



Global Transformation of Christian Zionism

edited by Yoshihiro Yakushige

Kyoto University

Unit of Kyoto Initiatives for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Center for Interdisciplinary Education and Research,
Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies

International Conference on the Global Transformation of
Christian Zionism Organizing Committee

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Acknowledgment

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First, I'd like to say a special thanks to Professor Mari Oka who, as an advisor to the conference organizing committee, kindly provided logistical and moral support and helped me connect to the necessary resources at Kyoto University.

At the three-day conference, we had outstanding guest speakers with varied academic, religious and ethnic background. Without their participation and cooperation, this project would not have been possible. The panelists (main speakers and commentators) included Munther Isaac, Kim Yong-Bock, Akira Usuki, Akira Iwaki, Cynthia Holder Rich, Philip Peacock, Tsutomu Aguro, Megumi Ishiida, Chandra Muzaffar, Shamsul Islam, Iyas Salim, Jude L. Fernando, Robert O. Smith, Mark Braverman, Miyuki Kinjo, and Tina Ottman. I am especially thankful to Ranjan Solomon, who delivered the opening remark on the second day of the conference, helped me to connect with candidate speakers through his activist networks including the Global Kairos Asia Pacific Solidarity for Palestine (GKAPPS). I was indeed inspired by the two webinars by GKAPPS on Christian Zionism, held in 2020, that gave me the significant impetus to work towards realizing the idea of this international conference.

I'd also like thank the technical staff of the organizing committee – Kei Saido and Kazuya Solomon Kanno, who assisted in the preparation and management of the Zoom webinar.

All presentations by the main speakers are compiled in this volume. Additionally, some commentators contributed papers that further developed the ideas mentioned in their comments during the sessions. I'd like to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of all the contributors for this volume.

Yoshihiro Yakushige
March 2022

Foreword

Mari Oka

*Professor, Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies,
Kyoto University*

In October 2021, our three-day international symposium “Global Transformations of Christian Zionism” was held online with speakers and discussants consisting of seventeen scholars, researchers, and activists from related fields, hailing from various parts of the world: Palestine, Korea, Malaysia, India, Tanzania, Germany, Ireland, Canada, the U.S., and Japan. For three consecutive days – or to be more precise, three midnights in Japan and three early dawns in the west coast of the Americas – the histories and the latest trends of Christian Zionism in each region, insightful analysis, and personal experiences were shared and lively discussions took place among the panelists across continents.

Since the academic significance of this symposium and each paper presented therein will be fully discussed in the introduction by Dr. Yoshihiro Yakushige, I will focus on my impression on the event itself.

This event was funded by two institutions of Kyoto University: The Unit of Kyoto Initiatives for the Humanities and Social Sciences and The Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies to which I belong. To my knowledge, this was the first academic conference to be held in Japan which embraced Christian Zionism as its main theme. Moreover, I believe it was a pioneering event on the international level as well, due to it being truly global in both its topic and its scale. As a member of the institution that had the honor to sponsor the conference, I was extremely delighted and grateful that we could support such an ambitious and challenging event.

Dr. Yoshihiro Yakushige was the one who originally came up with the idea to hold an international symposium which sheds light on the current trends in Christian Zionism around the world from a multifaceted perspective. He eventually led this unprecedented three-day conference to a success as the executive director. Dr. Yakushige is one of the very few scholars in Japan who specializes in Christian Zionism; in fact, it is no exaggeration to say that he is the only academic of this field in the country.

Dr. Yakushige obtained his doctorate degree from Kyoto University in 2017 with his thesis “Colonialism and Gentile Zionism in Modern Japan”. The thesis was published as a book and

received an award from the Society of Historical Studies of Christianity, Japan in 2018. Since then, Dr. Yakushige has been working on his academic interests with even more vigor, particularly on Christian Zionism's relationship with colonialism.

It is worth mentioning here that Dr. Yakushige, besides being a specialist on Christian Zionism, is also one of Japan's leading figures in social activism for the Palestinian Cause. He is the founder of Palestine Forum Japan, an NGO that has worked for peace in Palestine for over twenty years under his initiative. He has also co-authored many books on the question of Palestine. Such characteristics of his, being both an academic and an activist, defined the nature of this symposium which aspired to reach beyond merely exchanging professional knowledge and academic discussions and to be a catalyst for change to bring about peace in Palestine and the world.

This conference was ironically made possible by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, online meetings have spread rapidly among people who had previously been unfamiliar with them (like me), now becoming commonplace. In stark contrast to the pre-pandemic days where on-site attendance was required, cross-continental conferences like ours are now possible with far lower budgets and less efforts than ever before. However, I cannot help feeling that, if we had met in person and discussed face-to-face, we could have gotten to know each other much better and more personally, which would have brought us closer together to build a deeper relationship beyond just sharing knowledge and information. Needless to say, everything we shared through the conference were absolutely rich and precious, as you will find in this collection. But if we had met in person, that would have further contributed to our shared goal, that is, making a difference for peace and justice in Palestine and the global society.

Still, regardless of the limits inherent in this symposium, it was truly exciting to feel that we are globally connected to each other across national borders with universal human values which we all embrace. So, let the fruits of this symposium be a new starting point for our ongoing journey, on which path shall we meet again. This is just the beginning.

Introduction

Japanese Gentile Zionism – An Example of Colonial Deception

Yoshihiro Yakushige

Aims of the conference

The International Conference on the Global Transformation of Christian Zionism was held in a webinar style from October 23–25. The conference comprised four sessions, that are reflected in the four parts of this volume. Each session had four panelists; two main speakers and two commentators. Of the twelve papers in this compilation, eight have been contributed by the main speakers, five are pre-submitted papers that have been revised, and three are speech transcripts. The remaining four papers have been contributed by the commentators who expanded on the ideas in the remarks during the session.

This conference explored the dynamics of the recent transformation of discourses on the Palestinian cause, especially focusing on the Christian discourse. First, The Trump administration's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017 showed that Christian Zionism still played a pivotal role in the US policy towards the Middle East. However, such an overt political utilization of religion appears to be gradually losing its ideological persuasiveness even among the American evangelicals, who are the main source of Christian Zionism. The recent growth in critical voices among the evangelical Christians have led to reports of young American evangelicals gradually disapproving of Israeli policies towards Palestinians.¹

In contrast, among several non-Western countries, that have had a dominant anti-colonial discourse post-WW2, Christian Zionism seems to be incrementally penetrating the Protestant minority communities. Furthermore, sympathy for Israel is often seen not only among the Christian communities, but also in the non-Christian society faced with rising chauvinistic religious nationalism, such as the Indian Hindu society, Sri Lankan Buddhist society, and Japanese Shinto/Buddhist society.

Considering these temporal and spatial transformations of the Gentile Zionist constellation, we analyzed and characterized Christian Zionism in the wider historical and geopolitical context. Previous academic research on Christian Zionism has almost exclusively focused on the

¹ Jacob Magid, "Support for Israel among young US evangelical Christians drops sharply — survey," *Times of Israel*, 25 May 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/support-for-israel-among-young-us-evangelicals-drops-sharply-survey/>

British and US context. In this volume, we relativize this originally Eurocentric phenomenon from new perspective.

Japanese Gentile Zionism as a referential point

Considering the above-mentioned, I will briefly introduce the historical outline of Gentile Zionism in Japan as a reference. Japanese Christian communities, especially those of Protestantism, began forming through the Western missionaries in the late 19th century. The early Japanese Protestants were elite nationalists, mainly from the Samurai class, who accepted Christianity, believing that it would make Japan as strong as Western countries. But the Meiji government attempted to reestablish traditional Shintoism as the “state ritual” after failing to establish it as the “state religion” owing to strong Buddhist opposition. As the “state ritual,” every religious community was thus compelled to admit Shintoism’s mythic authority and that of the Emperor, who was regarded as a descendent of the ancient national Gods. Some pious Christians thought this was against their belief system and refused to pray at the Shinto Shrine. This strengthened the conservative nationalists hostility against Christianity, that was regarded as an alien and unpatriotic religion.

Thus, many Japanese Christian leaders tried to explain the compatibility of Christianity and patriotism and that the former promoted the latter. Some early Japanese Christians even interpreted the Old Testament as a national story applicable to Japan. One such proponent, Kanzo Uchimura (1861-1930), even thought that Japanese nation had its own contract with God and had the unique national mission to civilize and evangelize the other non-Christian nations in Asia. Based on this ethno-religious thought and inspired by the dispensational hermeneutics, Uchimura became one of the earliest Japanese Christian Zionists who believed that the movement was an important sign that Japan’s “Manifest Destiny” would finally be achieved through divine intervention.

Such Christian thoughts began to be entwined with the political development in East Asia. When the Japanese colonial interests in China confronted those of the Western powers in the 1930s, some Japanese military officers thought it apt to control and utilize the religious groups in the Empire for colonial and military purposes. Many Japanese Christians were mobilized into intelligence activities against the Christian population in the occupied territories. They also established Christian settlements in Manchukuo, a Japanese puppet state in China, as part of the settler colonial policies to promote massive emigration of Japanese farmers here. The most important referential model for this Christian settlement project included the contemporaneous Zionist settlements.

The Japanese military also relocated the Jewish refugees from the Nazi Germany at Manchukuo, believing that winning the Jewish people over to the Japan’s side, and therefore the inherent influence on Western politics and media, would manipulate US public opinion. We can thus refer to this settler-colonial project as the Japanese military Zionism. However, this project was called the Fugu plan, or Puffer plan, implying something very tasty but very dangerous. Colonel Norihiro Yasue, an officer who laid out and supervised the project was amongst the earliest to

introduce the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” to Japan. He was, also, an ardent supporter of the Zionist movement who believed that the Jewish diaspora was causing harm to the non-Jewish nations and that Zionism could neutralize this danger.

So far, I have introduced Japanese Christian Zionism and the Japanese military Zionism in the interwar-period. However, both these forms of Gentile Zionism were wiped out in the 1940s owing to the Japanese colonial empire’s rapid embrace of the Nazi German ideology and its rushed war with the US. This situational change undermined the very objective of any plan to utilize the “Jews.”

Japanese Gentile Zionism in the Post-WWII era

After World War II, some Japanese Gentile Zionist ideologies survived through time. For example, the Makuya group, whose founder was influenced by Kanzo Uchimura, is probably the most influential Christian Zionist organization, with some thousand members, and has maintained a very close relationship with the Israeli embassy in Japan since the 1960s. They are probably the only Christian group that is a part of the radical right-wing movement, that has ardently justified the Japanese colonial war against the neighboring countries. It is noteworthy that several Christian initiatives have organized Palestine solidarity activities in Japan. Thus, we can see a wide political spectrum in the Japan’s Christian communities regarding the Palestinian cause, which is similar to and clearer in the US.

However, only 1% of the Japanese population is Christian. Core Christian Zionists in Japan are a minority within the minority and their direct influence in the society and politics is limited. Nevertheless, recently pro-Zionist ideologies seem to have respectable influence among the right-wing and conservative politicians. Traditionally, the Japanese right-wing has harbored anti-West sentiments and this garnered some compassion for similar Arab nationalist movements. However, such compassion has been waning with the decline of the Arab nationalism as well as the “anti-terror” rhetoric following the 9/11 attacks. With this geopolitical change, several Japanese right-wing extremists began to support Israel in response to the latter’s diplomatic expansion of commercial and political ties in East Asia.

This move emphasized two points: the similarity between the countries’ national myths, and the superior Israeli military/security industries. Toshio Motoya, is an example of such non-Christian Gentile Zionism. As the president of APA Group, that owns the largest hotel chains in Japan, he is a core supporter of the former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He has written several books justifying the Japanese colonial past and advocating the country’s further militarization including that of nuclear armament. In 2017, in his group’s monthly magazine, he wrote “Jewish people control American information, finance, and laws.” He refuted the strong criticism for this antisemitic remark, stating that his words were meant to praise the Jewish people as wise, with excellent skills in the fields of information, finance and law, and that Japan should learn from them. He also emphasized that he had deep respect for their strong Jewish ethnic consciousness since he visited the Masada fortress in 2012, upon the Israeli Ambassador’s invitation.

Here we can see the antisemitic stereotype as strengthened by the Zionist ideology. We can also see that Motoya's Gentile Zionism is constructed on the basis of his chauvinistic nationalism and utilitarianist attitude against the "other." Such thoughts resonate with those of the Japanese military Zionism in the late 1930s.

Christian Zionism reconsidered from the Asian perspective

Our examples of gentile Zionism in the non-Western world suggest that the Palestine crisis shouldn't be regarded as a conflict between the two subjects in a small land in the Middle East. It instead shows the limit of the nation-state system that originated in the Christian Europe and expanded globally with European colonialism. The European nation-state system, with its unstable foundation, always necessitated scapegoats, inside and outside. This, therefore, reorganized and even strengthened the medieval antisemitism and Islamophobia. Christian Zionism grew as a Eurocentric solution to these two "threats" through the settler-colonial method. Jewish Zionism should thus, be regarded as a by-product of the Christian Zionism.

Generally speaking, in the nation-state system, religions are nationalized or subjugated under the state authority. However, most non-Western countries have a wide diversity of religion and ethnicity and a multi-layered identity. National identity is only a part of it. Japan's modernization forced its people into a monolithic religious-national identity by introducing the state-Shinto system. This was thought necessary to compete with the Western Christian powers. Thus, Japan developed its colonial policies, such as utilization of religious/ethnic minorities in its occupied areas.

Japanese Christian Zionism was born from a contradiction between Japanese nationalism and Christianity, when the people tried to integrate their national and religious identities. This attitude pursues the clearly-bordered and one-layered identity that is a derivative of the nation-state system, that Japan had adopted from the Western powers.

Every colonial power has exploited the multi-layered character of the non-Western nations. When we construct a single-layered identity to counter such oppression, we could become another colonial aggressor. Instead, we need to fight this trend with a multi-layered identity, and intersectional solidarity.

Overview of the contents

This book consists of four chapters that reflect the four sessions in the conference. The first chapter discusses the possibilities of the liberation theology as a catalyst for the wider solidarity to break the deadlock of today's crisis in Palestine. Munther Isaac criticizes Christian Zionism from the viewpoint of a Palestinian Christian living in occupied Bethlehem and advocates justice in any orthodox theology. Kim Yong-bock overviews the Korean people's legacies of spiritual resistance against oppressive powers and describes Palestine as a today's pivot of global spiritual struggle for justice.

The second chapter focuses on Christian Zionism in non-Western regions and investigates their background and features from the comparative viewpoints. Cynthia Holder Rich analyzes Christian Zionism in Africa, a strong tool of Israeli diplomacy in the continent over the last few decades. She talks about general history and features of Christian Zionism in Africa, including their frequent use of the “bless Israel and you will be blessed” transaction. Philip Peacock explores the Indian Christian Zionism and analyzes it in relation to the Dalit issues as well as the Hindutva movement. He also proposes the importance of inclusive theology and the interfaith understanding of Hagar in the Old Testament, or Hajira in Hadith of Islam, thus constructing a new perspective. Megumi Ishiida surveys the Christian Zionism in East Asia and discusses how it cannot be contained within the framework of dispensationalism but is rather closely related to people’s identity and actual life.

The third chapter extends our perspective to the wider geopolitical context with emphasis on the multi-religious character of the Asian region. Chandra Muzaffar first talked about the negative impact of Christian Zionism on the religiopolitical relations in Malaysia, where many Chinese Christians live as an ethnic-religious minority. He then emphasized that the problem is not confined to Christian Zionism, but extends to other fundamental currents in various religions in the region, all of which are collectively a decisive challenge. Shamsul Islam talks about Hindutva Zionism, the extreme religious national movement supporting Zionism in India. He sounds the alarm regarding its chauvinistic ideology based on his decades-long research on the issue. Jude Lal Fernando discusses the Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in relation to Zionism as well as Hindutva. He analyzes these ideologies and their interconnection in the geopolitical setting of the Western imperialism, that would provide an important base for the mutual empowerment of the oppressed peoples in these regions.

The fourth chapter considers the recent discursive change on Palestine, that is especially clear among the liberals and leftists in the United States, and looks at the possibility of international and intersectional solidarity for just peace in Palestine and beyond. Each contributor relates their “personal” background to the Palestinian issue as the starting point of their research. Robert O. Smith explores his multi-layered identity and how he came to study Christian Zionism, and proceeds to criticize the western Christian supersessionism, that he considers the root of the colonial violence in modern times. Mark Braverman emphasized the continuity between Judaism and Christianity and the universal character of the Hebrew Bible, as a Jew who influenced by the Palestinian Christians’ liberation theology. He then challenges the post-WWII theology that accepted the Zionist ideology. Miyuki Kinjo compares the colonial experience of Palestinians to that of the Korean minority in Japan (Zainichi). To envision a solidarity between the two oppressed people, she makes a reference to the recent Black-Palestinian solidarity with emphasis on the idea of intersectionality. Tina Ottman provides an elaborate comparative analysis between the views on the Palestinian issue of the Jewish communities in the U.S. and U.K. She especially takes up some recent debates regarding anti-Semitism in the U.K.

I believe that this volume would provide useful viewpoints towards the interdisciplinary research of Palestinian and other colonial issues. I also hope that it will be a springboard for future international/intersectional solidarity.

Part One

Liberation Theology towards Transnational Solidarity

1

Christian Zionism as Imperial Theology

A Perspective from The Other Side of the Wall

Munther Isaac

We are Palestinian Christians

I will be introducing Christian Zionism as I have experienced it as a Palestinian. Hence the title, Christian Zionism as an imperial theology: a perspective from the other side of the wall, implying the Palestinian side. We have been walled off by a physical wall in Palestine, but have also always been shielded from any compensation, and Christian Zionism likes to pretend that we don't exist. However, our perspective is very much needed and I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve this perspective.

When I say I will introduce Christian Zionism from my own experience, I also mean as a Palestinian. In the last seventy or eighty years we've been through a lot. We refer to the events of 1948 as Nakba, or catastrophe in Arabic, because they were so traumatic. It was truly a catastrophe in Biblical proportions for us Palestinians. We lost almost everything, with half our population were refugees, and lost 78% of our land. Many of our towns and villages were completely destroyed and people were expelled from their homes. And of course, thousands were killed. The world celebrated this as the creation of Israel, but for us it was Nakba.

Our Nakba continues today, as we still suffer from discrimination. Those of us who are citizens of the state of Israel are constitutionally discriminated against because most are non-Jewish citizens. The West Bank where I live is an Occupied Territory, in Bethlehem, from behind the wall, surrounded by settlements. Israel controls most of the land through its military occupation; they control the entrances of our towns, and every aspect of our lives. We live suppressed under arms and the millions of refugees are denied the right of return to their homes, towns and their land. Thus, our catastrophe, our Nakba, our daily struggle continues even as I speak.

Christians and Israel

As I said, the world celebrated and continues to celebrate this ‘great divine miracle’ that led to the creation of Israel. Christians, particularly in the West, celebrated this event as a sign of God’s faithfulness to the Jewish people. Hence, I would like to introduce Christian Zionism from the perspective of some major shared principles. A Christian Zionist would emphasize the continuous relationship between God and the Jewish people through the Abrahamic Covenant and then by associating God and the state of Israel, based on their interpretation of the Covenant. They celebrate the creation of Israel by considering the state as either a fulfillment of the prophecy or as God’s faithfulness to the Jewish people.

I, as a Palestinian, raise my voice and say, “Why would God in your perspective do this to us to fulfill a prophecy? Does this make sense? Or if this is a sign of God’s faithfulness to the Jewish people, is He then judging and condemning the Palestinian people by this act?” But here are assumptions about the land, about the Jewish people, who tie a certain state today to biblical prophecies and totally ignore the ground reality and the Palestinian presence.

Other forms of Christian Zionism would claim that if you bless Israel, God will bless you; and if you stand against Israel, God will curse you; this is a classic case of using the Bible for political motives. They base their argument on the verse in Genesis chapter 12. Of course, this interpretation is contested today. Nevertheless, this verse or its interpretation exhibit the strong motivation among Christian Zionists in supporting the state of Israel to seek the blessing of God or even to avoid God’s curse or condemnation. And of course, the assumption that God gave the land to the Jewish people, makes us Palestinians wonder, *but the land is not empty. What about the people who already live in the land?*

Christian Zionism as a political movement

These beliefs are translated into a political movement. They are no longer simply ways of interpreting the Bible but they have become the software, the DNA, or the driving force behind political action by many Christian Zionists around the world, and not only in the West. This movement further supports and funds the state of Israel, even its illegal settlements and the military, and politically lobbies to defend or support Israel. Even when Israel breaks the international law, they will defend it.

The force of Christian Zionism was on display in the five years of Trump’s presidency. As Yoshihiro mentions, Trump said he moved the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem for the evangelicals, and not because he felt it was best for Israel.

“A land without a people, for a people without a land”

As I mentioned, from our own experience as Christians in Palestine, the movement ignores us at best, and at worst, dehumanizes us, totally ignores our reality, and attacks us. Think of

the infamous Zionist slogan “a land without people for a people without a land.” However, several Christian Zionists feel the same. Using or describing our land as empty is a highly colonial method or way of thinking. The land was not empty and they knew it, but to them, the Arabs or Palestinians who inhabited the land were completely irrelevant. The land was not literally, but in terms of people, of equal worth to the new-comer Jewish settlers. As I said, this is a typical colonial white Christian approach.

The land is still described today as if it’s empty and people continue to ignore us. The debate questions the belief that the Jews have a divine right to Israel’s land. Again, they call it Israel’s land, as they assumed it was empty and the Palestinians or our perspectives are not even considered.

I said that I live behind the physical wall, and I hope you see the fact that Israel built the separation wall. Some call it the apartheid wall. Israel claims it was built for security reasons but we can easily show otherwise. I argue that a wall existed long before this physical wall was constructed. We find this wall in theology books, where we are ignored, and shielded from reality; or in the myth that speaks of Jews returning to an empty land. These are the original walls, just as the physical wall that today surrounds us and shields us from the world. I would therefore say, once you do this and dehumanize people, you can then justify violence against them by labelling them terrorists and dangerous. This is what Christian Zionism does.

The Employment of God

I now go deeper into some of the perspectives, worldviews, or tactics of Christian Zionism. It is a movement that employs God on its side. You see God is now on our side, they would say, because Israel is God’s chosen land. Therefore, the slogan of the biggest Christian Zionist organization, Christians United for Israel, is “Because I am a Christian, I stand with Israel.” Again, the leaders say, “To stand against Israel is to stand against God.” God is thus employed for political purposes. As mentioned, this goes beyond United States, and can be seen in the incident from three years ago when millions of Christian evangelicals marched in Brazil as a part of the annual “March for Jesus.” To them, marching for Jesus meant supporting or hailing Israel.

This exhibits the confused notion that, if you are a Christian and you love God, you must support Israel; and of course, if you don’t do that, you oppose God. We now have a rather naive or simple question, that would help us understand the Bible: Do Jews have a divine right to Israel’s land? For me as a Palestinian, if the answer is yes, and that Christians believe or that the Bible teaches them that Jews have a divine right to the land, then I may ask: Can I oppose that? Can I stand against Israel? Because if I stand against Israel, I would be standing against God and that’s the dilemma that they have put upon us as Palestinians. Of course, we have the question, but the whole premise states that the bible really says that. It’s ironic to me that these are the same Christians who say that they will go crazy if Muslims use the same language. If Muslims say that they have a divine right to the land, the Christians would call them fundamentalists and extremists. But it’s perfectly fine to apply this to Israel and the Jews.

Fear

They not only employ God, but also promote or use fear – fear of the “Other.” Because the “Other” is dangerous, is a terrorist, or the polemic whole in an equation where polarization exists, putting two sides against each other. Thus, Judeo-Christian tradition is on one side, as the good people, and the Arabs or Muslims on the other side, as the bad people. We must fear and be weary of the other guys. The language of the Judeo-Christian tradition is what many Palestinian Christians and theologians would call a language or a coded language for cultural superiority, used to promote superiority against the Arabs and Muslims, and to justify the occupation of the land.

It’s typical of many American Christian leaders to assume that America and Israel are in direct relationship with God, to enable them to do anything against the bad people. When the former Vice President of America, Mike Pence, visited Jerusalem, the Israeli Parliament, a few years ago, he said, “We stand with Israel because your cause is our cause, your values are our values, and your fight is our fight.” But then he adds, “We stand with Israel because we believe in right over wrong, in good over evil and in liberty over tyranny.” In one sentence, he illustrated what I’ve been talking about – the employment of God, polarization, and dehumanizing the other. Palestinians are the wrong, evil tyrants, and as such, violence and occupation of our land can be justified.

Attacking Palestinian Christians

Because we, Palestinian Christians and leaders, dare to challenge this theology and this argument, we have been attacked and verbally abused. These attacks have a strategy, that discourages people from engaging with us and our theology or engaging with our stories, because we challenge the dominant story. Again, this is the very typical colonial approach towards silencing the voice of Palestinian Christians, over time.

We’ve often been invited to conferences, only to have the invitation withdrawn after pressure either from Christian Zionists, Christian–Jewish dialog groups or the Jewish partners. There seems to be a strong attempt to silence any Palestinian Christian voice. Why are we being silenced? Because we break the stereotype, because we challenge the paradigm of good vs evil, because we’re Arabs but also Christians. And we insist that while religious extremism is the challenge, it’s the challenge in all religions. This conflict, however, is not religious; it is political. It’s about dominance; about one people occupying the other, and not about the fight between two religions. That is not always a welcome perspective, because it challenges the framework of Christian Zionism.

“Proper” Theology

Christian Zionism likes to claim theology, Bible interpretations, and that they are the only people entitled to interpret the Bible. Any other interpretation is immediately challenged as a replacement theology, as not biblical. Thus, they seem to own the interpretation. I wish I can share with you the many books we have written on the Bible, as Palestinian Christians, and how we believe the Bible and its interpretation. Unfortunately, people say, “Oh, that’s the Palestinian

perspective, but the true perspective comes from Dallas or from Oxford.” This is a nice quote from a Palestinian theologian: Christians who say this are engaged in a “combination of both theological and political imperialism.” We see here the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations holding a Bible and defending Israel’s right to build settlements.

The Kairos Palestine document, prophetically declared that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transforms religion into human ideology and strips the Word of God of its holiness, its universality, and its truth. The Kairos Palestine is a very important document that challenges such imperial theologies.

So as Palestinian Christians, justice matters. To me, justice is the test of any orthodox or good theology. It’s the biblical principle. We quote this verse from the Book of Deuteronomy: “Justice, and only justice, you should follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” Sadly, in the Christian Zionist ideology, even justice is relativized. To them, justice is supporting Israel.

Christian Zionism is not necessarily friendly towards Jewish people as well, because in many scenarios, the Christian Zionists believe that in the end of time, two-thirds of the Jewish people will be massacred and the other third will convert to Christianity. This is written in a documentary called “ ‘Til Kingdom Come” by an Israeli journalist, that documents the anti-Semitism within Christian Zionism. It was a very important documentary that still garners a lot of discussion within Israeli society.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by referring to Israeli journalist Gideon Levi, who is a very strong supporter of Palestinian rights. He wrote about three principles, that in his opinion, enables Israeli society to live in peace with occupation. These three principles state exactly what I’ve been trying to say and what Christian Zionism entails. He argues that many people in Israeli society believe that “they are the chosen people, so they can do anything, that they are the only victims, that the others are trying to destroy, and thus must feel that they are being demonized.” And they, in the process, dehumanize the Palestinians. Sadly, this is our opinion about Christian Zionism, that used this principle to support and continue to support the occupation of our land and dehumanization of Palestinians.

But despite all, our message as Palestinians continues to be that of peacemaking, challenging this theology, this dominance, these imperial voices, speaking truth to the power, and calling instead for sharing the land. Our response to Christian Zionism, that is an exclusive ideology, can only be a theology wherein we share the land, and to do so as Christians we must unite in challenging theologies that justified occupation, and imperial theology. We must present an alternative to these theologies and stand united to put an end to the occupation, as a first step toward accomplishing or achieving this reality of sharing the land. Thank you very much.

2

Minjung Theology - In Search of Solidarity with the People of Palestine

Kim Yong-Bock

Spiritual Resistance Against Israeli and Christian Zionist Politics: Kairos Palestine Versus Zionism, from a Korean Perspective

The Minjung (people) are the subjects of history, who work towards securing the “web of life.” The key word is “subject” – the Minjung as the subject of spiritual reality; and spirituality is the substance of the subjecthood of all living beings, including the Minjung.

The Minjung hermeneutics of life lies in the Bible, and history tell us that all living beings are spiritual subjects who form the web of life. Accordingly, this web of life and all its living beings should be understood as “zoography,” being a story of living beings as spiritual subjects.

In the Bible, God as the spiritual subject of life made the primary covenant with all living beings on earth, as told in the Genesis story of creation (1~3; 9). The garden of living beings (仙界) signifies the web of life. The Biblical zoography describes a movement of transformation of earth and history for the web of life. If the zoography of living beings is a Biblical story, then its opposite is thanatography, being the story of the destruction of the web of life and its living beings.

