

ENA Talk Summary – Who Profits from the Occupation?

1. Who loses from the occupation?

- a. Obviously the Palestinians.
- b. Israelis also lose money. The occupation is the biggest economic expenditure of the Israeli government, and costs about 9% of the total Israeli budget. It accumulates to about 3 billion dollars per year on civilian costs, and 6 billion dollars per year on security costs, based on a calculation which I put together from various estimates published by many researchers.
- c. This cost increases very fast with the population of the colonists, by a rate of about 7% annually. The colonists migrate to the West Bank because of the government benefits, but this makes the occupation altogether more expensive.
- d. The result of this massive expenditure is that Israel is the poorest state in the West, with the highest level of poverty in the OECD and the highest inequality in any country except the U.S.

2. International Aid

- a. The cost of the occupation is also taken up by the international community, especially Europe, through international aid.
- b. The money keeps the Palestinians under occupation from reaching mass famine, but much of it actually helps the Israeli economy.
- c. So why do international players want to pay for the occupation? This has a lot to do with economic interests in pacifying the Middle East, but Europe especially is paralyzed politically – it can spend money to prevent the situation from deteriorating (not always successfully), but refuses to put any pressure on Israel.
- d. But at the same time, the U.S gives Israel even more aid than the Palestinians receive, 3 billion dollars annually. Why?

3. Who really profits from the occupation?

- a. The Israeli military industry, exporting at about 4 billion dollars annually (and growing), using the Palestinian population as guinea pigs for new weapons.
- b. Israel is the world's capital of "homeland security" products, aimed at controlling civilians rather than at fighting armies.
- c. The U.S aid to Israel comes in the form of vouchers to buy U.S-made weapons. In fact, it is a subsidy for the U.S arms industry. This can also explain the seemingly great power which the Israeli lobby has in the U.S – its not a Zionist conspiracy, but rather a proxy which helps U.S presidents to appease the weapon and oil lobbies, while pretending to be friends of Israel.
- d. Meanwhile, every war that Israel fights and every escalation with the Palestinians creates profit for the weapon and oil companies, most of them centered in the U.S, which could explain the U.S policy of preventing the end of the occupation.
- e. Finally, the right-wing in Europe also supports Israel very strongly, and uses Israel as a model on how to treat immigrants, Moslems, and human rights. Israel does not only provide the technology, but also gives an example on how this technology can be used against minorities with impunity.