

John McCulloch - Israel

April 2019

c/o St Andrew's Scottish Guest House
PO Box 8619
1 David Remez Street
Jerusalem 91086
Israel

The Economics of Injustice

Who Profits?

<https://whoprofits.org/>



Bedouin 'homes' outside an Israeli settlement in the Palestinian Occupied Territories

Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I recently visited one of the Church of Scotland's partners here in Israel which carries out vital and detailed research on the economics of injustice, perpetuated by the Occupation of the Palestinian Territories & Blockade of Gaza. The organisation is called **Who Profits?** and aims to go beyond philanthropy and charity work by addressing the structural issues of economic injustice. Many international bodies such as the UN have used their detailed and carefully researched reports, to shine a light on the injustices that Palestinians are living with in the Occupied Territories & Gaza are suffering from on a daily basis.

On their website they give a brief description of their history and remit:

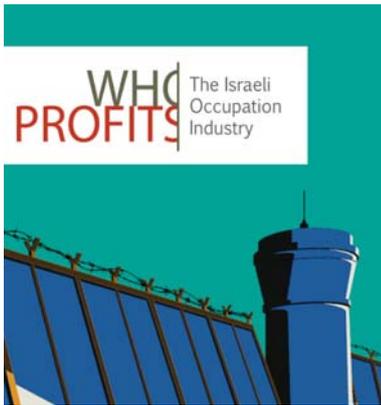
Who Profits from the Occupation is an independent research center dedicated to exposing the commercial involvement of Israeli and international corporations in the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian lands.

Who Profits was founded in 2007 as a project of the Coalition of Women for Peace, and became an independent Research Center in 2013. Our work addresses the economy of the Israeli occupation through three areas of activity: we maintain an online database of complicit corporations; we operate a free online information center; and we publish regular reports and updates on the corporate aspect of the occupation. Through these, we shed light on the role of the private sector in the Israeli settlement enterprise, in economic exploitation of Palestinian and Syrian land, labor and resources, and in the apparatus of control over the occupied population.

The verified and reliable information presented by Who Profits helps grassroots activists, civil society organizations and policymakers to stimulate a candid public conversation regarding the occupation economy and the global and local economic interests that play a critical role in sustaining Israeli control over occupied Palestinian and Syrian land ¹.

¹ Quoted from <https://whoprofits.org/about-who-profits/> (accessed 16.4.2019)

PARTNER PLAN



I went to meet them at an undisclosed location to hear more about the work they do. As an Israeli organisation that analyses aspects of government policy, they represent an important voice within Israeli society who want an end to the Occupation.

One of the signs of hope I have found here in Israel, are the Jewish and Israeli groups who are standing in solidarity with their Palestinian brothers and sisters, and doing all they can to advocate and campaign for a just resolution to this asymmetrical conflict. I was impressed by the rigour and methodology that underpins their work, which is carried out in humble surroundings: an unmarked studio flat in a ramshackle and dilapidated part of town.

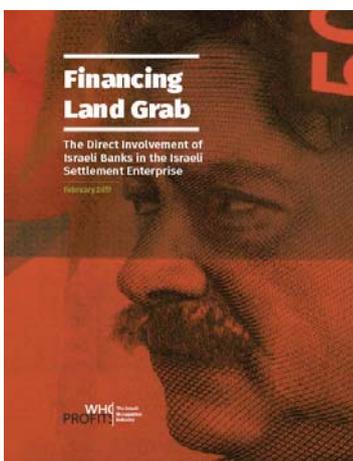
It felt as if I had walked into a Franz Kafka novel when I turned up at a rundown building, and walked up the cracked stone steps to an unmarked door. As I arrived the door opened and sitting in the studio apartment, were around 5 young women, busy writing at their computers. I was introduced and we sat down for coffee, and spoke about the challenges they face in their daily work. We spoke about how one of the roles of the Church is to stand up against economic injustice wherever it happens, and stand in solidarity with those who have been disenfranchised.



They spoke about some of their publications (which are all available on their website), and I reproduce a few examples and excerpts below as a brief conspectus of their important work:

Extract from above report:

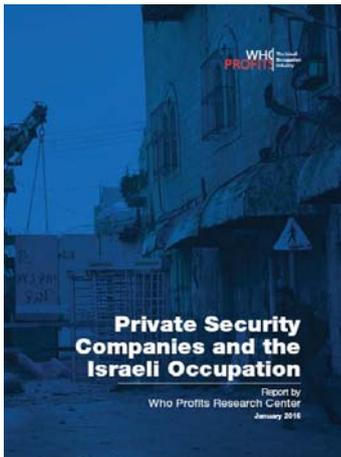
The central role played by heavy engineering machinery in the last two decades – in the attacks on Gaza and in urban warfare in the West Bank – stems from a rationale that puts the protection of Israeli soldiers and settlers above all, while the value of the rights and lives of Palestinian civilians is steadily declining. Unmanned, armored and armed D9 bulldozers razing Palestinian neighborhoods to the ground and extra-judicial killings executed by demolishing a house over a suspect's head – are clear manifestations of this “minimum risk” doctrine.



Extract from above report:

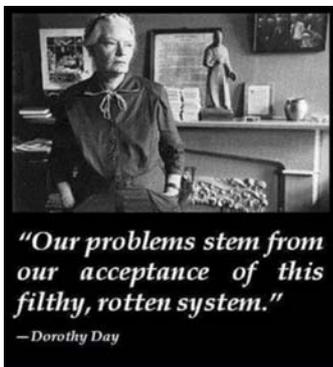
It is indisputable that Israeli banks provide the financial foundation for the construction, sustainment and development of settlements. The following report by Who Profits clearly demonstrates that Israeli banks not only provide such services and enable such activities, they are also fully aware of the type of activities for which their financial assistance is being used. Moreover, Israeli banks reap profits from the subordination of the Palestinian financial sector as a captive market.

PARTNER PLAN



Extract from above report:

The privatization process of the checkpoints and the employment of private security guards, usually contractor workers who are not directly employed by the state, also enables the Israeli authorities to shirk their responsibility for activities taking place in the checkpoints. While the Israeli authorities take full responsibility for the activities of their employees, the private security companies' responsibility for their workers is inadequate. As illustrated in this report, the private security industry in Israel is large and profitable, among other factors due to its extensive involvement in Israeli control and surveillance of the Palestinian people.



Charity and philanthropy are not enough. The root causes of injustice need to be addressed, not just here in Israel and the OPTs, but globally. It is the mission of the church to stand with the oppressed, and to do all it can to bring about a more just future. As Catholic Worker Dorothy Day said, in a very different context:

Please visit their website and disseminate amongst your networks and contacts. <https://whoprofits.org/about-who-profits/>

Best wishes

John McCulloch