

About This Issue

Is Yahweh the Great Ethnic-Cleanser? Did He not instruct the Israelites to rid their Promised Land of its indigenous people?

Few biblical scholars want to wrestle with these questions. Rev. Michael Prior needs to wrestle with them. He's been to today's Holy Land and has seen today's variation on biblically sanctioned genocide.

Dr. Prior is Professor of Biblical Studies in the University of Surrey, England, and visiting professor in Bethlehem University, Palestine. He is a biblical scholar and author of "Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry" and "The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique."

Twenty-two years ago, the journalist Grace Halsell visited the Holy Land. She too came away with the need to tell what happens when religion is used as a divine writ for ethnic cleansing. Grace died in August and an all-too-brief testimony to her life and work is found on page 13.

Norman Finkelstein, who has written two feature articles for *The Link*, has come out with his latest book "The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering." Norman too has been to Palestine, and has stood in front of Israeli bulldozers intent on scraping yet one more Palestinian home off the land.

Included in our book/video catalog on pages 14-16 are books by Michael Prior, Grace Halsell and Norman Finkelstein.

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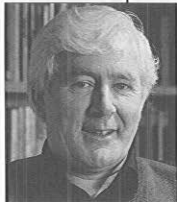
Confronting the Bible's Ethnic Cleansing In Palestine

BY MICHAEL PRIOR, C.M.

It is mid-October 2000; to date, at least 98 Palestinians and 7 Jews have been killed, and over 3,000, mostly Palestinians, injured in the Holy Land's most recent unholy. That's the math of it.

It is, however, the morality of it that has engaged me over the past quarter of a century.

I would have been spared some pain had I not undertaken significant portions of my postgraduate biblical studies in the land of the Bible. And although the focus of my engagement was "the biblical past," I could not avoid the modern social context of the region. As a result, my studying the Bible in the Land of the Bible provoked perspectives that scarcely would have arisen elsewhere.



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For me, as a boy and young man, politics began and ended in Ireland, an Ireland obsessed with England. It was much later that I recognized that the history I absorbed so readily in school was one fabricated by the nationalist historiographers of a newly independent Ireland, who refracted the totality of its history through the lens of 19th-century European nationalisms. Although my Catholic culture also cherished Saint Patrick and the saints and scholars after him, the real heroes of Ireland's history were those who challenged British colonialism in Ireland. I had no interest in the politics of any other region — except that I knew that Communism, wherever, was wrong. Anyhow, the priesthood beckoned.

My seminary courses on the Old Testament first sensitized me to the social and political context of theological reflection. We inquired into the real-life situations of the prophets, and considered the contexts of the Wisdom Literature. Beyond the narratives of Genesis 1-11 and Exodus, however, I do not recall much engagement with the Torah. The atrocities recorded in the Book of Joshua made no particular impression on me. The monarchy period got a generous airing, noting the link between religious perspectives and changing political circumstances. But just as I was not sensitive at that stage to the fact that Irish nationalist historiography had imposed a rigid nationalist framework on everything that preceded the advent of interest in the nation state, it never crossed my mind that the biblical narrative also might be a fabrication of a past, reflecting the distinctive perspective of its later authors.

Prior to the 5-10 June 1967 war, I had no particular interest in the State of Israel, other than an admiration for Jews having constructed a nation state and restored a national language. In addition to stimulating my first curiosity in the Israeli-Arab conflict, Israel's conquest of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and Sinai brought me "face to face," via TV, with wider, international political realities. The startling, speedy, and comprehensive victory of diminutive Israel over its rapacious Arab predators produced surges of delight in me. And I had no reason to question the mellifluous mendacity of Abba Eban at the United Na-

tions, delivered in that urbanity and self-assurance characteristic of Western diplomats, however fraudulent, claiming that Israel was an innocent victim of Egyptian aggression.

Later that summer in London, I was intrigued by billboards in Golders Green, with quotations from the Hebrew prophets, assuring readers that those who trusted in biblical prophecy could not be surprised by Israel's victory. Up to then, my understanding was that biblical prophecy related to the period of the prophets, and was not about predicting the future. The prophets were "forth-tellers" for God, rather than foretellers of future events. I was intrigued that others thought differently.

I was to learn later, in the 1980s and 1990s, that the 1967 war inaugurated a new phase in the Zionist conquest of Mandated Palestine, one which brought theological assertions and biblical interpretations to the very heart of the ideology that propelled the Israeli conquest and set the pattern for Jewish settlement. After two more years of theology, ordination, and three years of postgraduate biblical studies, I made my first visit to Israel-Palestine at Easter 1972, with a party of postgraduate students from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Seeing and Believing

The visit offered the first challenge to my favorable predisposition toward Israel. I was disturbed by the ubiquitous signs of the oppression of the Arabs, whom later I learned to call Palestinians. I was witnessing some kind of "institutionalized oppression" — I cannot recall whether 'apartheid' was part of my vocabulary at the time. The experience must have been profound since, when the Yom Kippur War broke out in October 1973, my support for Israel did not match my enthusiasm of 1967. I had no particular interest in the area for the remainder of the 1970s, but I recall watching on TV the visit of Egypt's President Sadat to the Israeli Knesset in November 1977, an initiative which would culminate in a formal peace agreement in Camp David in 1979. Things changed for me in the 1980s.

In 1981 I went with a party from my university to visit Bir Zeit University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Because the campus was closed by the military just before our arrival, carefully planned programs had to yield to Palestinian "ad-hocery." Bir Zeit put a bus at our disposal, and equal numbers of its and our students constituted a university on wheels. I was profoundly shocked when I began to see from the inside the reality of land expropriation and the on-going Jewish settlement of the West Bank. I began to question the prevailing view that the Israeli occupation was for security reasons, but even with such obvious evidence I could not bring myself to abandon it.

I spent my 1983-84 sabbatical year at Jerusalem's *École Biblique* researching the Pauline Epistles. Again, the day-to-day life in Jerusalem sharpened my sensitivities. I was beginning to suspect that the Israeli occupation was not after all for security reasons, but was an expansion toward the achievement of "Greater Israel," which, I was to learn later, was the goal of even mainstream Zionism.

One incident in particular alerted me to the religious dimension of the conflict. On a spring morning in 1984, the Voice of Israel radio reported that during the night a Jewish terrorist group had been caught attempting to blow up the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount), only a few hundred meters south of the *École*. Subsequently the newspapers published a picture of one of those convicted of the offence, wearing the typical dress of the religious settler movement *Gush Emunim*. He had the Book of Psalms in his hand as the judge read out the verdict. That an attempted act of such enormous international and inter-faith significance sprang from religious fervor shocked me. Settler Jews performed other acts of terror during that year, and the name of the overtly racist Rabbi Meir Kahane was seldom off the headlines.

I can date to that period also voicing my first displeasure at my perception that the land traditions of the Bible appeared to mandate the genocide of the indigenous "Canaan." At the end of his public lecture in Tantur, I suggested to Marc Ellis, a young Jewish theologian who was developing a Jewish Theology of Liberation with strong dependence on the Hebrew prophets, that it would be no more difficult to construct a Theology of Oppression on the basis of other biblical traditions, especially those dealing with Israelite origins that demanded the destruction of other peoples.

