

SHARED FUTURE LAB · SOURCE READER

The Problem With Free Palestine

Casebook and source notes for the complete seven-part walkthrough

A reader for examining the programs, methods, historical claims, and political futures attached to a familiar call for freedom. It preserves distinctions among organizations, individual speakers, state actors, and ordinary supporters.

Central question: Does the political future being advanced protect Palestinian freedom while preserving Jewish safety, refuge, self-government, and meaningful political pluralism?

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SECTION 01

Across named organizations, freedom language can carry a demand for Israel's removal.

Within Our Lifetime is one example. Rally speeches and a national student organizing toolkit also connect liberation language to ending Israel's existence or dismantling its political foundations. Read the appeal and the stated endpoint together:

WITHIN OUR LIFETIME · RALLY TOOLKIT

"We don't want two states! We want '48!"

Its organizing guide places freedom chants alongside dismantling the Zionist state.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER · MAY 2019

"We don't want no two states, we want all of it!"

Nathaniel Chase, speaking for IAC, explains this as every inch between river and sea, then leads the familiar freedom slogan.

WORKERS WORLD PARTY · MAY 2019

"Israel won't survive."

Sara Flounders's solidarity speech, delivered for the party, predicts the state's end and closes with river-to-sea freedom wording.

NATIONAL SJP · OCTOBER 2023

"Palestine will be liberated from the river to the sea"

Its national toolkit calls for dismantling Zionism and praises the Hamas-led attack as a liberation victory inside Israel.

The recurring pattern: language a supporter may hear as a call for rights is attached to an issuer's program against Israel's continued existence as a Jewish state.

Methods matter too. The National SJP toolkit describes people it labels "settlers," including within Israel, as non-civilians and military assets. That blanket denial of civilian protection makes its praise of the attack especially consequential.

These examples establish named organizers' positions, not every person's meaning when they say "Free Palestine." Two of the speeches came from the same rally.

Once that endpoint is visible, the next question is whether it is also written into political policy.

SECTION 02

Hamas's own policies retain rejection of Israel's legitimacy.

Its 1988 charter called for Israel's obliteration and invoked killing Jews. In 2017, Hamas changed the Jews-versus-Zionists language while retaining rejection of Israel's legitimacy and its claim to the whole territory.

The offer of a state on the 1967 lines did not surrender that larger claim. Softer wording therefore did not establish acceptance of a lasting shared future.

The PLO's story also begins decades before recognition.

Its 1964 charter rejected Israel's establishment while excluding the then Arab-held West Bank and Gaza from PLO territorial sovereignty. Its founding liberation target was Israel itself, before Israel controlled those territories in 1967.

After the 1967 war, the Arab summit at Khartoum declared three principles: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with it. This was an Arab-state resolution, distinct from the PLO's own program.

The 1968 charter made armed struggle the sole liberation strategy. The ensuing record included terrorism by PLO factions: the PFLP's 1970 airliner hijackings and the Palestine Liberation Front's 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking and murder of Leon Klinghoffer.

Arafat's 1993 recognition of Israel and renunciation of terrorism were later formal commitments. They do not erase the founding program or the terrorist record; subsequent conduct must also be examined.

The proposed future matters. So does what happens to people trying to build coexistence now.

SECTION 03

When coexistence is permitted only on one movement's political terms.

BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti has stated his endpoint plainly. Writing under his own name in 2022, he said: "definitely, most definitely, we oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine." He paired that rejection with a proposal to accept Jewish Israelis as equal citizens in a new shared society. BDS itself says it takes no formal position on whether the final arrangement should be one state or two; Barghouti's proposal is his personal position.

That distinction does not make the endpoint less consequential. Equal citizenship promises individual legal status; it does not preserve Jewish national self-government, control of refuge and admission, or institutions able to protect Jews if they become a demographic minority. Because Barghouti seeks the end of Jewish sovereignty, his assurance of future equality must be evaluated against the political practices he and the movement endorse now.

Those practices are not limited to one speaker. The Palestinian BDS National Committee's anti-normalization guidelines say joint Palestinian or Arab–Israeli work is boycottable unless the Israeli side publicly recognizes the rights in the BDS call and the activity is "co-resistance" against the system BDS describes as occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid. The guidelines identify many projects framed around "dialogue," "coexistence,"

reconciliation, or overcoming barriers as normalization when they do not meet those conditions.

