

## Session Three

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle:

Justice, Equity and  
Compassion in All  
Human Relations

### Injustice

Stories of Israelis and  
Palestinians  
Hebron as a Case  
Study of Occupation

### Prereading

“Checkpoints: Matrix of Control,” by Rosie McInnes ([UUJME 2013 Fall Newsletter](#), <http://uujme.org/home/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=10zKraSYONk%3d&tabid=66&portalid=0&mid=384> page 4)

“Parallels Between the Jim Crow South and Israel-Palestine,” ([http://www.firstunitarianportland.org/images/stories/Social\\_Justice/Peace\\_Action/Parallels\\_bet.\\_Jim\\_Crow\\_South\\_and\\_Israel.Palestine.pdf](http://www.firstunitarianportland.org/images/stories/Social_Justice/Peace_Action/Parallels_bet._Jim_Crow_South_and_Israel.Palestine.pdf)) by UUJME board member Curtis Bell; also available in the Winter 2013 and Spring 2014 UUJME Newsletter, Part I (page 5) at <http://uujme.org/home/Portals/0/Newsletters/NewsletterWinter2013-UUJME.pdf?ver=2014-07-20-060841-000> and Part II (page 10) at <http://uujme.org/home/Portals/0/Newsletters/UUJME-news-0528FINAL.pdf?ver=2014-07-20-060950-000>.

UUs in Action – Pat Westwater-Jong’s photography project  
Stories of Palestinians and Israelis

### Opening Reading and Discussion

#### Activities

*Home Front*, four short films from Just Vision, featuring a young Palestinian teenager whose family is forced to give up half their home in East Jerusalem to Jewish settlers, interviewing Palestinians and Israelis, 26 minutes total; <http://www.justvision.org/homefront>

Short video of Hebron road closed to Palestinians, Breaking the Silence/B’tselem, <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/media/49098?sg=0>, 4:11 minutes

Short video of Israeli conducting night searches of Palestinian homes in Hebron at night to photograph children, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLg-IIHPO0A>, 8:12 minutes

Discuss what a just, equitable and compassionate course of action might be in these situations.

## Principle 2: Justice, Equity and Compassion in All Human Relations

Sessions One, Two and Three present readings and activities that emphasize subjective experience of this conflict, in line with principles 3, 1, and 2.

### Pre-reading



### Checkpoints: A Matrix of Control and Humiliation

*By Rosie McInnes, UUJME 2013 Human Rights Trip participant, in 2013*

*UUJME has sponsored five fact-finding trips to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, most recently in the summer of 2013. Our trips focus on human rights and include meetings with Israeli and Palestinian rights groups, peace activists, politicians, scholars and businesspeople. To date, 50 UUs have benefited from the highly informative, often emotional trips to the region, the majority returning to become activists in their congregations and elsewhere. The trips also feature homestays with Palestinian families, discussions with settlers and experiences of checkpoints. Below is an impression of crossing the Jalmeh checkpoint, north of Jenin. It was written by a member of the 2013 delegation, Rosie McInnes. Rosie was a sophomore at Bryn Mawr College when she wrote this article, and is the granddaughter of Don McInnes, the Cambridge, MA lawyer who established UUJME’s trips to the region.*

I stepped off the air-conditioned bus with trepidation, leaving behind the rest of the American members of our group. I followed George—our guide on the UJME trip and the co-founder of the Siraj Center for Holy Land Studies in Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem—his wife, Muna, and their two sons. We were about to pass through the checkpoint crossing from Jalmech to Nazareth in the fashion of all Palestinians: as pedestrians. I chose to join them, rather than pass through quickly on the bus, to better understand the Palestinian experience, and to show kinship and solidarity towards a family I had come to know and love. I felt a twinge of fear, but was careful not to show it; I felt I didn't deserve to be afraid of an experience that all Palestinians must endure, some every day. As we entered the checkpoint, George told me, "This is what it's like to be treated like a thief in your own country." I was about to find out what that was like.

