**[WHY THE OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE IS BAD FOR ISRAEL](http://why-the-occupation-of-palestine-is-bad-for-israel/)**

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In June 1967, after Israel’s victory in the Six Day War and the capture from Jordan of the area now known as the West Bank, David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, was taken on a helicopter flight across the newly captured area by the then Defence Minister Moshe Dayan.  While congratulation the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on their achievements, he also stunned Dayan & others by saying that apart from Jerusalem, most of the West Bank should be returned straight away to Jordan.  To one commander (to Louis Nir, whose unit captured Hebron) Ben Gurion said “Well, done, now give it back to them.”[[i]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_edn1)  
  
Ben Gurion also warned that the having to rule a large population of Arabs in the newly captured territory would cause internal problems to Israel.  Hirsh Goodman remembers him saying on the radio:  
  
Israel, he said, better rid itself of the territories and their Arab population as soon as possible. If it did not Israel would soon become an Apartheid State. Demography, he said, was a greater danger than not having the territorial depth the right wing was always claiming Israel needed to defend itself.[[ii]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_edn2)  
  
Ben Gurion was right.  46 years after the Six Day War, we can see the corrosive effects of being an occupying force has had on Israeli society.  The treatment of Palestinians on the West bank draws parallels with how Jews were treated in Nazi Germany.   The perceived need by the Israeli Government to secure the occupied areas and the imposition of repressive measures by force has lead to generations of Israelis going through their compulsory army service acting as gaolers to keep the local population under their control. Treating other people in such an inhumane way is horrific not just to those that suffer such treatment but also for those that are conditioned to meet it out. Just as in South Africa, it breeds resentment and resistance among those subjected to often brutal suppression.  As ever in these situations, all that is done is justified in the name of “security” & the fight against terrorism.  It is ironic that the measures said to counter these are actually creating them.    
  
One big effect is the lessening of respect for the law.  Illegal seizure of land from Palestinians (and ruled as illegal by the Israeli Supreme Court under Israeli law but ignored by the government[[iii]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_edn3)) is one area where the Israeli Law (let alone International Law) is being treated with contempt because of the continual occupation.  In addition, there are also no end of stories of the settlers flouting laws that are meant to apply to them as they harass and terrorise the Arabs living near them.  What is worse is that the IDF & the police take no action to stop this, in deed some of the security forces are no above joining in and helping the settlers.  This disregard of the law is spilling over from the West Bank into illegal activities inside Israel.  The [assassination of Yitzhak Rabin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination_of_Yitzhak_Rabin) is one well know example but there a numerous other smaller attacks, from graffiti attacks on villages like [Newe Shalom](http://wasns.org/) that work for reconciliation to the desecration of Christian cemeteries in Jerusalem owned by the [St George's Anglican Cathedral](http://www.j-diocese.org/index.php?lang=en&page=1296660138621).    This attitude, that the law of the land doesn’t necessarily apply to Israelis living on the West Bank, is creeping into how the law and those charged with applying the law are viewed; if those charged with applying the law do not do so, and even ignore it themselves, why should others follow it?    
  
As an Israeli, all be it one who lives in the UK, it sad for me to see the country I love and want to be proud of lose its way and not realise that the way it treats the people under its control actually harms it standing and weakens it rather than strengthen it.  Just as South Africa found in the 70s & 80s, the ability to suppress can never win in the end.  I want Israel to survive and be the nation we can all be proud of; for that reason, I want it to realise that its future depends not on suppressing and oppressing the Palestinian but in leaving them forge their own state.  Just as freedom for Palestinians depends on a secure Israel, Israel’s long term security depends on giving Palestinians their freedom   
  
  
  
[[i]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_ednref1)    ["Is the end in sight?" by Henry Porter in *The Observer* (28 October 2001)](http://observer.guardian.co.uk/nireland/story/0,11008,582158,00.html)  
  
  
[[ii]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_ednref2)    Let Me Create A Paradise, God Said To Himself: A Journey Of Conscience From Johannesburg To Jerusalem by Hirsh Goodman (PublicAffairs, 2005)  
[[iii]](file:///C:\Users\Leon\Dropbox\Mantonite%20-%20Blog\Why%20the%20occupation%20of%20Palestine%20is%20bad%20for%20Israel.doc#_ednref3)    <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/israel-sees-court-rulings-on-palestinian-land-as-mere-recommendations-1.6200>  
  
 