The policy includes an accountability rule: it calls for boycotting the works, products, and activities of Palestinians or Arabs found to have participated in normalization until they end and publicly renounce that involvement and affirm BDS principles. PACBI applied this approach again in 2025 when it renewed its boycott call against Standing Together, a Jewish–Palestinian movement for peace and equality.

BDS does not ban every joint Palestinian or Arab–Israeli project. It allows projects only when the Israeli side accepts the rights in the BDS call and the work counts as “co-resistance.” In most other cases, it rejects dialogue or coexistence across political disagreement.

That record matters to credibility. A future Jewish minority is asked to trust that equal rights and security will be protected after Jewish sovereignty is removed. Yet the movement's present rules discourage many bridge-building projects unless Jewish participants first accept its political premises, and impose social and professional costs on Palestinian or Arab participants labeled “normalizers.” That does not prove future rights would be violated. It does give Jews a concrete reason to ask what independent institutions, enforceable guarantees, and political pluralism would protect them when assurances are no longer voluntary.

A separate case involved state-like coercion. Hamas authorities detained Rami Aman after an online meeting with Israeli peace activists in 2020. He spent more than six months in detention and was convicted before his release.

Boycott and imprisonment are different harms, imposed by different actors. Barghouti's one-state proposal is personal; the anti-normalization and accountability rules are organizational policy.

These costs make coexistence harder. An earlier international forum shows how a justice appeal can also accommodate hostility toward Jews.

Barghouti's stated endpoint. In a 2022 letter under his own name, Omar Barghouti reproduced and defended his rejection of “a Jewish state in any part of Palestine,” while proposing equal citizenship in a new shared society. [Read his letter](#)

BDS anti-normalization rules. The BNC requires public recognition of the rights in the BDS call and co-resistance; it also defines many dialogue and coexistence projects outside those conditions as normalization and describes an accountability boycott. [Read the BDS guidelines](#)

PACBI summary. PACBI's academic-boycott summary says a joint Palestinian/Arab–Israeli project is not boycottable when the Israeli party recognizes the three BDS rights and the project is co-resistance rather than coexistence. [Read PACBI's summary](#)

SECTION 04

A campaign for justice can still make room for hostility toward Jews.

The 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, offers a modern example. Governments attended the United Nations conference, while advocacy groups gathered at a separate NGO Forum. That forum's declaration singled out Israel for diplomatic, economic, and social isolation. The Arab Lawyers Union distributed a booklet with antisemitic caricatures. US delegate Tom Lantos reported a widely distributed flyer showing Hitler beneath the question, "What if I had won?" Its answer began: "There would be NO Israel..." Jewish participants described threats, while Human Rights Watch later acknowledged antisemitic statements and the targeting of Jews.

Durban did not create this danger. The history behind Jewish fears of losing collective protection reaches much further back.

In Damascus in 1840, a false ritual-murder accusation led to the arrest and torture of Jews, some of whom died. In Baghdad in 1941, the Farhud killed an estimated 150–180 Jews. These events had different perpetrators and political settings. The Farhud's instigators portrayed Iraqi Jews as British collaborators or Zionist sympathizers and connected violence against them to the conflict in Palestine. Those political claims did not justify attacking Jewish civilians who were treated as collectively responsible. Both episodes show how quickly a Jewish minority could lose protection.

A Nazi propagandist carried the same campaign into postwar anti-Zionism.

Johann von Leers did not discover hostility to Jews through the Arab–Israeli conflict. As a Nazi propagandist, he defended the Holocaust while it was underway. In May 1943, he wrote, "we are exterminating the Jews of Europe," and demanded their "total elimination."

After the war, von Leers continued publishing antisemitic material. He moved to Egypt in 1956 and became an adviser on anti-Israel propaganda. Israel and Zionism became new political vehicles for the same older worldview. A contemporary CIA report recorded his aim to "convince two billion non-Europeans of the Jewish danger."

The audience expanded and the language shifted toward anti-colonial liberation, but the alleged enemy remained a worldwide "Jewish danger." In von Leers's work, anti-Zionism did not replace antisemitism; it carried it into a new geopolitical setting. His record does not define every criticism of Zionism. It does show that explicitly Nazi antisemitism entered postwar anti-Zionist propaganda rather than simply disappearing in 1945.