The Israeli Defense Force began constructing checkpoints within and around the West Bank in the 1990s, but particularly after the Second Intifada, with the stated purpose of maintaining security within Israel, and preventing those who might wish it harm from entering. These permanent checkpoints, which number well over 500 now, are frequent sites of IDF harassment and abuse of Palestinians. They also severely restrict movement for Palestinians and impose economic hardship. But above all, they are reminders to Palestinians that they are seen as threats, that they are not welcome, that they are always under suspicion in a land that is their home.

The first thing we did when we entered the checkpoint was pass through a metal detector, after which a voice over a loudspeaker spoke angrily to us in Hebrew. All the soldiers spoke Hebrew throughout the process, even though many Palestinians do not speak the language. We continued down winding, narrow hallways, being buzzed through locked doors wherever we came to them. The floors were concrete, the walls metal. We were the only ones there, it being the middle of the day. We went through seemingly endless turnstiles, winding corners, and finally put our belongings through a final conveyor belt. We then entered an area labeled "Inspection Room." A young female soldier sitting behind a glass barrier in the small windowless room took our documents wordlessly and pulled a curtain and returned our documents over the glass barrier. We waited for about five minutes, after which the woman drew back the curtain without saying a word. We continued to the final checking station, where another soldier, again a woman and again speaking only Hebrew, took our documents. Armed soldiers walked around on catwalks above us. The soldier scanned Muna's fingerprints, and there was a briefly tense moment when she refused to let the boys go through with George because of a new rule regarding his permit. They had to wait and pass through with Muna. I was only briefly acknowledged: the soldier glanced at my passport and let me pass.

Going through the checkpoint, I truly felt like I was a criminal entering jail. As a human being, I felt humiliated to be treated in such a way. I felt ashamed that George's sons had to watch their mother's finger be scanned, had to receive the message that they were strangers and threats in their own country. I couldn't believe that the rest of the group could drive by and that the Palestinian family had to walk. What seems like such a simple difference, like such a minor distinction, is actually steeped in great shame. To be forced to *walk* while others *drive*. It is a form of humiliation so basic that it seems silly. But to experience it is not so silly.

Another thing that I had thought about before but not fully understood until this experience was the complete illogic of the checkpoints. The Israeli government defends the checkpoints on the basis of "security needs." Palestinians have entered Israel with bombs and caused violence in the past, so Israel has to make sure that does not happen again. This sentiment is steeped in deep fear and I really understand where it comes from. It is natural to respond to violence and threat with defensiveness. I think it is a natural gut reaction, but I do not think it is a logical or compassionate reaction. The constant humiliation and restrictive power of the checkpoints is not right.

As we were walking out of the checkpoint, George's wife Muna saw that I was upset, shaken up by what we had just gone through. She came over to me and touched my arm. She said to me, "I'm sorry. I can imagine that it was a shock for you to go through that, not really knowing what to expect." I could not believe that she was apologizing to me. I couldn't put into words how deeply sorry I was, how ashamed that my government supported a system that has made her feel like a stranger and criminal in her own country.

## Separate and Unequal

By Curtis Bell

*Fellow UUs: Unitarian Universalists committed themselves to the struggles for civil rights and voting rights of blacks in the South during the 1960s. Two hundred of the five hundred clergy in the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery were Unitarian Universalists. Two Unitarian Universalists were killed in the violence of events surrounding that march, Rev. James Reeb from Boston and Viola Liuzzo from Detroit. The protests in Selma were triggered by the killing of a young black man, Jimmy Lee Jackson, in a previous voting rights demonstration. A sculpture in memory of Rev. Reeb, Viola Liuzzo and Jimmy Lee Jackson is present in the main office of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston. Opposition to the oppression of blacks in the Jim Crow South followed naturally from a commitment to the basic Unitarian Universalist principles of respect for the worth and dignity of every human being and for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. The accompanying article draws out the many parallels between the oppression of blacks in the Jim Crow South and the oppression of Palestinians today.*

Two hundred of the five hundred clergy in the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery were Unitarian Universalists. Two Unitarian Universalists were killed in the violence of events surrounding that march, Rev. James Reeb from Boston and Viola Liuzzo from Detroit. The protests in Selma were triggered by the killing of a young black man, Jimmy Lee Jackson, in a previous voting rights demonstration.