Following my sabbatical in 1984, I returned to London where, later that year, a colleague told me of the plea of Abuna Elias Chacour of Ibillin to pilgrims from the West to meet the Christian communities, "the Living Stones" of the land, and not be satisfied with the "dead stones" of archaeological sites. Soon a group of interested people in London established the ecumenical trust, *Living Stones*, which promotes links between Christians in Britain and the

Holy Land, and appointed me Chairman. In 1985 I co-led a study tour to Israel and the Occupied Territories, and led a group of priests on a "Retreat through Pilgrimage" in 1987 and made other visits in 1990 and 1991.

In 1991, I participated in an International Peace Walk from Jerusalem to Amman, and although I did not reach the destination, I gained the acquaintance of several groups of Israeli soldiers and police, enjoyed detention twice, and faced into what appeared to be an inevitable spell in prison. Officially, my crime, in the first instance, was to have trespassed into "a closed military zone" on the outskirts of Ramallah, and in the second, to have refused to leave a similarly designated area on the way from Taybeh to Jericho. The real purpose of such designations was to halt the silent walk of some 30 "peaceniks" from about 15 countries. Our presence was having a decidedly energizing effect on the Palestinians, who did not dare protest so forthrightly.

A few hours into walking silently over the Judean hills, before beginning our descent into the Jordan Valley, we were informed by the military that we were inside "a military zone." While our negotiators were engaging the Commanding Officer of the district, we sat on the side of the road and sang peace songs. I opened with a rendition, in my *bel canto* Irish-accented Hebrew, of Psalm 119 (118). My singing of this Passover song of deliverance had an obviously disturbing effect on the young soldiers "guarding" us. Formal arrest and several hours' detention in Jericho followed. To the policeman who informed me that I could make one phone call, I replied that I wished to speak to the Pope. "I am sorry, it cannot be international." My comportment during the day-long detention — insisting on the group being fed, being polite but firm under interrogation, refusing to sign my 'statement' of incrimination, etc. — left the police in no doubt about whom I considered to be the criminals.

After a long, wearying day in detention in sun-baked Jericho, we were driven to what we were assured would be a "prison." This was not good news. The principal of my college would not be pleased to read: "Sorry I cannot be there in time for class — am in prison in the Holy Land!" In the event, we were brought to a police station in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem, and even having refused to sign another declaration, we were released. The peacewalk experience demonstrated how police, defense forces and the noble discourse of jurisprudence itself, designed to protect the vulnerable, can legitimize oppression, something I had experienced already in London while I struggled for the human rights of gypsies.

It took some time for my experiences to acquire an ideological framework. Gradually I read more of the modern history of the region. In addition to bringing a university group in 1992, I spent August in the *École Biblique*, and while there interviewed prominent Palestinians, including the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, the

Greek Orthodox Archbishop Timotheos, the Anglican Bishop Samir Kafity, Canon Naim Ateek, and the Vice-President of Bir Zeit University, Dr. Gabi Baramki.

I made three visits in 1993, one at Easter to prepare the Cumberland Lodge Conference on Christians in the Holy Land, one for study in August, and the third to bring a group of students. Although my academic concentration in that period was on the scene of Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4.16-30), my growing unease about the link between biblical spirituality and oppression stimulated me to examine the land traditions of the Bible, and so I began to read the narrative systematically with that theme in mind.

Yahweh and Ethnic Cleansing

What struck me most about the biblical narrative was that the divine promise of land was integrally linked with the mandate to exterminate the indigenous peoples, and I had to wrestle with my perception that those traditions were inherently oppressive and morally reprehensible. Even the Exodus narrative was problematic. While it portrays Yahweh as having compassion on the misery of his people, and as willing to deliver them from the Egyptians and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3.7-8), that was only part of the picture. Although the reading of Exodus 3, both in the Christian liturgy and in the classical texts of liberation theologues, halts abruptly in the middle of verse 8 at the description of the land as one "flowing with milk and honey," the biblical text itself continues, "to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites." Manifestly, the promised land, flowing with milk and honey, had no lack of indigenous peoples, and, according to the narrative, would soon flow with blood:

When my angel goes in front of you, and brings you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, you shall not bow down to their gods, or worship them, or follow their practices, but you shall utterly demolish them and break their pillars in pieces (Exodus 23.23-24).

Matters got worse in the narrative of the Book of Deuteronomy. After the King of Heshbon refused passage to the Israelites, Yahweh gave him over to the Israelites who captured and utterly destroyed all the cities, killing all the men, women, and children (Deuteronomy 2.33-34). The role of the King of Bashan was no better (3.3). Yahweh's fate was central:

When Yahweh your God brings you into the land that you are about to enter and occupy, and he clears away many nations before you — the Hit-

tites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites...and when Yahweh your God gives them over to you...you must utterly destroy them...Show them no mercy...For you are a people holy to Yahweh your God; Yahweh your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession (Deuteronomy 7.1-11; see also 9.1-5; 11.8-9, 23, 31-32).

And again, from the mouth of Moses:

But as for the towns of these peoples that Yahweh your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as Yahweh your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against Yahweh your God (Deuteronomy 20.16-18).

It was some shock to realize that the narrative presents "ethnic cleansing" as not only legitimate, but as required by the deity. The book ends with Moses's sight of the promised land before he dies (34.1-3). Although Moses was unequalled in his deeds, he left a worthy successor, Joshua, who, after Moses had lain his hands on him, was full of the spirit of wisdom (34.4-12). So much for the preparation for entry into the Promised Land.

The first part of the Book of Joshua (chapters 2-12) describes the conquest of a few key cities, and their fate in accordance with the laws of the Holy War. Even when the Gibeonites were to be spared, the Israelite elders complained at the lapse in fidelity to the mandate to destroy all the inhabitants of the land (9.21-27). Joshua took Makkedah, utterly destroying every person in it (10.28). A similar fate befell other cities (10.29-39): everything that breathed was destroyed, as Yahweh commanded (10.40-43). Joshua utterly destroyed the inhabitants of the cities of the north as well (11.1-23). Yahweh gave to Israel all the land that he swore to their ancestors he would give them (21.43-45). The legendary achievements of Yahweh through the agencies of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are kept before the Israelites even in their prayers: "You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it" (Psalm 80.8; see also Psalms 78.54-55; 105.44).

By modern standards of international law and human rights, what these biblical narratives mandate are "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity." While readers might seek refuge in the claim that the problem lies with the predispositions of the modern reader, rather than with the text itself, one could not escape so easily. One must acknowledge that much of the Torah, and the Book of

Deuteronomy in particular, contains menacing ideologies and racist, xenophobic and militaristic tendencies. The implications of the existence of dubious moral dispositions, presented as mandated by the divinity, within a book which is canonized as Sacred Scripture, invited the most serious investigation. Was there a way of reading the traditions which could rescue the Bible from being a blunt instrument of oppression, and acquit God of the charge of being the Great Ethnic-Cleanser?

In that August of 1994, the École library had just received a *Festschrift* consisting of studies in Deuteronomy. In addition to articles covering the customary source, historical-critical, and literary discussions, it contained one by F.E. Deist, with the intriguing title, "The Dangers of Deuteronomy," which discussed the role of that book in support of apartheid.¹ It dealt with the text from the perspective of its reception history, especially within the ideology of an emerging Afrikaner nationalism. During that month I also read A.G. Lamadrid's discussion of the role of the Bible and Christian theology in the Iberian conquest of Latin America.² The problem, then, went beyond academic reflection on the interpretation of ancient documents.