In the Bible, the creation story of Genesis (zoography) is posed against thanatography as represented by Marduk (darkness), Tiamat (chaos), and the powerful Babylonian empire. Fundamentally, God’s zoography is counterposed to the thanatographies of Leviathan, Behemoth, and the Roman Empire through the prophetic movements, the Jesus Movement, and other spiritual movements of primitive Christianity. Biblical hermeneutics discern the dynamics and counter dynamics of these two stories.

Korean Zoography from the Biblical Perspective

I want to focus on Korean zoography (story of life) versus thanatography (story of destruction). “The heart (spiritual subject) of the Minjung (民心) is the heart (spiritual subject) of Heaven

(天心),” in synchronicity with the Biblical perspective. This original vision of life in Korea’s history of 5,000 years, has been expressed in the Saga of Dangun (founder of Korea), that tells us:

- a) The cosmic order of Sang Saeng embraces all living beings. (理化相生)
- b) The people are to live together in “oikonomia convivencia” (經世濟民) according to the cosmic mandate of life.
- c) The basic principle is the social well-being of the people (弘益人間).
- d) There is to be Great Peace on Earth (太平盛代).

The polity (政體) of Sang Saeng (Oikonomia Convivencia) states that it nurture and sustain the web of life. The web of life is the convivial texture of Sang Saeng (相生). Just as the heart of the people is the heart of Heaven, the people are primary stewards of the web of life in God’s covenant of life. The Minjung (people) are the subjects of history for the security of the web of life. Thus, the polity is to protect, sustain and nurture the web of life for all living beings.

The essence of the polity entails the spirituality, heart, and subjecthood of all living beings. With human beings as “steward/diakon” of all living beings and their web, the essential polity is Doulos+Arche, or Doularchy, supporting the web of life in the convivial order of Sang Saeng (相生).

Radical love among all living beings is the essence of the web of life, that is, Sang Saeng is the communion (koinonia) of all living beings on earth. Violence against the web of life occurs through tyranny, exploitation, and war, the crux of such violence being wars by past kingdoms and the present empire. Modern civilization, the modern nation state, and the industrial economy have taken shape through Western colonialism: the Western powers’ encroachment into East Asia has been via British colonialism, Western science and technology, and Christian Zionism. In the Asian version of colonialism, the modern Japanese imperial regime imposed colonial control over Korea, China, various Southeast Asian nations, and the Pacific islands.

Asian Peoples’ Response: Emergence of People’s Movements in East Asia

The mid-19th century, saw the rise of the Donghak Movement in Korea, triggered by the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Heavenly Lord (天主). In China, the T’aping Christian Peasant Movement was triggered by Baptist Christian teachings, that were radically reformed to resist British colonial encroachment.

These trends led to the formation of messianic politics in the Korean Christian movement. The Western missionary legacy, as the religious-cultural legacy of colonialism in 19th century Asia, was counterposed by the Christian faith community among the Minjung communities in Korea. Roman Catholicism, that was accepted mainly among the upper-middle class (中人) in 17th century Korea, had begun dismantling the social hierarchy of the Yangban

system of aristocratic literati versus the commoners. In 1891, the Donghak Peasant Resistance Movement became the point of convergence for various indigenous faith traditions of resistance against oppressive powers, including Sang Saeng, the Dangun Saga (仙界), Minjung Maitreya Buddhism, Minjung Confucianism (民心天心), Catholic faith in the Heavenly Lord, and the revitalization of Protestant Biblical messianism. This “convergent pivot of faith resistance” stood against the Chinese, Japanese, and Russian military conflicts over the Korean peninsula, that was surrounded by these encroaching powers. It included:

1. The Donghak Faith Tradition
2. Radical Confucianism
3. The Dangun Saga
4. Minjung Buddhism
5. Christian Messianism
6. Bolshevik Peasant Culture
7. Western Liberal Tradition

In the Korean Minjung movement, the spiritual dynamics of resistance against colonial domination was constituted as the March First Independence Movement of 1919. It highlighted the spiritual dynamics of peace, against the colonial wars and the First World War, for self-determination against Western colonialism in its symbiotic forms of industrial capitalism and political conquest.

Security of the web of life is absent in the modern nation state (the Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes) and the industrial economy (the greedy Mammon of private capitalism). The Leviathan is based on the individual person and private property, under the order of “survival of the fittest.” Modern rationality is devoid of the spirit of life, as with the Sang Saeng subjects.

Historical Dynamics of Zionist Politics in the World.

Despotic polities (專制政治) of power, royal and imperial, have pervaded the history of the world. Such polities were first grounded on certain forms of divine (religious) presuppositions. The ancient Egyptian empires with their Sun goddess, Babylonian mythologies, and other divine mythologies in Eastern, Central and Western Asia, absolutized their polity and power against all living beings.

In this context, the oppressed people began resisting despotism to liberate themselves. Their resistance may be the foundation of the affirmative vision of the web of life. The countervailing polity arose as a utopian vision of the world, such as in the creation saga of the Habiru (Hebrew) people. This polity formation led to the regimes of kingdoms, and the pressures of empire may have triggered the utopian Zionist vision of polity as the alternative or countervailing polity of empire. This may be the root of modern Zionism.

Zionism in Israel in Modern Times

Zionism (Hebrew: ציוניזם *Tsiyyonut* [tsijo'nut] after *Zion*) is an ideology and nationalist movement that espouses the establishment of, and support for, a Jewish state centered in the area roughly corresponding to Canaan, the Holy Land, the region of Palestine or Eretz Israel on the basis of a long Jewish connection and attachment to that land.

Modern Zionism emerged in the late 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe as a national revival movement, both in reaction to newer waves of antisemitism and as a response to Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment. Soon after, most leaders of the movement associated their main goal with that of creating the desired state in Palestine, being an area then controlled by the Ottoman Empire.

Zionism posited a negation of Jewish life in the diaspora and, until 1948, perceived its primary goal as an ideal ingathering of exiles (*kibbutz galuyot*) in the ancient heartland of the Jewish people, and, through the establishment of a state, the liberation of Jews from the persecution, humiliation, discrimination and antisemitism that they had been subject to. Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Zionism has continued primarily to advocate on her behalf and to address threats to her continued existence and security.

A religious variety of Zionism supports Jews upholding their Jewish identity in adherence to Judaism, opposes the assimilation of Jews into other societies, and advocates the return of Jews to Israel, as a means to ensure a majority nation in their own state. A variety of Zionism, called cultural Zionism, founded and represented most prominently by Ahad Ha'am, fostered a secular vision of a Jewish "spiritual center" in Israel. Unlike Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, Ahad Ha'am strived to make Israel "a Jewish state and not merely a state of Jews."

Advocates of Zionism view it as a national liberation movement aimed at the repatriation of a persecuted people residing as minorities in various nations, to their ancestral homeland. Critics of Zionism view it as a colonialist, racist, and exceptionalist ideology that led advocates to violence during the Mandatory Palestine, followed by the exodus of Palestinians, and the subsequent denial of their right to return to the lands and property lost during the 1948 and 1967 wars.

Political Zionism today is a symbiosis of Christian Zionism and Jewish Zionism, and this convergence is problematic in the global context as well as in West Asia.

Zionism refers to the religious ideology of the state of Israel, that is based on politicized Judaism. The threat of the political despotism of Zionism is apparent, with its hegemonic military power and potential genocidal violence (armed with nuclear weapons).

Israel's Zionism is characterized by settler colonialism (conquest of the land), apartheid (racism against Palestinians), discrimination against other ethnic communities, religious antagonism against the Islamic faith, and its symbiosis with Western colonialism.

The historical fusion of Western colonialism and Zionism occurred in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration. In 1948, the state of Israel was established in Palestine. Pan Arab politics emerged in the post-colonial era, followed by the Cold War, and then by global hegemonic politics and the settling in of the global MIMAC (military industrial media academic complex), and the concomitant hegemonic politics of the globalized economy.

Emergence of Christian Zionism: A Timeline

1. Christianity under Constantine's Roman Empire and the Crusades
2. Establishment of Christian kingdoms
3. Conquest of the Americas using Christian political ideology
4. Conquest and colonialism by Western Christian powers over the non-Christian world
5. Christian Zionism in the Cold War era
6. Emergence of Christian Zionism in the post-Cold War era – the Pacific War (WW II)
7. Confrontation of USA and the Japanese Empire
8. San Francisco Peace Treaty
9. The Cold War order's fateful 1940s division of Korea (political apartheid)

Political and Ethnic Apartheid

The ongoing Minjung hermeneutics for historical transformation resists the US global hegemony and Christian Zionism. Christian Zionism underwent a resurgence in the Cold War era, from the Korean and Vietnamese wars to the rhetoric of the “evil empire” (Reagan's politics). Then came the global War on Terror; since 9/11, the axis of evil has thus undergirded the US's unilateral hegemonic wars in West Asia and the consolidation of the hegemonic MIMAC in the Asia and Pacific region.

A culture of Islamophobia and racism against Asians and all other non-white people has continued to grow, with the fusion of Christian Zionism with Zionist politics against Palestine, and unconditional support by American Christian Zionist forces for US global hegemony, based on the global MIMAC and the globalized economy (oil politics). In West Asia, this is manifested in all-out support for the dominance of Zionist Israel against Palestine and the peoples of West Asia. The Christian Zionist Movement has thus permeated Christianity globally.

New Era of Ecumenism for Spiritual Resistance

Worldwide, there are diverse historical legacies of wisdom for spiritual resistance.

Spirituality for combat (resistance) is the Indian ecumenical legacy (M. M. Thomas), in convergence with Indian spiritual legacies of resistance against colonialism, for self-determination, against class and caste domination (Dalits), and for liberation of Muslims and tribal communities.

Convergence of spiritualities against despotic colonial powers is the historical legacy of the Donghak Peasant Movement in the 1860s, and of the March First Independence Movement of 1919 against Imperial Japan's colonial conquests and wars. Seven faith communities converged to lead this movement.

In the 1850s, *T'aiping Christianity* resisted the encroachment of the Western colonial powers.

A *People's Bandung Forum of Spiritual Resistance* may have been formed around the spirit of the Indonesian Independence Movement, Pan Arab spiritual convergence, Pan African spiritual convergence (South Africa's struggle against apartheid), First Nations' spiritual convergence for resistance in the Americas, Pan Pacific peoples' convergence in spirituality for the web of life, and spiritual convergence for resistance by global diaspora faith communities. Such a "Forum of Spiritual Resistance" may contribute to overcoming the Zionist politics of Israel and its allies in the global Christian Zionist movement.

The Kairos Movement in Palestine can be the focus of spiritual resistance against the political symbiosis of Christian Zionism and Zionist Israel. The political symbiosis of Christian and Israeli Zionism must be confronted in Palestine, and simultaneously, within the framework of global ecumenism.

1. There should be a global convergence of spiritual resistance.
2. This convergence should be people-centered, for self-determination.
3. The movement should dismantle the political and ideological character of Zionism in Palestine, in West Asia and in the global context. The people are the subjects everywhere.
4. It should liberate all people from the racist apartheid system.
5. It should be free of the global geopolitics of hegemony (MIMAC).
6. It should be free from capitalist greed (neo-liberal capitalism).
7. Spirituality should be the foundation of the web of life on earth.

Influence of Christian Zionism in Korea

1. Christian Zionism in Korea is the result of anti-communism and the Cold War regime, serial military dictatorships, and military technocratic and neoliberal development.
2. The impact of the MIMAC in the context of global hegemonic struggle created a space for Christian Zionism on the fringes of the Korean Christian church.
3. Advanced technocratic management of neoliberal capitalism will create a spiritual space for Christian Zionism among the people. The rise of Christian Zionists in the US government has consequently led to the collapse of the chain of command. (https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2020/04/1_37_288025.html)

This situation has strongly affected the Korean peninsula, as well as Palestine, a prime example being the destructive actions of US Secretary of State, Pompeo in Pyongyang. (https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2018/06/7_23_250362.html)

Palestine as a Pivot of Convergence for Spiritual Resistance Against Political Zionism: What Needs to Be Done

- Revitalize the roots of the spiritual life as manifested in the Jesus Faith Movement against empires, as against the Roman empire in Palestine.
- Revitalize and creatively converge the spiritualities of life in the original communities across continents.
- Revitalize and converge spiritualities of resistance against colonial conquests.
- Revitalize and converge spiritualities of resistance against neoliberal greed, that is exploiting and destroying living beings.
- Revitalize spiritualities against global military/technocratic hegemony, for peace and all living beings on earth. Actualize the vision of a Festival of Convivencia for all.
- Expose Christian Zionism's basic fallacy of separation between life and death, heaven and hell, this world and the other, and its use of this false separation to justify the violence of political powers, neoliberal greed, and human supremacy over the web of life.
- Recognize life as the foretaste of the messianic banquet here and now, and forever in fullness over the entire earth.

Part Two

Theological Critique of Christian Zionism in the Non-Western World

3

Christian Zionism in Africa: A Question of Agendas

Cynthia Holder Rich

Introduction

In July 2021, Israel was granted observer status by the African Union (African Union, July 2021), something they have sought for decades—particularly since 2013 when Palestine gained this status with the AU. The granting was a unilateral move taken by Moussa Faki Mahamat. Mahamat, a former Prime Minister of Chad, serves currently as the chairman of the African Union.

The move was greeted with loud protests by several African governments, particularly those who have resisted pressure to restore their pre-1967 ties with the State of Israel, and from some who have maintained close ties with Palestine (Bishara, 2021; August, 2021; Bishku, 2021). Those who protested Israel's new status noted that as recently as May of this year, Mahamat made a statement on behalf of the AU condemning Israel's May 2021 bombardment of the Gaza Strip, during which scores of Palestinians were killed, and Israeli attacks at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Islamic observance of Ramadan, in which over 300 worshippers sustained injuries (African Union, May 2021). Mahamat was careful when announcing Israel's new status to reiterate AU support for a Two-State solution (African Union, July 2021) and for justice for all parties in efforts toward peace between Israel and Palestine. Less than a month after observer status was granted, Chairman Mahamat issued a 2nd communique (African Union, August 2021), in which he stated that the decision to grant this status was completely within the Chairman's purview; and that "the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people", including the right to "establish an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital", continued to enjoy the "unflinching support" of the African Union.

The granting of observer status to Israel raises many questions. Primary among them is what AU Chairman Mahamat had to gain in taking this unilateral step, which he undoubtedly understood would inspire outrage in many corners of the continent—comprehension he made clear

both in the careful rhetoric of the announcement, couched in support for Palestine, and in the hurried release of a second communique, assuring angry representatives of the AU Executive Council that there would be opportunity for discussion. That which Mahamat put at risk in taking this step is clear. What he would gain is left, at present, to speculation; yet we can assume that there were gains to be made through this choice. One notable factor: more than 40 years after breaking relations with Israel after the 1967 and 1973 wars, the nation of Chad—the country which AU Chairman Mahamat previously served as Prime Minister—renewed diplomatic ties with Israel in 2019 (Reuters, 2019), and visits between leaders of the two countries and sharing of military and security assistance have featured frequently since then.

Christian Zionism is a movement that is neither Christian nor Zionist. In Africa, there are powerful agendas in the movement's work—bargains and transactions made to gain something, and decisions about what steps one is willing to take. Every political actor, agency, and government has agendas, a fact not new nor surprising. In the geopolitical moves Israel takes in Africa, they are interested in giving something to get something. African leaders and governments all tackle the same question—what to give and what they can get in return. This is often what it means to be in politics—making transactions with the potential costs and benefits in mind.

This paper discusses Christian Zionism's agenda in Africa. Christian Zionist organizations openly state their overt agendas online. Mission statements include various goals, including “promoting positive Christian engagement in the Near East”, (Philos Project), “confronting indifference and combating antisemitism in all its forms” (Christians United for Israel), the bringing of “Biblical understanding in the Church concerning God's purposes for Israel” (Christians for Israel International), and prayer “for the peace of Jerusalem” (Jerusalem Prayer Team). At issue for us is how these reasonable-sounding goals become operative in the contexts of African nations, nearly all of which are post-colonial, continued venues for extraction of resources by richer countries, and lower- to very-low-income. A more pointed question is why Christian Zionist actors and organizations have become so active in Africa, where many governments operate at the juncture of a variety of powerful actors, with whom they can collaborate, or defend themselves, or from whom they can seek assistance. In this paper, I explore these questions and how to confront the harm that is being done in Africa in the name of Jesus through the transactional work of Christian Zionist organizations.

Israel's agenda in Africa

As African nations gained independence from their European colonizers in the 1950s and '60s, Israel sought diplomatic relationships with many African governments (Kraemer, 2018). Israel exists in a hostile geopolitical neighborhood. Hence, making alliances with those who had suffered oppression, whom Israel could use as a mirror in which to see itself as similarly persecuted (Yotam Gidron, 06 February 2021), seemed wise. Many African governments recognized Israel, seeing in them a persecuted people like themselves who had suffered at the hands of Europeans.

However, after wars in 1967 and 1973, Israel claimed and occupied territory that had been designated for a future Palestinian state. Most African nations broke relations with Israel and became openly pro-Palestinian. We must note that these were not transactional decisions—not taken because they expected to receive something from Palestine in response, but rather because they found the occupation and oppression of Palestine painfully familiar. Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere spoke for many African leaders, saying that "Our generation was a generation of nationalist struggle for the independence of our own countries ...but the plight of the Palestinians is very different and much worse. They have been deprived of their own country, they are a nation without a land of their own. They therefore deserve the support of...the entire world" (Balawi, 2019). The rupture in Israel's relationship with most African nations continued for decades—political decisions not made transactionally, but on principle.

One notable exception was the government of South Africa, which maintained robust relations with Israel throughout the apartheid era (1948-1994). The South African government in that era was led and supported by Zionist Christians, who interpreted the Bible to justify policies of legally enforced separation of people based on race (Pillay, 2016).

After apartheid ended, South African relations with Israel moved through a variety of advances and setbacks (Oneko and Schwikowski, 2019). Presently, South Africa is one of the strongest critics of Israel on the continent, and one of the loudest in protesting the granting of Israel's AU observer status (Bishara, 2021; August, 2021).

Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, made a concerted effort to mend broken relationships in Africa. Netanyahu began visiting Africa in 2016, making speeches, offering assistance, and campaigning for the resumption of relations. The Prime Minister and other Israeli government officials made the transaction they offered plain: Israel offers assistance to Africa to stop anti-Israel measures from being passed at international bodies, including the United Nations. Before visiting the Economic Community of West African States meeting in 2017, Netanyahu stated that his aim was "to dissolve this majority, this giant bloc...of African countries that is the basis of the automatic majority against Israel in the UN and international bodies" (Gruzd et al, 2018, pp. 9-10).

While offering assistance and investing in scientific research to alleviate African suffering (The Fellowship, 2021), Israel also quickly punishes African governments if votes in international forums are not sufficiently supportive of Israel (Baroud, 2019). Israel sets an unapologetically transactional course in their relationships with African governments, and this can be expected to continue under the new Israeli administration.

Agendas between Christian Zionists and Israel

Christian Zionist actors and organizations and Israel have agendas in their relationships with each other. But the goals of their agendas are not the same; at times, they are mutually contradictory.

Christian Zionists have long professed love for Israel, and many see the movement as an inter-faith miracle and repentance for anti-Semitism, which found its tragic pinnacle in the Holocaust. Popular US evangelist and Christian Zionist Billy Graham visited Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and had multiple meetings with US Jewish leaders. In explaining his motivation, Graham stated that “All Christians are guilty as far as Jewish experience is concerned” (Hummel, 2018). John Hagee, chairman and founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI), states unequivocally that Jerusalem and Israel belong to the Jewish people. During the violence in May 2021 in Israel and Palestine, Hagee posted on Twitter that Israel deserves “unconditional love and support” (Orly and Brenneman, 2021). Christian Zionists in the US send millions to Israel annually, including support for Jewish immigration based on the Law of Return, which grants all Jews the right to emigrate to Israel (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1950). Christian Zionist organizations regularly support “Aliyah” flights for Jews wanting to emigrate. One organization shared that in the first five months of 2021, they had covered all travel expenses for over 1100 new Jewish immigrants to Israel (Parsons, May 2021).

Christian Zionists believe and teach that blessing Israel will be rewarded with blessings, often quoting part of a verse from the Biblical book of Genesis to support their claims. In Genesis, the LORD called Abram, whom the LORD had chosen to be one whom the LORD would make a great nation, saying in Genesis 12:3a, “I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse.”¹ Christian Zionists view Israel’s wealth and achievements as signs of this text’s fulfillment (Gidron, 19 February 2021).² As such, the building of new Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories and the removal of Palestinians from these areas are viewed as manifestations of God’s plan. Confident in a promised future where Eretz Israel spreads to the Mediterranean, Israeli military operations pressuring Palestinian communities are interpreted as God’s continued faithfulness to the chosen people. During one of these, Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009, many Christian Zionists made pilgrimage to Sderot, a town bordering the Gaza Strip, to watch and celebrate the dropping of phosphorus on Gazan communities, which they saw as God’s strategy to bring God’s plan to fruition (Sturm, 2021).

The March 2021 Israeli election, which led to the formation of a new coalition government in Israel including both Arab Israelis and Israeli centrists, alarmed many US-based Christian Zionists. Netanyahu’s defeat was seen by some as a betrayal of biblical prophecies by Israeli voters (Lynch, 2021), moving some Christian Zionists to anger and to making threats. Prominent Christian Zionist pastor Mike Evans shared his dismay with new Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, saying, “we gave you four years of miracles under Donald Trump—we evangelicals delivered it—and you delivered nothing...I will fight you every step of the way...Don’t call yourself a defender of Zion. You’re not.” (Silliman, 2021) Other US Christian Zionist leaders were

1 Toryough and Okanlawan’s (2014, 123-136) non-transactional exegesis of Genesis 12:1-3, which brings it into conversation with Paul’s use of this text in Galatians 3:13-16, is helpful here.

2 In the discourse around this verse there seems to be little recognition that the offspring of Abraham are not limited to Jacob/Israel and his descendants. It must include both his descendants through Esau as well as his descendants through Hagar and Keturah. That comprises a much larger set of populations/nations than just modern Israel. Genesis 12 provides no basis for limiting the prayers of believers to the modern nation of Israel.

more measured; yet, the loss of Netanyahu, whom they saw as a strong ally, has been deeply felt by Christian Zionist communities.

Christian Zionists' agenda with Israel is also based on scriptural interpretations of the role Israel will play in the End Times and Christ's return. According to Christian Zionist narratives, Israel must be in Jerusalem in order for Jesus to return. Support of Israel in its conflicts with the Palestinians is part of a strategy with the goal of Apocalypse, and Christian Zionist understanding of Israel's role in this drama is clear—and deeply problematic. While Christian Zionists witness to Israel's continued chosenness, many also believe that those Jews who do not convert to Christianity at the end will be obliterated. Some US Christian Zionists believe/hope that most Jews will convert, and yet concede that many will die during the Great Tribulation (Awad, 2021). These beliefs demonstrate a deeply transactional relationship to the State of Israel and to Jews, which operates not only at the political level but also at the level of divine/human relations. Despite Christian Zionist claims of “unconditional love and support”. Christian Zionism has been named by commentators as deeply anti-Semitic (Gottlieb, 2019; Orly and Brenneman, 2021).

Many in Israel view Christian Zionists transactionally, understanding that the goals of the movement have often been stated and incarnated in anti-Semitic ways (Orly and Brenneman, 2021; Krusch, nd). Israelis recognize that US Christian Zionists successfully pressure US governments to support Israel and use their veto at the UN to stop measures that would punish them for their actions, and that these organizations raise millions of dollars that flow to Israel. Hence, many in Israel are willing to overlook the ugly Christian Zionist narrative in which all non-Christians—including the Jews—are annihilated in the End.

Christian Zionist agendas in Africa

Since the 1970s, Christian Zionist organizations have become very active in Africa, seeing the turning of African peoples and governments toward support of Israel as part of a divine mandate. In Africa, the preaching of blessings and curses finds a culturally coherent home. Many indigenous belief systems on the continent include belief in blessings and curses, constructing a largely transactional relationship to God, the gods, and/or the ancestors. Additionally, Christian Zionist preaching fits well with the power of Prosperity Gospel understandings already preached in many African Christian churches.

Prosperity Gospel preaching asserts that sufficient levels of faithfulness and prayer will result in accumulating blessings in the form of wealth. The amazing personal wealth of prominent US Prosperity Gospel preachers Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, and Kenneth Copeland offers evidence that their preaching is true (Falsani, 2009; Burton, 2017).

In African resource-poor contexts, Christian Zionist use of the “bless Israel and you will be blessed” transaction often becomes abusive—an interpretation which some African scholars have confronted (Toryough and Okanlawon, 2014). Before the pandemic, many thousands of

African Christians were annually offered carefully curated all-expense paid trips to Israel by Christian Zionist organizations (Hutt, 2014), during which the “bless to receive blessing” transaction was emphasized. Andrew Tucker of Christians for Israel stated in a visit to Uganda in 2018, during a famine, that “The continent of Africa will prosper if it enters a strategic alliance with Israel” (Tucker, 2018). And during a 2020 visit to Tanzanian President Magafuli, David Parsons, Vice President of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, stated that moving Tanzania’s embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem would result in “ten years of the fatted calf” for Tanzania (ICEJ, 2020). The overt use of African poverty and suffering by Christian Zionist actors to achieve their ends exploits the weak in ways that cannot be called Christian.

The fly in the ointment of the “bless to receive blessing” transaction for Africans is that most of them are dark-skinned—a fact that has shown up in relationships between Africans and Israel. Jews from Africa who have emigrated to Israel have struggled to find the country a place they can feel at home. Israel’s practice of deporting Africans who come to the country has become politically problematic, but it has not stopped. Netanyahu spoke on the subject early in 2021, saying that “in connection to the danger of a flooding of illegal immigrants from Africa that flooded Israel. I built a fence that saved us all – and then I was told, if someone climbs the fence, he has an automatic right to be a refugee. So I decided to pass the Nation-State Law” (Harkov, 2021). The Nation-State Law has been used to ensure that those who emigrate are certifiably Jewish. Critics have suggested that only White Jews need apply (Green, 2018). Many Ethiopian Jews have been told by Israel that they are not really Jewish (Gerth-Niculescu, 2019).

To work in Africa, recognition of the construct of race and how this has operated in Christian history, including colonial and mission history, is required as part of faithful discipleship. In contrast, Christian Zionist organizations have come to Africa, promoting ideas that Africans have sinned and need to confess and repent, as they enslaved the Hebrews; and, that the ten plagues suffered by the Egyptians continue in Africa because Africans have not yet confessed and repented. These are shared as conditions of receiving blessings from God (Berkowitz, 2018). One organization has worked to draw a parallel between the 400 years of the trans-Atlantic enslavement of Africans with the six million Jews who need help to return to Israel (Adler, 2019), suggesting a relationship between the two. The encouragement of shame and the building of internalized racism are not activities that organizations calling themselves Christian should adopt.

Conclusion

Christian Zionist organizations are neither truly Christian nor truly Zionist—and are built on a false foundation. Their promotion of the idea that salvation and blessing will come through anything but Jesus marks their work as not about Christ—therefore, not Christian. Their indifference—at times rising to celebration—at Palestinian suffering renders the movement evil. Further, their form of Zionism ends with the violent death of all Jews who do not convert—which is not Zionist nor Christian. In Africa, the inherent racism in their work denies the identity of Africans as made in God’s image, and thus, is not of God.

Jesus' own words (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32) reject the false idea on which Christian Zionism is built, that humans can in any way move the calendar ahead for Christ's return, by increasing the number praying for Israel, or the amount of money raised, or how many Jews return to the thin slice of land that is in no way large enough to hold them all. The goal of faith in Jesus does not match the goal of Christian Zionism. Unlike geopolitical relationships, faith in God through Jesus is never constructed on a tit-for-tat transaction. The entirety of the Protestant Reformation was founded on the rejection of this idea. To suggest to people who have few resources that God's free blessing can be, and must be, bought amounts to sin.

When our eyes are opened to the falsity and craven perniciousness of these ideas, we are called to confront them in every way possible to work toward change, justice, healing, and peace.

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4

Christian Zionism: Exploring Roots in the Indian Context

Philip Vinod Peacock

The personal is political: my own story

There has been a long history of academics in India, who have been working on the question of Christian Zionism. Thank you for asking me though to be a part of this. This has been a personal passion of mine, and there is a specific reason for it.

I would therefore like to start by asserting that the personal is political, and I would like to start with my own story. I think this makes some impact on the question that is at hand. My grandfather was a very conservative Christian like most of my family and was a very, very deeply committed Christian Zionist. If there was an embodiment or an epitome of Christian Zionism, this person existed as my grandfather. It went to great depths with him. He was a firm believer in the letter of the law as was written in the Old Testament, in the First Testament. So, he kept the Sabbath. He avoided and kept all the eating and other restrictions that were outlined in the purity laws in Leviticus, but most importantly, every evening he prayed for peace in Jerusalem. This did not mean a cessation of violence in Jerusalem, but rather it meant a victory for Zionists who wanted to take over Jerusalem and the entire Palestinian lands as their own. He himself had visited Palestine several times in his life. Even though he was very poor, I think he saved up money and was able to, through the help of relatives and others, visit more than once and was a very, very strong supporter of the cause of Israel and Christian Zionism.

