Accords. He did not believe that the Oslo Accords would lead to a truly independent Palestinian state. His relationship with the Palestinian Author-

“Once we grant that Palestinians and Israelis are there to stay, then the decent conclusion has to be the need for peaceful coexistence and genuine reconciliation—real self-determination,” Said remarked in 1999. “Unfortunately injustice and belligerence don't diminish by themselves; they have to be attacked by all concerned. Now is the time.”



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ity was a sour one until he praised Yasser Arafat in 2000 for rejecting the Camp David Accords. In 2002, Said helped establish the Palestinian National Initiative, or al-Mubadara, as a democratic, reformist, third alternative in Palestinian politics to Fatah and Hamas.

Said received numerous awards, among them Columbia's Trilling Award and the Wellek Prize of the American Comparative Literature Association. He contributed many publications to the academic world in a wide range of fields, from music and literature to political theory. His most renowned books include *Orientalism* (1978), *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *Out of Place: A Memoir* (1999), and *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* with the conductor Daniel Barenboim (2003). Said regularly wrote on a variety of topics for the *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Counterpunch*, and *Al Ahram*, among many publications.

In 1999 he founded the West-East Divan Orchestra with his friend Daniel Barenboim—an Argentine-Israeli conductor. With Said's help, Barenboim taught master music classes to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Until his death, Said remained a preeminent voice for peace with justice in Israel/Palestine.



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Isam Sartawi

Palestinian physician who founded the Red Crescent Medical Society and the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP), a non-combatant group that offered medical assistance to Palestinian resistance fighters. Nominated by the AFSC for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

Dr. Isam Sartawi was born in Acre, Palestine, in 1935. He received his medical training in Iraq and the United States, returning from there in 1967 to join the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). While he never established a medical practice, he was a founder of the Red Crescent Medical Society and in 1967 founded the Active Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (AOLP), a non-combatant group that offered medical assistance to Palestinian resistance fighters. In 1968, his group merged with Fatah, the main PLO armed resistance group, but later split with them, only to rejoin them in 1971 after the Black September events in Jordan when the PLO was forced out of the country by Jordan's King Hussein.

"The Palestinians did not say, 'Who are these people? They do not exist and they never existed.' [Instead, Palestinians said] they [Israeli Jews] are here and they must love the country as much as we do, so we shall share it with them. In the Palestinian National Council of 1969, all Israeli Jews were granted equal citizenship in the projected, secular democratic state of Palestine."

Sartawi became a close advisor to Yasser Arafat, who defended him against hardliners who did not like Sartawi's moderate tone in talking about the shape of an eventual peace with Israel. Several times Arafat refused Sartawi's attempts to resign from the Palestinian National Council, the Palestinian parliament in exile.

With the full knowledge of Arafat but acting on his own, Sartawi became known as one who sought contacts with the peace movement in Israel. He established close ties with Arie (Lov) Eliav, with whom he shared the Austrian Kresiky Prize in 1979. He was among the first in the PLO leadership to urge the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, seeking a two-state solution to the conflict. However, in many of his speeches, he also stated his desire for a secular democratic state in which Jews and Arabs would live side by side.

The hardliners in the PLO condemned him for these views and, while attending a meeting of the Socialist International in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1983, Isam Sartawi was assassinated. It is thought that the Abu Nidal group was responsible for his assassination. That year Sartawi and Israeli Mattiyahu Peled were nominated by the American Friends Service Committee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"The Palestinians did not say, 'Who are these people? They do not exist and they never existed', " Sartawi was quoted as saying in *The Link* (Jan.-Feb., 1977). "[Instead, Palestinians said] they [Israeli Jews] are here and they must love the country as much as we do, so we shall share it with them. In the Palestinian National Council of 1969, all Israeli Jews were granted equal citizenship in the projected, secular democratic state of Palestine."



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Yehuda Shaul

Israeli former soldier and co-founder of Breaking the Silence, which aims to educate the Israeli public about the daily activities of the Israeli military in the occupied Palestinian territories. The group also hopes to spark a conversation among Israelis about the corrupting influence of the occupation on Israeli society and Israelis themselves.

Yehuda Shaul was born in 1982 in Jerusalem. He is one of the founders of Breaking the Silence, a group started in 2004 by Israeli soldiers who work to educate the Israeli public about the daily activities of the Israeli military in the occupied Palestinian territories. Breaking the Silence conducts interviews with former soldiers who have served in the occupied Palestinian territories, and presents their photographs and narratives in exhibitions and publications.

