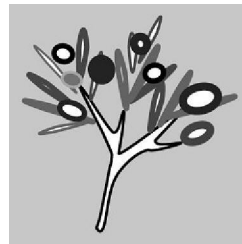
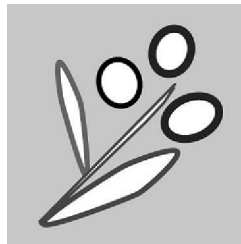
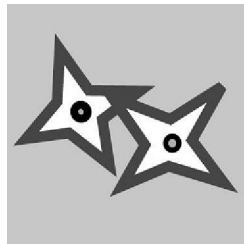
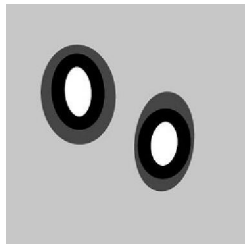


*For the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.
-Proverbs 11:30*

Leader's Guide



Trees of Reconciliation

A Tu B'Shvat Seder
for Healing and Reparation

Jewish Voice for Peace
January 2008

Table of Contents

Welcome	page 1
Background	page 2
Before the Seder	
Planning the Event	page 4
Shopping and Prep	page 5
Leading the Seder	page 6
Part One: The Seed	page 7
Part Two: The Blossom	page 8
Part Three: The Fruit	page 9
Part Four: The Harvest	page 10
Ideas for Introducing Campaign	page 11
After the Seder	page 13
Resources for Further Learning	
History Overview	page 14
JNF	page 14
1948	page 14
1967	page 15
Olive Trees and Environment	page 15
Tu B'Shvat	page 15
Progressive Jewish Voices	page 16
Films	page 16

Welcome to Your Leader's Guide!

If you are reading this, you have probably agreed to host or lead a Tu B'Shvat seder for the Trees of Reconciliation Campaign. Thank you!

In this guide, you will find background information on the holiday, checklists to make planning and leading the event easier, ideas for making your seder the political event of the year, and information on gathering pledges and building support for the campaign.

This guide is a supplement to the haggadah available for downloading on our web site. While the haggadah contains all of the readings and blessings, in this guide you will also find discussion questions or ideas for each of the four sections. These were created to allow a deeper experience for the participants by encouraging people to recall and share their good memories about trees, to give immediate voice to concerns and questions, and to plan out loud together how to move forward. Most seders will not have time for all of the questions to be asked and fully answered, so you'll want to pick those that make the most sense for your community.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We want to know about your experience using these tools, and will ask you to participate in a brief survey after the event.

Thanks! We hope your seder is easy to host, a pleasure to lead, and meaningful for all involved.

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Background

We'd like to tell you a bit about this seder and how it was developed.

What most of us who've ever been to a Tu B'Shvat seder have experienced is a more-or-less Kabbalistic ritual marking the unity of the "four worlds" -- drinking cups of red and white wine intermixed, eating combinations of nuts and fruits with hard or soft insides or outsides, listening to readings about the four elements (earth, fire, water, air), and how these relate to four different kinds of thoughtfulness and action in the world.

However, this is not the only kind of Tu B'Shvat celebration in Jewish tradition. During the era of the Mishnah the rabbis marked Tu B'Shvat as a tax day for trees, before which all produce was allocated to the year before, and after which all produce was taxed during the following year. This date mattered, because all who owned gardens were required to set aside a portion of their harvest for the benefit of the poor and landless. This marking of the holiday as a facet of *tikkun olam* was unknown in Torah, and its establishment as such was very much an act of social and economic justice.

The Tu B'Shvat seder of the Kabbalists was entirely a mystical experience, part of a set of year-long rituals designed to repair the devastation wrought when humans were originally expelled from the Garden of Eden. This seder was, in its own era, also completely new in the world, proposing a cosmic *tikkun olam* unknown to the rabbinical tradition or to earlier Kabbalists.

With the coming of Zionism, Tu B'Shvat was again reinvented, this time as a nationalist holiday designed to link diasporic Jews to the land that was then called Palestine. This celebration was, again, a completely new way to mark the date, and it borrowed heavily from European cultural rites celebrating spring and May Day. Songs and games for children were composed, and all families were encouraged to go to the land, picnic, and plant trees to make the desert bloom.

