

**Update on *Land and people*, Part I, p.1**

*Can you really not see?*

By Amira Hass

Let us leave aside those Israelis whose ideology supports the dispossession of the Palestinian people because "God chose us." Leave aside the judges who whitewash every military policy of killing and destruction. Leave aside the military commanders who knowingly jail an entire nation in pens surrounded by walls, fortified observation towers, machine guns, barbed wire and blinding projectors. Leave aside the ministers. All of these are not counted among the collaborators. These are the architects, the planners, the designers, the executioners.

But there are others. Historians and mathematicians, senior editors, media stars, psychologists and family doctors, lawyers who do not support Gush Emunim and Kadima, teachers and educators, lovers of hiking trails and sing-alongs, high-tech wizards. Where are you? And what about you, researchers of Nazism, the Holocaust and Soviet gulags? Could you all be in favor of systematic discriminating laws? Laws stating that the Arabs of the Galilee will not even be compensated for the damages of the war by the same sums their Jewish neighbors are entitled to (Aryeh Dayan, Haaretz , August 21).

Could it be that you are all in favor of a racist Citizenship Law that forbids an Israeli Arab from living with his family in his own home? That you side with further expropriation of lands and the demolishing of additional orchards, for another settler neighborhood and another exclusively Jewish road? That you all back the shelling and missile fire killing the old and the young in the Gaza Strip?

Could it be that you all agree that a third of the West Bank (the Jordan Valley) should be off limits to Palestinians? That you all side with an Israeli policy that prevents tens of thousands of Palestinians who have obtained foreign citizenship from returning to their families in the occupied territories?

Could your mind really be so washed with the security excuse, used to forbid Gaza students from studying occupational therapy at Bethlehem and medicine at Abu Dis, and preventing sick people from Rafah from receiving medical treatment in Ramallah? Will also you find it easy to hide behind the explanation "we had no idea": we had no idea that the discrimination practiced in the distribution of water - which is solely controlled by Israel - leaves thousands of Palestinian households without water during the hot summer months; we had no idea that when the IDF blocks the entrance to villages, it also blocks their access to springs or water tanks.

But it cannot be that you don't see the iron gates along route 344 in the West Bank, blocking access to it from the Palestinian villages it passes by. It cannot be that you support preventing the access of thousands of farmers to their land and plantations, that you support the quarantine on Gaza which prevents the entry of medicine for hospitals,

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the disruption of electricity and water supply to 1.4 million human beings, closing their only outlet to the world for months.

Could it be that you do not know what is happening 15 minutes from your faculties and offices? Is it plausible that you support the system in which Hebrew soldiers, at checkpoints in the heart of the West Bank, are letting tens of thousands of people wait everyday for hours upon hours under the blazing sun, while selecting: residents of Nablus and Tul Karm are not allowed through, 35-year-olds and under - yallah, back to Jenin, residents of the Salem village are not even allowed to be here, a sick woman who skipped the line must learn a lesson and will be purposefully detained for hours. Machsom Watch's site is available for all; in it are countless such testimonies and worse, a day by day routine. But it cannot be that those who are appalled over every swastika painted on a Jewish grave in France and over every anti-Semitic headline in a Spanish local newspaper will not know how to reach this information, and will not be appalled and outraged.

As Jews we all enjoy the privilege Israel gives us, what makes us all collaborators. The question is what does every one of us do in an active and direct daily manner to minimize cooperation with a dispossessing, suppressing regime that never has its fill. Signing a petition and tutting will not do. Israel is a democracy for its Jews. We are not in danger of our lives, we will not be jailed in concentration camps, our livelihood will not be damaged and recreation in the countryside or abroad will not be denied to us. Therefore, the burden of collaboration and direct responsibility is immeasurably heavy.

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