

Appendix E -- Session 3 Material

Fact Sheets

pages 2-7

As described on page 22 of the *Facilitators' Manual*, three fact sheets were prepared for use in Session 3, both to answer questions raised in the first two class sessions and to provide context for the film excerpts to be shown. Class participants received the first handout at the beginning of the class. It was used as part of a discussion introducing the first film. The other two fact sheets were available for participants to take home at the end of the class. The facilitators cited key findings from them during the brief discussion periods following the second and third film excerpts.

1. *Israel/Palestine -- Changing Populations, Changing Boundaries*
2. *Comparative Data on Fatalities, Armaments, and U.S. Aid*
3. *Attitudes and Expectations of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans*

Although the fact sheets were composed in late 2010, the information they contain is still historically valid and instructive. Sources are cited throughout so that they can also be updated. To use the fact sheets as handouts without the pages numbers shown in this appendix, simply copy the text into a new document (with one inch margins on all sides) and photocopy front and back.

Film Selection and Response

pages 8-10

This section describes the content of the three film excerpts shown in Session 3, as well as the response of class participants to them.

Readings from Scripture and Closing Prayer

pages 11-13

This section provides the passages from Genesis, Galatians, Amos, and Isaiah read during the meditative “Wilderness Walk” that concluded Session 3, as well as the Hanukkah poem used as a closing prayer.

Israel/Palestine

Changing Populations, Changing Boundaries

Population prior to 1948

- Population of Palestine in 1878, under the Ottoman Turks: 462,000 (1)
- 1878: first Zionist agricultural colony in Palestine
- 1882-1914: 65,000 European Jews immigrate (2)
- 1904-1919: 40,000 Zionist immigrants arrive; Jews are now 6% of the population
- 1920-1930: 108,000 more immigrants arrive
- 1922: British Census of Mandate Palestine shows a total population of 757,182 (78% Muslim, 11% Jewish, 9.6% Christian)
- 1931 British Census shows total pop. of 1,035,154 (81.6% Arab; 16.9% Jewish) (3)
- 1931-1937: 174,000 more Jewish immigrants
- 1937-1945: 119,800 more Jewish immigrants
- Population at partition in 1947: 1,750,000, of whom two thirds were Palestinian and one-third (or 548,000) were Jewish (4)

Source: Except as otherwise noted, the information cited above is drawn from *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé (Oxford: One World, 2006)

Current Demographics

ISRAEL

- Area comparison: slightly smaller than New Jersey (pop. 8.7 million).
- Population 7.3 million people (includes annexed E. Jerusalem and the Golan).
- Under age 15: 27.9%; growth rate: 1.628%.
- In-migration rate: 2.22 migrants per 1,000 pop.
- Ethnicity: Jewish 76.4% (Israel-born 67.1%, Europe/America-born 22.6%, Africa-born 5.9%, Asia-born 4.2%) and non-Jewish 23.6% (mostly Arab) (2004)
- Religions: Jewish 75.5%, Muslim 16.8%, Christian 2.1%, Druze 1.7%, other 3.9% (2008)
- By the end of 2008, 507,554 illegal Jewish settlers were living in the Occupied Territories (5)

PALESTINE

- Area comparison: the West Bank is slightly smaller than Delaware (which has a population of 885,122); Gaza is slightly more than twice the size of Washington, DC (pop. 600,000).
- Population: West Bank (2,351,000) and Gaza (1,417,000) for a total of 3,768,000.
- Of these, 1,551,000 are refugees registered with the UN.
- Under age 15: 44% in Gaza, 37.3% in the WB. Growth rate: 3.29% Gaza, 2.13% WB.
- In-migration: 0% Gaza and West Bank
- In 2007, the World Bank estimated that 75% of Palestinians were living in poverty (on less than \$2.00 US a day), with an unemployment rate of 53% (6)

Source: Except as otherwise noted, the information above is drawn from www.ciafacts.gov

Changes in land settlement and control 1947 to 1967

- On November 29, 1947, the UN adopted Resolution 181 on the partition of Palestine. This called for Palestinians to retain just over 43% of the land (although they owned 92% of it and represented two thirds of the population) and for Jews to be given control over 56% of the land (though they represented 31% of the population and owned only 6% of the land). (7)
- Within the portion allocated to the proposed Jewish state, Jews constituted 57% of the

population (538,000, versus an Arab population of 397,000)