For our marking of Tu B'Shvat as Jews opposed to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, we have joined the Jewish tradition of re-making the tradition. Our seder is built on entirely new symbols, linked, as was the original, to values of social and economic justice. The binding metaphor of our seder is that of the cycle of the olive tree - the seed, the bloom, the fruit, and the harvest.

These four parts of our seder explore what trees have meant in Jewish history throughout the centuries and in particular in Israel-Palestine. In "Seeds" we give some background into the rich place of trees in generations of Jewish thought. In "Blooms," we consider the dreams of those who wanted to build a homeland, and who gathered pennies for this purpose in small blue boxes for the Jewish National Fund. We then examine the "Fruit" of these blooms as we explore the ways that trees planted in Israel came to serve as place-holders for the Jewish people in a tragically contested land. As these trees were planted, other trees that grew on that land for hundreds and hundreds of years were being uprooted as part of the violent struggle for this territory. Finally, in "Harvest," we consider what we can glean from what we have learned, and what seeds we want to plant for a more just future.

So why do this learning as a seder, and not just send the info and ask for donations? Because a seder is a ritual that makes an idea tangible. On Passover, we use all of our senses to transform a trip to the dinner table into a journey of liberation. We eat horseradish in order to really taste the bitterness of slavery; we drink wine to experience in our bodies the giddiness of freedom. We retell the story of the exodus from Egypt so that we have words to understand these sensations with our minds and hearts.

The intention of this Tu B'Shvat seder, too, is to make an idea visceral and concrete. The idea is this: that the beautiful dream of "greening the desert," which was such a central part of the Zionist vision for settlement by Jews in Palestine throughout the Twentieth Century, had what Uri Avnery has called "a dark side not registered in Zionist consciousness." That dark side was, and remains, the appropriation of land from native Palestinians, destruction of livelihoods and of the economy of the community, uprooting of ancient orchards and trees in a false quest for "security," and damage to the eco-system of Israel-Palestine. We will come together on January 21 to acknowledge the harms done to the trees and to begin the painful process of repairing the damage, even as we celebrate the role that repair -- *tikkun olam* -- can play in healing our world and our relationships with our neighbors.

How are we planning to repair the damage? In three different but linked ways. First, the Tu B'Shvat seder will launch the Trees of Reconciliation project as part of the Swords Into Ploughshares campaign of Jewish Voice for Peace, raising funds for replanting of olive trees in the West Bank through the Palestine Fair Trade Association. Second, the seder will allow us to join with other Jews and activists by taking a deep look at the history and reality of what trees have meant in Israel-Palestine as a kind of t'shuvah (turning) for ourselves and our communities. Third, and perhaps most important, we hope the seder and the Trees of Reconciliation work will help spark important conversations both within and outside the Jewish community about the Occupation, the economic and political devastation of Palestine, and the role that Jews -- particularly U.S. Jews -- can and must begin to play in the process of bringing about an end to the Occupation and peace between Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

Before The Seder

Planning The Event

Your seder may be a large and public event -- but it doesn't have to be. Small groups gathered around a single table are just important, and the intimacy of a small event can create a deep learning experience. You just need a date, time and location, one trip to the supermarket, and a copy of the haggadah for each guest. Using the haggadah, a few simple ideas from this guide, and plates with fruits and nuts, you can easily navigate through the seder and create a successful event.

Some of the planning ideas below assume an event of more than just a few people, and these hints are designed to help manage larger numbers.

Announcing your Event

If your seder is public, you will want to invite folks several weeks in advance. Send a “save the date” notice with basic information about the seder as soon as you have a date and time.

If you are willing to have your seder be open to the public, please contact Hannah or Elliott so it can be posted on the website.

When you have a location and other specific information, send your invitations. Remember to ask for RSVPs. At JVP Philadelphia, we've designed an invitation using the free software from www.evite.com. If you'd like to see a sample, or get help to make your own, please ask.

Recruiting Help

Recruit volunteers for shopping, preparation, and clean-up. If you'll need to rent tables or chairs, remember to recruit a volunteer to pick them up and return them.

Appoint a song leader if you can, as the singing flows much more smoothly, and is more enjoyable, if the group has one clear person to follow. You'll find sound files of the seder's songs on our website at: http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/publish/article_935.shtml.

