

# Letters on "On Palestinian suicide bombings: letters to the WSWS and a reply by the editorial board"

17 April 2002

Your response to the posts protesting the WSWS perspective on suicide bombers was excellent. The reaction of these correspondents to anything other than total support of Israel is typical of the low flash-point of many in the Jewish-American community.

I don't have a dog in this fight, as they say—and for years I didn't take much notice of events in the Middle East. More recently, I've done more investigation and I'm horrified to discover that not only were my suspicions justified, but that the situation is far worse than I could have dreamed. There is little mention in the US media of the fact that there is a growing Israeli lobby for a halt to the carnage, but the BBC has broadcast interviews with prominent Jewish figures who are outraged at what is being perpetrated in their name. When the citizens of a country begin to feel so uneasy about their government's policies there's something seriously wrong.

I think the best hope for a resolution of the crisis lies with this grass roots movement within Israel. The Jewish people, in my experience, are naturally supportive of the underdog. They aren't intrinsically vengeful, and it's my belief that Sharon's will to subjugate an entire nation is not representative of the people he leads.

VH

13 April 2002

Gentlemen,

Bravo to your editorial board for your brave, rigorous and compelling analysis of the utter despair of the Palestinian people and blatant injustice they have constantly suffered in the last 50 years that inevitably will continue to produce suicide bombers unless Israel is forced by the international community to end its illegal and brutal military occupation and oppression of 3 million Palestinians and systematic terror tactics against its victims.

God bless you.

AJGY

Florence, Italy

13 April 2002

Dear Editor,

It's okay to have one's personal ideological leaning. But do you folks really believe within yourselves that Yasser Arafat does not know about the suicide bombings?

J

13 April 2002

First, killing people is wrong whether you do it or I do it. It is very bad today to see people getting killed on both sides, but what disturbs me is America wanting Arafat to condemn what took place. Why did America not condemn what took place at the Jenin refugee camp, or is killing Palestinians OK, but killing Jews is not OK? That tells me that the United States supports and finances Sharon. Sharon is a criminal and America is associated with him.

Second, each time I see one of the Zionist officials come on TV and say we are a democratic state. Yes, apartheid South Africa was a democratic state. This is no different. Many realize that following Zionist principles leads from one thing to another. I hope and pray that no blood be shed, be it Jewish or Arab. The real path to peace lies in America stopping the financing and harboring of Sharon and Netanyahu. Zionism has misled many Jews into acts of aggression against the Palestinian people.

Third, there is a difference between a Jew as a religious person and the Zionist. Jewish people have been known as a compassionate, god-fearing, peaceful people and have lived side by side for over a thousand years in peace and brotherhood with their Arab and Muslim cousins.

Zionism is not the same as Judaism. Zionism is the true enemy of Judaism, the transformation of godliness into a work of Satan. Tragically some people in the Holy Land and elsewhere, as a part of a mistaken reaction to the Holocaust, have seen Zionism as their savior. An upsurge of anti-Judaism is an objective of Zionism, so that the Jewish people will feel forced to run to them for their supposed protection. Zionism and its state are at the core of the tragedy that has been perpetrated in the Holy Land, against Arab and Jew alike. But you should know that Zionism is a greater tragedy for Jews than for the Palestinians.

From the Palestinians, Zionism and its state took their land and their bodies, but from the Jews the Zionists and its state took their souls, their belief in God and, in fact, they have transformed the whole concept of Judaism.

Fourth, the danger to the Jews is the blind support for Zionism from most if not all United States senators and congressmen and women.

Finally, may we live to see the day in the very near future, when one God will be recognized throughout his universe and all will serve him together in peace and joy. Amen.

A

13 April 2002

As for those who appear outraged by your very proper and sensible opinion blaming Israel for the sad conditions there, I suspect they are from American Jews, who for some reason unfathomable to me, simply support Israel, right or wrong, and without knowing anything about the terrible injustices and humiliations under which the Palestinian people live.

Any one of them forced to live in the same conditions would undoubtedly turn into suicide bombers—if they had the guts. Death is preferable to such horror. I have friends whom I love dearly, except when the topic of Israel arises, and they turn insane at any suggestion that Israel's occupation and cruel treatment have any connection to the desperation of the young who become a human bomb.

MM

13 April 2002

Why, oh why, do Muslims become fatally enraged when a Jew wants to visit the holiest of sites for Judaism? That he had to show up with a

thousand soldiers testifies to how dangerous Palestinian rage made it for a Jew like Sharon to visit the Western Wall. You don't see Israelis throwing rocks and having a fit because Muslims choose to go to Mecca....

By the way, your description of Israeli territorial gains is misleading. Israel didn't kick out the refugees in '47, the Arabs frightened them out with their war. Similarly in '67, Israel held onto vital security lands in the wake of yet another Arab invasion. In any case, the return of Sinai is proof that Israel will negotiate with a sincere Arab State.

GD

13 April 2002

Comrades,

You are extraordinary and outstanding people. I think more clearly knowing you guys are around.