I, however, in my growing up could not identify with any of this. I didn't live with my grandfather on my father's side. He lived in another town. We visited him often, of course, but somehow the social and cultural spaces – this did not include the church, but the social and cultural spaces that I occupied, as a child growing up in India, did not have a space or allow for Christian Zionism or any form of Zionism for that matter. Because the point is that India at that particular time, and I will come to this, was extremely pro-Palestine. And so, in my education system in school, with my friends, what I saw on television, we had a very, very pro-Palestinian position.

The context of Christian Zionism in India

Before I go down to what changed, to highlight the context in which Christian Zionism actually flourishes in India today probably has some resonance with my own personal story as well. The first thing to take into account is India's multi-religious context. India from its outset has been declaring itself as a nation in 1947 constitutionally enshrined that it would be a secular country. Secularism in India has a very specific way of looking at it which is perhaps different from how western countries look at secularism.

In India, secularism means that the state will not favor any particular religion, that with the eyes of the state and in the eyes of the law, all religions are equal. After independence without what was earlier called West and East Pakistan (today's Pakistan and Bangladesh), India is about 80% Hindu, 15% Muslim, and the rest of the 5% is divided among Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and those who belong to indigenous religions or don't affiliate with any religion at all. Of course, this fact is well known across the country. So, it is an extremely multi-religious context; however, there is a caveat to which I will come a little later.

But more significantly, India is not only divided on the question of religion but also very deeply on the question of caste. The question of caste has always been read through colonial lenses and the lenses of the dominant castes in India. These two groups have colluded to give a picture of what caste is. However, very simply put, India does not have four castes. There are about 16,000 castes in India. About 14% of these castes are considered to be untouchable castes. The dominant caste, that is the Brahmin group in India, is about just 3% of the country, but there are 16,000 different castes, and each of them are antagonistic to each other.

The caste question has relevance for the Christian question in India as well. From the last quarter of the 19th century into the first quarter of the 20th century, there was a mass movement from formerly untouchable communities, whom we call Dalits today, towards Christianity to the extent that about 70% of Indian Christians today are from the Dalit community, that is to say from formerly untouchable caste communities. More importantly, about 10% of all Dalits in India are actually Christian.

This significant shift that happened between 1875 and 1925 changed the demographic of Christianity in India. Earlier, Christianity in India was a dominant caste, urban and an educated population, but this mass movement of Dalits to Christianity resulted in Christianity in India being a largely rural, uneducated, poor, and lower caste faith community. This is important when we understand the power dynamics that Christians in India are, firstly, a minority and, secondly, almost all of them belong to the lower castes or perhaps what we call in India, scheduled tribes, better known as indigenous people, who also are marginalized from mainstream Indian society. This is important for us to understand Christian Zionism within the context of India.

Exploring the Indian relationship to Palestine

Next, I want to explore the Indian relationship to Palestine as a whole. As I said before, I grew up, like many others, in the time when India had a very pro-Palestinian position. Yasser Arafat and the PLO were seen to be close friends within the context of Indian diplomatic policies. However, there has been a definitive shift over the last two or two and a half decades within India's relationship with Israel.

This has been fueled by three things. Firstly, a growing Islamophobia around the world and a growing Islamophobia in India. While tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities have existed for a very long time, these have come to a head in the last 20 years maybe, ever since 2000, in a way that we have not experienced before.

More importantly, this is being driven by the fact that the Hindutva, the right-wing Hindu movement in India which has taken government, is also extremely Islamophobic to the extent that the levels of violence against Muslims and other minorities in India are horrific, extremely cruel, and deeply violent.

Hindutva itself has a very strange relationship with Zionism. In as much as Hindutva aligned itself with the national socialists in Europe in its early formation, one would have believed that there should have been some sort of different relationship with Muslims as against Jews, but this doesn't happen. Antisemitism in the world, as we have seen, has also quickly slipped into anti-Muslim or into Islamophobia. So, there has been this shift, and this shift is also very much seen within the context of Hindutva.

Hindutva sees Muslims as the big enemy, and therefore with Palestinians being equated with Muslims. It seems to be a common alliance between the political powers that belong to the right-wing Hindus in India as well as the Zionist project of Israel to the extent that just last week, there was a press conference in which the Prime Minister of India declared that India, USA, Saudi Arabia, and Israel are very close friends.

Within this context, what we need to talk about is Christian Zionism in India. Christian Zionism in India, as I explained through the story of my grandfather, existed far before this national turn towards Israel. In fact, if anything, Christian Zionism would separate itself from the national turn to Israel but would support Christian Zionism in a global sense. So, it's not a cohesive theory. It's very, very fragmented. It doesn't make complete sense. You can't hold it all together, but this is somehow how it works.

So, Christians in India would be Zionists, very much in support of Israel, but at odds with the national Hindutva project, which is also equally Zionist in its own sense. This is something that needs to be taken into account.

Christian Zionism: The theological framing

How do we explain this? What is the theological framework? One is that there is a certain sense of totalistic theology that comes with Christian Zionism and the evangelical movement, a theology that explains everything. Everything, history, time, human activity, all has its place in a totalistic theology in which everything is explained by the Sovereignty of God. Rooted in this is the deep idea of dispensationalism. They think that God has acted in different ways throughout history, there is a connectivity of these ways, today, we live in a particular age of grace, but next we are going to turn into an age of judgment. However, within this age of grace, there are going to be historic events that have been predicted long ago that are happening now, of which of prime importance is the idea that Jerusalem has to be reinstated, the temple has to be rebuilt, and then this gives way to the Second Coming itself.

Of course, connected to this is the constant bombarding of the idea that we live in end times. Rooted to this idea of the Sovereignty of God, which all of us would accept, is the fact of the God of Explanations, that everything happens because of a reason, that God explains everything. There is no place for doubt, there is no place for difference of opinion, and everything is easily and quickly explained with a theological explanation.

Thirdly, of course, I think what we must note, total systems like this lead to totalitarian regimes. This kind of theology that is rooted in ideas of dispensationalism in which everything happens for a reason, a God of Explanation, is also in itself a totalitarian regime, which lends itself very easily to the notion of Christian Zionism which calls for a violent state to basically snuff out any dissent.

There are also mythical explanations to this and therefore theological categories like perhaps election, as I will look at, are quickly moved into social categories. Therefore, the Jews were the chosen people of God, a mythical explanation that must be read in a particular way in scripture, quickly moves into a social category that we must now have the nation of Israel that exists.

Secondly, what we have is this becoming an explanation or a shorthand for colonialism. Colonialism is justified by the same thing that God has elected or selected a certain group of people to carry out a divine mission in the world, so to speak. This becomes a justification for colonialism. You will find that many Indian Christians actually, and particularly Dalit Christians, would lend themselves or lean towards a great love of missionaries and missionary activity because they believe that the missionary brought them salvation.

The actual history is far more complicated. Of course, there is no doubt that with colonialism and Christian activity, the breakdown of the caste system also began to occur, and conversion allowed for a certain social mobility of Dalits and it's really complex, but this has also been set in the Indian Christian Dalit mindset that colonialism was actually a good thing, it offered opportunity. In as much as American theology has invaded into Indian spaces, this has also become a shorthand for American exceptionalism. So, the Christian project is seen to also not only support Israel, but also support Christian nationalism as it exists in the USA.

For example, it's not unusual to find Indian Christians mourning the fact that prayer is no longer allowed in American schools or Indian Christians being very strong supporters of Trump. This is a little bit of a mind-bend because on the one hand Indian Christians are not supporters of Hindu nationalism in India but are very supportive of Christian nationalism in America. They don't want India to be a Hindu nation, but they very much want the USA to be a Christian nation and see it carrying out the will of God.

In the midst of this is the whole idea of election theology, that God has chosen a certain group of people to carry out God's divine will here on Earth. This is something that we have to also consider. What are these theologies of election and how do they play out within the context of India, and asking the question, who is being elected and for what?

Theologically moving forward

In the closing, I want to offer now within this context three things on theologically moving forward. Firstly to consider the ambiguous promise of and to Abraham. In Judaism, Abraham has a very large place as being the founder or the father of the faith, so to speak. Yet, there is a problematic promise to Abraham in Christianity. We link to Abraham not genetically, but rather as sons and daughters of Abraham in faith, and this connects then to Christian Dalits and the question of election. Christian Dalits in the context of being oppressed within the context of India link their faiths to Abraham, see themselves as the elected ones, and particularly this makes sense because they were the ones who were always rejected within the context of India and therefore hold onto Abraham to claim a certain sense of presence, a superiority within a caste system, which is completely different from other questions in other places.

Connected to this then in Dalits' theology in particular, we find the ambiguous promise of the Exodus. In Dalits theology, the Exodus is held onto very easily and quickly as the epitome of liberation theology. Dalits in India have been not only quickly able to associate themselves with Abraham as the chosen one, but also see themselves in the experience of the Hebrew slaves and their liberation from Pharaoh. But this is problematic. This easy equation between Christian Dalits' experience and the experience of Abraham or the Hebrew slaves is very difficult because one must ask the question: Why don't Dalits in India see a commonality of experience in the context of Abraham with Hagar and in the context of the Exodus with the Canaanites? That seems to be far closer an experience than to these other examples that I have shown, and this is something that we need to look at.

Hagar/Hajira as a model

The question that I would like to explore is: Does Hagar, or Hajira as she is known in Islamic traditions, actually offer us a model of moving forward? Hagar plays very little role within Christian theology. We are so quick to move to Sarah that we forget who Hagar is. So, who is Hagar in the Bible? We know that she is an immigrant, she is a slave, she is not part of the national agenda, and she comes outside of faith, and she is seen as the one through whom Abraham tries

his own means of salvation rather than trusting in God. In a way, it's the Eve's story being retold, the temptress, but in slightly different format.

However, the story brings us into tension, the question between election and justice. The God we believe in is the God who chooses, but we hold on that God is on the side of the oppressed. But in the Hagar question when it comes to God's election between a God who is on the side of the oppressed and the God who chooses seems to win over the God of justice, so to speak.

Therefore, Phyllis Tribble in her particular work says this about Hagar. This resonates very much with Christian Dalit experience. Hagar experiences Exodus without liberation, revelation without salvation, wilderness without covenant, wandering without land, promise without fulfillment, and unmerited exile without return. This seems to be the experience of Dalits as well. So then, how do we work with this question of Christian Zionism?

Hajira is important for our thinking of Christians Zionism because we find that she, at least in the first section, is left by Abraham, but she is protected by God. She becomes, in Islamic theology, a pioneer of a new civilization, but not a victim. In the Islamic experience, which I believe is something that we can learn from, Hajira, when they go on visit to Mecca and Medina, they run between these two mountains reliving the experience of Hagar in the wilderness, because unlike Christian or perhaps even particularly a Zionist thinking, the idea of nation and land-owning is not important, but rather God is drawn towards the alien, the wanderer, those who run between the two spaces, and this is the Christian Dalit experience, that we are the alien, we are the wanderer, we are the ones without land. This makes much more sense for us within the context of Christian Zionism to link to this and perhaps therefore look at the whole question of Jewish nationalism from this particular question.

Towards a new Indian theology for Palestinian Liberation

Perhaps what we need to dismantle Christian Zionism is a new Indian theology for Palestinian liberation. I offer three possibilities. One, a dialogue outside the logic of power, that is to say we acknowledge a vulnerability and begin to dialogue from this perspective. Secondly, dialogue within the logic of hope. We hope for a new world, we hope for a new alternative that does not rely on this God of Explanations, but imagines an alternative reality where there can be justice for people. Thirdly, dialogue with possibilities of bringing together new alliances for a new world. I would actually like to posit that within the context of India and the political situation as is developing in India now, the real partners for moving forward for a new world in India are not the Hindutva who supports Zionism, but rather it is with the Palestinians. Therefore, I would actually argue that Palestine as it exists today, though we don't want it to exist forever in this particular manner, brings together a model of Christians and Muslims working together for liberation, for an alternative society. It offers the possibilities of Jews, Muslims, and Christians working together for a new society in which there is justice for all, which gives us a model for Indian Dalits to actually look at the question of what kind of India we want to forge.

5

Christian Zionists in East Asia – A Theological Background

Focusing on their Perspective toward Dispensationalism

Megumi Ishiida

Introduction

There is a rising trend in Christian Zionism in the United States, especially since 9/11.¹ Stephen Sizer states that although Christian Zionism originated in the 19th century British premillennial sectarianism, it became a predominantly American dispensational movement in the early 20th Century.²

Dispensationalism is a premillennial theory advocated by the former Irish Church pastor John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) in the 1830s.³ This idea lends importance to the Jews' return to Palestine in the timeline toward the end times. It is often pointed out that dispensationalism defends Zionism and is the theological basis of Christian Zionism.

Some, like Robert O. Smith, point out that Christian Zionist motives are not limited to apocalyptic ones.⁴ However, this often criticized basis of Christian Zionism is dispensationalism.⁵ The author thinks that Christian Zionism was not spawned by dispensationalism or eschatology, but

1 Donald E. Wagner, "The Alliance between Fundamentalist Christians and the Pro-Israel Lobby: Christian Zionism in US Middle East Policy," *Holy Land Studies* 2.2 (2004), 163-187, 163.

2 Stephen R. Sizer, "The Promised Land: A Critical Investigation of Evangelical Christian Zionism in Britain and the United States of America since 1800," (PhD diss. Middlesex University and Oak Hill Theological College, 2002), 305-306.

3 John Hubers, "Christian Zionism: A Historical Analysis and Critique." Paper submitted to the RCA General Synod, 2004, 1-21, 6. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/11026498/Christian_Zionism_An_Historical_Analysis_and_Critique. (Accessed on 21 January 2019.)

4 Gary Burge. (trans. Seon Suk Lee) *Jesus and the Land: The New Testament Challenge to "Holy Land" Theology*, Se-mul-gyeol-plus, 2020, 233-234; See also, Smith, Robert O., "Christian Zionism: It Challenges Our Lutheran Commitments," *The Lutheran* 164 (2009), 1.

5 Stephen R. Sizer, *op cit.*, 306-307.

rather it reinforced or even provided the basis for dispensationalism, ultra-literal and the futurist reading of the Bible.

Since the 1990s, Christian Zionism has expanded its influence in East Asia, but with little relation to dispensationalism. Furthermore, Christian Zionism in each region has different characteristics and is not necessarily concentrated solely on apocalyptic motivation. This paper provides an overview of the relationship between Christian Zionism, dispensationalism, and eschatology, by using China, South Korea and Japan as examples.

The text also refers to Messianic Judaism. Since the 1970s, the number of Jewish believers has increased, especially in English-speaking countries, and many started using the term “Messianic Jew” to emphasize their Jewish identity.⁶ Christian Zionism and Messianic Judaism have their pro-Zionism ideologies in common; however, Daniel Juster, the author of *Jewish Roots*, stated, “Some do not understand that even non-dispensationalists can believe in God’s covenant with Israel.” He also emphasized that there are differences between the two.⁷ For example, in contrast to dispensationalism, that emphasizes the difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament eras, Messianic Judaism stresses biblical continuity, claiming that the people of Israel have been consistently the people of God and insists the “saved Jews” should continue to be Jewish even though they are part of the church.⁸ Therefore, the two movements should be distinguished, as many Messianic Jews do not identify themselves as dispensationalists.

1. Christian Zionism in Chinese Speaking Region

1.1. Historical Development

There are two main trends of Christian Zionism in the Chinese speaking region. The first one is a movement called Back to Jerusalem (BTJ), that aims to preach the gospel to the “region from China to Israel,” especially to the Islamic world.⁹ This movement began not because of theology, but because they received a calling in prayer.¹⁰ BTJ gained momentum in the 1940s but almost disappeared in the Cultural Revolution.¹¹ However, the vision was inherited by Zhen-ying Liu (Brother Yun). According to Jian-guang Chen, this movement was started by Chinese churches but supported by overseas missionary organizations.¹²

6 David Rudolph and Joel Willitts, *Introduction to Messianic Judaism: It's Ecclesial Context and Biblical Foundations*, (Zondervan, 2013), 31-33.

7 Daniel Juster. (trans. Kazuhito Yukizawa) *Jewish Roots* (Malkoushu Publication, 2004), 32.

8 *Ibid.*, 101-102.

9 Brother Yun. (trans. Megumu Hanaya) *The Heavenly Man* (Malkoushu Publication, 2009), 287-297.

10 Chi-huei Huang, “‘Jump to Jerusalem’: The new back to Jerusalem movement of the Chinese Christian world, 2000-2010,” (PhD diss. Fuller Theological Seminary, 2011), 17-24.

11 Jian-guang Chen (陈剑光), (trans. Yuan Yang), 「中国大陆基督徒团体的宣教运动：“福音传回耶路撒冷”运动」『基督教学术』9, 2011, 159-183.

12 Jian-guang Chen, *op cit.*, 162.

The second trend is strongly influenced by the Pentecostals and has been active since 2000,¹³ and focuses on “Israel.”¹⁴ According to Chi-Huei Huang, the movement has revolved around Chinese leaders who received a vision at the Jerusalem House of Prayer for All Nations conference in Israel led by Tom Hess.¹⁵ Kainei A. T. Mori also pointed out that the ideas of The Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), a global evangelical Jewish missionary network, have spread among Chinese churches since the early 1990s, and have been strongly supported since the beginning of 2000.¹⁶ The following provides an overview of the developments of the movements by region.

(1) Mainland China

Information about BTJ is mainly disseminated by Chinese immigrants abroad,¹⁷ under the prominence of Brother Yun, who has been active in BTJ’s missionary work since he left China in 1997.¹⁸ However, there are several unclear points about the actual situation of BTJ. Tobias Brandner describes BTJ as a minority movement,¹⁹ while Luther Martin, Eugene Bach, and David Aikman believe that its vision is shared by almost every underground church in China.²⁰

Originally, BTJ’s interest was in the Islamic region. “Many Chinese love Israel, but missions to the Islamic world are also important, as they are also in desperate need of love and the gospel,” according to Brother Yun.²¹ However, recent years has seen an increasing interest in Israel among Chinese Christians. The ICEJ rally in Jerusalem in 2004 was attended by nearly 1,000 Chinese from over 10 organizations, consisting of all Christians who loved Israel and prayed for peace in Jerusalem.²² Thus, this may point to the transformation of BTJ into an Israel restoration movement.²³

13 Chi-huei Huang, *op cit.*, 42.

14 *Ibid.*, 148.

15 *Ibid.*, 42-44.

16 Kainei A. T. Mori, 『華人系プロテスタント教会』研究の手掛り: 『世界華人福音運動』を通して, *Asia & Religious Plurality* 10 (2012), 19-36, 32.

17 Jian-guang Chen, *op cit.*, 170.

18 Brother Yun, *op cit.*, 297.

19 Tobias Brandner, “Mission, Millennium, and Politics: A Continuation of the History of Salvation - from the East,” *Missiology: An International Review* 47/3 (2009), 317-332, 328.

20 Brother Zhu ed., *Back to Jerusalem of the East: The Underground House Church of North Korea* (Fifth Estate, 2011), 108. David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Regnery Publishing, 2006), 196.

21 Brad TV, “예루살렘을 향한 중국의 부르심,” March 29, 2017, <https://bradtv.net/archives/3935> (last visited December 29, 2021). See also, David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Regnery Publishing, 2006), 202.

22 *Ibid.*

23 Pil-chan Lee (이필찬), 『백투예루살렘 운동, 무엇이 문제인가: 한국 교회 속의 왜곡된 종말 사상과 선교 운동』 (Holy Wave Plus, 2016); I-cheol Jeong(정이철), 『신사도 운동에 빠진 교회: 한국교회 속의 뒤틀린 성령운동』 (Holy Wave Plus, 2012), 21-22.

(2) Hong Kong

The first Christian Zionist organization, founded in Hong Kong in the early 1990s, was a branch of the British Jewish missionary organization, Christian Witness to Israel (CWI).²⁴ According to Sizer, CWI's theology is covenantal premillennial and not dispensational.²⁵

Since the 1930s, the American Jewish missionary organization Chosen People Ministries (CPM) has maintained a friendly relationship with the Hephzibah Evangelistic Center (喜樂福音堂), a non-denominational church in Hong Kong.²⁶ However, the CPM's Hong Kong branch was established only in 2007,²⁷ reflecting the growing interest in Israel and the Jews in Hong Kong since 2000.²⁸

(3) Taiwan

CWI is also regarded as the earliest Christian Zionist organization in Taiwan. Taiwan's first Jewish missionary, I-ming Lan (藍逸明), joined CWI in 1996 and engaged in Jewish missions.²⁹ In 1998, a small group of CWI supporters started their activities in Taiwan.³⁰

In 2000, a Taiwanese Christian Zionist group was also established.³¹ The Taiwan branch of the Keren Hayesod-UIA, an international organization supporting Jews, was established in 2012 and also an ICEJ branch in 2013. The Taiwan Holocaust Peace Memorial Hall was founded in 2002. Its founder, Chih-an Chuo, is a Presbyterian pastor who studied with Takeji Otsuki at the Holy Ecclesia of Japan's Logos Theological Academy.³²

1.2. Ethnic Solidarity of Chinese (Hua-ren) and Jews

Taiwanese pastor Ji-si (Nicole) says that because the Chinese helped the Jews during World War II, the Chinese descendants (華人Hua-ren) have a commission to fulfil in the end of time. Nicole stresses that Chinese, regardless of where they live, have unified identity and destiny. She cites "the land of Sinim" (Isaiah 49:12) as the Biblical basis, but also states that the vision was

24 Rong-yao-shi-gong (榮耀事工), *Rong-yao-shi-gong* (『榮耀事工』) 2010, 1.

25 Stephen R. Sizer, *op cit.*, 95.

26 Xuan-min-shi-gong-cha-hui (選民事工差會) 「歷史, 信仰宣言」, <https://chosenpeople.org.hk/歷史、信仰宣言/> (last visited December 29, 2021).

27 *Ibid.*

28 God's Glory Ministry (榮耀事工) was established by Gloria Mok (莫莊雅) in 2002. Also, a media ministry, Kingdom Ministries (國度事奉中心) was started by Andrew Ho (何寶生) in 2004.

29 Tai-pei-lin-sen-nan-lu-li-pai-tang (台北林森南路禮拜堂) 『宣教報報』, July 2013, 1, http://www.linnan.org.tw/sites/default/files/download_files/2013年七月.pdf (last visited December 29, 2021).

30 Ming-hsien Tsai (蔡明憲), 「CWI台北小組 為猶太人信主禱告15年」 『基督教論壇報』, November 26, 2013, <https://www.ct.org.tw/1240497> (last visited July 7, 2020).

31 Chi-huei Huang, *op cit.*, 46.

32 Chin-ni Chen (陳衿妮), 「主盡忠的僕人 卓枝安牧師安息主懷」 基督教今日報, May 8, 2017, <https://cdn-news.org/news/11135> (last visited December 29, 2021).

“revealed in prayer.” According to her, Hua-ren have a commission both for Jews and Arabs. This mission was derived from her experience at the Homecoming conference, rather than being based on theology or the Bible.³³

2. Christian Zionism in Japan

2.1. Historical Development

Since the 1920s, Christian Zionism in Japan has been promoted by (1) some non-church movements, and (2) the Japanese Holiness Church leader Juji Nakada (1870-1939).³⁴ Both these trends were influenced by dispensationalism.³⁵ In his later years, Nakada strengthened his understanding of Israel in an apocalyptic context, and in 1933, his Church was divided into the Kiyome Church, led by him, and the Japan Seikyokai Church, led by others.³⁶

After World War II, (1) Ikuro Teshima (1910-1973), who belonged to the non-church movement, founded a congregation in 1965, now called the Original Gospel Movement or Makuya of Christ.³⁷ On the other hand, (2) Takeji Otsuki (1906-2004), a follower of Nakada, also established the Holy Ecclesia in 1946.

In the 1990s, Christian Zionism gained momentum when Jewish believers introduced Messianic Judaism to Japan. In 1993, Kenji Uchiyama, a deacon of a Messianic congregation in the United States, returned to Japan temporarily and met Takashi Yokoyama, who found salvation at the Holiness Church. In the same year, they established the Japan Messianic Fellowship (JMF), that invited several Messianic Jewish teachers to Japan for about a decade.³⁸

During this period, the Japanese branches of international Christian Zionist organizations were also established by people who were associated with Nakada's movement. In 1994, Ken-ichi Nakagawa and others established the LCJE Japan chapter, and in 1996³⁹, Eiko Stevens, a tour guide in Israel, and others established the Bridges for Peace (B.F.P.) Japan.⁴⁰

33 Nicole (紀思), 『末世華人命定：從宏觀歷史看神榮耀的拉選』以琳書房, 2019. <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/情猶獨鍾/ep46-從秦國來的人華人的角色-ftnicole牧師-JcQ4MpNixen/?t=1215> (last visited December 27, 2021)

34 Yoshihiro Yakushige (役重善洋), 『近代日本の植民地主義とジェンタイル・シオニズム—内村鑑三・矢内原忠雄・中田重治におけるナショナリズムと世界認識』, Impact Shuppankai, 2018; David G. Goodman, Masanori Miyazawa. *Jews in the Japanese mind: the history and uses of a cultural stereotype* (Kodansha, 1999), 85-103.

35 Yoshihiro Yakushige, *op cit.*, 170-199.

36 Megumi Ishiida (石井田恵), “Juji Nakada's Idea about the Relationship Between Japanese and Jews: A Consideration of the Case of Christian Zionism,” *The World of Monotheistic Religions* 10, 2019, 58-77.

37 Mark R. Mullins (trans. Megumi Takasaki), *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*, (Transview, 2005), 167.

38 The newsletter published by JMF introduces the activities.

39 It is said that Ken-ichi Nakagawa, who is the representative of the Japanese missionary organization, Harvest Time Ministries, have been saved in a former Holiness church.

40 Atsumi Takada, who belonged to the former Holiness church, became the representative of B.F.P. Japan.

Since the 2000s, Pentecostal Churches have become actively involved in the movement. In 2006, Tom Hess' Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Nations held the first prayer festival in Japan, that helped spread Christian Zionism among Japanese Pentecostals.⁴¹ In 2019, an Israeli Messianic Jew was invited as the main speaker of the Japan Pentecostal Fellowship Conference, the largest national annual conference of Pentecostal leaders.⁴² This event exemplifies the growing interest in Messianic Jews. In 2020, a leader of another Messianic Jewish Congregation in Israel was invited as a speaker at the same conference.

Thus, early Christian Zionism in Japan was influenced by dispensationalism. However, after Messianic Judaism was introduced to Japan in the 1990s, the movement expanded among the Pentecostals, and after 2000, Messianic Judaism gained as much influence as dispensationalism.

2.2. Cooperation Between Organizations, Interest in Ethnic Origin

There is a cooperative relationship between Christian Zionist organizations with different theological positions, such as dispensationalism and Messianic Judaism. While the B.F.P. Japan and the LCJE Japan have a strong dispensational tendency, A Bridge between Zion and Japan, and the Joy of Zion (now Revive Israel Tikkun Global Japan) support Messianic Jewish organizations. However, they mutually posted advertisements and articles for their publications.

The B.F.P. Japan's magazine, *Olive Life*, featured discussions with the representatives of LCJE Japan, A Bridge between Zion and Japan, and the Joy of Zion. Each organization's characteristics and activities, and the prospect of cooperation were reported over six pages. It also mentions the importance of "praying in unison rather than a theological approach."⁴³

Also, some organizations advocate the Japanese-Jewish common ancestry theory. Although this is not connected with Christian Zionism, believers in this theory often attend meetings of Christian Zionist groups.⁴⁴ They, however, seem more interested in their "roots" than the apocalypse. To sum up, it seems that Japanese Christian Zionism is underpinned by ambiguous aspirations, interests, and admirations for the Jews, rather than by theological ideas or beliefs.

3. Christian Zionism in South Korea

3.1. Historical Development

Before World War II, the influence of dispensationalism was strongly seen in Christianity in Korea. The missionary organization InterCP, established in 1983, is often counted as a Christian Zionist organization. They follow the flow of the BTJ, a movement that started in China, that

41 A Bridge Between Zion and Japan. *News From Zion*, December 2006, 12.

42 LCJE Japan, *LCJE NEWS*, March 2019, 4.

43 B.F.P. Japan, *Olive Life*, April 2008.

44 The Bible Japan (聖書と日本フォーラム) is an organization that advocates the Japanese-Jewish Common ancestry theory. The Bible Japan, "Brochure," <http://biblejapan.info/about/brochure/> (last visited December 29, 2021).

preaches the gospel – from China to Israel.⁴⁵ However, many Christian Zionists in Korea do not regard InterCP as an affiliate organization because they stress Arab evangelism.

