

By Richard Greve

On October 6th and 7th, the Russel Tribunal on Palestine was held in the Great Hall at Cooper Union in NYC. I attended this conference, and what I took away from it confirmed the US role in sustaining Israel's human rights abuses in Palestine, which clearly amount to Crimes Against Humanity under International Law and Basic Laws of Morality. These are the reasons for charging Israel with Crimes Against Humanity in the World Court in the Hague.

1) Israel practices a policy of a severe form of apartheid in the occupied territories which is based on exclusive rights for those who are Jewish and virtually no rights for those who are not. Apartheid is a Crime Against Humanity.

2) Land is confiscated from Palestinians and houses demolished to make way for settlements and housing where only Jews can live. The Palestinians affected are made homeless. This is a Crime Against Humanity.

3) Israel has built a wall, not on the boundary, but deep inside of it, and has taken the land for exclusive Jewish settlement. Large Jewish settlements have been built on the "Palestinian side" of the wall, and roads for Jews Only have been built so that Jews can drive through the wall, into Israel proper, while the non-Jewish residents on that side are barred from these roads and must stay behind the wall. This is a Crime Against Humanity.

4) Water is severely limited to Palestinians. Israeli settlers receive about five times the amount of water than their non-Jewish neighbors. Water cisterns built by Palestinians are routinely destroyed by the Israeli army. This is a Crime against Humanity.*

5) Palestinians are not given permits to build on their land, and when they do build, since they were not given permits, their structures are torn down by the Israeli Army. Tens of thousands of apartheid settlements have been built on land taken from Palestinians. Ancient olive orchards, which are the Palestinian farmers main source of income, have been bulldozed by Israel, the land confiscated, and settlements for Jews Only have been built there. This is a Crime Against Humanity.

6) In Israel proper, Israel has one set of laws that apply to Jews regarding land ownership, marriage rights and a myriad of laws giving Jews

rights that Palestinians, because they are not Jewish, cannot have. This is a Crime Against Humanity.

7) According to the Geneva Convention, the Occupying Power must protect the occupied population from land theft and property destruction and respect their human rights. Israel routinely ignores its responsibilities under the Convention, and does the opposite of what International Law and basic human rights call for. This is a Crime Against Humanity.

8) Israel has ethnically cleansed much of the occupied territories of the non-Jewish population and replaced them with Jewish settlers. Ethnic cleansing is a violation of International Law. It is a Crime against Humanity.

Successive US governments have vetoed many resolutions in the UN Security Council which tried to stop Israel from committing these Crimes Against Humanity, thus Israel has been able to continue its apartheid policies and ethnic cleansing of non-Jews from their land with impunity.

The US government, because it supports Israel's crimes, is also guilty of these crimes. The US has enabled Israel to continue its apartheid policies and ethnic cleansing of the greater part of Palestine, not only with its vetoes in the UN, but with the billions of dollars in military aid given to

Israel every year. Israel is slowly emptying large areas of Palestine of its non Jewish population, and confining them to small, scattered pockets of Palestine.

Many Americans are ignorant of these facts because our mainstream media censors this information and keeps the American people from knowing the facts.

Isn't it time for Israel to begin to address its crimes against the Palestinians, and begin to treat all people under its rule with the same rights under the law for all people regardless of their religion? Isn't it time for Israel to treat others the way they would want to be treated? It's time alright, it's high time.

Let's hope it's not too late because the right wing, ultranationalists and religious people in Israel seem to have a tight grip on Israeli society, which is only getting tighter. Israel has a small but vibrant group of citizens who stand squarely with Palestinians in their demand for equal rights under the law, but they are like a voice calling in the wilderness and are not heard.

In the meantime, the Palestinians must continue to struggle against oppression, and do what they can to hold onto what's left of their lives and property. People of the world with a conscience and moral compass, must stand with Palestinians and Israelis who want a just society, and support Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, until Israel ends its apartheid rule and incorporates a system of equal rights under the law for Jews and non-Jews in Israel/Palestine and replaces its brutal practices with humane ones, based on justice and equality.