- From December, 1947, to May, 1948, Zionist militia, Palestinians, and Arab volunteers from neighboring states skirmished throughout the country.
- In March, 1948, the Zionist leadership adopted “Plan Dalet” which called for the expulsion of the indigenous population by force; by May, some 250,000 Palestinians had been driven from their homes through a strategy of targeted massacres and intimidation.
- On May 15, 1948, the British withdrew from Palestine, the Jewish Agency declared the establishment of Israel as an independent state, and Arab troops entered the country.
- By the end of the War of 1948, Israel controlled 78% of the land of historic Palestine; the remaining 22% was now under the control of Jordan (E. Jerusalem and the West Bank) or Egypt (the Gaza Strip)
- During 1948, over 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes; they either fled to neighboring countries or moved to the remaining 22% of the land.
- Of the 500 Palestinian villages in the land controlled by Israel, the government destroyed 418.

Source: Except as otherwise noted, the information cited above is drawn from *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé (Oxford: One World, 2006)

Changes in land settlement and control 1967 to the present

- During the 1967 war, Israel occupied all of historic Palestine, displacing 400,000 Palestinians from their homes (one half of whom had previously been displaced in 1948)
- The United Nations called for Israel to withdraw to its pre-1967 boundaries as part of a comprehensive peace settlement, but this was rejected.
- Following the Camp David Accords signed by Begin, Sadat, and Carter in 1978, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty in 1979 and Israel withdrew from the Sinai, which it had occupied in 1967.
- Following the Madrid Conference in 1991, the Israelis and Palestinians held secret negotiations in Oslo, resulting in the signing of the “Oslo Accords” at the White House in September, 1993. The Accords called for the Israeli army to withdraw from parts of Gaza and the West Bank and for the creation of a Palestinian National Authority (PA) to administer portions under its control. The final status of Jerusalem, refugees, Israeli settlements, and borders were left for later negotiations.
- The Oslo II Agreement of 1995, divided the West Bank into Area A (18% of the land, under PA control), Area B (22% of the land, under PA civil control and joint PA-Israeli security control), and Area C (60% of the land, including most farmland and water, under full Israeli control). (8)
- During the six years of the continuing Oslo Process after 1993, illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories doubled in size and population, from 200,000 to 400,000. (9)
- In 2002 Israel began constructing the Separation Barrier Wall, planned to annex 9.5% of the West Bank, including Palestinian homes, farms, and key aquifers. (10)
- In August, 2005, Israel withdrew its army and all settlers from Gaza (2% of all settlers); each settler was promised \$227,000 to relocate; Israel sought \$2.2 billion from the US for this. (11)

Footnotes:

- (1) Cited in the documentary film *Occupation 101*. Source: Benin and Hajjar, www.merip.org
- (2) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: www.palestineremembered.com
- (3) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: British Royal Commission on Palestine Report.
- (4) Halper, Jeff, *Obstacles to Peace*, Israeli Coalition against House Demolitions, Jerusalem, 2009
- (5) Foundation for Middle East Peace, *Comprehensive Settlement Population, 1972-2009*, www.fmep.org
- (6) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: The World Bank.
- (7) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: Benin & Hajjar, www.merip.org
- (8) Halper, op. cit., page 2.
- (9) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace.
- (10) B'tselem, the Israeli Info Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, www.btselem.org
- (11) Cited in *Occupation 101*. Source: Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org

Israel/Palestine *Comparative Data*

Fatalities

The following data comes from B'tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Index.asp).

During the First Intifada (12/9/87- 9/1393):

- 1,100 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces, including 250 minors
- 114 Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians, including 114 minors.

From the start of the Second Intifada on 9/29/00 to the beginning of Operation Cast Lead:

- 4,787 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in the Occupied Territories (OT) and 69 in Israel
- 45 Palestinians were killed by Israeli citizens in the OT and 2 in Israel
- 239 Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians in the OT and 492 in Israel
- 609 Palestinians were killed by Palestinians in the OT
- The above figures include 950 Palestinian minors killed by Israeli security services in the OT, and Israeli minors killed by Palestinians: 39 in the OT and 84 inside Israel.