Then in the early 1990s, Han-sa-lang Seon-gyo-hoe (한사랑 선교회) introduced Messianic Judaism to South Korea, and in September 1990, and invited American Messianic Jew Michael Brown.⁴⁶ The Onnuri Community Church (온누리 교회) also set up an Israel Mission (later known as the Korea Israel Bible Institute :KIBI) in 1992.⁴⁷

Since 2000, the Korean branch of the Derek Prince Ministries and the Korean Israel Mission (KIM) have been established.⁴⁸ Then, in 2009, a documentary film on Messianic Jews, *Restoration*, directed by Jong-cheol Kim, was released in a regular movie theater, raising the Christian interest in Israel and Messianic Judaism.

In addition, since 2014, Jin-seop Kim, former vice president of Baek-seok University Seoul Campus, Yeon-ho Jeong, vice president of University of the Holy Land, and Hyeok-seung Kwon, former vice president of Seoul Theological University, advocated “Israel Theology,” that attempts to reinterpret the Bible in light of Israel. Their aim of building a new theology based on the Bible rather than accepting Western dispensational theology, is noteworthy.⁴⁹

In recent years, the Korean branch of international Christian Zionist organizations and Messianic Jewish organizations, such as CPM, IFCJ, CWI, LCJE, Revive Israel, and B.F.P., have also been established.⁵⁰

As outlined above, dispensational theology was introduced in South Korea before the World War II, but only in the 1980s, organizations that followed the BTJ in China began their activities. After the 1990s, organizations supporting Messianic Judaism and Christian Zionism were established consecutively. And since 2010, those movements have expanded rapidly. However, no major group advocates dispensationalism.

45 Paul Choe, the head of InterCP, finds apocalyptic implications for Israel's recovery.

Paul Choi (최바울) 『시대의 표적』 (도서출판 퍼네기, 2007), 42.

Paul Choi (최바울) 『왕의 대로』 (도서출판 퍼네기, 2009), 263-265, 294-296.

Paul Choi (최바울) 『왕의 나라』 (도서출판 퍼네기, 2011), 13-14, 162.

46 Han-sa-lang-seon-gyo-hoe-tss-han-sa-lang-me-si-a-nig-sin-hag-won (한사랑선교회&한사랑메시아니신학원) 「신학원 안내 연혁」 March 16, 2012, <http://cafe.daum.net/Yeshua/17S/4> (last visited December 29, 2021)

47 「내 백성을 위로하라」 On-nu-li-sin-mun(온누리신문), January 31, 2016, http://news.onnuri.org/m/board/board_view.php?Mode=I&BoardID=10&ViewType=T&page=1&BoardSeqNo=15020&pagesize=undefined&SortOrder=Asc&mnuBookNumber=0 (last visited December 29, 2021)

48 Cheol-huan Jo (조철환) 「하나님의 약병」 데릭프린스선교회 한국지부, 2013 <http://cafe.daum.net/derekprince/Ovuc/7> (last visited December 29, 2021)

Hyang-suk Lee (이향숙) 『하나님 마음으로 배우는 이스라엘』 (KIM출판사, 2017), 61-3.

49 『제1회 이스라엘 신학포럼 자료집』 Israel Theology Forum Committee (이스라엘 신학포럼 위원회), 2014, 4.

50 IFCJ Korea 「한국 IFCJ란?」 http://www.ifcj.kr/?page_id=861 (last visited December 29, 2021)

Brad TV 「브래드쇼 257회 “성경과 이스라엘 과거, 현재 그리고 미래”- 정태권 목사」 August 7, 2019, <https://bradt.net/archives/4296> (last visited December 29, 2021)

3.2. “Unification of Korean Peninsular” and “Avoidance of Dispensationalism”

Korean Christian Zionists treat political issues within South Korea, especially the unification of the Korean Peninsula, as subjects related to the restoration of Israel. For example, Israel Ministries Network states, “By devoting the Korean church to the restoration of Israel, the north and south will be unified by the gospel, and the gospel will be brought to Israel together, and the evangelization of Israel will be completed.”⁵¹ The Esther Prayer Movement, represented by Yonghui Lee, also has a vision of unifying the Korean Peninsula with restoration of Israel.⁵²

Also, it is noteworthy that Korean Christian Zionists distance themselves from dispensationalism. As mentioned earlier, in South Korea, the people involved in the Christian Zionist movement do not publicly advocate dispensationalism. It may be related to the fact that dispensationalism is used as a framework to criticize Christian Zionism in South Korea.

The BTJ and Messianic Judaism have different roots and characteristics from dispensationalism, but they are often scrutinized as a part of the latter. For instance, an early study of Korean Christian Zionism by Sung-Gun Kim and Jin-gu Lee regarded the InterCP as a “representative” of Christian Zionist organizations in Korea and argued that it was influenced by premillennialism and dispensationalism.⁵³ I-cheol Jeong covered organizations other than InterCP, but generally his arguments were based on the assumption that Christian Zionism was dispensationalism.⁵⁴ Furthermore, although Heui-gwon Kim showed some understanding of the “Israel Theological Forum,” he did not distinguish it from dispensationalism as well.⁵⁵

Pil-chan Lee noted that Daniel Juster, author of *Jewish Roots*, differentiated Messianic Judaism from dispensationalism, but concluded that the former was a form of the latter with only a different emphasis.⁵⁶ Gong-seok Ryu, although he was critical of Christian Zionism, admits that

51 On Israel 91, “이스라엘학교 멘데이트 5강 교회와 이스라엘 (임도현 목사/벤엘교회) 2018.11.07,” YouTube, December 7, 2018, <https://youtu.be/rnkYi3RANTQ> (last visited December 29, 2021).

52 Brad TV, “[Brad TV] BradShow 35회. “북한과 이스라엘, 이슬람 국가를 위해 기도하자” - 이용희 교수,” YouTube, April 22, 2015, <https://youtu.be/HLYKuEkg5aM> (last visited December 29, 2021).

53 Sung-Gun Kim, “Korean Christian Zionism: A Sociological Study of Mission,” *International Review of Mission* 100(1), Oxford University Press, 2011, 85-95; Jin-gu Lee (이진구), 「한국 개신교 해외선교에 나타난 종교적 군사주의: 백투예루살렘 운동을 중심으로」 『종교문화비평』 20, 2011, 261-295, 264.

54 Chapter 11 of the book deals with KIBI, and Chapter 12 deals with Inter CP. I-cheol Jeong, *op cit.*, 345; Deok-man Bae and In-yeop Lee also claim that the theological background of Christian Zionism is the dispensational premillennialism, which needs to be revised. Deok-man Bae (배덕만), 「한국교회의 친 유대주의, 어떻게 이해할 것인가?」 『기독교사상』 2014, 52-58, 53; In-yeop Lee (이인엽), 「세대주의와 기독교 시오니즘, 그리고 친이스라엘 정책」 *NEWS&JOY*, (July 20, 2014), <http://www.newsjoy.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=197164> (last visited December 29, 2021)

55 Heui-gwon Kim (김회권), 「벤자민 네탄야후의 유사신학적 정치수사와 세대주의의 위험한 공생의선교학적 함의 분석」 『신학과 실천』 68, 2020, 583-618, 610.

56 Pil-chan Lee states that Back to Jerusalem is interested in Islamic missions and the Messianic movement is interested in restoring Jewish roots. He also points out that KIBI is similar to the Messianic movement, and that InterCP is characterized by a peace movement and aggressive missions. Pil-chan Lee, *op cit.*, 229-231.

equating it with dispensationalism was incorrect.⁵⁷ However, such an understanding is seemingly not dominant.

Conclusion

In all of the regions covered in this paper, we have seen that some factors have had nothing to do with dispensationalism. Therefore, it can be deduced that, at least in this region, dispensationalism is not the main source of Christian Zionism, but rather interest in Jews and Israel promotes dispensationalism and literalism. The belief that what is written in the Bible is substantiated by Israel's "past" and "present" seemed to support the faith of Christian Zionists and strengthen their hope in the "future."

Also, it was pointed out that Christian Zionism in each region has different characteristics. In the Chinese context, it was linked to the special calling of Chinese people around the world. In the South Korean context, the unification of the Korean Peninsula was emphasized. In Japan, some were interested in their ancient roots. It can thus be pointed out that Christian Zionism is not just an abstract, theological concept or idea, but it is closely related to their identity or "present" life.

However, it seems inappropriate to understand it as a pure political movement, because from a political point of view, their interests of present life have almost no connection with Israeli politics. On the contrary, it is also true that Christian Zionists should be aware of their impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recently, some Christian Zionist organizations have turned their attention to the Arabs. I hope more Christian Zionists pay attention to them and play an important role as real peacemakers.

57 Gong-seok Ryu (류공석), 「기독교 시온주의 이스라엘 회복운동의 문제점과 대안」 『KMQ』 13/3 (2014) 40-51, 44.

Part Three

Challenging Religious Nationalism and Political Utilization of Religion

6

Christian Zionism as a Challenge to the Emergence of a Shared Universal Commitment to Global Justice

Chandra Muzaffar

Peace be with you. I'd like to thank the organizers for their very kind invitation and commend them for organizing this webinar.

There is no doubt that one of the greatest challenges facing us today is the fostering of global solidarity in the struggle for global justice. This has come to the fore as a result of the COVID-19 catastrophe. In its midst, we've begun to realize that there is no way one can save lives, restore normalcy, or fight for justice without all human beings and all human communities working together. That is the prerequisite for our very survival as a people.

We have been reminded of the need for global solidarity in other circumstances, but the COVID crisis has hit us as no other. We have been reminded of the need for solidarity over climate change because that involves our very survival as a species. We have been reminded of the need for global solidarity in the face of the threat of nuclear weapons. But COVID-19 has revealed all our weaknesses and our strengths as a people in facing great calamities together.

With this backdrop I'd like to suggest, dear friends, that we cannot have global solidarity, we cannot work together, and we cannot cooperate, as long as we have ideologies and belief systems like Christian Zionism. We have to understand this threat in the context of global solidarity and the struggle for global justice. How can people come together, how can they fight for a common cause when you have something like Christian Zionism that has serious implications in every way? I'll just highlight a few.

Christian Zionism divides Christians. It separates those who adopt a certain interpretation or certain theological aspects of the religion linked to the purported return of the Messiah, of Christ. The implications of this entail what it will lead to, and how it would impact people worldwide. But basically, it says very clearly that the blessed are those who accept a certain view of the return of the Christ. The others are damned within the Christian community.

Christian Zionism also argues that the return of Christ will eventually lead to the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, that must certainly trouble many Jews. It is demeaning and degrading to the Jewish nation, that they would have to yield their faith to facilitate a major event that Christian theology – or at least some of aspects Christian theology – upholds, and that it is only possible with the conversion of Jews.

Christian Zionism also believes it is the bearer and the champion of Christianity. It believes in its triumph over Muslims, especially in West Asia; and that the Muslims will surrender to it. There will be a profound change, a transformation, in religious terms, in terms of adherence to faith as a result of the return of Christ, and that is the triumph of Christian Zionism.

Christian Zionism is deeply intertwined with power and wealth. It views the situation where both Muslims and Christians live together, as societies that will bring about the kind of change that Christian Zionism wants to see.

Malaysia is an example of where you have Muslims and Christians living side by side. You will thus find, in many writings about Christian Zionism, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, that the Christian minority – especially the Chinese Christian minority – will have to bring about a change in the religious equation within Malaysia, and they will become the bridgehead linking overseas Chinese Christians, or those of Christian Zionist persuasion, with Christians in China. This will eventually lead to the transformation of China, thus making it the world's most significant Christian nation.

If you want to explore these issues in greater depth than what I will be able to present here, you should look at the writings of a brilliant scholar who has worked on this issue for a while. Iain Buchanan, a British academic, has shown the role of Christian Zionism and evangelicalism in global politics [and] foreign policy in his book called *The Armies of God*. Another book called *Sang Nila Utama and the Lion of Judah*, that is more specific to Malaysia and Singapore, delves into what has been happening – a lot of it hidden from the public view – in relation to Christian Zionism and its impact on society.

Thus, you have this phenomenon that deeply affects the relations between religious communities in Malaysia and in Southeast Asia; and you have the situation presented by Christian Zionism that has a devastating impact upon the religious landscape of the region and of China. Given that China is the rising power, can you imagine the impact upon global politics and the global economy?

Friends, fortunately, if we look at what Christian Zionists have been saying in their writings about the region, and about China, you get the impression that they are totally off the mark, because there is no way that Christianity or Christian Zionism is going to dominate China. If one considers their vigilance and alertness, the Chinese government is very much aware of what is happening, and they are very proactive in responding to this challenge.

You also find this in Malaysia and Singapore. In Malaysia, Chinese Christians are a minority; a minority within the minority. Though you have quite a few followers of Christian Zionism, one must also acknowledge that they've not had a big impact. In Singapore, the impact is apparent; however, you also have a government that is again very alert and very much aware of the challenge that this sort of thinking poses to multi-religious regions.

So, I don't think these movements are as great a threat as they are made out to be. However, we must be alert, we must respond, we must tell the truth about the situation; and this has to be done by Christians themselves. You must be very much aware that Christian Zionism is a trend within Christianity, more prominent than any other trend in recent decades, and has evoked a strong response from other Christians. There are many Christians who do not agree with what the Christian Zionists stand for and what they are preaching and take very public stances against the group. Now, that has to continue and reach a higher level. It has to become more organized and more dynamic. It has to confront this challenge, especially in multi-religious societies.

Several of their activities are very subtle, and in multi-religious societies, these are done in a very surreptitious manner; therefore, it is so important for people to drag them out into the open and question and challenge them in a democratic, peaceful manner. This is where I think we are lacking. We would encourage more and more of our Christian brothers and sisters to publicly stand up to this challenge.

I would argue that people of other faiths also have to confront the demons within our own religious communities. It is not just Christian Zionists who have become a divisive force. That's the topic we are focused on now, but this is happening worldwide.

Amongst Hindus, you've got the Hindutva movement. You have very extreme positions taken by Hindus, and I'm sure you'll hear a little more about this later. A lot has been written and will continue to be written about this.

In case of the Buddhists, especially what's happening in Myanmar/Burma, you have a trend developing within Buddhism that defies it, and challenges its very essence. It is growing, and it has got support, with links to the military and the religious order in Myanmar. Now, that has to be confronted.

We have to confront the narrow, bigoted thinking within Judaism that demeans other human beings and people of other faiths, and lends support to some of the most extreme rightist positions adopted by Jewish groups within and without Israel. That is also a major challenge.

And we face challenges within the Muslim world. You have Muslims who not only resort to violence to perpetuate their position, [but also] have taken very bigoted positions in the name of their religion, and who are very exclusive and tend to distort the essence of Islam, its universalism, and its oneness. They try to project the religion in a manner that suits the narrow-minded elements, whether it's Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State. These are some of the more obvious groups,

but there are many other groups lurking beneath the surface. They pose a challenge not just to the non-Muslims, but also to members of the faith, because they are attempting to hijack the religion. In some instances, they have succeeded in this goal.

Therefore, a period of struggle awaits all of us. Not just Christians, who have to deal with Christian Zionism and other similar groups that manifest a tremendous injustice to Christianity, but you have these in all the other religious communities. In fact, it is a phenomenon of our times. The distortion, the perversion, and the vilification in a sense, of our own religions.

And we have to stand up. We have to be counted. We have to confront. We have to challenge. We have to show people the essence of our faith. And you cannot wait. It is something you cannot postpone. Because every moment that is sacrificed because of one's fear, because one is not willing to stand up because of what it may lead to, the repercussions... every minute, every moment is a betrayal of the truth of our respective religions. Moreover, we are sacrificing the future. We are sacrificing our children, grandchildren, their children. In fact, we are complicit in a vile, vicious attempt to usurp faith and to give it a meaning, that is a betrayal of all that the faith has stood for over the last many thousands of years.

Excerpts from the discussion

Thank you Dr. Iyas Salim for your question about Northeast Asia and how one would read Christian Zionism and the politics of that region. My brief answer would be as follows.

The whole question of Taiwan as part of the politics of Northeast Asia is significant because I see the U.S. moves vis-à-vis Taiwan as part of the larger scheme of containing China. As far as Taiwan is concerned, it has now reached a different level, partly because I think the U.S. fears that it has not been possible to stop China, and to curb it in other ways. The Uyghur issue, the issue of Hong Kong, various issues pertaining to trade... they are all connected with curbing China. And of course, the very important issues pertaining to digitization and new technologies. We do know that all those things are still on the agenda, but in addition, the U.S. and its allies have decided to move vigorously against China on the question of Taiwan. And the military relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan has provided a handle to the U.S. for this purpose.

Now, I see that as the larger picture; I do not think that Christian Zionist activities in Taiwan – and they are actually in Taiwan, as some of us here know – overshadow the other concerns, including the concern about China. The concern about China remains pivotal, it remains central, but within the context of Christian Zionism in Taiwan, I see them playing an active role in supporting the U.S. as part of foreign policy, as part of the larger geopolitics of the region, hoping that it would contribute in some way to the effort to curb China. I don't think it has left much of an impact, but Taiwan will be one of their strategies. Christian Zionists not only in Taiwan, but also in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and in other countries – this is one of the roles they need to play; they're going to back the U.S. in the larger geopolitical battle with China. But they

have to be very careful because they know that public sentiment in China is clearly with the Chinese government and not with the U.S. So, if they make a wrong move, the Christian Zionist elements could be totally isolated. But nonetheless, I think they will try. But they won't go very far. They won't be able to achieve much.

But what we should be focusing upon, as some of the previous commentators have said, is the larger question of U.S.-China relations, because that is going to be the defining issue in our part of the world and in world politics for the next few decades. I cannot see any other issue taking precedence over this. It is going to be a question of U.S. or China.

Why? Because, for the U.S., and indeed for the West as a whole, the rise of China and its growing prominence – not just in economics, but even in science – worries the U.S., because they know that its ascendancy in the world has been largely due to its control over science, that has been its secret of power. The U.S. knows that and has pursued its geo-economic and geopolitical goals with its scientific power as the backdrop, and now they find that China has become a scientific power through its own making, with its own strength; therefore, the U.S. is going all out to curb China. And of course, they're using Japan, South Korea, everyone else and everything else that you can think of as part that endeavor. So, I see that as central. We'll focus on that. The role of the Christian Zionists is minor, but it's part of that larger mix.

As for the question that Dr. Jude posed about the U.S. pivot to Asia: here again, if I may reiterate this point that the pivot to Asia is about China more than anything else.

It began with Obama. He went to Asia because he wanted to make sure that, as China's ties with the rest of Asia grew and developed, and that China had become almost indispensable to the economies in that region, it had to be curbed. Obama and his advisers were convinced that, unless they made the move and they laid the groundwork for its control, the question of leadership of the region, Northeast and Southeast Asia, would be decided in favor of China.

As you can see, in the recent months, the U.S. obsession with the South China Sea and some of the issues connected with it are partly due to the mistakes that the Chinese have made. They've also made mistakes as far as the South China Sea issue is concerned. But nonetheless, the U.S. has gone all out to maneuver and to manipulate the situation, to manipulate Vietnam, Philippines... It is a very intricate, complex game, but this is central to U.S. policy in this part of the world.

This is why I think China perhaps should be a little more sophisticated, to put it very gently, in dealing with the situation. And one example of the sort of sophistication I think would help China and maybe some of the other countries in the region is: If China continues to insist that almost 85% of the South China Sea is Chinese based upon a 1936 notion of control over the seas and the maps that have been produced, to my mind, this is self-defeating. It's not going to help

China because almost every Southeast Asian country, not just Vietnam or other vocal countries, resents this idea of China claiming ownership of 85% of the South China Sea.

Why? Partly because the people of Southeast Asia have a long history as seafarers. They may not have named islands and so on, but they have legitimate claims to segments of the South China Sea, and China should not antagonize those countries in this contest that is developing between China and the U.S.. Thank you.

7

Hindutva Zionism

A Looming Lethal Danger that the Civilized World Remains Ignorant About

Shamsul Islam

Those who believe in a world free of hegemonic ethno-nationalism, racism, religious bigotry, and hatred towards “others” have rightly taken note of Zionism and its ally Christian Zionism, the major perpetrators of ethnic cleansing. However, the civilized world, with its core belief in multi-culturalism and peaceful co-existence, is oblivious to a no-less-dangerous threat to the present human civilization; the Hindutva Zionism. As the term reads, it is part of the Hindutva world-view, that stands for an exclusive Hindu India. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS; National Volunteer Organization) is the most prominent flag-bearer of the Hindutva politics whose cadres presently rule India, the largest democracy in the world.

The RSS was founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889–1940) in 1925, who was disillusioned with the Indian freedom struggle led by MK Gandhi (1869–1948) against British rule, because of his belief that the Indian nation was a composite entity consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and followers of other religions living in India. Hedgewar and his associates aggressively claimed that India was an exclusive nation of Hindus. For RSS, the real enemies were not the British rulers, but Muslims and Christians, as they belonged to foreign religions. Thus, RSS represented the militant Hindu nationalism, termed as Hindutva, opposed to Gandhi’s all-inclusive Indian nationalism.

According to the most prominent ideologues of Hindutva, VD Savarkar (1883–1966) and MS Golwalkar (1906–1973), Hindutva is true “Hinduness” that should not be reduced to what is understood as Hinduism. Hindutva is aggressive commitment to the belief that India is the father-land and holy land of Hindus, who are Aryans, speak Sanskrit language, and believe in Casteism. All others are foreign races who:

“must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture...must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment not even citizen’s rights.”¹

Golwalkar’s other ‘Holy’ book for the RSS cadres, *Bunch of Thoughts*, has a long chapter titled “Internal Threats,” in which Muslims and Christians have been described as threat number 1 and 2, respectively.²

Importantly, RSS and its leading cadres ruling India presently are the most vocal supporters of Zionism and the Zionist Israel after the West. The renowned Indian author Khushwant Singh noted that RSS “supported Zionism and the Jewish state of Israel for no other reason but that it was forever waging wars against its Arab neighbors who were Muslims.”³ The current RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat, like his predecessors, has been calling upon the RSS cadres to emulate and tread “the path of Israel while serving the cause of nationalism.”⁴ A leading English daily newspaper in Israel, the *Jerusalem Post*, too underlined the fact that “whenever a BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party; a political appendage of the RSS) government comes to power, the vibrancy in India-Israel relations reaches new heights.”⁵

At the government level, Narendra Modi [Prime Minister of India since 2014], who is also a leading ideologue of the RSS, was the first prime minister of India to visit Israel in mid-2017 [almost 70 years after the founding of the Indian Republic], with the then Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visiting India in early 2018. Both continue to enjoy a close friendship despite Netanyahu not being the prime minister of Israel anymore. India is one of the largest importers of Israeli arms and the largest consumer of the surveillance and intelligence-related equipment. The latest disclosures about Israeli-made Pegasus spyware make it clear how India made large purchases for use against lawyers, journalists, politicians, and activists who were suspected to be opposed to the Hindutva politics. On the surveillance front, the ganging-up of Zionist Israel and India is proven by the fact that India remains the only democracy not to share any information about the purchase of Pegasus spyware, that has been described as the “world’s most powerful cyber weapon.”⁶ Concerned by the abstruseness of the Modi government, the Supreme Court, the highest court of justice in India, had to constitute a committee to uncover the truth in October 2021, the report of which is awaited.

1 Golwalkar, MS, *We Or Our Nationhood Defined*, Nagpur, 1939, p. 48.

2 Golwalkar, M.S., *Bunch of Thoughts*, Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1996, p. 177.

3 Singh, Khushwant, ‘Faith of the bigot.’ <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/faith-of-the-bigot/cid/1026785>

4 Mohan Bhagwat’s address to the ‘Youth pledge camp’ at Agra on November 3, 2014, <http://www.coastaldigest.com/rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-advocates-israel-model-nationalism?page=24>

5 <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/rashtriya-swayamsevak-sangh-rss-and-its-views-on-israel-598435>

6 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/28/magazine/nso-group-israel-spyware.html>

In the meantime, two renowned investigative journalists, Ronen Bergman and Mark Mazetti, relying on official Israeli papers, confirmed that India did buy Pegasus spyware, by courtesy of Netanyahu. According to the report:

“In July 2017, Narendra Modi, who won office on a platform of Hindu nationalism, became the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel. For decades, India had maintained a policy of what it called ‘commitment to the Palestinian cause,’ and relations with Israel were frosty. The Modi visit, however, was notably cordial, complete with a carefully staged moment of him and Prime Minister Netanyahu walking together barefoot on a local beach. They had reason for the warm feelings. Their countries had agreed on the sale of a package of sophisticated weapons and intelligence gear worth roughly \$2 billion — with Pegasus and a missile system as the centerpieces. Months later, Netanyahu made a rare state visit to India. And in June 2019, India voted in support of Israel at the U.N.’s Economic and Social Council to deny observer status to a Palestinian human rights organization, a first for the nation.”

Affinities between Zionism and Hindutva

1. God’s ‘Chosen People’: According to Zionism, the Jewish people were chosen by God as His true worshippers and to fulfill the mission of proclaiming his truth among all the nations of the world. The Hindutva flag-bearers proclaim the same status. According to them, the Hindu race:

“professes its illustrious Hindu Religion, the only Religion in the world worthy of being so denominated, which in its variety is still an organic whole, capable of feeding the noble aspirations of all men...enriched by the noblest philosophy of life in all its functions, and hallowed by an unbroken, interminable succession of divine spiritual geniuses, a religion of which any sane man may be justly proud. Guided by this Religion...the [Hindu] Race evolved a culture, which despite the degenerating contact with the debased ‘civilizations’ of the Mussalman and the Europeans, for the last ten centuries, is still the noblest in the world.”⁷

Speaking a language similar to the Zionists, Golwalkar went on to declare that the world soon will “tremble with fear”⁸ before the “chosen people” i.e., upholders of the Hindutva.

2. Religion as basis of nationality: Both believe that religion is the determining factor for nationality. Both are against inclusive nationalities.

3. Religious scriptures as authentic history: For Zionists and Hindutva protagonists, religious scriptures narrate actual history and any other narrative is unacceptable. Myths are truths.

⁷ Golwalkar, MS, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, Nagpur, 1939, pp. 40-41.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

4. Genocidal: Zionist organizations and Zionist Israel have been widely condemned for the genocide of Palestinians and other opponents. Israel is the only state that has been condemned both by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations through more than 200 resolutions since its founding in 1948.

In India, we have witnessed a major genocide of minorities almost every decade, in which Hindutva cadres have been found to be involved. In these genocides, victims have not been only minorities, but lower caste Hindus too. It is important to know that RSS, that claims to be a cultural organization, is fond of worshipping arms. It celebrates its foundation day as “shastr pooja” (worship of the arms) wherein RSS leaders/cadres participate in large numbers.⁹

5. Demonization of opponents: An important commonality between the two is the demonization and persecution of anti-Zionists as anti-Semitic and anti-Hindutva as anti-Hindu. The renowned researcher of Zionism, Yoav Litvin, wrote:

“In fact, anti-Zionists were targeted from before the foundation of the state of Israel. Today, Jewish pro-Palestinian activists who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement are detained, punished and even deported.”¹⁰

In India, MK Gandhi (Father of the Nation) and anti-Hindutva intellectuals/journalists, namely, Govind Pansare, MM Kalburgi, Narendra Dabholkar, and Gouri Lankesh, were assassinated by the Hindutva zealots for being anti-Hindu. Arrest of anti-Hindutva intellectuals like Anand Teltumbde, Fr. Stany (who died during incarceration), Gautam Navlakha, Varavara Rao, lawyer Sudha Bharadwaj, activists Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves, Hany Babu, Umar Khalid, and hundreds others under terror laws, also speak of the same trend.

6. Racist: Zionists ruling Israel may harp on the divine unity of the Jews of the world, but in reality, Israel is ruled by and for superior Ashkenazi [European] Jews. In Israel, hatred for dark-skinned African Jews, Sephardi [Spanish speaking Jews], and Mizrahi Jews [Jews from Central and West Asian countries, many of them Arabic-speaking] is too glaring to be missed.