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham, Alabama does a good job of showing what blacks endured before the civil rights victories of the 1960s. I visited there last fall and was especially struck by one particular image: a 1926 map of the small and isolated patches of Birmingham where blacks were then allowed to live (Fig. 1). What struck me was the similarity of this map to maps of the isolated patches of the West Bank and East Jerusalem where Palestinians are allowed to live (Fig. 2). The map then made me think about other similarities between the oppression of blacks in the Jim Crow South and Israel's present-day oppression of Palestinians.

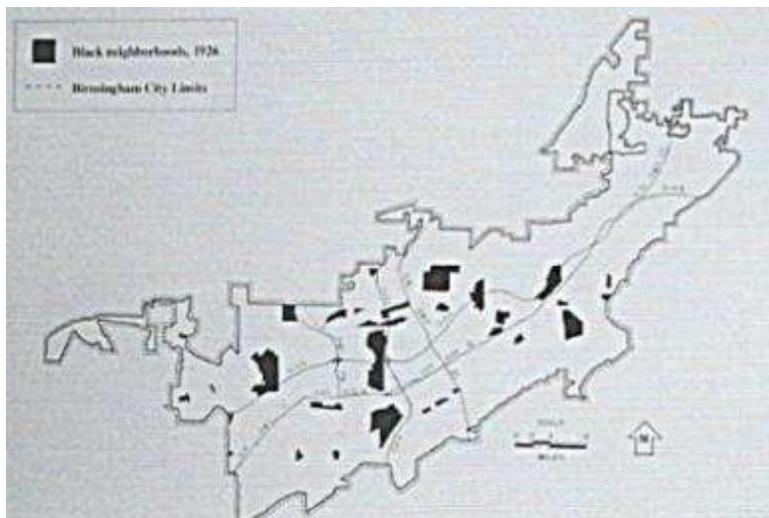


Figure 1. Black Neighborhoods of Birmingham in 1926. From “March of Justice, a journey inside the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.” Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, 2009.



Figure 2: Palestinian areas of the West Bank. Brown areas are those with “full” Palestinian control (Area A). Green areas are those with mixed Palestinian and Israeli control (Area B). All other areas are full Israeli control (Area C). International Middle East Media Center.

The methods for keeping blacks within their enclaves in Birmingham were more direct and brutal than the redlining agreements among banks and realtors that maintained a de facto segregation in the North. Municipal zoning laws in Birmingham prevented sales to blacks outside designated areas, and if a black person somehow acquired a house outside the designated area, even if just across the street, the house would be blown up, according to the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

Similarly, the Israeli legal system keeps Palestinians within restricted areas of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Palestinians living outside those areas have been evicted and their homes destroyed or occupied by Jewish settlers. Eighteen thousand Palestinian homes have been destroyed by Israel since 1967, according to the [Israeli Committee Against House Demolition](http://www.icahd.org) (<http://www.icahd.org>). The black areas and white areas of Birmingham were very different physically. The black areas often lacked municipal amenities or services such as street lighting, paved streets, sidewalks, garbage collection and sewers that the white areas had. Similarly, the Palestinian areas of East Jerusalem often lack these same basic facilities and services, and the differences between Palestinian and non-Palestinian areas are clear to all.

Suppression of the human rights of blacks in the South was maintained by both “legal” and extralegal means. State and municipal Jim Crow laws restricted residence, use of public facilities, use of public transport, interracial marriage and other aspects of life in the South. White courts and police forces enforced these laws and the whole system of segregation. Arbitrary arrests under vagrancy laws yielded large numbers of black prisoners (who were often forced to do hard labor). Non-violent civil rights marches and protests were met with police and state National Guard violence.

Similarly, Israeli control over the lives of Palestinians is maintained by a system of laws, courts, police and Israeli military that discriminates against Palestinians. Laws restrict where Palestinians can live, where they can travel, what roads they can travel on, and whether they can live with their spouse in another part of the country. Permits to travel from the West Bank to East Jerusalem for work are tightly controlled and dependent on “good” behavior. “Administrative detentions” have led to the indefinite incarceration of thousands of Palestinians without trials. The Israeli Defense Force meets non-violent protests against the separation wall and the taking of Palestinian land with violence (see the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, B’tselem, <http://www.btselem.org>).