Somebody must have addressed the moral question before, I presumed. Back in Jerusalem in August 1995, I realized that this was not the case. Even though Gerhard von Rad lamented in 1943 that no thorough investigation of "the land" had been made, no serious study of the topic was undertaken for another 30 years. Even W.D. Davies acknowledged later that he had written his seminal work "The Gospel and the Land" at the request of friends in Jerusalem who, just before the war in 1967, had urged his support for the cause of Israel. Moreover, he confessed that he wrote both his 1982 "The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism" under the direct impact of that war, and its 1991 updated version because of the mounting need to understand the theme in the light of events in the Middle East, culminating in the Gulf War and its aftermath. I was intrigued by the frankness with which Davies publicized his hermeneutical key: "Here I have concentrated on what in

my judgment must be the beginning for an understanding of this conflict: the sympathetic attempt to comprehend the Jewish tradition."³

While Davies considers "the land" from virtually every other conceivable perspective, little attention is given to broadly moral and human rights issues. In particular, he excludes from his concern, "What happens when the understanding of the Promised Land in Judaism conflicts with the claims of the traditions and occupancy of its other peoples?" He excused himself by saying that to engage that issue would demand another volume, without indicating his intention of embarking upon such an enterprise. I wondered whether Davies would have been equally sanguine had white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants, or even white Catholics of European provenance been among the displaced people who paid the price for the prize of Zionism.

Reflecting a somewhat elastic moral sense, Davies, although perturbed by the aftermath of the 1967 conquest, took the establishment of the State of Israel in his stride. Showing no concern for the foundational injustice done to the Palestinians in 1948, Davies wrote as if there were later a moral equivalence between the dispossessed

Palestinians and the dispossessing Zionists. The rights of the rapist and the victim were finely balanced.

Walter Brueggemann's "The Land" brought me no further. While he saw land as perhaps "the central theme" of biblical faith, he bypassed the treatment to be meted out to the indigenous inhabitants, affirming, "What is asked is not courage to destroy enemies, but courage to keep Torah," avoiding the fact that "keeping Torah" in this context demanded accepting its xenophobic and destructive militarism. By 1994, however, Brueggemann was less sanguine, noting that while the scholastic community had provided "rich and suggestive studies on the 'land theme' in the Bible...they characteristically stop before they get to the hard part, contemporary issues of land in the Holy Land."⁴

It was beginning to dawn on me that much biblical



Joshua's Victory over the Amelekites, by Nicolas Poussin. *Erich Lessing/Art Resources, NY*

investigation — especially that concentration on the past which is typical of the historical-critical method — was quite indifferent to moral considerations. Indeed, it was becoming clear that the discipline of biblical studies over the last hundred years reflected the Eurocentric perspectives of virtually all Western historiography and had contributed significantly to the oppression of native peoples. The benevolent interpretation of biblical traditions which advocate atrocities and war crimes had given solace to those bent on the exploitation of new lands at the expense of native peoples. While the behavior of communities and nation states is complex, and is never the result of one element of motivation, there is abundant evidence that the Bible has been, and still is for some, *the idea that redeems the conquest of the earth*. This was particularly true in the case of the Arabs of Palestine, in whose country I had reached these conclusions as I studied the Bible.

By the autumn of 1995 I was well into a book on the subject, and in November I went to discuss with Sheffield Academic Press a draft MS on "The Bible and Zionism." The editor, apprehensive at my concentration on Zionism, persuaded me to use three case studies. The task ahead, then, would require further immersion in the histories of Latin America, South Africa, and Israel, as well as a more detailed study of the biblical narrative and its interpretation in the hands of the biblical academy.

Having had my moral being sensitized by the biblical mandate to commit genocide, I was amazed that scholars had a high esteem for the Book of Deuteronomy. Indeed, commentators conventionally assess it to be a theological book *par excellence*, and the focal point of the religious history of the Old Testament. In the Nov. 14, 1995 Lattey Lecture in Cambridge University, Professor Norbert Lohfink argued that it provides a model of an utopian society in which there would be no poor.⁵ In my role as the formal proposer of a vote of thanks — I was the chairperson of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain — I invited him to consider whether, in the light of that book's insistence on a mandate to commit genocide, the utopian society would be possible only after the invading Israelites had wiped out the indigenous inhabitants. The protocol of the Lattey Lecture left the last word with me, and subsequently I was given a second word, being invited to deliver the 1997 Lattey Lecture, for which I chose the title, "A Land flowing with Milk, Honey, and People."⁶

O Little Bantustan of Bethlehem

The final revision of my study on the relation between the Bible and colonialism was undertaken in 1996-97 while I was Visiting Professor in Bethlehem University and Scholar-in-Residence in Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem. My context was a persistent reminder of the degradation and oppression which colonizing enterprises inflict

on their indigenes. I also became more aware of the collusion of Western scholarship in the enterprise.

Working against a background of bullet fire, and in the shadow of tanks, added a certain intensity to my research. Several bullets landed on the flat roof of Tantur on 25-26 September 1996. Two Palestinians, one a graduate of the University, were killed in Bethlehem, and many more, Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, were killed in the disturbances elsewhere in the West Bank. However, with no bullets flying in Jerusalem on the 26th, I was able to deliver my advertised public lecture in the Swedish Christian Study Center, entitled "Does the God of the Bible sanction Ethnic Cleansing?" By mid-December I was able to send the MS of "The Bible and Colonialism" to Sheffield Academic Press.

I preached at the 1996 Christmas Midnight Mass in Bethlehem University, presided over by Msgr. Montezemolo, the Holy See's Apostolic Delegate, a key player in the signing of the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel on 30 December 1993. I reflected with the congregation that, notwithstanding the Christmas rhetoric about God's Glory in the Highest Heaven and Peace on Earth, the reality of Bethlehem brought one down to earth rather quickly. I assured them that passing by the checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem twice a day made me boil with anger at the humiliation which the colonizing enterprise of Zionism had inflicted on the people of the region. I suggested that the Christmas narratives portray the ordinary people as the heroes and the rulers as the anti-heroes, as if assuring believers that the mighty will be cast down, and that God is working for the oppressed today. I would meet His Excellency again soon.

On 30 December, I listened to Msgr. Montezemolo lecture in Notre Dame on the third anniversary of the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and Israel. The audience was composed exclusively of expatriate Christians and Israeli Jews, with not a Palestinian in sight.

Well into the question time, I violated the somewhat sycophantic atmosphere: "I had expected that the Agreement would have given the Holy See some leverage in putting pressure on Israel *vis-à-vis* the Palestinians, if only on the matter of freedom to worship in Jerusalem — Palestinians have been forbidden entry into even East Jerusalem, whether on Friday or Sunday, since March 1993."

His Excellency replied rhetorically, "Do you not think that the Holy See is doing all it can?" At the reception afterwards, a certain Ambassador Gilboa, one of the Israeli architects of the Agreement, berated me in a most aggressive fashion for my question. Rather than assuming the posture of a culprit, I took the attack to him on the matter of the Jews having "kicked out" the Palestinians in 1948. "No, they were not kicked out," he, who was a soldier at the time, insisted. "In fact helicopters dropped leaflets on

the Arab towns, beseeching the inhabitants to stay put, etc."

