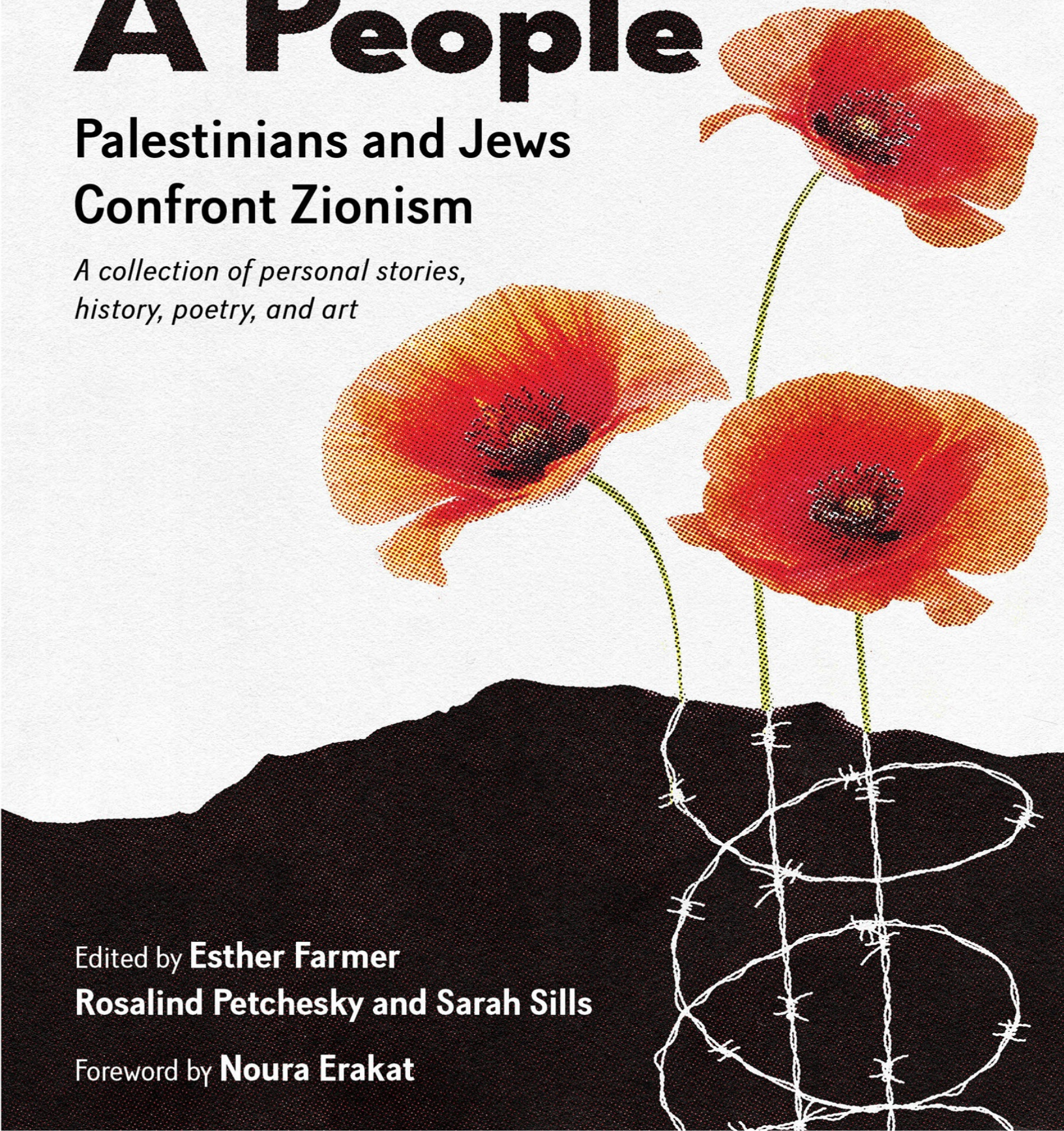
A Land With A People

Palestinians and Jews Confront Zionism

A collection of personal stories, history, poetry, and art



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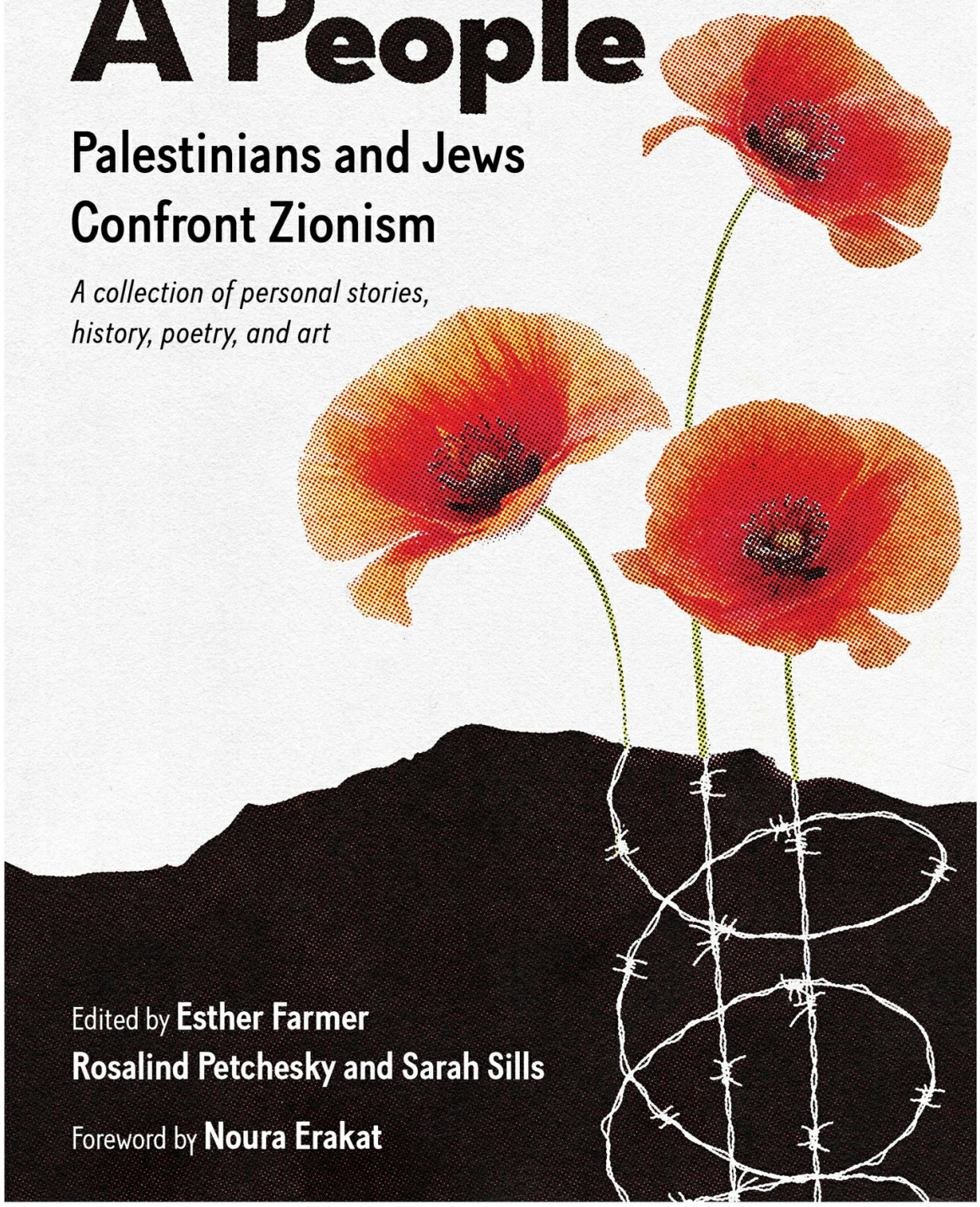

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Advance Praise for **A Land With A People**

A must-read, timely critique of political Zionism conveyed through searing, personal writings of Jews who refuse to accept Zionism's ethno-religious indoctrination and its violent manifestations, intertwined with reflections from Zionism's greatest yet oft-silenced Palestinian victims. This book is an invaluable resource in the effort to challenge the deliberate and dangerous conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism to silence criticism of Israel, and in understanding that the "Israel/Palestine conflict" is not a religious or ethnic one; it is not even a conflict, but rather an existential struggle against a racist, settler-colonial system. It is a struggle that can and must be undertaken by Palestinians and Jews together.

Huwaida Arraf
Human rights attorney & activist

This moving and reflective anthology weaves together poetry, art, history, and memoir about the impact of Zionism on the lives and communities of Palestinians and Jews of all backgrounds. It offers a path forward rooted in an understanding of a painful shared history that leads to a commitment to solidarity and justice for all people. Reading it is both illuminating and healing.

Rebecca Vilkomerson
Former Executive Direcctor, Jewish Voice for Peace

A Land With A People

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PALESTINIANS AND JEWS CONFRONT ZIONISM

A collection of personal stories, history, poetry, and art

Edited by

ESTHER FARMER,
ROSALIND PETCHESKY,
AND SARAH SILLS

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The Jews are a people without a country, even as their own land … is in a great measure a country without a people.

—REV. DR. ALEXANDER KEITH

Scottish Christian clergyman, in *The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob* (1843)

I now conclude and avow that the price of a Jewish state is, to me, Jewishly unacceptable and that the existence of this (or any similar) Jewish ethnic-religious nation state is a Jewish, i.e. a human and moral, disaster and violates every remaining value for which Judaism and Jews might exist in history. The lethal military triumphalism and corrosive racism that inheres in the state and in its supporters (both there and here) are profoundly abhorrent to me. So is the message that now goes forth to the nations of the world that the Jewish people claim the right to impose a holocaust on others in order to preserve its State.

—HENRY SCHWARZSCHILD

German Jewish refugee from the Nazi Holocaust who emigrated to the US in 1939. He worked in the South in the 1960s with the ACLU against the death penalty and believed that Judaism meant social justice action "here and now."

To struggle is to overturn the logics of a racial regime that uses security to justify dispossession, military rule, and the denial of the most basic rights. To struggle is to begin building the future in the present, to prefigure a post-apartheid/post-Zionist society."

—ROBIN D.G. KELLEY

"Yes, I Said 'National Liberation'," in Vijay Prashad, ed., *Letters to Palestine: Writers Respond to War and Occupation* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2016)

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Radical Imagination and Palestine

NOURA ERAKAT

I am the daughter of first-generation immigrants from Palestine. My parents began to build their new lives in the Bay Area of California in 1975. We were immersed in a vibrant immigrant community—Arab, Afghan, Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, Desi (people of or from the Indian subcontinent). I stood out, not because I was the only brown kid, but because I was the only Arab in class. In fact, the reason I retained my family's Arab tongue is because my elementary schoolteachers told my parents to speak their native language at home, and they would speak to us in English at school. I didn't know it then, but I was lucky: this immigrant haven shielded me and allowed me to live outside the debilitating shadow of white supremacy. I never wanted to be anything but my Palestinian, Arab, Muslim self.

As I saw it, my first encounters with injustice had to do with being a girl in the world. I grew up with three brothers and, for no reason besides the sheer fortune of cisgender assignment, I was responsible for social reproduction—all the things that maintain domestic order, like cleaning and cooking along with my mama—without benefitting from any of the privileges that my brothers seemed to have without limit, like playing basketball, walking to the local 7-11 to buy a bag of chips, or hanging out at the mall with friends. I refused to accept this unequal labor/privilege distribution as divine destiny. Thus began my first protests: I rebelled against my family. Though I succeeded in assigning my brothers some household chores, it was hardly equitable. I definitely never enjoyed their freedom in the public sphere, a key and enduring feature of patriarchy.

My parents, having just arrived in the United States, raised me in fear. They feared they would lose me to a culture they hardly understood; feared that their missteps with me would earn them the ire of the broader Arab immigrant community; feared that I did not understand the risks of my heady rebellion. So they raised me with an iron fist. But because those fears were mitigated in Palestine, where close-knit communities and extended family networks made the public sphere less daunting, and because I had heard stories of my girl cousins who roamed the streets with their friends in Jericho and Abu Dis, I craved going to Palestine to experience that freedom. At fourteen, I finally got that chance, when I traveled there for the first time with my aunt and great-uncle. And while I searched for an uncomplicated childhood, I found another grave injustice in Israel's domination of our lives.

Upon arrival at the airport, I was pulled out for interrogation and thoroughly searched for hours. How was I, a young girl, a security threat? Traversing militarized checkpoints, I witnessed how my blue U.S. passport worked like some superpower. Then, driving from the underdeveloped roads of Abu Dis, I seemed to time travel into lush waterparks, beach shores,

and restaurants with terraces and glossy menus across the Green Line.

As my friend and I played Monopoly (or "moe-no-po-lee," as she referred to it) in her yard, I listened to her tell me about her two-month detention in an Israeli prison because she joined high school protests. The same visceral revulsion I had felt to patriarchy rocked my body once again, this time in response to colonialism.

I did not know the word for it yet. My parents had never taught me about Palestine as a place of struggle. Of course, they told me the basic facts: that it was stolen from us by Jewish Zionists in 1948, and that more of it was taken in 1967, forcing them to leave and carry Palestine with them. But, as working-class folks who, like many immigrants, escaped their homelands so their children could forge better realities, they desperately tried to steer me away from Palestinian advocacy as my life's work. My parents would complain, "If Arafat couldn't do anything, what makes you think *you* can?"

It wasn't that I believed I could. But I could not do anything else after witnessing Israeli colonialism. My commitment became entrenched in 2000 when I returned to Palestine as a university exchange student and lived through the first few months of what was to be known as the Second Intifada. In Abu Dis, where I lived, we learned that the uprising had started because of the announcement that, following Friday prayer on September 2, when Ariel Sharon led one thousand Israeli troops into the Al Haram compound, our neighbor was among the first five Palestinians shot dead at the Al Aqsa mosque. And, as we gathered in this man's home, with his wailing wife and his red-haired infant daughter, I realized that my family's pursuit of a life free from this colonial violence in the United States actually sustained this violence in Palestine. After all, wanting to fit in and do well, they paid taxes. And everyone's taxes in the United States go to military aid. There was no escape from it and nowhere to take refuge.

As a student activist at UC Berkeley, drawn to the university because of its radical legacy, I was conscious of the fact that the United States began as a white settler colony and became an imperial power. When we in Students for Justice in Palestine developed the first divestment campaign from Apartheid Israel in the spring of 2001, we did it shoulder to shoulder with Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlán (MECHA), the Black Student Alliance, the Asian Student Union, antiwar contingents, and the progressive student parties in university government. We never called our alliance intersectional or described it as intersectionality; we were in joint struggle because we knew our oppressors were common and our freedom dreams intertwined.

I have since become an attorney, practicing law for several years in Washington, D.C., at the UN, and on behalf of NGOs. I have seeded Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaigns, lost many, won many, gone back to school. I am now a scholar-activist in the academy, still searching for ways to advance the Palestinian freedom struggle within a framework of collective liberation. What is clear is that we must imagine new ways of organizing ourselves socially and politically; we must dismantle racial capitalism and all of the myths about the unbiased and invisible hand of the free market. We must continue the struggle for decolonization; we must free the land.

Decolonization struggles gained new life in the aftermath of the Second World War, when national liberation movements around the world took up arms and coalesced their efforts to upend imperial domination. Their efforts ushered in a new world of independent Brown, Black, Yellow, and Red nations, but their decolonial projects remain incomplete. Not only did liberation movements not manage to establish a new international economic order or supplant European

models of sovereignty; they also did not overcome Zionist settler-colonization as they dreamed they could.

The work that remains to be done requires something new from us. It asks that we shift from the strictures of political advocacy to the realm of spiritual transformation, where revolutionary potential lies. This is the realm of radical imagination that frees us from the shackles of what is possible; to emphasize, instead, what is necessary for our freedom. It is this radical imagining that has led me away from models of shared sovereignty, an incommensurate equation, to models of belonging, which are seemingly infinite.

Herein lies a pathway to decolonization, not predicated on the physical removal of the settlers, but on the transformation of the settlers, who must shed their claim to be owners of the land. Who must recognize their arrival as the conquest it was and not the redemption they had hoped; and who must change their relationship to the land and its Indigenous people from one of superior "masters" to that of cohabitants with native Palestinians in the valleys and on the hilltops and flatlands and coastlines, where they belong. Any pathway to Palestinian freedom is a decolonial process. It necessitates the confrontation and ultimate shedding of political Zionism as a legitimate ideology as well as our disavowal of historical colonialism and imperialism as legitimate systems of government.

A Land With A People is an exercise of decolonization in the form of reckoning that provides a path for others to follow. This collection of stories, poetry, and photography shares the stories of Jews who confronted Zionism. And it shares the stories of and by Palestinians, who, in Edward Said's words, are the "victims of Zionism" whose reality makes clear that Zionism is not the triumphant story of Jewish emancipation from centuries of antisemitism but a colonial project facilitated by European imperial powers driven by a desire to remove Jews from Europe rather than combat their own white supremacy. These Palestinian stories make evident that political Zionism is predicated on the systemic removal of Palestinians, their dispossession and displacement through military technologies, hyper-surveillance, containment, securitization, and gross dehumanization.

Palestinian stories are essential to decolonization, yet they have been suppressed and are often only countenanced if supported by Jewish endorsement. For example, Palestinians have been saying that Israel is an apartheid state for decades, but it wasn't until B'tselem, the Israeli human rights organization, acknowledged this fact in early 2021 that Israeli apartheid suddenly became universally credible. In an environment where they can only be heard if a Jewish ally confirms what they have been saying, Palestinians understandably grow angry.

This is a dynamic that Palestinians constantly deal with in relationships with our Jewish friends and allies in the anti-Zionist world. It is exacerbated by liberal efforts—especially from donors to multilateral processes, academic institutions, and gatekeepers—that insist on forms of "conflict resolution" that assume a false parity, eschewing the vast power differential between Palestinians and the Israeli government, and reducing our freedom struggle to hackneyed tolerance and diversity training.

This book is fundamentally different, tackling power head-on and charting the struggle against Zionism within the Jewish communities that Zionism purportedly serves. Its anti-Zionist Jewish stories are critical to decolonization, as well as for lighting pathways darkened by the punishing hand of imperial expansion.

May this book serve to crack the edifice of Zionist propaganda and institutional machinery that have worked to silence and punish opposition. May it lead to broader pathways toward

decolonization. Until freedom for all.

—January 26, 2021

PREFACE

Wrestling with Zionism
A READER'S THEATER

Esther Farmer, Wrestling with Zionism director

Photo by Tony Nieves

Wrestling with Zionism cast at the Unitarian Church of All Souls, New York City, 2018

Photo by Bud Koroster

Why Tell These Stories?

ESTHER FARMER

Since the founding of Israel in 1948, Americans have heard many stories about the hopeful and wonderful things Israel has done. We are inundated with images of the kibbutz and cooperation, of how Israelis reclaimed the land and built a modern democracy. We were told that "Israel was a land without people for a people without a land"—an idea actually invented by nineteenth-century European Christians and appropriated by some Jewish Zionists as a convenient trope. It must also be remembered that the genocide of six million Jews spurred many to welcome a Jewish state as a form of justice and reparation to a persecuted and desperate people.

The problem is, the Israeli narrative erases an entire people! And it's not just a few people either. It's as if millions of Palestinian people never existed. And just as the history of the indigenous people of America and their colonial conquest and displacement has been hidden until it was too late to do anything about it, the story of the indigenous people of Palestine has also been hidden. Palestine was not a land without people; there were millions of Palestinians there. Those Palestinians were of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faiths. After the creation of Israel, 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes to make room for the European Jews who would take their place and, in many cases, take their very homes. Those that stayed live under impossible apartheid conditions. Many people in the US don't even realize that the population of Israel is half Israeli and half Palestinian. Or that Palestine and Palestinians were of many faiths. This includes my family, who always identified as Palestinian Jews. My grandmother used to say that Jews had no problem in Palestine until the British got involved. The Balfour Declaration in 1917 and the British bias toward the Jewish settlers paved the way for much of Palestine to be declared a Jewish state. I often imagine her surprise that one day her family got along fine with her Muslim neighbors and then all of a sudden these policies of the colonial British government created resentment, chaos, and war between neighbors.

This is not a pretty story; it is painful and difficult. In fact, it is so difficult that it cannot be normalized. We cannot dialogue our way out of this story by bringing people together to discuss it in ways that pretend that both sides are equal. Israel has been empowered to keep down any semblance of Palestinian autonomy or human rights. The Israeli narrative even denies that there was a country called Palestine! Palestinians cannot show their flag. Their foods, their language, their histories, their towns, their commerce, and their culture have been systematically erased. It is also important to note that the history of Jewish opposition to Zionism and to the creation of Israel was also erased. Before the Jewish holocaust there was substantial opposition among Jews to Zionism. Over seventy years later, at this very moment, the Israeli lobby and the US government are pushing the narrative that being an anti-Zionist is the same as being antisemitic.

The stories in this book vividly challenge that dangerous notion. In fact, many of our Jewish storytellers assert that they are anti-Zionist not in spite of their Jewishness but because of their Jewishness.

Rooted in this historical context, we in New York City Jewish Voice for Peace began an exploration of our individual and collective relationships to this history. We began by telling each other what we learned growing up and how we began to see the experiences of the "other." We wrote our stories down and found that our original, mostly Jewish stories were not only fascinating but also hopeful in their demonstration of the human capacity to "see" in new ways and to look courageously at what has been done in the name of all Jews. These thirteen stories became a small book called *Confronting Zionism*. As the book began to get wider distribution, it became clear to me that the stories were crying out to be performed and that we had an obligation to look fearlessly at this history, to begin the process of taking responsibility, to commit to the spiritual transformation that Noura Erakat describes in her Foreword and to change the dominant narrative by reclaiming the stories that must be told. Thus, the reader's theater piece, "Wrestling with Zionism," was born. Then a wonderful thing happened. Many of our Palestinian friends and partners (both Christian and Muslim) asked if they could tell their stories as part of this theater piece. If it takes courage for Jews to risk being called "self-hating" when they question Zionism, imagine what it takes for Palestinians to come out and say how their lives have been impacted by the State of Israel. Some of them have been threatened, they have been put on blacklists, one of our writer's children has been threatened. In this context the act of telling your story becomes an act of resistance.

There is something magical that happens in the telling of these stories. Storytelling isn't a polemic, it's not an ideological fight, it's the telling of a real person's lived experience. And in the performance of that story, the storyteller and the audience are both changed. We have no interest in pretending that this is about equal groups of people who can't get along. This is about power and the use of power to destroy an entire people. We are proud that we don't flinch from that. And because of that, each time we have performed the piece, the conversations that ensue build empathy and community—something that is so difficult to accomplish when people argue about the "facts."

A Land With A People is a project of solidarity. While the contributors to this volume have arrived at a similar place of renouncing Zionist ideology and its consequences for people's lives, they have done so from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Among our Jewish authors and poets, some grew up in observant religious households, others in secular and even anti-religious ones. Some are Israeli, some are white Ashkenazi, some have Mizrahi or Sephardi family origins (descending from the Middle East and North Africa or Iberia). My own family origins are both Jewish and Palestinian. Our other Palestinian authors and poets include Muslim, Christian, and secular backgrounds and, like the Jewish authors and poets, are both queer and straight. They trace roots through Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Ohio, and Brooklyn. Three authors grew up in Gaza, and one is still living and working there. Their stories vividly illustrate how they and their family members struggle to keep close their connection to relatives in the occupied West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem and to Palestinian landscapes, life, and culture, despite exile and multiple barriers.

A Land With A People is the progeny of the earlier book, *Confronting Zionism*, as well as of our reader's theater. But with Palestinian stories, poems, and photos intertwined with Jewish stories, poems, and photos, it becomes an entirely new and different publication. In addition, we

have deliberately intertwined the stories of ordinary people with those of well-known writers as part of illuminating how Zionism has affected their daily lives.

As a Palestinian Jew (whose story is included here), it has been my honor to be a part of this project. I couldn't be prouder of all that this work has generated and of the writers, storytellers, editors, artists, performers, producers, filmmakers, and the audiences who have allowed themselves to stretch, to explore, to question their biases and to be touched through honoring the stories of "Others."

In these times, that gives me hope.

A HISTORY

Key of Return, a widespread symbol for the Palestinian right to return, sits atop the entrance gate to Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem

Photo by David Bragin

Zionism's Twilight

Colonial Dreams, Racist Nightmares, Liberated Futures

ROSALIND PETCHESKY

> *"Zionism has hidden, or caused to disappear, the literal historical ground of its growth, its political cost to the native inhabitants of Palestine, and its militantly oppressive discriminations between Jews and non-Jews…. [T]oday the one issue that electrifies Israel as a society is the problem of the Palestinians, whose negation is the most consistent thread running through Zionism."*[1]

Over forty years since the late Palestinian scholar and activist Edward Said wrote these words, the ground has shifted. Thanks to a powerful resistance movement joining Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, secular, and other Palestine solidarity activists, the question of Palestine is visible and vibrant on the global stage. Meanwhile, the "question of Zion" comes laden with convoluted historical baggage. When Jewish Zionists appropriated the idea of Palestine as *"a land without a people for a people without a land,"* they did so with the awareness that the land was not empty. Rather, they chose to treat the indigenous Arab people as "invisible," as "strangers," as less than Europeans; in short, as not really a people.[2] The "literal historical ground of [Zionism's] growth," wrote Said, is racism.

Since 2016, when the New York City chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP-NYC) first launched a project to rethink our own relationship to Zionism—Zionism from the standpoint of its perpetrators—huge fault lines have opened up in the geopolitical landscape. These include:

1. The veer of Israeli politics even further to the right, with the passage of the Jewish Nation-State Law in 2018, granting constitutional status to long-standing discriminatory policies, and fully exposing Israel as an apartheid state; and the rise to power and official representation in the Israeli parliament (Knesset) of openly racist and fascist parties.[3]

2. Election of Donald J. Trump and entrenchment of a right-wing, white supremacist presidency in the United States. One of the Trump regime's major platforms was complete, unconditional support of the Israeli state. At this writing, it is doubtful that the Democratic administration of Biden and Harris will pull back from Trump's extreme position supporting Israeli apartheid and settler colonialism, but rather will

continue with the U.S. government's long-standing pro-Israel bias.[4]

3. A tsunami of policies emanating from the toxic Trump-Netanyahu bond that have made the lives of Palestinians, Muslims, and their Jewish and other supporters increasingly dangerous and justice for Palestinians even further from reach: (a) deepening of Israel's de facto annexation of Palestinian territory, including a massive increase in illegal settlements;[5] (b) the move of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to annexed Jerusalem, now accepted by the United States as Israel's capital; (c) anti-BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) laws and policies that punish individuals and businesses in the United States and bar BDS supporters from entering Israel; (d) regular exchanges of policing and surveillance methods between Israeli and U.S. law enforcement authorities, sponsored by U.S.-based Zionist organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL); and (e) a U.S.-led diplomatic campaign to normalize relations between the Israeli state and United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, in exchange for arms and political favors.

4. Deepening influence of powerful neo-Christian evangelical Zionist groups in the United States and Europe. The evangelicals have strong ties to both the Trump and Netanyahu regimes, as well as the global white nationalist movement that undergirds them.[6]

5. Establishment of laws and policies in the United States and Israel that attempt to silence any criticism of Israel by equating (a) allegiance to the Israeli state with Jewishness, (b) Jewishness with Zionism, and therefore (c) criticism of the Israeli state and Zionism with antisemitism. This new form of McCarthyism has led to the scapegoating and harassment of students and faculty at universities as well as progressive congresspeople and others who support Palestine or criticize Israel.[7]

6. A rise in antisemitism and antisemitic attacks, in the context of Islamophobic and anti-Black hate crimes in the United States, including the deadly white supremacist Nazi rally in Charlottesville, 2017, the massacre of Jews at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, 2018, and arsons and attempted bombings of synagogues. President Trump's refusal to condemn such groups culminated in his incitement, on January 6, 2021, of an insurrectionist mob of thousands—some wearing T-shirts reading "Camp Auschwitz" and "6MWE" (6 Million Wasn't Enough)—to storm the U.S. Capitol Building where Congress had met to certify the 2020 presidential election.

To understand the personal testimonies that make up most of this book, we need to frame them in the context of a long and troubling history of Zionism as a form of racism and Zionism's real-world consequences, especially for Palestinians but also for Jews.

Fundamentals of Zionism: Settler Colonialism, Racism, Antisemitism, Patriarchy

Zionism is the ideology that fuses creation of (ancient) Jewish collectivity with claims to

(modern) sovereignty over land allegedly promised by God to Jews and their descendants. Its myth of a common ethnos (culture and blood ties) relies on the process of transforming the Old Testament into a literal historical reference book, certifying the Jewish people as an uprooted "race" and a "chosen people" by virtue of their unique covenant with God. God promised Jews their return to their biblical homeland, turning all others who resided in that land over the centuries into "strangers" or "infiltrators."[8] This elaborate fiction of racial unity and singularity contradicts the diasporic reality of Jews as persons who, for centuries, have practiced various religious customs and rituals in diverse cultures, languages, racial identities, and geographies across the globe. To convert this polyphony into "theological-colonial nationalism" required not only a race-ethnic construct but also a common land or territory and what German sociologist Max Weber called a "monopoly over the legitimate use of force."[9] And it required a concerted strategy to eliminate the "others" while recruiting Jews from across the globe into the colonizing enterprise. As renowned Jewish philosopher Martin Buber and others foresaw, Zionism was a project that would necessitate endless violence, injustice, and war.

Homogenizing Jews as a single national or racial identity inextricably bound to the State of Israel is itself a form of antisemitism with very old roots. From its origins in nineteenth-century Europe, Zionism has been an ideology and set of practices that constituted a racist system of settler colonialism. Like all racisms, it is double-sided, facing both outward toward its "others" and inward toward its own. Its early alignment with European assumptions about Western and white superiority produced, and was based on, the oppression and exclusion of Palestinian Arabs, North Africans, and Muslims, while its equation of Jewishness with allegiance to an exclusively Jewish Israeli state has entailed efforts to racialize, whiten, and nationalize Jews. This last has edged perilously toward antisemitism by internalizing stereotypes of Jews as a "race," aliens in any location but the Israeli homeland. To be an anti-Zionist Jew thus invites the labels not only of "self-hating" but also of traitor.

Multiple sources attest to the ways that racism, antisemitism, and masculinism were intertwined among Zionism's founders and early proponents. Theodore Herzl, long seen as the father of nineteenth-century Zionism, identified strongly in his youth with the Prussian aristocracy, as well as dueling, hyper-masculinity, and a disdain for East European and diasporic Jews as "weak." His *Die Judenstaat* (The Jews' State) in 1896 was an appeal to Europe's Ashkenazi (West European) Jews to migrate to Palestine rather than try to assimilate in Europe —an expression of "strong" nationalism that may also have been an effort to reclaim Jewish masculinity in the eyes of white European Christian men.[10] British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour's letter to Lord Rothschild, a Zionist and Britain's most famous Jewish citizen, in 1917 promising British support for the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" was motivated as much by Balfour's eagerness to rid Britain of its Jews as it was by the British Empire's colonial interests in having a stronghold in the Middle East. Above all, European and Zionist endorsement of Jewish settler colonialism was laced from the start with the white supremacist elimination or denigration of Palestinian Arabs in favor of honorable, civilized Jewish men.[11]

Precursors to the Nakba—From Balfour to 1947

The 1917 Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Covenant that set up the British

Mandate paid lip service to the civil and religious rights of "non-Jewish communities" but ignored their national rights to self-determination. In blatant contravention of the role of mandatory as laid out in the Covenant (Article 22), the Palestine Mandate entirely erased Palestinian or even Arab presence in historic Palestine in deference to prioritizing Jewish immigration and establishing "a national home for the Jewish people." This blatant discrimination occurred even though indigenous Palestinian Arabs constituted 90 percent of the population of Palestine at the time, in contrast to the Jewish settlers' 10 percent. In other words, the "wishes of the [indigenous] communities" cited in the League Covenant were subordinated to the World Zionist Organization's dream.[12]

In the years immediately following the Balfour Declaration and the increased Jewish immigration to Palestine that it unleashed, Arab and Palestinian protests accelerated. In 1919, the first Palestinian Arab congress met in Jerusalem and framed a national charter demanding independence for Palestine, rejecting British rule, and denouncing the Balfour Declaration.[13] In 1920, the annual Muslim Nebi Musa Festival grew into skirmishes between Muslims and Jews (who were led by right-wing Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky). At anti-Zionist protests in Nablus, Muslim protesters sang, "*We are the children of Jabal al-Nar (Nablus)/We are a thorn in the throat of the occupation*."[14] In 1921, Palestinian women founded the Palestinian Women's Union, which led organized demonstrations against Balfour and the British Mandate, and later formed the General Palestinian Women's Congress in Jerusalem.[15] In England, even the single Jewish member of the British cabinet, Edwin Montagu, publicly opposed the Balfour framework and Zionism.[16] But in Europe after the First World War, power and racist settler colonialism were indivisible. Soon after the war, international Zionist organizations laid claim to *Eretz Yisrael*—a sovereign nation state based on exclusive Jewish ownership of the land—on behalf of Jews throughout the world.

In its racism and its dreams of racially superior masculinity, Zionism is in no way exceptional; it is simply appropriating the European settler-colonialist dogma, found in texts going back to John Locke.[17] At the core of this dogma is the claim that the settlers would bring superior intellectual and technological capacity and thus improvement to lands they portrayed as barren and neglected—a spurious claim used to justify indigenous dispossession in Palestine, India, the Americas, and elsewhere. In the early-to mid-twentieth century, Zionist rabbis disseminated this racist-colonialist trope in local synagogues in towns and cities across America, building allegiance to the Zionist movement among their congregations.