During Operation Cast Lead (the invasion of Gaza, 12/27/08-1/18/09):

- 1,390 Palestinian civilians in Gaza were killed by Israeli security services. This number includes
 - 759 who were not taking part in hostilities
 - 349 who were taking part in hostilities
 - 344 minors
 - 248 Palestinian police officers killed inside police stations
 - 21 who were killed in the course of a targeted killing or were its objects
- 18 Palestinians were killed by fellow Palestinians.
- 5 Israeli security personnel were killed by Palestinians

From September 29, 2000 through August 31, 2010

In the online version of this chart, one can click on the figures cited to get a list of individual names and details about the circumstances of their deaths. www.btselem.org/English/Israeli%5FCivilians/.

| Data , 29.9.2000-31.8.2010 | Occupied Territories | | | Israel |
|---|----------------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| | Gaza Strip | West Bank | Total | |
| Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces | 4467 | 1823 | 6290 | 69 |
| Palestinians killed by Israeli civilians | 4 | 43 | 47 | 2 |
| Israeli civilians killed by Palestinians | 39 | 207 | 246 | 496 |
| Israeli security force personnel killed by Palestinians | 105 | 147 | 252 | 90 |
| Foreign citizens killed by Palestinians | 10 | 7 | 17 | 38 |
| Foreign citizens killed by Israeli security forces | 4 | 6 | 10 | 0 |
| Palestinians killed by Palestinians | 529 | 135 | 664 | 0 |

| Additional data (included in previous table) | Occupied Territories | | | Israel |
|--|----------------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| | Gaza | Strip | West Bank | |
| Palestinian minors killed by Israeli security forces | 987 | 325 | 1312 | 3 |
| Israeli minors killed by Palestinians | 4 | 36 | 40 | 84 |
| Palestinians killed during the course of a targeted killing | 301 | 107 | 408 | 0 |
| Palestinians who were the object of a targeted killing | 156 | 82 | 238 | 0 |
| Palestinians killed by Palestinians for suspected collaboration with Israel | 25 | 109 | 134 | 0 |
| Palestinians who did not take part in the hostilities and were killed by Israeli security forces (not including the objects of targeted killings). | 2130 | 853 | 2983 | 5 |
| Palestinians who were killed by Israeli security forces and it is not known if they were taking part in the hostilities | 277 | 411 | 688 | 3 |
| Palestinians who took part in the hostilities and were killed by Israeli security forces | 1653 | 476 | 2129 | 61 |
| Palestinian police officers who were killed inside police stations | 248 | 0 | 248 | 0 |

Comparison of Armaments*

- Tanks: Israel 3,920 Palestine 0
- F-16 jets: Israel 362 Palestine 0
- Israel has the second largest navy in the world, after the United States.
- Israel is the world's 5th largest nuclear power with an estimated 200-300 warheads.

* Cited in the 2008 documentary *Occupation 101*. Sources: www.israeli-weapons.com and www.globalsecurity.org.

U.S. Aid 1949-1996**

- Total aid to Israel: \$62.5 billion.
- Total aid to all countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa: also \$62.5 billion
- Translates to \$10,775 per person in Israel (5.8 million) and \$59 per person in all the other regions cited (total population: 1.05 billion).
- Of the total aid the US gives annually, Israel receives one-third.

** Cited in the 2008 documentary *Occupation 101*. Source: Richard Curtiss, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, www.wrmea.com

Attitudes and Expectations of Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans

(as revealed in recent public opinion surveys)

ISRAELI VIEWS

Findings of the 2010 Israeli Democracy Index (www.idi.org.il)

- 86% of the Jewish public (76% of the total population) think that critical decisions for the state should be made by the Jewish majority.
- 53% of the Jewish public believe the State is entitled to encourage the emigration of Arabs.
- 70% of Israel's population thinks that there is no justification whatsoever for using violence in order to achieve political goals.
- 51% of the general public approves of equality of rights between Jews and Arabs.
- 67% of the Jewish public believe that close relatives of Arabs should not be permitted to enter Israel under of the rubric of family unification.
- Almost two-thirds (62%) of Jews believe that while Israel is in conflict with the Palestinians, the views of Arab citizens of Israel on foreign policy and security matters should not be considered.