I told him I did not believe him, and cited even the Israeli revisionist historiographer, Benny Morris, whom he dismissed as a compulsive attention-seeker. It was obvious all round the room that a not insignificant altercation was taking place. In the hope of discouraging him from trying to stifle the truth in the future, I assured him that he should have remained a soldier, because he had the manners of a "corner-boy," and not what I expected from a diplomat. I went home righteous.

Academic life rolled on. My 28 Feb. 1997 lecture on "The Bible and Zionism" seemed to perplex several of the students of Bethlehem Bible College. Most of the questions reflected a literalist understanding of the Bible, and I struggled to convey the impression that there were forms of discourse other than history.

Having visited the Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron as a gesture of solidarity on 6 March, I returned home for the Tantor public lecture on "The Future of Religious Zionism" by the Jewish philosopher, Professor David Hartman. It was an eventful occasion. Hartman gave a dazzling exegesis on the theme of covenant, from the Bible through the Rabbis, to Zionism. My journal takes the matter up from the second half of his talk, devoted to questions:

I made the fourth intervention, to the effect that in being brought through the stages of understanding of the covenant, from the Bible to Rabbinic Judaism, I was enchanted, and much appreciative. However, I was shocked to hear Zionism described as "the high point of covenantal spirituality." Zionism, as I saw it, both in its rhetoric and in its practice, was not an ideology of sharing, but one of displacing. I was shocked, therefore, that what others might see as an example of 19th-century colonial plunder was being clothed in the garment of spirituality.

Somewhat shaken, Professor Hartman thanked me for my question, and set about putting the historical record straight. The real problem was that the Arabs had not welcomed Jews back to their homeland. Moreover, the displacement of the Arabs was never intended, but was forced on the Zionist leadership by the attack of the Arab

armies in 1948. Nevertheless, great developments in history sometimes require initial destruction: consider how the USA had defeated totalitarianism, although this was preceded by the displacement of the Indians.

On the following day, in the discussion time after my final session of teaching on "Jesus the Liberator" in Tantor, one of the Continuing Education students brought the discussion back to the previous day's deliberations. He was very embarrassed by my attack on "that holy man."

There was a particularly lively exchange with several getting into the discussion. A second student said that he was delighted with my question yesterday and was sure that it represented the disquiet of many of

the group. A third responded enthusiastically to my liberationist ethic, saying that it disturbed him, but he had to cope with the disturbance. An American priest came to me afterwards, saying how much he appreciated my courage in speaking yesterday, and on a previous occasion, etc. His enthusiasm was not shared by everyone. After the class, an advertising notice appeared on the board from the overseer of the Scholar's Colloquium. It read, "Dr. Michael Prior presents a largish paper, 'Zionism: from the Secular to the Sacred,' which is a chapter from a book he is in the process of writing." The next paragraph read:

Zionism is a subject on which there are hot opinions — not least from the author himself. Some have suggested to me that this disunity is a reason why we should not discuss such matters at all. I believe the opposite: the quality of hot opinions is best tested in a scholarly discussion, where they must be supported by evidence and good argument. One can even learn something. Welcome!

The Swedish New Testament scholar, Bengt Holmberg, chaired the Colloquium.

The first scholar to respond to my paper, a U.S. Catholic veteran of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, did so in a decidedly aggressive manner, accusing me of disloyalty to the Church, etc.

The second was long in praise.

The third intimated that there was nothing new in the paper, and rambled on about the Zionists' intentions to



Michael Prior with students from Bethlehem University visiting the home of one of his students in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp.

bring benefits to the indigenous population, etc. Losing patience, I asked him to produce evidence for his claims, adding that not only was there not such evidence, but the evidence there was showed that the Zionist ideologues were virtually at one in their determination to rid the land of Arabs.

A fourth scholar, a Dutch Protestant veteran of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, chastised me for my audacity in addressing the question at all, insisting that I should be silent, because I was an outsider and a Christian.

I rose to the challenge. Was I understanding him to say that, having seen the distress of the Palestinian people for myself, I should now not comment on it? Was he asking me to deny my experience, or merely to mute my critique? I assured the Colloquium that as a biblical scholar, and an ongoing witness to what transpired in the region, I considered it an obligation to protest what was going on. Once again, the admiring remarks were made later, in private.

The proofs of "The Bible and Colonialism" arrived on Good Friday. I got my first taste of teargas in the vicinity of Rachel's Tomb on my way to Easter Sunday Mass at St. Catherine's in Bethlehem. On 3 April, I delivered the Tantor public lecture, "The Moral Problem of the Bible's Land Traditions," followed by questions, both appreciative and hostile. Uniquely for the series, the lecture was not advertised in the Jerusalem Post. In dealing with a trilogy of hostile questions I availed of the opportunity to say that I considered Zionism to be one of the most pernicious ideologies of the 20th century, particularly evil because of its essential link with religious values.

Stars from the West studied the sky over Bethlehem for the celebrations of Tantor's 25th birthday (25-28 May 1997). Under the light of the plainly visible Hale-Bopp comet, a frail Teddy Kolek was introduced at the opening ceremony as though he were the founder of the Institute. A choir from the USA sang, one song in Hebrew, Palestinian faces, not least that of Afif Safieh, the Palestinian Delegate to the UK and the Holy See, looked decidedly out of joint throughout the opening festivities. But the Palestinians were not altogether forgotten, being thanked profusely for their work in the kitchen and around the grounds.

Moreover, for the lecture on "Christians of the Holy Land" which was given on May 27, prominent Palestinians were invited to speak from the floor. Although the lecture was billed to be presented by a distinguished expatriate scholar "with local presenters," in fact the Palestinian savants had been invited only to the audience floor. Having excused himself from dealing with the political context, the lecturer delivered an urbane, accomplished historical perspective.

The token Palestinians were invited to speak from the floor, first Naim Ateek, then Mitri Raheb, and then Kevork

Hintlian. After two rabbis had their say, also from the floor, I was allowed to speak, wishing to make two points: that my experience with the Palestinians had impressed upon me their unity, rather than their diversity, and, secondly, that the Jewish-Christian dialogue had been hijacked by a Zionist agenda. After one more sentence had escaped from my mouth the Chair stopped me short. I had broken the Solemn Silence. This was the third time that year I had been prevented from speaking in public. I paused, producing a most uncomfortable silence, thanked him, and sat down.

Saturday 31 May, 1997 being the 28th anniversary of my ordination, I determined to do something different. Since it was also the Feast of the Visitation, I decided that I would go to Ein Karem, the traditional site of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. But on the way, I would call at Jabal Abu Ghneim, the hill opposite Tantor, which, despite UN condemnation, was being prepared for an Israeli settlement. The teeth of the high-tech machinery had cut into the rock, having chewed up thousands of trees. Joseph Conrad's phrase, "the relentless progress of our race," kept coming at me.

On the way to Ein Karem, I visited Mount Herzl to see the grave of the founder of Zionism. Knowing that I would also visit the grave of Yitzhak Rabin, I was struck by the irony of the situation. Theodor Herzl was sure that Jews could survive only in their own nation state. Nevertheless, he died a natural death in Europe, and was re-interred in the new state in 1949, while Prime Minister Rabin, born in Palestine, was gunned down by a Jewish religious zealot in what was intended to be the sole haven for Jews.