The apartheid and racism framing did not begin as a response to Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. In 1961, South African prime minister Hendrik Verwoerd declared: "Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state." In 1965, PLO Research Center founder Fayez Sayegh described Zionism as inherently colonial and racist. Both accusations preceded the 1967 war.

At the time, Israel did not control Gaza or the West Bank. Egypt held Gaza under military occupation, while Jordan had annexed the West Bank. Neither created an independent Palestinian state. The original accusation therefore targeted Israel's existence and Zionism's claim to Jewish national self-determination, not Israel's post-1967 occupation, which had yet to begin.

In 1975, a draft sponsored by a group dominated by Arab governments reached the UN General Assembly with Soviet-bloc backing. The adopted resolution placed Zionism alongside colonialism and apartheid and declared it "a

form of racism and racial discrimination.” It converted an existing political charge into an international anti-racist judgment. The General Assembly revoked it in 1991.

The Soviet record shows why that framing was dangerous. Soviet authorities used “anti-Zionism” to make Jewish national identity, Hebrew study, ties to Israel, and requests to emigrate evidence of political disloyalty. Jews could lose their jobs, face surveillance and searches, be refused permission to leave for years, or be imprisoned as “anti-Soviet” activists. Calling the campaign anti-Zionist allowed the state to persecute Jewish collective life while denying that it was persecuting Jews.

Durban joined the language of anti-racism to a campaign against Israel’s legitimacy while overt hatred of Jews circulated around it. BADIL published a caucus defense of the declaration’s Israel clauses; PCHR defended it too.

Durban occurred before both October 7, 2023 and the June 2007 Gaza blockade. It shows an earlier international setting in which a justice appeal coexisted with hostility toward Jews.

These episodes do not form one continuous movement, and criticism of Israel does not by itself establish hostility toward Jews. The NGO Forum was separate from the governments’ conference. Durban occurred during the Second Intifada and after earlier access restrictions. Attendance does not establish endorsement.

Damascus, 1840. A scholar-authored reference account documents the ritual-murder accusation, arrests, torture, and deaths. [Read the Cambridge reference](#)

Baghdad, 1941. The US Holocaust Memorial Museum documents the Farhud’s causes, violence, and estimated death toll. [Read the USHMM account](#)

Johann von Leers. A documented 1943 text contains von Leers’s statements about exterminating Europe’s Jews and demanding their total elimination. A declassified CIA report records his postwar propaganda goal in Egypt; the report is a contemporary intelligence account, not a verbatim transcript. [Read the documented 1943 text](#) [Read the 1956 CIA report](#)

The pre-1967 framing. A UN committee record reproduces Verwoerd’s 1961 comparison. Faye Sayegh’s 1965 PLO Research Center monograph argues that Zionism was inherently colonial and racist. [Read the UN committee record](#) [View the 1965 monograph record](#)

United Nations, 1975 and 1991. General Assembly Resolution 3379 declared Zionism a form of racism; Resolution 46/86 revoked that determination. [Read the 1975 resolution](#) [Read the 1991 revocation](#)

Sponsors and Soviet support. The UN record lists the draft’s formal sponsors; the Soviet Union is not among them. The roll-call record shows that it voted for the resolution. [Read the UN proceedings index](#) [Read the vote record](#)

Soviet Jews. US diplomatic records document searches, questioning, refusals of exit permission, and thousands of Jewish refuseniks. Archival collections of Soviet party, government, and KGB documents describe the late-1960s anti-Zionist campaign acquiring antisemitic overtones. [Read the 1977 memorandum](#) [Read the 1988 assessment](#) [See the Soviet-document collection](#)

Gaza and the West Bank before 1967. A contemporary United Nations record describes Gaza as under Egyptian military occupation. PalQuest documents Egypt’s military government and the limited Palestinian political authority it permitted. A contemporary US diplomatic record documents Jordan’s 1950 annexation of the West Bank. [Read the UN record](#) [Read the Gaza history](#) [Read the annexation record](#)

Durban, 2001. Tom Lantos recorded the Hitler flyer and the Arab Lawyers Union booklet in remarks preserved by the US Government Publishing Office. [Read the Congressional Record](#)

SECTION 05

A humane intention does not settle what a movement advances.