## Forced Compliance

African-American compliance with the system of segregation in the South was ensured by extralegal as well as legal means, including economic threats, harassment of various sorts, and extreme violence. More than 5000 lynchings were recorded between 1882 and 1959, and many beatings and killings went unrecorded. Violence against blacks increased as the civil rights movement grew in strength during the 1950s and 1960s. In one year alone, 30 black homes and churches were bombed in Birmingham. The white-controlled legal system only rarely prosecuted white-on-black violence.

Similarly, harassment and violence against Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem occur almost every day. The settlers try to force Palestinians off their land or to leave the region entirely. The settlers threaten or attack children on their way to school and shepherds in the fields. Palestinian land, wells, and olive groves are occupied. The Israeli military protects the settlers, and the Israeli legal system only rarely prosecutes settler harassment or violence.

Blacks in the Jim Crow South had no control over the governments that oppressed them and denied them their share of common resources. The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment of 1870 gave blacks the right to vote, but that right was progressively taken away in Southern states following the failure of reconstruction. Discriminatory registration procedures were introduced and were enforced by violence. As late as the 1960s, many counties in the South, even those with black majorities, had no registered black voters. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 finally changed that.

Similarly, the four million or so Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem have no say in the government that in fact controls them. They cannot vote in the Israeli elections. Palestinians did vote for a virtually powerless Palestinian government in 2006 in which a majority of seats in the parliament went to Hamas, a political party.

The Hamas legislators were immediately arrested and jailed by Israel. Many were kept in prison for over five years and the elected parliament has never been able to meet. Even if the parliament could meet, it would have only limited control over limited enclaves of the West Bank. Israel controls the water, electricity, borders, airspace, exports and imports of the enclaves, and the Israeli military enters the enclaves and arrests Palestinians at will.

Non-violent methods such as marches, boycotts and direct actions are critical tools for the success of any human rights movement, such as the American Civil Rights Movement, that confronts a power structure with a monopoly on physical force.

The Civil Rights Movement in the United States maintained the practice of non-violence to a heroic degree over many years, even in the face of violent repression from the Southern white power structure. Participants aroused the conscience of the rest of the nation and the world. Similar non-violent methods are now of central importance for the Palestinian rights movement. Protest marches against the separation wall, “Freedom Rides” on Israeli-only public transit, and “camp-ins” on land illegally expropriated for Israeli settlements are becoming common now in Palestine/Israel. Internationally, boycotts of all sorts and divestment from companies that maintain and profit from the occupation of Palestinian land are taking hold.

African-Americans in the American Civil Rights Movement made their appeal to the federal government for redress of wrongs committed at the lower levels of state and local governments. The federal government was already formally committed to the rights of blacks through the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments as well as various Supreme Court decisions. They also had authority and power over local governments. The aroused conscience of the nation and of the world finally forced the United States federal government to act. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson could not continue to present the United States to the world as the land of freedom and democracy when its own citizens were being beaten for asserting their freedom and their right to vote.

Here too there are parallels between the Civil Rights Movement in the American South and today’s movement for Palestinian rights. Israel cannot indefinitely present itself as a law-abiding, humane, and democratic state when it denies the human rights of the four million or so Palestinians in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The international

community is beginning to understand that although it is Israel that has control over those four million Palestinians, the Palestinians themselves have no say in the government that occupies and controls them.

Ironically, the federal government of the United States shares responsibility for the continuing denial of Palestinian human rights, just as for many decades it shared responsibility for the denial of black human rights in the Jim Crow South by not enforcing federal law. Now, and for many decades, United States diplomatic support has allowed Israel to violate international law with impunity. The United States has blocked United Nations sanctions against Israel for such violations of international law as the occupation of Palestinian land, the colonization of the West Bank by placing settlers on that land, and the annexation of East Jerusalem, the historic home of thousands of Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

In addition, the United States federal government provides about three billion dollars in military aid to Israel every year, and may be violating its own laws in doing so, as pointed out by a [letter to Congress](http://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/10/5/religious-leaders-ask-congress-condition-israel-mi/) (<http://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/10/5/religious-leaders-ask-congress-condition-israel-mi/>) in October 2012 from 15 leaders of major American Christian churches. The letter urged an “investigation into possible violations by Israel of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act and the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, which respectively prohibit assistance to any country which engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations and limit the use of U.S. weapons to ‘internal security’ or ‘legitimate self-defense’.” The letter cited evidence for human rights violations on the part of Israel and for Israel’s use of US arms against Palestinian civilians.