Fraternally,

HK

London

13 April 2002

I believe the American response to the Mideast crisis is not only apathetic and slow but also a wink and a nod to the Israeli administration to carry out atrocities against the Palestinian population. Granted, Palestinian suicide bombers have wreaked havoc on innocent Israelis. However, this is the *only* way Palestinians can fight a war that so obviously favors Israel militarily. Palestinians aren't allowed to have guns. They have no tanks, no airplanes, no helicopters, no war ships. *Nothing!* How is this a fair fight in any way?

Would it have been justifiable for the Jewish resistance to use suicide bombers against the Nazi population in the 1930s? It's easy to say "no," but an oppressed population has to fight back any way they can if there is no support from anywhere. In the 1930s the Jews didn't fight back. Look what happened to them. Ultimately violence is very ugly and sad. However, desperation leads to violence eventually. If there is no other recourse. That's just fact.

M

13 April 2002

I want to compliment you on your clear and impassioned defense of the Palestinian struggles against the Zionist excesses.

HM

13 April 2002

Friends at WSWS—

I found your article "On Palestinian suicide bombings: letters to the WSWS and a reply by the editorial board—13 April 2002" to be full of falsehoods and applies a double standard for Israel versus the surrounding Arab states vis-à-vis the rights afforded its citizens and the use of state power to maintain civil society.

The writing is emotional, clothed in outright falsehoods and half-truths (the half of the argument convenient to your position, not the causal root), such as in the case of "illegal occupation," or as quoted, "It is a tragic irony—rooted in the nationalist program of Zionism—that what was presented as the salvation of the Jewish people, the establishment of a Jewish state, was based on the dispossession of another oppressed people—the Palestinians.

"In 1948 the Zionist regime drove out 700,000 Palestinians and destroyed 400 of their villages."

I guess it will always be "one man's truth is another man's propaganda." Preexisting bias often has more sway than fact. Getting to "truth" might make one uncomfortable if it challenges the intellectual safety of a neat ideological framework. Reality (and human history) often makes utopian ideology nothing more relevant than a pipe dream. Wars have winners and losers. Sad. Barbaric. But it is the way of the world. Israel was victorious in wars of defense and sad to say, Palestinians were losers.

Arafat was expelled from Jordan. I'm curious as to why this was, and

why it is Israel that has to accommodate the desires of Arafat and the poor and oppressed Palestinian people rather than the Arab Nations that are their natural allies and "brethren" (who seem eager to supply funds for bombs and support to families of bombers but not land and facilities for people displaced by failed aggression. Throughout history, it is my understanding that many peoples have been displaced from their indigenous territories after losing in battle). I am sure your "editorial board" has the answers to these questions.

I am confident your "editorial board" has a simple and just solution to this whole situation, as well as all the problems, manifest and yet to arise in the world of the twenty-first century. (Which is why I check out your web site regularly.)

Thanks for your time,

RA

not a Popago, Navajo, Hopi, nor Apache, yet residing on land known today as Arizona (if you get my point).

13 April 2002

Dear Editor,

Whoever wants to burn out the Palestinians, let them try it and see how far the fire will spread after the last Palestinian is dead. There is always payback time for such crimes ... always ... no matter how long it takes.

Why does Israel carry on as if Jews are the only people who have been hurt in history? Is it because they are "*God's chosen people*"?

When I saw that awful blood-stained Netanyahu strutting at the US Congress yesterday and spewing out arrogance, I realised for the first time what a sham American democracy is and decided that the future of this world is in the hands of the working people—not the caricatures that purport to be leaders of the "Free World". What a joke!

AY

13 April 2002

This issue is the first where I cannot in any way agree with WSWS. While there is certainly enough guilt to reach around on both sides, Sharon is no worse than Arafat, if as bad.

"The Israelis are mistaken if they think we do not have an alternative to negotiations. By Allah I swear they are wrong. The Palestinian people are prepared to *sacrifice the last boy and the last girl so that the Palestinian flag will be flown over the walls, the churches, and the mosques of Jerusalem*—Yasser Arafat, in a speech given on 6 August 1995 at a party to celebrate the birth of his daughter (Ha'aretz, 6 September 1995; *Jerusalem Post*, 7 September 1995)

This slimy creature signed a paper that he recognized Israel's right to exist on September 19, 1993. But he had his fingers crossed because on November 11, 1995 he said:

"The struggle will continue until all of Palestine is liberated."

The Palestinian Arabs are, in relation to Arafat and the other rich Arabs, exactly as the German people were with respect to Adolph Hitler. There is no way to get at the war criminal without killing some of his followers. What would you have the Israelis do, simply submit to Arafat's aggression? It is apparent that any fanatics who would send children into a crowded bus with nitro strapped to them must be brought to justice.

Disagreement over this issue is tearing the progressive movement apart. Why can you not condemn both sides without forming an opinion based on incomplete data?

GS

13 April 2002

I am just writing to say that the article is beyond excellent. If only there was a way to expose a sizable portion of the population to the ideas and information presented within it.

SM

14 April 2002

I fully agree with you guys. Keep up the good work!

