

Christian Palestinian Liberation Theology: An Extreme Anti-Zionism

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Introduction

- The meaning of the word *Palestinian*
- The old **Social Gospel** and modern Liberation Theology
- Theological Interpretation of Scripture (**TIS**)



Mandate for Palestine, July 24 1922.

Showing the area of Trans-Jordan, in which the reconstitution of the Jewish National Home was to be postponed or withheld. The territory of Jewish Palestine has been reduced by 77% of the original Mandate.

The Word *Palestinian*

- Word created by the Greeks to designate the territory of the Philistines – a geographical designation
- It is deliberately applied to all of Israel by the Romans (basically southern Syria) – a geographical designation

The Word *Palestinian*

- During the British Mandate (1920-48) it referred to part of the geographical area under British control
 - ✓ Jewish Palestinians
 - ✓ Arab Palestinians

The Word *Palestinian*

- After the re-formation of Israel in 1948 and the formation of the PLO in the 1960s, the word increasingly came to be used ethnically of Arab Palestinians
 - ✓ This was for political reasons
 - ✓ There has never been a true ethnic group called Palestinians

Are these the same thing?

**Social
Gospel
(Early 19th
Century)**

**Liberation
Theology
(Late 19th
Century)**

Social Gospel: Walter Rauschenbusch

“redemption of society from political autocracies and economic oligarchies; the substitution of redemptive for vindictive penology; the abolition of constraint through hunger as part of the industrial system; and the abolition of war”

A Theology for the Social Gospel



Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS)

- Reading the Bible with a preconceived agenda or theological point already in mind
- Existence of God, Deity of Christ, Inerrancy of the Bible
- Trinity, Church (communitarian), Already-Not Yet
- Various forms of **liberation theology**

Sloganized verses: Let my people go; the truth shall make you free

Christian Palestinian Liberation Theology is an agenda-driven approach to using the Bible and Christian theology to advance the defeat of the government (Israel) which is oppressing the Palestinian people (Muslim & Christian Arabs).

Statement by Arab Mayor (Muslim) of Nablus after 1982 Invasion of Lebanon by Israel

No one was surprised by the criminal attack on Lebanon

It is a continuation of Israel's policy aimed at exterminating our people, physically and politically

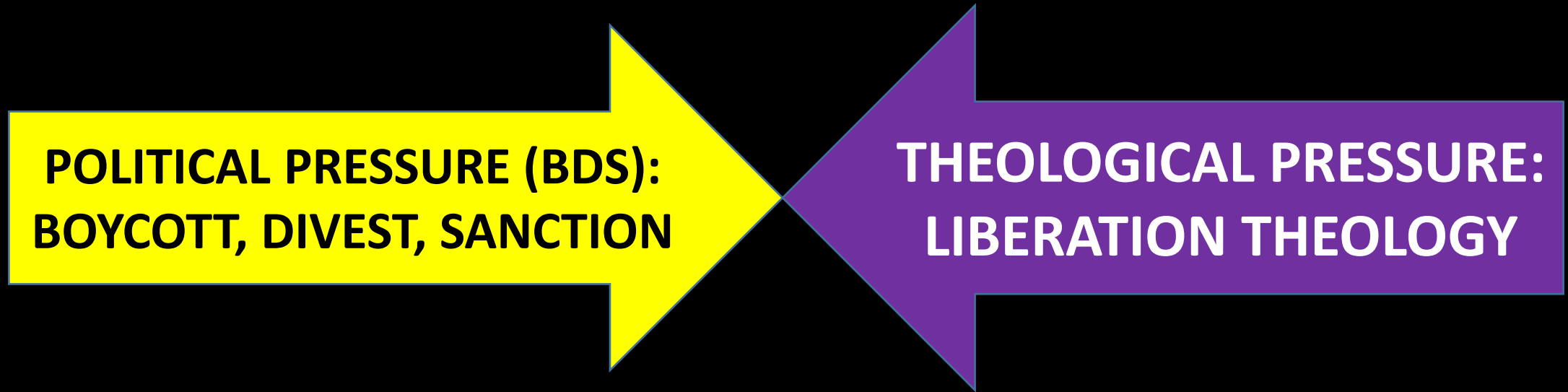
It is a continuation of the battle started by Israel at the very beginning when it considered the land to be its land

And sought to build a "pure" Israel without the inhabitants

Upside-Down Social Justice in the Case of Israel



Two Ways the Arab Narrative is Being Spread



Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS)

- Boycott purchase of Israel products
- Goal is anti-Israel thinking – drawing an analogy between the apartheid of South Africa and the apartheid of Israel
- Attempt to keep Israeli speakers (academics, doctors, etc.) from speaking at conferences or publishing in journals
- Bombarding college campuses (especially in Britain and the USA) with anti-Israel propaganda

Anti-Semitism on University Campuses

Examples:

1. Students of Color Conference (SOCC)
2. Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)
3. Middle Eastern Studies typically leave out any emphasis on Jews and Israel

Students of Color Conferences

“Over the course of what was probably no longer than an hour, my history was denied, the murder of my people was justified, and a movement whose sole purpose is the destruction of the Jewish homeland was glorified.”