In summary, many parallels exist between the historic mistreatment of blacks in the Jim Crow South and the present-day mistreatment of Palestinians in Israel/Palestine. Many parallels also exist between the strategies of the Palestinian rights movement to end Palestinian mistreatment today and those taken previously by the American Civil Rights Movement to end black mistreatment. These strategies consist of arousing and mobilizing the conscience of the world through non-violent protest, direct action, boycotts and divestment, together with citizen demands that the governments involved obey both national and international law. These strategies brought significant changes for African-Americans in the South and hopefully, with commitment and perseverance, may someday accomplish the same for Palestinians.



Pat Westwater-Jong

### **UUs in Action: Pat Westwater-Jong**

*By Diana Digges*

***Massachusetts photographer’s exhibit documents Courage and Compassion in the Holy Land.***

Photography is Pat Westwater-Jong’s third career. It’s the one that weaves together all the strands of her professional and personal life as a psychotherapist, a conflict resolution facilitator and a specialist in organizational change. And it’s the career that has taken her to the Middle East two months of every year since 2008 to document the efforts of Muslims, Christians and Jews who are working together for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine.

Witnessing the violence in the region can be discouraging, frustrating, infuriating, and heartbreaking, Pat notes, but “witnessing reactions to the violence can be inspiring.”

Her *Courage and Compassion in the Holy Land* project focuses on two groups of people who react in different ways: those who work to dispel fear and increase understanding of members of the “other” religion; and those who actively resist the Occupation and work for equal rights for everyone.

Typical of the first group are the Jerusalem Peacemakers. Founded in 2004, the group is a network of interfaith, humanitarian peace-builders whose mission is to contribute to understanding, peace and reconciliation among all faiths.

In the pictures below, the four co-founders lead the group in an unusual annual event of blessing and celebration of the Old City of Jerusalem. They offer prayers that the Old City may be a peaceful place of worship for people of all faiths, a place of welcome for everyone. The event begins with groups of people stationed at both the Jaffa Gate (leading to Israeli West Jerusalem) and the Damascus Gate (leading to Palestinian East Jerusalem), and culminates with drumming and dancing well into the night, ending up near the New Gate on the border between Israeli West Jerusalem and Palestinian East Jerusalem.



Jerusalem peacemakers bless the Old City  
Photo credit: Pat Westwater-Jong



Sheerin Al-Araj talks to visiting Israeli teachers  
about the Wall in her village  
Photo credit: Pat Westwater-Jong

Political activists such as Sheerin Al-Araj, from the Palestinian West Bank village of Al-Walaja, are typical of the second group in the exhibit. For years, Pat says, Sheerin has protested in direct action against Israeli soldiers uprooting olive trees, demolishing homes and building the Separation Wall. Christian Palestinians, Jewish Israelis and internationals occasionally join her in the village protests. She also engages in educating people about the Occupation. In the picture above right, according to Pat, she is explaining to visiting Israeli teachers that “the Wall is not for security – it is a ‘structural displacement tool,’ built to seize more land and to force Palestinians out.

When one of the teachers raises the argument that suicide bombing has stopped because of the Wall, Pat says Sheerin points to the presence of numerous gaps in the Wall itself, which would allow bombers to enter Israel. When Sheerin is asked what she would suggest, she answered, according to Pat, “I think the ultimate solution is one state. We are too small to face the upcoming disasters alone, and if we have that state we will have the best of the world: Palestinians are the connections to both [the] Arab and Muslim worlds and the Israelis to the rest of the world, mainly the western one. The economy is one thing, but [we can] also [be a] meeting point - we can be the center of the world in something good for a change.”