These cases show why the appeal needs a second question. Does the program protect freedom while preserving Jewish safety and self-government? Does it allow coexistence? Does it reject attacks on civilians?

Arab rulers had years to support Palestinian independence.

For most of the nineteen years from 1948 to 1967, Egypt occupied Gaza and Jordan controlled the West Bank. They had an opportunity to support Palestinian sovereignty in territories they held. Instead, Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950; Egypt maintained its military occupation of Gaza. Nasser closed the nominal All-Palestine Government's offices in 1959. Neither arrangement delivered an independent Palestinian state.

Regional ambitions also competed with Palestinian self-rule. King Abdullah pursued a Greater Syria project; Nasser championed pan-Arab unity, including the Egypt–Syria union. A different movement, Hizb ut-Tahrir, founded in Jerusalem in 1953, sought an Islamic caliphate. These were distinct projects, not one shared Arab or Muslim program.

Palestinian nationalism grew alongside these ambitions. Yet Arab sponsorship could constrain it: in 1964, Jordan required the emerging PLO to disclaim sovereignty over the West Bank. Supporting a Palestinian cause did not necessarily mean allowing Palestinians to govern themselves.

The conditions matter too: both territories had refugee camps and poor economies, with neglected development. Jordan granted citizenship to eligible Palestinians, but its nationality provision explicitly excluded Jews. Egypt's military government in Gaza allowed limited local political authority.

Palestinians also faced restrictions other governments could change. Egypt's human rights council reported citizenship denials in 2005 to children of Egyptian mothers and Palestinian fathers; Egypt began granting citizenship in 2011. Lebanon's 2001 property law limited Palestinian refugees' ability to buy and register property, while preserving inheritance of already-owned property. A slogan centered on Israel can leave these responsibilities out of view.

SECTION 06

Israel matters to Jews as a home, a refuge, and a shared future.

Sovereignty means the power to govern: to make laws, protect a population, and decide whom to admit. For Jews, Israel provides institutions through which they can act for their own safety and offer a home to Jews who need one.

The history explains why those powers matter. Jewish communities could live in a country for centuries and still lose their homes or protection:

- Yemen, 1679–1680: many Jewish communities were forced from their homes in the Mawza exile.
- Damascus, 1840: a false accusation that Jews had killed someone for a religious ritual led to arrests, torture, and deaths.
- Baghdad, 1941: the Farhud was an outbreak of anti-Jewish violence that killed an estimated 150–180 Jews.

Escape also depended on whether another country would let people in. In 1939, most passengers aboard the St. Louis —Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany—were refused landing in Cuba and the United States. They returned to Europe; 254 were later killed in the Holocaust.

Israel changes who can open the door. It has provided a new home for threatened or dispersed Jewish communities. In Iraq, persecution and citizenship and asset loss accompanied almost 120,000 Jewish departures in 1950–1951. Jewish refuge no longer depends entirely on other governments agreeing to admit them.

That is a living stake today. Replacing Israel would change who controls protection and admission. A replacement program must explain who would keep refuge open and enforce Jewish safety if the governing majority refused.

A shared future must preserve that Jewish home and capacity for self-government while securing Palestinian freedom and statehood. That brings us to a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

SECTION 07

Palestinian freedom can mean statehood alongside Israel.

Negotiation has already produced peace between Israel and former enemies, and Israeli leaders have repeatedly accepted territorial compromise and Palestinian political recognition. That record differs from programs that make liberation depend on Israel's elimination.

- 1978–82 Peace with Egypt and the return of Sinai Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty that ended the state of war, established normal relations, and required Israel to withdraw its armed forces and civilians from Sinai. Israel dismantled its settlements and completed the return of the peninsula to Egyptian sovereignty in 1982. It was a concrete demonstration that Israel would exchange territory captured in war for peace and security arrangements. [Read the treaty history](#)
- 1993–95 Oslo and Yitzhak Rabin In the Oslo process, the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist in peace and security and renounced terrorism; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. The agreements created Palestinian self-government and a process for negotiating permanent status. Rabin also signed Israel's 1994 peace treaty with Jordan. On November 4, 1995, a Jewish extremist opposed to his peace policies assassinated him after a peace rally in Tel Aviv. [Read the mutual-recognition letters](#) [Read the Knesset account of Rabin's life](#)
- 2000 Camp David & the Clinton parameters Camp David ended without agreement. Clinton's later proposal set out Palestinian statehood alongside Israel, with territorial, security, Jerusalem, and refugee arrangements. [Read the parameters](#)
- 2001 Taba Israeli and Palestinian negotiators worked on the core issues. Their joint statement reported substantial progress and remaining gaps; no final agreement was reached. [Read their joint statement](#)