In India, RSS demands abrogation of the democratic-secular-egalitarian constitution and promulgation of Code of Manu [*Manusmriti*] as law of the land. *Manusmriti* is declared to be most worship-able after the Vedas. It decrees sub-human status to women and Sudras [lowest caste in the Brahmanical caste system].¹¹ Moreover, RSS treats dark-skinned South Indians as inferior.¹²

9 <https://www.outlookindia.com/photos/single/147568>, <https://newsdnntv.com/news/sarsanghchhalak-mohan-bhagwat-did-arms-worship-on-v>

10 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/1/9/the-zionist-fallacy-of-jewish-supremacy>

11 For detail elaboration of Manu Code look at: https://www.academia.edu/676528/Untouchables_in_Manusmriti

12 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/bjp-s-tarun-vijay-stokes-racism-row-we-have-south-india-we-live-with-black-people/story-rmaP8qguUK7zr1mWem2e4O.html>

RSS linkages with international neo-Fascist organizations

Editorial in the *New York Times*

The world has not bothered to take any notice of a terrorist network developing fast in India and its neighborhood, between RSS and the two terrorist ultra-nationalist Buddhist groups of Myanmar and Sri Lanka, against minorities, especially Muslims in the region. According to an editorial in *The International New York Times* ["Deadly alliances against Muslims," October 16, 2014], it was announced by Galagodaththe Gnanasara, the leader of the radical Sri Lankan Buddhist group, Bodu Bala Sena [Buddhist Power Force], at an international convention in Colombo in September 2014. The editorial disclosed that at the convention:

"The guest of honor was Ashin Wirathu, a Buddhist radical whose picture Time magazine put on its July 1 [2013] covers as 'The Face of Buddhist Terror'...Mr. Gnanasara claimed he was in discussions 'at a high level' with the right-wing Indian Hindu group Rashtriya Swayam Sevak to form what he called a 'Hindu-Buddhist peace zone' in South Asia."¹³

The NYT editorial also carried Facebook and Twitter congratulatory messages from Ram Madhav (who kept shuffling as spokesperson of RSS and general secretary of BJP) to Bodu Bala Sena. These must be read to know the depth of linkages between Buddhist terrorist organizations and RSS.

Neo-Nazi mass murderer of Norway, Anders Behring Breivik's linkages with the RSS

On 22 July 2011, Breivik massacred 77 youth belonging to the Norway's ruling Labour Party at a youth training camp on the island of Utøya. It was no sudden carnage by some mad person. Breivik had planned it for years. Just before the attack, he had released online "A European Declaration of Independence," that declared war against the devils: cultural Marxism, multi-culturalism, feminism, emotionalism, humanism, and egalitarianism.¹⁴

In this case, too, the world took almost no notice of the critical fact that Breivik's manifesto laid down a plan of co-operation between Neo-Nazi movements of Europe and "Hindu Nationalist" organizations of India. Out of 1515 pages of Breivik's manifesto, 102 pages dealt with the glorification of the Hindutva movement in India.

It emphasized that it was essential that these two "learn from each other and cooperate as much as possible" as "our goals are more or less identical." This manifesto specially mentioned the name of the fountainhead of the Hindutva politics, RSS and its appendages, like BJP, ABVP (Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad; the student appendage of the RSS) and VHP (Vishwa

¹³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/16/opinion/deadly-alliances-against-muslims.html>

¹⁴ <https://info.publicintelligence.net/AndersBehringBreivikManifesto.pdf>

Hindu Parishad; RSS appendage to bring the world under Hindutva hegemony) as partners.¹⁵ Importantly, the manifesto pledged military support “to the nationalists in the Indian civil war and in the deportation of all Muslims from India” as part of a larger campaign to “overthrow of all Western European multi-culturalist governments.”

The danger of RSS becoming a rallying point of all the neo-Fascists of the world can be gauged by the fact that the former, according to its own admission, was active in 39 countries with the nomenclature Hindu Seva Sangh.¹⁶ The RSS has not uploaded data after 2015 in this regard. There must be many more countries where it could be functioning covertly. The civilized world can risk overlooking this most lethal danger at its own peril.

For an in-depth study of RSS, please look at the following link:

https://www.academia.edu/44213326/RASHTRIYA_SWAYAMSEVAK_SANGH_AS_A_TERROR_OUTFIT_EVIDENCE_FROM_ITS_ARCHIVES_E_book_updated_on_October_14_2020_

Link for some of S. Islam’s writings in English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and video interviews/debates:

<http://du-in.academia.edu/ShamsulIslam>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/shamsul.islam.332>

Twitter: @shamsforjustice

<http://shamsforpeace.blogspot.com/>

¹⁵ <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/norwegian-mass-killers-manifesto-hails-hindutva/article2293829.ece>

¹⁶ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Rashtriya-Swayamsevak-Sangh-shakha-spreads-its-wings-to-39-countries/articleshow/50260517.cms>

8

Zionism, Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism, and Hindutva

Colonizing Ideologies and Geopolitical Alliances

Jude Lal Fernando

Introduction

Colonial ideologies have persisted, even after formal independence, in the form of nationalist ideologies; moreover, they have gained a new life that facilitates neo-colonial alliances, dragging the world into a permanent state of warfare. This paper probes into how Zionism, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, and Hindutva have been forged as part of the Western imperial project and its technologies of control. These cases are studied comparatively, not merely to seek parallels, but to situate them in a geopolitical setting in the changing phases of Western imperial geopolitics and to identify the interconnections amongst these contexts. Such a scrutiny can enable solidarity amongst the people who have been brutalized by these oppressive ideologies and their associated geopolitics. It is necessary to adopt this methodology to globalize resistance, both internationally and inter-sectionally, that mutually empowers each other's resistance on the principles of justice, autonomy, equality, diversity and interdependence. The paper first critically examines the colonial construction of Zionism, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, and Hindutva within the Western imperial project. Secondly, it explores the neo-coloniality of these nationalist states that constructs an internal "other" as the enemy while maintaining neo-colonial alliances with the Western imperial power. The conclusion reiterates the need for a process of mutual empowerment of resistance of distinct oppressed peoples, not only in an international, but also an intersectional mode.

The Geopolitics of Colonial Practice

The Western imperialist project stresses not only on geopolitical exclusion, but also inclusion. This is not simply an inclusion of the elite in the colonized land, but an integration of the state structure of the colony into the geo-strategic complex of the empire. Contrary to the claim that the West inherits a Judeo-Christian civilization, the Christian empire marginalized the Jews and

the Muslims for centuries. With the Zionist project of colonizing Palestine, the West has been ‘rebaptized’ as a Judeo-Christian civilization including the Jews and excluding the Palestinians (who are both Muslims and Christians) in particular, and the Arabs and Muslims in general. The founding father of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl – a European Jew who was molded with the colonizing ideology of the West, seeking the assimilation of Jews into the European culture – defined the incipient project of the State of Israel as an “outpost of Western civilization” against the “barbarism” of the Middle East.¹ This reinforces the ideological inclusion of the Jews into some European nation states.

Christian Zionism, that arose amongst the evangelicals of the US in support of the State of Israel, is inherently anti-Semitic as it includes Jews into the supremacist Christian paradigm that negates the specificity of prophetic and rabbinic Judaism. However, these Western colonial ideologies do not necessarily demand conversion to Christianity as in the precolonial period where the Jews (with the Muslims) resisted the Christian hegemony. Instead, the Christian Zionist ideology has collectively integrated Jews into the West not only culturally, but also as a “nation state,” through an imperial outpost, called the State of Israel. Even though support for the establishment of the State of Israel has been justified as a reparation for the centuries-old persecution of the Jews by the Christian West, which reached its horrifying climax in the Shoah, it is fundamentally a colonizing state that has been constructed as part of a Western imperial complex in the Middle East.

The modern European colonial project was theologically justified on the basis of “European Christian chosenness,” an ethnocentric/racist ideology. Nazism combined anti-Semitism, the original variant of this Christian supremacy, with modern Western colonial practices in its extermination of Jews from Europe. As Muhammad Mamdani puts it, the colonial practices that had previously been applied by Europe to the peoples of Africa and Asia were adopted by the Nazis against the Jews in the twentieth century.² The Christian guilty consciousness that emerged as a response to Nazi atrocities and the political interests of the Western bourgeois flowed into one another, in turning Biblical Israel, that enshrined the prophetic resistance to empire building and oppression, into the modern State of Israel as an oppressive ethnocratic state aligned to the Western powers, and that is hostile to its Arab neighbors. This is called the Zionist project.

In theological and spiritual terms, Christians did not pay for the sin of their age old anti-Semitism. Instead, the Palestinians in particular, and Arab Muslims in general, have been displaced from their homeland in the name of a God-given “promised land” for a “chosen people” – the Jews. Christian-Jewish dialogue has been conditioned to exclude the prophetic call for political justice to the Palestinians. The kingdom of God, which is an eschatological category, has been ushered in for the Jewish people by the oppressive imperial powers on earth, who were denounced by the Biblical prophets as idols. Middle Eastern Christians, who are distinct from European Christians

1 Santiago Slabodsky. “Empty Land: Righteous Theology and Sneaky Coloniality”, in *People and Land: Decolonizing Theologies* edited by Jione Havea, New York: Lexington Books, 2020, 60.

2 Muhammad Mamdani. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim, America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, New York: Three Leaves Press, 2003, 13-14.

in their political and cultural outlook, have co-existed with the Jews and Muslims in the region for centuries. Unlike Christianity, Islam recognizes Jews as the “People of the Book” along with Christians. These relations have been compounded by the Zionist project. The State of Israel not only operates against the Palestinian liberation, but also against many other such struggles across the world (Eelam Tamil liberation movement in Sri Lanka) by providing oppressive states with counter-insurgency expertise and in threatening the states that resist the US/UK hegemony (like Iran and Syria).

The similar imperial logic of inclusion and exclusion is very visible in the formation of Sri Lanka’s unitary political structure and its accompanying Sinhala Buddhist ideology that were formed under British colonial rule. Buddhists and Hindus, who were seen as pagans by the Christian missionaries, were categorized into racial blocks by the colonial officers. The British Raj, in its move to control India – “Jewel of the Crown” – by containing the other imperial rivals like France and internal uprisings within India, treated the island of Sri Lanka as a geo-strategic location. The majority of Sinhalese on the island (who were a minority in the Indian subcontinent, like the Jews in the Middle East) were presented as “true heirs” of the island as opposed to the Tamils and Tamil-speaking Muslims (like the Arabs in the Middle East), who were presented as “invaders.” The father of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, Anagarika Dharmapala (like Theodor Herzl, who had embraced coloniality), a lay Buddhist leader – who emerged from the new trading class under colonial rule – states as follows, in his attack against the Muslims in 1915, while declaring his total allegiance to the British state:

What the German is to the Britisher, that the Muhammedan is to the Sinhalese. He is an alien to the Sinhalese by religion, race and language. He traces his origin to Arabia, whilst the Sinhalese traces his origin to India and to Aryan sources...To the Sinhalese without Buddhism death is preferable. The British officials may shoot, hang, quarter, imprison or do anything to the Sinhalese but there will always be bad blood between the Moors and the Sinhalese...The whole nation in one day has risen against the Moor people. The powerful British nation is waging war against German militarism and millions of pounds are spent daily to crush Germany. England is fighting on behalf of smaller nationalities...

True, that I criticize in my articles, the officials; but my loyalty to the British Throne is as solid as a rock and I have invariably expressed sentiments of loyalty to the King. But I love my religion, and Sinhala Race, and my happiness depends on their welfare.³

Even though the Sri Lankan unitary state structure is upheld as the embodiment of the island’s sovereignty by the Sinhala Buddhist nationalists (like the Zionist claim to the State of Israel), it was colonially carved as a geo-strategic state against India in general, and the Eelam Tamils in particular. Like Zionism has justified occupation of Palestine, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism is not a national liberation movement, but a settler colonial project against the Eelam Tamils.

3 Ananda Guruge (ed.). *Return To Righteousness: A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of Anagarika Dharmapala*, Colombo: Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Information, 1991, p.482.

Its enemy is not the imperial power, but the internal “other” who is portrayed as the invader and racially inferior.

As the religious history of the Bible is converted into an imperial history, subduing its anti-imperial prophetic tradition, in justifying the State of Israel by the Zionists, the post-canonical Pali text, *Mahavamsa*, that was written (in 5th century CE) with a Buddhist sectarian lens, is used to justify the existence of the island’s unitary state structure. Even though this text is considered to be the chronicle of the Sinhala Buddhist nation today, it was written in a totally different cultural and political context, and cannot be treated as an ethno-nationalist text. Its justification of the killing of Tamils goes totally against the canonical teachings of Buddhism, as well as the compassion embodied in the popular Buddhist *Jataka* tales. However, in the British imperial strategy of maintaining the island as a unitary political structure, this text was racialized and territorialized. The essentialist readings of the Bible and *Mahavamsa* are part of the colonial practice in both cases, where the empire adopted a geopolitics of inclusion (Sinhala Buddhists and Jews) and exclusion (Eelam Tamils and Palestinians).

India as a state was not formed in the same way as Israel and Sri Lanka – as colonially carved ethnocratic states. However, as in the case of Zionism and Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the Hindutva ideology is a result of the British colonial practice, and did not arise in a political vacuum. Ideologically, the communalization of religious identities is a product of British technologies of control over the Indian subcontinent. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar’s Hindutva ideology, based on a common nation, race, and civilization, was essentially anti-Muslim and proclaimed Aryan supremacy, like the Sinhala Buddhist nationalists in Sri Lanka. Aryan racial theory was introduced to the Indian subcontinent by British colonial practice, that was embraced by some sectors of the incipient nationalists in the region.

Yes, we Hindus are a Nation by ourselves. Because religious, racial, cultural and historical affinities bind us intimately into a homogenous nation, and we are most pre-eminently gifted with a territorial unity as well. Our racial being is identified with India – our beloved Fatherland and our Holy-land above all and irrespective of it all, we Hindus will to be a Nation and, therefore, we are a Nation.⁴

Hindutva is a full embodiment of coloniality, but the Western imperial moves of exclusion and inclusion were contained to a greater extent due to the vibrant Indian movement for independence and the politics of the Cold War. On the contrary, Sri Lanka did not seek self-rule, but a dominion status under the British Raj by maintaining the unitary political structure and its racial ideology that is distinctively different from the Indian secular pluralist and federal system of governance. While India did not recognize the State of Israel, Sri Lanka’s first prime minister did the contrary.

⁴ Quoted in Ram Punyani. *Communalism: India’s Struggle for Democracy and Pluralism*, London: Frontpage Publications, 2018, p. 8

During the Cold War, both India and the Palestinian Liberation Organization supported the Tamil Eelam liberation movement in Sri Lanka against the Sinhala Buddhist state. Indira Gandhi's government allowed the leaders of the Tamil liberation movement to operate in Tamil Nadu in a move to curb the strengthening of the Sri Lankan government's ties with the Western powers. During this period, India was closer to the Moscow axis. The Tamil Eelam movement, that arose as a response to the religiously defined ethnocentric state, adopted the Indian secular pluralism. However, while the Sinhala-dominated state continued to engage in oppressing and repressing the Eelam Tamils, the Brahminical dominance of the Indian ruling classes remained unchanged. As a result, various Indian governments engaged in both pragmatic communalism (under the Congress Party, which represents Indian nationalism) and programmatic communalism (under the Bharatiya Janata Party, that upholds Hindu nationalism based on the Hindutva ideology) as well as caste politics that excluded the Muslims, Dalits, and Adivasis respectively. India's anti-imperialist position radically changed as the Cold War drew to an end. How have the above colonizing ideologies led to direct political alliances between the states of Israel, Sri Lanka, and India, particularly after the Cold War accentuating the imperialist logic of inclusion and exclusion and reifying neo-colonial alliances?

Neo-colonial Geopolitics

With the end of the Cold War, the Hindutva colonial ideology gained predominance; India rapidly moved towards the Western axis of power, and thereby soon became an ally of the global War on Terror, that was fundamentally based on Islamophobia. After being contained for some time due to the Non-Aligned Movement (severing connections with Israel), Sri Lanka openly entered into the Western axis long before India, as far back as 1977. The Colombo government allowed an Israeli interest section (based in the US embassy) in the country, and obtained security expertise from Israel in its war against the Tamil national resistance movement. In the 1980s, the Sri Lankan state was advised by Shin Bet and Mossad in creating buffer zones in the border regions of the Tamil areas, to dismantle the territorial contiguity of the Tamil homeland by separating the north from the east. This similar pattern was followed by Israel in severing Gaza from the West Bank through Jewish settlements.

Closer to the end of the Cold War, India entered into an accord with Sri Lanka to suppress the Tamil national demands, that resulted in sending Indian troops to the Tamil region in 1987–1990. The Tamil liberation movement resisted both Indian and Western dominance and held on to its political aspiration for self-determination, nationhood, and homeland in the north and east of the island. During the thirty-year long war against the Eelam Tamils, with the direct approval of the US, Israel sold Kafir fighter jets to the Sri Lankan air force, that massacred scores of Tamil civilians. Under the leadership of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Tamil national movement succeeded in building the Tamil Eelam state and reached a balance of power with the Sri Lankan state by 2002, leading to a peace process. The parity of esteem between the two parties was destroyed by the US and UK putting pressure on the EU to ban the LTTE, that emboldened Sinhala Buddhist nationalists to call for a military solution. The war against the Eelam Tamils – fully aided by the US/UK/Israeli axis – was coded as part of the War on Terror

that eventually disseminated the de facto state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east, with massive human cost, by 2009.

The Eelam Tamils were massacred in genocidal proportions as a move to consolidate the colonially carved unitary political structure of the island that deemed it necessary to encircle China in the Indian subcontinent. The Indian state heavily backed the Sri Lankan state in executing the war, despite the massive opposition emerging from the people in Tamil Nadu. Israel used the same rhetoric of the global war on terror to intensify its brutalization of the Palestinian resistance and further occupation. Under the rule of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), the Indian state has strengthened its ties with Israel economically, politically and militarily, while furthering anti-Muslim attacks. In January 2021, Mike Pompeo, the former US Secretary of State, and a leading figure in the evangelical organization Christians United for Israel, visited both India and Sri Lanka to strengthen the military and political ties, and therefore contain the growing sphere of Chinese influence in the region. China has become Sri Lanka's biggest donor, even while Chinese-Indian hostilities have increased. The US entered into three pivotal security agreements with India, aimed at containing China, but also emboldened the BJP in its anti-Muslim campaign. The Sri Lankan state has increased propagation of Islamophobia and discrimination of Muslims in the name of curbing Islamic militancy while justifying further militarization of the island; this gained a new impetus after the military victory over the LTTE in 2009.

Mutual Reinforcement of Neo-Coloniality and Hegemonic Geopolitics

The analysis of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, Hindutva, and Zionism should not be limited to mere comparisons. These three ideologies are interconnected as they have emerged within the Western colonial practice of inclusion and exclusion of ethno-nationalist groups and states. Even though the power of these ideologies was contained to some extent during the Cold War, it has been revived and converted into overt state practices, politically and militarily, in the post-Cold War period. These ideologies mutually reinforce each other as part of the neo-colonial states in an imperial complex. These states function as allied states of the Western empire, mainly led by the US/UK while brutalizing resisting peoples and occupying their land.

A concrete example of this mutual reinforcement of Sinhala Buddhism, Hindutva and Zionism in reference to Sri Lanka, would be as follows. After the military victory of the Sri Lankan state over the LTTE – who led a secular pluralist de facto state in the traditional Tamil homeland – Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS–National Volunteer Organization), the most widespread Hindu fundamentalist group in India (and globally), has started its activities in the Tamil areas attempting to imbue Hindu nationalism while opposing Muslims. The Christian Zionist churches have increased their activities in the Tamil areas as well, where public religious processions have been organized with the Israeli and Sri Lankan national flags, and under police protection. One such procession is held annually in the Eastern Province, that has a large Muslim population living alongside Hindus and Christians. The Sinhala Buddhist nationalist groups have been engaged in building hundreds of Buddhist shrines in Tamil areas with full support of the security forces, while the US-Sri Lankan joint military training sessions continue.

The Japanese government funds some of the archaeological projects, that are orchestrated to claim ‘ancient Sinhala Buddhist heritage’ in the Tamil region. This obliterates the ancient strand of Tamil Buddhism and thereby cements the racial version of Buddhism (Sinhala ethnocentric Buddhism), and its inseparable link with the entire island and the unitary state. Similarly, the Sinhala Buddhist nationalist groups have been spreading Islamophobia, that has been accentuated and joined by the Sinhala Christians, after the Easter Sunday suicide attacks on churches and hotels in 2019. No sooner did these attacks take place, when the Hindutva prime minister of India visited Colombo and placed a bouquet of flowers in a church that came under attack.

As a geo-strategic island crucial to US’s pivot towards Asia in encircling China, the unitary state of Sri Lanka has been further militarized, not only through its occupation of the Tamil homeland, where in some places the force density is one soldier per two Tamils, but also through the control of over a hundred state and public sectors by the security forces. As Chinese investments increase on the island, the accusations levelled against the Sri Lankan state by the Western powers (who orchestrated the war against the Tamils) concerning human rights violations have come to the fore. A false geopolitical polarization has been generated between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, wherein the Sinhalese perceive Tamils as aided by the West and the Tamils see Sinhala state as aided by China. Following the destruction of the LTTE, there is a move to include the Tamils into the Western orbit with a promise of juridical justice over the mass atrocities in exchange of political justice that guarantees the right to self-determination, nationhood, and homeland. A similar political device has been utilized in the face of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and ongoing atrocities. Western rhetoric of human rights has not condemned Israel’s and Sri Lanka’s moves to further occupation of Palestine and Tamil Eelam respectively. The same could be said of India, that, under the Hindutva government, has openly declared its support to its ideological partners – Sinhala Buddhist nationalists and Zionists.

Conclusion: Mutual Empowerment of the Oppressed Peoples

What has happened to international solidarity, across the borders, among oppressed peoples? In 2014, a few years after the military victory, the Sri Lankan president was awarded the highest Palestinian honor by the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, for his political party’s traditional support for the Palestinian cause. On the same tour, Israel praised the president during his visit to Tel Aviv for defeating the Tamil resistance movement.⁵ India, that was once an ardent supporter of the Palestinian Liberation Movement, has built a strong relationship with Israel. In this setting, religious divisions have been accentuated, particularly against Muslims. International solidarity with oppressed nations, like Palestine and Tamil Eelam, has been compounded. The new security alliances amongst US, Israel, India, and Sri Lanka have solidified the oppression of Palestinians, Eelam Tamils, Muslims, Dalits, Adivasis, and many other national groups.

5 See Athithan Jayapalan. “Axis of Sinhala Chauvinism, Zionism and Western Imperialism: Palestinians and the Tamils”, <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/axis-of-sinhala-chauvinism-zionism-and-western-imperialism-palestinians-and-the-tamils/> (downloaded: 10 Oct 2021).

As traditional forms of internationalism have waned, how do we build new alliances for solidarity? The coloniality of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, Hindutva, and Zionism has to be exposed both as ideologies and political structures. The neo-colonial imperial complex has included these as strategic outposts that justify occupation and oppression of many other nationalities and national groups. In that sense, the terminology of “conflict” (Israel-Palestine conflict, Sinhala-Tamil or Sri Lankan conflict or Hindu-Muslim conflict) is hegemonic and conceals the real geopolitical dimension of these lands. Instead, the terms “occupation,” “colonization,” and “discrimination/oppression” capture the coloniality of these states. The terms “resistance,” “liberation,” and “anti-colonial struggles” reflect the collective aspiration of the oppressed peoples. Furthermore, any attempt to build international solidarity amongst oppressed nations have to take the intersecting reality of multiple layers of oppression into consideration. For example, the Tamil liberation movement considered its national project as a socially emancipatory program that establishes gender equality and abolishes caste discrimination.

In terms of religious divisions, Islamophobia is fundamentally a Western construct, which has been highly utilized by Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, Hindutva and Zionism. Resisting Western imperialist designs requires countering Islamophobia. Mobilizing faith communities for resistance – rather than relying on exclusivist religious identities – necessitates the reinterpretation of faith from the experience of one’s oppression that recognizes the experience of other oppressed national groups. Instead of religiously carved states (like Israel, Sri Lanka, Hindutva India, Saudi Arabia and Christian Zionist US) or anti-religious secularist states (like France), it is necessary to envision secular pluralist states or pluri-national states where autonomy, equality, diversity and interdependence are upheld as fundamental principles and practices of another world. Such a world is not only possible, but also necessary.

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Part Four

Deconstructing Zionism, Reconstructing Solidarity

9

Christian Zionism, Settler Coloniality, and Supersessionist Anxiety

Robert O. Smith

This essay explores how I came to study Christian Zionism, my assessment of the movement as an imperial theology, along with new trajectories of my research into settler colonialism as a manifestation of western Christian supersessionist anxieties. These analytical trajectories provide opportunities for new forms of trans-contextual solidarity.

I came to the study of Christian Zionism because of my fundamentalist Christian upbringing in the US State of Oklahoma. My childhood church in the 1980s was filled with preaching about possible nuclear annihilation and the importance of Israel for God's plan.

During seminary, a professor—Charles Amjad-Ali—insisted that I leave no part of myself behind as I explored research projects. Other professors warned me to stay away from controversial topics. I found myself unable to avoid topics at the intersection of religion and politics. Christian Zionism became a central pillar of my ongoing research.

Early in my career, which has consistently blended pastoral and academic work, I found myself working closely with Palestinian Christians. Those efforts involved working alongside organizations like Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Palestinian colleagues in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and nascent efforts toward what would become Kairos Palestine.

In my conversations with Palestinian Christians, their overriding question was how to comprehend American Christian attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since I was working on a significant component of those attitudes, I functioned as a sort of informant.

I am an enrolled citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, one of the five tribes ethnically cleansed out of the Southeastern United States following the Indian Removal Act of 1830.¹ I did not expect

¹ For a history of early post-contact Chickasaw experience, see Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540–1715* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); for more recent history, see John P. Dyson, *The Early Chickasaw Homeland: Origins, Boundaries & Society* (Ada: Chickasaw Press, 2014).

that encounters with Palestinians would make my Chickasaw identity come alive in new ways. Palestinian narrative and Palestinian resistance provided a new lens through which I could interpret the Indigenous Chickasaw component of my identity.

I come to these topics as a Chickasaw Citizen, as an American, as a former Fundamentalist Christian, and as a progressive Christian clergyperson and academic theological historian. As such, I am keenly aware of how three out of those four layers of my identity have in their own ways validated Palestinian dispossession. My western Christian heritage has also directly harmed both Jews and Muslims through millennia of history. Because I am implicated in the sufferings of various peoples, I must attempt to take responsibility.

Christian historical responsibility begins with acknowledging not just complicity, but Christian responsibility for historical realities, including millennia of anti-Jewish teachings,² the Crusades,³ and subsequent centuries of anti-Islamic ideology.⁴ Christians must take historical responsibility for European colonization since 1492; these processes were enacted under Church authority and, later, the secularized Christian frameworks we call modernity.⁵ The tyranny of modern subjectivities reached its apex in industrialized slavery and the Shoah itself.⁶

Christian Zionism, as an imperial theology, actively perpetuates and advances each of these historical trends. Just as the trajectory of Jewish political Zionism in the Holy Land exemplifies global settler coloniality,⁷ Christian Zionism makes explicit western Christian commitments underlying global oppression.

To promote academic discussion about Christian Zionism, I defined the movement as “political action, informed by specifically Christian commitments, to promote or preserve Jewish control over the geographic area now comprising Israel and Palestine.”⁸ I appreciate that Mitri Raheb has identified it as part of the “software” informing the western imperial worldview.⁹ Practitioners

2 See David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (London: Head of Zeus, 2013).

3 Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes* (New York: Schocken, 1984).

4 Cf. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), and Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford, 1993).

5 See Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of ‘The Other’ and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995) and, more specifically for North American contexts, Robert J. Miller, et al, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (New York: Oxford, 2010).

6 See Gerald Horne, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), and Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

7 See Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London: Pluto, 2006).

8 Robert O. Smith, *More Desired Than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford, 2013), 2.

9 Mitri Raheb, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2014), 24.

of “state theology,”¹⁰ willing to validate American empire through sterile, cookie-cutter Christian Zionism, are never in short supply.

My research trajectory has led me to the preliminary conclusion that, in order to understand how our world is presently shaped and the solidarities necessary to promote the survivance of colonized communities, we must go deeper than Christian Zionism to the bedrock concepts and ideas that shape the western world itself. The foundational ideas and concepts of modernity, which we have been taught to identify with secularity, are, in fact, primarily theological.

Those ideas include the basic Christian commitment to supersessionism, or, as it has more recently been called, “replacement theology.” Supersessionism, within theological studies, is the idea that one religious community replaces another as the people of God. This is the clear content and commitment of Christian scriptures, the New Testament, taken as a whole. With the Constantinian establishment of the church, theological commitments to the supremacy of Christianity over Judaism were translated into political action against, among others, Jews.

This ‘positive’ Christian understanding of supersessionism went unchallenged in official Christian theology until October 1965, when the Second Vatican Council released “*Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.*”¹¹ This was just over two decades after the end of World War II and the revealed horrors of the Shoah.

But there is another side to replacement theology. In supersessionist systems, ‘the replacer’ and ‘the replaced’ each have their own perspective. The ‘replaced’ is understandably indignant and offended by the claims of the replacer. The replacer, on the other hand, must always play a confidence game. There’s anxiety on all sides: who is correct and who is not?