Recruit the person who will be asking for pledges of trees and tracking the pledges. More information on this will be coming soon, but the basic work will be gathering names for the pledge database, collecting any pledges with checks or cash made that night, and conveying the information to JVP for follow-up.

We have found, through many different seders and groups, that the event flows more smoothly if some of the readings are assigned in advance to people willing to briefly rehearse them beforehand. (This is especially true of poems, or passages with Hebrew or Arabic phrases or names. Some of these readings carry emotional or political charge, and people who simply launch into one without knowing its content can also be taken aback, or thrown off guard.) Consider assigning at least some of the numbered passages in advance. This is a great role for chapter members if you are hosting a larger or public seder.

Shopping and Prep

Using the shopping list on the web site, gather the food, drink, and supplies.

The seder will flow much more smoothly if the foods are prepared in advance and are ready to serve. Prepare one tray with the listed foods for each of the four sections, so they can be brought out quickly.

You might also want to have bowls of nuts or dried fruits on the table for guests to snack on throughout the event.

If you are serving a meal at the end of the event, have the food in containers ready to be served before you begin.

Leading the Seder

The main role of the seder leader is to shepherd the evening -- get folks started on time, keep the event moving, anticipate upcoming sections, and be a resource for questions or more information (you'll find a bibliography in the back of this guide).

The leader should do or find someone to do the following things:

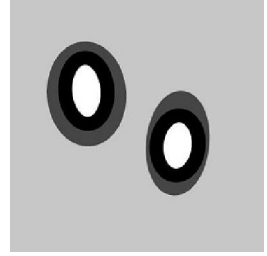
- Welcome guests
- Introduce the event and Jewish Voice for Peace
- Answer questions, especially about the Trees of Reconciliation Campaign

If the discussion questions are used, the leader should introduce them and set time limits. You will want to decide in advance how the discussions will happen -- in the whole group, or in pairs or small groups. You might also ask people to reflect silently on one question, then to discuss another. That the discussions happen is more important than how or than what is said -- being able to give voice to personal experience or to reflect on questions about new information are vital parts of effective adult learning experiences. The seder asks that participants listen to and absorb information, some of which might challenge deeply held perceptions; the chance to "talk back" will help relieve any tension, and give guests and visitors a chance to get to know your community.

The seder is designed with two kinds of information -- paragraphs that introduce and close each section, and numbered readings that share information or analysis. Leaders can read the introductory information, or ask for others to do so. If you are using the Hebrew blessings, they will flow more smoothly if each has one clear leader who is comfortable with the Hebrew.

If you prefer doing the seder in a more secular way, you can obviously skip the blessings and just do the readings in English.

Part One: The Seed



The goal of this section is to introduce the important role trees have played in Jewish thought in many different eras. This section also creates the setting to make strong, positive connections to our traditions and cultural values, important because the sections of the seder about how Zionism and the State of Israel have treated Palestinians can be emotionally challenging. People can't be motivated to act for social change, for justice, from a place of shame or silence, so it is important to affirm what is positive about our identification with our Jewish-ness as we discuss the effect of Israel as a Jewish state on the Palestinians.

For non-Jews leading or participating in this seder, this section is vital to creating an environment that separates criticism of Zionism and of the the State of Israel from the entirety of Jewish history and culture.

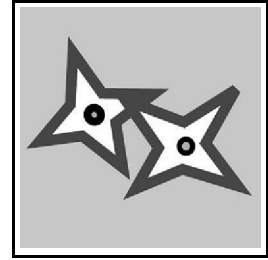
The sources quoted cover a time span of thousands of years, from verses recorded in the Torah to contemporary Israeli poet Danny Siegel.

We suggest having the first plate of fruits and cups for juice on the table at the start of the seder. Explain that the foods should not be eaten until the blessings happen after the reading.

If you want to invite discussion in this section, we suggest pausing between eating the food and singing Etz Chayim Hi. You might ask participants to silently recall, or discuss with one other person, positive memories they have of trees, or to reflect on what they have just heard/read. In order to keep momentum for the event, this discussion should be no more than a few minutes.

At the end of this section, clear the platter/s and bring the food for the second section to the table. If you have bowls of nuts or fruit for people to snack on, place these on the table as well.