- 2007–08 Annapolis & the Olmert–Abbas negotiations The leaders jointly committed to negotiations for Israel and Palestine living alongside each other in peace and security. The process did not produce a final peace treaty. Read the joint commitment

The Egypt and Jordan treaties became lasting agreements. Oslo established mutual recognition and Palestinian self-government but did not produce a final Israeli–Palestinian settlement. The later negotiations also ended without final agreements, and there is substantial debate about their adequacy, responsibility for failure, and the effects of violence and political constraints. Their significance here is the demonstrated political horizon: territory can be exchanged for peace, former enemies can recognize one another, and an independent Palestine alongside Israel is a different goal from replacing Israel.

Say the future you support plainly.

Palestinians deserve freedom, dignity, accountable government, and a state they can shape. Israelis deserve safety and continued self-determination in their homeland. A durable peace must protect both peoples, reject attacks on civilians, and make coexistence possible.

The task is to build that future—and support the people and programs working toward it.

BEFORE LENDING YOUR VOICE

- What future does this group seek?
 - Which methods does it endorse or reject?
 - How does it treat Jews and coexistence?
 - Who imposed the restriction—and who can remove it?
-

SOURCE LINKS

Primary and institutional reading

Links are reproduced from the published walkthrough. Descriptive labels identify their role; readers should consult the linked material directly for full context.

- **Read the issued toolkit**
<https://wolpalestine.com/resources/rally-toolkit/>
- **Read the published speech**
<https://iacenter.org/2019/06/10/solidarity-with-palestine-on-al-quds-day/>
- **Read the archived toolkit**
<https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/1179/sjp-day-of-resistance-toolkit.pdf>
- **Read his letter**
<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/6/9/barghouti-lte/>
- **Read the BDS guidelines**
<https://www.bdsmovement.net/news/bds-movement-anti-normalization-guidelines>
- **Read PACBI's summary**
<https://bdsmovement.net/academic-boycott>
- **Read the Cambridge reference**
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-dictionary-of-judaism-and-jewish-culture/d/E199E81FB6AFCCA04CE6BC3D2E4B9DDA>
- **Read the USHMM account**
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-farhud>
- **Read the documented 1943 text**
<https://phdn.org/histgen/documents/nazisdoc-en.html>
- **Read the 1956 CIA report**
https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/LEERS%2C%20JOHANNES%20VON_0070.pdf
- **Read the UN committee record**
https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/863723/files/A_C.3_SR.2132-EN.pdf
- **View the 1965 monograph record**
<https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/205878>
- **Read the 1975 resolution**
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-181963/>
- **Read the 1991 revocation**
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180327/>
- **Read the UN proceedings index**
https://library.un.org/sites/library.un.org/files/itp/a29-30-special_sess-7_1.pdf
- **Read the vote record**
<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/650324?ln=en>
- **Read the 1977 memorandum**
<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/24372-memo-secretary-state-vance-president-carter-23-may-1977>
- **Read the 1988 assessment**
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1981-88v41/d108>
- **See the Soviet-document collection**
https://www.nli.org.il/en/books/NNL_ALEPH990018678420205171/NLI

- **Read the UN record**
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-211461/>
- **Read the Gaza history**
<https://www.palquest.org/en/highlight/22188/palestinian-refugees-gaza-strip-1948-1967>
- **Read the annexation record**
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v05/d457>
- **Read the Congressional Record**
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-2002-03-21/pdf/CREC-2002-03-21.pdf>
- **Read the treaty history**
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v09Ed2/d239>
- **Read the mutual-recognition letters**
<https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/israel-plo20mutual20recognition.pdf>
- **Read the Knesset account of Rabin's life**
<https://m.knesset.gov.il/EN/About/Pages/rabin.aspx>
- **Read the parameters**
<https://fmep.org/resource/clinton-parameters/>
- **Read their joint statement**
https://prn.mcgill.ca/prn/docs/ta_ba_declaration_e.html
- **Read the joint commitment**
<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071127.html>