Christianity experiences this from both sides. For most of its history, Christianity claimed to supersede Judaism. At the same time, Islam claims to supersede both Judaism and Christianity (albeit more gently than Christian claims). The competing claims result in what I call “supersessionist anxiety” for both the ‘replaced’ and for those who have done such ‘replacing.’ For Jews, supersessionist anxiety is the result of long-suffered historical experience. For Christians (and, to a lesser degree, Muslims), there is a double anxiety: 1) in relation to Islam,¹² that Christianity

10 The phrase “state theology” is borrowed from the 1985 South Africa Kairos Document, “Challenge to the Church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa,” found online at <https://kairossouthernafrika.wordpress.com/2011/05/08/the-south-africa-kairos-document-1985/>. “The South African apartheid State has a theology of its own and we have chosen to call it ‘State Theology.’ ‘State Theology’ is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism. It blesses injustice, canonizes the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy.”

11 Pope Paul VI, “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: *Nostra Aetate*,” proclaimed 28 October 1965; available online at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

12 An important component of historical Christian anxiety vis-à-vis Islam is that it came with a fully equipped army. That is, an army that defeated Christians in the Crusades; a defeat that Euro-centric Christians rarely admit but have never forgotten.

too can be replaced, and 2) in relation to Judaism, that Christian claims of replacement rest on faulty ground.

Add to this, of course, the western Christian assault on Orthodox Christian traditions; we cannot forget the Great Schism of Christianity in 1054 and the Sacking of Constantinople by European Crusaders in April 1204. Whether we consider western Christian approaches to Judaism, Islam, or eastern Orthodoxy, we find that supremacist ideas, blended with supersessionist anxiety, offer a recipe for explosive violence.

I have therefore grown convinced that a particularly western Christian blend of supersessionism and supremacism is a central component of the unrelenting colonial violence of modernity. As Enrique Dussel has convincingly argued, the constitutive moment of modernity is 1492.¹³ In addition to Columbus “sailing the ocean blue,” armed with the papal Doctrine of Discovery,¹⁴ bringing irrevocable harm to the Indigenous nations of this hemisphere, 1492 marks the expulsion of both Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula. This is an act of creating a falsely homogenized ‘Christian’ space, an act of supremacism informed by western Christian supersessionist anxiety.

German political theorist Carl Schmitt wrote in 1922 that “All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts.”¹⁵ Jewish historian Susannah Heschel has observed that Christianity, with its uniquely supersessionist drive, “colonized Judaism theologically, taking over its central theological concepts of the Messiah, eschatology, apocalypticism, election, and Israel, as well as its scriptures, its prophets, and even its God, and denying the continued validity of those ideas for Judaism.”¹⁶

The violence of this Christian theological move is echoed, almost matched, by a particular form of coloniality now known as settler colonialism. “Negatively,” Patrick Wolfe has argued, “settler colonialism ... strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base.... settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.”¹⁷

Settler colonialism describes a particular form of coloniality in which the invader eliminates the Native for the purpose of creating a new society on stolen land. Settler colonialism is nothing less than the political, historical, and material manifestation of supersessionist theological

13 See, for instance, Enrique Dussel, “Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures),” *Boundary 2* 20:3 (1993): 65–76.

14 On the historical sources of the Doctrine of Discovery, see Steven Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Chicago: Chicago Review, 2008).

15 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5.

16 Susannah Heschel, “Christ’s Passion: Homoeroticism and the Origins of Christianity,” in *Mel Gibson’s Bible: Religion, Popular Culture, and The Passion of the Christ*, eds. Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 100.

17 Patrick Wolfe, Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native, *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (2006), 388.

concepts activated by peculiarly western ideologies of supremacism. American Indians and Palestinians, along with other victims of settler colonial genocide, recognize their experiences in their respective stories.¹⁸ They also recognize their common opponents, including proponents of the imperial ideology of Christian Zionism.

This global moment demands the reconstructions of solidarities. Although the State of Israel's actions of expanding illegal settlements and recent declaration that Palestinian human rights organizations are terrorist entities are worthy of ridicule,¹⁹ Israel itself is not the primary cause of the concerns I seek to address.

Instead, we must understand the State of Israel as a component within contemporary global ethno-state dynamics. Those dynamics include increasing chauvinism, xenophobia, and expulsion even as imperial preservations of regional satraps and alliances increase regional proxy competitions. The solidarities that need to be reconstructed include networks of the Indigenous, the enslaved, and the colonized who have directly experienced the necropolitical²⁰ underside of empires erected to preserve the prerogatives of ethno-supremacist states.

Solidarity, therefore, must include both trans-decolonial and trans-Indigenous solidarities. Recent developments in Palestinian and Black American solidarity exemplify these possibilities.²¹ Even as we envision these new forms of solidarity, we must strategically recognize that anti-solidarity pushback is comprehensive and extremely well-funded. It even takes on a whiff of academic rigor. Just as this essay was first delivered as a conference presentation, the liberal American magazine, *The Atlantic*, published a liberal Zionist essay titled "Palestine Isn't Ferguson" or "How to Misunderstand the Israeli Palestinian Conflict."²² Using liberal concepts, the article's rhetorical purpose is to nullify the possibility of critical comparison of Israel with other oppressive regimes.

Our common resistance is grounded in our stories. By listening to each other's stories—both individually and communally—we can recognize our common pasts while more clearly indicting

18 This comparative realization has, as of late, often been confused with "intersectionality." While intersectionality is a useful tool for social analysis and redress, it is a component of broader decolonial and liberative thought. On intersectionality, see Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1:8 (1989): 139–167. See also Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties* (Albany: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1986).

19 Joseph Krauss, "Israel Outlaws Palestinian Rights Groups, Alleging Terrorism," Associated Press (22 October 2021), available online at <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-israel-terrorism-96464d7d14c3a1a0b5adb75a45aa6a5e>.

20 See Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," trans. Libby Meintjes, *Public Culture* 15:1 (2003): 11–40.

21 See the excellent special issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (48:4, 2019) dedicated to Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarities edited by Noura Erakat and Marc Lamont Hill. Standout articles include their introductory essay, "Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarity: Renewals, Returns, and Practice," and Taurean J. Webb's "Troubling Idols: Black-Palestinian Solidarity in U.S. Afro-Christian Spaces."

22 Susie Linfield, "Palestine Isn't Ferguson," *The Atlantic* (24 October 2021), available online at <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/10/israeli-palestinian-conflict-ferguson/620471/>.

our common opponents and systemic challenges. In our stories, we find grief and pain. But we also discover preservation and reconstruction while finding resources for local and trans-contextual resistance.²³

Together, we must discover new tools and methodologies for dismantling the dominant myths and narratives informing the structure of our contemporary world. This work must include the voices of women and youth. We must challenge the exclusionary and xenophobic tendencies within our own communities. As a Christian from the United States within a denomination that is primarily white, who is a Citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in close relationship with Palestinians and other dispossessed and colonized peoples, a significant component of my ongoing research will be to challenge both western Christian theologies and modernist ideologies that normalize imperial hegemony and anti-Indigenous land theft, Christian Zionism chief among them.

23 On the importance of story for providing critical narratives and imparting vital analytical observations in ways accessible to oppressed communities, see Aja Y. Martinez, *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory* (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 2020).

10

Tipping Point: Zionism, the Church, and Why This Is Bigger than Palestine

Mark Braverman

I want to thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me to present. It's a pleasure to be with you. I speak to you from Portland, Oregon, in the United States. I acknowledge the indigenous people on whose land I live: Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Chinook, Tualatin Kalapuya, Wasco and Mollala.

As I begin it is important to mention the recent action taken by the State of Israel against six Palestinian Human rights organizations. Israel has charged them with association with so-called terrorist organizations, in order to effectively close down their operations. Many of us involved directly with the Palestinian struggle know the work of these organizations. Their tireless and courageous work is an expression of the refusal of the Palestinian people to be erased or to cease their commitment to the life, culture and future of their society. The good news is that there has been significant push back on Israel from human rights organizations here in the United States, as well as from some Jewish organizations. So Israel is being watched, public opinion is turning, and I think that this supports the case I will make that we have reached a tipping point.

The issues that we take on when we address the question of Palestine today are bigger and broader than the struggle of one particular people for liberation. Furthermore, taking on Zionism extends beyond the devastating impact that this ideology has had on the Palestinian people. With Palestine we step on to not only a political but a theological battlefield. Where we are today takes us back to the first century, to the context in which Jesus pursued his ministry, where the distinctions between politics and theology that we hold today didn't exist. And we will get nowhere in the movement for human rights of Palestinians if we do not take on the theological and the hermeneutical barriers that stand in the way.

As Dr. Muzaffar pointed out in a previous session, Christian Zionism is deeply expressive of what liberation theologian Walter Wink called the Domination System. Zionism provides the theological armature on which systems of oppression are built. Masquerading as a liberation

movement, Zionism provides the cover for tyranny. It divides people when what we need most urgently these days is to come together to meet the challenges facing humanity as a whole.

I want to say a few words about my own story, my own process of leaving Zionism. I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1948. If you are a child born into a traditional Jewish family in the U.S. in the years following the establishment of the State of Israel, you are raised in a potent combination of political Zionism and Rabbinic Judaism. I was taught that I was blessed to have been born at a time when my people had been liberated from 2000 years of slaughter and oppression. I was taught that as a Jew, I was constantly vulnerable, that I lived in a dangerous world, that I could only trust my own kind. And that further there were two particular peoples whom I was to hate and to fear: the German people because of what they had done to us, and the Arabs, as we called them, because of what they would do to us if we did not have the State of Israel. Something deep within me rebelled against this basis for building an identity and worldview. And then, by the grace of God, I was led to cross over that wall, to meet this purported enemy, the Palestinians. I learned that, despite the wrong that has been done to them, they did not fear me, and they did not hate me. I met the Palestinian Christians and was introduced to their liberation theology. And I realized that the teachings of Jesus, that Palestinian Jew of long ago, spoke to the values that had been implanted in my study of the Jewish prophets. I have had to patiently explain to people that in embracing the teachings of Jesus, I have not “converted” to Christianity. I remain a Jew, in fact I have become the best Jew that I can be. Through my work for the liberation of Palestine I have been able to surmount the wall that had been built in my heart, and to join the community of humanity, instead of being enclosed behind the fortress walls that we Jews have built in a tragic and fruitless attempt to heal our collective Jewish trauma.

I treasure my tradition, treasure my religious upbringing and feel great love for my people. So that when I talk about what has happened to my people and the great wrongs we have committed, I do this with grief, with horror, with compassion, and with a hope that we will someday dig ourselves out of the hole that we now find ourselves in. That we will forgive ourselves for what we have done, and resolve to leave Zionism behind.

I also come to this as an American who, in parallel fashion, has had to unlearn the mythology about our founding that, until recently, erased the recognition of our original sins of genocide and chattel slavery. I have now come to understand my country in terms of our colonial settler DNA. This is now being expressed in what is known as critical race theory and in the concept of whiteness. Thus, my journey from Zionism and my awakening to the reality of my heritage as an American are of one piece.

Add to this the work that I have been privileged to do with churches in the United States and around the world. The response of the global church to the liberation cry of the Palestinian Christians is a key component of the of the Palestinian struggle. Working for liberation in Palestine today brings us back to Palestine of the first century, which was the context of the gospel narrative of a grassroots movement against tyranny.

Church Struggle

I want to begin with the concept of church struggle. The concept of church struggle first emerged in the Nazi era, when the Confession Church emerged in opposition to the wholesale and willing complicity of the German Lutheran Church with the National Socialist Regime. The term was adopted by the South African churches in the anti-apartheid struggle. It denotes the struggle of the church between its faithfulness to basic gospel principles of equality and justice, and preserving its institutional identity and stability by aligning with power, even at the cost of collaborating with tyranny. This internal conflict within the church goes far back in church history, to the relationship between the church and colonialism. We can trace that to the Doctrine of Discovery of the sixteenth century, but really we can go all the way back to the fourth century and the Roman Emperor Constantine's embrace of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire.

The Ecumenical Movement was and continues to be an arena in which this fundamental struggle of the church between its institutional nature and its faithfulness to core gospel principles plays out. It had its birth between World War I and World War 2, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth were very much part of setting out the theological and ecclesiological principles at stake. Bonhoeffer's struggle was expressed in asking the question, what is the true church? Was it the Confessing Church, which he founded with Barth and others, or was it the so-called "German Church," which had allied with the Nazi regime?

Fast forward to the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S. in the mid-twentieth century, sometimes called the civil rights movement, which demonstrated the power of the church to actively engage with society and to exert a direct influence on human affairs in the political arena. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail by sets out the terms of the struggle very clearly. Recall that King was writing this to fellow clergymen, who were advising caution, to go slow and rock the boat. But King said that to act boldly and with uncompromising moral clarity is what God demands of us, to act as the early followers of Jesus did in challenging the injustice of the society in which they lived.

The World Council of Churches, which was the institution by which the Ecumenical Movement revived itself after the interruption of World War II, founded the Program to Combat Racism in 1969. In so doing, the church, speaking and acting as a global, ecumenical body, declared that racism was the compelling issue of the times. In the face of fierce opposition from member churches in the North, the PCR funded national liberation movements in Africa. The WCC was accused of aiding and abetting terrorism. We see this same charge directed against churches who support Palestinian resistance to the historic and ongoing theft and colonization of their land. We saw a similar response on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to Latin American liberation theology, when the Holy See sought to discredit those church leaders and clergy taking up the cause of the poor by associating its advocacy for oppressed with godless Communism. And finally in the latter part of the 20th century, the church's response to legalized

and systematic injustice came to a head in its perhaps most visible and well-known way in the case of South Africa.

Kairos theology, Church theology

The Kairos South African 1985 document, titled, significantly, “A Challenge to the Church,” is a brilliantly and powerfully articulated call to the churches to reject the theological and ecclesial complicity with power. The document introduced the concept of Church Theology. Church Theology – as opposed to Prophetic Theology – twists and distorts theology to support and maintain the system of domination and power. It defines concepts such as reconciliation, non-violence and justice to serve the needs and program of the oppressor. It’s an old story, of course. “Violence,” for example, is the resistance of the oppressed, not the structural and overt violence of the state. Along with the Letter from Birmingham Jail, the South Africa Kairos document stands as a towering document of contextual and public theology of 20th century. I commend it to you.

It is in this tradition that we now have the 2009 Kairos Palestine “Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering.” This too was a call to the church to resist tyranny. You can say that that the Kairos Palestine document initiated public theology in the 21st century. It has spawned a host of Kairos documents from every continent, each responding to the Palestinian call from its own context of struggle. The Kairos Palestine document launched a movement – what is now a global network of church-related organizations.

There is more to say about the Global South here, and the powerful documents of liberation theology emerging from the South in support of the Palestinians. This global dynamic is an important factor in the developing strategy to mobilize the churches to change the policies of governments and international bodies on a global level. In an important sense this is the purpose and proper focus of this entire seminar series, raising the question, what is the role of the churches of South and East Asia as they confront the theological issues raised by the call of the Palestinian churches.

The U.S., UK, Germany and other western countries have also written their own responses from their own contextual perspectives. And that context, of course, is the responsibility of the West for colonialism in its many manifestations over the centuries. From England and the United States, we have confessions of complicity for what is happening in Palestine today. The most hopeful and wonderful thing that has happened is that out of Kairos Palestine, which has been an organization since 2009, a coalition of organizations called Global Kairos for Justice has arisen to network and to link member organizations and church in a strategy for action. I’ll make the case that it’s the churches who will be the necessary component to changing the political wind. The church has done it before. The civil rights movement in the United States began as a church movement – its leaders were pastors, organizing their work according to principles of resistance derived from the gospels. The anti-apartheid movement owed much to the spiritual

and organizing power of church leaders, most of them still unknown still to the West with the exception of Desmond Tutu. Church leaders from South Africa were responsible for bringing the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to do the Protestant equivalent of excommunicating in 1982 the churches in South Africa that were practicing apartheid and racial separation. That unleashed a flood of support, which made a critical difference in pushing the governments of the U.S. and the UK to finally join the economic sanctions against South Africa which ultimately brought down the Apartheid regime.

The story of the churches in the anti-Apartheid struggle demonstrates how the churches can make a difference. It was true then, and it is true now. The Palestinian call has brought about the church struggle of our times.

Post- WWII theology, Zionism, and Christian-Jewish relations

I want to address a few words to the issue of what to do about my people, the Jewish people, with respect to the challenge to the church to stand with the Palestinians. It's a crucial question and it is the "elephant in the room" – the big issue that is very rarely addressed openly. After World War II, with the ovens of the Nazi death camps still smoldering, the Christian world, beginning in Germany and then spreading west, embarked on an urgent project to purge Christianity of its anti-Judaism, to confess its sins against the Jews and to build bridges of reconciliation with the Jewish people. Out of this emerged what has come to be known as post-holocaust theology. At its heart was a renunciation of replacement theology, also called supersessionism, the doctrine that was responsible for so much Jewish suffering at the hands of the Church.

This was a good and important project, But the pendulum has swung too far. In the course of atoning for church anti-Judaism, mainstream Christian theology has effectively restored the idea that one people or group is specially loved by God. In the process of renouncing the demonization of the Jews, the postwar project of penitence for antisemitism has brought back the idea of a Chosen People, most beloved of God, and with that comes privileges – including a land grant. It has put Christian theology – across the confessional and theological spectrum, I will have more to say about that – on a slippery slope to the embrace of Zionism. This flies directly in the face of core gospel principles of anti-territoriality and universalism. Articulated by prominent, mainstream Protestant German theologians in the postwar period, it spread quickly to the United States. And it remains normative in mainstream Christianity in the West, as well as in the South, even in those societies and churches that are all-too-familiar with the struggle of oppressed peoples against colonial tyranny.

And they have gotten Jesus wrong.

To me the Jewish Jesus was the Jesus that stood before the Temple – the church establishment of his time if you will – and said, this has to come down, to be replaced with my body – one universal humanity united in compassion and equality. This is the message of Pentecost: to leave Jerusalem and go out into the wide world speaking all the languages of the world, bringing the

Good News that God's love is for everyone, not just one people, and that God is to be worshipped everywhere, in the Spirit, and not on one particular mountain.

Yes, the church has to answer for millennia of Jewish suffering, but this is not the heart of the matter today. The call of Palestine to the church is urgent, indisputable and must be answered. It overrides considerations of guilt and shame over past Jewish suffering. But too many Christians who recognize their obligation to stand with Palestinians continue to feel that they cannot move forward without explicit or implicit permission from Jewish community leaders. Another way that this has manifested is through entering into "dialogue" with Jews about the question of Zionism and Israel. Unfortunately, these relationships come with unwritten rules about not challenging Zionist assumptions.

The unwritten rules governing the Christian-Jewish "interfaith" dialogue today dictate that you may acknowledge Palestinian suffering, but you may not challenge fundamental Zionist assumptions. You must accept the claim made by those who claim to represent all Jews that Jewish identity is inseparable from allegiance to the State of Israel, and that Zionism and Judaism are one and the same. You must never be so politically and theologically incorrect as to say that the Old Testament is fundamentally tribal and that the New Testament is universal. But Jesus was taking Judaism where it obviously needed to go, lifting it from the idea of a covenant between God and one family and later one nation, into the realm of the universality and ultimate grace of God's love for humankind. That was a very Jewish thing for Jesus to do. He had never intended to start a new religion. We need to see the Old Testament, as providing the foundation for what came to be called Christianity, but that in it there was a radical break from particularity and tribalism. The church has to unapologetically and proudly own this break from the Old Testament narrative, in spite of the fact that in today's environment you subject yourselves to being called antisemitic for saying such things. I highly recommend to you the work of New Testament scholars Gary Burge in the United States and the late Stephen Prior from Ireland for their work in this area. The bold truth is that when you come to terms with these basic theological principles, you have no choice but to renounce Zionism – in its secular or religious forms, Christian or Jewish, as the basis for ordering human affairs in the Holy Land or religious discourse anywhere.

My conviction is that the church must look to its own house and not wait for the institutional Jewish community to come around to challenging the whole concept of a Jewish state. The message of Palestine to Christians is that if you want to truly reclaim the Jewish Jesus, you must be willing to pick up the cross of being accused of antisemitism when you support the Palestinian cause.

Confronting Christian Zionism

This brings us to the issue of Christian Zionism. The crisis for the church in confronting the question of Palestinian is very much about how we understand the Bible. Robert Smith and Don Wagner in the United States and Munther Isaac in Palestine have written about the foundations of Christian Zionism in the English Reformation and the way it has manifested in evangelical

Christianity. Stephen Sizer in the UK and Munther Isaac, Naim Ateek, Yohanna Katanacho and Mitri Raheb in Palestine have done important work in helping us understand the urgent theological issues raised by Christian Zionism. I also refer you to www.christianzionism.org, an excellent website intended principally for evangelical as well as mainline Christians.

In traditional Christian Zionism, the establishment of the State of Israel is seen as bringing closer the End Times, in which Jesus will return after the last non-Jew is expelled from Jerusalem. At least half the Christians in the world would agree that this theology is non-biblical but this theology and worldview has a strong hold. It is this form of Christian Zionism we usually talk about, but we also need to talk about the Christian Zionism that's hiding in plain sight in mainline Christianity. It does not have the End Times eschatology, but it shares a worldview that is exclusionary and triumphalist. And it is very much represented in the postwar theology philo-judaic theology that I have talked about today.

It's also important to realize that there is a large swath of evangelical Christians, particularly in the United States, who have been to Palestine, seen the reality on the ground, and on that basis are willing to take a hard look at their theology and their understanding of biblical promises. But we need to talk to the mainline churches as well, about their theology and their hermeneutic. This theological work is ongoing, begun by Palestinian theologians such as Munther Isaac, Yohanna Katanacho, Mitri Raheb and Naim Ateek, and continued in the work of Don Wagner, Stephen Sizer, and Gary Burge. Also worthy of mention is the excellent work of Jewish Voice for Peace in the U.S. and the Palestine-Israel Networks of the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Church of Christ in the U.S.

The Jewish predicament and the Christian dilemma

We Jews are trapped in victimhood; we are a case of collective post-traumatic stress disorder. From my work as a psychologist, I know that the treatment of choice for people who have been traumatized over the years, even over generations, is not to put them in a fortress, post soldiers on the fortress walls, and promote the message that the world is dangerous and to trust no one. This perpetuates the trauma. The greater tragedy is that the victims then becoming the victimizers, which is what we see in modern-day Israel. What we Jews must do – and this is beginning, particularly among the young – is to realize that Zionism not the solution to antisemitism, confess that it was an understandable wrong turn for which we need to forgive ourselves, and that in order to recover from our suffering and to learn to trust, we must join the wider world, and embrace our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Christians face a different challenge. Reacting in horror at the genocide of the Jews of Europe, Christians missed the opportunity for deep self-reflection. The horror of what church anti-Judaism had produced should have brought about not a reversion to the theology of specialness and chosenness and a guilt offering of land, but rather the understanding that it was that very theology of exceptionalism and triumphalism that allowed the genocide to happen. I ask myself what would Bonhoeffer say today contemplating Christian support for Zionism? What would

he say about this guilt offering of specialness and the privileged right to Palestine that you've granted to the Jewish people, a gift which provides you a free ride back into your own exceptionalism? In a betrayal of the gospel, you have embraced the notion of God's special people, first giving it back to the Jews and then hitching a ride on it. The philojudaic theology of the postwar period produced the concept of the "Judeo-Christian tradition", which Robert Smith and Mitri Raheb have also written about, which is Christian triumphalism on steroids: what we have today is Judeo-Christian triumphalism. To borrow Bonhoeffer's terminology, it's cheap grace. What would be costly grace in Bonhoeffer's terms would be to say to your Jewish sisters and brothers: thou dost evil. To say, I know you're going to call me antisemitic but we have to do what our faith obligates us to do, which is to stand with the oppressed, and we pray that you will come alongside us someday.

The tipping point

In summary: why do I believe that we have reached a tipping point? First: the charge of antisemitism leveled at critics of Israel has been around for a while but today it is being weaponized as never before. Back in the 1970s, neoconservatives in the United States, threatened by the fact that Israel was coming under scrutiny for its human rights crimes, developed the concept of the "New Antisemitism." They discredited it by connected it with the political Left (remember this was the Cold War), saying, if you dare to criticize Israel you are antisemitic. Today the equating of criticism of Israel with antisemitism has been revived, but on a broader scale. You see it used against church leaders as well as at the highest levels of national governments. An example is the definition of antisemitism produced by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which explicitly names criticism of the State of Israel as a form of antisemitism. It has been adopted by several governments, including the UK. To me this is good news. It means that those who defend Israel's crimes are now on the defensive. The issue is being debated at the highest levels. In the halls of United States Congress. Recently the words apartheid and settler colonialism were used in the same sentence in debates about whether or not Israel should continue to receive military aid from us.

Second: we have reached a tipping point because the churches have awakened as a result of the tireless work of the Palestinian Christians. And please do not accept the Zionist argument that Christians are being victimized by what they call "Palestinian nationalism", which is code for Muslims. It's an old trick, and there are no Palestinians who would say that Christians and Muslims are divided in their resistance to Israeli oppression.

I come back to and will conclude by returning to the concept of church struggle. The church has always struggled, it needs to struggle – that's the living church, that's the awakened and enlivened church. The struggle is going on within churches, but it's also happening between churches – west and east, north and south. Our work today is to mobilize the global church, with Palestine as an entry point, but being clear that this is about a struggle against a universal phenomenon. Here I commend to you another document, entitled "Dangerous Memory and Hope for the Future." It emerged from a conference in Johannesburg in 2015 on the occasion of the

30th anniversary of Kairos South Africa document. It is a brief document that talks about how Palestine is an entry point for the struggle against tyranny and inequality that we are all engaged with as a human community. It takes us right back to the gospels, which is what that narrative and ministry was all about.

I will conclude by quoting from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who in 1935 wrote the following words: “Theology itself is not the fighting part here; it stands wholly in the service of the living, confessing and struggling church.” Bonhoeffer here, writing from within the crucible of his own personal, theological and church struggle, meant that this is the point of doing theology. He understood the church as the community of those who, like Jesus, saw the signs of the times and struggled with the challenges they presented. I celebrate my membership in this community and I thank you again for inviting me to speak to you today.

11

The Possible Renewal of Solidarity with the Palestinians

Through the Eyes of a Korean-Japanese

Miyuki Kinjo

Palestinian struggle and the Zainichi Koreans

The Palestinian struggle has been an important reference that sharply captures the postcolonial situation in Japan. Especially among the marginalized Korean minorities in Japan, it has long been a significant referential point in creating their identity as resisting agents against Japan's continuing colonialism and its nation-state violence. The Korean minorities, generally labeled as *Zainichi* Koreans ("Koreans living in Japan"), are mostly former Japanese imperial subjects, who were excluded from the post-World War II Japanese constitutional frameworks through being deprived of their Japanese citizenship.

As of 2020, there are nearly 450,000 *Zainichi* Koreans in Japan, two-thirds of whom hold special permanent residency status designed specifically for the former Japanese imperial subjects in Korea, alongside Taiwan. Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula, incrementally formulated in the 1900s, was formally proclaimed in 1910, and the annexation continued until the end of World War II in 1945. During the period of colonization, Koreans were denied the right of self-determination, of their national identity, and were faced with the assimilation policy of Imperial Japan. This policy included enforcing the Japanese state-religion (Shintoism) and imposing Japanese nationality on Korean people, while prohibiting the exhibition of the Korean national identity in public space, and banning the use of the Korean language, flag, costumes, and even their original Korean names. As with any other colonial rule, the Japanese colonization destroyed the Korean economy, thus forcing many Koreans, including my paternal grandfather, to immigrate to the metropole to survive, while the Japanese deliberately discriminated against the colonial subjects there.

Japan's surrender to the Allied forces in the summer of 1945 also liberated the Korean peninsula, that encouraged the two million Koreans living in Japan to return to their homeland,

anticipating decolonization and its state-building. However, such a decolonization was never fully realized, since the post-World War II superpowers, the U. S. and the Soviet Union, began to penetrate Korea to fill the political vacuum left by the Japanese rule. After witnessing a division of their homeland in the deadly civil war, that led to the Korean War in 1950, nearly 600,000 Koreans eventually chose to stay in the former metropole, and formed the core of the Zainichi Korean population in the post-World War II Japan.

The Korean population was expected to be included into the Japanese citizenship. However, a day before the proclamation of the new Japanese Constitution in 1947, the last decree of Emperor Hirohito stated that all Koreans, along with Taiwanese, were to be categorized as aliens for the time being, thus substantially revoking their citizenship to Japan. The decree was later legislated in 1952, with the enforcement of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, whereby Japan normalized their diplomatic relations with 50 Allied powers, without any obligation to fulfill its responsibility as colonizer to secure the colonized people's rights. Precisely then, many Koreans fled from their war-torn homeland, while others returned to Japan as "illegal immigrants," this time. During the geopolitical transformation from World War II to the Cold War, Zainichi Koreans suddenly became refugees without a safe homeland in Korea, nor did they have any rights in Japan.