Part Two: The Blossom



The goal of this section is to make space to honor the dream of greening the desert and redeeming the land. To those of us who created the seder, it is important that participants be able to make a connection between their positive experience giving money to help Israel as children and what they can do to help Israel now. We want to teach the truth about the effect of Jewish National Fund policies, but in a way that does not blame everyone who shared a beautiful dream.

If you happen to have a blue box or JNF donor certificates, bring these to the seder and place them on the table during this section.

If you know that some of your participants may have little or no knowledge about the timeline for the founding of the State of Israel, you might to introduce this section with a very brief overview of important milestones:

1897 - first Zionist Congress held in Basel, Switzerland

1901 - Jewish National Fund is created and soon begins to purchase land for Jews in Palestine

1917 - The Balfour Declaration opens the door for limited Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Zionist movement builds on this and continues political and military struggle to create a Jewish homeland.

1948 - The State of Israel is created after the United Nations votes to partition the land of Palestine; and land confiscated in the fighting that follows is transferred from the State to the JNF for Jewish-only use and settlement.

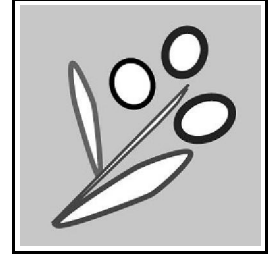
1967 - In the “six-day” war, Israel defeats Arab armies and begins the military Occupation of the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank of the Jordan River, East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip.

If you want to include discussion in this section, pause after the final reading and before the line beginning “We honor the hopes and good intentions” that introduces the food to be eaten. Invite participants to turn and talk in pairs or small groups about any memories they have about JNF, the blue boxes, or visiting JNF forests in Israel. This discussion can be quite brief, and should not be more than a few minutes, as the next section of the seder is the longest and most difficult.

If you have community members or seder participants who are likely to be highly critical of the JNF, you might want to pair them up for this discussion, so that people with positive memories are allowed to express them without challenge in this section.

After the blessings and eating, clear the platters and bring out trays with bittersweet fruits for the next section.

Part Three: The Fruit



This section takes on the difficult question of the effect of Jewish dreams and the JNF on Palestinian communities and the land itself. The sections intentionally jump across time, from pre-1948 until today, to show the effect of the continuity of policies of removing Palestinians from their land in favor of Jewish-only settlements, which continues today in the Occupied Territories but also in Palestinian communities in Israel.

We expect that some participants may find these pieces challenging. We suggest slowing down the pace here, even though it is longest section, and leaving time between each reading for words and ideas to sink in.

If you have a song leader, one option is to have people quietly hum or sing “Lo yisa goy” for one or two repetitions between every third or fourth reading. This will make this section longer, but can provide release from emotional tension if your participants will find the information in this section particularly difficult.

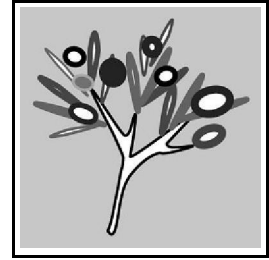
For this part of the seder, inviting people to talk back is probably the most important, but is also the most likely to be a site for challenges. When people encounter information that challenges their sense of what is right or true in the world, they can respond by shutting down or by becoming upset. Therefore the framing of the invited response is quite important, as it can channel the emotional power behind the confusion or anger into a positive direction.

We suggest pausing after the final reading, the poem by Julia Vinograd. Ask people to stop to consider how they each balance truths that are in conflict with one another -- how do they hold in their heads and hearts both the Jewish story and the Palestinian story? This time for quiet thinking is also designed to help anyone who is upset calm down before beginning to talk. After people have had a few moments to gather their thoughts, have them turn and share their strategies for dealing with difficult information.

Be prepared to intervene (gently) in any difficult situations by walking to each table to re-direct any conversations that slip into debating the “facts.” If you are hosting a large event, make sure each table has one person you know to be a good facilitator, and prepare them for being ready to step in at this section.

Use the singing of Lo Yisa Goy (or Pat Humphries’ *Peace, Salaam, Shalom*) to build energy; people know this song, and most have positive emotional responses to it, so sing loud and long. This will set the stage for moving into the final section.

Part Four: The Harvest



This section of the seder is the call to action; it introduces the Trees of Reconciliation campaign specifically, but also poses the larger question of what we carry from the past and what we plant for the future.