This ideological campaign was only in part a defense against European antisemitism; it was also a direct reaction to the robust but ultimately overpowered resistance movement by Palestinian Arabs against British mandatory rule and British-sponsored Zionist colonialism in Palestine. Historian Rashid Khalidi writes:

> *The 1936 Palestinian general strike and the armed revolt that followed were momentous events for the Palestinians, the region, and the British Empire. The six-month general strike, which ran from April until October and involved work stoppages and boycotts of the British- and Zionist-controlled parts of the economy, was the longest anticolonial strike of its kind until that point in history, and perhaps the longest ever.*[18]

A stunning example of the Zionist propaganda efforts in mid-century Middle America appeared in research that I conducted in the archives of my family's reform synagogue in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A June 1936 issue of the *Tulsa Jewish Review*, a publication of the Tulsa Council of Jewish Women (of which my grandmother was a member), featured an article by the local rabbi reassuring its readers that "the recent disturbances in Palestine"—clearly referring to the general strike—did not reflect hostility to Jewish settlers among the Palestinians or endanger "Anglo-Jewish friendship." In addition to characterizing the Palestinian resistance of that momentous year as "acts of terrorism" and urging the British to stand fast, the rabbi denigrates the rebels as victims of "propaganda and threats" whose "earthly happiness" could only come from Jewish colonialism.[19]

It is important to understand that the settler colonial project to "de-Arabise Palestine" and bring all of historic Palestine under Zionist sovereignty long pre-dated both the Nakba and worldwide knowledge of the Nazi holocaust. The 1929 constitution of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the para-statal agency that basically manages distribution of land throughout all Israeli-controlled territory to this day, declared JNF land to be "the inalienable property of the Jewish people" and that "[the JNF] is not obliged to act for the good of all its citizens [but] for the good of the Jewish people only."[20] Israel's first Prime Minister and longtime Zionist leader, David Ben-Gurion, was obsessed with the idea of "demographic balance" as a means to maintain Zionist hegemony over Palestine. As early as 1937, he observed that establishing what he considered an optimal balance between Arabs and Jews might necessitate the use of force, and in a 1947 speech he affirmed that "only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state."[21]

Particularly striking is a top-secret meeting that took place in New Court, Britain, in 1941, of twenty Zionist leaders who together formed an elite West European Zionist patriarchate.[22] What is remarkable about this meeting is not only the disagreements about strategies to realize Zionism but also the central theme: the transfer of populations. Participants Chaim Weizmann and Ben-Gurion urged the necessity of establishing not just a "homeland" but also a Jewish state with a Jewish majority, encouraging as much immigration as possible of Jews from around the world. One dissenter from this view, Sir Robert Waley Cohen, worried that the idea of a "Jewish state" seemed "dangerous," exclusionary, even sort of Hitler-like in its emphasis "on one religion and one race." But Weizmann and Ben-Gurion's ethnocentric vision, while invoking the principles of non-discrimination and "voluntary" transfer, won the day. They insisted on the necessity of a majority Jewish state with a Jewish name based, not on Judaism as a religion, but "being a Jew"—that is, ethnicity and birth. Most indigenous Arabs would be relocated and their place taken by the millions of Jewish immigrants assumed to be yearning for "the Promised Land."[23] Zionists and their British sponsors had envisioned various forms of "population transfer" for some years before, but we can see in this meeting the seeds of Plan Dalet and the mass expulsions of 1947–1948. We can also see a false presumption that all Jews everywhere would eagerly adopt the Zionist ideal and rush to a new-found State of Israel. Any who rejected this ideal, in Weizmann's words, should be considered "antisemites."[24]

But this presumption was a fantasy. Many European Jews had long rejected the notion of an ingathering of all Jews to a homeland. These defectors included both Orthodox sects that regarded Jewish national sovereignty as a blasphemy against God and the Torah, and Reform Jewish leaders who regarded Judaism as a "worldwide religious community comprising many different citizens of many different countries and cultures." The idea of "Jewish blood and soil,"

at the heart of Zionism, they saw as a profoundly antisemitic fiction.[25] Members of the Bund, formed in 1897 and representing Jewish workers in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania, expressly opposed Zionism, choosing to fight for justice and freedom against the tsarist regimes where they lived.[26]

Both before and after the Second World War, many Jews who were seeking to escape antisemitism in Western Europe or the pogroms in Russia and Poland had their sights set on America or other countries in the West or Latin America. These included the grandparents and great-grandparents of most of this book's Jewish contributors. But two forces combined to funnel many Jewish immigrants, regardless of their desires, into colonizing Palestine and later populating the State of Israel: (1) exclusionary racist and antisemitic immigration laws, particularly in the United States and Britain in the 1920s and 1930s; and (2) complicity of political leaders in those countries with the Zionist movement's aims. From the time of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate, then, Zionism has been entangled with global geopolitics and required the alignment of powerful elites to be realized. Efforts at the highest levels conspired to foreclose alternatives to Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine.[27]

1948 and the UN Partition Plan

The Nakba, Arabic for catastrophe, was originally launched in 1947–1948, but many historians and political analysts refer to the "ongoing Nakba," since the methods and goals of that first phase have never really ended. Plan D (Dalet in Hebrew) was the fourth in a series of master plans introduced by Jewish military officers in 1948 for carrying out mass expulsions, intimidation, bombings, and destruction of Palestinian villages and urban areas. The immediate result was the massacre and forcible expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians from their ancestral villages and homes, what historian Ilan Pappe has called "the ethnic cleansing of Palestine."[28] Atrocities committed by Jewish terrorist groups were especially brutal in the villages surrounding Jerusalem, most famously Deir Yasin, where 110 Palestinian men, women, and children were slaughtered. But it is important to remember that these horrors were a means to intimidate and terrorize to achieve the larger end—a massive land grab that continues to this day with annexations. Author and Middle East analyst Nathan Thrall tells us that Israel has seized more than three-quarters of the land of all indigenous Palestinians, a "continuous project [of] expropriation."[29]

Despite many obstacles, every turn of the seven-decade-long Nakba has been met with unyielding resistance by Palestinians, oftentimes led by women, and also by Jews condemning Zionism's extreme violence and injustice.[30] In the mid-twentieth century, many of the most prominent Jewish intellectuals in Europe and the United States—such as Ahad Na'am, Martin Buber, Hans Kohn, Albert Einstein, and Hannah Arendt—were highly critical of the ethno-nationalist form Zionism had taken, favoring some kind of cultural Zionism or bi-national state in Palestine.[31] In December 1948, a group of twenty-eight of these leftist Jewish intellectuals wrote a letter to the *New York Times* protesting the visit to the United States of Menachem Begin, the leader of a new right-wing political party in Israel that would become the Likud, the party of Netanyahu and the Israeli right. This so-called "Freedom Party," the letter pointed out, had grown out of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Irgun), the terrorist organization also led by Begin and responsible for the worst massacres and expulsions of Palestinians, including the notorious

massacre in Deir Yassin. The letter's signatories denounced not only the party's fascist leanings and "gangster methods" but also the complicit silence of "the top leadership of American Zionism."[32]

Protests over the injustices and violations of international law entailed in the founding of the Zionist state and the dispossession of Palestinians found a home in the United Nations from its earliest days. In 1947, the UN formed the Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which recommended a partition plan that would have divided Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. But UNSCOP's legal subcommittee report to the General Assembly recognized that imposing the partition "against the expressed wishes of the majority of its population" in order to create a "Jewish national home" was "contrary to the principles of the [UN] Charter," particularly the principle of self-determination. Nonetheless, in November 1947, the General Assembly, against strong protests from the Arab delegations, passed Resolution 181 imposing the partition and allocating 55.5 percent of the land to the one-third minority Jewish population, who at that time owned under 7 percent. Under pressure from the Catholic Church and Catholic countries, the plan also declared Jerusalem, including its surrounding villages, an international city under UN jurisdiction. Yet almost immediately, the Zionist forces violated these seemingly favorable terms—unleashing Plan D on the Palestinian villages and, after unilaterally declaring the State of Israel in May 1948, proceeding to annex west Jerusalem, including "some 10,000 Palestinian homes and their contents."[33]

Law as Lawfare

Quickly following Jewish Israelis' self-proclaimed independence in 1948, the Zionist state began putting into place its two-pronged strategy to consolidate Jewish control over historic Palestine via: (1) a complex web of laws, policies, and practices related to who "belonged" as nationals or citizens, who were "infiltrators," who could exercise civil rights; and (2) a massive infrastructure of militarism and surveillance to enforce and supplement this legal framework: the Israeli security state. Between 1948 and 1954, Israel enacted:

- **The 1950 Right of Return Law,** giving automatic Jewish nationality and Israeli citizenship to all Jews anywhere in the world (defined as those "born of a Jewish mother" or having converted to Judaism)—even those whose families have never lived in Palestine—while denying a right of return to indigenous Palestinians whose families have lived there for hundreds of years.[34]

- **The 1950 Absentee Property Law,** amended through the 1970s, an Orwellian absurdity whereby Palestinians, including those living in Israel or the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, were deemed "present absentees," mostly disqualified from being able to reclaim their stolen homes in Israel and Jerusalem.[35]

- **The 1952 Nationality Law,** enabling only Palestinians who remained in Israel between 1948 and 1952 to become citizens of Israel, thus barring all those whom the Nakba had expelled or driven into exile. These two laws together create another absurdity, "bifurcating Jewish nationality from Israeli citizenship." In effect, there is no such thing as Israeli nationality, with only "Jewish" or "Arab" designated on passports and

ID cards.[36]

- **The 1954 Prevention of Infiltration Law,** defining as "infiltrators" any Palestinians who "left" Israel for whatever reason and might claim their right of return to reclaim their stolen lands and property. This created a new category that would be applied to many unwanted groups, such as African asylum seekers, beginning in 2008.

Other laws and judicial rulings add personal and family restrictions to the architecture of Israeli apartheid. Following the start of the occupation in 1967, Israel assigned Palestinians in East Jerusalem the status of "permanent residency," a revocable status that reduces them to aliens in their own homes. It issued West Bank IDs and Gaza IDs to the remainder of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). This ID system impacts all aspects of Palestinian life, ranging from employment to where a family may or may not live. As a result of Israel's regular denial of family unification requests, even for the children and spouses of its Palestinian citizens, families are often separated or forced to maintain two households. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, documents how the Zionist paranoia about being invaded or overwhelmed by the Other weaponizes marriage and stigmatizes internally displaced migrants as metaphorical rapists of the nation.[37]

The crown of this legal edifice assuring Zionist control is the Jewish Nation-State Law, passed in the Knesset in July 2018 and still (in early 2021) being contested in Israeli courts by Palestinian and Jewish dissenters. Intended as the culmination of Israel's Basic Laws, the 2018 law codifies a series of measures—cultural, political, social, linguistic—to thoroughly Judaicize everything under Israeli control and effectively render apartheid the law of the land.[38]

Among its provisions are those

- Declaring the State of Israel "the nation-state of the Jewish people" and "the right of national self-determination" to be "unique to the Jewish people" within its borders

- Making official national symbols and holidays entirely Jewish ones (Star of David, Menorah, so-called Independence Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, etc.)

- Declaring "the unified and complete [city of] Jerusalem to be Israel's capital"

- Making Hebrew the state's official language, thereby demoting the status of Arabic

- Naming "Jewish settlement as a national value" and promising that the state will "promote its establishment and development."

Thus, the Nation-State Law effaces the rights of Palestinians not only to self-determination but also to be co-equal citizens in their own land. It also severely impacts Palestinians in the OPT, the target for illegal settlements.

Since the Nation-State Law was first proposed, resistance to it has been persistent. During the debates in the Knesset leading up to its adoption, Arab parties countered with amendments that would make Israel "a state of all its citizens." But then Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked, invoking Zionism's split between citizenship and nationality, retorted: "Israel is a Jewish state. It isn't a state of all its nations. That is, equal rights to all citizens but not equal national rights."[39]

At the end of 2020 and in early 2021, fifteen different groups and individuals—including Palestinians and Jews, academics and lawyers, Mizrahim, Bedouins, the Arab Joint List party, the Jewish Meretz Party, and Adalah—petitioned the Israeli High Court in protest against the Nation-State Law's discriminatory and anti-democratic effects. Adalah's petition asserted that the High Court's failure to overturn the law in toto would basically "perpetuate principles of an apartheid regime as the basis for Israel's legal system."[40]

As with every system of laws codifying the dominance of one group over another, the Israeli system depends on an armature of policing and violence.[41] Today, the visible aspects of Israel's security state are on display to any visitor—gun-bearing Israeli Occupation Force (IOF) officers patrolling the streets, hundreds of checkpoints and other obstacles to movement, the immense apartheid wall, and all the faces of militarization in everyday life. Also, like other settler-colonial and fascist regimes, Zionism's hyper-military fortress has deep psychological and existential meanings. Shalhoub-Kevorkian associates the "politics of fear" intrinsic to settler-colonial power in the Israeli case with what she names *security theology*. This is a set of beliefs that welds the biblical injunction of God's covenant with the Jews to the indisputable stamp of "national security" on any police, military, or confiscatory action the state wishes to take. It brands every single Palestinian or "other" a potential terrorist—even those who are not yet born or are already dead (witness the IOF's practice of withholding the bodies of Palestinians murdered by Israeli soldiers from their families), while anointing the settlers as God's "chosen."[42]

Yet, ironically, the Zionist state is tethered to its Palestinian victims. Shalhoub-Kevorkian describes a contradictory need to erase or displace the indigenous population but simultaneously to keep them present as a constant threat. Without the Palestinian Other, the entire security apparatus of walls, checkpoints, militarized environments, land appropriations—to say nothing of billions of dollars a year in U.S. military aid and a global Israeli security and surveillance industry—would lose its rationale. Like Hegel's dialectic of the master and slave, the master can never fully eliminate the slave; like the master without the slave, Israel without Palestinians would cease to exist.

Zionism's Other Racisms

And what of the other "others," including Jews who do not share the white Ashkenazi background of Zionism's European founders? Seventy-three years of the Europeanization and whitening of Israeliness expose the bias against people of African and Levantine descent that Zionism shares with all Western European colonialisms. Cultural critic and NYU professor Ella Shohat argues that "in fact the majority of Jews [from the Middle East and North Africa] were decidedly not Zionists"; their displacement in the 1950s and 1960s from the Arab cultures in which they had lived and thrived for generations was, for them, a kind of "dismemberment." Shohat herself was part of the Iraqi Jewish migration, squeezed between Arab nationalism and Zionist propaganda against Arabs. She sees the "ambivalent positioning" of Arab Jews and the "invention of *Mizrahim*" as fraught with cultural loss and disempowerment. Yet resistance emerged here too, with the formation of the Israeli Black Panthers in the 1970s.[43]

From 1948 through the mid-1960s, Israel's obsession with achieving Jewish demographic superiority vis-à-vis Palestinians produced a schizophrenic policy of first recruiting around one million Jews from countries like Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Iraq, and Iran, and then desperately

trying to “de-Arabise” them through biopolitical practices which many might consider genocidal. The most famous example is the now well-documented case of thousands of Yemenite children whom Israeli doctors, nurses, and social workers stole from their parents and gave for adoption to Ashkenazi Jewish parents. The parents were told that their babies had died in the hospital but were never shown any burial sites or death certificates. Only in February 2021 did the Israeli cabinet formally express “sorrow” for these reprehensible acts and vote to pay substantial reparations to the affected Yemenite families.[44]

A similarly disturbing example is that of Ethiopian migrants. In the 1970s, the Mossad began a campaign of airlifting thousands of Ethiopian Jews out of Sudanese refugee camps and into Israel. But this attempt to elevate Jewish numbers with Black African immigrants has created a conflict with white Ashkenazi racism. Young Ethiopian women and men are deemed fit to serve in the military and often posted in front-line positions as guards at checkpoints. Yet, since their arrival in Israel, the Ethiopian Jewish community, now numbering some 135,000, has been subjected to housing discrimination, high rates of unemployment, and segregated schools. They have suffered disproportionately high rates of poverty and have protested recurrent incidents of police brutality. In 2013, after exposure in a global media campaign, Israeli government officials acknowledged the past practice of injecting in-migrating Ethiopian women with the controversial contraceptive Depo-Provera, in greatly disproportionate numbers to Ashkenazi women, without the Ethiopian women’s full knowledge or consent. After studies ascertained that birthrates among Israeli Ethiopian women had declined by half, for unknown reasons, the practice was officially abandoned. Still, white racism contends with the demographic aim of raising the number of Jews, regardless of color. Thus, Israel airlifted hundreds more Ethiopian Jews into Israel from the embattled Tigray region in 2020.[45]

Although Israel signed the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Refugees, in a typical pattern of disdain for international law and human rights it has consistently ignored its treaty obligations. When, beginning in 2008–2009, a new wave of African refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, and Côte d’Ivoire began arriving through Egypt into Israel, Israeli courts, legislators, and politicians aimed the same tools of exclusion and restriction against Africans—the new “infiltrators”—that they had been using against Palestinians for decades. Ethnic identity, not residency or persecution in their home countries, would determine their legal status and limit their rights and movement, even their ability to live.

In late 2007, the Knesset passed an amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration Act to allow deportation of African refugees back to their country of origin (such as Sudan, where many faced death threats) or to a culturally alien third country (such as Rwanda). Others were detained in the remote and oppressive conditions of Holot prison in the desert, with the express purpose of making their lives, as a former Israeli interior minister said, “so miserable that they would voluntarily leave the country.” Danish-Israeli musician and writer Jonathan Ofir, who often writes about Israel’s racist policies, remarks how Trump’s frequent racist barbs about immigrants of color and “shithole countries” might come directly from the playbook of a list of Israel’s top officials, who for years have labeled African refugees as infiltrators and “a cancer in our body.” But Africans in Israel resisted deportation, chaining themselves outside the Knesset in 2018, holding a mock “slave auction” to protest their inhumane treatment, and capturing the attention of global social media.[46]

Palestinian loss of land due to Zionist conquest and settler colonialism, 1946–2018

Graphic by David Bragin

Land Expropriation and Creeping Annexation

As this book's title connotes, Zionism's project has always been about appropriating and controlling land. That another people had long inhabited and nurtured this land was an inconvenience, a problem, as Said observed, and how Israeli Jews have variously addressed this problem over nearly three-quarters of a century is fundamental to the story of Israel. The 1967 War was a major turning point, considered a victory by the Zionist forces, and a *Naksa*, or setback, for Palestinians. As a result of the war, Israel gained control of the Palestinian-inhabited territories that had been under the jurisdiction of Jordan and Egypt: the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as East Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan, and the Sinai Peninsula (later returned to Egypt). Hundreds of thousands more Palestinians were displaced and became internal or external refugees. What became an official military Occupation, supposedly subject to what is known in international law as the "law of belligerent occupation," began here, while Israel's conquest over Egypt in the war established it once and for all "as a formidable military power" in international arenas.[47]

Though Israeli officials in diplomatic and UN debates insisted that the 1967 War and its territorial yields were mainly defensive, there seems little question that the objective for Israel was outright territorial expansion. Since 1967, Israel has used a variety of policies in order to appropriate land and control its use, such as declaring it to be State land, a closed military zone, or a nature preserve. These practices, in contravention of international law and the UN Charter, have always been a principal tool of Zionist expansion, even in areas supposedly deemed Palestinian.[48]

The Oslo Accords created a jurisdictional framework dividing the West Bank, excluding annexed East Jerusalem, into three areas: Area A, under full Palestinian Authority (PA) control and constituting around 18 percent of the West Bank; Area B, around 22 percent where supposedly the PA would have civil control but, in practice, at least since 2000, the Israelis have full control; and Area C, a full 60 percent of the West Bank, where, pending the forever delayed "final status negotiations," Israel exerts almost total control. This unequal arrangement, enforced by Israel's police and military supremacy over the entire area, has provided the cover for:

- expanding illegal settlements throughout Area C and East Jerusalem and expelling Palestinians from their homes and fields

- building bypass roads that give settlers vertical and horizontal mobility across the terrain and direct connection to Israel, while further fragmenting the territory and restricting Palestinian movement and access

- consistently denying Palestinians building or renovation permits, forcing them to build "illegally" and thus subjecting their homes, infrastructure, etc. to demolition, sometimes requiring that they carry out such demolition themselves[49]

- annexing de facto parts of the fertile Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area and

- continuing to target Bedouin communities for bulldozing and forceful transfer from the West Bank, even though the Bedouins resist and rebuild, time and time again.[50]

The apartheid wall, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, zigzags along and into much of the West Bank and is itself an instrument of land annexation. Construction of the wall began in 2003, after the Second Intifada, and continues, ultimately expected to reach a length of 440 miles. In some places, the wall cuts as much as eleven miles into the West Bank, effectively annexing a broad swath of Palestinian territory and cutting off some twenty-five thousand Palestinians from their fields, villages, and houses. Its looming physicality has become the most prominent symbol of Israeli apartheid "and its conception of colonial, territorial, and demographic security."[51] And yet, the wall, too, has become a site of resistance, its surfaces covered end to end with the world's longest gallery of graffiti and colorful protest art.

Further menacing Palestinians living in the shadow of ever-expanding illegal settlements are the settlers themselves. Some thirty-seven new settler outposts have been established without a permit in the West Bank in recent years. The Israeli authorities do nothing to remove these illegal structures, and ultimately approve them, using the common pretext of "state land." Palestinian efforts to file complaints with Israeli police about settler vandalism and harassment rarely lead to criminal charges. The settlers, given virtual impunity, regularly invade the Palestinian villages, graze their animals there, swim in the water, and harass the residents, particularly the women.[52] By enabling these incursions, the Israeli government can achieve de facto annexation on the ground without a formal edict. Indeed, as Nathan Thrall has argued, settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem inhabit their stolen land with a degree of civil and political privilege identical to that of Jews in pre-1967 Israel. This reality belies the "fiction of separate regimes" and makes clear there is only one real system of power and apartheid from the river to the sea.[53]

Indeed, the entire history of the ongoing Nakba is a story of *elimination and replacement*, in both urban and rural areas. As *Haaretz* journalist Amira Hass has argued, "Land-grabbing right-wing [Jewish] NGOs with a religious and messianic patina" function as an unofficial branch of government, helping to implement policies of Israeli officials and courts to evict Palestinians from their long-held lands and homes. In the occupied East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, for example, right-wing settler organizations have for decades sought to secure eviction of Palestinian residents from their homes and their replacement by Jewish settlers. Some sixty-seven adults and children had been forcibly displaced from the neighborhood in the spring of

2021, with dozens more families facing imminent eviction.[54] And yet, once again, Palestinians refuse the status of victims and continue to resist. When six of the families awaiting eviction were ordered by the Israeli Supreme Court to "reach an agreement" with the settlers to become their tenants, a social media campaign, #SaveSheikhJarrah, mobilized thousands of protests all over Palestine and throughout the world, including in the U.S. Congress. The threatened Palestinian families announced they "firmly reject" any such agreement: "these are our homes, and the settlers are not our landlords … we will continue our international campaign to stop this ethnic cleansing."[55]

Militarism, Detention, and Criminal Injustice

Israel's two-tier criminal injustice system is itself one of the most blatant examples of its version of apartheid. Only Jewish Israelis, including settlers, are subject to ordinary civilian or even criminal law; all Palestinians are subject instead to a separate system of military law, in which soldiers and military tribunals become judge, jury, and executioner. The documented conviction rate for Palestinians post-arrest is 99 percent. Moreover, under Israel's military law, any Palestinian, including children, can be seized for pre-trial "administrative detention" and held for up to seventy-five days without being charged. During this time, detainees are vulnerable to physical and verbal abuse, including torture, beatings, solitary confinement, forced confessions, and being denied visitors for weeks or months on end.

Like the United States, Israel is a carceral state, where the reality and continual threat of mass incarceration operate as a pervasive form of bio-political control over "minority" populations. Since 1967, around eight hundred thousand Palestinians have been arrested and detained: 20 percent of the entire Palestinian population and 40 percent of all males.[56] What this means is that virtually every Palestinian family has members who are currently, or have been, imprisoned, and that the struggle against the insidious Israeli penal system is indistinguishable from the Palestinian struggle for freedom writ large. As a result, periodic hunger strikes by prisoners have long been one of the most common and widely practiced forms of Palestinian popular resistance, with mothers and other family members, activists, and organizations expressing solidarity through protest marches, statements, and gatherings in strike support tents.

When it comes to children, Israel is uniquely cruel in its human rights abuses. It is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes, each year, between five hundred and seven hundred children as young as twelve in military courts. Children in detention are subjected to physical and psychological torment, separation from parents or lawyers, beatings, solitary confinement, and forced confessions.[57] Indeed, Israel's criminal injustice system permeates Palestinian families, making their daily lives a state of siege. The process of carrying out detentions normalizes human rights violations that brutalize entire families and communities. Soldiers routinely make raids at night, enter houses with dogs and lasers looking for "suspects," traumatize children, and take people away to unknown detention sites. In one case in 2021, a 17-year-old Palestinian boy with life-threatening medical conditions was ordered rearrested by the military prosecutor and sentenced to six months of administrative detention for allegedly throwing stones (a typical charge against Palestinian boys).[58]

Israel prides itself on having developed the most technologically advanced system of surveillance—cameras, biometrics, spyware embedded in social media apps, drones—to control

dissent and what it sees as the pervasive threat of terrorism. But, of course, the main target of these technologies—apart from a global market of national governments and local militarized police forces—are Palestinians living their everyday lives.[59] This surveillance and the militarization of daily life haunt Palestinian children at every turn: the constant fear of night raids or arrest of parents, siblings, and friends; the confinement to restricted neighborhoods or the tiny, crowded streets of refugee camps, without any space to play; above all, the need for constant vigilance. Soldiers, for instance, can harass girls walking to school, even enter their classrooms and arrest their teachers. Shalhoub-Kevorkian names this perpetration of violence on and virtual incarceration of children "*the politics of unchilding*." Through dozens of interviews with Palestinian children living in East Jerusalem, she documents the cruel effects of violence on their ability to thrive, emotionally and educationally.[60]

For Palestinian adults as well as children, the ways in which settler colonialism penetrates their homes and neighborhoods are deeply personal. Surrounded by Jewish settlements, Palestinians in East Jerusalem and Area C are harassed and attacked on a daily basis, while IOF soldiers and Israeli officials look the other way. Right-wing settler gangs, such as Tag Mehir (followers of deceased Zionist terrorist Meir Kahane) commit acts of vandalism and spray paint walls of homes and mosques with ugly Islamophobic slogans. The terrorizing presence of these settler thugs in the roads, added to the constant scrutiny of IOF soldiers and surveillance cameras, creates in Palestinian women under occupation a sense of being constantly followed, hunted down, and thus imprisoned in their own homes.[61] In the rural and Bedouin areas, settlers burn Palestinian crops, cut down olive trees, poison wells, and divert water from village aquifers, causing chronic shortages. A Palestinian farmer in Area C, whose village experienced this water theft, explains that, to dig their own wells, Palestinians must secure a permit, which almost never happens. "But this is our land," he laments angrily, "and we shouldn't have to get any permits to live on it. We want to live."[62]

During periods of heightened tension, which often happen around important holidays, the collusion between Israeli police forces and right-wing Jewish extremists comes into full view. Events during Ramadan in 2021 echoed many previous instances of combined state and unofficial violence. First, on the pretext of keeping order, police erected barricades and checkpoints around the Damascus Gate steps in the Old City, a place where Palestinians typically gather during the nights of Ramadan. Then gangs of young male Jewish thugs, organized by the far-right group Lehava, began rampaging through the streets of the Old City, chanting "Death to Arabs" and assaulting Palestinian homes, terrorizing pedestrians and children. According to one Palestinian resident, "the police paved the way for the settlers and blocked us from reaching our homes," a "very scary and upsetting" situation. When Muslim Palestinians gathered to pray at their third holiest site, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, they were repeatedly attacked by Israeli forces, leaving hundreds of Palestinians injured and hospitalized. The cycle of violence continued with Israel bombing and killing some 243 civilians, including 67 children; in Gaza in response to Hamas rocket fire that killed ten adults and two children in Israel; and Jewish Zionist youth poised to march again through the Old City.[63] In this way, aroused settler gangs—like private militias in every fascist regime in memory—become "privatized branches of the government" and ultimately "a tool of dispossession."[64] The Nakba goes on, its aim being to drive all Palestinians out of Jerusalem.

Institutionalized Precarity, Slow Death, and the Agony of Gaza

Many critics of Israeli policies have observed a long-term strategy that some call "slow death," a process of sapping Palestinians' energy and will to resist or remain in Palestine, through the policies and practices of harassment, intimidation, and violence discussed above. Frequently those engaged in active resistance encounter policies of either shoot to kill or shoot to disable, for example, when IOF soldiers deliberately aim at the legs of protesters to cripple or kneecap them. "The sustained practice of maiming," or "not letting die," argues author and queer theorist Jasbir Puar, allows Israeli authorities to claim that they are not committing genocide, but rather using restraint when they attack Palestinian civilians.[65] This policy gained notoriety during the First Intifada, in the late 1980s, when Yitzhak Rabin called for breaking the limbs of Palestinians. It again reached heightened visibility during the Great March of Return in 2018–2019, with not only hundreds killed by Israeli sniper fire but also dozens permanently crippled, blinded, and maimed.[66]

The starkest example of Israel's colonial policy of attrition, dehumanization, and slow death is the Gaza Strip. In the annals of racist settler colonialism, Gaza stands as a frightening paradox. Israel claims to have officially ended its occupation there in 2005; yet a system of colonial rule by remote control has continued through four large-scale attacks on the area (Operations Cast Lead in 2008–2009, Pillar of Defense in 2012, Protective Edge in 2014, and renewed bombing in 2021) and enforcement of a nearly fifteen-year blockade as an act of collective punishment.[67] Not only have recurrent Israeli bombings destroyed 150,258 buildings and displaced or killed tens of thousands of civilians; Israel also controls all avenues in and out of Gaza, restricts the import of food, medical, and building supplies, and restricts electricity access to a few hours a day. As a result of the blockade and attacks, over 90 percent of Gaza's water is now undrinkable and, according to United Nations officials, its conditions of life have become unlivable.[68]

Referring to Gaza as the world's largest open-air prison, while by now almost a cliché, reflects a literal truth. Its nearly two million residents, the majority of whom are internal refugees from the Nakba, live packed into a territory of just over 140 square miles. They can almost never obtain permits to leave through "the two tightly-controlled border checkpoints in the north and south," whether for medical reasons, to travel, or pursue education. Attempting to escape unauthorized, either by sea or "over the heavily guarded perimeter fence" bordering Israel, will mean certain death.[69] So, one has to wonder, what conceivable function does Gaza serve for apartheid Israel, beyond a training ground for warfare? In the words of professor and founder of Decolonizing Architecture, Eyal Weizman, Gaza is "a laboratory" for testing "all sorts of new control technologies, munitions, legal and humanitarian tools," but most of all for trying out "the limits of violence" a state will be allowed to inflict "in the name of 'war on terror.'"[70]

While this book was in preparation, the world was undergoing the dreadful Coronavirus pandemic that has killed millions and devastated economies and health care systems. Covid-19 and the consequent crisis around vaccine distribution exposed the vast inequalities in health care, both within and between countries, globally. Nowhere was this more starkly revealed than in the context of Israeli apartheid, and specifically medical apartheid, where decades of colonial "de-development" in the OPT, especially in Gaza, had already left Palestinians with critical shortages of viable health facilities, essential medicines, and the infrastructure necessary for health care to function.[71]

As infection and death rates rose among both Palestinians and Israeli Jews in the fall and

winter of 2020–2021, Israel quickly ramped up its purchase and dissemination of vaccines, winning mass media acclaim for the most ambitious and rapid vaccination rollout campaign anywhere—for its citizens, including settlers living in illegal West Bank settlements. By early 2021, Israel had vaccinated over half its Jewish citizens, but a far smaller percentage of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Besides those East Jerusalem Palestinians, this effort entirely excluded the five million Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Only grudgingly, under immense internal and external pressure, did the Israeli government eventually agree to provide vaccines to the approximately 130,000 Palestinians who work for low wages in construction sites and factories within Israel and in the settlements.[72]

The patent injustices in Israel's vaccine distribution program quickly prompted an international outcry. Over one hundred Palestinian NGOs and human rights groups were joined by international health professionals, a strong cohort of Democratic representatives in the United States Congress, Jewish Voice for Peace, and even the pro-Israel lobbying group J Street to remind Israel of its clear obligations as a military occupying power under both international human rights and international humanitarian law: it must protect the right to health of the populations under its control, including their access to lifesaving medicines and vaccines.[73] Israel has long rejected that responsibility, based on its interpretation of the Oslo Accords, hypocritically insisting on dominating all aspects of Palestinian lives and movement when it comes to anything related to "security," but holding the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas responsible when it comes to health care and other social needs.[74]

As elsewhere, the pandemic in Palestine and Israel lays bare not only the gross immorality but also the colossal irrationality of racism. Israeli Zionists cling to their illusion of moral and political exceptionalism and their refusal to see their shared destiny and proximity with their Palestinian cohabitants, despite the obvious risks to their own people. This is mainly about power, not morality or even public health. The Israelis still control what goods, medicines, and people can flow into and out of the OPT; only when faced with immense international condemnation have they opened the valves to a small degree and agreed to vaccinate their own Palestinian workers. As a Human Rights Watch observer remarked, "vaccinating only those Palestinians who come in contact with Israelis reinforces that, to Israeli authorities, Palestinian life only matters to the extent it affects Jewish life."[75]

Sumud–Resistance Continues

Those who berate Zionism's critics—and undoubtedly will target this book—often complain we are unfairly "singling out" Israel. Quite the contrary is true. A main purpose of *A Land With A People*, and of this historical introduction, is to show how Zionism is of a piece with many other cases of settler colonialism and racism. The point is to see how Zionism is *not* exceptional or deserving of exoneration—and for all of us, as Jews and Palestinians, to grieve and denounce its willing participation in the wrongs of colonialism and apartheid that have afflicted most settler- and post-colonial societies. What is exceptional is Palestinians' refusal to give up.

As the preceding historical review and the Timeline at the end of the book remind us, those wrongs have persistently called forth acts of resistance. Nowhere did this resistance materialize more powerfully than in Gaza, with the youth-led Great March of Return throughout 2018 and 2019, which courageously protested the prolonged closure of Gaza and called for the

implementation of the Palestinian right of return. The Zionist-leaning mainstream media falsely labeled this massive, grassroots resistance movement "terrorist," controlled by Hamas, while Israeli forces unleashed sniper attacks that deliberately maimed and killed hundreds of demonstrators and medics who had peacefully gathered near the fence bordering Israel. When the protestors deployed (nonlethal) incendiary kites, the Israelis launched airstrikes. According to the United Nations, 214 Palestinians, including forty-six children, were killed and over 36,100, nearly a fourth of them children, were injured in these protests—many by live ammunition.[76] These events further galvanized JVP members and many Jews outside JVP; we could not "unsee" that these atrocities, too, were the bitter fruits of Zionism.