“We gather together in this group not because we have the same political affiliation. We gather together because we agree on the same problem: the moral corruption. As a group, we don’t deal with anything more than just telling the truth.”

However, these activities are a means to an end: To spark a conversation among Israelis about the corrupting influence of the occupation on Israeli society and Israelis themselves.

Growing up in Israel, Shaul had looked forward to serving in the military. From March 2001 until March 2004, Shaul served in the exclusive Nahal Brigade and rose to the rank of commander and platoon sergeant. He served in many parts of the West Bank, including Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron. However, by the end of his time in the military, he began to question how his experience as an occupying force within Palestinian society had affected him. In addition, he found that many others in the military were asking similar questions.

In June 2004, Shaul and some fellow Israeli soldiers started Breaking the Silence with a photo exhibition in Tel Aviv about Hebron. The members of Breaking the Silence explained their mission this way:

“Since our discharge from the army, we all feel that we have become different. We feel that service in the Occupied Territories and the incidents we faced have distorted and harmed the moral values on which we grew up.

“We all agree that as long as Israeli society keeps sending its best people to military combat service in the Occupied Territories, it is extremely important that all of us, Israeli citizens, know the price which the generation who is fighting in the territories is paying, the impossible situations it is facing, the insanity it is confronting everyday, and the heavy burden it bears after being discharged from the IDF—a heavy burden that hasn’t left us.

“That’s why we decided to break the silence, because it’s time to tell.”

More than 7,000 people viewed the exhibit and it received a great amount of media attention because it dealt with issues that were previously not raised in Israeli society. It soon became clear that there were many other soldiers who had similar experiences and they wanted to share them. Breaking the Silence began to record the testimonies of soldiers who served in the Occupied Territories and now has 400 interviews with Israelis who have served in the occupied Palestinian territories.

“We gather together in this group not because we have the same political affiliation. We gather together because we agree on the same problem: the moral corruption,” Shaul says. “As a group, we don’t deal with anything more than just telling the truth.”

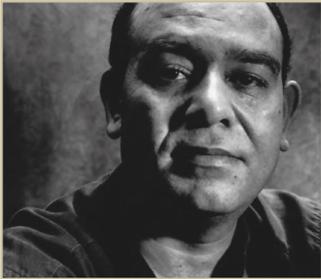


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For learn more about Breaking the Silence, please log onto www.shovrimshika.org/index_e.asp

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Raji Sourani

Palestinian human rights activist in Gaza. He is the founder and director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights.

Raji Sourani of Gaza, the 1991 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award winner, has been a lawyer in Gaza for more than thirty years. His work on human rights, especially in calling attention to human rights abuses by both the Israeli Occupation and the Palestinian Authority, has brought him international attention. It has also brought him periods of imprisonment and torture by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

“I simply believe that human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are not luxuries. They are crucial necessities - the oxygen of meaningful life.”

In spite of his incarceration he has continued to be a voice for justice and hope as the founder and director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights and former director of the Gaza Center for Rights and Law. For Sourani, his work is rooted in a belief in human rights. “I simply believe that human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are not luxuries. They are crucial necessities - the oxygen of meaningful life,” Sourani explains. “We see the violations on a daily basis. We see the victims, we know them, and we live with them. What keeps us going is the belief that you can do something, even if it is just a little something.” Each year his work becomes harder and also more vital.

“I simply believe that human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are not luxuries. They are crucial necessities — the oxygen of meaningful life.”

More recently, Sourani’s work has faced a new challenge in reminding the international community that Gaza remains under occupation even following the 2005 Israeli withdrawal of settlers from the territory. Even without settlements, Gaza remains under Israeli control as Israel controls all travel in and out of Gaza which is surrounded by a wall built by the Israeli military. Sourani has also sought to draw attention to the deteriorating situation for Gazans as victims of Palestinian factional infighting. His willingness to be critical of Palestinians as well as Israelis has put his life in jeopardy many times.

Throughout this struggle he has tried to maintain contact with his Israeli counterparts in human rights work, despite being unable to meet with them physically. This solidarity he has extended to worldwide struggles against human rights abuses, and has been an impassioned advocate for oppressed people everywhere. Sourani explains, “I don’t believe in violence, and I don’t think it is a solution. Nor do I believe that Palestinians are the only ones whose blood is sacred. All human life is sacred, no matter which nationality, race or religion.”

To learn more about the Palestinian Center for Human Rights see <http://www.pchrgaza.ps/>.