The choreography of this section is a little different from the first three, and a bit more complicated. We suggest this order:

1. do the readings through number three.
2. introduce the campaign and make the pledge pitch, using the words in the haggadah or the extended version below
3. make sure the foods are on the table, including seeds, and that everyone has a glass of water for the blessing.
4. make the blessing for beginnings and eat the seeds
5. sing or speak the blessing for water and drink the water
6. speak both blessings for the other foods, then eat them
7. give people a few minutes to pass and eat
8. continue with the readings
9. invite everyone to say the closing blessing aloud together (all people are chosen/all land is holy)
10. Sing Od Yavo and close. If you are serving a meal, invite the people who are staying to stand, stretch, take a break, etc, while tables are cleared and food is brought out.

For reading #3, the Amichai poem, if you have someone who can read it fluently in Hebrew, please feel free to offer it in both languages.

The song “Bruchah at eyn mayim chayim” can be read as blessing or sung. You’ll find a sound file of this song on the resource web site: XXXXXXXX

Our suggestion is to not have a discussion question in this section, as people will see the end coming and be restless. You might want to have a short Q&A period around asking for donations, if this feels appropriate in your gathering.

More Ideas for Introducing the Campaign

We are hoping that all of our seder hosts can make a fundraising push for the Trees of Reconciliation project. Since we know that people have widely varying comfort levels asking for donations, we suggest recruiting a shameless and enthusiastic fundraiser for this task.

The haggadah contains a few paragraphs about the campaign; your fundraiser might also want to read from or paraphrase the additional information below.

Through "Trees of Reconciliation," JVP intends to donate 3,000 olive saplings to Palestinian farmers for planting in the coming year.

As you now know, the olive crop is an essential cornerstone of the Palestinian economy. Since the beginning of the Second Intifada, the uprooting of more than 700,000 olive trees by the Israeli Defense Forces to make way for illegal settlements and the Apartheid Wall has wreaked incalculable damage on the only source of livelihood for thousands of Palestinian families living under Occupation. Destroying of trees has other consequences as well, since under Ottoman law, which still applies in the West Bank, land not cultivated for three years can be legally confiscated by the Israeli government.

Trees have long served political purposes, both symbolic and practical, in the struggle for land and resources in Israel-Palestine. From the early days of the last century, the Jewish National Fund collected pennies in its Blue Box campaigns, particularly in the U.S. and European Jewish communities, to plant trees to "make the desert bloom" and thus "Redeem the Holy Land." In fact, the millions raised by the JNF rarely purchased land, but instead supported demolition of hundreds of Palestinian villages and the planting of environmentally disastrous pine forests in an eco-system where they did not belong. Today in many of the JNF forests that tourists visit in Israel the ruins of villages destroyed by the IDF in the 1940s and 50s are still visible. Despite the best intentions of all those who donated to "green the desert" over the years, the planting of those trees was an environmental, economic and psychological disaster for the fellahin whose families had farmed these lands for centuries.

Working through the Palestine Fair Trade Association, JVP will purchase olive saplings for planting in the Jenin-Nablus-Salfit triangle of the Occupied West Bank. While 3,000 trees is only a tiny beginning, the symbolism of such an effort will be powerful both to Palestinians and within the progressive Jewish community in the United States. It also provides possibilities for meaningful conversation with others in our communities about the realities of life for Palestinians living under the Israeli occupation and the moral responsibility of U.S. Jews in the current crisis.

Each \$20 pledge you make tonight will plant three olive saplings on Fair Trade farms in Palestine. If you are so moved, we ask that you take pledge forms and talk with other people in your communities about joining this campaign.

Given the enormity of the problem of peace and reconciliation between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, it is often difficult for us as activists to find concrete steps we can take that will make any real difference. The planting of 3,000 olive trees by U.S. Jews on Palestinian farms will not solve the crisis, but the symbolism is undeniable, and 3,000 saplings do make a real difference to real people "on the ground."

Please join us! Before you leave tonight, either make a donation of \$20 for 3 trees (of \$40 for 6 trees, or \$80 for 12 trees...) -- or take a pledge form and commit to helping us raise pledges toward our 3000 tree goal.