Since the Great March, despite exhaustion and disappointment, Gazans have shown extraordinary resilience and *sumud* ("steadfastness," in Arabic). In 2020, young activists from the march transitioned to new forms of civil disobedience. A further iteration of the freedom movement, "We Want to Live" (*bidna n'eesh*), brought Gazans into the streets to protest unemployment, rising taxes and prices, and then to greater reliance on social media as an outlet for anger and social protest.[77] Following a long tradition of Palestinian struggle, Gazans have also turned to cultural expression and art. We Are Not Numbers (WANN), an organization based in Gaza City, is a storytelling project that has mentored over three hundred young Palestinians to write stories and essays that are then published on its website. In addition, WANN has used its online capacity to conduct tours of Gazan cities for visitors, to sponsor a series of talks by Palestinian intellectuals and activists, and to provide mental health support for its writers.[78]

Cultural expression through stories, poetry, art, theater, and song is a timeless form of resistance against oppression that this book seeks not only to honor but also to emulate. Another stunning example of art as resistance exists in the neighborhood of Batan al-Hawa in Silwan, a large and ancient Palestinian town in occupied East Jerusalem, beset by settler harassment and displacement.[79] At this writing, well over a dozen Palestinian families in this neighborhood had been evicted through orders initiated by the Israeli settler group, Ateret Cohanim, and some eighty-four others were fighting eviction in Israeli courts. A remarkable art project has painted murals of giant eyes, birds, and flowers on the hillside buildings of Batan al-Hawa, facing West Jerusalem and the Old City. Called "I Witness Silwan," this installation turns the colonial gaze back on the perpetrators. In this way, art becomes an instrument of visual decolonization, (see photo on p. 147) "making visible what was invisible and enabling and empowering others to bear witness, in solidarity with the Palestinian people, to colonial violence and dispossession."[80]

Palestinian resistance includes opposing the gender and sexual stereotypes that Zionists and others perpetuate about Palestinians and Arabs and Muslims, generally. Palestinian feminists have demolished the false images of Palestinian (and Muslim) women as victims of gender oppression who need to be pitied and "saved," celebrating generations of fierce, outspoken Palestinian women leaders in every era since the 1920s.[81] Queer Palestinians and their allies have organized against Israel's "pinkwashing" campaign—a government-organized marketing and public relations program to brand Israel as LGBTQ-friendly and thus enhance its reputation as modern, cosmopolitan, democratic, and a champion of human rights.[82]

Palestinian LGBTQ and other activists paint a different and distinctly oppositional picture. The grassroots Palestinian organization Al Qaws for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society has worked independently since 2007 from its base in occupied Jerusalem to build a vibrant culture that celebrates diverse sexualities, sexual orientations, and genders. Al Qaws' important political analysis challenges Zionist propaganda by exposing pinkwashing as not

merely a “global marketing strategy” but, more importantly, an instrument that props up settler colonialism and colonial violence. The IOF may boast of its inclusion of openly gay officers, “but for Palestinians the sexuality [or gender or color] of the soldier at a checkpoint makes little difference. They all wield the same guns, wear the same boots, and maintain the same colonial regime.”[83]

Finally, it is crucial to understand that the Palestinian movement for liberation has always taken a strongly internationalist perspective, identifying and expressing material solidarity with many other liberation movements across the globe. In this way, it has contributed immeasurably to international solidarity movements against colonialism, racism, apartheid, and imperialism. Likewise, those international movements have helped to breathe hope into the Palestinian struggle. Examples of strong mutual support abound (South Africa, Puerto Rico, Northern Ireland, Algeria, the Caribbean), but the dynamic relationship for decades between the Palestinian struggle and the movement for Black liberation and against anti-Black racism in the United States has particular resonance today.[84] Prior to the 1960s, all but a few African-American leaders saw Zionism as a kindred anti-colonial struggle and identified with the biblical Jewish Exodus narrative. Likewise, Black leaders in the mid-twentieth century supported the founding of the State of Israel as a triumph by an oppressed people over a history of slavery, persecution, and genocide. It took Malcolm X to break with “Zionist Logic” (the title of his 1964 essay, written after visiting Palestinians in an Egyptian refugee camp) and to name Zionism a “new form of colonialism” supported by U.S. “dollarism.”[85]

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, African-American/Palestinian relations took a sharp turn in favor of Palestinian liberation. Black radicals in Chicago, leaders of the Black Panther Party (BPP) like Fred Hampton and Huey Newton, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the political prisoner George Jackson all took strong stands denouncing the Israeli state as a product of U.S. imperialism and Zionism as a form of racist settler colonialism.[86] Members of the BPP had an especially close relationship with the Palestinian movement, issuing several official solidarity statements in the decade between 1970 and 1980 and meeting with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on a number of occasions in Algiers in 1969–1970.[87]

Perhaps the most enduring and powerful expression of Black-Palestinian solidarity has been that forged by Black and Palestinian feminists. In 1971, Palestinian political prisoners incarcerated in Israeli jails wrote a letter of solidarity to Angela Davis, who was then imprisoned in the United States. Through much of her life, unwavering commitment to Palestine liberation has been an integral part of Davis’s extraordinary global activism and revolutionary thought. Like her friend, the great Black feminist poet June Jordan, she has attempted “to embody the juncture of Black and Palestine liberation.”[88] Davis cites as a high point in this journey her participation in a historic 2011 delegation of women of color and indigenous women activists, led by Palestinian activist and professor Rabab Abdulhadi, to the West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem.

Following Angela Davis’s lead, many other women of color have created crucial nodes of intersectional politics and coalition building, joining Palestine solidarity and support for BDS with campaigns against war, racism, state violence, colonialism, and the prison-industrial complex.[89] In March 2021, a group of U.S.-based Palestinian feminist activists posted a “Palestinian Feminist Collective Pledge” recognizing “Palestinian liberation as a critical feminist issue” and the long history of Palestinian women struggling “to end multiple forms of

oppression." The pledge quickly drew hundreds of individual signatures and organizational endorsements throughout the United States and Palestine and countries around the world—a culmination of decades of intersectional feminist work.[90]

The convergence of two horrific atrocities in 2014—the brutal police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the Israeli siege and massacre of civilians in Gaza—cemented Black-Palestinian bonds. Demonstrators in Ferguson held up signs pledging solidarity with Palestine, and Palestinians sent Ferguson activists instructions about how to defend against tear gas—from the same U.S.-branded canisters that had rained down on Gazans. The following year, another historic delegation made up of young organizers, journalists, and artists representing Black Lives Matter, Dream Defenders, Black Youth Project 100, and Ferguson activists—nearly all founded or led by queer women of color—traveled to Palestine to make political connections and learn from the Palestinian struggle. That same year, some 1,100 Black organizers, activists, artists, students, professors, clergy, and political prisoners from twenty-five countries, plus fifty organizations, signed the statement "Black for Palestine" declaring, "our commitment to working through cultural, economic, and political means to ensure Palestinian liberation at the same time as we work towards our own."[91]

International solidarity is indispensable for the resistance and vitality of the Palestine movement; as such, it is perceived as a direct threat to Zionism. Those who engage in it are the target of vicious backlash campaigns from the much larger, more powerful and richly resourced pro-Israel organizations, which wield accusations of antisemitism like rhetorical grenades. Black movements face this danger with particular vengeance. When the Movement for Black Lives published its Comprehensive Vision for Black Lives Platform in 2016, it dared to include a section denouncing the billions of dollars in U.S. taxpayers' money sent to the Israeli government every year, the militarization of Palestinian lives, illegal settlements, apartheid, and "the genocide taking place against the Palestinian people." This statement, especially its use of the word "genocide," immediately drew a barrage of angry attacks from Zionist groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Community Relations Council.[92] Palestine solidarity and anti-Zionism have become the new "communism."

Jewish Anti-Zionism in the Present

In 2018, Jewish Voice for Peace, as a national organization, adopted a position paper entitled "Our Approach to Zionism." In a statement reflecting several years of rigorous, democratic consultations among all its local and national constituents, JVP concluded that "Zionism was a false and failed answer to the desperately real question many of our ancestors faced of how to protect Jewish lives from murderous antisemitism in Europe." Quoting the Jewish feminist writer Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, who advocated what she called "diasporism" as an alternative to Zionism, the statement asserts: "the Zionism that took hold and stands today is a settler-colonial movement, establishing an apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others … [W]e unequivocally oppose Zionism because it is counter to [our] ideals … of justice, equality and freedom for all people … we choose solidarity."[93]

JVP's approach is no longer a fringe position among progressives, and especially progressive Jews, in the United States and abroad. Polls show a widening gap between older and younger generations of Jewish Americans around Zionism. Support for Israel and the powerful American

Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has markedly declined among the young, who refuse to accept the false equation between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. More and more, young Jews are living and expressing their Jewishness in ways that decouple tradition and spiritual values from political loyalty to the State of Israel. This includes a growing consciousness that the Nakba and its endurance in contemporary Israeli policies casts a huge, ugly shadow over the origins of the Israeli state and the very meanings of Zionism. It also includes a dramatic shift in the language used to describe this historical and current reality, with terms like "settler colonialism" and "apartheid" becoming increasingly commonplace not only among activists but also liberal Jewish intellectuals and advocacy organizations. In January 2021, the Israeli human rights group B'tselem published a kind of manifesto, declaring, "a regime that uses laws, practices and organized violence to cement the supremacy of one group over another is an apartheid regime," and naming Israel's "regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea" unequivocally apartheid. This statement received enormous attention across the globe, even as it failed to acknowledge that Palestinians had been saying this for many decades.[94]

The Trump years and their aftermath were, for many of us, the darkest period we had known. Yet what seemed an avalanche of global and local crises related to systemic racism, the pandemic, climate catastrophe, immigration, economic injustice, and so much else, also opened up opportunities for vibrant multi-racial coalitions and strategic alignments. For JVP, standing as Jews with Muslims, immigrants, people of color, and all those who come under the white supremacist hate agenda became inextricably woven into our commitment to justice for Palestine and ending Israeli apartheid. JVP and its political branch, JVP-Action, joined with fifty-six Palestinian and Muslim partner organizations to challenge the spurious International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of Zionism as antisemitism and its adoption by social media platforms like Facebook.[95]

We helped to elect progressive, pro-Palestine representatives at congressional, state, and local levels and then worked with them to create legislation to roll back U.S. military funding for Israel, defeat anti-BDS laws, and end what many now call the Deadly Exchange policing programs between the United States and Israel.[96] We continued to work in community-based and women-of–color-led coalitions for prison abolition, moving public funds from policing to community and safety care, and stopping immigrant detentions. And, in partnership with Muslim and Palestine solidarity groups, we tried to mobilize a vocal campaign among progressive U.S. congresspeople to pressure Israel to end its medical apartheid and provide anti-Covid vaccines throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In a signal that coalition work is having results, a dozen Democratic members of Congress signed a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, calling for a serious change in U.S. policy toward Palestine and Israel, including opposing home demolitions, settlements, and "all forms of ongoing, de facto annexation [and] settler colonialism in any form" in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while demanding vaccines "to all Palestinians living under military occupation," including "in the besieged Gaza Strip." This was followed in April 2021 by Congresswoman Betty McCollum introducing her Palestinian Children and Families Act (HR 2590), which bars U.S. military aid to Israel in the case of a wide range of human rights abuses: home demolitions, killing of Palestinian civilians, annexing their land, military detention of children, among other crimes. This was a historic step, though only the beginning of a long, uphill struggle in the U.S. Congress.[97] Meanwhile, Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Executive Director of T'ruah, a rabbinical human rights organization, called on Jewish groups to stop casting the far-right Jewish thugs who terrorize Palestinian neighborhoods "as marginalized

outsiders." Rabbi Jacobs called out the network of U.S.-based Zionist foundations and organizations (such as the Central Fund of Israel) that channel millions of dollars to Israeli right-wing and terrorist groups. "[We] must insist," she urged fellow Jews, "that the institutions to which we are connected do not contribute to the groups that promote genocide and organize Jews to take part in violent rampages."[98] A U.S. rabbi's unapologetic use of the word "genocide" with regard to Israeli and Zionist organizations' treatment of Palestinians indicates an important rhetorical shift.

Within Israel, there have always been courageous Jewish citizens who have stood up to their government's anti-Palestinian militarism and apartheid policies—and in some cases, such as refusing compulsory military service, suffered punitive sanctions and even imprisonment. Organizations like Mesarvot (Refusal), a network of activists who support political and military refusal and opening up critical discussion among the Israeli public; Zochrot, whose aim is to educate the Jewish Israeli public about the Nakba, lead tours through destroyed Palestinian village sites, and generate not only awareness but also a sense of responsibility and accountability among Jews; the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHD), which conducts peaceful direct action against demolitions of Palestinian houses and more generally opposes Israeli settlements in the OPT; and Boycott from Within, which calls on all citizens of Israel to join and support the BDS movement, have worked for years in defiance of the increasingly right-wing and racist tendencies of their government. Jewish feminist groups, such as the Coalition of Women for Peace, which, until its recent closure, documented the deadly exchange and investments in military technology of Israel's military-industrial complex; and Machsom (Checkpoint) Watch, a group of Israeli Jewish women who monitor and document the conduct of soldiers and police at checkpoints in the occupied West Bank, as well as proceedings in Israeli military courts, are part of the international movement that understands war, militarism, and colonial occupation as distinctly feminist issues.[99]

Progressive Jews in Israel also rise to the occasion when particular crises, such as attacks on Gaza, annexations in the Jordan Valley, or expulsions of refugees arise. In 2018, a group of thirty-six Israeli Holocaust survivors signed a letter protesting the government's attempt to deport some 38,000 African asylum seekers, urging that such harsh action went against the very founding of Israel as a haven for Jewish refugees.[100] In 2021, Israeli public health experts demanded that the Israeli government provide urgently needed vaccinations to Palestinians in the OPT on both public health and equity grounds, in order to end the pandemic and to address the "crippling healthcare" emergency among Palestinians. And, of course, individual Israeli journalists and intellectuals such as Amira Hass, Ilan Pappe, Shlomo Sand, Gideon Levy, Jonathan Ofir, and others have spoken out for decades in support of Palestinian rights and to expose the injustices of the Nakba and occupation. These efforts are small but courageous steps "to begin building the future in the present, to prefigure a post-apartheid/post-Zionist society."[101]

And maybe the world is finally starting to listen. On March 3, 2021, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in the Hague announced that the Court would begin a formal investigation into war crimes in all the occupied Palestinian Territories, including "forcible transfer" and illegal settlements. The ICC decision was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority but denounced by the United States and Israeli governments, with Netanyahu predictably calling it "antisemitic."[102] Then, in late April 2021, Human Rights Watch, the world's leading international human rights organization, issued the strongest, most authoritative report yet, affirming that Israel's official and systematic oppression of Palestinians constitutes the legal

crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution, as defined in the ICC Rome Statute and international customary law. The report calls on the ICC prosecutor's office to investigate and try Israeli officials implicated in these crimes and on all countries, under the principle of universal jurisdiction, to impose sanctions, travel bans, and arrests on implicated Israeli authorities.[103]

To be clear, we must not confuse these developments with *justice*, which requires full recognition of Palestinians' right of return, restitution of stolen lands and properties, full equality and dignity for all Palestinians, an end forever to the violence of the endless Nakba, and so much more. But maybe we are seeing the beginning of some accountability and of Zionism's twilight.

In 1944, in the midst of the Second World War, Jewish political theorist Hannah Arendt described the specter that still haunts Zionism and those who stand against it—Palestinians, Jews, the colonized, the displaced:

> *The real obstacle to solving the problem of refugees and statelessness lies in the fact that it is simply unsolvable as long as peoples are organized within the old system of nation-states. Instead, those who are stateless reveal more clearly than anything else the crisis of the nation-state. And we shall not master this crisis by heaping one injustice upon another merely so that we can reestablish an order that does not correspond either to a modern sense of justice or to modern conditions under which peoples actually live together.*[104]

The Israeli state came into existence in a world organized around "the old system of nation-states" whose core was a principle of sovereignty—meaning total power over land, people, and the terms of belonging. To challenge Zionism in the name of Palestinian liberation and right of return is to challenge that principle and the hegemony and inherent racism of nation states. Perhaps we need to be imagining something new and hitherto unknown in the modern world: the integrity and self-determination of *peoples* and the possibility of "peoples actually [living] together."[105] The writers, poets, and artists represented in this book have all used their voices and memories to confront and transcend Zionist injustice. Together, from different sites and vantage points, all help guide us toward more collective visions and more liberated futures.

Endnotes

1 Edward Said, "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims," in *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

2 Jacqueline Rose, *The Question of Zion* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005), dedicated to the memory of Edward Said; and Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 11.

3 On the Jewish Nation-State Law, [see pp. 27-28]. The spring 2021 Israeli elections saw Jewish Power, "the party of followers of the late Jewish-fascist rabbi Meir Kahane," gain six seats for its bloc in the Knesset. Jewish Power advocates "transfer of the enemy"—that is, expulsion of any (whether Palestinians or Jewish anti-Zionists) who do not support absolute Jewish supremacy. Jonathan Ofir, "Yes Jewish Power Party is fascistic, but its rise was inevitable," *Mondoweiss*, March 25, 2021 (https://mondoweiss.net/2021/03/yes-jewish-power-party-is-fascistic-but-its-rise-was-inevitable/).

4 Philip Weiss, "Biden's Secretary of State Praises Trump's Achievements on Israel," *Mondoweiss*, January 21, 2021 (https://mondoweiss.net/2021/01/bidens-secretary-of-state-praises-trumps-achievements-on-israel-2/). In his January 2021 confirmation hearing in the Senate, incoming Secretary Antony Blinken endorsed keeping the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and normalizing its relations with Arab nations, without a word about vastly expanded settlements or Palestinian rights. President Biden's ties with Israel go back decades. The new administration did restore $235 million in funding for UNWRA (the UN agency that provides vital education and health care services for

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza), which Trump had withdrawn. But it defined this strictly as "humanitarian aid," in an amount significantly lower than pre-Trump levels. "Biden administration restores $235m in aid to Palestinians," *Middle East Eye*, April 7, 2021 (https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/biden-administration-restores-235-million-aid-palestinians).

5 Tamara Nassar, "Israel Went on Demolition Spree in 2020," *The Electronic Intifada*, January 5, 2021 (https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/tamara-nassar/israel-went-demolition-spree-2020).

6 Netanyahu came to see evangelical Christians as a more reliable ally than American Jews, growing numbers of whom—particularly among younger generations—were rejecting nationalist Zionism. Dov Waxman, "As Israel Turns 70, Many Young American Jews Turn Away," *The Conversation*, May 3, 2018 (https://theconversation.com/as-israel-turns-70-many-young-american-jews-turn-away-95271).

7 This definition of antisemitism is that of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) (www.holocaustremembrance.com), which Zionists have worked to bring into wholesale usage among state and national governments, academic institutions, mass media, and social media platforms throughout the United States and Europe. In November 2020, 51 out of 53 members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations voted to adopt the IHRA definition. See Palestine Legal, *The Palestine Exception to Free Speech: A Movement under Attack* (https://palestinelegal.org/the-palestine-exception; downloadable pdf available).

8 See Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (New York: Verso, 2010); Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics, and Scholarship in Israel* (New York: Verso, 2008); and especially Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), who painstakingly reconstruct the Zionist historiography, archaeology, and cartography deployed to create a continuous, unified "Jewish People," bound from ancient times by common origin, God's promise, and patriarchal tradition.

9 On "monopoly over the legitimate use of force," see Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 30; and Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. (London: Routledge, 1948).

10 Piterberg, chap. 1; and Jonathan Ofir, "The 'Strong Jew' Is Weak," *Mondoweiss*, May 12, 2019 (https://mondoweiss.net/2019/05/the-strong-weak/).

11 In a letter to Balfour in 1918, Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann used stereotypical derogatory slurs to refer to Arabs as inherently "treacherous" and deceitful. In a letter to Weizmann in 1929, the revered American reform rabbi Judah Magnes disparaged "the Palestine Arabs" as "still half savage, and their leaders … almost all small men." See *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon, eds. (New York: Grove Press, 2003).

12 "70 Years On: Palestinians Retain Sovereignty Over East and West Jerusalem," Al Haq Briefing Paper, October 2018. [See Timelines, pp. 187-202, and Glossary, pp. 203-210, sections for definitions and chronological sequences concerning these events.] (https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/alhaq_files/images/stories/PDF/Jerusalem_20%20Oct_final.pdf); Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 32–33; and Noura Erakat, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2019), 38–41. Erakat writes, "With the stroke of a pen, a nascent international community institutionalized the framework of exception justifying the elision of Palestinians' juridical status as a people … in order to fulfill the self-determination of a settler population in their place."

13 "Qarar al-mu'utmar al-'arabi al-filastini al-awal b'arsal wufud ila mu'utmar as-salah fī bārīs," First Palestine Arab Congress—Resolution Regarding the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, see Economic Cooperation Foundation (https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/253h).

14 Zena Tahhan, "More Than a Century On: The Balfour Declaration Explained," *Al Jazeera*, November 2, 2018 (https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/11/2/more-than-a-century-on-the-balfour-declaration-explained). Nebi Musa is an annual Muslim festival before Good Friday in which worshipers march to the tomb of Moses near Jericho. Evidence suggests that Jabotinsky and his followers played a role in provoking the 1920 riots.

15 Rabab Abdulhadi, "The Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (December 1998), 654. The Palestinian Women's Union later formed the General Palestinian Women's Congress in Jerusalem in 1929.

16 Edwin Montagu, the only Jewish British cabinet member, pushed back against the Balfour Declaration, saying it emboldened antisemitic nations to disenfranchise Jews. See Montagu, "Memorandum on the Anti-Semitism of the Present Government," submitted to the British Government, August 23, 1917, see Jewish Virtual Library (https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/montagu-memo-on-british-government-s-anti-semitism).

17 See the excellent analysis by Gary Fields in his *Enclosure: Palestinian Landscapes in a Historical Mirror* (Berkeley: University of California, 2017); and John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Book II, Ch. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

18 Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, 106. Khalidi's detailed analysis of the Palestinian uprisings of this period examines the reasons for the Palestinians' "failure to achieve self-determination and establish a state" prior to 1948, including both powerful external opposition by the British and others, and fatal internal political divisions.

19 "[T]he Arab masses did not resent the Jewish immigration that brought to them more prosperity and material advancement in a decade than they had known in a millennium; … only propaganda and threats could drive these poor souls into rebellion against the source of their earthly happiness." In the same publication four months later, the rabbi denies any "parallel

between the treatment the American Indian received at the hands of the white intruder and that of the Arab at the hands of the Jew." It is noteworthy that some critical voices were making this parallel in 1936.

20 Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 17, calls the JNF "the principal Zionist tool for the colonization of Palestine." [See Glossary for JNF definition] See also Jonathan Cook, "'Finished with the bluffing': Jewish National Fund goes public with its aid to settlers," *Mondoweiss*, March 17, 2021 (https://mondoweiss.net/2021/03/finished-with-the-bluffing-jewish-national-fund-goes-public-with-its-aid-to-settlers/); and Jesse Benjamin, "Why I protested the Jewish National Fund," *Mondoweiss*, October 12, 2010 (https://mondoweiss.net/2010/10/why-i-protested-the-jewish-national-fund/).

21 Pappe, 25 and 48–49. "De-Arabization" is Pappe's term (49).

22 Participants included three Rothschilds, three members of the House of Lords, Simon Marks (of Marks and Spencer department store), Chaim Weizmann, and Ben-Gurion.

23 The National Archives of Great Britain (TNA), FO 371/45377, "Note of Meeting Held at New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C., on Tuesday, September the 9th, 1941 at 2:30 p.m." At the top of page 1 of this folio are the words, hand-written in red ink in block letters, "TO BE TREATED AS MOST SECRET." Thomas Suarez, *State of Terror: How Terrorism Created Modern Israel* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press/Interlink, 2017), 72–73. Thanks must go to Suarez, who not only uncovered this and many other valuable primary sources about Zionist violence but also made his entire trove of sources available publicly on the Internet (http://thomassuarez.com/zionist_meeting_9sept1941.html).

24 Suarez, 73.

25 See Allan C. Brownfield, "Zionism at 100: Remembering Its often Prophetic Jewish Critics," *The American Jewish Council*, 1997 (http://www.acjna.org/acjna/articles_detail.aspx?id=94).

26 See Daniel Katz, *All Together Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 19.

27 A particularly interesting example occurred during the Cold War period, when President Ronald Reagan entered deals to pressure over a million Soviet Jews to migrate to their destined "homeland" rather than their preferred destination in the United States. See Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Land of Israel: From Holy Land to Homeland* (New York: Verso, 2012), 20–21.

28 See, among many sources, Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine;* Walid Khalidi, ed., *All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); and "Plan Dalet, Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Autumn 1988), 4–20.

29 "The Annexation Delusion: Nathan Thrall on Israel's Apartheid," *London Review of Books*, January 21, 2021; also, Al Haq Briefing Paper (2018), 7.

30 [See Jay Saper, "An Abbreviated History of Resistance to Zionism," pp. 191-202].

31 See excerpts from their writings in Kushner and Solomon, *Wrestling with Zion*; and Adam Shatz, ed., *Prophets Outcast: A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing about Zionism and Israel* (New York: Nation Books, 2004). Also, Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, eds. (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 220–221; and Judith Butler's invaluable chapter on Arendt, "Is Judaism Zionism?" in her *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

32 Shatz, *Prophets Outcast*, 65–67. For a vivid first-person account of Jewish terrorist and militia groups' participation in these massacres, including at Deir Yassin, see the stunning documentary by Ahlam Muhtaseb and Andy Trimlett, *1948: Creation and Catastrophe*, https://www.1948movie.com.

33 Al Haq, "70 Years On"; Pappe, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 31–35; and Erakat, *Justice for Some*, 44–47. Arab leaders decided to boycott the UNSCOP negotiations and their subsequent proceedings, leaving a vacuum that the Jewish Agency rushed to fill.

34 A 1970 amendment broadened this right for Jews to include anyone having one Jewish grandparent.

35 For the Kafkaesque travails of one such Palestinian, the distinguished architect and dean Andoni Baramki, see Suad Amiry, *Golda Slept Here* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2014). After the 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem, Baramki could only stare at the beloved home he had designed, and where his family had lived, from the rooftop of the YMCA in West Jerusalem, where he worked. See also Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948,* and the *Claims of Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

36 Erakat, *Justice for Some*, 58–59. The minority of Palestinians who qualify as citizens (today around 20 percent of Israelis) remain decidedly second-class, with voting and some civil rights but restricted economic and social rights.

37 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2015), 50–54.

38 See BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights position paper, *The Nation State Law: The Culmination of 70 Years of Israeli Apartheid and Colonization*, October 2018 (https://www.badil.org/phocadownloadpap/badil-new/publications/research/in-focus/NationStateLaw) (PositionPaper-BADIL-Oct2018).pdf); "Jewish Nation State Law: Q & A with Adalah's Hassan Jabareen," *Mondoweiss*, August 13, 2018 (https://mondoweiss.net/2018/08/jewish-adalahs-jabareen/); and Al Haq, fact sheet on the Jewish Nation-State Law (2018) (https://www.alhaq.org/cached_uploads/download/alhaq_files/images/stories/PDF/NState_factsheet_FINAL_23%20January‘
The State of Israel does not yet have a constitution. Its Basic Laws [see Glossary], most of which can only be amended by a super-majority in the Knesset, are meant to be foundational principles laying down civil rights and liberties and the core

values of the nation until an official constitution is adopted.

39 Jonathan Ofir, "Israel's Justice Minister Endorses Apartheid—the Jewish State 'at the Expense of Equality,'" *Mondoweiss*, February 13, 2018 (https://mondoweiss.net/2018/02/minister-endorses-apartheid/); and Gideon Levy, "Israel's Minister of Truth," Haaretz.com, September 1, 2017 (https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/israel-s-minister-of-truth-1.5447118).

40 Netael Bandel and Jonathan Lis, "High Court Hears 15 Petitions against Controversial Nation-State Law in Live Broadcast," Haaretz.com, December 22, 2020 (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-high-court-hears-15-petitions-against-controversial-nation-state-law-1.9392107); and Orly Noy, "The Israeli Nation-State Law Had Its Day in Court," *+972 Magazine*, December 24, 2020 (https://www.972mag.com/jewish-nation-state-law-high-court/). At the time of this writing, the High Court had not yet ruled on these petitions. In a particularly dramatic statement, Avraham Burg—a former speaker of the Knesset, Labor Party leader, and Jewish Agency head—renounced his membership in "the Jewish nationality," saying, "This law constitutes a change in my existential definition." (Ravit Hecht, "A scion of Zionist aristocracy wants to quit the Jewish people. Will Israel let him?" Haaretz.com, January 2, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.HIGH-LIGHT.MAGAZINE-a-scion-of-zionist-aristocracy-wants-to-quit-the-jewish-people-will-israel-let-him-1.9414503).)

41 If we take the entire territory of Israel-Palestine between the river and the sea, today the numbers of Jews and Palestinians are roughly equal; in Israel alone, Palestinians are roughly 20 percent of the total population. Moreover, Palestinians have a higher birth rate than Jewish Israelis, plus it appears that twice as many Jews migrate out of Israel every year than the numbers of Jews in the United States and elsewhere who exercise their "right of return." This creates the likelihood that, in a very short time, Palestinians throughout the area that Israel controls (or expects to control) will outnumber Israeli Jews, creating a situation similar to apartheid South Africa—an ethnic minority ruling over an ethnic majority.

42 "Insofar as biblical claims of Jewish 'chosenness' and 'return' serve Israel's narrative as a legitimate and sovereign state, they also work to cast Israeli violence against Palestinians as a 'security necessity.'" Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology*, 5 and 14–15.

43 Ella Shohat, "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews," *Social Text*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (75) (Summer 2003), 55–60 (https://muse.jhu.edu/article/43731/pdf). On the Israeli Black Panthers, a protest movement of second-generation Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East, see Jaclynn Ashly, "When Israel's Black Panthers found common cause with Palestinians," *The Electronic Intifada*, March 7, 2019 (https://electronicintifada.net/content/when-israels-black-panthers-found-common-cause-palestinians/26821).

44 For personal testimonies, see Amram Association, https://www.edut-amram.org. Also, Ofer Aderet and Judy Maltz, "Israel Formally 'Expresses Sorrow' for Disappearance of Yemenite Children 70 Years On, to Pay Reparations to Families," Haaretz.com, February 22, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-disappearance-of-yemenite-children-israel-to-express-sorrow-pay-reparations-1.9558508). The amount of reparations voted in 2021 was around $50 million. This practice of stealing babies was common among other fascist regimes, including Pinochet's Chile and Franco's Spain; see the moving documentary film by Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar, *The Silence of Others* (2018).

45 Phoebe Greenwood, "Ethiopian women in Israel 'given contraceptive without consent,'" *The Guardian*, February 28, 2013 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/28/ethiopian-women-given-contraceptives-israel#:~:text=Israel's%20health%20ministry%20is%20investigating%20claims%20that%20Ethiopian%20women%20are,th
Diane Tober, "Israel admits targeting Ethiopian Jews for compulsory contraception," *Biopolitical Times*, February 7, 2013 (https://www.geneticsandsociety.org/biopolitical-times/israel-admits-targeting-ethiopian-jews-compulsory-contraception).

46 "Israel passes 'anti-infiltration law' to speed up the deportation of African refugees," *Mondoweiss*, December 14, 2017 (https://mondoweiss.net/2017/12/infiltration-deportation-refugees/); and "Trump's line on 'shithole countries' is a mainstream view in Israel," *Mondoweiss*, January 16, 2018 (https://mondoweiss.net/2018/01/shithole-countries-mainstream/). Of course, these are the same racist aspersions Israeli officials cast regularly on Palestinians. Ofir refers to comments by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak, historian Benny Morris, and Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman. On "slave auction" protests, see Oren Ziv, "Refugees hold 'slave auction' outside Knesset to protest deportation," *+972 Magazine*, January 17, 2018 (https://www.972mag.com/refugees-hold-slave-auction-outside-knesset-to-protest-deportation/).

47 Erakat, *Justice for Some*, 64-65.

48 The UN Charter prohibits the acquisition of territory through the threat or use of force. See the excellent account in Erakat, *Justice for Some*, chap. 2, especially 65–68 and 85, regarding "non-registered property."

49 In 2020 alone, Israel set an almost ten-year record for numbers of Palestinian homes it demolished, or forced Palestinians to self-demolish, displacing some one thousand Palestinian men, women, and children. Tamara Nassar, "Israel Went on Demolition Spree in 2020," *The Electronic Intifada*, January 5, 2021 (https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/tamara-nassar/israel-went-demolition-spree-2020). Nassar reports that "Israel demolished more than 850 Palestinian structures throughout [2020], displacing 1,000 people. More than half of those displaced were children." Most of the demolitions took place in occupied East Jerusalem and Area C.

50 See, among others, Farah Najjar, "Israel destroys Bedouin Village for the 119th time," *Al Jazeera*, October 3, 2017 (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/3/israel-destroys-bedouin-village-for-the-119th-time).

51 See Eyal Weizman, "The Best of All Possible Walls," in his *The Least of All Possible Evils* (New York: Verso, 2011), for an eloquent and searing critique.

52 Yuval Abraham, "'I Want Battir to Go to Hell': Israeli Settlers Invade Palestinian World Heritage Site," *+972 Magazine*, July 29, 2020 (https://www.972mag.com/settlers-battir-illegal-outpost/).

53 "Israel extended to Jews in the West Bank most of the same rights as Israelis in the rest of the country regarding health insurance, national insurance, consumer protection, taxes…, higher education, entry to Israel, population registration, traffic ordinance and voting, making settlers the only Israeli citizens … permitted to vote in a place of residence outside the official territory of the state." "The Separate Regimes Delusion: Nathan Thrall on Israel's Apartheid," *London Review of Books*, January 21, 2021 (https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v43/n02/nathan-thrall/the-separate-regimes-delusion).

54 Amira Hass, "The privatization of violence: Right-wing Jerusalem thugs are an arm of the state," *Haaretz*, April 26, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fopinion%2F.premium-the-privatization-of-violence-right-wing-jerusalem-thugs-are-an-arm-of-the-state-1.9747116); and Yumna Patel, "Israeli court says Sheikh Jarrah residents must 'reach agreement' with the settlers trying to evict them," *Mondoweiss*, May 3, 2021 (https://mondoweiss.net/2021/05/israeli-court-says-sheikh-jarrah-residents-must-reach-agreement-with-the-settlers-trying-to-evict-them/). Militant religious settler groups include, among others, Regavim, Amana, Elad, Ateret Cohanim, and the extreme racist, Kahanist group (followers of the outlawed Kach movement of Meir Kahane), Lehava.

55 Nir Hasson, "After few days of calm in Jerusalem, tension[s] are set to escalate again," Haaretz.com, May 4, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fisrael-news%2F.premium-after-a-few-days-of-calm-events-could-rekindle-clashes-in-jerusalem-1.9770402); and Patel, "Israeli court says Sheikh Jarrah residents …." (2021).

56 See Adameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, "On Administrative Detention," July 2017 (https://www.addameer.org/index.php/israeli_military_judicial_system/administrative_detention). In 2020 alone, the IOF detained 4,636 Palestinians, including 543 minors under 18, and 128 women. By the end of the year, 4,400 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons and detention centers, and 350 administrative detainees were being held without charge.

57 On the militarization and detention of Palestinian children, see Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP), *No Way to Treat a Child*, April 2016 (https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/dcipalestine/pages/1527/attachments/original/1460665378/DCIP_NWTTAC_Report 1460665378). According to the Israeli Prison Service, an average of 204 Palestinian children are taken into custody each month. Typical charges for which most kids are detained include throwing stones, which carries a maximum sentence of ten to twenty years; "interfering with the work of a soldier"; taking photos in the street, or other supposed threats to security. Children between 12 and 18 may be held for anywhere between 48 and 96 hours without a lawyer or family member present. When Ahed Tamimi, whose family and village of Nabi Salih have resisted Israeli occupation for decades, was taken into custody for resisting a soldier, she was 16 years old; she was detained for eight months.