Findings of the New America Foundation

November 2009 survey of 1,000 Israelis (www.naf.org)

- 41% give President Obama a favorable rating vs. 37% unfavorable; 55% believe he does not support Israel vs. 42% who do; 50% believe he is weak on terrorism; 43% believe he is naïve
- 69% support Prime Minister Netanyahu's handling of security issues; 59% would support "any agreement Netanyahu reaches with our enemies."
- If Israel were to reject a US-sponsored final status agreement, 64% believe the US would reduce financial aid and 58% believe it would reduce military aid to Israel
- The top reasons given to support a peace agreement with the Palestinians are "a more normal life for our children" (50%) and economic growth (37%).

Arab-Jewish relations

- The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (www.acri.org.il) reported in 2007 that racism in the country was increasing: over 2/3rds of Israeli teens believe Arabs to be less intelligent, uncultured, and violent; 50% of all Israelis surveyed would not live in the same building as Arabs, befriend them, let their children do so, or let them into their homes.
- The Institute of Studies (Magar Mouhot) found 50% of Jewish youth (82% of ultra-Orthodox youth) believe Arabs should not have the same rights as Jews, not be allowed to run for the Knesset (56%), and that settlers should not be evacuated from the West Bank (48%).
- A survey by Haifa University Professor Sami Smoocha, published in *Ha'aretz* in May 25, 2010, reported deteriorating relations since 2003. In that time, the proportion of Arab Israelis unwilling to have a Jewish friend rose from 16% to 29%; 62% fear forced migration vs. 6% in 2003.
- Smoocha found that Israelis' fear of high Arab birth-rates dropped from 70% to 58% during this period, but 70% still fear a change to the country's Jewish character.
- An October 2010 poll by the Dahaf polling agency found that 36% of Israeli Jews favor eliminating voting rights for non-Jews; at the same time, 42 to 56% agree that Israeli Arabs suffer from discrimination compared to Jewish citizens.

PALESTINIAN VIEWS

Findings of the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research (www.pcpsr.org)

Poll #37, Sept/Oct 2010:

- 71% are opposed to the abandonment of a two-state solution and the adoption of a one-state solution

- 66% want Palestine to pull out of direct negotiations if settlement construction continues
- If negotiations continue, 63% of Palestinians think chances of success are low or very low; 29% rate chances as medium, and 6% as high or very high.
- If negotiations fail, 69% support going to the UN for recognition of a Palestinian state, 54% support a unilateral declaration of statehood, and 51% support non-violent resistance.
- 54% of all Palestinians oppose another armed intifada, but support for it varies from 35% in the West Bank to 52% in Gaza.
- If a Palestinian state is established and all other issues are resolved, 49% would support and 48% oppose mutual recognition of Israel as the state for Jewish people and Palestine as the state for the Palestinian people.
- 76% of Palestinians are worried that they or a member of their family will be hurt by Israelis, their land confiscated, or their homes demolished; 24% are not worried.

Poll #35, March 2010:

- 73% of Gaza residents say conditions are bad or very bad; 11% say they are good; 36% of the Palestinians living in the West Bank say conditions are bad or very bad; 31% good or very good.
- If elections for president were held “today,” Abbas would receive 50% and Haniyeh (Hamas) 40%; if legislative elections were held, 42% would vote for Fatah and 28% for Hamas.
- 59% view unification of the West Bank and Gaza as the top priority; 24% prefer opening border crossings; 24% choose the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip.

Findings of the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion (www.pcpo.ps)

Poll #173, November 3, 2010

- Will direct negotiations succeed or fail in reaching an agreement for permanent peace? Surely succeed (7.2%), succeed (42%), fail (31.6%), surely fail (12.3%), don't know (6.3%).
- Are you more or less optimistic than in the past about reaching a final accord? More optimistic (21.7%), same as in past (25.6%), more pessimistic than in the past (25.9%), same as in the past (24.3%), no opinion (2.5%).
- What is your attitude toward firing Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel? Strongly oppose (28.7%), somewhat oppose (20.7%), somewhat in favor (33.2%), strongly in favor (13%).
- Do you think Israelis are concerned about making peace with the Palestinians? Yes (16.6%), to some extent (46.7%), no (34.8%), don't know (1.9%)
- If a peace deal were within reach, would you support or oppose the deployment of multi-national UN forces in the West Bank and Gaza? Strongly support (13%), somewhat support (33.2%), somewhat oppose (20.7%), strongly oppose (28.7%), don't know (4.4%)