After the Seder

Although we know that not every guest will want to add their name and email address to the Trees of Reconciliation campaign list, please encourage folks to sign up, as we are consciously building a broad campaign. If people feel they can't pledge at the time, encourage them to take a pledge form. In any case, we hope to have a list of the names and email addresses of all the guests who attended your seder.

We will be mailing each seder leader a large pre-addressed envelope in which pledges and attendee lists should be returned. We hope at the end of each seder to come away with the following:

- a list of attendees including email and home addresses
- a list of pledges, including email and home addresses, with checks (made out to JVP) attached
- registration forms for collecting pledges in 2008

Please mail these back to JVP in the envelope provided no later than January 31. Thanks!

A few days after the seder we will be sending out a brief online survey to gather your ideas and feedback about the seder, haggadah, and campaign. This seder is the first part of a multi-year campaign, so your experiences, feedback and ideas are important to us.

Resources for Further Learning

History Overview

Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Beacon Press, 2006.

Morris, Benny. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*. Vintage, 1999.

Pappe, Ilan. *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Said, Edward. *The Question of Palestine*. Vintage Books, 1979.

Shlaim, Avi. *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. WW Norton and Co., 2001.

Tolan, Sandy. *The Lemon Tree*. Bloomsbury Press, 2006.

Jewish National Fund

Avnery, Uri. Abolish the JNF. <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=12642>

Blouground, David. The Jewish National Fund. Policy paper, Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies (2001). <http://www.iasps.org/policystudies/ps49.pdf>

Ha'aretz Editorial, "Who Needs the JNF?" (September 24, 2007), www.icahd.org/eng/news.asp?

Morris, Benny. "Yosef Weitz and the Transfer Committees, 1948-49" and "Yosef Nachmani and the Arab Question," in *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (revised edition, 1994).

"Protesting the JNF" <http://stopthewall.org/worldwideactivism/1577.shtml>

1948 expulsions, destruction of villages and the Naqba (catastrophe)

Pappe, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. OneWorld Publications, 2006.

Segev, Tom. *1949: The First Israelis*. Owl Books, 1986.

Zochrot - www.zochrot.org Israeli NGO site with maps and information about specific villages that were emptied and/or destroyed.

Lists of destroyed villages: www.palestineremembered.com

1967 and the Occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem

Bennis, Phyllis. *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer*. Olive Branch Press, 2007.

If Americans Knew: What Every American Needs to Know About Israel-Palestine.
<http://www.ifamericansknew.org/media/sides.html>

Segev, Tom. *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East*. Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. Verso, 2007.

Electronic Intifada: www.electronicintifada.net

Olive Trees and Environmental Issues

Cohen, Shaul. *The Politics of Planting: Israeli-Palestinian Competition for Control of Land in the Jerusalem Periphery*. University of Chicago Press, 1993

Kankar, Sonia. "Rooted Like an Olive Tree."
<http://desertpeace.blogspot.com/2007/09/palestine-rooted-like-olive-tree.html>

Tal, Alon. *Pollution in a Promised Land: An Environmental History of Israel*. University of California Press, 2002.

www.bustan.org (Israeli Environmental NGO)

www.palestinefairtrade.org

<http://imeu.net/news/printer006919.shtml> (Institute for Middle East Understanding)

Tu B'Shvat

Elon, Ari, Naomi Mara Hyman & Arthur Waskow. *Trees, Earth and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology*. Jewish Publication Society, 2000.

www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Tu_Bishvat/

Progressive Jewish Voices on Zionism and the Occupation

Ellis, Marc H. *Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes*. Pluto Press, 2002.

Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. 2d ed., Verso, 2003.

Kushner, Tony and Alisa Solomon (eds.). *Wrestling With Zion: Progressive Jewish Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Grove Press, 2003.

Schatz, Adam (ed.). *Prophets Outcast: A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing About Zionism and Israel*. Nation Books, 2004

Films

The Iron Wall (<http://www.theironwall.ps/>)

Arna's Children (<http://www.arna.info/Arna/>)

Palestine is Still the Issue (<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/pisi.html>)

The Diaries of Yossef Nachmani ((http://www.firstrunfeatures.com/theatrical_catalog4a.html))

Al Nakba: The Palestinian Catastrophe 1948 (<http://www.arabfilm.com/item/2/>)