Back in England

I returned to London in July 1997. By December, "The Bible and Colonialism" and "Western Scholarship and the History of Palestine" were hot off the press. In "The Bible and Colonialism" I promised that I would discuss elsewhere the more theological aspects of Zionism, and, while still in Jerusalem in 1997, I had laid out my plans for writing the book I had really wanted to write some years earlier.

I submitted a draft MS to a distinguished publisher in November 1997, and even though the anonymous reader found it to be "a brilliant book which must be published," the press declined, because, I was informed orally, the press had "a very strong Jewish list," and could not offend its Jewish contributors and readers. While an American publishing company judged it to be "a prodigious achievement of historical and theological investigation" and "a very important work," it deemed that it would not really suit its publishing program. Routledge "bit the bullet," publishing it under the title "Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry."⁷

On the basis of his having read my "The Bible and Colonialism," Professor Heikki Räisänen of the University of Helsinki invited me to address the most prestigious of the international biblical conferences, the Society of Biblical Literature International Conference (Helsinki-Lahti, 16-22 July 1999) on the subject, "The Bible and Zionism." The session at which I was invited to speak dealt with "Reception History and Moral Criticism of the Bible," and I was preceded by Professors Robert Jewett (USA) and David Clines (UK) on aspects of Paul and Job, respectively.

When my hour came, I invited biblical scholarship not to maintain an academic detachment from significant engagement in contemporary issues. I noted that "the view that the Bible provides the title-deed for the establishment of the State of Israel and for its policies since 1948 is so pervasive even within mainstream Christian theology and university biblical studies, that the very attempt to raise the issue is sure to elicit opposition. The disfavor usually took the form of personal abuse, and the intimidation of publishers."

In the light of what happened next I might have added that one is seldom honored by having the substantive issues addressed in the usual way.

After I had delivered my 25-minute lecture the official respondent, who had my paper a month in advance, said he would bypass the usual niceties ("A very fine paper, etc."), and got down to his objections, which were so standard as not to deserve my refutation. Instead I suggested to the Chair to open up the discussion.

Some five Israelis in turn took up the challenge. "Jews have always longed for the land." "They never intended displacing anyone." "The land was empty — almost." "I was wrong historically: Herzl never intended displacing the Arabs."

I interrupted, quoting Herzl's 12 June 1895 diary entry — in the original German for good measure — about his endeavor to expel the poor population, etc.

I was berated for having raised a "political matter" in an academic conference: "See what can happen when one abandons the historical critical method!" Another Israeli professor began by saying, "I am very pleased to have been here this morning," but added, "because I understand better now how anti-Semitism can present itself as anti-Zionism, all under the guise of academic scholarship." A cabal, including at least one Israeli and a well-known scholar from Germany, clapped. The Chair had to restore order.

In the course of my "defense" I reiterated that it was the displacement of another people that raised the moral problematic for me. I had witnessed the effects of the oppression rather more than even most of the audience. Having been given the last word, I professed that until Is-

raelis acknowledge their having displaced another people and make some reparation and accommodation, there would be no future for the state.

In the course of the following day several who had attended expressed their appreciation, albeit in private. A Finnish scholar congratulated me on having raised a vital issue, adding, "The way you were received added sharpness to your argument." A distinguished biblical scholar from Germany, who was very distressed by my having raised the question, later pleaded that his people were responsible for killing six million Jews.

The Importance of the Issue

I have learned that, distinctively in the case of Zionist colonisation, a determined effort was made to rid the terrain altogether of the native population, since their presence in any number would frustrate the grand design of establishing a Jewish state. The necessity of removing the Arabs was recognised from the beginning of the Zionist enterprise — and advocated by all major Zionist ideologues from Theodor Herzl to Ehud Barak — and was meticulously planned and executed in 1948 and 1967. In their determination to present an unblemished record of the Zionist achievement, the fabricators of propagandistic Zionist history are among the most accomplished practitioners of the strange craft of source-doctoring, rewriting not only their history, but the documents upon which such a history was based. The propagandistic intent was to hide things said and done, and to bequeath to posterity only a sanitized version of the past.

In any case, the argument for the compelling need of Jews to settle in a Jewish state does not constitute a right to displace an indigenous population. And even if it had never been intended from the start, which it most certainly was, the moral problematic arises most acutely precisely from the fact that Zionism has wreaked havoc on the indigenous population, and not a little inconvenience on several surrounding states. Nor can the *Shoah* (Holocaust) be appealed to credibly to justify the destruction of an innocent third party. It is a dubious moral principle to regard the barbaric treatment of Jews by the Third Reich as constituting a right to establish a Jewish state at the expense of an innocent third party. Surely the victims of Auschwitz would not have approved.

My study of the Bible in the Land of the Bible brought me face to face with the turbulence of Israel-Palestine and raised questions not only about the link between biblical interpretation and colonial exploitation but about the nature of the biblical narrative itself. An academic interest became a consuming moral imperative.

Why should the State of Israel, any more than any other state, be such a challenge to morality? The first rea-

son, I suggest, derives from the general moral question attendant upon the forcible displacement of an indigenous people from its homeland. The second springs from the unique place that the land has in the Sacred Scriptures of both Jews and Christians, and the significance attached to it as the location of the state for Jews. In addition, there is the positive assessment of the State of Israel on the part of the majority of religious Jews of various categories, as well as in certain Christian ecclesial and theological circles.

As a biblical scholar, I have been shocked to discover that the only plausible validation for the displacement of the Palestinians derived from a naïve interpretation of the Bible, and that in many Church and academic parties — and not only the "fundamentalist" wing — biblical literalism swept away any concerns deriving from considerations of morality. I contend that fidelity to the literary genre of the biblical traditions and respect for the evidence provided mainly by archaeological investigation demands a rejection of such simplistic readings of the biblical narratives of land, and of the prophetic oracles of restoration.

And to these academic perspectives, one must add one of faith, namely, that God is fundamentally moral, and, for those espousing the Christian vision, loves all his people, irrespective of race, etc.

Rather than relate the establishment of the State of Israel to the *Shoah*, I have been led gradually to situate Zionism within the category of xenophobic imperialism, so characteristic of the major European powers towards the end of the 19th century. I consider the espousal of it by a majority of Jews world-wide to mark the nadir of Jewish morality. Because I trust in a God before whom tyranny ultimately dissolves, and because one learns something from history, I have no doubt that a future generation of diaspora and Israeli Jews will repudiate its presumptions, and repent for the injustices perpetrated on the Palestinians by their fathers and grandfathers.

While I regret the descent of Judaism into the embrace of Zionism, there is little I can do about it. However, the degree to which a thoroughly Zionised Judaism infects the so-called Jewish-Christian dialogue — which I prefer to

designate "a monologue in two voices" — is a matter of grave concern. I am perturbed that concurrence with a Zionist reading of Jewish history — that Jews everywhere, and at all times, wanted to re-establish a nation state in Palestine (with no concern for the indigenous population), etc. — is virtually a component of the credo of the dialogue. In that fabricated scenario, the planned, and systematically executed displacement of the Palestinian population, far from incurring the wrath of post-colonial liberalism, becomes an object of honor, and even religious significance. While most Jews worldwide — there are notable exceptions — allow themselves to be deluded by such perspectives, I see no reason why Christians should.



Michael Prior in Jerusalem's Via Dolorosa. Graffiti on wall reads in Hebrew "Death to Arabs."