“Statements were made justifying the ruthless murder of innocent Israeli civilians, blatantly denying the Holocaust in which six million Jews were murdered. Why anyone in their right mind would accept these slanders as truths baffles me. But they did. These statements, and others, were met with endless snaps and cheers. I was taken aback.” – **Arielle, Jewish student**

Students for Justice in Palestine

- A chapter of SJP was suspended at Northeastern University in 2014
 - ✓ Defaced a statue of a Jewish donor
 - ✓ Disrupting Holocaust awareness events



Theological Pressure: Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology

- Focus on political deliverance usually through nonviolent means
- Started in the middle of the 20th century
- Latin America/Roman Catholic
- Bible sloganized, not interpreted and practiced

Evangelical Theology

- High view of the Bible
- High view of Christ
- Focus on salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone
- Attempt to practice the Bible

Christian Palestinianism

- A form of **liberation theology** focusing on the oppression of the Palestinian Arabs (both Muslims and Christians) by Israel and their need for political deliverance
- A movement of **professing Christians** from the **liberal** side of the spectrum
- **Social justice** is the key issue

Father of Christian Palestinianism

Naim Ateek

- **Palestinian Arab**
- **Anglican Priest**
- **Wrote the key book:**
***Justice and Only Justice: A
Palestinian Theology of
Liberation***
(1989)



In 1989 Ateek founded Sabeel



- Sabeel is an **ecumenical** organization
- Promotes the **Arab narrative** that Israel is an apartheid nation
- Supports BDS movement

SABEEL



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**1. Propagation of a
Palestinianized version
of Roman Catholic
liberation theology**

SABEEL



2. Blatant distortion and de-Zionization of God's Word

3. A Marcionite Jesus arrayed in Palestinian Robes = downplaying of the Old Testament

SABEEL



4. Interfaith agenda at odds with the uniqueness of Jesus and the gospel of eternal life – **what is shared by the various groups is rejection of Israel**

SABEEL



5. Seduction of Western evangelicals who hold to replacement theology –
Christ at the Checkpoint
(2010)

**What is the end game for Christian
Palestinianism?**

What would victory over Israel look like?

**If they win over Israel, will social justice
be done?**

Christ At the Checkpoint

- Series of meetings beginning in 2010 held in Israel/Palestine
- Mostly professing evangelicals who share the “Arab Narrative”
- Some crossover of speakers from Sabeel
- Most of the speakers hold to replacement theology



- Dr. Gary Burge
- One of the leaders of Christ at the Checkpoint
- Calvin Theological Seminary
- Presbyterian
- Has written books against Zionism and against Israel

- Stephen Sizer
- **Speaker at both Sabeel and Christ at the Checkpoint**
- Retired Anglican minister
- **Anti-Semitic & Anti-Zionist**
- Has spoken at a pro-Hezbollah conference



Note the Replacement Theology of CATC

“We do not condemn the Jewish people and we reject any forms of anti-Semitism. In fact, many of our supporters are Israeli Jews who believe that the present Israeli treatment of the Palestinians does not reflect the deeper moral values of Judaism itself.”

“We simply wish to find a life in the entire Holy Land that is free of discrimination and injustice, where each person can live without prejudice toward their race or religion.”

“This also means we reject theologies that lead to discrimination or privileges based on ethnicity. Worldviews that promote divine national entitlement or exceptionalism do not promote the values of the Kingdom of God because they place nationalism above Jesus.”

One for Israel says this about CATC:

CATC's "true purpose is to fundamentally change the way that Evangelicals in the West read the Bible in order to fundamentally change their political stand regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict- and through them, to affect their political leaders."

Some Recommendations -- # 1

**Literal
Interpretation**

**Embrace
Dispensationalism**

**You will support
Zionism**

**Your love for
Jewish people will
grow**

Some Recommendations -- # 2

Do not accept all the actions of the present Israeli government as right just because it is Israel.



Some Recommendations -- # 3

Oppose BDS and Christian Palestinian Liberation Theology at every opportunity

Share in your churches how the social justice movement practices anti-semitism

Some Recommendations -- # 4

Remember that Jesus is Jewish. How can we not love the Jewish people?

The Apostle said “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers” (Rom. 11:28)