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Gila Svirsky

Israeli activist in the women's peace movement and a founding member of the Coalition of Women for Peace, a group of Israeli and Palestinian women's organizations.

Gila Svirsky is an American-born Israeli who lives in Jerusalem. She is a co-founder of the Coalition of Women for Peace, a group of Israeli and Palestinian women's peace organizations.

Gila was raised in New Jersey in an Orthodox Jewish community. Her parents were immigrants to the United States—her mother by way of Palestine. She moved to Israel when she was 19, returning to the U.S. briefly to finish college at Brandeis.

“Our long-term strategy is to engage in activities in Israel that will not only persuade Israeli public opinion that the only way to end the violence is to arrive at a just political solution, but also to demonstrate to foreigners that there is a large constituency of Israelis who do want a just political solution, who believe that the occupation is unjust and must end.”

According to Svirsky, the Lebanon War of the 1980s was “a turning point of one sort for me, when I came to the realization that there was something horribly awry with the government's enunciated policy and the facts on the ground. The more I became thoughtful about the conflict between what we were doing and my understanding of the mission of Israel, the more I felt pushed into a position of opposition.”

In response to the first intifada in December 1987, Svirsky became a participant in the vigils held by Women in Black, a women's group that opposes the Israeli occupation. Since then, she has worked tirelessly in the women's peace movement.

When the second intifada began, she helped initiate the Coalition of Women for Peace in November 2000. The coalition brings together independent Jewish and Palestinian women and Israeli women's peace organizations.

The coalition carries out mass rallies, human rights campaigns, outreach, and advocacy activities, including rallies calling for an end to the occupation that feature thousands of Israeli and Palestinian women carrying banners that read, “We refuse to be enemies.” The coalition has also mobilized women in 150 locations on five continents in support of its mass activities.

In addition, the coalition has provided emergency supplies to women and children in refugee camps. It has also provided school supplies to thousands of Palestinian children. Together with Palestinian women, it conducted the International Human Rights March of Women, marching for three weeks in Israel and Palestine and calling for an end to the occupation and creation of a just peace between both peoples.

For more information about the coalition, see www.coalitionofwomen.org/home

“Our long-term strategy is to engage in activities in Israel that will not only persuade Israeli public opinion that the only way to end the violence is to arrive at a just political solution,” Svirsky says, “but also to demonstrate to foreigners that there is a large constituency of Israelis who do want a just political solution, who believe that the occupation is unjust and must end.”



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Leah Tsemel

One of the first Israeli lawyers to defend Palestinian rights. During the past 30 years, Tsemel's cases have dealt with land confiscation, torture and interrogation, house demolitions, residency, and political prisoners, among many others. In 1999 she won a landmark case that outlawed the use of torture by Israeli officials when interrogating detained Palestinians.

Leah Tsemel was born in Haifa in 1945 to a family that fled Europe just before the Holocaust. Most of her family was lost in the Holocaust. She attended the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and graduated in 1968 with a degree in criminal law. Tsemel became politically active in college. She was a member of the left-radical Israeli group Matzpen, opposing Zionism and occupation.

The political beliefs she holds today were shaped by the 1967 war and the subsequent occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

"It seems that my parents and others who wanted to build the state of Israel did not understand that it is impossible to build a new future on the relics of oppression."

In 1967, Tsemel volunteered in the Six Day War, believing that the immediate aftermath of the war would give Israel an opportunity to make peace with its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians. However, she was disappointed with the outcome of the war, understanding for the first time that Israel "never intended to have peace" (Dateline May 5, 2004).

She witnessed the Israeli army deporting Palestinians out of entire towns and villages, and eventually destroying some of those towns. The occupation of the Palestinians in 1967 changed her entire worldview, and as a result, in the 1970s she became one of the first Israeli lawyers to defend Palestinian rights. She says that feelings of shame about Israeli abuses against Palestinians motivated her. The focus of her legal practice was, and continues to be, radical and unpopular in Israeli society.

Her children suffered much discrimination and torment in Israel because of Tsemel's activism for Palestinian rights. Despite all this, Tsemel sees it as her moral obligation to defend Palestinians against oppression and repression. For more than 30 years she has defended Palestinian rights in Israel, from the military courts to the Supreme Court of Justice. Her cases include land confiscation, torture and interrogation, house demolitions, residency, political prisoners, identity card confiscations, suicide bombers who did not detonate their bombs, and many more.