Pat notes the differences in approach between the human rights protestors such as Sheerin and the non-confrontational tactics of groups like Jerusalem Peacemakers, but sees both as different doorways into activism. “I welcome into my heart and project *anyone* working non-violently on these issues,” she emphasizes.

Her own entry into this work was via interfaith experience. A child of a Jewish mother and a Christian father, Pat and her family found a spiritual home in the Unitarian Universalist congregation of Winchester, MA. She was deeply influenced by her minister, Rev. Bob Storer. “He was one of the wisest and most loving people I’ve ever met,” Pat says. “He came to UUism from a background in vaudeville and brought that spirit into his ministry.”

He also impressed Pat with his educational approach to Bible study. “He would put two contradictory quotes on the board—both from the Bible. It was a great way to get young people to think about the many ways of interpreting Scripture.”

Pat had always been passionate about interfaith work and human rights. In 2007, she organized a talk given by two visiting members of the Jerusalem Peacemakers. It was hearing their stories that compelled her to join a delegation from the Interfaith Peace Builders Network to go to Israel-Palestine the following year.

“If there is to be peace in the Holy Land, there also must be justice and the courage to reach across religious and national lines. People must treat each other as they would like to be treated, and be able to forgive,” she says. “The people documented in this project represent hundreds, maybe more, who are playing what could be the critical role in moving the situation from one of disrespect, fear, violence and injustice to one of common values, goals, safety, and equality.”

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*“Courage and Compassion in the Holy Land” was displayed for the public at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA. When not in Israel or Palestine, Pat is happy to give private tours. For more information on sharing Pat’s work with your congregation, please contact her at [westwaterp@gmail.com](mailto:westwaterp@gmail.com).*

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## **Walk a Mile in Their Shoes: Israeli/Palestinian Composite Stories**

By Elissa Goss

The stories below are composites of situations and opinions of Palestinians and Israeli Jews. Read each story and try to visualize what the situation is like for each person.

### Lisbeth, Jewish Israeli living in a West Bank settlement

My family just moved to a settlement near the border with Israel. My dad works in Tel Aviv, about an hour’s drive away and my mom stays home with me. I didn’t want to move here because everyone says the West Bank is dangerous. We are only allowed on roads made just for us, but I can see the local Palestinian town down the hill. I go to a school in the settlement, with other kids from our neighborhood. I miss my friends in Tel Aviv and I felt safer there. My parents tell me not to talk to the Palestinians if I meet them. Sometimes I see them on the side of the roads, walking to their fields, because their fields are all around our settlement. Dad says those fields will be razed and the settlement plans to expand. My family has always wanted to live here. They didn’t like big city feeling of Tel Aviv and love being where it is quieter. They say this land used to be ours, long ago. It makes me feel proud to be back, even if it means being away from my friends.

### Anees, Palestinian from the Gaza Strip

I want to travel and study in the US, as well as visit extended family in Hebron. However, because I live in Rafah, I am not allowed into the West Bank because the Israelis do not allow Gazans to pass through the checkpoints at the border of Israel. My only way of getting out of Gaza is through the Rafah checkpoint into Egypt, with very few permitted to cross, and it took me over 46 days to leave because of issues with papers and the checkpoint being closed at random intervals. I waited with others for weeks outside of the gates, traveling home at certain intervals when I could. We only have a few hours of electricity a day, since Israel bombed our electricity tower. I have extended family in Hebron whom I have never seen and that my mother has not seen in over 15 years. Hebron is only 60 miles away, but I have only been able to live within the 13 miles by 36 miles militarized border of Gaza. I am one of 1.5 million Gazans and refugees who live here.

### Josh, Jewish immigrant living in Tel Aviv

I immigrated to Israel from the US after college to do *Aliyah*. My non-Jewish partner is currently trying to get citizenship, and it will probably take just two to three years. We live in Tel Aviv while I am in graduate school and take weekend trips around the country. We have friends in settlements in the West Bank, and are only allowed to visit the settlements. We are encouraged to not visit Palestinian villages or towns like Ramallah due to security concerns, but can visit places under Israeli or mixed Palestinian Authority/Israeli control like Hebron, Nazareth and kibbutzes in the southern Negev desert.