God the Ethnic Cleanser?

Often I am asked: How do you as a Catholic priest and biblical scholar explain to an ordinary believer the Yahweh-sanctioned ethnic-cleansing mandated in some of the narrative of the Old Testament? Is not this also the Word of God? Such questions have forced themselves on me in a particular way as a result of my contact with the Holy Land. Let me indicate some of my perspectives. But first, let us look at the stakes.

Recently a full-page advertisement in the 10 September 2000 New York Times, signed by over 150 Jewish scholars and leaders, stated:

Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel. The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically-based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised — and given — to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this support.

Here we see clothed in the garment of piety the Zionist enterprise, which was determined to create a state for Jews at the expense of the indigenous Arab people — a product of the nationalistic and imperialistic spirit of 19th-century Europe.

Whatever pangs of conscience one might have about the expulsion of a million Palestinian Arabs, and the destruction of their villages to ensure they would not return, the Bible can salve it. Zionism, a program originally despised by both wings of Judaism, Orthodox and Reform, as being anti-religious (by the Orthodox) and contrary to the universal mission of Judaism (by Reform Jewry), is now at the core of the Jewish credo. And credulous Christians allow themselves to be sucked into the vortex. Only when Zionism is being evaluated are normal rules of morality suspended; only here is ethnic-cleansing applauded by the religious spirit.

Many theologians on seeing how the revered sacred text has been used as an instrument of oppression seek refuge in the view that it is the misuse of the Bible, rather than the text itself which is the problem. The blame is shifted from the non-problematic biblical text to the perverse predispositions of the interpreter.

This "solution" evades the problem. It must be acknowledged that several traditions within the Bible lend themselves to oppressive interpretations and applications, precisely because of their inherently oppressive nature.

Towards a Moral Reading of the Bible

My approach is set forth in a chapter of my book, "The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique."³ I begin by stressing how important it is to acknowledge the existence of texts of unsurpassed violence within Sacred Scripture, and to recognise them to be an affront to moral sensitivities. The problem is not only theoretical. In addition to being morally reprehensible texts, some have fuelled terrible injustices through colonialist enterprises.

The Holy War traditions of the Old Testament pose an especially difficult moral problem. In addition to portraying God as one who cherishes the slaughter of his created ones, they acquit the killer of moral responsibility for his destruction, presenting it as a religious obligation.

Every effort must be made to rescue the Bible from being a blunt instrument in the oppression of one people by another. If a naive interpretation leads to such unacceptable conclusions, what kind of exegesis can rescue it?

Some exegetes note that Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the life and paschal mystery of Christ. In such a perspective, the writings of the Old Testament contain certain "imperfect and provisional" elements, which the divine pedagogy could not eliminate right away.

The Bible, then, reflects a considerable moral development, which finds its completion in the New Testament. I do not find this proposal satisfactory.

The attempts of the Fathers of the Church to eliminate the scandal caused by particular texts of the Bible do little for me. The allegorical presentation of Joshua leading the people into the land of Canaan as a type of Christ, who leads Christians into the true promised land does not impress.

The Catholic Church deals with the embarrassment of having divinely mandated ethnic cleansing in the biblical narrative by either excluding it altogether from public use, or excising the most offensive verses. The disjuncture between this censoring of the Word of God and the insistence on the divine provenance of the whole of the Scriptures has not been satisfactorily resolved.

There is another method which is more amenable to modern sensibilities, one which takes seriously the literary forms of the materials, the circumstances of their composition, and relevant non-literary evidence. According to this view, the fundamental tenet of the Protestant Reformation that the Bible can be understood in a straightforward way must be abandoned. Narratives purporting to describe the past are not necessarily accurate records of it. One must respect the distinctive literary forms within the biblical narrative — legend, fabricated myths of the past, prophecy and apocalyptic, etc.

The relevant biblical narratives of the past are not simple history, but reflect the religious and political ideologies of their much later authors. It is now part of the scholarly consensus that the patriarchal narratives of Genesis do not record events of an alleged patriarchal period, but are retrojections into a past about which the writers knew little, reflecting the author's intentions at the later period of composition. It is naive, then, to cleave to the view that God made the promise of progeny and land to Abraham after the fashion indicated in Genesis 15.

The Exodus narrative poses particular difficulties for any reader who is neither naive nor amoral. It is the entrance (Eisodus) into the land of milk and honey which keeps the hope of the wandering Israelites alive. It is high time that readers read the narrative with sensitivity to the innocent third-party about to be exterminated, that is, "with the eyes of the Canaanites."

Moreover, there is virtual unanimity among scholars that the model of tribal conquest as narrated in Joshua 1-12 is unsustainable. Leaving aside the witness of the Bible, we have no evidence that there was a Hebrew conquest. Evidence from archaeology, extra-biblical literature, etc., points in an altogether different direction from that propounded by Joshua 1-12. It suggests a sequence of periods marked by a gradual and peaceful coalescence of disparate peoples into a group of highland dwellers whose achievement of a new sense of unity culminated

only with the entry of the Assyrian administration. The Iron I Age settlements on the central hills of Palestine, from which the later kingdom of Israel developed, reflect continuity with Canaanite culture, and repudiate any ethnic distinction between "Canaanites" and "Israelites." Israel's origins, then, were within Canaan, not outside it. There was neither invasion from outside, nor revolution within.

A historiography of Israelite origins based solely, or primarily on the biblical narratives is an artificial construct influenced by certain religious motivations obtaining at a time long post-dating any verifiable evidence of events. Accordingly, *pace* the 150 plus Jewish scholars and rabbis who signed *The New York Times* ad, the biblical narrative is not sufficient to transform barbarism into piety.

Conclusion

Western theological scholarship, while strong in its critique of repressive regimes elsewhere, gives a wide berth to Zionism. Indeed a moral critique of its impact on the Palestinians is ruled out.

I try to break the silence in my "The Bible and Colonialism" and "Zionism and the State of Israel." The former explores the moral question of the impact which colonialist enterprises, fueled by the biblical paradigm, have had on the indigenous populations in general, while the latter deals with the impact of Zionism on the Palestinians. They are explorations into terrain virtually devoid of inquirers, which attempt to map out some of the contours of that terrain. They subject the land traditions of the Bible to an evaluation which derives from general ethical principles and criteria of human decency, such as are enshrined in conventions of human rights and international law.

Such an enterprise is necessary. When people are dispossessed, dispersed and humiliated, not only with alleged divine support, but at the alleged express command of God, one's moral self recoils in horror. Any association of God with the destruction of people must be subjected to an ethical analysis. The obvious contradiction between what some claim to be God's will and ordinary civilized, decent behavior poses the question as to whether God is a chauvinistic, nationalistic and militaristic xenophobe. It also poses the problem of biblical prophecy finding its fulfillment in what even unbelievers would regard as a form of "ethnic cleansing."

I consider that biblical studies and theology should deal with the real conditions of people's lives, and not satisfy themselves with comfortable survival in an academic or ecclesial ghetto. I am concerned about the use of the Bible as a legitimisation for colonialism and its consequences. My academic work addresses aspects of biblical hermeneutics, and informs a wider public on issues which have implications for human well-being, as well as for allegiance to God.