58 Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, "Ofer Military Court Confirms Six Months Administrative Detention Order against Palestinian Child with Rare Disease," February 2, 2021 (https://www.addameer.org/index.php/news/ofer-military-court-confirms-six-months-administrative-detention-order-against-palestinian).

59 See Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (New York: Verso, 2007); and Researching the American Israeli Alliance and Jewish Voice for Peace, "Deadly Exchange: The Dangerous Consequences of US–Israel Law Enforcement Exchanges," September 2018 (https://deadlyexchange.org/deadly-exchange-research-report/).

60 *Incarcerated Childhood and the Politics of Unchilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2019).

61 Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Security Theology*, 33–39. One of her respondents, a Jerusalemite woman, reports: "The settlers pass by the house and pee and defecate on the mattresses I leave out to air. They cut the laundry lines and throw all my clean laundry in the streets… My son has lost interest in school… and I decided to agree to marry off my fifteen-year-old daughter, to save her from all this…. We live these horrors daily."

62 Personal interviews with rural Palestinians in Zone C, May 2017. As with non-permitted houses, building a well without a permit means it will likely be destroyed by the authorities.

63 Live Updates, May 10, 2021, Haaretz.com (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/jerusalem-day-dozens-palestinians-wounded-clashes-temple-mount-gaza-sheikh-jarrah-1.9789351); *Democracy Now!* Daily Digest, May 11, 2021 (https://mailchi.mp/democracynow/20180813-736510?e=6f170e15a2).

64 Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, personal communication; Hass, "The privatization of violence," Haaretz.com (https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-the-privatization-of-violence-right-wing-jerusalem-thugs-are-an-arm-of-the-state-1.9747116); Daniel Nerenberg, info@justvision.org (May 4, 2021); Jill Jacobs, "American Jews, stop funding Jewish terrorism," Haaretz.com, May 2, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium.HIGHLIGHT-american-jews-stop-funding-jewish-terrorism-1.9765063); and Sami Abou Shahadeh, "'Death to Arabs': Palestinians need international protection from Israel's racist Jewish thugs," *Haaretz*, April 26, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fmiddle-east-news%2F.premium-death-to-arabs-palestinians-need-protection-from-israel-s-racist-jewish-thugs-1.9747860).

65 Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University, 2017), 144.

66 "Colonel Says Rabin Ordered Breaking of Palestinians' Bones," *Los Angeles Times* archives, June 22, 1990 (https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-06-22-mn-431-story.html); and "Two Years On: People injured and traumatized during the 'Great March of Return' are still struggling," United Nations, April 6, 2020

(https://www.un.org/unispal/document/two-years-on-people-injured-and-traumatized-during-the-great-march-of-return-are-still-struggling/).

67 Weizman, *The Least of All* Possible *Evils*, 85.

68 Norman G. Finkelstein, *Gaza: An Inquiry into Its Martyrdom* (Berkeley: University of California, 2018), probably the most comprehensive critical analysis of Israel's human rights violations in the Gaza Strip. See also Puar, *The Right to Maim*; Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*; and Sara Roy, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2016). For more recent data, see Aljazeera.com, "Gaza: Daunting rebuilding task after 11 days of Israeli bombing," May 22, 2021 (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/21/thousands-of-gazans-return-to-destroyed-homes-after-israel-truce).

69 Finkelstein, 116–117, citing reports by B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization, in 2014, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in 2016. UNRWA states that Gaza's "highly educated youth" are trapped in poverty and "do not have the option to travel, to seek education outside Gaza, or to find work anywhere else." Egypt has also played a role in creating this prison, often barring access to people and goods at its Rafah crossing.

70 Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, 96.

71 The Palestinian independent policy network Al Shabaka warned that, between occupation, political divisions, and Covid-19, Gaza was "confronting total collapse." Ali Abdel-Wahab, "Gaza between Occupation, Division, and Covid-19: Confronting Total Collapse," January 14, 2021 (https://al-shabaka.org/commentaries/gaza-between-occupation-division-and-covid-19-confronting-total-collapse/).

72 Hagar Shezaf, "Israel vaccinated over 50,000 Palestinians with Israeli work permits against COVID," Haaretz.com, March 16, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/over-50-000-palestinians-with-israeli-work-permits-received-first-covid-vaccine-1.9623474); and Jack Khoury and Hagar Shezaf, "Sixty thousand COVID vaccines land in Israel en route to Palestinians," Haaretz.com, March 17, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-sixty-thousand-covid-vaccines-land-in-israel-en-route-to-palestinians-1.9627405). Adding insult to injury, the Netanyahu government at one point announced it had decided to donate thousands of doses of vaccine to selected foreign countries, while neglecting the millions of Palestinians under its control. (The countries in question were those that had moved or promised to move their embassies or diplomatic offices to Jerusalem as Israel's alleged capital.) But later, again under pressure, it backed away from this controversial vaccine diplomacy. See "COVID-19 Vaccines for the Palestinians," Haaretz Editorial, February 24, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/covid-19-vaccines-for-the-palestinians-1.9563968); and Patrick Kingsley, "Israel Vaccines Go To Far-Off Allies Before Palestinians," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2021 https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/23/world/middleeast/israel-palestinians-vaccine-diplomacy.html).

73 "Racism and Institutionalised Discrimination in the Roll-Out of the COVID-19 Vaccine," Statement by Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGOs), January 14, 2021 (https://www.pngo.net/en/publications/%D9%8Dstatements/racism-and-institutionalised-discrimination-in-the-roll-out-of-the-covid-19-vaccine/); Ben Samuels, "Democratic lawmakers slam Israel for not vaccinating Palestinians in occupied West Bank," Haaretz.com, January 24, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-congress-members-say-israel-should-vaccinate-palestinians-in-occupied-west-bank-1.9477315); "COVID-19 Vaccines for Palestinians," letter from The Lancet Palestinian Health Alliance, *The Lancet*, January 28, 2021; and Statement by the Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council, February 19, 2021 (https://www.jvphealth.org/health-human-rights-blog/urgent-statement-from-the-jvp-hac-february-19-2021-israel-must-assume-its-legal-and-moral-obligation-to-provide-covid-19-vaccines-to-the-palestinian-population-in-the-west-bank-and-gaza).

74 Adam Rasgon, "After harsh criticism, Israel says it will vaccinate Palestinians who hold work permits," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2021 (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/28/world/israel-vaccine-palestine.html) (tens of thousands of Palestinians who work in Israel without official permits were not included in this policy change); and Ahmad Abu Amer, "Gaza Launches Vaccination Drive amid Low Turnout," *Al-Monitor*, February 28, 2021 (https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/gaza-coronavirus-vaccination-campaign-concerns.html). By mid-March of 2021, the PA did manage to acquire some 20,000 doses of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine, through the UAE and another 60,000 through the WHO's COVAX initiative, to send to the West Bank and Gaza. However, at two doses per person for millions of age-eligible Palestinian adults, this amount was grossly inadequate. More importantly, these measures entirely ignore Israel's international obligations as an occupying power.

75 Maureen Clare Murphy, "Vaccinating Palestinians only when it serves Israel," *The Electronic Intifada*, quoting Omar Shakir, a Human Rights Watch program director, March 12, 2021 (https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/maureen-clare-murphy/vaccinating-palestinians-only-when-it-serves-israel).

76 "Two Years On," United Nations, April 6, 2020. According to Medical Aid for Palestinians (map-uk.org), many dozens of those wounded by Israeli fire in the Great March of Return sustained limb amputations or permanently debilitating paralysis or bone infections. See Jewish Voice for Peace, Media Watch, May 1, 2021 (https://www.jvphealth.org/health-human-rights-blog/media-watch-may-1-2021).

77 Abdel-Wahab, "Gaza Between Occupation, Division, and COVID-19."

78 See We Are Not Numbers (https://wearenotnumbers.org/). JVP's Alice Rothchild volunteers as mentor coordinator for WANN, and a story by one of its writers and members, Mohammed Rafik, is part of this book.

79 [See Rosalind Petchesky, "Postscript," p. 145].

80 Susan Greene, "I Witness Silwan: Who Is Watching Whom?" *Institute for Palestine Studies*, Issue 82 (Summer 2020) (https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/1650290). Greene directs the U.S.-based group, Art Forces (https://artforces.org/), which collaborated with the Madaa Creative Center in Silwan to carry out this public art project. Future murals will depict portraits of artists and philosophers, including Edward Said, as well as birds.

81 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2013); Rabab Abdulhadi, "The Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges," *Gender & Society*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (December 1998); and *Arab and Arab-American Feminisms: Gender, Violence, and Belonging*, Evelyn Alsultany and Nadine Naber, coeditors (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

82 Puar, *The Right to Maim*, chap. 3; Sarah Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (Durham: Duke University, 2012); and Al Qaws, "Beyond Propaganda: Pinkwashing as Colonial Violence," October 18, 2020 (http://www.alqaws.org/articles/Beyond-Propaganda-Pinkwashing-as-Colonial-Violence?category_id=0).

83 See the landmark 2020 report, Al Qaws, "Beyond Propaganda"; appreciation also to Al Qaws leaders Haneen Maikey and Muhammad Abu-Rmeileh for inspiring presentations to JVP-NYC and Eyewitness Palestine in 2019.

84 Information for this section came from many useful sources, including: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Summer 2019); Robin D. G. Kelley, "Yes, I said 'National Liberation,'" from *Letters to Palestine: Writers respond to war and occupation*, ed. Vijay Prashad (New York: Verso: 2015); Roundtable on Anti-Blackness and Black-Palestinian Solidarity, moderated by Noura Erakat, *Jadaliyya*, June 3, 2015 (https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/32145); Greg Thomas, "The Black Panther Party—for Palestine," Samidoun/International Prisoner Solidarity News, September 30, 2016 (https://samidoun.net/2016/09/the-black-panther-party-for-palestine-by-greg-thomas/); and "Black Lives Matter, Palestine, and the Future of Black Radicalism," interview with Angela Davis by Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin, *Literary Hub*, September 1, 2017 (https://lithub.com/angela-davis-on-black-lives-matter-palestine-and-the-future-of-radicalism/), which first appeared in their book, *Futures of Black Radicalism* (New York: Verso, 2017).

85 "Zionist Logic—Malcolm X on Zionism," *The New York Amsterdam News*, April 12, 2011 (http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2011/apr/12/zionist-logic-malcolm-x-on-zionism/) (taken from *The Egyptian Gazette*, September 17, 1964).

86 After Jackson's 1971 murder in San Quentin prison, guards found a book of poetry by Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasim, *Enemy of the Sun*, in his cell. Former SNCC members had published this volume in 1970. Jackson had copied Qasim's poems, "Enemy of the Sun" and "I Defy," onto a piece of paper, and members of the Panthers erroneously attributed the poems to him. See remarks by Che Gossett in Roundtable on Anti-Blackness, *Jadaliyya*, 2015; and Thomas, "The Black Panther Party—for Palestine."

87 Thomas, "The Black Panther Party."

88 Johnson and Lubin interview with Angela Davis, *Literary Hub*.

89 These groups include INCITE!, the Women of Color Resource Center, the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, women's caucuses at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001, countless campus-based struggles against racism, colonialism, and Islamophobia, and resolutions supporting BDS in academic associations such as the National Women's Studies Association, led by women of color. See remarks by Nadeen Naber and Rabab Abdulhadi in Roundtable on Anti-Blackness (2015).

90 Palestinian Feminist Collective Pledge, 2021 (https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/pledge-declaring-palestine-is-a-feminist-issue); and Nadia Elia, "Whose Feminism? Palestine's Feminism," *Mondoweiss*, March 19, 2021 (https://mondoweiss.net/2021/03/whose-feminism-palestines-feminism/).

91 Kristian Davis Bailey, "Dream Defenders, Black Lives Matter & Ferguson Reps Take Historic Trip to Palestine," Ebony.com, January 9, 2015 (https://www.ebony.com/news/dream-defenders-black-lives-matter-ferguson-reps-take-historic-trip-to-palestine/); and Black for Palestine (http://www.blackforpalestine.com/read-the-statement.html). Besides Bailey (journalist and communications manager of the advocacy group Palestine Legal), included in this delegation were BLM founder Patrisse Cullors, Black Youth Project national director Charlene Carruthers, journalist Marc Lamont Hill, Dream Defenders policy director Ahmad Abuznaid, and poet Aja Monet.

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93 [See "JVP's Approach to Zionism," Appendix, pp. 184-186].

94 "This Is Apartheid," January 12, 2021 (https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid). As important as it was, the B'tselem statement still fell short of acknowledging that Israel is a settler-colonial state, and its apartheid stems directly from its founding in 1948. See also Peter Beinart, "There Is No Right to a State," *Jewish Currents*, January 27, 2021. Beinart's argument that the right to national self-determination does not mean a right to exclusive sovereignty over a single state, when enforcing such a right would mean denying another people its right to self-determination, has been made frequently by Palestinian writers. See, e.g., Ali Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2014). Like B'tselem, Beinart is catching up with decades of Palestinian and progressive Jewish thinking.

95 See "Facebook, We Need to Talk" (https://facebookweneedtotalk.org/). Cosponsoring groups for this campaign included MPower Change, Independent Jewish Voices Canada, Eyewitness Palestine, JVP, Adalah Justice Project, Palestine Legal,

BDS National Committee, and American Muslims for Palestine.

96 See RAIA/Researching the American Israeli Alliance and Jewish Voice for Peace, *Deadly Exchange: The Dangerous Consequences of US-Israel Law Enforcement Exchanges* (September 2018) (https://secure.everyaction.com/8DZEWCBa1kW4yux1scRgQg2?ms=deadlyexchange?ms=link_deadly-exchangereport).

97 Ben Samuels, "12 U.S. lawmakers call on Biden to change approach toward Israel, Palestinians" and "Over 300 U.S. Lawmakers Call for U.S. to Maintain Israel Aid without Preconditions," Haaretz.com, April 22, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/hblocked?returnTo=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.haaretz.com%2Fus-news%2F.premium-over-300-u-s-lawmakers-call-for-u-s-to-maintain-israel-aid-without-preconditions-1.9735981). The 330 supporters of unconditional aid included both Democrats and Republicans; whereas the McCollum bill's congressional cosponsors at this writing consisted of a mere 18.

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99 Mesarvot (Twitter): https://twitter.com/mesarvot?lang=en; Zochrot: https://zochrot.org/; ICAHD: https://icahd.org/; Boycott From Within: http://boycottisrael.info/; Coalition of Women for Peace: https://coalitionofwomen.org/; Machsom Watch: https://machsomwatch.org/en.

100 Isabel Kershner, "Israel Moves to Expel Africans. Critics Say That's Not Jewish," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2018 (https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/world/middleeast/israel-migrants-african.html); and "Israeli Holocaust survivors plead case of African migrants," *The Guardian*, January 26, 2018 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/26/israel-holocaust-survivors-african-migrants-netanyahu).

101 Nadav Davidovich and Joseph Bruch, "Israelis, demand Palestinians get vaccinated, too. Or the pandemic won't end," March 2, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium-israelis-demand-palestinians-get-vaccinated-too-or-the-pandemic-won-t-end-1.9580772); and Robin D. G. Kelley in *Letters to Palestine.*

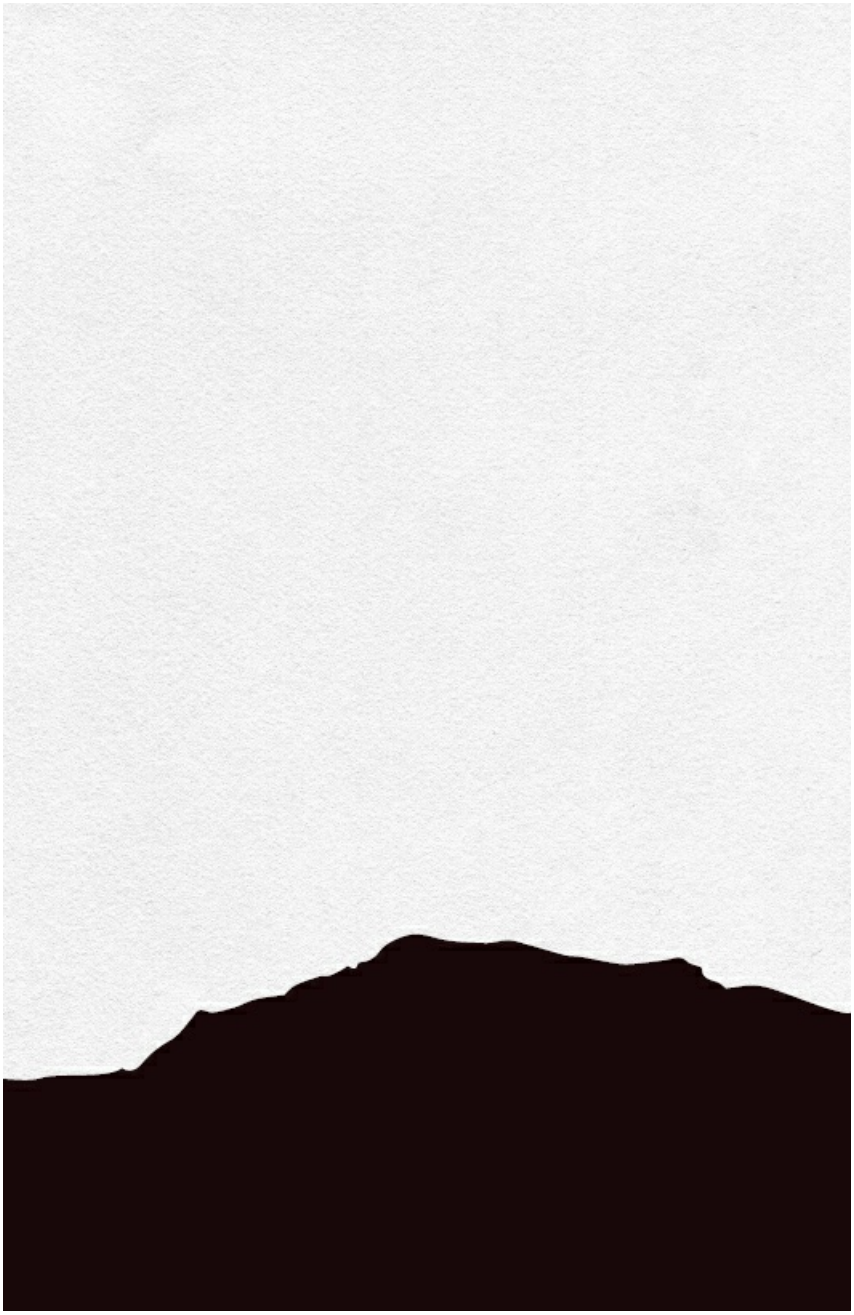
102 Jack Khoury and Judy Maltz, "International Criminal Court prosecutor says will open formal investigation into war crimes in Palestinian Territories," Haaretz.com, March 3, 2021 (https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-icc-prosecutor-says-will-open-investigation-into-war-crimes-in-palestinian-territori-1.9586293).

103 Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*, April 27, 2021 (https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution).

104 Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 235.

105 See Erakat, who attributes this important distinction to native scholar Taiaiake Alfred in *Justice for Some*, Conclusion (especially n. 109, 310). Erakat wisely avoids placing any faith for a liberatory future in a "one-state" or a "two-state solution." "There is no solution," she writes, "that does not travel through a direct confrontation with Israel's insistence upon maintaining Jewish sovereignty and the framework of exception that has made that sovereignty an immovable priority" (237).

DISPLACEMENT AND MEMORY



Palestinian political cartoonist Naji al-Ali, who was expelled from his home at age 10 during the Nakba, created the popular symbol of resistance Handala, a 10-year-old Palestinian refugee with arms clasped fast behind his back in defiance. Handala will only turn to show his face when Palestine is free.

Photo by David Bragin

Nakba

REMI KANAZI

she was scared
seven months pregnant
guns pointed at temples
tears dropping
stomach cusped
back bent
dirt pathways
leading to
dispossession

rocking boats
waves crashing
people rushing
falling over each other
packing into small spaces
like memories

her home
mandated
occupied
cleansed
conquered

terrorizers
sat on hills
sniping children
neighbors fled
on April 10
word came
of massacre

didn’t fight
didn’t leave
shells and bombs

bursting in air
like anthems

prayed for the dead
with priests and imams
prayed for the living
looking over shoulders
for the Irgun and Haganah

a warrior
raised life
planted trees
painted fruit
cared for the road
as if it was her garden

orphaned twice
after birth
from Palestine
whispered Yaffa
till final breath
never knew essence
until she found
emptiness

48 ways to flee
and she found Beirut
bullet holes in buildings
reminder of home
but not home

years later
daughters sat
on hills in the South
dreaming of breaking
water never touched

thinking of their mother
that warrior
how battles still
raged here and abroad

orchards flourished
propagandists called
them barren
land expropriated

for Europeans
thirsting for
territory

colonist
non-native
not from here
plant flags, call it home
rename cities and villages
uprooting graveyards
wiping/clearing/cleansing
memory that this
is not theirs

passed away
August 22, 2009
frail hands shook
lip trembled
didn’t want to die
but suffered decades

she spoke in Arabic
broken English
wounded words
and murmurs
her eyes closed
but every so often
they blinked brilliance
memories that could not
be erased, uprooted
or cleansed

she had not forgotten
we have not forgotten
we will not forget
veins like roots
of olive trees

we will return
that is not a threat
not a wish
a hope
or a dream
but a promise

The Necklace

RIHAM BARGHOUTI

I am obsessed with Palestine. I don't just mean that I love the olive groves, people, land, and the smell of jasmine and cardamom coffee in the morning. I am obsessed with the geography of Palestine. Growing up in New York, I was told over and over again that I didn't exist, my people didn't exist, Palestine didn't exist. So I searched for Palestine on every map and globe I could find. I knew it was there. I had visited it so many times. One day I happened upon the old globe in the library of Brooklyn Technical High School. I looked at it carefully, sure I was not going to see what I was searching for. However, to my joy and satisfaction, there it was, a small strip of land between Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan, labeled Palestine.

The success of the Zionist project is dependent on maintaining the myth that "Palestine was a land without a people for a people without a land." Any transgression of this mantra would incur severe consequences. I learned this early on.

On July 31, 2006, Israel launched a brutal airstrike on the defenseless Lebanese town of Qana. Twenty-eight civilians were killed, including sixteen children. Israel immediately began a media spin in an attempt to erase the horrendous images from our minds: pictures of children being taken out of the rubble, the site of death and destruction that brought back all of our memories because Qana was violated before. Many of us woke up Sunday morning to the news —news that made our stomachs ache, almost like an ulcer, bringing a feeling of despair. Oh god, not again, please not again. But nothing could erase those images, and we were reminded once again of the massacres perpetrated by Israel against Arabs. As I watched the news, I thought about Deir Yassin in 1948, Qana in 1996, Jenin in 2002. Most of all I was assaulted by the memories of Sabra and Shatila in 1982.

I was ten years old, living in New York, when the massacre of Sabra and Shatila happened. This period was fraught with the worst recurring nightmare of my life. In my sleep I would come to my home and open the door to find my family slaughtered by a fierce lion. As hard as I would try, I could never save them: my father, my mother, and my sisters, all savagely killed and I totally useless, left alive and alone. For a while, I began sleeping in my parents' bed so that the minute the nightmare began, I could open my eyes and feel the very real comfort of my parents' breath assuring me that they were, in fact, alive and untouched by the savage lion.

Riham and her cousin Nai at the entrance to their ancestral home in Deir Ghassaneh, Palestine, August 12, 2018.

Photo courtesy of the author

Several years after I stopped having this nightmare, I overheard my father explaining to some Palestinian friends that they should be careful about what images from the intifada their children watched on the news. He explained that when I was ten years old, I had had this horrible recurring nightmare of my family being slaughtered, due to the images I saw of the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. I then understood where my nightmares had come from. Though I was living in New York and not threatened in any real way, subconsciously my mind made the connection: In Lebanon there were Palestinians who were being massacred. I too am Palestinian. My family is Palestinian. If it could happen to them, it could happen to us.

For most Palestinians in the diaspora, the only way home is through “the Bridge.” This is not the Verrazano or the Golden Gate; it’s more like a few wooden planks atop a puddle that connect the west and east banks of the Jordan River. It was, and still is, an arduous trip. Your luggage is dumped and patted down, and your body is strip-searched and patted down. This is true for old or young; man or woman. Do you see how democratic Israel is?

On one trip to Palestine, as a soldier checked our luggage—meaning dumped all our belongings into dirty plastic crates, physically handling even the most personal of items, underwear included—he alighted on a small jewelry case. He opened it and, lo and behold, found a major transgression, something very dangerous and sinister, more threatening than weapons of

mass destruction. He found a gold charm depicting the map of historic Palestine.

The Israeli soldier who found the map realized right away what a crime we had committed. He gave the necklace with the gold charm to my mother and said, “Get rid of it.” But my mother couldn’t force herself to throw away such a precious item. She told my sister to wear the necklace backwards so that it would be hidden by her hair. But it was quickly discovered by a female Israeli soldier when we were taken to be physically searched. She called her superior right away. In the weeks to come we would get to know Captain Yakov very well. On his command we were herded into a room by a number of soldiers brandishing their M-16s. Soon enough my mother was arguing with them, my sister was screaming. Captain Yakov swore to my mother that so long as he was in charge we would never be allowed to enter.

It took four trips; two sets of permits, one of which had to be smuggled out of Palestine by Amti Zaghloula, my sixty-year-old aunt; an Israeli lawyer, Felice Langer; an article in the local newspaper; and my mother’s tenacity to finally get us across the bridge that year.

Why was the map such a major transgression? Why was the response to it so uncompromising? Why were we made to suffer? Well, it’s simple. It wasn’t just a gold map; it was all that the map represented. My mother, an ordinary Palestinian who had been dispossessed and had lived in exile for over fifteen years, had stubbornly held on to her connection to her homeland. She had also successfully passed on her passion for a return home to her children. And if that was the case—if Palestinians, generation after generation, were going to remember their past and demand recognition of their identity—how could Israel go about its business of denying the existence of Palestine? How could it create a Jewish state for only Jewish people in the land of Palestinians? How would Israel forget its legacy of colonialism and expulsion if those it had colonized continued to resist and those it had expelled continued to return?

Now, I think of all the children who do not have time and distance to protect them, who live in an endless barrage of violence and fear. I think of how so many do not have a safe place to sleep to escape the nightmares, because the violence is not only in their imagination. It is real; it is continuous. Most Palestinians don’t have the luxury of suffering post-traumatic stress disorder because our collective trauma began before 1948 and continues today. The years are on a loop inside my head: 1936, 1947, 1948, 1953, 1956, 1967, 1982, 1987, 1994, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 …. There is no past. This is our past, it is our present, and I fear how far it will continue into our future.

The Blue Book

LYNNE LOPEZ-SALZEDO

In twelfth-century Spain, my ancestors were integrated into the Spanish nobility. Three centuries later, Isabella and Ferdinand's Inquisition engulfed the Spanish Jews in a wave of terror. Some of these Jews, the Marranos, converted to Christianity on pain of death, but held secret Jewish services in underground tunnels, all the while keeping up the outward pretense of being good Catholics. Perhaps my family became Marranos before fleeing to Holland. There, they found safe refuge. For five centuries, they thrived in their new home. No longer courtiers, they found new roles as composers, lawyers, judges, translators.

Then the Nazis invaded. The safety that my family thought they had found in Holland proved to be illusory. Those who emigrated to Britain before the Second World War survived; those who stayed in Holland were sent to the gas chambers. Three members of my family were murdered in Auschwitz and Sobibor.

I know less about my father's family. Legend has it that my paternal grandparents escaped the Russian pogroms, boarding a ship to America when they were both eleven years old. When the ship docked in Scotland, they disembarked, believing they'd arrived in America. By the time they realized their mistake, the ship had left harbor. My father and his two brothers were sent to university and became professionals; his two sisters were expected to marry and devote themselves to their families. They were women, after all. What did women need an education for? They both married "well"; that is to say, they married wealthy men.

So it is that I grew up with a seamless narrative in place: there has never been a safe place for the Jews. Whether in Spain or Holland or Russia; whether Spanish aristocrats or Russian peasants, our situation was always tenuous. When we did find a measure of safety and acceptance, it could evaporate in an instant. I belong to a persecuted people, and the only safety we Jews can rely on is having our own state, with our own strong military.

The narrative that I've been taught is beyond question; it takes almost a lifetime before I become aware of cracks in this seamless structure. Once those cracks appear, the entire edifice collapses like a flimsy house of cards.

My father was the ardent Zionist, not my mother. The British Sephardim were a closed, elitist society. They were wealthy merchant bankers, lawyers, judges, and successful businessmen. They kept to themselves and looked down on the Ashknenazi Jews. When my mother married my father, it was almost as if she'd married outside the faith. I grew up in both communities, learning both Sephardic and Ashkenazi customs and ways of thinking.

> *On the living room mantelpiece of our West End penthouse is a small, blue and white box. I know that every penny we give to the Jewish National Fund is going to make the desert bloom. Before the Jews' return to Israel, the Mandate of Palestine had been an empty, arid land. I am vaguely aware that people called Arabs had lived there, before we Jews returned to claim our homeland. I know*

little about these Arabs, other than that they're primitive and all they want to do is drive us into the sea. This is our fate as Jews: in every generation, someone will rise up to destroy us. I am a young child, and I believe all this with complete certainty. This is what my family and my community believe. I've been manipulated and lied to, but I don't yet realize it.

There was another reason the myth of a perfect, idealized Israel resonated with me: my family life was chaotic and frightening. The myths I was taught fulfilled my need for a fantasy realm, a space of safety and belonging and hope. I longed for what I imagined was the simplicity of kibbutz life, where everyone pitched in together for the greater good, where everyone was happy, where everyone was equal. How different from the elitist, class-ridden London society I grew up in!

One day we were traveling by train. I ask my father why we're traveling first class while others are in crowded, uncomfortable, second-class compartments. What makes us better than those other people? That evening, after my father has seen his last patient for the day, he changes into his favorite gray cashmere sweater and pours dry sherry from a cut-glass decanter. We sit in the living room, talking about Rilke and Alfred North Whitehead; he often reads us his favorite passages from these beloved writers and thinkers. But an ominous current sometimes invades these conversations. My relatives and our friends tell me that the "schwartzes," as they call Black people, are good at sports and singing. But they don't have much intelligence and they'll never excel at science or intellectual pursuits. As for the Arabs, I'm told that theirs is a culture of death, while ours is a culture of life. They bring their children up to be martyrs, to glorify death. They've been our enemies since time immemorial.

How superior we are, how special! As an adult, I'll come to realize that many members of my family were racists. Their Zionism too was an integral part of this dark and ugly current of racism that cast such a pall over my childhood.

When I was eight years old, we made a halfhearted attempt at aliyah. My father had been offered a job at a hospital in Jerusalem. The medical staff took us on tours of the wards; they told us how they cared for both rich and poor, regardless of their means. Their dedication filled me with pride. But my dad was the son of Russian peasants and wanted his daughters to have every advantage in life. Also, his Zionist ideals didn't extend to taking the drop in living standards and status that a permanent move to Israel would have entailed. So we moved back to London. Instead of making aliyah, we summered in Haifa, sipping cocktails at luxury hotels. It was a way to indulge our Zionism without having to make any real effort.

In 1967, war broke out between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. The fledgling state of Israel was surrounded by powerful Arab foes and threatened with destruction. I believed these news headlines; I had no idea how skillfully my emotions were being manipulated.

For six days, we hear nothing at all. The stirring narrative of how the tiny, endangered state of Israel is fighting against overwhelming odds is heightened by

a media blackout. I join thousands of volunteers waiting to fly out to Israel as soon as commercial flights resume. We all mill around the large intake center in Central London, waiting impatiently for news. Then the news blackout ends and we hear that Israel, through brilliant and amazing military maneuvers, has emerged victorious. A couple of days later, I arrive in Tel Aviv. I'm sent to a kibbutz close to Jerusalem. I get up each day just before dawn and head out to the fields to pick peaches. Afternoons are spent sleeping off the worst heat of the day and swimming in the kibbutz pool. In the evening, IDF soldiers who have just returned from the front join us around the campfire, and we sing triumphant, patriotic songs into the night. There's a high in the air, a fierce euphoria. Something about it frightens me. Something isn't right. I can't name this fear I feel and quickly put it out of mind.

I was the perfect example of how diabolically effective propaganda can be. Intelligence and decency are no match against a well-coordinated PR machine. I believed all the myths. After all, I had no information to contradict them: Israel is the only safety the Jews have against persecution; Israel is our ancient homeland, and after thousands of years, we've now returned; Israel is building the perfect socialist society, embodied in the collectivist kibbutzim.

Decades later, I learned more about those newly planted forests that our contributions to the JNF were funding. Beneath the modern cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa and Jaffa lies a hidden world. Beneath those forests lie the ruined villages of the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine. I read about Deir Yassin and Lydda, the unfamiliar names of Palestinian villages whose very existence had to be disappeared, like the people who once lived there. When the Zionists came to power, there was no safe place for the Palestinians, who were demonized and massacred. Some of them escaped, but many did not. Now the former inhabitants of what is now Israel languish in the open-air jail of Gaza or in the occupied enclaves of the West Bank.

Once I started reading, I couldn't stop. I read about rapes and murders, villagers running for their lives and being gunned down by the Israelis as they fled. These were the "Arabs" I'd once been so contemptuous of. They were the indigenous inhabitants of the land the Zionists stole from them. They weren't in any way responsible for what had been done to the Jews during the Holocaust. In fact, they'd been living peaceably with the Jews of Palestine for hundreds of years. They were simply in the way.

While it's true that the European Jews desperately needed a safe place to call their own in the aftermath of the Holocaust, that in no way justified stealing the land of Palestine. But that is what transpired. The Zionists stole the Palestinians' land and their livelihoods, their farms and orchards and olive groves and aquifers. Since this could not be said, an elaborate mythology was created to whitewash the truth. I was duped into believing these lies. My family was duped.

Fast forward to 2014: images from Protective Edge stream across the Web. On Facebook and Twitter and alternative media sites, I read that five hundred Palestinian children have been killed; two thousand people in all, most of them civilians. I see photos of the corpses of Palestinian babies stuffed into ice cream freezers, because there simply is no other way to store so many corpses of dead children in the intense heat. A Twitter feed documents the murder of four Palestinian boys playing ball on the beach. Israel is on a killing spree, and no amount of Hasbara can cover this up. On live TV, an UNRWA official breaks down in tears; the interview goes

viral. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon is forced to object to the slaughter. This puts even U.S. President Obama in a position where he is forced to make a statement condemning Israel's tactics. The war ends the very next day.

One night in New York City in 2015, after watching a movie about the Nakba, I was introduced to a Palestinian man whose family fled Jerusalem after the 1967 War. We were walking through Washington Square Park to the subway and the winter wind was bitterly cold; we could hardly hear each other through the howling gusts. As we walked, he told me about how his mother was murdered in her own home, how his sister was so traumatized that she simply stopped speaking for two years. His family were intellectuals from an old Palestinian family. They'd fled for their lives, some of them eventually finding safety across the seas. How similar his story is to my own family history! While these terrible things were happening to his family, I was living on a kibbutz a few kilometers away, celebrating our victory. It is truly awful to realize that I'd been celebrating not a victory but a massacre. I told him this and he fell silent.