S

14 April 2002

Dear Sir,

Suicidal action by individuals in defence of their community is a phenomenon well known through many species of social animals. Cases abound in natural history studies of ants, chimps, baboons, etc., who, *in extremis*, give their existence for continuity of their kin. But importantly it is to be remembered this is solely a defensive measure. I know of no study which shows "suicide" to be the first line of attack.

The cases in Israel show this clearly. It is a last ditch stand by people who feel their lives have no future and no meaning. As the odds shorten that in the course of their day to day life they might be shot or blown apart by Israeli weapons at any moment that autonomy in the matter and choice of their death is one of the last freedoms open.

In short: if my life cannot count then my death will.

Ask yourselves this, are the Palestinians doing this because they are just a mob of "excitable Arabs"? Of course not. It is because Zionist aggression and the treachery of Arab leadership has left them feeling there is no other way out.

Regards,

TC

Sydney

14 April 2002

Dear Editorial Board,

Thank you for your insight on Palestinian oppression that was presented in your response under "Palestinian suicide bombings (13 April 2002)." Both my logical and emotional sides tend to resonate with the plight of the Palestinian people. A similar parallelism of oppression occurs right here in the United States among my people, the Mexican (Americans) and other indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere—where we continue to be subjugated and marginalized by the predacious and rapacious presence of colonialism. We, like the Palestinians, have been uprooted from our homeland—and now, the American people of colonial descent call our land (the red-brown earth) their homeland.

Zionism is attempting to destroy and eradicate the Palestinian people in exactly the same motive force that Manifest Destiny and American evangelism has historically acted upon indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere: colonial warfare has uprooted our red-brown people and destroyed our native culture, leaving us poor in resources and health. For the weak, there is a turn to substance abuse, and for the rest of us, it is a lifestyle of enslavement to colonial interests and a broken spirit. We exist merely to work the fields and to fulfill the construction and cultivation of European-style housing, lawn maintenance and housekeeping in our now lost homeland—just as the Palestinian people are harnessed as a labor force to build more Israeli colonial settlements in the aftermath of Palestinian cultural destruction.

Yours sincerely,

A Mexican-American woman,

CX

15 April 2002

Dear WWSWS;

I am a regular reader and in general I find myself to agree with almost all that you have to offer. However, I have been disturbed before with what seems a slightly nonchalant attitude toward Israeli lives extinguished by suicide bombings. It is not that I am keen for you to make pronunciamientos on the moral depravity of suicide bombers, nor adopt some sort of simplistic "each side is equally to blame" attitude. I certainly do not subscribe to the "Clash of Civilisations" filth, either. Nonetheless, despite your reply to letters, I am still a little disturbed.

The quote from "Their Morals and Ours" [Leon Trotsky] was quite appropriate insofar as it applies to the hypocritical denunciations of bombings by world leaders. Indeed, the Palestinians ought not to be vilified for taking, accidentally, civilian lives in their struggle to attain

their most basic rights. However, the point of divergence from your example of slave vs. slaver is that suicide bombers *do* kill civilians quite intentionally. Accordingly, the people they kill warrant more than a passing, and at times, indifferent mention. Their deaths affect much more than the efficacy of the Palestinians' struggle against subjugation.

In critical friendship,

IP

15 April 2002

You first take the land from a people, second their basic human rights, third their water and, furthermore, keep controlling the strings of their every move. They might refuse to accept this and might defend themselves. And ... since this people is not allowed to have its own state with an army, it will go on the streets and use any self-made weapon—sure!

If Graf von Stauffenberg [the anti-Hitler conspirator] had been a suicide bomber, would you say he was a terrorist? And, yes, what is terrorism, and what is a cruel and stupid war carried out by a state?

HL

Leipzig, Germany

15 April 2002

To the Board:

Thank you for this lucid article. If we had to depend for our news and information solely on the mainstream US media, we would never hear about these things. Fortunately, since the media must know by now that a great many of us are looking to the internet for the facts, they are occasionally forced to insert little bites of the truth. Very little. Still, I don't know how they can face their cameras day after day with the knowledge that we who are watching them know they are lying or, at the very least, distorting the facts and, at the very worst, doling out vulgar propaganda in an attempt to numb people's minds. You state very clearly just what the causes of this conflict are. Thank you again.

CZ

San Francisco

15 April 2002

It is all so very depressing, prior to the recent Zionist offensive, I would have said that one of the major fault of the Oslo accords was the ignoring of the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who are in an appalling situation since the current Lebanese regime does not want them. The proposal to build a highway through Sabra-Shatila (where the people live in a real slum) speaks for itself.

They are now a little safer, since I suspect that the Americans would frown on another Lebanese invasion, the population in Israel would also be less than keen since they would not want their "boys" coming home in body bags.

Given the events in Jenin (amongst other Zionist crimes) there is something truly obscene about the Bush administration playing the role of neutral mediator given their massive military, political and diplomatic support to a regime headed by a man who should be in the dock at a UN war crimes tribunal.

OO

15 April 2002

Your reply by the editorial board on the suicide bombing was an eye-opener. To understand the conflict the first thing to know is that Israel is the occupier and the Palestinians are struggling to liberate their land.

Y

16 April 2002



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**

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