While such a venture might be regarded as an instructive academic contribution by any competent scholar, to assume responsibility for doing so is for me, who has witnessed the dispossession, dispersion and humiliation of the Palestinians, of the order of a moral imperative. It is high time that biblical scholars, church people, and Western intellectuals read the biblical narratives of the promise of land "with the eyes of the Canaanites."⁹

End Notes

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² Lamadrid, A.G., *Canaán y América. La Biblia y la Teología medieval ante la Conquista de la Tierra*, in "Escritos de Biblia y Oriente. Bibliotheca Salmanticensis," Estudios 38, 1981, Salamanca-Jerusalén: Universidad Pontificia, 329-46.

³ Davies, W.D., "The Gospel and the Land. Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine," 1974, Berkeley: University of California Press. See also his "The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism," 1982, Berkeley: University of California Press; and his "The Territorial Dimensions of Judaism. With a Symposium and Further Reflections," 1991, Minneapolis: Fortress.

⁴ Brueggemann, Walter, "The Land. Place as Gift, and Challenge in Biblical Faith," 1977, Philadelphia: Fortress. See also his *Forward in March*, W. Eugene, "Israel and the Politics of Land. A Theological Case Study," 1994, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

⁵ Lohfink, Norbert, *The Laws of Deuteronomy. Project for a World without any Poor*, in *Scripture Bulletin*, 1996, 26:2-19.

⁶ Prior, Michael, "A Land flowing with Milk, Honey, and People," 1997, Cambridge: Von Hügel Institute; and in *Scripture Bulletin*, 28 (1998):2-17.

⁷ Prior, Michael, "Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry," 1999, London and New York: Routledge.

⁸ Prior, Michael, "The Bible and Colonialism. A Moral Critique," 1997, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

⁹ My study of the Bible in the Land of the Bible obviously aided me in seeing "with the eyes of the Canaanites." Others, surely, have had no less interesting experiences to tell, some of which I have collected in "They Came and They Saw. Western Christian Experiences of the Holy Land," Michael Prior, ed., 2000, London: Melisende. □

Grace Halsell, 1923 – 2000

In the late 1960s, as a White House staff writer for President Lyndon Johnson, Grace Halsell overheard LBJ's favorite cook, Zephyr White, tell of the time Johnson, then a senator, had asked her to transport two dogs overnight in her car. "You have no idea," Ms. White told Johnson, "what it is like for a Negro to try and get a decent hotel room — and you are asking me to take two dogs?"

The questioned haunted Grace. She left the White House and consulted with dermatologists at Yale and Harvard Universities. They told her about a medication which, when taken in conjunction with exposure of the body to intense tropical sun, would darken one's skin.

Grace took the medication and headed for a Caribbean island. "One day," she later reminisced, "I looked in a mirror and saw a 'black' woman looking back at me." For the next year Grace learned — "the hard way," as she put it — what it was like being an African-American woman. Her book "Soul Sister" sold over a million copies.

In the late 1970s, Grace decided to go to Jerusalem to live with a Jewish, Christian, and Muslim family. She approached Macmillan publishers who gave her an advance on a book that would be titled "Journey to Jerusalem." It came out in 1981.

It did not sell a million copies. Grace learned — the hard way — that criticism of Israeli policies in our country easily translates into charges of anti-Semitism. Macmillan did little to promote the book, and Grace's lecture agent, reacting to "strong pressure," dropped her.

That's when she embarked on her shoe-leather apostolate, literally



Grace Halsell, 1982, visiting the Palestinian Refugee Camp in Rashidiyeh, South Lebanon

knocking on the doors of any one and any organization that might help her. When she came to our office and I met her for the first time, I took the copy of "Journey" she left with me on my train commute home; I nearly missed getting off at my station stop. It wasn't that what she had written was news to me — it was all too familiar; it was the unprecedented fact that it was being said by a respected journalist in a mainstream publication.

A short time later, the directors of Americans for Middle East Understanding invited Grace to join them on the board of directors. At the time I remember thinking that, most likely, she would decline the invitation out of professional concerns. After all, we were prominently listed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in its directory of "Pro-Arab Propaganda in America." Why on earth would a journalist who wrote for a living need that kind of "baggage"?

Clearly, I did not know Grace Halsell. Once she felt another's pain — walked in their shoes, as she put it — money was never an overriding factor. Grace joined our board of directors and for 18 years remained one of our most active members. In addition to authoring four feature arti-

cles ("Yasser Arafat: The Man and his People," 1982; "Shrine Under Siege," 1984; "Bosnia: A Genocide of Muslims," 1994; "In the Land of Christ Christianity is Dying," 1995), she inspired and challenged the rest of us with her fortitude and steadfastness.

I picture Grace, a young "black" woman, standing on a Jackson, Mississippi street corner, waiting for a white housewife who had hired her as a maid for \$5 a day. And I picture her standing in a back room at Ben Gurion airport, refusing, in her mellifluous Texas accent, to tell her Israeli interrogators who she had met during her visit.

The irony, of course, is that once back in Washington, D.C., where she had a modest apartment, Grace spent just about all her time, through books, articles, interviews and lectures, telling all of us who she had met and what she had seen.

Grace Halsell died on Aug. 16 from multiple myeloma. Her voice — and the courage that infused it — will be truly missed.

John F. Mahoney

To Order, Put Check Mark in Left
Hand Column and Use Order
Form on Page 16.

AMEU's Book Selections (See Videos on Page 16)