He told me he's making calligraphic paintings. Whenever he meets someone who listens to his family's story and shows solidarity with the Palestinians, he adds the person's name to his painting. He asked me to write down my name; he wanted to include it. I scribbled my name on a piece of scrap of paper and handed it to him. Then he got off at Fourteenth Street, and the subway lurched on.

I second-guess myself a lot. Why did it take me so long to realize the truth? Being part of a community that silenced the truth was certainly part of it. But once I understood that most Jewish communities do this, I no longer wanted any association with mainstream Judaism. There are many reasons why I couldn't bring myself to part with the narrative I'd believed since childhood. But I finally freed myself. And with that freedom has also come a new responsibility: to work in solidarity with the Palestinians, who were, and still are, innocent victims of nationalist Zionism's worst crimes.

Abu Arab shares about his village of Saffuri, which was destroyed during the Nakba

Photos by Sarah Sills

A Place Cleared of Memory

GABRIELLE SPEAR

When I was 11 years old, I read *The Diary of a Young Girl* and became absolutely enthralled with Anne Frank. In her writings, I found empathy for a Jewish people I had little to no interaction with, having grown up Catholic in the Bible Belt. And then, during my sophomore year at Goucher College, I took a class called Oral Histories of Holocaust Survivors in which people who'd lived through that time came to speak with us. All my efforts to imagine the Nazi holocaust through children's books and through the life of Anne Frank became real and alive during the months I spent interviewing Rivka.

When my teacher prepared us to meet Rivka and others for our project, he said, "Remember, you are speaking to survivors, not victims." Still, I know now that the Nazi holocaust as we know it today is no longer about survivorship. Through Zionism, it has been morphed and twisted into a narrative about victimhood, specifically and exclusively, the victimhood of white Jews. And as real and valid as the trauma of the Nazi holocaust is, it does not mean Jews get a free pass. It does not mean Jews get to wage another genocide in the name of memory.

A few years after I met Rivka, I studied abroad with my Arabic professor in his hometown of Nazareth. At that point, I still did not quite understand the full nature of Israeli apartheid and its impact on Palestinians. I was still unable to fathom the complete scope of Zionism's violent imprint on Palestine and the ways in which it used the Nazi holocaust to justify Israel's violence. In Nazareth, my classmates and I met with Abu Arab, a survivor of the Nakba, the Palestinian holocaust. He took us on a tour of his home village of Saffuri, a destroyed Palestinian village outside Nazareth in the Galilee. "I know how it feels when you enter into a cemetery," he said to my classmates and me. "And I'm so sorry this is the first place we will visit today." His words struck me, for they were Rivka's words: "Sorry," she had said to us. "Sorry you have to hear my story."

Unable to watch the scene in Saffuri unfold before me, I gripped the iPad I had brought, and focused my eyes on the screen. I remembered my first interview with Rivka. Assigned the task of filming, I had sat behind the camera and quietly cried, grateful that Rivka could not see my tears. Behind the gaze of the lens, I felt protected. Now, as with Rivka, I had come to Saffuri to record Abu Arab's history.

On the evening of July 15, 1948, Saffuri was attacked by Israeli Defense Force (IDF) bombs. Nearly the entire village of about four thousand people fled their homes that night. They thought they would come back soon. By the following morning, though, Saffuri no longer existed. A year later, a cooperative agricultural town called Zippori was built on its ruins. But I did not hear Abu Arab's words at that moment. Instead, I thought of Rivka's: "There were bombs falling from the

sky," she said to us as she sat at her kitchen table, pictures of her family, exterminated by the German forces, hanging on her wall. She said that she ran so fast from the bombs, she felt like she was on wings.

She told us how she grew up in Zhurmuny, the Polish village mostly made up of her family, and how she often spent time in the city of Lida. Sometimes she said her house was in Russia; other times Belarus or Germany. My note taking never seemed to be accurate enough. I wanted to believe it was her faulty, eighty-nine-year-old memory. I couldn't comprehend how several military occupations seemed to rise and fall in the span of a three-hour interview.

As I stood in Saffuri, I suddenly realized that I had stepped into Abu Arab's Zhurmuny. "They planted pine trees to make the Eastern European immigrants feel at home," Sally, our Palestinian tour guide, said to us pointing out the scattered trees. Lida, a city that Rivka loved so much, happens to mean, "A place cleared of forest." I remembered reading this when I searched for Zhurmuny on the internet. There is nearly no record of Zhurmuny anymore, so I settled for learning about Lida. I pictured the forest of her nearby city of Lida cut down and hastily replanted in Saffuri. Lida's name is a coincidence, of course, but the way Israelis have literally planted forgetfulness astounded me.

In 1948, Rivka and Abu Arab were both refugees. Rivka lived in a displaced persons camp—a euphemism for a refugee camp—in U.S.-occupied Germany. She never returned to Zhurmuny because her family, and therefore her village, no longer existed. Abu Arab fled Israeli-occupied Saffuri and escaped to southern Lebanon, eventually returning to the new state of Israel because his family yearned for their home. Seventy-three years later, however, he remains a refugee in his own land, the land Rivka now calls Israel, her homeland, her heaven.

A week after I met Abu Arab, I spoke with Ziad, a third-generation Saffuri refugee living in Nazareth, and Abu Arab's nephew. "I'm a physical therapist. I know that each person has pain," Ziad explained. "I treat Holocaust survivors. I know these humans' stories. I want to bring them to my story."

He told us of his confrontations with Israelis in Saffuri: "I say to them, 'You are afraid of the story. The story is frightening for you, I know.'"

I am continually frightened by how easy it is to wipe a people off a map. I have sat with this story for so long. I want to separate Rivka's story from Palestine. And yet, the damage is done. Zionism wove Rivka's story into the fabric of Palestine forever. What was most frightening to me about Palestine was that in the chaos of apartheid, occupation, displacement, and grief, I found Rivka there too.

Palestinians in Asira al-Qibliya harvest their olives, an ancient and vital crop that is constantly threatened by attacks from Israeli settlers

Photo by David Bragin

From Thriving Farmers to Hopeless Refugees

ABDULLAH ALJAMMAL'S STORY

as told and translated by his daughter, Shurouq Aljammal

I am Palestinian but grew up in Jordan. Unfortunately, I don't have any experience in Palestine because I'm not even allowed to visit. My family is one of the thousands of Palestinian families who lost their homes and farms and have been stripped of their citizenship, after they lived in their country of Palestine for hundreds of years. They went from being prosperous farmers and merchants to being homeless, stateless, refugees in UN camps. My family tried to stay in their country, moving from place to place. Every time the Zionists bombed a city, my family moved to another city; they moved to and from six cities in three years. In 1951, the United Nations rented camps in Jordan for the Palestinian refugees for ninety-nine years. There are thirty years left. The Zionists didn't just kill people and steal lands; they killed dreams for young kids and they left hidden wounds in their hearts.

After sixty-nine years, my father decided to tell his story because his wounded heart started to bleed. His nightmares disclose his suffering when he screams and wakes up terrified every night, his dreams returning like a flashback scene to 1948 when he was eight years old. Here is what he told me:

Before 1948, my family owned a thriving farm. We lived in Ramla, a city in central Palestine, now Israel, between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. We lived in peace, and Muslims, Jews, and Christians worked together and celebrated one another's holidays. After the Nakba, everything changed. Palestine was partitioned and, although the Zionists got almost sixty percent of the land, they wanted more. In July 1948, the Zionists occupied Lod, or Lydda. People in Lod got ready for the war because they knew that the Zionists would attack them. But the surprise was that the Zionist army was disguised in Jordanian army uniforms and the Jordanian flags were on their tanks. The people thought they were getting help from Jordan, but it was Israel that made this plan to kill them.

The people from Ramla were afraid they would be massacred, as happened in Deir Yassin. This massacre took place on April 9, 1948, when around 120 fighters from the Zionist

paramilitary groups Irgun and Lehi attacked Deir Yassin, a Palestinian-Arab village of roughly six hundred people, near Jerusalem. The assault occurred as the Jewish militia sought to relieve the blockade of Jerusalem during the civil war that preceded the end of British rule in Palestine.

Deir Yassin fell after fierce, house-to-house fighting. During and after the battle for the village, at least 107 Palestinians were killed, including women and children. Some were shot, while others died when hand grenades were thrown into their homes. Apart from bodies left lying in the streets, there were an additional 150 corpses found in one cistern alone, among them people who had been either decapitated or disemboweled. Israeli historian Benny Morris wrote that there were also cases of mutilation and rape. Several villagers were taken prisoner and may have been killed after being paraded through the streets of West Jerusalem.

The people in Lod chose four people to negotiate with the Zionist army in Lod; they agreed to give the Zionists everything they wanted from the village, in return for an end to the massacre and killing. The Zionists broke the agreement. I remember a Yemeni Zionist who came to a supermarket in Soq Al Nassara and asked the owner if he could leave his bag for thirty minutes. After the Yemeni guy left, his bag exploded; there was a bomb inside and many people at the supermarket were killed that day.

After what happened in Lod, my family left Ramla. We moved to a small town nearby called Deir Ammar. We left everything: our farms, houses, our businesses.

One of my brothers refused to go. He said he would rather sleep under the trees, and he took our grandmother and two others, deciding to go back to Ramla by cart. On our way to Ramla, they passed through Lod, which was occupied by the Israeli 89th Commando Battalion, led by Moshe Dayan. Shortly after this occupation, several hundred civilians were killed by Israeli troops, including eighty who were machine-gunned inside the Dahmash Mosque. My brother was shot in his leg and his head.

Someone saw his jacket beside a dead body and thought my brother had been killed. We went back sadly to Deir Ammar and mourned his death. Then we heard rumors, and after nine months my grandmother asked my grandfather to look for my brother. My grandfather went secretly to Ramla because he was considered a Palestinian militant and the Zionists had threatened to kill him. He discovered that my brother was still alive in Ramla. That day we had a party, we were so happy.

After this, my family moved from Deir Ammar to a camp in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, and from Rafah to Bani Suheleh [*Bani Suheleh is a town in the southern Gaza Strip, part of the Khan Yunis Governorate*]. Subsequently, we moved to a camp in Krameh City, Jordan.

I kept attending school in each UN refugee camp we moved to. I always registered myself, as my parents were sick and too busy surviving. When we were in Rafah, my dad got really sick. We had no more money and could not go back to Ramla. My older brother was fourteen years old and decided to go to work doing construction in Jordan to bring money for us.

At that time, traveling from Gaza to Jordan was very dangerous, due to the occupation. Only the spies or Zionists could travel, but somehow my brother came every few months to bring us money. One time, the Egyptian army arrested him and held him for three months because they thought he was spying for the Zionists, but then they released him when they realized he was just traveling to work in Jordan.

I remember the one day my brother went to work and he and some friends stopped in a cave to take a nap, leaving their donkeys outside. The Zionists saw the donkeys from a helicopter and shot the animals and my brother's friends. It was written in the *Gaza News* that my brother was

killed. For a week we were devastated. It turned out that his friends were murdered but somehow my brother survived. He was only fourteen.

The UN gave every family two bags of cement and a supply of adobe, a kind of clay used as a building material, typically in the form of sun-dried bricks. For the ceiling, they gave us asbestos, knowing that asbestos is internationally banned because it has health risks and causes cancer. Each family built their own shelter without infrastructure.

In the refugee camps, the UN gave all us students iron cups that we hung on our waists like prisoners. Each day we drank British milk and fish oil and were sprayed with DDT, a substance that is internationally prohibited for the severe damage caused to the human nervous system. One day the UN gave all the kids in my school red shoes. Except for me, because my feet were too big, so I kept going to school without shoes.

My family moved from camp to camp in the Gaza Strip until we landed finally in Jordan, where we still are.

It is not only genes that are transmitted to offspring. There are many things the human being inherits that are not physical. The world can fabricate a lie and it inhabits you forever. Because the world is scared of the truth, and Palestinian Arabs have no hope.

Seventieth Anniversary of the Nakba: A Warm April Day in 1948 Jerusalem

LAMA KHOURI

My mother is finally mustering the strength to tell me about the day she left the home of her birth:

"I am twelve years old. Nadia, my sister, our neighbor Lily, and I are playing hopscotch in front of the house. Your grandfather and grandmother are going in and out, loading the car and getting ready to head to Amman. Our dog is strangely excited or agitated, I'm not sure which. Every time a suitcase is loaded in the car, she barks at the bag and her whole body shakes, as if the bag is a collaborator in some conspiracy. Maybe she knows what we do not anticipate."

She pauses. "My brothers are playing marbles. At fifteen and seventeen, they aren't getting into mischief as they used to do. My father is roaming around, seemingly busy, but doing nothing. He seems to be all in a spin. My sister, Hala, is with my mother. She is barely two and not allowed to play outside."

"Are you sad to be leaving?" I ask.

"No!" she says emphatically. "I am relieved. Zionist gangs are terrorizing the Arabs. They are laying mines in markets and in the backyards of houses. My mother spends the night on the roof of our house to make sure no mines are laid in ours. Going to school is dangerous—we could be caught in the crossfire. When the sun sets, we run back home and pray to be alive the next day."

"Why are you leaving?"

"The Zionists have bombed King David Hotel, which was owned by the British, as if to say: 'even the British won't stop us.' The last straw was when we got news about a massacre in Deir Yassin—hundreds of Palestinians murdered, and in the most atrocious ways. We were told that the bellies of pregnant women were slit open. Yesterday morning, British soldiers knocked on our door and told us to leave for two weeks. The situation is becoming increasingly dangerous. They said we can come back in a week or two when the danger has subsided."

Left to right: Mother, Lily, Nadia, 1948

Photo courtesy of the author

She stops talking, lost in thought for a moment, then goes on. “I think my mother knows that it will be longer than that, because she has packed winter clothes. My father asks her, ‘why winter clothes, when we will be back in two weeks?’ She doesn’t respond. My uncle, aunt, and their daughter left to go to Amman a couple of months ago to seek safety. I sing to myself: Ami bi Amman, ou kullo aman’ [my uncle is in Amman where it is all safe]. But when we get to Amman, we receive news that the Zionists have invaded West Jerusalem and taken it over. We are told that we cannot go back to the house because it is occupied by someone else. When we return a year later, we have to live in a one-bedroom apartment in East Jerusalem and barely scrape by. My two sisters and I sleep in my parents’ room and my two brothers in the living room.”

My mind stays with the dog, as if it is too painful to think about the betrayal the Palestinians had to contend with. I have heard about the family dog before. My aunt Nadia loved her; Nadia hated meat and would sneak her lunch to the dog.

“What happened to the dog?”

After a moment of silence, my mother continues as if she hasn’t heard my question.

“My mother looks sad and sullen. I feel the heaviness in my parents’ hearts but I don’t particularly care to know why. Two weeks earlier, a stray bullet entered the house and missed my head by this much.” She makes a space of about an inch with her fingers.

Left to right: Hala, Nadia, Mother, and cousin in front of the house they lost in 1948

Photo courtesy of the author

“What happened to the dog?” I ask again.

“Nadia is crying,” she responds. “She wants the dog to come with us. When we finally are seated in the car and close the doors, the dog stops barking, lays her head between her paws and begins to whimper, as if she knows she won’t see us again. As we pull away, she runs after us until she can’t catch up.”

“Why don’t you take the dog with you?”

“I think because there is no space. And my mother says the dog needs to stay to guard the house.”

“But how will the dog survive if there is no one left behind to care for her?”

My mother has a dissociated look on her face, as if she doesn’t understand or something is amiss. She repeats: “The dog has to stay to guard the house. My mother has placed the sewing machine behind the entrance door, with a mortar and hammer on top. She thinks if someone tries to enter, the hammer will fall and they’ll get scared, thinking the house is occupied.”

For days following this conversation with my mother, I think about the dog, my heart heavy. Why was she barking? What might she have known that they didn’t know? Could she have known what was coming, the betrayal and deception? How did she fend for herself when they

left? What happened to her? In dark moments, I imagine her roaming the streets, emaciated, looking for food.

It is easier to feel sad for the dog than for the Palestinian people, homeless and destitute. I wonder how the dog felt when strangers entered the house. In my daydreams, I wish that there had been another twelve-year-old girl who might have fallen in love with the dog and protected her. Perhaps this girl wouldn't have liked meat either and would have sneaked it to the dog. Most likely, the dog, who was supposed to guard the house, barked and growled at the intruders. My worst thought is that they shot her dead.

I always found it peculiar that my mother could not recall the dog's name. Perhaps the trauma is too great to remember. I fantasize her name was Lady, perhaps because of the Disney movie *Lady and the Tramp*. Was this Palestinian Lady forced to become a tramp?

"What did you take with you when you left?" A moment of silence.

"The Christmas decorations," she mumbles.

"All of them?" I ask with astonishment.

She goes quiet and looks lost in thought, staring at the Turkish coffee cup next to her. "Mama?" She forces the words out, as if barely able to breathe.

"The North Star."

The Snap

SHIRLY BAHAR

I remember that day clearly. In the fall of 1989, we got a new homeroom teacher. I was ten years old, going on eleven, and had just started fifth grade, joining the "elders" among the students of the Zalman Aran elementary school in the Tel Aviv neighborhood where I grew up. The new teacher's specialty was in bible studies and literature—my favorite subjects. Our fourth-grade bible class ended on a hopeful note: the fleeing Israelites had just made it to Canaan and were finally about to enter, or as narrated, "return to their promised land after years of exile and slavery in Egypt and an excruciating forty-year long journey in the desert."

Now, the Israelites just needed to figure out how to reenter. I was on the edge of my seat. Captivating as bible classes were for me, this was going to be a whole new level, and the new teacher really knew how to tell a story. Eagerly, she started telling us how Joshua Bin-Nun, the leader of the Israelites, and successor of Moses, followed the word of God and prepared the people's army for a complex military operation to reoccupy Jericho, and how, after seven days of incitement, the Israelites managed to collapse the walls of Jericho upon the Canaanites. No one survived but Rahab, the sex worker who provided the Israelites with intelligence for the operation.

Getting louder as the story progressed, her cheeks turning red, and her left arm waving around the bible book she was reading from, my teacher was on fire. But her fire really turned into fury as she made the connection between the biblical story and the current times—the latter years of the First Intifada. "If Joshua and the Israelites arrived back to Canaan after so many years of exile," she asked, "were they not expecting it to be populated by people? Isn't this military aggression by the Israelites reminding you of Israeli occupation of the territories nowadays?"

I carry this formative memory with me till this day. I think of my teacher's burst of fury as an instance of what Sara Ahmed,[1] author of *Living a Feminist Life*, has called "the feminist snap," that "sharp sound," "which infects a body with a desire to speak in ways other than how you have been commanded to speak … snap, snap … in a feminist and queer genealogy, life unfolds from such points."

As Ahmed surely did, I think of Audre Lorde[2] teaching us of the "uses of anger," where she asserted that "every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being." The fury that my teacher ignited in me at ten years old has encouraged me to keep my eyes open through the thick, layered lies about Palestine and Palestinian history that constituted my upbringing in Israel. As my nascent desire for strong-minded, rebellious women blended with budding politicization, the

fury that I zealously cast into my writing, teaching, and organizing is modeled after hers.

Coming home that day, I couldn't keep my mind away from class. So, at a memorial gathering that took place that evening, I repeated the school day's occurrences to my extended family. They were scandalized. "How could my teacher say something like that?" My mom and aunt protested. "It is illegal for a teacher to express her political views in the classroom."

As the argument escalated, turning into a shouting match, my mom and aunt shushed me, fearing that my uncle, an extreme right-wing nationalist, would get mad—that he'd explode. We had seen his violence come out before around matters like that.

What I don't remember is, whose death we were commemorating in the family that evening.

Though my family in Israel was small, the commemorations we held were many. Leaving Istanbul, Turkey, in the late 1970s, right before I was born, my family moved to Israel after my paternal grandfather died of a sudden heart attack. In Istanbul, my grandfather had run a successful business for scarves, which my family lost upon his death. Shocked and stripped of their most precious source of safety, my newlywed parents and my aunt and uncle found refuge where my grandfather had warned them never to venture: Under the wings of the Zionist propaganda, rapidly popularized in Jewish circles in Istanbul at that time, then in Israel, which Turkish Jews call "the medina," or "the state."

There, my family thought, they would find more opportunities. As young women, my mom and aunt fervently believed that, in Israel, they would be able to lead more liberated lives. But my family's financial struggles only intensified after their departure, harboring confusion, frustration, and personal altercations; sometimes, as was the case with my uncle, minor physical violence.

In Israel, my family's experiences of discrimination and exclusion at work, their cultural marginalization and social isolation as Mizrahim, were stacked upon dense layers of pain and longing for their home in Istanbul. But that took a very long time for me to understand. It was only when I reached my thirties that I started making those connections to my family's lived experiences as Mizrahi immigrants. It is only now, in my continual attempts to weave the pieces of their and our personal, familial, and community histories into a story, that I dare to consider that perhaps the naive fury birthed in me during bible class at ten years old may have emanated from that deep, soft, wounded spot within me, drawing me to my teacher.

I don't remember whose death we were commemorating that evening because, as I was growing up, my family told me little about their lives in Istanbul. When my parents would mention my grandfather's business, for example, they would simply say that he sold scarves. It was not until I traveled to Istanbul to see his shop with my own eyes that I found out he was selling Muslim headscarves.

My family, who internalized the dogmas of Zionist education in their youth and learned to feel ashamed of their relationship to it, also learned to entrench the Orientalist and racialized framing of Islam and Muslims as backwards and misogynist. As I started recollecting the details concerning my family's migration, I also learned that Zalman Aran, the man who my elementary school was named after, introduced in the 1950s as Israel's Minister of Education, the intra-Jewish segregated school system. Aran believed that Mizrahi children in the "periphery" had inferior cognitive capabilities and therefore should be tracked into vocational education. Under this school system, the life that my family led for five hundred years in the Ottoman Empire—later, Turkey—was never told to me. Israeli history books had erased and distorted the lives, cultures, languages, tastes, and sounds of Middle Eastern Jews.

This process was complementary to the erasure of Palestine and Palestinian history. If, as Israel hoped, Arabs and Jews were to become segregated enemies, then Arab Jews could not exist. The centuries-long legacies of Judaism that emerged in the Islamic world had to be denied. Our provisional inclusion in Jewish ethnic purity and supremacy in Israel was conditioned by forced forgetfulness of our Middle Eastern lineages.

As long as the airs of the muezzin, pleading for Allah, still pound at the heart of the maqam composed for our Hebrew prayers, the sharp sound of my furious Mizrahi feminist *snap* will keep burning and bursting out of me, inappropriately demanding the proper, long-overdue clarity. The *snap* will break the silence on how intertwined our Mizrahi pain is with that of Palestinians who lost their homeland of Palestine and demand to return to it. The *snap* will break the silence imposed on our Mizrahi histories, cultures, mothers, and mother tongues, as well as on the lingering effects of silencing on our shattered voices, stuttered accents, and ongoing realities of inflicted amnesia.

"*Snap*, *snap*, sad, bad, mad, rad": We will keep speaking up and talking back *through* and despite silencing. We will continue to raise our voices and reclaim our stories.

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1 Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), p. 191.

2 Audre Lorde delivered "Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism" in June 1981 as a keynote presentation at the National Women's Studies Association Conference, Storrs, Connecticut (https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1981-au-dre-lorde-uses-anger-women-responding-racism/).

In the Haze of Fifty-One Days

DORGHAM ABUSALIM

Everyone talks about the summer of 2014. Indeed, fifty-one dreadful days.

From Egypt, I returned to Gaza after the excitement of spending the summer vacation faded away. It was too soon to return to school in Europe, and I missed Mama a great deal.

The journey through the scorching Sinai Desert took me back to simpler days. Back then, I did not have to stop at Egyptian military checkpoints or take the crumbling ferry across the Suez Canal. Instead, the driver would zoom across the towering Peace Bridge, cutting the trip by three hours. But this is now, and much has changed since I last travelled through Sinai.

When I arrived at my parents' house, I could not help but be overwhelmed by its majestic aura, nestled on a hill, surrounded by all the greenery. I fell into the embrace of Mama's arms as she patted me down head to toe to feel my weight. She lost her sight several years ago, but not her motherly touch. "You are too skinny!" she said in dismay. "We'll take care of that," Mama chuckled as she laid out the menu options for a dearly missed homemade meal.

A few days later, I visited my sister, who married a year ago, at her apartment. "Come in, come in! Dinner will be served soon," she chirped, as she proudly ushered me in.

Her husband was eager to meet me. We did not know each other very well. The dinner was an excellent icebreaker. As we devoured her famous maklouba, we spoke about all sorts of things. We all thought the anticipated war, especially with Ramadan around the corner, would be short-lived, nothing more than a targeted skirmish between Israel and Hamas to settle some political scores.

Little did I know, my blind Mama, paralyzed Baba, two sisters, and I would spend our nights huddled between as many walls as we could count in our quest for safety, while listening to radio broadcasts about the impact of Israel's macabre technological prowess.

"Dorgham! Dorgham! Wake up! Everyone! Mama! Help!" my older sister rushed out of her room, "I heard it, oh my God I heard it!" she said.

"Calm down, I cannot understand you, heard what?" I asked, while slowly pulling myself out of bed after another sleepless, feverish night.

"A roof-knock! On our brother's house next door!" she answered.

One of my older brothers, who had been working abroad for years, built a house on a plot of land that Baba gave him for a time when he and his family would return. His life's work was in jeopardy.

A "roof-knock" is what Israel calls fair warning: a small missile strikes the target to evacuate

any civilians who may be there. The irony is that the roof-knock is, in fact, deadly, so the idea of evacuation is pointless. The roof-knock is then followed by a bigger missile capable of destroying whole buildings. I'd seen footage of this horrific so-called warning on the news.

"What! Are you sure? Where is Mama? Where is everyone?" I said in shock. "Yalla, yalla, yalla!"

"Where!?" my sisters screamed.

"The garage," I replied. My brother's house is east of ours, and the garage is west, located on the lower slope of the hill. I thought it was the safest place. "And get in the car! Where are the car keys!?"

"Make sure you grab our bags and dress modestly in case we end up at a school shelter!" Mama told the girls. She asked the housekeeper to pack in advance, preparing for the worst.

"Mama, did you pack your jewelry!? And the land deeds!?" my younger sister asked. "The deeds, yes, not the jewelry," Mama replied.

"What!?" my sister responded as she rushed out of the car to pick up Mama's jewelry box.

"It does not matter," I screamed.

"It's fine, we will be alright," Mama tried to calm me down.

"Why are you not moving?" my sister asked when she returned to the car.

"Give me a minute!" I said, breathing heavily.

"They say the second strike comes only a few minutes after the roof-knock," my other sister explained. "Yalla!" they both shouted.

What if we leave the garage and a drone strikes us? Would we become suspect if we are seen driving away from the site of an airstrike? These and a million other questions rushed into my mind.

"Yalla!" my older sister snapped me out of my panic.

When we left the garage, a few meters down the road, we stopped for an ambulance, going east of our house.

"Why is there an ambulance? Was there anyone at my brother's house? Is anyone hurt?" I asked my sisters. "Call the housekeeper!"

We decided to drive to my aunt's, next door. "May God curse them all!" my aunt prayed. "Why would they destroy our houses like this?"

"I think there was a resistance fighter in the field by the house," my cousin speculated. "They must have targeted someone or something."

"Dorgham, you have lost so much weight! Who knew a war could make people so sick!" my aunt turned to me. "I know what you need! Would you like some wine?" We spent the next couple of hours anxiously anticipating the bigger missile, debating whether it was safe to go back. The missile never came.

When we returned, the family and the house staff went to sleep off the shock of the day. I stayed in the kitchen, smoking like a chimney, staring eastward out of the window until the sun came up.

I needed to get out of the house. So, when the housekeeper needed a ride to the taxi station, I volunteered to drive her.

"Your mother told me you have been ill," said the housekeeper. "Eat salty things with olive oil and drink warm fluids. That should help."

Piles of rubble lined the streets. The housekeeper shared with me stories she heard about every strike. I did not want to return to my parents' house so soon. I decided to go for a ride on the coastal highway, blasting music and simply letting go.

I parked the car by the edge of a cliff and looked out into the horizon of the sea. Memories of my rebellious teens rushed into my mind. I looked around and remembered him, a neighbor around my age, with the charm of a "bad boy." We would sneak out in his car, where our teenaged bodies would climax near a seaside cliff not far from where I stood.

For a moment, the rush of the memories felt sweet, but that quickly faded away as I walked further down memory lane.

"Where have you been!?" Mama admonished me as soon as I returned to the house. "We have been so worried! Baba had a heated argument and slapped the chauffeur for not going with you," she fumed.

"What? What do you mean?" I asked. "He is a grown man!"

"Ya khawal!" Baba shouted from his room. He must have heard us talking.

"Here we go," I said to Mama as I walked toward my father's room. "I knew there is no escaping this fight no matter what, even during a war."

"Where have you been, ya manyak!?" Baba asked with utter contempt.

"Khawal" and "manyak" are two words I thought I left behind a long time ago. They mean faggot.

"Really, Baba? Again with this nonsense? I am not a child anymore, and you will speak to me with respect!" I fired back at him.

"Come here, bring him closer to me!" Baba instructed his caretaker. The house staff never got involved in our family fights, though I always wondered what they thought and how they felt about Baba's infamous fits of rage.

"What is it, old man? You cannot get up? Why don't you try to run after me? You used to carry a belt, remember?" I bullied him as they all looked at me, startled by my words.

"She has not raised you right!" my father continued with his sharp words.

"Really?" I laughed, "She is my mother, careful now," I warned him. "If she has not raised me right, your divorced mother did not raise you right, either," I said dismissively and walked away.

I am not one to buy into archaic ideas about family and women, but I knew this was Baba's weakest point: my grandparents' divorce and how grandfather had treated Baba's mother. I always wondered how Baba could repeat the same mistakes so often, when he never saw eye-to-eye with his own father because of them.

"Habibi! Please go easy on him," Mama pleaded with me. "The house staff can deal with him, do not worry about them. They have been with us for years. You have always been tough with him."

"He is insufferable!" I told her.

"You are too rough on him. I will not stand for it and will tell the rest of the family. You know he does not mean it the way you think he means it," my older sister piped in.

"Enough! Let us go to your aunt's; we'll leave him be for some time," Mama said, attempting to defuse the tension with her usual method of avoidance and pretending that leaving Baba alone was a solution. It never worked.

We were sitting on my aunt's balcony when Baba appeared on our balcony, separated only by a parking lot, waving his gun around.

“Is that a gun!?” I asked, my jaw dropping. “I guess old habits die hard!” I laughed hysterically.

“Go back inside, old man!” my aunt shouted across the parking lot, while my cousin tried to calm him down. I sat there in disbelief, looking at the toxic masculinity of our world come to life, complete with a gun.

Baba fired three shots into the sky while leaning on his caretaker, as if to say he is still in charge.

“Long live the martyrs! Long live the martyrs!” our neighborhood mosque announced.

“They should play uplifting music instead of screaming chants,” my aunt chuckled. We were never a family tied to religion or the local mosque. Mama, who prays five times a day and has gone to Mecca twice, raised us all to be the sovereigns of our faith. Imams, priests, and rabbis, merchants of religion, as she would call them, have no business in our faith.

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“One hell of a vacation,” Mama said as I prepared to leave the next morning.

“Yes, I came and brought the war with me,” I joked.

“I hope circumstances will be better next time,” she sighed.

“Next time!? There will be no next time, Mama. I am done with this miserable place,” I announced.

“Don’t talk like that! Home will always be home,” she sternly replied.

“So much rubble,” I said to the chauffeur on our way to the crossing.

“This is nothing, only the beginning. Farther east is where the real destruction is,” he replied. We were passing through Khan Younis, the governorate where the Khuza’a massacre took place a few days earlier. The town was practically flattened to the ground, like the Shujaiyya neighborhood.

When we arrived at the Egyptian side of the crossing, I looked around and saw a crumbling sign that said, “Welcome to *Ma’bar* Rafah, Egypt.”

I was suddenly struck by the realization that the Arabic word *Ma’bar*, which means “crossing,” shares the same root as the Hebrew word referring to the Hebrew tribe, not the language—the tribe, we are told, that crossed the Sinai in the Exodus. I then remembered one of my favorite TV political dramas, *The West Wing*. In an episode about the façade of making peace in the Middle East, the writers predictably portrayed an unfavorable view of Palestine. But as I endured the humiliation at *Ma’bar* Rafah, one line from the episode could not feel truer: “Palestinians are the Jews of the Arab world.”

The home where Dorgham grew up in Deir Albalah

Photo courtesy of the author

"My God! What happened to you?" my older brother asked in shock when he met me at Cairo International Airport nearly twenty-four hours later. "Thank God you are still in one piece, a very skinny piece," he tried to cheer me up. "Your flight is in a few hours. I am sorry I could not convince anyone to let you stay in Cairo. I tried all my contacts."

"I would not stay here if they offered me citizenship!" I replied angrily. "Hush now, there are security guards everywhere," he whispered. "Here, take this. Let me know if you need more when you arrive." He handed me some money.

When the plane took off, I felt a sudden uplift in the pit of my stomach. I wanted to weep for what had been and for what would come. For an image of myself that I knew had been shattered by the bloodshed and the pain. But the time for tears had passed, and deep down I knew a long journey of healing lay ahead. I wondered whether anyone is capable of completely healing the scars of war, injustice, shame, loneliness, and disappointment. I wondered if I even wanted to be healed, if the pain would be a good reminder of the cruelty and inhumanity of this world.

I put on my headphones and began listening to the one song that got me through the haze of those fifty-one days. I would listen to it when I needed to be alone, defying death away from a world that mistook my pain for everything except what it was: pain to be heard, to be understood, to be embraced.

I Lived (OneRepublic)

Hope when you take that jump

You don’t fear the fall
Hope when the water rises
You built a wall
Hope when the crowd screams out
They’re screaming your name
Hope if everybody runs
You choose to stay
Hope that you fall in love
And it hurts so bad
The only way you can know
You give it all you had
And I hope that you don’t suffer
But take the pain
Hope when the moment comes,
You’ll say
I, I did it all
I, I did it all
I owned every second that this world could give
I saw so many places, the things that I did
Yeah with every broken bone
I swear I lived

The Worst Ghosts

HALA ALYAN

A thing must have hands

[to mourn]

what it cannot touch

//

Define *in*, I say when anyone asks
if I've ever been in a war. I smoked
pot with a boy who refused to
marry me. I slept through the
airport bombing. When the
window facing the street shattered,
I kept a piece in my mother's
glove compartment.

//

Sometimes I'll make myself thin

[enough]

to slip through walls

//

But if you don't name the tree

My grandmother's couch milks itself into the carpet

how can you love it

//

Palestine, a name that means

//

The worst ghosts are the ones that don’t come back.