AMERICAN VIEWS

Findings of recent polls (as reported on www.pollingreport.com/israel.htm)

- CNN/Opinion Research Corp., Sept. 2010: Do you think peace can be achieved “in the period ahead.” Yes 25% No 73% Unsure 1%
- CBS/NY Times, May 2010: Is your overall opinion of Israel very favorable (15%), mostly favorable (40%), mostly unfavorable (16%), very unfavorable (7%), or unsure (22%)
- Gallup Poll, Feb. 2010: Are your sympathies more with the Israelis (63%) or with the Palestinian Arabs (15%), both (3%), neither (12%), or unsure (8%)
- Gallup Poll (same): Do you think there will come a time when Israel and the Arab nations will be able to settle their differences and live in peace? (Will 30%, Will not 67%, Unsure 3%)
- USA Today/Gallup, May 2009: Do you favor (51%) or oppose (29%) the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza? Unsure (20%)
- CNN/Opinion Research, Jan. 2009 (re: Operation Cast Lead): Do you think Israel was justified (63%) or unjustified (31%) in taking military action against Hamas? Unsure (6%) Do you think the military force used was too much (38%), about right (43%), or too little (14%) Unsure (5%)
- Pew Research Center, Jan. 2009: Do you think the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a major (45%) or minor (40%) threat to the well being of the US, or not a threat (9%)? Unsure (6%)

Film Selection and Response

Selection of Film Excerpts

In screening documentaries, we looked for excerpts that would illustrate one or more of the following topics:

- Palestinian life under occupation, including the presence of Israeli armed forces, the separation barrier wall, ubiquitous checkpoints, house demolitions, destruction of olive orchards and property
- Land confiscated for use only by Israeli Jews, including segregated highways and illegal settlements ranging from the hilltop outposts occupied by Orthodox extremists to extensive suburban-style communities
- Examples of the terror experienced by Israelis due to suicide bombings and missile attacks from Gaza and Lebanon
- Palestinians and Israelis working together across geographic, cultural, religious, and ideological divides
- Differences in the way these realities are depicted in the media in Israel/Palestine, the U.S., and possibly other countries

After looking at a number of different films, we settled on three excerpts from two documentaries:

Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land

(Produced by the Media Education Foundation, 2003, www.mediaed.org)

1. DVD Segment 1/6: *Invisible Colonization*, 10 minutes, 30 seconds
2. DVD Segment 1/7: *Violence in a Vacuum*, 10 minutes, 9 seconds

Encounter Point

(Produced by Just Vision, 2006, www.justvision.org)

3. Segment 2/7, featuring Tzvika Shahak and George Sa'adeh

Use of Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land

This film examines the different ways in which television news outlets in Israel, Great Britain, and the United States cover the same events. The first segment reviews many of the aspects of the Occupation, revealing that British editors and journalists more frequently provide their viewers with the “bigger picture” in comparison to their American counterparts. For example, they may explain that most checkpoints are within the West Bank and not at access points into Israel itself. They may show that the route of the barrier wall is not along the 1967 line previously separating Israel from Palestine, but encroaches well into the West Bank, placing important water resources and geographic features -- as well as part of the Palestinian population -- on the Israeli side of the wall.

In one telling example, a British journalist reveals an internal CNN memo directing that network’s journalists not to describe illegal, Jewish-only settlements built on Palestinian land near Jerusalem in those terms but as “Israeli neighborhoods.” The film then juxtaposes news footage from CNN, CBS, and other major American media sources using that misleading language with the more honest coverage shown on the BBC and other British outlets.

The second segment similarly contrasts the ways in which violent incidents in Israel and Palestine are described by Israeli, American, and British media. While not condoning any of the violence, the film reveals that Israeli and American media rarely explain that acts of desperate violence by Palestinians are forms of protest against the seizure of their land -- first in 1948 and again in 1967 -- and the harsh, humiliating conditions of the military occupation. Conversely, the film shows that acts of violence by the government of Israel against Palestinian communities are almost always described in American and Israeli media as “responses” to provocations and motivated by a desire to defend Israel. In contrast,

British media will more often provide the larger context for the violence, describing the provocation of the Occupation itself and contrasting the scale of Palestinian violence with the collective punishment meted out by the Israeli forces against entire communities.