Reem, Palestinian woman from near Bethlehem

My family owns an olive farm outside of Bethlehem. Our trees are over 300 years old, and this land has been in our family since the Turks governed. We are Palestinian Christians but it is very hard to visit to holy sites in Bethlehem because we have to go through three checkpoints that take anywhere from one to five hours depending on if it is a workday or a holy day. International tourists visiting don't have to wait in the same line to visit the same site; it usually takes less than an hour for them to go through. Sometimes we are denied entry for no reason at all. If we are denied, we have to just turn around and go home.

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## Opening Reading: Elaboration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle

“Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations points us toward something beyond inherent worth and dignity. It points us to the larger community. It gets at collective responsibility. It reminds us that treating people as human beings is not simply something we do one-on-one, but something that has **systemic implications and can inform our entire cultural way of being**.

“Compassion is something that we can easily act on individually. We can demonstrate openness, give people respect, and treat people with kindness on our own. **But we need one another to achieve equity and justice.**”

“Justice, equity, and compassion are all part of the same package. Just as the second Principle overlaps with the first, so it is related to the seventh Principle—the interdependent web of all existence.”

—Rev. Emily Gage, Unity Temple, Chicago, IL (read more from Emily in *The Seven Principles in Word and Worship*, ed. Ellen Brandenburg)

## Grounding Questions and Discussion

1. What is our **collective responsibility**, as a faith tradition, in this conflict?

Discuss

- our commitment to each other as an interfaith tradition and
  - our involvement as tax-paying citizens and
  - as congregants with money in TIAA-CREFF)
2. What are the **systemic implications** of these three things?
    - being interfaith;
    - fueling the occupation with our taxes and our political support;
    - violating our Socially Responsible Investment obligations by holding funds in TIAA-CREF.
  3. How do we, as a community, achieve equity and justice?
  4. Is there a place for neutrality?

## Activities

### Discuss the Prereading.

The following activities introduce participants to some of the trying situations that Palestinians endure under occupation. The video *Home Front*, a collection of four short and no-cost online videos, shows the phenomenon of Jewish settlers taking over Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem, a city that was intended during the partition to be an international city with half under Israeli control and half under Arab control. The videos interview individuals affected and involved in protests. The videos from *Breaking the Silence* and *B'tselem* give an idea of some events that Palestinian families experience around Hebron, a Palestinian town which has had many restrictions placed on movement due to the presence of Jewish settlers. *Breaking the Silence* is an organization of former Israeli soldiers who do not support occupation. *B'tselem* is an Israeli human rights group that tries to shed light on Israeli military activities that violate international law. The photographing of children at night in their homes is disturbing, and is linked to the larger issue of child military detention. Hundreds of Palestinian children each year are arrested and detained by Israel's government and military—as

young as 12—with many reporting shocking treatment upon their release. Some are held in prisons in Israel. See the website Defence of Children-Palestine for more details at [http://www.dci-palestine.org/issues\\_military\\_detention](http://www.dci-palestine.org/issues_military_detention).

**View the short film series *Home Front***, four short films from Just Vision, featuring a young Palestinian teenager whose family is forced to give up half their home in East Jerusalem to Jewish settlers, interviewing Palestinians and Israelis; <http://www.justvision.org/homefront>. Discuss reactions.

**View the video** from two Israeli human rights groups, Breaking the Silence and B'tselem, documenting the Hebron road closed to Palestinians, <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/media/49098?sg=0/>. Discuss reactions.

**View the video** from Israeli human rights group, B'tselem, showing soldiers entering 10 Hebron homes at night to photograph children, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLg-1IHPO0A>. Discuss reactions.

**Discuss** the pre readings and the class videos.

**Call to Action Ideas:** Exercise your democratic rights by writing a letter to a publication, or a representative of a body in which you can vote: your congregation, your social justice committee, your town, your state or federal congressional districts. What are some actions you can request the representative or group of representative leaders to take regarding Palestine/Israel? It can simply be a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine sharing what you have learned from this group so far, and what you desire to see happen or stop happening. Consider what action you can cause to be taken by vote that will support peace with justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

## Closing

Each person in the group can share what they learned, found most notable, or a question that arose from the session.

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