//

The officer at JFK scans me. My body, ghost-white, flickering on his screen.

Pretty boy. Blue eyes.

Takes my fingerprint and winks.

Cheer up. You’re home.

Zionists Love Israel but They Don’t Love Jews

ESTHER FARMER

I am a Palestinian Jew. My father was born in Hebron, Palestine. His father, my grandfather, was a Turkish Jew who went to Palestine to avoid serving in the Turkish army. Unfortunately, Palestine was a Turkish “protectorate” and he was drafted into the army anyway. He did not believe in war, so his only choice was to emigrate to America.

My grandmother had always lived in Palestine; her father was a pharmacist/herbalist. His customers were both Muslims and Jews. At the time Muslims, Christians, and Jews considered themselves and were considered by everyone to be Palestinian.

When my grandparents and my father emigrated to America in the 1920s, they spoke Yiddish and Arabic. Yiddish was a bit of a family mystery since it has never been associated with the Middle East. Also, Yiddish was the language of the poor Jew, and it was not particularly encouraged after Israel was created. That has always seemed ironic to me, given that Israel was supposed to be about supporting Jews and Jewish culture. Yet the Zionist elites were willing to sacrifice a vibrant and alive language, along with a progressive cultural history with which the Yiddish language was associated, in favor of the scholarly Hebrew that, when I was growing up, was not the spoken language of most Jews.

My grandmother used to always say that Jews had no problems with Muslims until the British got involved. She was not a Zionist when she came to New York but later became more influenced by Zionism as she lived here. She was also very religiously observant.

After coming to America, the family lived on the Lower East Side and were very poor. My Turkish grandfather was considered a scholar and tried to prove that socialism was ordained in the Talmud. My father was a fur worker and was involved with labor leader and scholar Philip Foner and the early union organizing struggles in the fur and garment industry. The book that best described my father’s life was a novel by Mike Gold called *Jews Without Money*. My father went to City College, where he became more politicized and very anti-Zionist. After graduating, he was denied a teacher’s license because of his thick accent, so he went to work for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). My parents were atheists but, culturally, very Jewish. I remember them reading aloud the stories of Sholem Aleichem in Yiddish and even though my brother and I did not speak Yiddish, their laughter was so infectious we laughed right along with them.

Like many Jewish progressives during the infamous 1950s McCarthy era, my father was harassed by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). He was called to testify and refused to give information on his friends who had signed petitions to place American Labor Party candidates on the ballot. As a consequence, he lost his job with NYCHA and was

blacklisted for over ten years. The authorities threatened to deport him back to Palestine, but Palestine no longer existed! They even made him prove he was a U.S. citizen.

These were very hard years for my family. My brother and I were really scared; stories of the Rosenbergs were all over the house, and the lesson was clear: If you were Jewish and a progressive, you were a threat.

I remember being terrified that the electric chair was waiting for my parents. We had the FBI at our door many times. Once, two big FBI agents came and, when my mother tried to shut them out, one of them stuck his foot in the door to stop her. I remember her saying, "Look, I'm very popular in this neighborhood, and so I'm going to count to three and then I'm screaming rape. One … two …" The two guys left before she got to "three." My mother was fearless.

My brother and I did not advertise my parents' anti-Zionism to our Jewish neighbors, since most Jews acted like you were less than human if you opposed Zionism. But my parents taught us about the deals the Zionists made with fascists, even supporting the decision to refuse entry to Jewish refugees during the war, in return for US support for the establishment of Israel. My father always said the Zionists love Israel and hate Jews. He said two other things that have turned out to be prophetic.

One was that the Zionist Jewish establishment made a deal with the devil. When you see the Zionists of America honoring known antisemites like Steve Bannon and Donald Trump, you can see how true this has become. My father's other belief, which has turned out to be extremely significant, is his questioning the rationale for a Jewish state altogether.

Esther's parents, Harry and Ruth Gouldin, on their wedding, 1949

Photo courtesy of the author

He had the guts to question why a Jewish state was a good thing. He would say that Jews were nomads and that we took culture everywhere. He thought it would turn out to be a disaster for Jews and the world, given that Israel was being built on the backs of the Palestinians. He taught us that it simply was not fair to scapegoat Palestinians for the Holocaust, when they had nothing to do with it. He felt strongly that, because of the Holocaust, Jews were vulnerable to being used by powerful players who wanted Israel for their own interests. My father always identified as a Palestinian Jew.

My family was very active in the civil rights movement. It seemed to us that, the more Zionism took hold in the Jewish community, the more Jews moved rightward, politically. The

first such milestone in this shift came during the notorious 1968 teachers' strike in the Ocean Hill–Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, with Albert Shanker's United Federation of Teachers refusing to support the demand from communities of color for community control of their public schools.

Instead of the striking teachers, my family supported the community. It was the first time we ever crossed a picket line, and my parents were viciously attacked. I was again very proud of their principled position and was shocked at the nastiness some of my teachers showed toward me for our position. It was quite a lesson to see how politics impacted people's attitudes toward you as a person.

Soon afterward, I married and became involved with national liberation struggles allied with the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, who were explicitly pro-Palestinian. But the vicious onslaught by the FBI and the COINTELPRO operation against these groups made living in New York City too dangerous, and I, with my then husband and our two-year-old daughter, were forced to leave the city for a while.

Because of government surveillance and infiltration, activists were threatened with jail; there were divisive rumors spread by agents, people were set up to fight each other, and there was the constant threat of violence. Not to mention the murders of Black Panthers while they slept. I was at Brooklyn College at the time, where the campus was 95 percent white and Jewish. I was active in supporting people of color who were organizing to challenge the systemic racism in higher education and integrate the campus. The big fights were for Open Admissions, the establishment of one of the first Africana and Puerto Rican Studies departments in the country, as well as other ethnic and women's studies programs. We were successful at establishing Open Admissions (also the ethnic studies departments). Open Admissions established a free and accessible higher education for all at the City University of New York. This was a major victory, lasting for seven years until the Reagan administration rolled back many of the gains.

During this struggle, we were in a major battle with the Zionist leadership of Brooklyn College, who opposed the aims of people of color at every turn. The right-wing Jewish Defense League was active at this time, and there were pitched battles between them and people of color —another example of how Zionism fueled antisemitism and resentment against Jews. Given the stance of Brooklyn College's Zionist leadership during these years, I often felt ashamed of being Jewish.

At the same time, I have always been proud of my Jewish progressive history. For me, Israel is a historical example of immense and tragic proportions, showing what happens when the persecuted fail to find solidarity with others and become instead interested only in themselves. I am proud to come from a long tradition of anti-Zionist Jews whose history has been deliberately erased. We are part of the movement of Jews toward reclaiming the humanitarian and progressive politics and values to which Jews have historically adhered. My parents have been gone for many years, but their voices ring true today: We must always be Jews for Justice, not Just Us.

I feel closer to them than ever.

A State for All Its Citizens

ASAF CALDERON

To a native Israeli Jew, Zionism isn't so much a political stance as it is a basic component of national identity. Being a Zionist is often used as a sort of catchall term for displays of, or claims to, patriotism, good citizenship, and involvement in public and community life. It should come as no surprise then, that to native Israelis, the term is often so banal that its meaning might get somewhat blurry. I remember that, in a certain junior high school class, we were asked to describe a scene in an American film that included the U.S. flag and national anthem. One of my classmates remarked that the film attempts to show that "the Americans are a very Zionist people"; "Zionist," of course, was for him simply a synonym for "patriotic."

Growing up in Israel in the 1990s, there was never any particular moment in which I started being a Zionist, just like there was no particular time in which I started being a Jew. In the highly political post-Oslo climate and after Rabin's assassination, I grew up fully aware of political and ideological polemics: one could (like my parents) be an anti-occupation leftist, a hawkish right-winger, a religious fanatic, or a gay rights activist, but my assumption was that in addition to all these, you were also a Zionist. Zionism was, to me, the default, neutral point of view.

Toward the end of high school, I became politically active in issues such as racism, immigration, and the occupation. My self-centered teenage brain started to give way to a painful awareness of injustice. My mother is a founding member of Peace Now, a Zionist antiwar and anti-occupation organization that used to be rather influential, and my father is a relatively outspoken intellectual and commentator on politics. My parents had been taking me to demonstrations since I was young. So becoming political myself was natural. I discovered, however, that the people I thought were doing good activist work—demonstrating against the wall in the West Bank, consistently opposing assaults on Gaza, and fighting for the rights of refugees and migrants—were overwhelmingly non-Zionist.

They did not believe in a Jewish state. Rather, they believed in a State for All Its Citizens. To my family, and therefore to me, this was a radical, extremist idea, and at first, I rejected it. I held to the belief that the Jews deserve their own nation state and there's nothing wrong with that, as long as it adheres to certain democratic values. Yet I had to admit that, compared with the Zionist left's impotent party politics and unimpressive field presence, the non-Zionists were far more exciting. I suppose this was scary for me; I didn't want to become a "radical," so I kept a safe distance.

One of the main tenets that separate the Zionist from the non-Zionist left in Israel is the issue of conscription. To my parents, serving in the military was normal and expected, even if you didn't agree with most of what the military does. Non-Zionist organizations, and people

generally, support refusal to serve. When my conscription drew near, I decided I would not serve. It was only partially an ideological decision; mostly, I felt unfit for military life (I suffered from quite serious anxiety at the time). I hated the idea of forced conscription and the endless pro-military propaganda in my school.

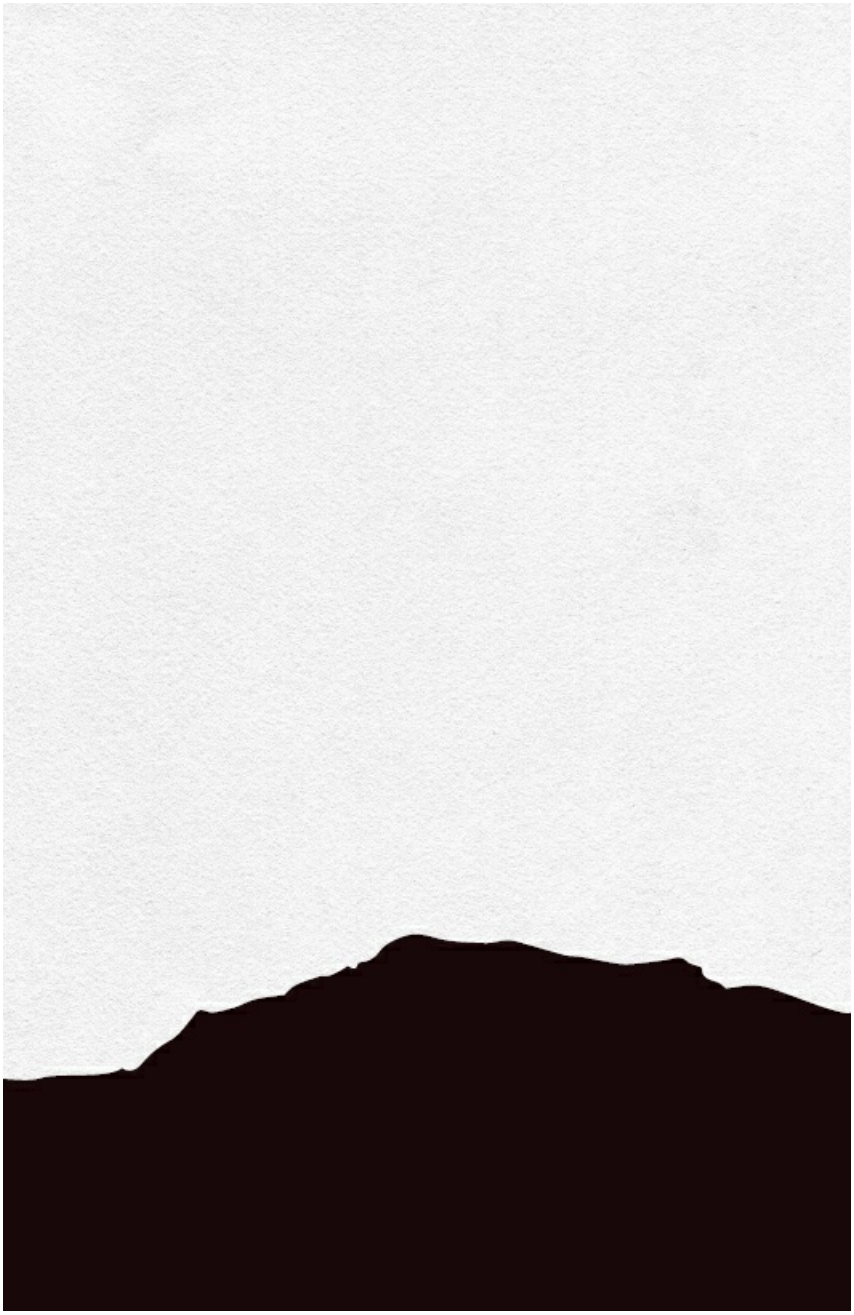
In hindsight, dodging service was probably the best decision I ever made. Once I knew I was not going to serve, an abyss suddenly opened between me and my friends who went into the army. Whether I wanted it or not, I was now labeled a radical. Somehow this made it easier to admit that, in fact, I was.

Instead of serving in the army, I volunteered in a workers' rights organization. I started to hang out almost exclusively with people with whom I could relate: other draft dodgers and refuseniks, activists, NGO workers, African refugees. My family supported my decision not to serve, but now I was no longer afraid to admit that we had different opinions. I no longer found any logic in the idea that Israel should be more Jewish than it should be Palestinian. I began to reevaluate the simplistic and one-sided history of Zionism that is taught at school, and started using terms such as colonialism, apartheid, and fascism.

This ideological shift allowed me finally to look Palestinians in the eye. While I was a Zionist, the Palestinians were always "others" to me. I supported their right to a state but could not accept their demands for the return of the refugees, the BDS movement, or the call for a total, South-African-style regime change. Zionism, for me, was a mental prison, and breaking out of it meant that I was willing to really listen to the Palestinians I came in contact with and adjust my views of the oppressor, based on the demands of the oppressed. I became more than a non-Zionist. I was now an anti-Zionist. "Non-Zionist" implies that one rejects Zionism as an ideological framework, but doesn't necessarily actively oppose it. It may imply a sort of agnosticism on Zionism. "Anti-Zionist" is a more assertive, resolute term that implies direct opposition.

Because Zionism and patriotism are so entwined in the Israeli discourse, being anti-Zionist defines one as inherently unpatriotic. However, I never thought of my opposition to Zionism as unpatriotic. Even from abroad, I love my country and its people, and I certainly don't believe they should cease to exist. The Zionist regime, however, with its deeply racist systems and its inherently alienating approach to all who are not Jewish, must fall and be replaced with a democratic and egalitarian society for all its citizens.

WRESTLING WITH IDENTITY



Evolving Through and Out of Zionism
(But Still Looking Back)

KENAN JAFFE

My ongoing struggles with Zionism have been defined by the fact that it was Zionism that radicalized me in the first place. I grew up in a mainstream and traditional Jewish household and community in which allegiance to Israel and a vaguely right-leaning politics were assumed, but in which few, if any, people actually had a personal or ideological relationship with Zionism. The world changed for me when my parents, just by happenstance, sent me to a summer camp run by a Zionist youth movement. As a specifically Labor Zionist organization, it traced its roots to the original secular founders of the Israeli state and attempted to marry attachment to Israel with a progressive belief in creating a new socialist society. Graduates of similar movements, particularly those, like mine, with very well-cultivated ideological and social worlds, will understand when I say that describing the effect that my upbringing in "the movement" had on me is next to impossible. Suffice it to say that it was utterly transformative, and even liberating for me, both socially and politically, although not entirely in ways that were intended.

It was at summer camp and on affiliated programs that I met some of my very best friends and had some of my most powerful and defining experiences. It was also in Zionist education that I first learned to develop a critique of society and to think about the ways that class and race and gender contribute to privilege and inequity in my daily life. Most significant was the idea that ideology and a critique of society demanded action and the upheaval of one's life, the highest ideal being living in communal groups in Israel. Today, friends of mine who made that choice live communally in Israel and work toward (mostly) socially beneficial goals.

Some people have fun at summer camp and move on, but I am constituted to fall in with things deeply and emotionally, and I was hooked on Zionist youth movement life. I thought seriously about moving to Israel, but eventually decided it was too ideological and narrow a path for me. I have a distinct memory of being at a seminar in Israel and listening with annoyance as a movement guru gave a distorted and mystical explanation of Jewish history that advocated *aliyah* to Israel. I realized right there and then that I was not cut out to be a true believer and couldn't commit. I had academic interests and non-Jewish friends, and the world's horizons seemed larger than Labor Zionism.

Kenan as a child at his Zionist summer camp

Photo courtesy of the author

To be perfectly honest, however, although I had entertained occasional nagging doubts, I did not, and could not, develop a true moral and political critique of Zionism itself until I had left my youth movement behind. It was only when I left my Labor Zionist world in New York to leave for graduate school that I began encountering new ideas and new people, including many leftist Israelis, who forced me to confront what I would now call the truly relevant issues. It had been easy as a teenager to ditch the right-wing Zionism at my synagogue in favor of the hip and socially-conscious Zionism of my youth movement, but the next stage in my evolution was lengthy and agonizing.

Realizing that for all its claims to independence and radicalism, the youth movement that I adored was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the (racist) institutional Zionist world and a staunch defender of the (reactionary) liberal Zionist status quo has left me feeling betrayed and in need of regular de-programming conversations with fellow ex-members. Challenging the centrality of Zionism to my Jewish self-identity, not to mention facing the living nightmare that it has been for Palestinians, took years of emotional and intellectual work.

The most significant blind spots that were nurtured in me via my liberal Zionist education were the following:

1. I could acknowledge the immorality of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and I clung to the possibility of creating a Palestinian state for those Palestinians currently under military rule, even as Israel made such an option impossible. I simply did not know that the Israeli state as it exists violates the basic standards of democratic governance by, for example, coordinating with global Zionist institutions which import and settle Jews in Israel and the occupied territories, and by categorizing its citizens by religion and defining its sovereignty as being beholden to world Jewry rather than the state’s citizens.

2. I used to accept the implicit understanding that the occupation is an internal Jewish matter that Jewish education and Jewish values could solve, and therefore I would become upset by non-Jewish criticism of Israel. I had to be forced to acknowledge that the same principles that have defined every previous system of oppression define this one: power and privilege give up nothing except under pressure. Israel's treatment of its Palestinian subjects is a global human rights issue, and we must invite and welcome criticism and pressure from all responsible actors.

3. Because I had been so taught, I assumed that Zionism was the inevitable end product of Jewish history, that it had definitively "won the battle of ideas" against competing notions of Jewish modernity. In fact, it was non- and anti-Zionists in the early 20th century who most accurately predicted what the consequences of Zionism would be and what the state of Israel would look like. Exposure to their predictions and analysis was revelatory for me, especially when it came paired with my creeping acknowledgment of the corruption that Zionism has wrought on contemporary Jewish politics, culture, and theology.

4. I did not grapple with the reality of 1947–9, and did not allow talk of the Nakba to shake my view of the justice of creating a Jewish-majority state in a place that did not have a Jewish majority. And then I did.

I am not proud of how long it took me to reach my current convictions, and it devastates me to know that justice in Israel/Palestine will be achieved only over the objections of so many Jews whose minds will change too slowly (or not at all). There is no excuse for the century of colonialism and bloodshed that Zionists have enacted to further their goals, and we must unequivocally and forcefully oppose the current political reality, for the liberation of Palestinians and also for the sake of the Jewish future. The hour is late, and the crisis is upon us.

And yet, as angry as I now feel about the education I received and about how a similar education has misled so many others, still I cannot regret the consciousness that my time with Zionism afforded me. I continue to believe that Jewish attachment to the land of Israel is real and historical, and even that Zionism was an understandable (if ultimately catastrophic) Jewish response to 20th-century Europe. I do not call myself an anti-Zionist, although I personally want nothing to do with Zionism any longer.

I am glad to have seen and felt Zionism from the inside, to have understood it not only as a nationalist enterprise but as an attempt to revolutionize Jewish life, and to have internalized some of the hopes and dreams that went into it. I am grateful for this most of all because from such understanding comes the possibility of sympathy for the moral failures of the Jewish community to which I belong and for which I care deeply. I for one hope to see a single egalitarian state in Israel/Palestine that decouples Jewish peoplehood and religion from state power. In service of that goal I want to offer Jews and Israelis hope that their (Zionist?) desire for safety and cultural permanence in the land of Israel can still be met, precisely if they can give up the oppression and exclusive control on which they currently rely.

From Brooklyn to Palestine and Back

ABIR SALEH

I am a Palestinian American mother. My parents are both from the West Bank. My father went to college in Beirut, and when his father asked him to return to Palestine, he went back, was arrested, then released, but was never able to finish his degree. My parents were married in Palestine. After my brother was born, they came to America looking for better financial opportunities and a better life.

My father has deep ties to Palestine. Several years ago, after living in New York City for many years, he returned to the West Bank, thinking that he could stay for long periods of time and go back and forth. However, according to the Israelis, he is living there illegally! He was told that if he leaves the West Bank again he will not be able to return, and so he is there while we are here.

He has never seen two of his grandchildren. My sister-in-law tried to visit, to show him his grandchildren, but was not allowed in through the Allenby Gate in Jordan. Distraught and scared, she had to return very late at night to a desolate area in Amman. The other day I called my father, and he cried on the phone, he missed us all so much. This was shocking to me, as he is a serious and reserved man and not someone who cries easily. Once, he tried to travel and showed his original Palestinian passport from the 1940s, but the Israelis just laughed. He got so upset that he is from a place that does not recognize he was there before Israel was created.

I was raised in Brooklyn, New York. When we were children, we had a Jewish neighbor named Selma. Because she married an Italian, non-Jewish man, her family disowned her. Our two families became very close. Sel was very kind to us, and she and her husband sort of adopted us as their own children since they had none. It's a Brooklyn story for sure: Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim in the same place.

Selma was like our grandmother, and we treated her that way. After her husband died, she reunited with her family who were very Zionist. After that, there was a wedge between us. She was told that Palestinians were all terrorists, and it got to the point where we could not talk about the issue of Israel/Palestine at all. Yet she continued to be in our lives and helped me with my children. While terminally ill, she used to sneak us into her house, worried that if any nosy neighbor would ask, she would pass us off as Syrian Jews. As I wear a hijab, this was rather difficult. But she snuck other family members in as Puerto Rican, or any of the hundreds of possibilities that exist in New York City. Her family did not know about us or care about anyone she was close to who weren't Jewish. Being Palestinian, we were her dirty little secret; when Selma died they didn't even tell us. This broke our hearts. My grandmother died and I didn't know.

As a Palestinian in the West Bank, you must have a visa to travel in your own country. I have cousins living in the West Bank who are always getting arrested. Most of the time they don't know what the charges are. This means that every time they need to go from one place to another, they are often detained. This happens to Palestinians all the time. My cousin described one such incident when she was trying to travel to Jerusalem and, while crossing the checkpoints, was detained for several hours in a tiny enclosure like a box in the sun. This is customary. You sit in that box in the blazing sun for hours while the IDF officers smoke, relax, play cards, and you are completely helpless to do anything. It doesn't matter whether you are going to work or to the hospital, you sit in that box simply for the crime of being Palestinian.

In Palestine, much of your life is determined by what kind of passport you have. Because we had American passports, and not Palestinian residency cards, we were allowed to stay in our car at the checkpoints and drive across. If you don't have an American passport, you have to get out and are treated as less than human. The IDF officers interrogate you. Not only do they have guns; their fingers are on the trigger pointing directly at you while they ask you questions. You feel like a criminal.

Once on a visit there, we were going through a checkpoint on a bus. We were supposed to stay on the bus because we had American passports, but there were some people on the bus who didn't have the right papers, so they made us all get off. I had my teenage son with me, and I was a nervous wreck, knowing they treat young Palestinian men as worse than animals. I had terrified visions of when the IDF brutally beat Tariq Khdeir, a 15-year-old American visiting his family in Palestine in 2015. So we decided to hitchhike and got into a car with an American from California.

Before I knew what was happening, a strange woman jumped into the car instead of my son while the car was still rolling, with the driver yelling at us to hurry. The fierce mother instinct came out of me at that moment, and I physically pushed the stranger out of the car so my son could get in, just in time to be where the soldiers took your papers. I felt terrible about this, but I had to protect my son. I didn't think I could do such a thing.

In the short time of my visit, my normal, patient, caring self was tested to the max. I felt the shift in attitude and in my anger level as the days grew longer. I can empathize with those Palestinians who are born into these constrictions and struggle on a daily basis just to live.

I Am the “Other”

EMAN RASHID

I am a Palestinian American whose family has lived in the West Bank for three hundred years. Because of the Nakba (the catastrophe in 1948), Palestinians have traveled the world looking for a better life, and my family is no exception. For many years, my close family members lived in Rio Piedras in Puerto Rico. Many people don’t realize there was a Palestinian community in Puerto Rico, and that some Palestinians, like my family, speak Spanish as well as Arabic and English.

I also have family in Jerusalem. Visiting and living with them was one of the most painful experiences in my life. Israeli soldiers are everywhere in Jerusalem. When they see my Palestinian name, they treat me like a criminal. They check my bags and pat me down. It’s stop-and-frisk, Brownsville-Brooklyn style, every single day for Palestinians. I remember seeing a group of Israeli soldiers go up to a young Palestinian man and slap him around, calling him names. He looked confused and scared, with his hands up to shield his face. They had guns, while he had nothing. My instinct was to protect him, so I moved toward them. One of the soldiers put a gun to my head and said, “Do you want to die?” I walked away, feeling like a coward. I should have done something, but I didn’t want to die. I was in my twenties.

There was the time soldiers put guns to my mom’s neck and my dad’s head when they thought that my parents were using lights in the house to send out terrorist messages. My parents were in their sixties. Their lights had been going on and off because they were packing up for their trip back to Chicago and checking every room to make sure they didn’t forget anything. When I was sixteen and my sister fourteen, we went on a nonviolent women’s march. When the soldiers threw tear gas, we ran away. My sister and I were shot at and grazed by rubber bullets. The doctor said one more inch and we would have been brain damaged.

Another incident involved my eight-year-old brother who was being driven to school by our cousin. Palestinians have different license plates than Israelis, so settlers immediately know if a Palestinian is driving. This particular settler was going really slowly, so my cousin tried to pass him. The settler cut my cousin off and then got out of the car with a shotgun and went to the passenger side and pointed the gun directly at my young brother’s head. The settler was furious that my cousin dared to try to pass him on “his road.” My brother was terrified. The police were called but did nothing to the settler. They told my cousin not to pass settlers anymore.

The narrative we have been given has meant that many Americans are unable to see Palestinians, except as terrorists. The news media talk about Palestinian issues only when there is Palestinian violence. I have felt this “violent Palestinian” narrative run through the course of my life. At times, people have asked me where I’m from originally, and I hesitate to tell them,

because when I say I'm Palestinian, I've had people snarl at me, physically step away in fear, yell at me, or call me a terrorist. Once, I applied for a waitress job in Michigan, and the Israeli owner threw me out of his restaurant when he found out I was Palestinian. On another occasion, a locksmith in Manhattan told me, while he was fixing my lock, that he "didn't mind" Arabs, just not in his "backyard."

Perhaps one of the most painful encounters I recall was when a friend introduced me to a man she thought I might be interested in romantically. He was handsome, smart, and funny. We had a great dinner and really connected, talking like we were best friends. He said he adored me and wanted to see me again—until he found out I was Palestinian. Then he looked at me with disgust. "I'm Jewish," he said. He got up from the table, walked away, and never spoke to me again. I was devastated. When I told the friend who had set us up what my blind date did, she didn't believe me. "He's not like that," she said. Because he was a "good guy," which was even worse. If he had been a jerk, it would have been understandable. But he was a good guy; he just didn't like Palestinians.

When I think of people's racism against Palestinians, I think it's not their fault—neither the blind date, nor the locksmith, nor the restaurant owner, nor the folks who call me a terrorist. It's the narrative they have always heard or read, that I was the "other." I was supposed to be scary or racist or violent. That narrative has meant that I struggle to feel connected to my Palestinian roots. It's a battle against self-hatred.

Unlearning Zionism

TALIA BAURER

I grew up imbued with a strong Jewish identity, a fascination with my family's Holocaust legacy, and a deep love for and pride in the state of Israel. These three things were totally and inextricably linked. The first two are still at my core.

Jewish education and, with it, Israel education were a priority for my parents in raising my two older sisters and me. We grew up attending synagogue regularly, went to Jewish day school for elementary school and, in my case, for middle school, and were active in Jewish youth groups through middle and high school. At my elementary school, I learned about Tikkun Olam, the Jewish social justice principle that posits that Jews have a responsibility to repair the world. I was taught to value and take pride in the legacy of American Jewish solidarity with the civil rights movement. In the same classrooms, I learned that Palestinian schools taught children that Heaven was beautiful so that they would grow up to be suicide bombers, and that Israel ("we") kept ceding more land to the Palestine Liberation Organization or PLO ("them") while being met with greater demands and ceaseless violence. I learned that this was my issue, the current event that affected my life perhaps more than any other.

My family also periodically visited relatives in Israel, and I celebrated my Bat Mitzvah in Jerusalem. I grew up knowing that Israel was my homeland, that I had deep biblical and historical roots there, and that its existence made me safer in the world (among other insidious myths). Though my parents did not subscribe to the extreme right-wing Zionism of some in our community, and did not agree with all of my teachers' mischaracterizations of the region's recent history, these core assumptions were never questioned. Neither at home nor in school did we ever talk about the true lived experiences of Palestinian people.

In order to make sense of this handed-down worldview that I held on to throughout adolescence and in order to relate to my school-aged self, I now hold on to memories of moments in which the foundations of my Zionist illusions began to splinter, even slightly. When I was in high school, my family went to visit my sister at college and, sitting in her dorm room, I watched her take on my parents in a heated, emotional debate that brought into question the core ideas on which our Zionism rested. On another weekend a year or two later, I was trained in "Israel advocacy" through my youth group. This meant learning a few talking points that could be employed in the face of the opposition, who were represented in one training exercise by someone who shouted us down and behaved aggressively while yelling one-line arguments. I later expressed my frustration to a friend: "What if they aren't yelling in your face? What if they have valid points?"

In late high school and early college, I began to feel, rather than understand, that I leaned

further left on this issue than my childhood friends or the groups like J Street that existed on my campus. I was (and still am) fortunate to know that my older sisters—my most trusted political and ideological guides—disagreed with and challenged our upbringing. I was too intimidated by my own ignorance to attend a Students for Justice in Palestine meeting or to ask my sisters for resources. And although they were careful not to impose their views on me, I trusted their support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement (which made sense to me even then) and, later on, their appreciation of Jewish Voice for Peace. After my freshman year in college, I spent a month in Israel and visited the West Bank for the first time. My group toured the Palestinian town of Susya with Breaking the Silence, an Israeli human rights organization, heard from its residents, and later that day saw the hauntingly segregated streets of Hebron. I finally let go of the historical narrative of my childhood education and began to hollow out my own sense of what Israel and Zionism meant for my life, my community, and the world in general. I had unlearned enough to distance myself from my past beliefs, but I had not relearned enough to articulate my new ones. I settled into uncomfortable silence.

In the summer of 2014, I was an intern at a sexuality education and training organization where I got to do justice-oriented work that I loved with like-minded people. Part of my job was to coordinate the organization's Facebook and Twitter, so I spent a lot of time on my intern shifts scrolling through various progressive news sources as well as my personal and work feeds. On July 8, 2014, when Israel launched Operation Protective Edge, I was a month into my internship. From that day on I spent shifts glued to my computer, distracted from my organization's page by the most recent news, opinions, and heartbreaking stories about the assault on Gaza. My uncertainty abated, my well-cultivated connection to Israel faded into a sense of emptiness, and, as I watched the mounting numbers of Palestinians being murdered in my name, I woke up. In the face of isolating, useless despair, the cry of "Not in my name" and the JVP community gave me words and action to shatter my lifelong silence and complicity. That summer I, like so many others, felt whatever was left of my carefully constructed illusions crumble and fall away.

I read and reposted furiously, sought support and guidance from my sisters and friends, got over the feeling that I didn't know enough to engage, and returned to the Wesleyan college campus, determined not to be quiet or unsure any longer. I turned down the opportunity to lead Wesleyan's Birthright trip; co-taught my religious school students a multifaceted narrative about Israel and Palestine; and cofounded a JVP chapter on Wesleyan's campus.

I wrote my undergraduate thesis on Spanish historical memory of the Franco era, and my adviser—one of those unique professors who, in an hour of conversation, would give me more to think about than other professors did in a semester—asked me why I found historical memory to be such a compelling topic. My default (and true) answer was that it helped me reflect on my family's Holocaust legacy. But twenty minutes later, I found myself speaking fervently about all that had clicked into place when I found my commitment to Palestinian solidarity work. I expressed my consuming anger and sadness at the way my own family history of oppression had now been co-opted to justify Israel's human rights abuses. I reflected on what happens when different collective memories conflict. I am still preoccupied by this question.

On my journey of unlearning the Zionism I was raised with, I have discovered new histories, ideologies, and political views. I have learned to love and celebrate the diaspora and all that it means for me and my family. I have met the very same civil rights veterans I learned about in school, such as Angela Davis, heard their unapologetic and undiluted views about civil rights in the U.S. and Palestine, and seen them turned away by the Jewish establishment that taught me to

be proud of their legacy. I have found a deeper mutual love, respect, and solidarity with my siblings than I knew was possible. I use diffeent vocabulary now, see humanity I was never supposed to recognize, and—perhaps most difficult—I have recently started to unlearn the powerful, pervasive myth that this discussion is actually about me. Palestine is still the issue that most compels me, but not because I am the most affected.

I want to keep learning and discussing and processing my experiences; I want to change my community; I want to take to the streets on this issue more than any other. But I must remember that I am not doing these things for myself first. As a white Jew in the United States, I must enter into this struggle following the leadership of Palestinian people who face the horrors of occupation, oppression, and apartheid every day in Palestine and Israel. I have a place in this fight because my voice is proof that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism, because I know from my own education that Zionism is racist, because my U.S. taxes support the Israeli military, because my history has been appropriated as a tactic to oppress others in my name. I work now to undo the Zionist notion that, because I am Jewish, pro-Israel activism is somehow “my struggle.” This journey has led me to understanding how this is a struggle of solidarity.

Tatreez & Cowgirl Boots

AMIRA HURRIYA

I am a *proud* Southerner. Everything I know and love comes from the South. I love the humidity, the sound of cicadas singing in the summer, and my mother's drawl. I love the magnolias and I love the way each area of our region has its own flavor and twang of what Southern-ness means. I love the way eastern Tennessee/Kentucky/West Virginia Appalachian bluegrass shares kinship with Southwest Louisiana Cajun banjo playing and Zydeco, its next-door neighbor. I love how barbecue specifics are a religion, and how I, as a Memphian, know you couldn't dare compare our smoked ribs and spicy-and-sweet goodness to Carolina's vinegar-based specialty or to Texas's acclaimed no-sauce mandate.