Admittedly these two excerpts paint a depressing picture of the situation in Israel/Palestine. They also provide a disturbing analysis of the ways in which commercial television networks in the U.S. have for many years (or at least up to 2003) been providing audiences with a distorted or at least partial view of realities there.

[Editors' Note: Since this film was released, media coverage in the U.S. has improved somewhat. In producing the companion DVD for its 2009 study guide *Steadfast Hope*, the Israel Palestine Mission Network of the Presbyterian Church USA included an excerpt from *Peace Propaganda and the Promised Land*, but complemented it with an excerpt from a January, 1960, broadcast of *60 Minutes*.

[Characterized as a "breakthrough" in major American media, this episode of *60 Minutes* featured a report by journalist Bob Simon covering President Obama's call for a freeze on the construction of illegal settlements by Israel. In the piece, Simon showed in detail many of features of Israel's military occupation of Palestine not previously explained on network TV. He concluded the piece by suggesting that Israel faced three choices: 1) the continued ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, 2) giving Palestinians the vote and thus ending the Jewish state, or 3) creating an apartheid state in which a minority Jewish population would rule the majority Palestinian population.

[Despite some changes in American media coverage of Israel/Palestine, *Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land* is still an effective wake up call for many viewers, helping them become more alert to instances of biased reporting and misrepresentations made in editorials.]

Use of Encounter Point

Although we wanted to impress upon class participants the harshness of daily life in the Occupied Territories, as well as the fear pervading Israeli communities within range of missiles fired by Hamas and Hezbollah, we also wanted to show that there are signs of hope. To that end, we drew our final excerpt from *Encounter Point*, which profiles a number of Israelis and Palestinians who have labored against great odds -- including the suspicion and antagonism of family members and friends in many instances -- to bridge these divides and work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

The film documents several organizations and programs through which Israelis and Palestinians are cooperating. One of the most impressive is the Parents Circle/Bereaved Families Forum, which brings together individuals who have lost family members to violence. Rather than give in to revenge, these people have instead committed themselves to addressing the underlying causes for the violence and to promoting understanding and reconciliation at both individual and communal levels.

The excerpt we selected focuses on Tzvika Shahak, a businessman and decorated war veteran with 35 years of service in the Israeli army and reserves, and George Sa'adeh, a Palestinian high school principal. Both men lost children to the violence. Shahak's 15 year old daughter was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber outside a Tel Aviv mall. Sa'adeh's 12 year old daughter was killed when Israeli soldiers mistakenly fired upon the family's car as they were returning from grocery shopping. The two men meet at a Bereaved Families Forum gathering and decide to work together to change the perceptions, actions, and visions of their respective communities.

Response to Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land

Asking participants to share "key" words that captured their initial reactions to the film proved to be a useful way to break the ice immediately after screening the two excerpts. Words mentioned included: *injustice, deception, disgusting, outrage, passivity, manipulation, brainwashing, and betrayal.*

The film sparked a lively discussion about accuracy in the media. Several participants with overseas experience pointed out how common it is for reporters in conflict situations to rely on official sources of information. Others said it is incumbent on all viewers and readers to seek out alternative sources.

One participant noted that the excerpts seem to present the Palestinians as being defenseless, when in reality some segments of the population (most notably those who are members of Hamas in Gaza or Hezbollah in Lebanon) have launched countless rocket attacks on communities within Israel. The facilitators acknowledged that we had searched for a film excerpt that would address the rocket attacks but had been unable to find one. Instead, we purposefully used excerpts that showed the aftermath of suicide bombings in Israel and the deaths caused by Palestinian snipers.

This discussion allowed us to introduce some of the facts from the second Fact Sheet concerning the disparities in armaments between Israel and Palestine and in fatalities on both sides -- as documented by an Israeli-based human rights group. One facilitator also pointed out that as of December 2010, there had not been a suicide bombing in Israel for four and a half years.

