

# Palestine, Annexation and the Wrong Story

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

*The other night I watched PBS NewsHour with Judy Woodruff. The report on the annexation (do I need to qualify or explain “annexation”? What other country has or is likely ever to declare its impending annexation of someone else’s land to the world?) came at the end of the hour on June 30th. It was appalling, and reminded me of co-founder of The Electronic Intifada Ali Abunimah’s almost [daily letters](#) to NPR (his ‘Bitter Pill’) pointing out bias about its reporting from Jerusalem. But that was years, no decades, ago! Nothing has changed since then.*

Somebody, something is controlling the Palestine/Israel news in the mainstream media. The reaction of anyone interested enough in alternative reporting on Palestine/Israel who happens to come across this statement is, “duh”—or perhaps the word “control” would trigger long harangues about anti-Semitic tropes and take us off the subject.

But how well do we really know about this ungodly control? There is a story to be told about it that deserves to be on Netflix or Amazon as much as the story of the control and political orientation of Fox News, The Loudest Voice, a TV 2019 mini-series, does. We need a dramatization!

How likely are you to see such a story on your movie entertainment screens? Zero. If you wonder why not, someone will sooner or later tell you, “it’s complicated.”

How complicated is it to question, if only with a raised eyebrow, the premise that Jewish settlers had a RIGHT to rob and dispossess Palestinians? In giving “both sides” equal time and implying that the annexation was a “security issue,” Nick Schiffrin’s reporting on PBS NewsHour (which also implicates Woodruff) is a shameful disgrace.

The Jewish colony of Efrat has over 10,000 Jews squatting on Palestinian land. These Jews, like their government, believe that it is their God-given right to seize it from Palestinians, “displace” them or drive them off into oblivion, if necessary, and Nick Schiffrin reports on their rapaciousness and outright supremacism as follows:

“But after decades of failed peace attempts, Mayor [Oded] Revivi of the Efrat settlement is pushing a plan that he says gives legitimacy to settlements.”

Missing from the PBS NewsHour report is anything that, even remotely, challenges the Jewish supremacist narrative, and instead, presents it simply as “the other side,” frustrated by the failure of the so-called peace effort.

Danny Seidemann, “a longtime [Israeli] activist and expert on Jerusalem’s geography and history,” according to the report, compares the annexation of parts of the West Bank being discussed with Israel’s illegal 1967 annexation of Jerusalem, saying: “There will probably be some Palestinians [on the annexed lands, as ethnic cleansing is never 100% efficient], and we will turn them into stateless people, just like we have with the Palestinians of East Jerusalem.”

Breaking news (from me not PBS NewsHour): The Jewish state turned the Palestinians into a stateless people way back in 1948 upon the violent establishment of Israel on approximately 78 percent of Palestine.

In *The Wrong Story*, Greg Shupak, who teaches Media Studies at the University of Guelph-Humber in Ontario, confronts, challenges and exposes the systematically deceptive frameworks and narratives in English-language mainstream media regarding Palestine and the Palestinian people. The titles of his chapters alone could be an education to Schiffrin and Woodruff:

Chapter One: Not “Both Sides”

Chapter Two: Extremists and Moderates

Chapter Three: Israel Does Not Have a Right to Defend Itself

In the conclusion to his book, Shupak writes:

The outlets covering Palestine-Israel are embedded in a system of global imperialist capitalism built around U.S. hegemony of which Israel is an important characteristic. The overall functioning of the international capitalist system of which the commercial media are a part is guaranteed by the US military and, as I have shown in Chapter Two, American sponsorship of Israeli settler-colonial capitalism is a key part of US planners’ strategy for dominance of the Middle East. The millionaire and billionaire owners of media outlets and of the advertisers that fund them are unambiguously part of the ruling class. The same is true, at least in the case of major national or international news organizations, of editors and often, as Hirji points out, journalists themselves who “belong to a societal elite” and “contribute, however, unconsciously to reinforcing existing notions about the way the world is.” One could add that such ideological administration also involves shaping beliefs about how the world should be and is capable of being. The stories of Palestine-Israel examined in these pages suggest that elites involved in the news making process believe that the violent oppression of Palestinians and the permanent consigning of them to the status of refugees and stateless persons is no great injustice, and that American stewardship of the Middle East is necessary and desirable.

Missing from the above persuasive and astute analysis is any mention of one other complication to the wrong story—the one that insulates a Jewish supremacist ideology from righteous attack or confrontation.

In addressing “the Palestinian side,” Nick Schiffrin tells us: “Palestinian leaders say that’s not good enough, and call the plan immoral.” We then hear Hanan Ashrawi, whom he describes as “a longtime Palestinian leader who says the U.S. is not an honest broker,” say: “It’s not a question of how much they will annex. The whole issue is annexation itself. You cannot be a

little bit pregnant. You cannot be a small thief or a big thief. Theft is theft. It's illegal."

Talk about greater or lesser annexations harks back to the same Jewish-state problem Palestinians faced when the world Jewish Zionist movement succeeded in dismembering Palestine and forming an entity that continued to grab more land, including Jerusalem, to push for more suppression, displacement and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, to form a greater and greater Jewish state.

In this PBS NewsHour report, we are presented with three voices spinning Israel—Trump's voice puffing about his "vision" of annexation, a Jewish Israeli activist's voice lamenting the moral failures of his government, and a "settler" voice loudly pushing Jewish supremacy—and, on "the other side," a lone Palestinian voice.

Recently, I came across an online [article](#) by a young journalist, Davide Mastracci, titled, "Uncovering Canadian Media's Devastating Pro-Israel Bias," and exposing the bias as being "enforced at every level of the [Canadian] media, from editorial boards all the way to ownership." He concludes with the following:

Israel is a settler-colonial state built on the murder and dispossession of Palestinians, who are now subjected to an apartheid system. Israel is in flagrant violation of international law at many levels. It is set to annex major chunks of the West Bank, effectively completing the destruction of Palestine. The media working to enforce a pro-Israel bias now is the equivalent of them defending South African apartheid... Crucially ... This means that journalists are failing to do justice by the oppressed, but also effectively falling in line with their government's foreign policy stance, leading to an abdication of responsibility internationally and at home. This coverage also plays a role in dissuading the public from working to hold Israel to account.

The PBS NewsHour [coverage](#) of Israel's annexation scandal on June 30th, 2020 is an abdication of its journalistic responsibility.

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Featured image: Capture from a [Facebook Middle East Monitor video](#) clip titled "Jewish settlers protest West Bank annexation plan"

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