She won a landmark case in 1999 in the Israeli Supreme Court, outlawing the use of torture by Israeli officials when interrogating detained Palestinians. More recently, Tsemel and a group of young lawyers forced Israel to admit the presence of the secret prison facility 1391 in Northern Israel, where Palestinians were being tortured. Israeli officials were forced by the president of the Supreme Court to speak about where the prison facility was, why it existed, and how it had been run.

"It seems that my parents and others who wanted to build the state of Israel did not understand that it is impossible to build a new future on the relics of oppression," she notes.



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Tsemel is regarded highly in peace and justice activism circles for her commitment to human rights. In 1996, Tsemel received the Human Rights Award of the French Republic on behalf of the Public Action Committee against Torture in Israel. Tsemel is relentless in her efforts, described as a rock by coworkers and partners. She says that she feels despair only when she thinks that she has not done enough. At that point, the despair turns into motivation to continue her work.

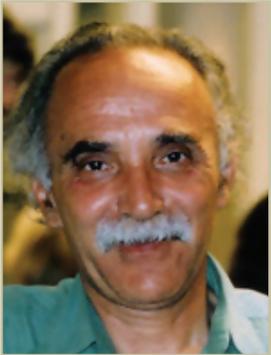


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Michel Warschawski

Israeli peace activist who has been instrumental in the development of numerous Israeli peace and human rights organizations. His life-long commitment has been to build alliances for a future of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Michel Warschawski was born in Strasbourg, France, in 1949, the son of a Polish rabbi. Warschawski moved to Israel at 16 to study the Talmud in Jerusalem. While studying at Hebrew University in 1968, he joined the anti-Zionist organization Matzpen, a political group that advocated for a single state for both Jews and Arabs. Warschawski met his wife, human rights lawyer Leah Tsemel, in 1968 when she was studying law.

Warschawski and Tsemel have three children.

“Israeli-Palestinian peace will be a peace of cooperation, of coexistence, or it simply won’t exist.”

Throughout the 1970s Warschawski made frequent trips to Europe, where he met Palestinian leaders and activists and began his life-long commitment to building alliances for a future of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. Warschawski would later state that, “Israeli-Palestinian peace will be a peace of cooperation, of coexistence, or it simply won’t exist.”

“Israeli-Palestinian peace will be a peace of cooperation, of coexistence, or it simply won’t exist.”

Warschawski was instrumental in the development of several Israeli peace and human rights organizations. In the early 1980s he helped to build the Committee in Solidarity with Birzeit University, a Palestinian university located in the West Bank. The committee organized public meetings, joint press conferences and demonstrations, art exhibitions, and space for Israelis and Palestinians to get to know one another in a solidarity framework. He later co-led the Committee Against the Iron Fist with the late Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini, organizing nonviolent protests and developing common analysis and strategy to end the occupation.

At the start of Israel’s war in Lebanon in 1982, Warschawski helped create Yesh Gvul (Hebrew for “There is a Limit/Border”), the first collective attempt to form an organization of Israeli reserve soldiers to refuse service in the Israeli military. Warschawski was jailed for 63 days in an Israeli prison for refusing to serve in Lebanon.

In 1984 he co-founded the Alternative Information Center, an organization that combines grassroots activism with critical research, analysis, discussions, and the dissemination of information on Palestine and Israel. By producing tools for advocacy and solidarity, Warschawski believes the center makes “available to the communities on both sides of the border information that was not otherwise readily available to them...to write in Arabic about Israel and to write in Hebrew about the Palestinian reality.” He believes this effort helps people work together for a common strategic vision and future.

Due to his close ties to Palestinian activists and efforts to expose human rights abuses by Israeli forces, Warschawski was arrested in 1987 for “providing services for illegal (Palestinian) organizations.” He was sentenced two years later to 30 months in prison, although this sentence was later reduced.

Two of Warschawski’s recent books, *Toward an Open Tomb: The Crisis of Israeli Society* and *On the Border*, deal with his work for peace and justice.



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Profiles *of* Peace

Forty short biographies of Israeli and Palestinian peace builders who have struggled to end the occupation and build a just future for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Commenting on what he sees for the future, Warschawski writes: "As long as we are ready to combat colonialism and occupation, as long there are soldiers refusing to serve in an army of occupation and men and women who will fight for a true cohabitation, 'ta'ayush', between Jews and Arabs, the chances of avoiding a catastrophe for the peoples of the region will be increased."

To learn more about the Alternative Information Center see <http://www.alternativenews.org/>.



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