Questions were also raised about the Israeli government's withdrawal of its citizens and military from Gaza. The film was produced in 2003. In December of that year, Israel announced its plan to evacuate all 8,500 settlers by the end of 2005. One Jewish member of the class said that he had read that Israel's real reason for withdrawing was that it had nearly exhausted the water table there in order to send water to communities and farms in the Negev Desert. One facilitator mentioned having read that Israel sought and received aid from the United States to cover the subsidy paid to each of the settler families as an incentive to evacuate.

Response to Encounter Point

Class members offered the following "key" words following the screening: *hope, pragmatic, healing, communication, courageous, empathy, change, cycle, redemption, open-hearted, hard, and perseverance*. One participant said he had thought of *Pentecost*, which he explained was "really about having the capacity to hear the other person."

As expected, participants were in awe of the courage shown by Shahak and Sa'adeh in transforming their grief into a commitment to reach out to parents "on the other side" and work with them to promote reconciliation. Noting that both of these men are well-educated, one class member asked if the Bereaved Families Forum also involves individuals from poorer families. The facilitators cited several examples, including that of Ali Abu Awwad, who is featured in the film and whose narrative was used in the previous week's class. We also pointed out that complete transcripts of the interviews conducted by the film crew can be found on the Just Vision web site (<http://www.justvision.org/encounterpoint/about/protagonists>).

A segment of the film showing Shahak addressing a class of Israeli boys about to do their three years of required service in the armed forces prompted a discussion about the hardened attitudes that many Israelis and Palestinians appear to have towards one another. That provided an opportunity to cite some of the findings from public opinion polls recorded on the final Fact Sheet. Among these are studies by Haifa University and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel documenting deteriorating relations between the two populations and an increase in racist attitudes towards Palestinians by Israeli teens.

Readings from Scripture and Closing Prayer, Session 3

As described on page 22 of the *Facilitators' Manual*, we anticipated that the film excerpts shown during this session, as well as the troubling nature of the data cited in the fact sheets, would leave participants feeling nearly overwhelmed by the complexity of the situation in Israel/Palestine. Therefore we decided to conclude the class with a period for meditation and reflection, which we called the "Wilderness Walk."

We introduced this segment by reminding class members of the many times that Jesus (and numerous prophets and pilgrims before and since) have gone into the wilderness to cleanse their minds and listen to God. We suggested that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes a wilderness of sorts, not merely for the people who live there but also for people around the world who yearn for a resolution but are frustrated by repeated setbacks.

As facilitators who experience the same feelings of despair as everyone else, we joined class members on this walk around the perimeter of the room. After a period of silence, one facilitator stepped aside to read the passages from Genesis and Galatians shown below, then resumed the walk. After some time for reflection, the second facilitator stepped aside to read the passage from Amos. After more silence, the third facilitator read the passage from Isaiah. We hoped the readings would inspire participants to ponder the relevance of ancient calls and commitments to their lives today and to the situation in the Holy Land.

After a final period of walking meditation, we asked participants to take a seat at a table and spend the remaining time for quiet reflection, journaling, or using the art materials provided to express their feelings in a picture or collage.

We concluded the session by lighting a candle and reading the Hanukkah poem shown below, "A candle is a small thing."

Passages read during the "Wilderness Walk"

Genesis 17:4-9

(New International Version)

- 4) This is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations.
- 5) No longer will you be called Abram, your name will be Abraham, for I have made you the father of many nations.
- 6) I will make you fruitful; I will make nations of you and kings will come from you.
- 7) I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to your God and the God of your descendants after you.
- 8) The whole land of Canaan where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you and I will be their God.
- 9) Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come".

Galatians 3: 5-9, 26-29

(New International Version)

- 5) Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?
- 6) Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."
- 7) Understand, then, that those who believe are the children of Abraham.
- 8) The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed by you."
- 9) So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
- 26) You are all sons [and daughters] of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
- 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- 29) If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Amos: 5: 14-15, 22-24

(New International Version)

- 14) Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.
- 15) Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts.
- 22) Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.
- 23) Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.
- 24) But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Isaiah 58: 1-9

(New International Version)

- 1) "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins.
- 2) For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.
- 3) 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.
- 4) Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.
- 5) Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?
- 6) Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

- 7) Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?
- 8) Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
- 9) Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say:
‘Here am I.’”

Closing Prayer

A candle is a small thing.
But one candle can light another.
And see how its own light increases,
as a candle gives its flame to the other.
You are such a light.

A Hanukkah poem by Moshe Davis and Victor Ratner