Zainichi Koreans' Encounter with the Palestinians

The existence of Zainichi Koreans, reminiscent of Japan's colonial violence, has remained rather invisible in Japan. I was born into the Zainichi community through my paternal grandparents' lineage, but was naturalized as a Japanese citizen by my parents in my early childhood. As a naturalized Japanese, detached from the Korean origin, I would ponder upon the historical meaning of the existence of Zainichi Koreans in Japan. However, post-World War II Japan only give Zainichi Koreans an inexplicable status, keeping their presence invisible within the constitutive framework and public discourse. Such invisibility is derived from Japan's oblivion of its own colonial past and its self-image of being a monoethnic society. Postwar Japan has never officially adapted multicultural policies nor recognized a minority status for any postcolonial minority groups, such as Zainichi Koreans and Okinawans, except the recent recognition of the indigenous Ainu people in 2019. Hence, racism against postcolonial minority groups has never been officially recognized, as the majority do not believe in the existence of such a problem in the Japanese society.

In reclaiming their history and rights in the Japanese society, some Zainichi intellectuals had established a clear self-consciousness as colonized agents, and had contextualized their own struggle within a general framework of decolonization in the Third World. The reference point linking the Zainichi struggle to global decolonization was Ghassan Kanafani, a prominent Palestinian writer and PFPL revolutionary in the 1960s and early 70s. His novels had exposed the Palestinian struggle to the world, that otherwise would be silenced by the Israeli colonial power.

Among the Zainichi intellectuals, Kyonshik Soh, a second generation Zainichi writer, drew a clear link between the Zainichi Korean and Palestinian experiences through his uncle's personal experience in his works in the 2000s.¹ His uncle, who had been in Japan in his early childhood, returned to Korea with his family immediately after the liberation in 1945, only to return to the metropole owing to the deadly battles across the peninsula. Recalling his uncle's experiences, from illegal maritime immigration to his secret illegal residency in Japan, Soh linked the Zainichi Koreans' lives with that of the Palestinians presented in Kanafani's novel, "Men in the Sun" (1962). The novel tells a story of three Palestinian refugees who had attempted to smuggle themselves from Jordan to Kuwait, and who had eventually died in the extraordinary heat in a water tank where they had hidden in secrecy to cross the border. Soh associated these Palestinian refugees, who had tried to cross the border unnoticed without calling for help, with the Zainichi Koreans typically represented by his uncle, who had lost his homeland and had secretly immigrated to Japan, hiding himself in a metallic drum filled with machine oil aboard a small smuggling ship. By presenting this synchronization of experiences between Kanafani's story and that of his uncle's, Soh captured a shared experience of the colonized subjects whose lives were collectively illegalized by the colonizers, while their history was kept hidden from the world.

Soh's synchronized portrait of the experiences of the Palestinians and Zainichi Koreans, in turn, sheds light on the structural similarity between Israel and Japan as colonial regimes. Post-World War II Japan often enjoys a positive image in the international community as a democratic country. However, through the colonized Zainichi Koreans' eyes, post-war Japan was born out of an ethnic cleansing policy on a legal level that unilaterally separated the colonized populations in the society and deprived them of their rights, while ensuring privileged citizenship only to ethnic Japanese as a superior metropole nation. Japan, absolving itself from the responsibility for its colonial past, carried on foundational and constitutional violence in its post-World War II re-establishment. This is where the structural similarity between postwar Japan and Israel is manifested. Israel, founded as a settler-colonial regime, claims itself to be Jewish-and-democratic, while continuing the elimination of the Palestinian natives. Similarly, post-World War Japan has been excluding its colonized population from their constitutional framework. In light of the Zainichi Koreans, Japan is Japanese-and-democratic, where its former colonial subjects remain physically present but politically absent.

Japan's transition from a colonial system to a post-war regime obscured its responsibility to its colonial past, and the Cold War reinforced this trend. After 1945, Japan was subjugated to the US anti-communist policy in East Asia, where former Japanese colonies, such as the Korean Peninsula, China, and Taiwan were divided, and the unified accusation against Japanese imperialism was made impossible. Taking advantage of the situation, Japan not only returned to the international community in 1952 without any agreements with its major colonies, but also enjoyed rapid economic growth following the special procurement boom sparked by the Korean War at the expense of Korean lives, and by making huge economic inroads through Official Developmental Aids to the anti-communist dictators in South East Asia. These situations had

1 Kyonshik, Soh. 2002. "A Sight from a quasi-Refugee." *Gendai Shiso*, vol. 30, no. 13, pp. 60-79. (in Japanese)

long disrupted the Asian victims of Japanese imperialism from raising their voices to accuse the Japanese of colonial violence.

However, in the post-Cold War situation of the 1990s, the colonized Asians began to openly accuse Imperial Japan of violence, and demanded that the Japanese government recognize their victimhood, and provide an official apology and compensation. These demands were made through over 110 lawsuits in Japan. This ignited discussions among the Japanese liberal intellectuals about how the government and its citizens should fulfill the historical responsibility for its colonial past and the present continuation. Soh's articulation of the Zainichi-Palestinian linkage emerged from his involvement in this public discussion in the 1990s, to contextualize the Zainichi Korean presence in Japan.

As such, a sign of belated attempts for self-decolonization appeared in the 1990s and the early 2000s, and the Japanese colonial responsibility was discussed intensively in the society, where Zainichi Koreans and Japanese liberal intellectuals openly exchanged views. The Asian victims' accusations included issues of unpaid military pensions for the Korean and Taiwanese who had served in the Japanese army, recognition and compensation for the forced labor and sex slavery, and the wartime responsibility of Emperor Hirohito, among many other things. In these discussions, some liberal Japanese intellectuals responded positively by articulating the need to assume their political responsibility that is derived from the fact that they are members of the Japanese privileged nations.

The Predicament of Zainichi Koreans and the Palestinians in the 2000s

However, in most cases, the Japanese courts dismissed the plaintiffs' claims, and absolved the Japanese government of the responsibility to compensate or of an official apology to the victims mostly under the pretext of "statute of limitations." Although, in most cases, the court largely admitted the accused facts, no further legal remedy was enforced to redress the colonial injustice. Such a governmental inaction encouraged serious backlash from the right-wing in the 2000s.

The backlash mainly emerged from two directions. First, in the 1990s, revisionist groups actively began campaigning for denial of responsibility towards the Asian-Pacific War, as well as the colonization of Taiwan, Korea, north China, and inner Mongolia (so-called "Manchukuo"), supported by the major right-wing conservatives in the leading Liberal Democracy Party. Their campaigns rebuffed the liberal discussions that attested to Japan's historical responsibility as a "masochistic view of history," and publicly justified the Asian-Pacific War as the war of the liberation from the US and European imperialism, a narrative previously circulated among right-wing conservatives, but in a clandestine manner.

Second, the War on Terror, post-9/11, reinforced the demonization of the Zainichi Koreans and made the conventionally invisible and marginalized group a subject of manifested racism. In January 2002, the US President George W. Bush named North Korea as part of an axis of evil along with Iran and Iraq in the above context. Japan took advantage of the US-led sanctions on North

Korea, and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi held the first- ever meeting between the heads of the North Korean and Japanese states in September 2002. In the meeting, the North Korean supreme leader, Kim Jong Il, confirmed the fact that its secret agents had abducted 13 Japanese citizens during the 1970s and 80s to tutor North Korean spies in Japan. This news sparked the Japanese campaigns that painted Zainichi Koreans as North Korean espionage agents. Zainichi Korean individuals and communities began to receive death threats and hate speeches, and were put under more highly insecure conditions than ever before.²

One of the most serious attacks on the Zainichi Korean community was an assault on a Korean school in Kyoto by the members of Japanese supremacist and anti-Korean racist groups in 2009. The Zainichi Korean parents who chose to educate their children in Korean schools had made great efforts to maintain the school. It not only served as a place to go back to their national identity and language that was kept suppressed during Japanese colonialism, but also as a center for their life and community. However, the racist groups exploited Japan's political situation where no comprehensive measure against racism has been taken under the pretext of "freedom of speech," and attempted to destroy the core of the Zainichi Korean community. The Japanese government barely took a positive role in defending their lives; rather they virtually endorsed these hate crimes by keeping the Korean school away from newly introduced free education policy for high schools. Thus, it further condoned hate speeches and public threats against the Zainichi Koreans in different areas.

The precarious situation of the Zainichi Koreans in the 2000s was concurrent with the Israeli consolidation of the apartheid system in Palestine during the Second Intifada. However, due to their deteriorated situation, the political space for Zainichi solidarity with the Palestinian struggle had severely reduced, and their activities were limited to reactive protests following the massive Israeli invasions in Gaza. The Oslo process, that started in 1993, also complicated the solidarity movement, because it established the PLO, the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people recognized in the international community and the official door for the international solidarity movement, as a de-facto subcontractor of the Israeli occupation system.

As the Zainichi Korean and the Palestinian situations exacerbated, racist oppression in Japan and Israel were also mutually consolidated. The Japanese oppression system developed in the same way as Israel's did, by consolidating a diplomatic alliance between them, and strengthening economic and military ties on public and private levels during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's second administration (2012-2020).

Renewal of Transnational Solidarity

However, even under these circumstances, some Zainichi Koreans reiterate the need to renew solidarity with the Palestinians to make it more impactful and mutual. To envisage a new

2 Sonia Ryang. 2009. "Visible and Vulnerable: The Predicament of Koreans in Japan." in Sonia Ryang ed. *Diaspora without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press. Pp.62-80.

solidarity between the Zainichi Koreans and Palestinians, it is important to refer to other examples of solidarity between the Palestinians and oppressed people. On this point, the renewed transnational solidarity between the Black movement in US and the Palestinians provides us an important reference.

In an introductory essay for an issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* in 2018, Nora Erakat and Marc Lamont Hill outlined the context for the recent reactivation of the Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarity (BPTS) by reframing the concept of “renewal.” The direct trigger of renewed BPTS can be found at the “Gaza-Ferguson moment” in 2014, when the third massive invasion of Gaza coincided with the killing of eighteen-year-old Michael Brown Jr. by a US police officer – events that exposed the devaluation, dehumanization, and destruction of both Black and Palestinian lives. The authors emphasized the meaning of “renewal,” because there was a disconnection from the previous BPTS due to political changes, including the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s. However, recent Black movements have increasingly exposed state-involved killings of Black people, exhibiting a synchronized situation with the violence in Palestine/Israel by using new media as a form of activism, that led to the reconfiguration of the BPTS.

The authors pointed out that although Black-Palestinian solidarity “have routinely framed the relationship between Blacks and Palestinians through the language of common interest, contextual similarity, and shared struggle, such frameworks are insufficient for developing a critical and nuanced analysis of contemporary Black-Palestinian solidarity politics.” The authors further interrogated the historical difference between the two movements, and also how the Arab American community deployed the oppressive frameworks (for example, anti-Blackness and heteronormativity) that undermine the viability of Black life.³

If we turn to the Zainichi-Palestinian solidarity here, obviously some differences should be taken into account. The primal difference is the number of both minority groups and the in/visibility of the oppression. However, we should remember that Japan’s image of monotonicity is a product of a deliberately crafted racist policy during the transformative period from a colonial regime to an exclusive and supremacist nation-state. Under such population control, Zainichi Koreans are kept disenfranchised in the Japanese society, and keep failing to encounter with the Palestinians in a global context. However, as a way to build new solidarity, we should open up political spaces for Palestinian solidarity in Japan by relating our struggle to the Palestinian one within the global analytic framework of colonialism, capitalism, racism, sexism, and supremacism.

In such an identity-focused solidarity, each one is expected to explore the historical context of his/her own identity. Members of the dominant group are thus called to unpack their privileges and consider the way to carry their own historical responsibility in that society. In turn, it

3 Noura Erakat and Marc Lamont Hill. 2019. “Black-Palestinian Transnational Solidarity: Renewals, Returns, and Practice.” *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol.48, No. 4 (Summer), pp. 7-16.

is crucial for the oppressed group to look for commensurability of diverse suffering with a keen eye on the differences and inner oppression among the movements. The interrogation of the solidarity is a necessary step to collectively resist the globally encompassing oppression.

Intersectional experience of the Palestinian Women

One way to renew our solidarity is to apply an identity-focused approach based on individual positionality rather than principled understanding of solidarity, based on the affiliation to a single group. In this regard, the concept of intersectionality born out of BPTS has a significant role. Kimberly Crenshaw, in her article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex” (1989) had first coined the word intersectionality, and showed an essence of the critical concept to interrogate the feminist theory and antiracist policy in the US. Although a typical form of oppression assumed in the anti-discrimination discourse or feminist discourse was a single form of oppression, Black women’s suffering is derived from discrimination against both Blacks and women, thus they face an intersection of racial and sexual discrimination. As intersectionality is now firmly fixed in general discourse, especially in the US, there is cautious skepticism in the use of intersectionality as a basis of solidarity, due to the fear of diminishing the term’s original potential and misappropriating the Black women experience, if not contextualized properly.

However, some specific contexts surrounding the Palestinians actually call for the concept of intersectionality to renew the unity within the Palestinian society and the transnational solidarity outside Palestine. In the Palestinian society in recent years, intersectionality captures the attention to envisage a radical framework to transcend the Israeli apartheid system and mobilize the Palestinians across the segregation, while bypassing their official leadership represented by the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Palestinian adaption of intersectionality was first initiated by Palestinian women youth networks, whose situations are distinctively intersectional, because they suffer from oppression both by the Israeli occupation and patriarchy within Palestinian society. However, the Israeli occupation regime has exploited the Palestinian patriarchy, and weaponized women’s right as the excuse of destructive intervention into Palestinian lives. It should be noted that the patriarchal structure in Palestinian society was primarily strengthened after the Oslo Process, where PA-led patriarchal political structure was designed and introduced by Israeli and international sanctions. In this process, Palestinian civil society went through a fundamental transformation, and the conventional liberation movements were reframed into aid-depending NGOs under the PA supervision. Consequently, a space of radical activities for liberation is diminished on the large scale.

As Yara Hawari noted, in history, “Palestinian women have long been politicized individuals not just as wives, sisters, or mothers, but also as fighters, organizers, and leaders with agency that is not defined by their relationship to men.” During the First Intifada, the images of women and girls throwing stones, challenging soldiers, and leading marches showed promising signs of a social restructuring, and women’s groups solidified their involvement in social works and

political organization. However, the Oslo Process created a framework wherein the exiled male Palestinian leadership was empowered, rather than a framework for the empowerment of the Palestinian people as a whole.⁴

Thus, the Oslo Process has diminished women's political space in society and confined women's rights mainly to microfinance empowerment and focused solely on the number of women in decision-making processes in donor-led organizations. Israel, one of the chief designers of the Oslo Process, took advantage of the political disempowerment of Palestinian women, and justified the control over Palestinian society under the pretext of "improvement of the women's right."

Despite that, the Palestinian women have widely voiced gendered and sexual violence inflicted by the Israeli settler-colonialism. One such example is threatening of or actual case of sexual violence during police or military interrogations and imprisonments, thus exploiting Palestinian patriarchal perceptions of sexuality and "honor" to recruit Palestinians as collaborators and deter attempts at organized resistance.⁵

The Palestinian women are resisting Israeli manipulation of women's rights on the political level, and its gendered and sexual violence that is inflicted on them on a daily basis. In addition, they also have to face gendered and sexual violence in their own society. Therefore they do not only protest the social or familial violence in the Palestinian society, but also resist the PA-led patriarchal socio-political structure that suppresses their radical role in liberation and prevents them from participating in protests against PA through literal and figurative gendered and sexual violence, in a way that imitates the occupier.

These Palestinian women's intersectional struggle is underpinning a new solidarity among the Palestinians, despite the persistent Israeli effort to suppress it. For instance, young Palestinian women took a significant role in organizing "Unity Intifada" during the Israeli invasion in Gaza in May 2021. As Palestinian youth seek the "reuniting of Palestinian society in all of its different parts," "reuniting our political will, and our means of struggle to confront Zionism throughout Palestine,"⁶ Palestinian women's intersectional struggle serves a new platform for unity beyond the old elite-led political fragmentation.

Towards Intersectional Solidarity

The Palestinian women's struggle resisting the Israeli settler-colonialism and the Palestinian patriarchal system again synchronizes with the Black women's struggle in the US and has encouraged a solidarity based on intersectional experience between Palestinian and Black women.

4 Yara Hawari. 2019. "The Political Marginalization of Palestinian Women in the West Bank." *al-Shabaka*. July 28. <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/the-political-marginalization-of-palestinian-women-in-the-west-bank/>

5 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Sarah Ihmoud and Suhad Dahir-Nashif. 2014. "Sexual Violence, Women's Bodies, and Israeli Settler Colonialism." *Jadaliyya*. Nov 17. <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/31481>

6 An Open Letter published on May 18, 2021. "The Manifesto of Dignity and Hope." *Mondoweiss*. <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/05/the-manifesto-of-dignity-and-hope/>.

However, the driving force of the Black-Palestinian women's intersectional solidarity emerges not only from the synchronicity of the situation, but also from the intersection of the Black movement *with* the Palestinian struggle, as suggested by the notable Black woman activist, Angela Davis. She suggests a possibility of bringing movements together and creating an intersectionality of ongoing antiracist movements. "In the abolition movement, we've been trying to find ways to talk about Palestine so that people who are attracted to a campaign to dismantle prisons in the US will also think about the need to end the occupation in Palestine."⁷ Such intersectionality of movements suggest the creation of windows and doors to talk about Palestine so that people committing to an anti-racist campaign in the US will also empathize with the Palestinian cause. As US politics now persistently demonizes the Palestinian solidarity movements in response to the Israeli campaign to label any such movements as anti-Semitic, promoting Palestine solidarity in the existing movements would be an important struggle.

The intersection of movements among Palestinians, native Americans, and other colonized people stem from the fact that various oppressive structures are learning from each other, duplicating themselves, and establishing an alliance. To counter such a huge web of oppression, we must be united. However, intersectional solidarity has to be based on exploration of each one's historical responsibility to the oppressive system of their own society. This form of solidarity is based on the differences while sharing a perspective for delivering justice by holding their own historical responsibility to the suffering of colonized people. This poses a difficult, but important challenge for us, because in this form of solidarity, there would be no clear theory, no unified structural understanding, and no strong leadership; we are all unique in terms of the intersectional responsibility to injustice. We need to be honest and to be self-critical on an individual level, but we can simultaneously confirm the possibility of a collective struggle to counter the oppressive system and to bring justice for all suffering people.

7 Davis, Angela Y.. 2016. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Haymarket Books. p.35.

12

Speaking in different voices

Zionist and non-Zionist Jews in the U.S. and the UK

Tina Ottman

Over the past two decades, there has been a perceptible sea change among diaspora Jewish communities in the perceptions of and support for Israel. While the largest community (located in the U.S., the extended circle is taken to be around 7.5 million persons or 2.4% of the U.S. population)¹ remains staunch adherents of Jewish political Zionism,² affirming its sense of ‘attachment’ or ‘concern’ for Israel (Alper & Cooperman, 2021),^{3,4} there has nevertheless been an uptick in critical discourse. Whether it will provide a necessary impetus to affect change in governmental policies towards Israel largely remains to be seen, but it does suggest that some elements of this diaspora community may be inching very gradually towards a ‘Kairos moment’.

Where are the signs of fissures among the rock-solid support? In May 2021, according to a Pew Center survey (Northey, 2021) the largely liberal, pro-Democrat community (excluding the smaller pro-Republican Orthodox community) exhibited a surprising diversity of attitudes towards Israel; some 29% are critical of U.S.’s ‘too supportive’ backing of Israel and ‘more than half’ were ‘negative’ about Israel’s then-PM, Benjamin Netanyahu; around 42%

1 <https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/the-size-of-the-u-s-jewish-population/>

2 I use this term here to distinguish Jewish Zionism from Christian Zionism, which is in fact far older than the former, dating back to the Restorationism of the English Puritans. The historic roots of Zionism would likely come as a surprise to the instinctive Jewish or non-Jewish supporter of Zionism today.

3 As evidenced by the May 2021 findings of the Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/05/11/10-key-findings-about-jewish-americans/>

4 A smaller poll, carried out by the Jewish Electorate Institute, produced similar findings; see <https://www.jewishelectorateinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/JEI-National-Jewish-Survey-Topline-Results-July-2021.pdf> and <https://www.jewishelectorateinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/JEI-Survey-Analysis-071321.pdf>

also did not believe the God ‘literally’ gave Israel to the Jews.⁵ While two-thirds of those polled in the Jewish Electoral Institute’s 2021 survey believed that ‘Israel doesn’t have the right to exist’ constitutes antisemitism, a not inconsiderable 31% agreed with statements such as ‘Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians; 28% concurred that ‘Israel is an apartheid state’ and 20% affirmed that ‘Israel’s treatment of Palestinians is similar to racism in the U.S.’⁶

The more obvious place to seek critical discourse is the ivory tower, which has debated academic boycotts of Israel.⁷ Notable in-tribe campus critics of varying intensity include Joel Beinin, Daniel Boyarin, Judith Butler, UN Special Rapporteur Richard Falk, Norman Finkelstein, Marianne Hirsch, Mark LeVine, and Zachary Lockman. Evidence may also be sought in vigorous media debate (for example, by prominent intellectuals such as the liberal Zionist or formerly Zionist, Peter Beinart). Other signs of dissent may be found in the community groups engaged in grassroots organizing campaigns and campus activism aimed at transforming governments’ blanket support for Israeli policies; these range from older liberal Zionist ‘progressive’ organizations such as Americans for Peace Now (the U.S. ‘sister group’ to Israel’s Shalom Achshav) to more ‘radical’ groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), which calls for ‘American military aid [to] be withheld until Israel ends its occupation’ and claims to be the ‘only major Jewish group to support the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions’ and to stand against ‘white nationalism, racism, antisemitism, and Islamophobia.’⁸ JVP also forges interfaith alliances with other movements that attempt to transform the prevailing discourse on Israel, endorsing Christian groups such as Kairos USA, for example in their Call to Action, that ‘advocates for nonviolent resistance to oppression of Palestinians and Israeli civil society.’⁹ A further Jewish group, If Not Now, ‘welcomes the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism’ as a viable alternative the ‘controversial and unhelpful’ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s widely-referenced working definition of antisemitism, criticizing ‘self-appointed Jewish leaders’ who have supported IHRA ‘as part of a

5 https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/u-s-jews-connections-with-and-attitudes-toward-israel/pf_05-11-21_jewish-americans-07-10/

6 See slide 5 in <https://www.jewishelectorateinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/JEI-Survey-Analysis-071321.pdf> and the data in the survey itself <https://www.jewishelectorateinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/JEI-National-Jewish-Survey-Topline-Results-July-2021.pdf>; question 43, ‘Israel is an apartheid state’ (25% agree); question 44, ‘Israel’s treatment of Palestinians is similar to racism in the U.S.’ (34%); question 45, ‘Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians’ (22% agree).

7 A non-comprehensive list can be found at <https://usacbi.org/academic-associations-endorsing-boycott/>

8 According to <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>

9 See <https://kairosusa.org/endorsements/jewish-voice-for-peace-rabbinical-council/>

long-term campaign to shield the Israeli government from accountability'.¹⁰ If Not Now takes an intersectional approach to oppression, believing that 'fighting antisemitism is inseparable from fighting other forms of discrimination... we can only defeat [antisemitism] by building relationships across differences and taking action as part of the larger movement for justice and equity for all' (Lieberman, 2021).¹¹

No data is available on the relative size of these groups in comparison to the non-critical, traditional Zionist majority, but the mere fact of their existence is worth noting and points to other voices among the community, perhaps reflective of its maturity and its confidence levels within the American democratic landscape. Perhaps Lawrence Davidson may be overstating the case in his *Consortium News* article 'Schism in US Judaism Deepens' (Davidson, 2022),¹² but he does highlight the controversial letter signed by 93 rabbinical and cantorial students entitled 'Rabbinical and Cantorial Students Appeal to the Heart of the Jewish Community' (also reported on in the *Forward* [Mandel et al, 2021] with the headline 'Gates of Tears': rabbinical and cantorial students stand for solidarity with Palestinians').¹³ The letter refers dramatically to the May 2021 crisis in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the consequent race riots in many cities and the spectre of another attack on Gaza:

Blood is flowing in the streets of the Holy Land. Fires are burning on the hills of Jerusalem and buildings are smoldering in Gaza. Violence is spilling onto the streets of Lod and Haifa. With each refresh of the news and each rocket that falls, new images of terror sear themselves into our minds. We find ourselves in tears.

... What will it take for us to see that our Israel has the military and controls the borders? How many Palestinians must lose their homes, their schools, their lives, for us to

10 The text of the 2020 Jerusalem Declaration is available here <https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JDA-1.pdf> Despite the distinguished list of radical Jewish academic signatories, the text was not necessarily well received by Palestinians; Palestinian-Canadian academic Mark Muhannad Ayash, of the Al-Shabaka Policy Network, writes that the Declaration is part of 'a wave of definitions of antisemitism that are determined to protect the validity of the idea of the Jewish state from any serious critique coming from anti-Zionist Jews (whose Jewishness is increasingly questioned) and non-Jews, foremost among the latter being Palestinians like [the late Edward] Said. ... this document keeps intact the colonial contract whereby the colonial masters retain the position of privilege and supremacy in voice and status over the colonised.' Ayash continues, 'The JDA is an orientalist text that fails to produce true opposition to the core problem of the IHRA definition: the silencing and erasure of Palestine and Palestinians' and takes issue with the text's Preamble and Parts B and C. He concludes with a call for reimagining the entire premises on which the enterprise is founded: "When Zionism initiated and commenced a political project to colonize Palestine, it destroyed Palestinian society and life and created a Jewish state on top of it. The destruction of Jewish life in Europe was dealt with by destroying Palestinian life in Palestine, and thereafter, the Jewish question ceased to be an internal Jewish question and became intertwined with the Palestinian question. To properly name and tackle antisemitism means properly naming and tackling colonial modernity and the settler colonization of Palestine. Anything short of that is bound to replicate colonial orientalist discourse and perpetuate colonial modernity' (Ayash, 2021). <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/4/21/the-jerusalem-declaration-on-antisemitism-is-an-orientalist-text>

11 <https://www.ifnotnowmovement.org/inn-statement-on-jda>

12 <https://consortiumnews.com/2022/01/04/schism-in-us-judaism-deepens/>

13 <https://forward.com/subscribe/469583/gates-of-tears-rabbinical-and-cantorial-students-stand-for-solidarity-with/>

understand that today, in 2021, Israel's choices come from a place of power and that Israel's actions constitute an intentional removal of Palestinians?¹⁴

The *Forward* immediately published a rebuttal letter [Artson, 2021] from the dean of one of the related rabbinical schools, the *Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies of American Jewish University in Los Angeles* ('The letter some of my rabbinical students shows a lack of empathy—with Jews').¹⁵ The author disingenuously claimed to 'share this concern and admire centering the humanity and suffering of Palestinians, too often ignored' but chastised the students for being 'shockingly silent about the suffering of the Israelis and the relentless terror they face daily.' Alleging imbalance, Rabbi Artson complains that nothing is said 'about the toll – psychic, physical, and social – on Israelis. ... Their suffering is too often marginalized or justified.' Continuing in this vein, Rabbi Artson denounces the 'murderous tyranny of Hamas,' 'Arab dictatorships ... [who] have imposed the continuation of occupation, by denying Palestinians citizenship' 'the ever-present antisemitism that is patently visible in social media, in beatings and murders of Jews around the world, in slogans chanted at rallies claiming to be pro-Palestinian, in public calls to kill the Jews.' As Davidson noted, the students' letter was 'met with "thundering silence" by all official Jewish organization' (Davidson, 2021), but nevertheless, it was out there: voices of dissent do exist.

However, this brief piece will focus not merely on the major diasporic community of the U.S. but will also compare the situation of the somewhat smaller Jewish community in the UK, the land of the Balfour Declaration (my own 'home community', albeit one from which I departed many years ago). There is, for starters, a sizeable demographic difference that may partly account for a more wary, less confident openness towards the critical approach; out of a UK population of around 67 million, there are estimated to be around 292,000 members of the 'core Jewish population' (DellaPergola and Staetsky, 2020, p. 14; pp. 38-39);¹⁶ numbers can be extended to 370,000 according to wider definitions, or 410,000 'according to Israel's Law of Return' (i.e., one Jewish grandparent).¹⁷ In contrast, Britain's Muslim population is its third largest belief group (after Christians and those who declared themselves to be areligious) and was estimated to be around 3,372,966 in 2018 (excluding Northern Ireland).¹⁸ Despite over 2000 years of habitation in Europe, the size of its Jewish community has plummeted since the 20th century, largely as a result of the Holocaust, immigration to the Americas, Oceania and to the State of Israel, and intermarriage; indeed, Europe's Jewish population is now less than in the time of the medieval traveller Benjamin of Tudela, who gave the 'first Jewish global population account' in 1170 (DellaPergola and Staetsky, 2020, loc. cit). The only demographic expansion is among the UK's

14 https://docs.google.com/document/d/17iNzy0uThn6YECqiBx9t_R-WAHF7m2Kkxxiq8v0IfPA/edit

15 <https://forward.com/subscribe/469900/my-rabbinical-students-letter-shows-imbalance-and-a-lack-of-empathyfor/>

16 See DellaPergola 2021, p. 14 (Table 1. Core Jewish population distribution, 1939–2020, thousands). https://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/JPR_2020.Jews_in_Europe_at_the_turn_of_the_Millennium.pdf

17 This data is drawn from the Institute of Jewish Policy Research <https://www.jpr.org.uk/country?id=354>

18 According to the UK Office for National Statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/muslimpopulationintheuk/>, a 2018 survey in which 33,111,246 people declared themselves to be Christians 'of all denominations'; 23,725,080 people declared that they had 'no religion'; data was absent on 2,023,914 persons.

more inward-looking Haredi community, which is projected to rise (Staetsky and Boyd, 2015),¹⁹ although this could be said to a feature shared with other diaspora communities.