But it's not just the accents, food, and music that define the South. Nor is the South solely defined by the dark and tragic history of these lands, contrary to what the rest of the country and world might think. While this history remains and is seen in every single aspect of our present, the South is also defined by the Black and indigenous revolutionary power that has survived the onslaught of white supremacy, fascism, and settler colonialism over centuries. The Black freedom struggle, in particular, was a defining factor of the Old South and continues to be part of what many movement workers claim as the pro-Black, pro-immigrant, pro-queer, pro-worker New South.

Being from Memphis, where Martin Luther King was assassinated after boldly supporting the Black sanitation workers' strike, I was made fully aware that to live on this land meant that I needed to inherit the responsibility of the Black freedom struggle. My place as a non-Black daughter of this land, and daughter of the diaspora of another land, meant that I needed to learn from the freedom fighters that came before, and work to put the lessons they left for us into practice for the rest of my life. It meant that I needed to see Black freedom as central to all freedom, and in particular, Palestinian freedom.

Aside from being a Southerner, I am also a very proud Palestinian. My lineage comes from freedom fighters on all sides. My paternal grandfather Hussein was a high-ranking leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) who, I was told, had a mafia-like persona and wielded power in the refugee camps of Amman, Jordan, where our family was displaced. My maternal grandfather was a white Methodist minister, active in the civil rights movement in Nashville, and a leader on the board of one of the first intentionally integrated (and later, one of the first pro-LGBTQ) churches in the city. Their church and our family were active in supporting the civil rights struggle locally in many ways that I am still learning about to this day. He did this through his understanding and practice of liberation theology. He did it with humility, grace—always behind the scenes.

My mother, who inherited her father's care and love for the people, has been an activist her entire life and is often regarded as a "movement mother" in Memphis. Throughout her nearly seventy years of life, her work has spanned from organizing against building nuclear power plants in rural Tennessee, to protesting the Vietnam War, to teaching public school for nearly fifteen years, to serving as one of the key Palestine solidarity organizers in Memphis, to founding and leading a Memphis mutual aid collective for migrants traveling through the city. She is also a forty-three-year practicing Buddhist, who raised me, not only to fight for social revolution but also, as we call it in our community, "human revolution"—the transformation of our internal karma hand-in-hand with the karma of the world around us. The Buddhist community I was raised in was predominantly Black, Japanese, and white, and also very queer. My neighborhood was also a historically queer neighborhood in Memphis and the South. I am proud to have been raised by lesbian, gay, and bisexual uncles and aunties who taught me to be as free as I desired, and to do it with a fighting spirit.

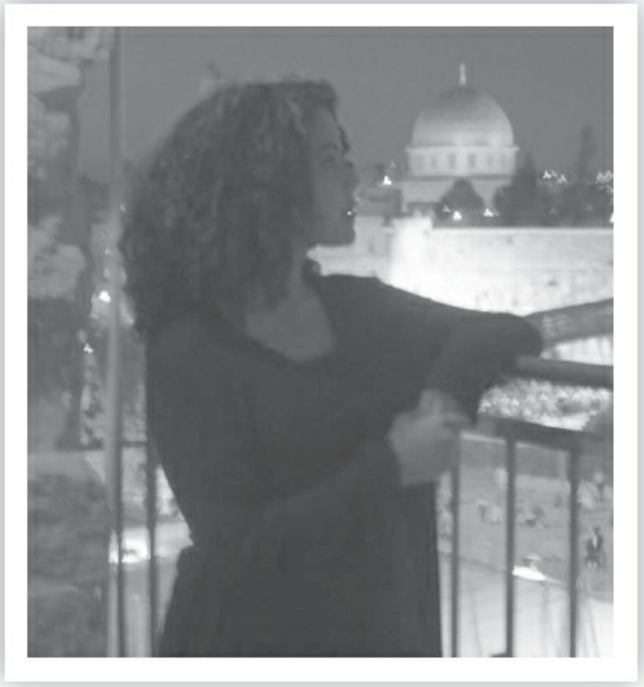
My father is Palestinian, born in (ever-expanding) exile. Our family comes from the village of Bayt Jubreen (meaning house of the powerful), which was outside al-Khalil (Hebron). In terms of its legacy of resistance, this area is geographically, linguistically, culturally, and also politically, often seen as the Palestinian equivalent of the U.S. South. Six months after the Nakba of May 1948, our village was bombed by the Israeli military in Operation Yoav, which led to massacres in the town's center and a mass exodus of all survivors, including my family.

They were first exiled to Aida refugee camp and, years later, exiled again to Dheisheh refugee camp, where my father was born. Then, during the 1967 War, my father and sixteen of his brothers and sisters were displaced for the final time to al-Wihdat refugee camp in Amman, Jordan, where they have remained ever since. My grandparents, rest in power, died there in exile in 2008. After more than fifty years, I was the first of my entire family to be able to return to Palestine. It was one of the greatest honors of my life, and I can't wait to develop a deeper relationship to our land.

My father was the first member of our family to leave the refugee camp, emigrating to the United States in the 1980s. A hustler and a felon, he did odd jobs and changed his identity often. He was dark skinned and charming; wearing an old leather jacket and always with a cigarette in hand, he often referred to himself as the Palestinian Sylvester Stallone. He was also a very damaged person who suffered from mental illness and was extremely abusive to my mother, my sister, and me for many years. Domestic violence defined most of my childhood, and I grew up in and outside of shelters, on the run, and in hiding in family friends' basements. Somehow, we managed to escape his wrath when I was seven, and my mother resiliently raised us with feminist values, to defy death and injustice at all costs. In some ways, I saw more of that fighting Palestinian spirit in my mother than I did in my father, who, in contrast, I saw eaten alive by oppression. We left him twenty years ago. I have not seen him since.

My Palestinian identity is not a part of me; it is the whole me. My Southern identity is not a part of me; it is the whole me. Even being raised mostly by my mother, I've always been reminded of who I was. Whether it was my Muslim identity and experiences at the Islamic school I attended through much of my childhood; or my father's combination of Southernized broken English and Palestinian Arabic that I grew up speaking; or my mother's constantly reminding me of the powerful land and people I come from, I was always conscious of what it meant to be a Palestinian. Even though it's possible that I may never be able to see my larger family again, I know, every time I look down at my brown-olive skin, where I come from.

This does not mean I wasn't questioned or told who I was—on the contrary. Because of my brown skin tone, big curly hair, and feminine presentation, I was often seen as Latinx. People never believed, because of stereotypes they had in their heads about our culture, that I could be an Arab woman, since I didn't wear a hijab. A crop-top-wearing, nose-pierced Palestinian? No way. As for my queerness, it was equally questioned. Most people decided to see me based on their own narratives, which had nothing to do with me.



Amira, hours after visiting Palestine for the first time, and being the first person in her family to return home in over 50 years, March 2014

Photo courtesy of the author

My queer "half" sister (same mother, different father), eleven years older than I, often protected me from my father's abuse. She was cool, goth, always dressed in black, and bisexual. Growing up around her and her friends, and growing up in a queer Buddhist community and queer neighborhood, were all huge influences on me. At school and around my friends, I felt like a freak for knowing that I had crushes on girls, but in my community outside school, I was reminded that there was a precedent. I may not have known other young kids who felt this way, but I knew people all around me outside of school who did. I couldn't be *that* much of a freak, could I? Were there other young brown girls who also felt this way? Was I the only one?

Secretly, I knew I was queer from the age of seven. The first time I realized it was when I was playing Barbies during a sleepover, and I tried to kiss my best friend, a young Syrian girl who went to my Islamic school. To escape the shame I would feel if she potentially told on me, I ran to her mother to tell on *her* first. The need for my silence and secrecy around my desires was only verified by the shame I saw my friend experience with her parents and my father. Thankfully, my sexuality was a nonissue with my mother, but I continued to deny it to my friends in high school, who were all straight.

However, it wasn't until college that I came into my full self, when I realized I could be bi—loving women, men, and people of all genders (and no genders), rather than being forced to "choose a side." The binaries I grew up escaping hit a new high, when I realized that I identified as nonbinary, and that what I had attached to "womanhood" was actually what it meant to be a femme in the radically politicized sense of the word. It had nothing to do with being either a "man" or "woman." I could be neither, all of it, something in between—but in all ways an extremely extra, always doin'-the-most, crop-top and lipstick wearing, nonbinary Palestinian femme.

So what is my identity? I'm a working class, Palestinian, queer, Buddhist, socialist, Southerner. I exist in no binaries. I'm all of it and then some. Satsumas and sumac, cicadas and cardamom, Fairuz and the Staple Singers, Ella Baker and Ghassan Kanafani-taught, banjos and ouds, cowgirl boots and tatreez, porch swings and the call to prayer, and in all ways, steadfast—or *sumud*.

We Are Palestinians, After All

SARA ABOU RASHED

Tamara Izmirli, I was told, was a short and beautiful woman. She had high cheekbones and silky hair that never grew past her shoulders. She was slender but mighty, with emerald eyes. Her father was a Turk from Izmir, hence her last name. But her mother was Russian, Jewish Russian. Together, they lived somewhere in southeast Russia and were believed to have spoken Hebrew with one another.

In the early 1940s, the project of Israel was in the making. When Tamara was in her teens, she and her family were among many others to flee Europe for Palestine, dreaming of a peaceful Jewish state. To Tamara's luck, or lack thereof, the neighbor's son in her new homeland was a curious, charming fellow. He was both Palestinian and Muslim, but they fell in love nonetheless. Of course, their families did not approve of this teenage nonsense, especially in a time of war, and when it involved the enemy. But Tamara and Hassan did not surrender; they married and lived in Haifa for a few years before settlers forced them out, to the borders of Dara'a, Syria in the summer of 1948.

Tamara was my great-grandmother.

It is true I've never seen her, and it is true I've yet to see Palestine. But I've claimed Tamara and Palestine my entire life, as if I've seen nowhere and no one but them, as my own name, my own eyes, making sense of the vast, inexplicable world. My grandmother was only three years old when her family had to escape Haifa, which, by extension, makes me the third generation of my family of Palestinian refugees to live in exile.

Like my mother, I was born in Syria and grew up in Al-Yarmouk Camp. Though it was, at first, indeed a camp for displaced Palestinians, it didn't take long for it to prosper into a city of its own, where Palestine redrew itself on Syrian streets, in the aroma of homemade meals, in embroidered clothing, in the faces of innocent children, guilty of being from a land so seductive to others—a city nourished by us, Palestinian-hyphen-Syrians—yet haunted by our dreams of going back home.

Like my mother, I speak an Arabic that's too aggressively Palestinian for a true Syrian, an Arabic too delicately Syrian for an authentic Palestinian. It's a mix of remains. "It makes us who we are," my mother says. At least we lived in a neighborhood where everyone spoke what we spoke, cooked what we cooked, learned what we learned. But, as children, it didn't take us long to realize we were different.

We're not *really* Syrian, though we were born there. They told us that even at schools, our UNRWA schools. They also told us education is the only weapon, the only way we can dream of ever having a homeland. So we studied. And studied. And studied. By middle school, every one

of my classmates had vowed to be the most successful they could be, whatever that meant—not for themselves but for us all, for our people, for our Palestine that we willed to die for but never knew.

In 2011, a civil war broke out in Syria. I was twelve. At first, it wasn't even a war. There were peaceful protests every Friday where people chanted for freedom. They wanted to overthrow the regime, to live free and honorable lives. We Palestinians remained neutral. It wasn't exactly our fight, or so we thought. Sure, we lived in the country, but as far as we were concerned, we were treated well, at least close to, or as well as, any Syrian. Soon the peaceful protests were challenged and dispersed. Gunshots and teargas became regular responses, and with that, violence spread across Syria like wildfire.

The war was getting closer by the hour. One morning, I was walking to school in Damascus, and I felt uneasy. I got to the school gate, then pulled out and wore my metal ID—*an ID made of metal*—mandated by rulers more concerned with identifying our dead bodies than keeping us alive. That morning, first period, math class, we were studying angles. At 8:02 a.m., I heard the most horrifying sound of my thirteen years of life.

A bomb so loud, I thought it hit my friend right next to me. We all started screaming, we hid in corners, under chairs, covering our eyes. All I could think was, if I make it home, I'll find my family dead. Our math teacher only managed to say one thing: "You bet we'll finish this lesson, even in hell." Three minutes later, at 8:05 a.m., we heard an even louder sound. We didn't wait for what came next; we grabbed our things and ran for the door. People got pushed, people fell on the stairs, but we just kept going; we ran as fast as we could into the streets. I was with my best friend, Rasha. We were holding hands and shaking and ran to her grandparents' house by the school. We broke down the goddamn door, knocking. We got in and collapsed on the brown leather couch, crying for hours. I called my mom and asked if anyone had died. She said, "No, Sara, it was far away … you should just breathe."

After that day, many of my classmates stopped coming to school altogether. It was the first and last bomb scare of its kind, but it made clear how deadly any place could become. I remember the next few days, when my mom and I pushed the beds away from the windows. Sometimes we slept on only the mattresses on the ground. Our shopping trips got shorter, our showers only a few minutes long. This became our life.

We knew we couldn't stay there for long. Our American passports guaranteed easy and safe travel by plane. We were lucky, really lucky. Around the time we left, my grandmother's sister and her family, along with a million others, walked across Europe on foot. Weeks it took them to catch their breath, marching on muddy soil, between trees, under water. They finally made it to Germany, and we made it to the United States.

It's been six years since we left Syria. Columbus, Ohio, has been the place we're trying to make home, knowing well that it may never be. This is what it means to be Palestinian: never where you belong, always searching. I started high school here in the United States with absolutely no English, and now I've become a poet. Perhaps language is the only way I've learned to mourn what's eternally lost to me, the security of being somewhere familiar.

Being a foreigner means constantly being asked questions: good questions, bad questions, stupid questions, clarifying questions, offensive questions, unaskable questions, unanswerable questions. My favorite was during an interview for a local paper. The journalist asked me, "Where do you think you live?" It almost made me laugh, how rhetorical it sounded. Really, what he was wondering is, Do I think I live in the America everyone around me lives in?

“Of course not,” I answered. “I live in a small Palestine, inside a smaller Syria, in a big and wide America.”

That’s where I live, that’s what my family and I carried in our suitcases. Counting Tamara’s, this is the third immigration my family has known and I have reason to believe it won’t be the last. We are Palestinians, after all. Not belonging is what we do. And I suppose, since, unlike Tamara’s, my last name isn’t indicative of any city, it is only natural for me to be of many places at once. But never, ever, enough of any.

From a Zionist's Son to a JVP Activist

DAVID BRAGIN

I was born in Brooklyn in 1944. In 1905, my father and his family emigrated from Russia, where his father had been a cantor. Once he moved to the United States, Grandpa Braginsky could not find a permanent position in a synagogue, so instead formed an itinerant choir. When my father was thirteen, Grandpa lost his vision from diabetes. At that point, my father took over handling business for the choir. My father was exploited and mistreated by the choir officials; he told me that this led him to lose all respect for rabbis and Orthodox Judaism. Even so, he retained his love for cantorial music.

My mother came from a more secular background. Her father was a Eugene Debs socialist, yet, when we moved from Brooklyn to Bayside, Queens, in 1950, she became active in Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, and remained so for the rest of her life. Once settled in Bayside, my father helped to found and lead a Conservative temple. It was there that I attended Hebrew School and was bar mitzvah. My father was also active in the Zionist Organization of America, eventually becoming president of the Long Island Region of the ZOA. My parents traveled to Israel several times, and my father learned Hebrew.

Israel was a major presence in our home. A plaque with the Israeli Declaration of Independence hung on the wall. Our living room shelves were filled with objects that bore testimony to my parents' love of Israel: a green copper menorah and green copper decorative platters and ashtrays from Israel. Our home was also filled with Israeli music. My sister and I would often dance the hora to records by young Israeli folk singers. We particularly loved the album from the 1950s Broadway show *Milk and Honey*. And, of course, we always kept a bottle of Sabra liqueur in our cabinet and a copy of *Exodus* by Leon Uris on our bookshelf.

My father was a fiery orator. He used to stand on the stage of our temple selling Israel bonds and giving speeches. Once, even I bought a $100 bond from him. Our family went to the annual Israel Bond festivals at the old Madison Square Garden. This was a perk given to reward my dad when he bought or sold enough bonds. I remember seeing some great performers at these festivals, including Edward G. Robinson and the wonderful Eartha Kitt.

While I was in college, I never thought much about politics. I studied industrial design at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute and was a liberal Democrat, like my parents. At that point, I never really ventured beyond their political positions. When I joined the Peace Corps after college, I started to learn about the war in Vietnam. A USAID worker who had been there, and who subscribed to the antiwar magazine *Viet Reports*, initiated my political education. I started reading *The New Republic* (liberal at that time) and subscribed to the influential *Ramparts* magazine.

While I was working in the Peace Corps in Ecuador, I learned that an Israeli well-drilling team was working nearby, as part of a foreign-aid package. I felt proud that Israel was doing this work. When the Six-Day War began in 1967, I was terrified that Israel's very existence might be endangered. And when news broke that Israel had prevailed, I was elated at the victory. It was only when I returned to the United States in October 1967 and joined a group called the Committee of Returned Volunteers (CRV) that I began to think politically and internationally. CRV was a group founded on the belief that the moral authority of former Peace Corps volunteers could be effective in opposing the Vietnam War. It was due to CRV that I became active in progressive politics.

CRV's development was similar to many New Left groups. After sending two delegations to Cuba, CRV began to move from a left-liberal to a revolutionary and anti-imperialist stance. We had a small Middle East Committee, but I was much more involved in Latin American issues at that point. In 1969, while in Cuba—one of the first countries to support the Palestinian movement—I did meet with two Palestinians. But in that era of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorism— the Black September attacks on Jordan in 1970, the 1979 hijacking of an Israeli commercial plane at the Entebbe, Uganda, airport, and the 1985 Achille Lauro ship hijacking—I found it hard to feel sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Also, at that time, I didn't have the historical background about Israel/Palestine that I have now.

The Yom Kippur War was the first war where Israel truly was vulnerable. At one point, it even appeared that Israel might lose. During this war, I felt there was a struggle for Israel's very existence, increasing my concern and reinforcing my family's Zionism. During this time, I no doubt still qualified as a PEP (Progressive Except Palestine). Even so, when my father offered to take me to Israel, I declined; I just did not feel comfortable with some of Israel's positions. But, in the interest of family harmony, I generally avoided the subject of Israel.

In 1977, my views on Israel/Palestine began to change. My second wife had worked on a kibbutz in the Golan Heights. We had a close Palestinian friend and attended several Palestinian solidarity events in Bay Ridge. But doing dances with the Palestinian flag and chanting anti-Israel slogans felt way out of my comfort zone. For many years, I continued to avoid the subject of Israel, immersing myself instead in other leftist causes.

In 2012, almost by accident, my present wife, Sarah Sills, and I went on a group trip to Palestine, organized by our old friend Sherrill Hogan, who has organized and led many such trips. Prior to the trip, I did some reading but essentially went not particularly well-prepared and not knowing what to expect, but with an open mind and heart.

During that trip, I met and talked with Palestinians and Israelis, both critical leftist and Zionist Israelis. People opened their homes to us and made us welcome. Sarah and I visited the settlement of Maale Adumim, the cities of Nablus and Bethlehem, and the small villages of Aseira and Zubabda. We saw the checkpoints, the Separation Wall, and the horror of Hebron. It was on this trip that my eyes were opened to the reality of Israel/Palestine. I finally began to understand the negative results of Zionism and the underlying mendacity of the Zionist narrative.

We were moved by the open friendliness of Palestinian families, who welcomed us into their homes, and we worked side by side with Palestinian cultivators to harvest their olive trees. For a few days, we worked and stayed with a family in a Christian Palestinian village. We visited the Tent of Nations, a beautiful, self-sustaining farm with the motto, "We refuse to be enemies." The farm is situated on a nearby hill, beneath a settlement whose members threatened and coveted the owners' land. The people we met at the Tent of Nations spoke of their desire to live in peace and

work their own land, something that is central to the Palestinian narrative, and so rarely heard here.

Probably the most impactful experience for me was our visit to Hebron. There, we were free to walk on the streets that are prohibited to the Palestinians, who have lived in this town for hundreds of years. We were also allowed into the “Jewish” side of the Ibrahimi Mosque, by merely telling the Israeli soldiers guarding the entrance that we were Jewish. It was deeply disturbing, and eye-opening, to see the numerous soldiers stationed there, guarding the fundamentalist settlers who are taking over the surrounding hills and moving into apartments overlooking the Palestinian market, which they shower with feces and refuse. And, of course, we saw the omnipresent checkpoints, manned by young soldiers—teenage boys and girls—armed to the teeth, who allowed us to pass, while detaining and harassing an elderly Palestinian woman carrying a container of olive oil. They opened the container and checked it before letting her through.

Around the start of the 2014 invasion of Gaza, Sarah and I joined and became active in Jewish Voice for Peace. The educational opportunities that JVP has provided have helped to give me a more accurate and sophisticated knowledge of the realities of Israel/Palestine. I believe that the opportunity to meet, talk with, and learn directly from Palestinians has been at least as meaningful for me as has been my exposure to political and historical analysis. Such direct contact has given a human face to the struggle. It has also given me hope that, with the right circumstances and leadership, Palestinians and Israeli Jews could someday live side by side in peace.

“Turkos” in the Diaspora

NADER

Until the age of nineteen, I lived in the West Bank of Palestine in the city of Beit Jala, near Bethlehem. My family is Christian. Before 1948, Christians comprised about 20 percent of the population; now they are 1 percent. My father was a prosperous businessman in the export-import trade. We were nonpolitical and not very involved in the conflict in Israel—although, in truth, all Palestinians are political because of what happened when Israel was created.

In 2004, after the Second Intifada, the situation became unbearable. The straw that broke the camel’s back was at my great-grandmother’s funeral. The whole family gathered at my uncle’s house for the wake, including my four younger siblings and many cousins and their children. We were drinking coffee and talking when, all of a sudden, we heard shooting. The walls of our house were stone and very thick, but they started to shake. We realized that we were being bombed by the Israeli army.

We were terrified, knowing that the house was under siege. I thought I was in a Hollywood action movie. Cars belonging to the mourners on the street were in flames; several people, including my uncle, were shot, luckily not fatally. We had no idea why we were being targeted. The bombing went on for forty-five minutes, until my uncle called a friend of his who worked at the UN. This friend called the Israeli authorities, and they finally ended the siege. The only explanation we ever received was that they “made a mistake.” It was the “wrong house.”

When I was seventeen, I went on a school trip to Jordan. We were all telling stories, and I tried to tell the story about this attack on our house during my great-grandmother’s wake. I was told I should not talk about politics.

But this bombing was not the only such incident, and certainly we were not the only people in Beit Jala affected. There were incidents every day. A neighbor of ours was shot and killed when he went to his roof to get something he left there. Children don’t watch cartoons in Palestine because, every day, everyone watches the news, surveying how many are killed, how many wounded, what is the latest incident.

Finally, my family decided that it was simply not tenable to stay. We left Palestine in 2004 for Honduras, where we have family. There were and still are Palestinian-Christian communities in Honduras and Chile that started during the Ottoman Empire, when the Turks were persecuting Christian Palestinians. Although the Hondurans call us “Turkos,” we were actually running from the Turks.

I spent the summer of 2019 in Palestine. Here, when I look out the bathroom window of my family home, I see settlers and guards with their guns pointing at my house. They are watching us constantly. My village is surrounded by settlements, while we are more and more confined to

ghettos. Isn't this confinement what the Germans did?

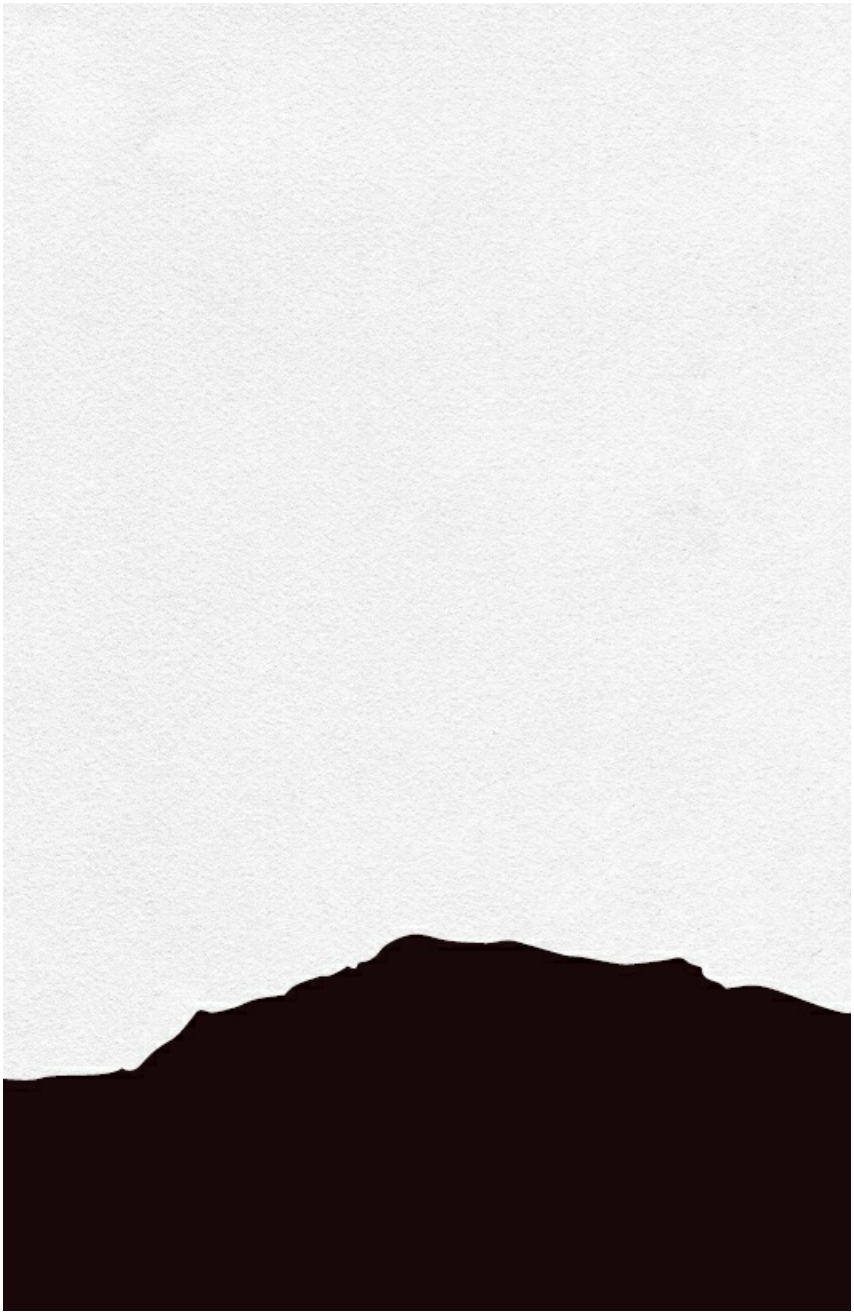
The settlers control the water. Palestinians are not allowed to drill a well, and water distribution is grossly unequal. The settlers get twenty-three times the amount of water we get. Yet we have to pay Israel exorbitant amounts for our paltry supply, while we watch settlers swim in their pools. Israel has built a tunnel to connect the settlers to Jerusalem and is now building another. Palestinians are not allowed to use this tunnel to go to Jerusalem, even though it's on Palestinian land. It is only for the settlers.

This summer, we watched a small outpost start on a beautiful hill called Gush Etzion. It's the last place of refuge for Palestinians in the area and a UNESCO heritage site. Once you see a few trailers and machines in an area, you know it is a land confiscation and a potential new settlement. But the Israeli authorities simply lie and say that land must be confiscated in the name of security. Palestinians have no say and are not compensated for what is theirs. The land is simply taken.

In this case, the Israeli paper *Haaretz* reported that settlers have been illegally building structures there. The Jewish National Fund is reportedly involved in this theft, saying that the Palestinians stole their own land and that the Israelis are "taking it back." In fact, a Palestinian family was just evicted prior to this theft. The Israelis destroyed their restaurant and their home. A few days after this eviction, the construction of buildings started.

We know what this means. Little by little, they make our lives utterly miserable. We are surrounded by settlements on all sides and watched constantly. It doesn't seem to matter that settlements are deemed "illegal." They do whatever they want.

QUESTIONING POWER



Jewish Voice for Peace embraces the Palestinian-led call for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

Poster by Sarah Sills

An Israeli in New York Testifies about Zionism and BDS

SAGIV GALAI

In September 2016, I found myself testifying before the New York City Council's Contracts Committee. The Council was holding a public hearing on a resolution (1058A) condemning the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement and proclaiming "all efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel" antisemitic. As a member of the organization Jewish Voice for Peace, which is part of the international BDS movement, and an Israeli Jew living in New York City, I was there to disagree that condemning Israel's human rights violations was antisemitic.

The session was intense. Over the course of the hearing, anti-Zionist protestors were escorted out, and plenty of Council members showed their talents by excoriating any testimony that was critical of the resolution. It was my first time in front of the NY City Council, and the subject up for discussion was the most intimate and difficult of my life. I explained to the legislators how militant Zionism had impacted every aspect of my childhood, and why I believed Israeli nationalism to be inseparable from the "othering" of Palestinians. The testimony I had worked tirelessly to craft didn't sway the mostly liberal Council, but I was glad to join a group of activists who told them that, as Jews, we disagreed with Israel's oppressive policies. I felt an obligation as a New Yorker to protest in a way that I thought could be constructive, confident that the story I told the Council members would change their minds.

I was wrong; the resolution passed. But, while Jewish people have a responsibility to show up for Palestine, Israelis have a responsibility that surpasses religious identity, and I thought that, as an Israeli from a settlement, I knew a bit more about Zionism and its manifestations than most of the members of the Council, especially the members of the Jewish Caucus who sponsored this misguided resolution. What follows is an abridged version of my 2016 testimony.

Today I'll share a bit about myself with this committee. As for the biographical facts: I was born and raised in Israel. When I was young, we moved to an exclusively Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Military life and its doctrines were prevalent features in my childhood. My dad demolished Palestinian homes in the military with the engineering unit. My grandfathers fought in Israel's wars. My mother, as a young woman, was in the Intelligence Corps. All in all, I had a very Israeli upbringing, which meant an unquestioning loyalty to Zionism.

Despite moments of grace or even bliss—the moments of sunshine that can be plucked away from the more troubling memories of our childhoods—I remember living with a deep sense of disdain for the Palestinian or Arab Other; I remember the concept of the Other being developed

and instilled to shape my malleable sense of morality as a young Israeli boy. I was raised to learn and repeat a morbid aphorism, which, to this day, I believe encapsulates the dehumanizing policies used to sustain the occupation: “a good Arab is a dead Arab.”

This disturbing social cliché was proclaimed with indifference; it was an emblem of dinner conversations that turned on the topic of “politics,” the idea that the death of the Other is a logical path toward peace. It was recited again and again as a way to remind me, the child, that our state-sponsored violence was but a logical and legitimate reaction to the Other’s implacable proclivity to violence. And this fundamental us–them hatred lay at the heart of my Zionist loyalty.

As I grew up, military life enthralled me. I aspired to be an elite infantry commander and rack up as many dead bodies under my name as the next best soldier. I remember sitting with my friends, trying to compare which of our dads inflicted more pain upon the Other; which was more elite; which was part of the more violent operations; which father killed more of “them.” I was blind to the crimes and violence perpetrated in my name.

Today, I see the impact such inculcation has on those I grew up with. I see the tantalizing racism that binds the political imagination and hearts of the young and the old. I see a nation built for sustaining its powerful position, to remain on top of the Palestinian people with our studded boots pressing hard on their dignity. I wish I could point to a moment of clarity, to an abrupt apotheosis that liberated my tainted young morality, but my transition from Zionism to Humanism was a gradual one; one that, in this long process of maturation, entailed the upending of my world. And as it was upended, I gained a bit of clarity.

The irony of this transition lies in the tragedy of the liberal paradigm of equality and democracy that we are encouraged to use as a lens for seeing the world. Such a prism is blurred by the hypocrisy it depends on and sustains. Eventually, as my emotional growth was cultivated through life and education, I could no longer reconcile my politics with the blindness through which I once used to assess the occupation.

At first, I don’t even think I knew there was an occupation. It took me awhile to recognize the significance of settlements as outposts of population transfers into occupied territory (a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention). But once I realized that, I addressed nearly all historic and current emblems of injustice inflicted by and upon humanity with a level of scrutiny I had never applied to Israel. And then, I realized that I, too, was an agent of hypocrisy. Suddenly, I saw my childhood—the racism that surrounded me: the hatred and the settlements and the checkpoints and the violent stories told by soldiers who returned from the “field”—through a new prism, one that is not solely dedicated to maintaining and justifying my own privilege.

Committee members, I ask you to reject the false claim that the activism of members of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement—and in fact by association, the whole Palestine Solidarity Movement—is tainted by antisemitism. This vitiated argument denies the reality that Jews can, and do in the thousands, proudly and wholeheartedly oppose Israeli policies, without diminishing their love for their community and heritage. I ask you to vote against this resolution because we have the right to boycott; because we have the right and moral duty to fight for Palestinian human rights and self-determination; and because opposing Israel and its policies is not antisemitic, regardless of how much right-wing and powerful Zionist groups may want us to believe the opposite.

Today, we need a politics that stretches our modern political imagination, surpasses Zionism,

and galvanizes those of us whom Zionism claims to speak for to move beyond the nationalist, colonial, and racist ideology that justifies occupation and apartheid. This necessitates courage to concern ourselves with the dignity of those we were separated from, those we were taught to hate. In the words of the Jewish thinker Hannah Arendt, herself an ardent critic of ethno-nationalist forms of Zionism in the twentieth century: “Courage liberates men [sic] from their worry about life for the freedom of the world. Courage is indispensable because, in politics, not life but the world is at stake.”

Arendt wrote these words as a Jew, a Holocaust survivor, and a refugee. In no way antisemitic, she was a political theorist who studied political violence with unprecedented rigor, teaching us that racism is often inextricable from colonialism, nationalism, dehumanization, and the making of stateless people. She urged people to find the courage to dignify the plight of the dispossessed with whom we share this world. Palestinians are a part of this world. Palestine exists. It is not an eradicated memory. I urge you, in your work as representatives and politicians, to have the courage to follow Arendt’s example and vote against this resolution.

On Becoming an Anti-Zionist Feminist

ROSALIND PETCHESKY

I grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the "oil capital of the world"—not a place where one expects to find a thriving Jewish community. But thriving it was, both culturally and economically. I never knew there was such a thing as poor Jews until I moved to New York City many years later.

As a distinctly minority community in a sea of white Christians (Christian evangelical groups conducted assemblies in our public high school every year), Jews in Tulsa tended to band together and to conduct many of their social activities within the confines of the two local congregations, a Reform temple, where my family belonged, and a synagogue that called itself Orthodox but was closer to Conservative.

