

‘Ordinary’ Israelis Don’t Perceive Themselves as Ordinary People

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On reading the enduring horrific daily news coming out of Palestine/Israel relating to the ongoing Jewish-state Nakba, I invariably feel a strong desire to discuss what is often the elephant in the room. It’s an issue constantly on the minds of Israelis and Palestinians alike, while at the same time being difficult to discuss frankly and directly in polite society.

The issue is Jewish supremacy as it manifests itself in the Zionist settler-colonial state of Israel and beyond. (See my [blog post](#), What is Jewish supremacy and how is it different from White supremacy?). I say “beyond”, because there is a strong existing connection to Israel by ‘ordinary’ Jews outside of Israel/Palestine, whose Jewish communities, in Europe and America, feed Israel. Even at a mature age they go there, either to visit or to stay (which is a support and confirmation for the state), but more often to [serve](#) in the military which is the most militant of brainwashing in Jewish supremacy.

Most activists skirt the issue of Jewish supremacy and some deny it outright in a way they would not dream of doing with White supremacy. The only safe place to discuss the issue of Jewish supremacy, it sometimes appears, is within the confines of Mondoweiss.

But even there, we are more likely to read forceful [critiques](#) debunking the Zionist idea of a ‘Jewish nation’ as sold to the world by the world Zionist movement. A necessary exercise. Nevertheless, I often wonder, what about the concomitant fact of the religious Jewish character of the state as expressed in its Basic Law? What about the self-professed Jewish identity of millions of Jews, in Israel and outside Israel—not to mention Palestinian perceptions of them—as Jews first, and Zionist second?

It therefore seems at times that, in order to liberate Palestine from the Zionist settler-colonial regime, Palestinians must first undertake the impossible task of convincing the world that those who espouse the Zionist settler-colonial regime are less Jewish than Zionist, which of course strips them of their self-identified Jewish identity and is unacceptable to them.

More and more Jews worldwide today are saying “not in our name”, in reference to Israel’s crimes against the Palestinian people. However, they too, don’t have the power to rename Israeli Jews as something else. This brings to mind Israel’s chief rabbi’s [statement](#) that “some Jews are more Jewish than others.”

When we talk about Israel, we can discuss apartheid, demographics, settler-colonialism, but we are often silenced when the issue is Jewish supremacy and the Jewish nature of the

state—issues that are central to Israeli society as well as to the current and future dynamics of Palestinian-Israeli relations.

If the goal of all the analysis about Israel is to find realistic solutions for an impossible status quo, we ought not to dismiss this very real and troubling issue. It doesn't make sense to do so.

In a 2015 article published [online](#) and titled 'Palestine–Israel: Decolonization Now, Peace Later', Alaa Tartir (researcher at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland and a policy advisor at [Al-Shabaka](#)) lists a number of basic but fundamental obstacles to any future lasting peace in Israel/Palestine. Among them is the following characterization of Israeli society:

Another dominant observation that I noticed in my small, random and unrepresentative sample is the sense of superiority [among Israeli Jews]. liberal, leftist, fundamentalists, secular, religious and progressive voices, from different generations living in different cities, shared the feature of superiority, which is problematic at the very personal and human level, before it extends to politics. Statements like 'we are God's chosen nation', 'we don't care about international law', 'we help those poor Palestinians to end the occupation', 'we offer Palestinians jobs and they work for us', 'Gaza is irrelevant', 'I have Palestinian friends but would never trust them' characterized the discussions. Therefore, unless 'ordinary' Israelis perceive themselves as ordinary people and not superior to other nations it is impossible to imagine how a one-state or two-state solution could work.

Tartir goes on to say,

Just as the Palestinian people and leadership need to engage in a serious process of reforming their strategies, so do the Israelis. The Israelis need to reconcile internally a number of issues mainly related to the apartheid structures, Jewish supremacy, the Jewish nature of the state, the demographic phobia and the return of the Palestinian refugees from exile.

When we are forced to ignore the perceptions of Israelis and their set of values and beliefs (which are the root manifestation of the Zionist Jewish state in Palestine), when we are unable to confront them candidly, we Palestinians will never be able to achieve justice and equality.

Lena, a former Israeli, writes:

Many Jews, even if not overtly Zionist, share this basic belief that in order to prevent another extermination, they must become DOMINANT and exercise superiority, because "this is how the world works, either you dominate or be exterminated". Although nobody ever has persecuted or offended these young Jews, they share the view of Goyim as a bunch of people who inherently want to erase Jews from this planet. I honestly do not know how to combat a basic belief that the world is based on domination, that whoever does not dominate will be subjugated or killed, that Jews must forever fight against an inherent existential threat, therefore not letting them dominate is the same as wanting them all dead.

Lena describes the mindset of any group of people who have been conditioned to see the world through us vs. them.

“Confronting the occupier, colonizer or oppressor is the main lesson from the history of liberation movements across the world,” writes Tartir. We must confront Israelis on the issue of Jewish supremacy, as on all others.

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