Authors	Publication		Year	Pgs	List	AMEU	Summary
Aburish, S.	Arafat: From Defender to Dictator	paper	1998	360	\$15.90	\$12.50	Good biography of Palestinian leader.
A.M.E.U.	Holy Land Travel Directory	paper	1999	18	\$10.00	\$5.00	Recommends travel agents, inns, guides, shops.
Amove, A., ed.	Iraq Under Siege	paper	2000	216	\$16.00	\$13.50	Articles by Aruri, Chomsky, Kelly, Abunimah.
Abu-Sitta, S.	Palestine: 1948	map	1998	NA	\$17.00	\$15.00	Locates 531 depopulated towns & villages.
Armstrong, K	Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths	paper	1999	474	\$17.50	\$16.95	Well written; critically acclaimed.
Ateek, N. ed.	Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee	paper	1999	314	\$25.00	\$24.50	Includes articles by Edward Said & Michael Prior.
Bailey & Hillard	Living Stones Pilgrimage	paper	1999	132	\$15.00	\$14.50	Guide to Holy Land's Christian communities.
Beit-Hallahmi, B.	Original Sins	paper	1993	227	\$19.95	\$12.50	Reflections on Zionism and Israel.
Benvenisti, M.	Sacred Landscape	cloth	2000	417	\$35.00	\$25.95	Israel's 50-year effort to change the landscape.
Bilkadi, Zayn	Babylon to Baku	cloth	1998	224	\$75.00	\$59.00	Richly illustrated 40,000-year history of oil.
Borne, J.	The USS Liberty	paper	1995	318	\$20.00	\$19.50	Author challenges official US-Israeli accounts.
CAABU	The Arab World	paper	1998	40	\$17.00	\$15.50	Excellent study guide for teachers.
Chacour, E.	Blood Brothers	paper	1984	223	\$7.95	\$7.50	Author is prominent Palestinian Christian leader.
Chapman, C.	Whose Promised land	paper	1992	286	\$10.95	\$5.50	Examines meaning of biblical promises.
Cheshin, et al.	Separate & Unequal	cloth	1999	288	\$27.95	\$19.95	Inside story of Israeli rule in East Jerusalem.
Christison, K.	Perceptions of Palestine	cloth	1999	380	\$40.00	\$29.95	How US media has influenced US policy.
Dallal, S.	Scattered Like Seeds	cloth	1998	335	\$26.95	\$19.95	Novel about Palestinian exile and return.
David, R.	Arabs & Israel for Beginners	paper	1993	218	\$9.95	\$8.95	Illustrated history of Palestine & Israel.
Eady & Mast	Sahmatah	paper	1998	40	\$10.00	\$10.00	One act play for two actors; see <i>Link</i> , Feb. 1999.
Ellis, M.	O Jerusalem	paper	1999	187	\$17.50	\$16.95	The contested future of the Jewish Covenant.
Fayez, J., ed.	The Colonization of Palestine	paper	1992	48	\$9.95	\$3.00	Description of destroyed cities, towns & villages.
Findley, P.	Deliberate Deceptions	paper	1993	326	\$14.95	\$6.95	Facing the facts about the US-Israeli relationship.
Finkelstein, N.	Image and Reality	paper	1995	243	\$18.95	\$17.95	Good background for understanding post-Oslo events.
Finkelstein, N.	The Holocaust Industry	cloth	2000	150	\$23.00	\$16.50	Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering.
Finkelstein, N.	The Rise and Fall of Palestine	paper	1996	152	\$18.95	\$15.50	A critical assessment of the peace process.
Fromkin, D.	A Peace to End All Peace	paper	1989	635	\$15.95	\$14.95	Fall of Ottoman Empire & rise of modern Mid-East.
Giladi, N.	Ben Gurion's Scandals	cloth	1992	261	\$19.50	\$14.95	How the Haganah & Mossad eliminated Jews.
Halsell, G.	Forcing God's Hand	paper	1999	100	\$14.95	\$9.95	Israel, the Rapture and Planet Earth's destruction.
Halsell, G.	Journey to Jerusalem	paper	1981	193	\$7.95	\$4.00	Moving expose of life under Israeli occupation.
Halsell, G.	Prophecy and Politics	paper	1986	210	\$14.95	\$8.95	Militant evangelists on the road to nuclear war.
Hass, A.	Drinking the Sea at Gaza	paper	1999	400	\$16.00	\$12.95	Israel's bureaucratic terrorism in the Gaza Strip.

Hunter, S.	The Future of Islam and the West	paper	1998	208	\$17.95	\$15.50	Clash of civilizations vs. peaceful coexistence.
Jayyusi, S.	Anthology	paper	1996	754	\$22.00	\$17.50	Modern Palestinian literature.
Kerr, A.	Come With Me From Lebanon	cloth	1994	322	\$28.95	\$22.50	Autobiography.
Koestler, A.	The Thirteenth Tribe	paper	1976	255	\$15.00	\$11.50	The Khaza ancestry of Jews who settled Israel.
Mallison, W.T. & S.	Palestine Problem in Int. Law	cloth	1986	564	\$49.50	\$10.00	Definitive work from Balfour Declaration to 1986.
Masalha, N.	Expulsion of the Palestinians	paper	1993	235	\$11.95	\$9.50	Examines Zionist notion of 'Transfer', 1882-1948.
McCormick, J.	Jerusalem and the Holy Land	paper	1997	206	\$12.95	\$10.95	An ecumenical pilgrim's guide.
McGowan-Hogan	The Saga of Deir Yassin	paper	1999	78	\$10.00	\$10.00	Response to Zionist revisionism.
Morris, B.	Righteous Victims	cloth	2000	751	\$40.00	\$27.50	The Zionist-Arab conflict from 1881 to 1999.
Morris, B.	Birth of the Palestinian refugee problem	paper	1987	380	\$25.95	\$19.95	Pivotal work on expulsion of Palestinians, 1947-49.
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Prior, M.	The Bible and Colonialism	paper	1997	342	\$28.50	\$27.50	A moral critique by author of Nov-Dec 2000 <i>Link</i> .
Prior, M., ed.	They Came and They Saw	paper	2000	302	\$22.00	\$19.50	Western Christian experiences in the Holy Land.
Prior, M.	Zionism and the State of Israel	cloth	1999	304	\$75.00	\$59.50	A moral inquiry.
Raheb & Strickert	Bethlehem 2000: Past and Present	cloth	1999	160	\$34.95	\$32.50	Coffee-table history book with 130 color photos.
Rantisi & Beebe	Blessed Are the Peacemakers	paper	1990	172	\$8.95	\$7.95	Personal account of the Lydda Death March.
Said, E.	Out of Place	cloth	1999	295	\$26.99	\$15.95	A memoir.
Said, E.	The End of the Peace Process	cloth	2000	345	\$27.50	\$19.50	Author questions foundations of Oslo accords.
Shahak & Mezvinsky	Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel	paper	1999	160	\$17.95	\$15.50	Focuses on roots of Jewish fundamentalism.
Shahak, I.	Jewish History, Jewish Religion	paper	1994	127	\$17.95	\$15.50	Talmud morality and the peace process.
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Simons, G.	Imposing Economic Sanctions	paper	1999	212	\$19.95	\$9.95	A legal remedy vs. a genocidal tool.
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Suleiman, M., ed.	Arabs in America	paper	2000	360	\$22.95	\$19.95	21 scholars report on Arabs of North America.
Thomas, B.	How Israel Was Won	paper	1999	346	\$19.95	\$18.50	Role of the Holocaust in Palestinian catastrophe.
Wagner, D.	Anxious for Armageddon	paper	1995	354	\$12.95	\$9.95	Christian Evangelicals and Israel.
Whitelam, K.	The Invention of Ancient Israel	paper	1997	281	\$20.00	\$16.50	Biblical scholarship and Palestinian dispossession.
Zed Publ.	The Spirit of Palestine	cloth	1994	244	\$50.00	\$50.00	Richly illustrated history; coffee-table size.

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- DMZ, **People & the Land** (1997, 57 minutes). This is the controversial documentary by Tom Hayes that appeared on over 40 PBS stations. AMEU: \$25.00.
- IRA, **Children of the Cradle** (1996, 30-minute report on embargo of Iraq). AMEU: \$3.00.
- Kelley, R., **The Bedouin of Israel** (1998, 2 hours). Never-before-seen film of how Israel has treated its Bedouin citizens, including interview with the notorious Green Patrol. AMEU: \$30.00.
- Masri, M., **Children of Shatila** (1999, 58 minutes). The children 17 years after the massacre. List: \$50.00; AMEU: \$39.50.
- Masri, M., **Hanan Ashrawi: A Woman of Her Time** (1995, 51 minutes). One of Palestine's most articulate representatives shows that Israel's occupation is far from over - and far from benign. List: \$65.00; AMEU: \$35.00.
- Middle East Council of Churches, **Disabled for Palestine** (1993, 21 minutes). A Palestinian doctor shows cases of Palestinian civilians who have been maimed for life by Israeli bullets, beatings and tear gas. List: \$25.00; AMEU: \$10.00.
- Munayyer, F. & H., **Palestinian Costumes and Embroidery: A Precious Legacy** (1990, 38 minutes). A rare collection of Palestinian dresses with accessories modeled against the background of Palestinian music, with commentary tracing the designs back to Canaanite times. List: \$50.00; AMEU: \$12.50.
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