As with the U.S., Britain's Jews largely share an emotional attachment to Israel although there is some diversity of views on Israel's policies. Two major Ipsos MORI surveys, discussed in detail below, reaffirm this. Predictably, respondents are more supportive of Israel and hold more hawkish/pro-Zionist views when they identify as religious; and are more dovish/critical/liberal Zionist or non-Zionist when their backgrounds are found to be more educated and more secular. The first of these polls, a study of 4000 respondents, was carried out in 2010 by David Graham and Jonathan Boyd of the Institute of Jewish Policy Research ('Committed, concerned and conciliatory: The attitude of British Jews towards Israel')²⁰ and a 2015 study (1131 respondents) sponsored by City University of London, (similarly titled 'The attitude of British Jews towards Israel') and authored by Stephen Miller, Margaret Harris and Colin Shindler.²¹

In the former study, different from the Pew poll in the U.S., British Jews across the board respond with conventional Jewish Zionist views on Israel being 'the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people'; on this there do not appear to be great divergences on grounds of religion or secularity. (The authors note that 'fully three quarters of "Secular" respondents ascribe to the "Israel as Jewish ancestral homeland" concept' [Graham and Boyd, 2010, p. 37]). Nevertheless, respondents are pragmatic in parting with occupied land for peace, '77% favour a two-state solution to the conflict with the Palestinians; 74% believe that it is wrong for existing settlements in the West Bank to be expanded; and 67% favour exchanging land for peace' (Graham and Boyd, loc. cit). Despite respondents' commitment to Israel (95% of those polled in 2010 had visited the region) some '55% see Israel as an occupying power in the West Bank; and 52% support the idea of Israel negotiating with Hamas' (one year after the Gaza invasion, 'Operation Cast Lead'). What can be inferred is consciousness of critiques of Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands and its treatment of its minorities touch a chord with at least half of the respondents.

The smaller 2015 study reaffirms the findings of the earlier study, with 90% of British Jewish respondents proudly in favour of Israel's 'right to exist as a Jewish state', 78% considering it to be 'a vibrant and open democracy' (presumably they are not consumers of *Ha'aretz* or *972mag*) and 93% claiming that Israel 'forms some part of their identity as Jews' (Miller, Harris and Shindler, 2010, p.7).

19 'Strictly Orthodox rising: What the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community', an Institute of Jewish Policy Studies report by L. Daniel Staetsky and Jonathan Boyd, issued in October 2015, projects that Orthodox Jewish young adults will constitute 30% of the community by 2031, eventually overtaking the mainstream Jewish community in the latter half of the 21st century. This 'dramatic change over a relatively short period has potentially enormous implications for British Jewish communal life, and its structures and needs' (p. 20).

20 Available at <https://pearsfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Committed-concerned-and-conciliatory-The-attitudes-of-Jews-in-Britain-towards-Israel.pdf> and <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=1509>

21 Available at <https://yachad.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/British-Jewish-Attitudes-Towards-Israel-Yachad-Ipsos-Mori-Nov-2015.pdf>

Yet opinions on wider Palestinian issues suggest a greater diversity; almost half (46%) disagree with West Bank settlement expansion, 75% agree that it is ‘a major obstacle to peace’, and 72% concur that Palestinians have ‘legitimate claim to a land of their own’. Slightly more than half of respondents (58%) expressed concern that ‘Israel will be seen as an “apartheid state” if it tries to retain control over borders which include more Arabs than Jews’. However, as in the 2010 poll, 71% appear to suggest that peace should be negotiated should be within the framework of a two-state solution (Miller, Harris and Shindler, 2010, pp. 6-7). In particular, the authors of 2015 study flag the fact that it was carried out a year after the 2014 Gaza war, in which 93% of respondents backed Israel’s military response to Hamas rockets (56% found the response ‘proportionate’ but revealingly, the more secular 37% did not).

Perhaps the biggest change is preference for describing oneself as a ‘Zionist’: in 2010, 72% of respondents agreed, but in 2015, the dip is noticeable: 59% (Miller, Harris and Shindler, 2010, p.9). Whether anything can be inferred from this statistical finding in view of the overall picture of support for and attachment to Israel is questionable.

Critical discourse on Israel is also to be found among British Jewry, but like the U.S., it largely emanates from within UK-resident Jewish/ Israeli academia (notable scholars include Ilan Pappé, Avi Shlaim, and Jacqueline Rose). Within the community, Israel-critical organizations include the Jewish Socialists’ Group (a descendent of the Jewish Labour Bund)²² and Jews for Justice for Palestinians, which are part of a federation of groups (European Jews for a Just Peace, founded in 2002);²³ Na’amod (British Jews against occupation); the British Shalom-Salaam Trust ‘established in 2004 by a group of Jews in response to the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East caused by the Israeli Occupation’.²⁴ There are also groups which are critical but nevertheless pro-Israel (such as Yachad, ‘together for Israel, together for peace’).²⁵

22 <https://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/>

23 According to the archived website at <https://web.archive.org/web/20111027115558/http://www.ejpp.org/main.asp?pagid=9> ; no recent data is available, but federated groups are listed as An Other Jewish Voice (The Netherlands); Union des Progressistes Juifs de Belgique –UPJB (Belgium); Friends of the Israeli Palestinian Coalition for Peace (United Kingdom); Jewish Socialists’ Group (United Kingdom); JustPeace UK (United Kingdom); Jews for Justice for Palestinians (United Kingdom); British Friends of Peace Now (United Kingdom) Rabbis for Human Rights UK (United Kingdom); Jüdische Stimme für einen gerechten Frieden zwischen Israel und Palestina (Switzerland); Jewish Manifesto (Sweden); Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (Sweden); New Outlook (Denmark); Union Juive Française pour la paix - UJFP (France); Union Juive Française pour la paix - UJFP Lille (France); Le Cercle Français de Juive Diasporique de Gauche cerle gaston cremieux (France) and Network of Jews Against Occupation, Rome (Italy).

24 <http://www.bsst.org.uk/about-us/>

25 Yachad <http://yachad.org.uk/> describes itself as ‘a British Jewish organisation which empowers British Jews to support a political resolution to the Israel Palestine conflict. ... founded in 2011 in response to a growing demand in our community for a more nuanced approach to Israel-Palestine. Community members wanted a way to support Israel whilst also vocally supporting a resolution to the conflict and the creation of a viable Palestinian state. This included, at times, being able to speak critically of Israeli government policies that run contrary to these values.’ Yachad affirms that they are ‘members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and work closely with a variety of communal bodies, as well as Jewish schools, student societies, youth movements and synagogues.’

The impression of a contented and comfortable minority, at ease with its historic place in British society, and able to engage with a wide range of views on the Palestine issue, would not, however, be an accurate one. Despite the far more secular character of the UK in comparison to the U.S., Britain is still struggling with how to relate to its tiny Jewish minority. As a (formerly European) country closer in proximity to the location of the Jewish Holocaust, and with its own notorious history of home-grown fascism and Jewish expulsion, the UK is continuously treading on eggshells. And the discomfort is mutual; it is revealing that there is also no cultural descriptor that provides a proud or popular hyphenated identity, such as the notion of the ‘Jewish-American’, ‘African-American’ ‘Italian-American’. As British writer and presenter David Baddiel claims in his recent polemic *Jews Don’t Count*, it is not ‘cool’ to be Jewish in the UK, even shameful;²⁶ no-one has ‘cancelled’ Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, or Alice Walker for antisemitism;²⁷ paradoxically, despite a long history of persecution as outsiders, the community is perceived as ‘white privilege’, never to be included in the extended checklist of oppressed BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic) groups. ‘Jews are the only objects of racism who are imagined – by the racists – as both low and high status. ... somehow both sub-human and humanity’s secret masters ... there is not a level playing field around racism’ (Baddiel, 2021, loc. 285; loc. 334). Jews may be ‘marginal’ but ‘are not thought of as marginalised. Which means Jews can’t be seen as representative of a modern Britain that is intent on shifting marginalised experiences into the mainstream’ (Baddiel, 2021, loc. 475). The ‘Y-word’ (chanted at soccer matches at Tottenham Hotspur fans)²⁸ is ‘considered *not as bad* hate speech as the P-word or the N-word’ (loc. 344). Racism against people of colour and antisemitism are somehow differently significant, Baddiel points out.

My own experience of growing up in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, prior to the multiculturalism doctrine and only 20 years after end of the Second World War, was of a community wracked by paranoia, negotiating an uneasy balance in a country in which casual racism in general was deeply entrenched; in which there were unofficial (and even official) quotas for ethnic / religious minorities in schools and facilities (such as golf courses and clubs). The entanglement of antisemitism and anti-Zionism amped up the climate of anxiety, in the wake of the 1975 passing of UN Resolution 3379 (which determined that ‘Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination’). The ripple effects, such as attempts to ban Jewish societies (‘JSocs’) on British university campuses, did little to raise consciousness of the actual issues at stake. Jews on the left who were already engaged in anti-apartheid struggles needed no such prompting to reflection, but the average Jewish student, having little political consciousness, and raised in the standard Zionist narrative, felt deeply threatened.

The above goes some way to explaining the continuing attachment to the imaginary ‘safe haven’ (although in the case of my late father, a Kindertransportee, it was the UK that in fact proved to be his safe haven). One did not lightly reveal one’s ethno-religious identity outside the fold; the safest option was in ‘passing’ for majority identity (or joining it), or de-emphasizing

26 See loc. 396 in the Kindle edition of *Jews Don’t Count* (Baddiel, 2021); TLS Books

27 See loc. 128-186 in the Kindle edition of *Jews Don’t Count*.

28 David and Ivor Baddiel are the makers of the 2-minute film *The Y-Word*, which can be viewed at https://youtu.be/RIVJC1_hKt8 but according to Baddiel, had great difficulty in finding official support for the making of the piece.

one's background, if one wished to make progress, particularly in public life, *qua* Benjamin Disraeli, Nigel Lawson, John Bercow, David and Ed Miliband.²⁹ As Baddiel observes, 'Jews are only OK as long as they can pass as non-Jews ... once identified as such – [they] *will* be thought of as different'.³⁰

Although the situation improved somewhat as multiculturalism trickled through to society through education and became enshrined in the UK, in the last two decades, Britain's Jews have once again been preoccupied by rising concerns about antisemitism, and whether anti-Zionism (as expressed in the media and on campuses, particularly during Israeli Apartheid Week) constitutes antisemitism or may segue into it. Antisemitic attacks on the British community are given high profile coverage by the Campaign Against Antisemitism and the Community Security Trust and publicized via the Jewish media (particularly *The Jewish Chronicle*). Outbreaks of anxiety roughly mirror outbreaks of Gaza conflict.

Kairos USA executive director, clinical psychologist Dr. Mark Braverman (Braverman, 2021)³¹ presciently characterizes this instinctive reaction as a form of 'post-traumatic stress disorder', as 'Zionism was the answer to the anti-Semitism of Christian Europe. ... Developing this particular brand of "character armor" has been part of our survival throughout long ages of persecution, marginalization, and demonization. ... The issue of anti-Semitism is complex and deeply embedded in two thousand years of Western history' (Braverman, n.d.)³² The perceived threat level appears to prevent reflection on larger themes of social and historical justice.

Two related issues have particularly convulsed the Jewish community in the UK: the debate over the highly controversial IHRA Working Definition of antisemitism (seven of whose examples reference the State of Israel, including 'applying double standards' to Israel or 'claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour')³³ and unending allegations of antisemitism in the British Labour Party. At some point (in July 2018) these issues coalesced, when the party rejected the adoption of the IHRA definition—a rejection which resulted in disciplinary proceedings for Jewish Labour MP Margaret Hodge, after she furiously criticized Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (reportedly for being 'an anti-semitic racist')³⁴ in Britain's House of Commons (Hodge later resigned from the Party). The resulting furore led three Jewish newspapers (the *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Jewish Telegraph* and the *Jewish News*) to publish matching front pages

29 19th century Conservative politician Disraeli, whose family converted to Anglicanism, was twice prime minister; Nigel Lawson served as Margaret Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer; Conservative MP John Bercow was Speaker of the House of Commons from 2009-2019; David Miliband served as a former Environment Secretary under PM Tony Blair and as Foreign Secretary under PM Gordon Brown; his brother Ed Miliband is former Shadow Leader of the Labour Party.

30 See loc. 418 in Baddiel (op.cit).

31 Comment made online during the International Conference on the Global Transformation of Christian Zionism (25 October, 2021).

32 The Jewish People, Zionism, and the Question of Justice | Mark Braverman

33 See <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

34 See the 17 July 2018 *Guardian* report by Jessica Stewart and Heather Elgot <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/17/labour-agrees-to-fresh-antisemitism-consultation-after-stormy-debate>

‘United We Stand’; The Guardian published a letter by 68 rabbis calling for ‘the Labour party to listen to the Jewish community, adopt the full and unamended International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism including its examples, and like the organisations listed ... [the Crown Prosecution Service, the College of Policing, the Scottish parliament, the Welsh assembly, the National Union of Students, and 124 local authorities] use the IHRA definition alone as their working definition of antisemitism.’³⁵ By September 2018 the pressure brought to bear on the Labour Party led to Labour’s National Executive Committee rescinding its decision and adopting the IHRA working definition in full, and without Corbyn’s critical clarification that ‘It cannot be considered racist to treat Israel like any other state or assess its conduct against the standards of international law. Nor should it be regarded as antisemitic to describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist because of their discriminatory impact, or to support another settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict’ (Sabbagh, 2018).³⁶ Excluding non-state entities, by 2021, 32 states (notably, 25 of them EU members), have now adopted the non-legally binding IHRA working definition,³⁷ but despite UK Education Secretary Gavin Williamson’s attempt to pressurize British universities to accept the definition, its acceptance on UK campuses continues to be questioned as threatening freedom of speech.³⁸ Analysing IHRA, University College London found the UK Equality Act preferable, as it ‘prohibits racist acts against Jews, but it does not prohibit criticism of the state of Israel’. UCL comments succinctly that ‘the only purpose of introducing the IHRA working definition into internal codes of conduct would be to make criticism of the state of Israel a disciplinary offence ... such a step would breach universities’ legal obligations to freedom of expression, core to chartered academic freedoms to teach and research.’³⁹ The UCL analysis further found that:

As well as targeting Palestinian staff and students and their supporters, the IHRA working definition is a direct attack on staff who teach and research in any area where the foundation, history and politics of the state of Israel is discussed.

The irony of a document advocated in the name of opposing prejudice against Jews but which will likely have the effect of silencing Jewish scholars in disciplines concerning Israel, Judaism and history, as well as Middle East politics, cannot be ignored.

Implementation is a recipe for inviting ill-considered allegations and arriving at unjust conclusions. It also dangerously risks discrediting the fight against real antisemitism.

Labour’s ‘antisemitism row’, which continues to run, resulted in numerous investigations: an inquiry by Labour Students into the infamous ‘Zio’ allegations of antisemitism in the Oxford

35 *The Guardian* Letters <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jul/16/labour-party-must-listen-to-the-jewish-community-on-defining-antisemitism>

36 Reported in *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/sep/04/labour-adopts-ihra-antisemitism-definition-in-full>

37 According to the American Jewish Committee Adoption of the Working Definition | AJC

38 Antisemitism definition is undermining free speech | Letters | The Guardian

39 Can the IHRA working definition be implemented? | UCL UCU - UCL – University College London

University Labour Club in February 2016; the Baroness Royall Enquiry; the Chakrabarti Enquiry; and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report, 'Antisemitism in the Labour Party'. The ongoing exposes saw a torrent of suspension of key members: the former leader, Jeremy Corbyn, MP Naz Shah, the former Lord Mayor of London Ken Livingstone (who later resigned his membership of the Parliamentary Labour Party); the resignation of seven MPs, including Jewish MPs Margaret Hodge, Louise Ellman and Luciana Berger; and a furious reaction from the pro-Corbyn camp, including Jewish Voice of Labour, who criticized the EHRC's report and their exclusion from its advisory board, actions which they say reflect new Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's attempts to 'purge' the party's left wing, including its anti-Zionist Jewish socialists.^{40 41} The Jewish Labour Movement, on the other hand, praised Starmer's attempts to reconstitute the Labour party ('The past five years have been a waking nightmare for the Jewish Labour Movement, our members and Jewish Labour activists across the party,' commented JLM national chairman Mike Katz.)⁴² In the meantime, criticisms of Starmer's leadership ability on a range of issues continue to mount,⁴³ so the battle is for the soul of Britain's Labour Party is far from over, and with it, charges of weaponization of antisemitism linger; lack of consensus over the incoherent IHRA working definition is likely to remain until the definition is substantively overhauled or overturned.

This paper began with an observation that there has been shift among diaspora Jewish communities in automatic support for Israel, but that there are greater differences in the way it manifests in the U.S. and the U.K.; these are partly generational in nature and largely a result of radically different demographics. Whether the future will tend toward the progressive or the paranoid seems to be partly a numbers game, but it is very much up to agents of conscientization

40 See, for example, <https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/on-labours-purge-particularly-of-jewish-socialists/> In the original Guardian article (Siddique, 2021) <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/dec/20/jewish-woman-accused-antisemitism-labour-threatens-sue-anti-zionism> JVL alleges that there are '42 Jewish members of the Labour party, two of whom have since died, who have faced or are facing disciplinary charges relating to allegations of antisemitism. The group estimates that Jewish Labour party members are at least five times more likely to have faced actioned complaints of antisemitism than non-Jewish members.'

41 According to an interview on the JVL website on 26 December, 2021, JVL's Mike Cushman claims 'Keir Starmer has, in effect, arrogantly pronounced that the Jewish members of JVL were not Jews, excluding them from his category of 'all Jews'. Starmer reinforced this when, at the request of the EHRC, he set up an advisory board which was meant to be representative of Jewish interests but excluded all Jews who did not agree with him about Israel and see its actions as oppressive.

Indeed, he appears to be in the process of driving all dissident Jews out of the Labour Party; claiming that the real but very rare Jewish antisemites are present in unbelievably great numbers inside the Labour Party.

Mike argues that the Party seems to have little understanding of antisemitism. Disciplinary letters take statements out of context, in contravention of the IHRA Definition which they claim to be following. Worse, they quote the words they deem to be offensive without ever explaining how they believe the words to be antisemitic. Their unwillingness or inability to make a case shows their lack of understanding and the structural unfairness of the process.' (<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/does-labour-know/>)

42 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nightmare-for-jewish-members-is-over-because-of-keir-starmer-now-eject-the-antisemites-cx7dqzdv>

43 See, for example, filmmaker Ken Loach <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/28/democracy-keir-starmer-labour-left-ken-loach>; <https://theconversation.com/whats-happened-to-keir-starmer-leadership-160804>; <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/starmer-dilemma/>

to lead the way out of the fog of centuries of trauma. In the words of *Ha'aretz* columnist Amira Hass, 'now the responsibility is ours and it is our own handiwork. ... we both terrorize and discipline history: We took care to create a sweeping definition of antisemitism, that includes criticism of Israel and opposition to Zionism, and woe to anyone who thinks otherwise' (Hass, 2022).⁴⁴ In fact, the risk of resisting the standard narrative that nurtures fear is negligible, but the consequences are immense, as Hass concludes: 'our dissidents are not in danger of losing their lives or their salaries, or of imprisonment – the silence, the standing on the sidelines and the unwillingness to know and to be involved (the choice of most Israelis) impose greater responsibility for being partners in crime, on us and on future generations.'

⁴⁴ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.HIGHLIGHT-why-criticize-israel-when-cruelty-elsewhere-in-the-world-is-worse-1.10513302>

Contributors

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Shamsul Islam, Ph.D., is a former associate professor at the University of Delhi, where he taught Political Science for 40 years. He is the author of several books including *Hindu Nationalism and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (2015) and *RSS: Marketing Fascism as Hindu Nationalism* (2018). Most of his books are available in several languages including English, Hindi, Urdu etc. He is also a dramatist and actor and had founded the oldest street theatre group in India, Nishant Natya Manch (End of the darkness theatre forum) in 1971.

Kim Yong-Bock, Ph.D., is the chancellor of the Asia-Pacific Center for Integral Study of Life in Korea. He is the former president of the Hanil University and Theological Seminary in Chonbuk, Korea. He has been a teaching fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary, USA. He has written several books including *Minjung theology: People as the subjects of history* (1981) and *Historical Transformation, People's Movement and Messianic Koinonia: A Study of the Relationship of Christian and Donghak Religious Communities to the March First Independence Movement in Korea* (2021).

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Chandra Muzaffar, Ph.D., is the president of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), an international NGO based in Malaysia. He served as the first director of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue at the University of Malaya, and professor of Global Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia. He has written many books including *A World in Crisis: Is There a Cure?* (2014) and *Reflections on Malaysian Unity and Other Challenges* (2017). He is also the recipient of the Harry J. Benda Prize for distinguished scholarship on Southeast Asia from the Association of Asian Studies, North America.

Mari Oka is a professor in the Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. She specializes in Modern Arabic Literature and is currently conducting a project on "Humanistic and Cross-Disciplinary Research of the Relationship between Humans and their 'Homelands' in the Transnational Era." She is the author of several books including *The Day When the Metro Runs in Gaza* (2018, in Japanese).

Tina Ottman, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Faculty of Global and Regional Studies at the Doshisha University, Kyoto. Her current research investigates the intellectual history of the notion of collective trauma and collective memory, and their dynamic and highly contested expansion and embedment in multiple discourses and fields. Her latest publication is "Dehumanization and trauma in Palestine: Representations of the occupation and the Great March of Return in the

Patriarchal War System” in *Exploring Betty A. Reardon’s Perspective on Peace Education: Looking back, looking forward*. (Dale T. Snauwaert, Ed.) (2019).

Philip Vinod Peacock, Th.M., is the acting general secretary for Programmes of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and an ordained deacon in the Church of North India. He was previously the associate professor in the Department of Theology, Ethics and Social Analysis at the Bishop’s College, a theological college belonging to the Church of North India. He co-edited the books *Dalit Theology in the Twenty First Century: Discordant Voices, Discerning Pathways* (2010) and *Bible and Theology from the Underside of Empire* (2019).

Robert O. Smith, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of history at the University of North Texas. He is also a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and has served as the academic director of the Jerusalem Global Gateway Program at Notre Dame University. He is the author of *More Desired than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (2013) and co-editor of *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison* (2014).

Yoshihiro Yakushige, PhD, is a researcher at the Institute for Study of Humanities and Social Sciences, Doshisha University. He teaches Human Rights Studies and Middle Eastern Studies at several universities. He is also a steering member of the BDS Japan Bulletin (@BDSJapan). He is the author of a Japanese book *Colonialism and Gentile Zionism in Modern Japan: Nationalism and Worldview of Uchimura Kanso, Yanaihara Tadao and Nakada Juji* (2018).



Oct 23 (Sat) 8:10 pm -12:10 am (JST)

- Opening Remarks: Mari Oka (Kyoto University)
- Introduction: Yoshihiro Yakushige (Kyoto University)

**Session 1: Liberation Theology towards
Transnational Solidarity (8:35 pm - 10:15 pm)**

- Munther Isaac (Bethlehem Bible College)
- Yong-Bock Kim (Hanshin University)
- Commentator: Akira Usuki (Japan Women's University)
- Commentator: Akira Iwaki (Bishop William's Theological Seminary)

**Session 2: Theological Critique of Christian
Zionism in the Non-Western World
(10:30 pm - 12:10 am)**

- Cynthia Holder Rich (Tumaini University Makumira)
- Philip Peacock (World Communion of Reformed Churches)
- Commentator: Tsutomu Aguro (Ichinomiya Christian Institute)
- Commentator: Megumi Ishiida (Doshisha University)

Oct 24 (Sun) 10:20 pm -12:10 am (JST)

- Opening Remarks: Ranjan Solomon (Indo-Palestine Solidarity Network)

**Session 3: Challenging Religious
Nationalism and Political Utilization of
Religion (10:30 pm - 12:10 am)**

- Chandra Muzaffar (International Movement for a Just World)
- Shamsul Islam (Formerly with Delhi University)
- Commentator: Iyas Salim (Doshisha University)
- Commentator: Jude L. Fernando (Trinity College Dublin)

Oct 25 (Mon) 10:20 pm -12:10 am (JST)

**Session 4: Deconstructing Zionism,
Reconstructing Solidarity (10:20 pm - 12:00 am)**

- Robert O. Smith (Briarwood Leadership Center)
- Mark Braverman (Kairos USA)
- Commentator: Miyuki Kinjo (Ritsumeikan University)
- Commentator: Tina Ottman (Doshisha University)

- Closing Remarks: Yoshihiro Yakushige

Co-hosted by: International Conference on the Global Transformation of Christian Zionism Organizing Committee;
Center for Interdisciplinary Education and Research, Graduate School of Human and Environmental
Studies, Kyoto University

Sponsored by: Unit of Kyoto Initiatives for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Kyoto University

The Aims of the Conference

This conference aims to explore the dynamics of the recent transformation in discourses on the Palestinian cause, especially with regards to Christian discourses in both Western and non-Western countries.

The Trump administration's radical pro-Israel policies demonstrated how Christian Zionism still plays pivotal roles in US policies vis-à-vis the Middle East. However, such an overt political utilization of religion is apparently becoming less ideologically persuasive, even among American evangelicals who have been recognized as the core of Christian Zionism. Recently, it is reported that young American evangelicals are becoming comparatively less pro-Israel.

On the contrary, in non-Western countries, where anti-colonial discourses have been predominant after WW2, Christian Zionism seems to be penetrating more and more into Protestant minority communities. Furthermore, sympathy for Israel can be seen not only in Christian communities but also in some non-Christian majority communities where chauvinistic religious nationalism is on the rise. Examples include Hindus in India, Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Shintoists / Buddhists in Japan.

Taking these temporal and spatial transformations of the Gentile Zionist constellation into consideration, we can analyze and characterize Christian Zionism in the wider historical and geopolitical context. So far, academic research on Christian Zionism has almost exclusively focused on the context of Britain and the US. We need to relativize this originally Eurocentric phenomenon from a new perspective.

To tackle this challenge, we will hold panels inviting speakers from different countries and areas, religious backgrounds, and academic disciplines, but with a shared aspiration for justice and peace in Palestine/Israel and beyond. We will make academic exchanges to promote interdisciplinary research of transnational/intersectional politics spanning religion, ethnicity, nation, gender, class and more. Anyone interested in these subjects are welcome to join this ambitious event. (Yoshihiro Yakushige, Organizing Chair)

Register to join on Zoom: <https://cutt.ly/6EZkBfA>

* All sessions will be conducted in English

Contact: czconference2021@gmail.com

	Japan / Korea	Malaysia	India	Palestine
Session 1 (Oct 23) * Including opening remarks and introduction	8:10 pm - 10:15 pm	7:10 pm - 9:15 pm	4:40 pm - 6:45 pm	2:10 pm - 4:15 pm
Session 2 (Oct 23)	10:30 pm - 12:10 pm	9:30 pm - 11:10 pm	7:00 pm - 8:40 pm	4:30 pm - 6:10 pm
Session 3 (Oct 24) * Including opening remarks	10:20 pm - 12:10 pm	9:20 pm - 11:10 pm	6:50 pm - 8:40 pm	4:20 pm - 6:10 pm
Session 4 (Oct 25) * Including closing remarks	10:20 pm - 12:10 pm	9:20 pm - 11:10 pm	6:50 pm - 8:40 pm	4:20 pm - 6:10 pm
	UK / Ireland	Eastern	Central	Pacific
Session 1 (Oct 23) * Including opening remarks and introduction	12:10 pm - 2:15 pm	7:10 am - 9:15 am	6:10 am - 8:15 am	4:10 am - 6:15 am
Session 2 (Oct 23)	2:30 pm - 4:10 pm	9:30 am - 11:10 am	8:30 am - 10:10 am	6:30 am - 8:10 am
Session 3 (Oct 24) * Including opening remarks	2:20 pm - 4:10 pm	9:20 am - 11:10 am	8:20 am - 10:10 am	6:20 am - 8:10 am
Session 4 (Oct 25) * Including closing remarks	2:20 pm - 4:10 pm	9:20 am - 11:10 am	8:20 am - 10:10 am	6:20 am - 8:10 am