My father, who had gone to Hebrew school in a Brooklyn yeshiva and was a biblical scholar, filled in for the rabbi when he was out of town. My maternal grandmother, a Russian immigrant and autodidact, was a devout Zionist, president of the local Hadassah chapter, and one of the first women in the United States to travel as a delegate of U.S. Jewry to the "Promised Land." Planting trees in Israel and enacting pageants based on the lore of Israeli land pioneers were routine activities in our Temple Israel Sunday school. As a musically trained teenager, I always led the performance of Israeli songs and dances, ignorant of the fact that these songs and dances were part of the cultural apparatus invented to promote modern Israeli nationalism, and in no way an authentic part of age-old Jewish tradition.

A huge part of this Zionist upbringing in our town—and our region of the Southwest—was BBYO, the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization. I attended BBYO chapter meetings and regional and national conventions with great enthusiasm, and BBYO became a substantial part of my teen social life. Naturally, I leapt at the opportunity to participate in a nine-week BBYO trip to Israel, which promised a connection to the Holy Land, its beauty, and the romance of meeting young Israelis. If all this sounds familiar, the BBYO trips were the precursor to today's Birthright, and likewise funded by wealthy Jewish Zionists as a strategy to cultivate a new generation of fervent Israel backers to, in Netanyahu's words, "change their lives forever."

But the use of romance to inculcate Zionist ideology, while nothing new, does not always succeed according to Zionist plans. Reading recent ex-Birthrighters' reports about the "rollicking tour buses" packed with American-Jewish kids "crisscrossing the country," and the romantic encounters with Israeli soldiers, I felt a jolt of recognition. That was me: I did that, way back in 1959. And it did change my life forever, but not in the ways the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization and its wealthy sponsors had intended.

I did meet and have a crush on a handsome Israeli soldier assigned to our group. But I didn't marry him. In fact, I never went back to Israel, but became instead a questioner of much of my

devout, though liberal, Jewish upbringing. My anti-Zionism began in the state of Israel—at the very moment the U.S. civil rights movement, in which I had become involved in Oklahoma, was bursting forth. And as it happened, in that same year, unbeknownst to me at the time, the first international anti-apartheid conference was convened in London.

Historical context matters. It affects how we see and what we see, or don't see. If I hadn't already been working in Tulsa, trying to fight racial segregation in schools and public places, would I have seen the stark incidents of racism my sixteen-year-old eyes witnessed in Israel? Not only Jew against Arab but also European white Jew against dark-skinned North African Jew. (We weren't introduced to "Israeli Arabs," that is, Palestinians living inside of Israel, on that trip but observed Bedouin encampments, on display like tourist attractions.) If the murmurs of protest against what we then called "prejudice" hadn't been burgeoning all around me in the United States, how could I have seen the racist nature of Israel?

My most vivid memory is of hanging out around the swimming pool of the kibbutz where we were staying. A white female member on the kibbutz, who spoke with a distinct Brooklyn accent, warned me not to talk to a dark-skinned young man because "he was African" (he was probably a Yemenite Jew). I was shocked and hurt because this blatant racism seemed to contradict everything I'd always been taught about Israel and Jewish ethics as bastions of justice and "brotherhood."

Even worse was the cruel shock upon coming home, giving talks around my town, trying to tell honestly what I'd seen—and having the conservative rabbi disparage my report. Advising an elderly woman listener that I was just a young girl and didn't know what I was talking about, he went on to say that he had recently been in Israel and none of what I said about racism was true. This was my first experience of being dismissed and muzzled for criticizing Israel—or any authority. It is why attempts today to stifle debate about Palestine and BDS resonate so bitterly with me. By 1974, B'nai B'rith's affiliate, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), had defined the "new antisemitism" as any criticism of Israel, and this has become Zionist dogma up to the present.

Ros in Israel with BBYO, July 1959

Photo courtesy of the author

So what, really, is new here and what goes on seemingly forever? Antisemitism is ancient and still exists. It demands our moral outrage, as do anti-Black and anti-Brown racism, Islamophobia, and all the hatreds based on who a person is, how they look or believe, or where they come from.

In 1959, a rash of antisemitic incidents—swastikas painted on synagogues and in Jewish cemeteries—had occurred across the United States. As a high school senior and the "International Citizenship Chairman" of B'nai B'rith Girls, I was charged by the national offices of both B'nai B'rith and the ADL with addressing this crisis. It never occurred to me then—and doesn't now—that fighting antisemitism and criticizing Israeli state policies and Zionist ideology, or any ethnic nationalism, were inconsistent. Then as now, it seemed to me that equating anti-Zionism with antisemitism is a philosophical and moral fallacy. At the same time, I did learn a life-changing lesson: the first fight, against antisemitism, would win me praise from the predominantly male leaders of my white ethnic community, while the second fight—against racism in any guise, especially Zionism—would bring scorn and repudiation. For fighting this second fight, I was dismissed, not just as a race-traitor and heretic, but also as a know-nothing girl. My earliest feminist anger took root in this particular caldron of religion, race, ethnicity, and gendered power.

Many subsequent influences helped to solidify these values. Foremost was my college mentor, the brilliant Palestinian scholar-in-exile, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod. Professor Abu-Lughod was the opposite of the arrogant Jewish men who had dismissed my criticisms of Zionism and tried to stymie my antiracist activism in Oklahoma. He taught me international law, tolerated my ignorance about Palestinian conditions, and never tried to counter my family's Zionist beliefs with arguments, but only by example. Born in Jaffa, he participated in militant Palestinian resistance before 1948, and then became a refugee when his family, like most Jaffa residents, was driven out during the Nakba. After coming to the United States and earning a Ph.D. at Princeton, he taught at Smith College, where I was a student in the early 1960s, and then at Northwestern University, in political science and African studies. He also became part of the Palestine National Council (PNC) and an important behind-the-scenes advocate for Palestinian self-determination, along with his close friend, Edward Said.

Just before Oslo, Professor Abu-Lughod resigned from the PNC and returned to Palestine to teach at Bir Zeit University, where he helped establish a graduate program in international studies. In 2001, amid the turmoil of the Second Intifada, he died (at age seventy-two, younger than I am now) of a long-standing lung disease, and was buried near the beach in his beloved Jaffa. But, in order to be buried in his birthplace, as he'd wished, Professor Abu-Lughod's body first had to be transported covertly and perilously from the West Bank to Jaffa. No Palestinian refugee has been allowed, even in death, to return home. Yet the necropolitics of check-points and creative resistance created a perverse "right of return" for one illustrious Palestinian.[1]

Over time, my anti-Zionist sentiments have drawn sustenance from transnational movements against war, racism, colonialism, and gender hierarchy, as well as from the courageous examples of beloved Palestinian feminist friends and students, both in Palestine and in exile. Most particularly, I have learned tremendously from the ideas and courageous example of my former student and decades-long friend, Dr. Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi. Becoming part of Jewish Voice

for Peace and the global struggle for BDS and against Israeli aggression was the natural outgrowth of all these years of activism, in the classroom and the world. But my youthful "trip to Israel" was the catalyst that set me on a path that brought me to this place, aided along the way by loving relationships and history.

The Zionists understand that no politics can succeed without passion and love, but, sadly, they fail to see how that love, turned exclusively inward, is ultimately doomed.

Postscript: Sixty Years Later

When I wrote "On Becoming an Anti-Zionist Feminist" almost three years ago, it was accurate to say I never again returned to Israel. Since then, I have been part of two delegations to Palestine, in May 2017 and June 2019, with the group Eyewitness Palestine (formerly Interfaith Peace Builders). I think of these, not as returns, but as my first journeys to Palestine, almost entirely disconnected from my long-ago expedition as a teenager. Even when our bus passed Lake Kinneret in the Galilee and the kibbutz where I had my early awakening sixty years before, it felt like a very different place. Though our groups had to pass through Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv and had illuminating visits with Israeli feminists, army resisters, and LGBTQ activists in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, our main intention was to see the land and the cities through Palestinian eyes, to walk alongside Palestinian friends and allies. Many highlights stay fixed in my heart; here are just a few, compiled from both trips.

- **In the Hebron Hills** We join around two hundred international and local Jewish Palestine solidarity activists to build a stone retaining wall that will keep settler vehicles from invading this piece of Palestinian land. I haul stones from a field for hours, not knowing whether I will make a difference, but feeling happy anyway. My sign reads: THIS AMERICAN JEW SUPPORTS JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE. TEAR DOWN THE WALL! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS! RETURN STOLEN LAND! I felt proud to be Jewish here, working in solidarity with Palestinian siblings.

- **Dheisheh Refugee Camp** (outside Bethlehem): We visit the Palestine Youth Action Center for Community Development (Laylac) and learn about the conditions Palestinian political prisoners endure from Naji Odeh, who has been incarcerated repeatedly, and his son, Murad, who enlightens us with his brilliant, passionate lectures on the Palestinian struggle. I and two other members of our group are staying in the home of Murad's aunt, who is in mourning for her son, recently murdered by the IOF. Murad and his wife, Maya, the daughter of JVP members from the Midwest, will name their new baby after their martyred cousin, Mumtaz, whose picture remains on the door of the house, like the haunting faces of other martyrs we see along the camp's inner wall. So many kinds of walls.

- **Ramallah and Jaffa:** I go on my own to visit Birzeit University and see Professor Abu-Lughod's portrait at the Institute of International Studies, which he founded. The program's current director, Lourdes Habash, tells me about the Palestinian leaders whom Professor Abu-Lughod taught over the years, and we share his influence on us as students. When I ask her how she copes under occupation, she says: "*We want to be*

here, we want to resist. We can't change the facts on the ground but can resist mentally, refuse to leave—and that's a form of resistance." Later, on a group visit to Jaffa, our guide will tell me proudly that he was one of the pallbearers at Professor Abu-Lughod's funeral, along with hundreds walking with his casket the mile from the mosque to the burial place.

- **Jerusalem and its environs:** Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian is one of Palestine's most brilliant and original feminist scholars, researchers, teachers, and activists. In the mornings, she accompanies children, mainly girls from the neighborhood, on their walk to school, to protect them from harassment by soldiers; in the evenings, after teaching her classes, she may be protesting yet another house demolition. Her books about the impact of Israel's "security theology" on the lives of Palestinian women and children are the greatest source of my understanding about the subject, and the lens through which I am able to see Jerusalem.

Nadera is my dear friend. She takes me walking through "her" Jerusalem, the Armenian quarter where she and her husband Gaby live—surrounded by security cameras and soldiers and by Haredi settlers and invaders everywhere. As we move across rooftops, above Palestinian shops that have been taken over by Yeshiva students, a private security guard approaches us. Nadera speaks politely to him in her fluent Hebrew and, despite his leering at her, she continues to stand with dignity: the life of a Palestinian woman scholar under the "normal" stresses of colonial occupation. Two days later, I hear raucous commotion in the street under the window of Nadera and Gaby's apartment, facing the Western Wall. Hundreds of Orthodox Jewish revelers are celebrating the Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah—rabbis, boys in kippas and payot, girls in long skirts, dancing and singing—every note seeming to deny the reality of the Muslim and Armenian neighborhoods and people around them; every note a triumphant cry, an arrogant claim of ownership and possession. This is what Nadera has called the "occupation of the senses," and I, too, feel its lacerating sting. *Not my people*, I think.

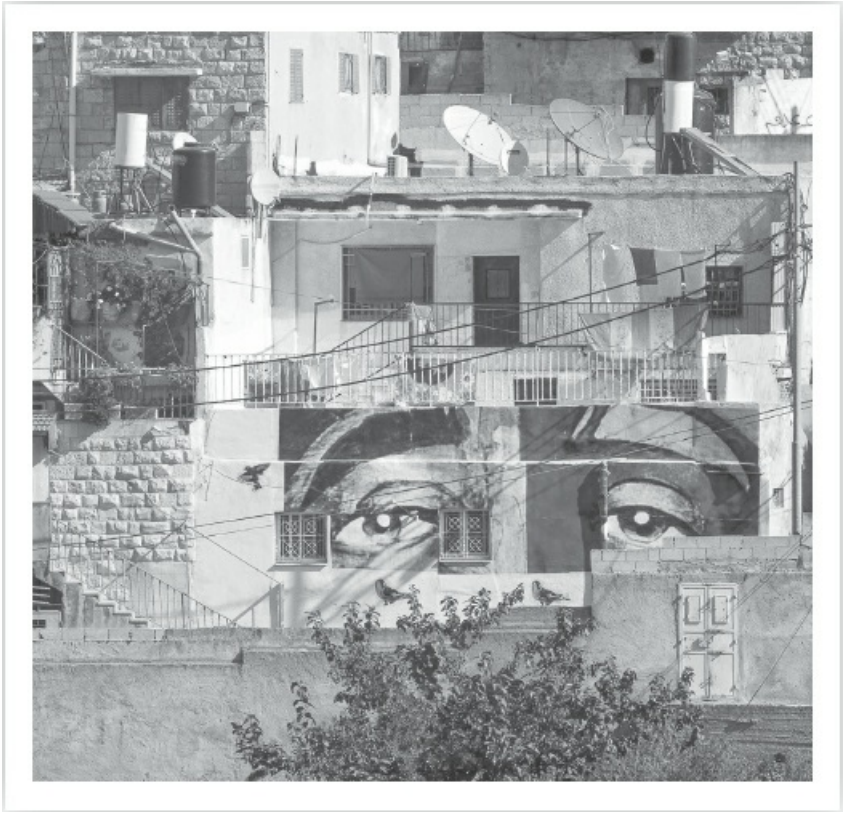
Unlike me, Nadera manifests a kind of humanity and capacity for seeing the Other that is rare in this world. Some of her favorite students at Hebrew University, where she teaches, are settlers, she tells me. She loves them, she says, and, more understandably, they love and revere her, as evidenced by a female settler student who raves to her daughter about her Palestinian professor. Two years later, I think about this when I'm back in Jerusalem, walking from a meeting with Reuven Abergel, one of the founders of the Israeli Black Panthers, and Philip, one of our two Palestinian-American group leaders. My rage and frustration at the Haredi settlers around us suddenly surfaces, and I share with Philip—who is a Christian—how difficult I find it to feel any forgiveness or compassion toward them. His perception is that the Haredi Jews are actually a minority group in the Israeli political context, and not always treated well. Implying the inevitability of a one-state future, he says, "But I have no choice; we are going to have to live with them."

Returning in 2019 to Jerusalem with Eyewitness Palestine, after just two years, was a profound shock. The settlements had expanded everywhere, replicating the massive Ma'ale Adumim, with its forty thousand Jewish settlers and apartheid roads and barriers looming high above the Palestinian villages. On the outskirts of the Old City of Jerusalem, we visited the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan—the most ancient part of Jerusalem where some fifty-five

thousand Palestinians currently live, like their ancestors, but now threatened with imminent expulsion; where Israeli-built underground tunnels are destabilizing the foundations of Palestinian homes, and a huge, new cable car will ferry settlers and link settlement sites.

A jarring visit to the so-called City of David—a kind of theme park for Jewish tourists and archaeological dig—awakened me to the Zionist hubris that weaponizes the triad of archaeology, tourism, and biblical history as tools of Judaization and displacement. So far, not a shard of evidence has been unearthed to validate the claim that this is the site of the first Jewish temple and the town where King David lived. In the process, other ancient artifacts are being removed and destroyed. This destruction is replicated throughout the West Bank: more Palestinian neighborhoods, homes, and land are confiscated to make way for Israeli national parks and excavation sites as well as for settlers to move in.

Almost everywhere we journeyed, this massive imposition of Israeli sovereignty was visible. It was most blatant in East Jerusalem and its environs, but it also loomed throughout Area C, which forms two-thirds of the West Bank and has been entirely under Israeli control since Oslo. Area C now has some four hundred thousand settlers, as opposed to two hundred thousand Palestinians. Israel's sovereignty was jarring not only in urban residential zones but also in rural and industrial ones, such as the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea area, where Israeli companies privatize the water and titans of the "beauty industry," like the Ahava cosmetic company, extract valuable minerals and exploit migrant labor to enhance the skin of Western women. My main takeaway from traveling to Palestine in 2019—sixty years after my trip to Israel—was this: the annexation of historic Palestine, from the river to the sea, is no longer just a threat by Israeli right-wingers and the Trump administration; it is a *fait accompli*, Zionism's deadly legacy.



The murals of the public art project "I Witness Silwan" (see p. 40) face the Old City and can be seen from Israeli tourist centers miles away. The project emphasizes transnational solidarity, which can be seen in this vinyl print by Salvadoran-born American citizen Josué Rojas of Alex Nieto, a California Latino man who was killed in 2014 by police in San Francisco.

Photo by Jinan Maswadeh

Yet we also encountered inspiring evidence of Palestinian resistance everywhere we went: Grassroots Al Quds and its defiant spokeswoman, Fayrouz Sharqawi, who revealed to us the Palestinian towns and villages that Israeli maps have erased; the neighborhood organizations and defense committees of Silwan, which have protested evictions since 2004; groups like Laylac in Bethlehem, Youth against Settlements in Hebron, and Mossawa in Jaffa, with its Coalition against Racism in Israel; advocacy organizations like Addameer and Defense of Children International-Palestine, supporting Palestinian political prisoners; Al Qaws for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society; and Al-Haq, a human rights organization based in Ramallah. Most of all, it was courageous individuals like Naji and Murad, Fayrouz, Lourdes, Nadera, and BDS founding member Omar Barghouti, whose refusal to give up the struggle for justice gave me hope.

Ros participating in nternational resistance against settler invasions in Hebron Hills, June 2017

Photo courtesy of the author

We were honored to visit the home of the extraordinary Tamimi family in Nabi Saleh, the village where Palestinian resistance originated in Ottoman times. That resistance has persisted more recently from the First Intifada to the present, even though Nabi Saleh has been the target of over three hundred Israeli military raids. Bassem Tamimi, the great Palestinian grassroots organizer, jailed more times than anyone can count, summed it up for us in two words: "We continue!"

1 Lila Abu-Lughod, “My Father’s Return to Palestine,” Institute of Palestine Studies 2001, No. 12-11, 2001 (https://www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/147860). Many thanks to Lila Abu-Lughod for helping me reconstruct her father’s story.

Advice before Departure at Ben Gurion

SUSAN EISENBERG

When they question you at the airport
don’t mention Tayibe, just say Tel Aviv.
They’ll ask what you’re bringing home.
Call everything trinkets. Say you bought them
in Jerusalem. Say, the Old City, the market.
Or say they were gifts, everything was a gift—
but then, they could ask who gave them. Best
to say you bought everything in the market.

You can say you went to Nazareth.
Just don’t say Nablus.
Or Ramallah, don’t say you were in Ramallah.
Not anywhere on the West Bank.
Give our address in Tel Aviv. Say mostly
you stayed here. But—my niece wrote a book
they don’t like, so—don’t mention our last name.
Just the address. Most of all,

don’t lie. And don’t mention Tayibe.

Going “Home”

NADIA KADER

I was born and raised in New York. My mom was born in Qatar, of Palestinian descent, and my dad was born in Palestine. Though most of my family lives on the East Coast of the United States, I have a lot of second cousins, some great uncles, and great aunts who still live in the West Bank. My grandfather “goes home” every year for three months, the maximum time he can stay there. Like many immigrants, he considers traveling to the West Bank to be going home, even though he’s lived in America for well over fifty years. I wonder sometimes if I’d feel the same way, if I left America for fifty years. I’m not too sure, because as a second-generation American, I sometimes feel both very American and also very “othered.” To be Palestinian-American is its own kind of oddness; the American government wavers between pretending Palestinians don’t exist and pretending that we are preventing peace in the Middle East.

Zionism was a part of my life before I even heard the term. My parents did not know what Zionism was; they still don’t quite understand the concept. Zionism, like all “-isms,” works best when people don’t understand the ideological framework behind it. Zionism could not be explained to me, but it prevailed in my family’s idea of the homeland, and their relationship with Jewish people.

“The Jews don’t want us to have a homeland. They won’t leave us alone.” As if the entire Jewish population of the world was a disembodied mass of people who hated us with a passion. As a child, I always felt like there was something wrong with that sentiment, but did not know how to question authority. My understanding of the Jewish people was that they were all from the same place and had the same background. I didn’t know there were Arab Jews and Sephardic Jews until I was in my twenties. I am embarrassed now by my ignorance. However, like American Jews who divorce themselves from their Zionist upbringing, I, too, broke away and consistently work toward educating myself.

When I was eighteen years old, I took a trip “to the homeland,” the West Bank. My grandparents graciously offered to cover airfare for me and my younger sister. We eagerly accepted, curious about the place where our ancestors were born. Before the trip, my grandmother tried to explain to me what was going to happen after we landed in Tel Aviv. She told me, “Whatever you do, don’t tell them that you are taking anything into the country for anybody. Just tell them you are there to visit your aunt.”

Confused, I said, “But I am going to visit family. That is the whole point of the trip.”

“Yes, good. Don’t tell them anything else.” She then mentioned that I would be pulled aside and questioned, and that I should do just what she told me.

“But Siti,” I asked, “why are they going to pull me aside?”

In her limited English, she told me, “Because you’re eighteen now.”

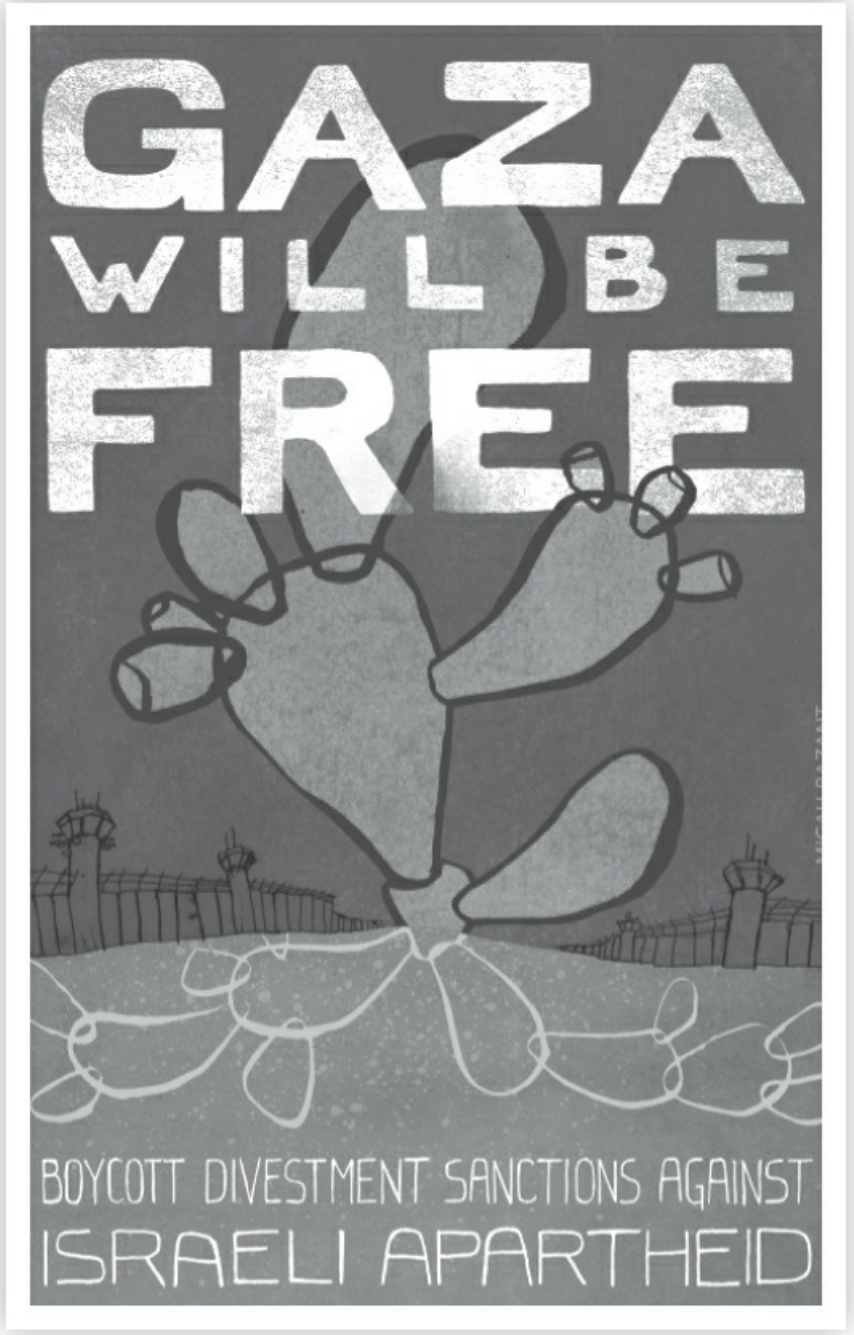
At the airport, just like my Siti had told me, I was pulled aside and questioned by a tall, intimidating man who looked like Vin Diesel. He asked me the exact questions my grandmother said he would, but I was still frightened. I knew something was off here. I wasn’t being questioned because I was eighteen. I was being questioned because I was eighteen and had an Arab last name.

This experience colored the rest of the summer that I was in the West Bank. I actively looked for disparity in our excursions as Palestinians. After passing checkpoint after checkpoint, seeing Palestinian people waiting in line for hours to get into the city of Nablus, seeing different-colored license plates that dictate which roads you could use, seeing soldiers *everywhere*—more soldiers than I have ever seen in one place—the differences and discrimination were palpable.

I felt a mix of emotions I could not place until long after I returned to New York. There was anger, frustration, and also shame. I know now that being held at the airport could have been so much worse. I understand that other, more actively political Palestinians would not even be allowed into the country. My ignorance saved me.

One day, in the West Bank, we walked past a bus stop near the city limits, where an orthodox Jewish teen stood waiting. He looked at us and somehow knew that we did not belong. He screamed at us, “Get out of my country—you don’t belong here!” Zionism gave him a sense of pride and belonging.

It gave me a newfound fear, that my Americanness cannot always save me. In certain places, I am a Palestinian and, as such, a second-class person.



The saber prickly pear cactus is a symbol of Indigenous resilience and resistance. and are/were used as natural fences. They regrow where Israeli bulldozers have flattened entire towns, showing a ghost map of Palestinian homes. I believe Zionist terror will end and free Palestine will rise, just like the beautiful saber.

Text and poster by Micah Bizant

Gaza Nights: January 2009

AURORA LEVINS MORALES

On the first day the earth shook all the time, a constant trembling underfoot. I was in the forest, watching ruby-crowned kinglets in the underbrush, sitting still in the presence of trees that were seedlings when the Ottoman Turks took Palestine. When I came home, the roof of tranquility was gone.

On the second day the journalist on the radio said there were old men sitting in the street weeping. He held the phone out his window so we could hear the whisper of limbs trying to find each other.

On the third day I am trying to write about Gaza, but in my mind's eye is a silver-toned photograph of Wounded Knee, one hundred and eighteen years ago today. I want to write about the dead of the last half hour, of the last five minutes, about the mosque, the police station, the children walking home from school, but what fills my inner eye is cannon fire tearing through buffalo hide to where families lie wrapped in fur, and afterwards silence, torn edges hanging still in the bitter winter air.

On the fourth day I say Gaza and my mouth fills with rivers of blood: Sand Creek of the Cheyenne, Bear River of the Shoshone, Mystic River of the Pequot, Red Bank of the Sauk and Fox, the Coayuco and Loiza and Mayagüez of the Taino.

On the fifth day I think about the concept of retaliation. I remember that when the Sauk returned to their village by the great river, the white general said it was an invasion and ordered a massacre. To conquerors, every act of resistance is an atrocity. Surviving is provocation enough. Among the occupied, not even babies are civilians.

On the sixth day and every day after, I think of tight spaces: the holds of slave ships, cattle cars, canyons, London bomb shelters during WWII. I think of the most densely populated place on Earth on fire with the doors locked.

On the seventh day I realize I haven't been sleeping. When I lie down I see pictures, so I get up and turn on the lights. My stomach hurts all the time. I watch a mouth form the words "there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza," and I realize that she means there are no humans there.

Days eight, nine, and ten I am organizing poets, collecting a sheaf of voices so we can begin tearing and mending the story.

Today one of the poets says her whole family, gathered in a basement in Gaza, almost died last night. I learn about laser weapons that explode people from the inside, depleted uranium shells, something that's shredding people's limbs much more than the "usual" bombings. Suddenly, I am sixteen reading about "daisy cutters" and other devices meant to tear apart the bodies of all the families in Viet Nam, because the maimed and agonizingly wounded will heap

greater burdens on the so-called enemy than the merely dead. I am sixteen reading about napalm, etched, like all my generation, with the photograph of the naked girl running down a road from a village in flames.

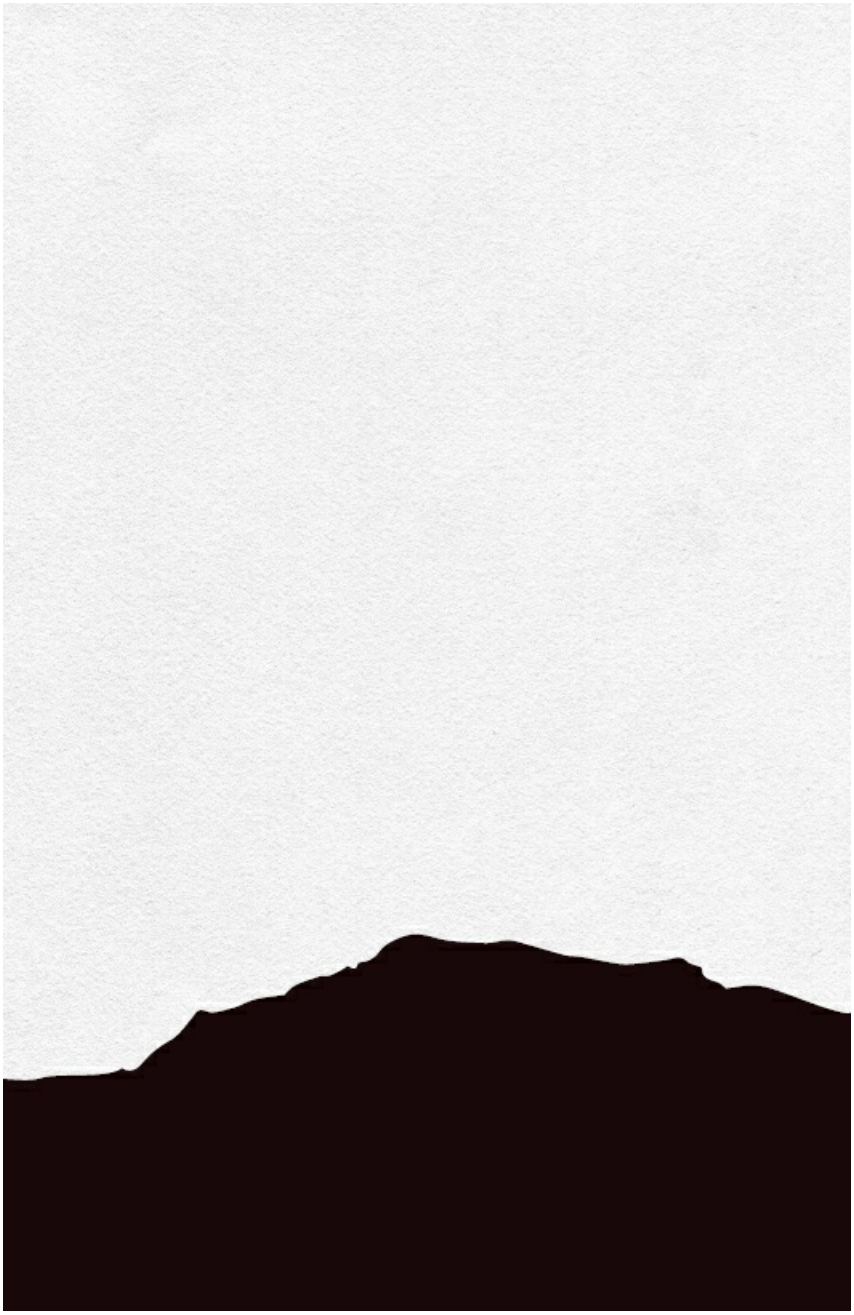
On the eleventh day I dream I am one of a multitude walking without legs. On the twelfth day I recognize the smell of these weapons, the stench of them drifting across the beaches and hills of my country, playground of armies, where every nightmare device, every terrible substance, has its trial run and incubates tiny wars in the cells of everybody downwind.

I stop writing. I can't write. I sleep a few hours in the dawn. At night I am wide-eyed, listening to a silent movie. The news has edited out the voices I most want to hear. The murderous assault dies down to the slower, grinding to death of a people, but I still can't sleep.

I don't sleep until I arrive in Cuba, the leading exporter of hope, until the Jewish neurologist holds my hand, says he is the descendant of Ukrainian migrants, says his son is in Israel and thank God, he says, not in the army, nowhere near Gaza, not part of it, and I ask how it was for him, how he felt, not knowing what he believes, and he says *I had a heart attack* and I look at him and say *that's when I stopped sleeping*.

We stand there for a moment, holding hands, and in the morning, I begin to write.

REPAIRING AND HEALING



Imagine finding yourself surrounded by a group of armed forces, their guns and fists forcing themselves on your body, in the distance are the screams of your friends and family. Everyone is being forced out of their homes, your neighborhood is being violently emptied to be replaced by settlers who proclaim "if I don't steal [your home] someone else will." You are thrown on the concrete, your homes are sprayed with skunk water, teargas, and stun grenades.

Palestinians need little imagination to build this image in their minds. This is because the bruised bodies and empty homes testify to this reality as one that is lived from generation to generation since 1948, what we mark as the beginning of our Nakba (catastrophe) when the process of Israeli colonization began stealing our lands, our homes, and our right to exist as a people.

For more than a decade, Palestinian families from the Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah have led weekly demonstrations with the hope to garner international solidarity to stop the impending plan by the colonial Israeli government and settler organizations relentlessly working to force all Palestinian families in the neighborhood out of their homes. The families and community of Sheikh Jarrah need our support.

Text and art by Shirien Creates

Seeing Zionism at Last

TZVIA THIER

I was born in Romania during the Second World War. When I was six, in the wake of the Holocaust, my family immigrated to Israel. There, I grew up in Tel Aviv, spent years on a kibbutz, and was part of a "socialist Zionist" youth movement called HaShomer HaTzair. While serving in the army, I volunteered to teach in the Negev, mainly immigrants from North Africa. I continued as a teacher and a principal until I moved to the United States, where I taught at a Jewish day school and created curricula for Jewish and Zionist organizations. In 1995, I moved back to Israel and lived in Jerusalem. I was a liberal Zionist and felt strongly connected to Israel. I believed that Israel should withdraw from the Occupied Territories and blamed the settlements and the settlers for the occupation. I was against wars, racism, and discrimination, and felt that I had good values. I did not know that I lived behind an invisible wall. I did not know how much I did not know.

As a child, like any child, I was influenced by people and institutions around me: teachers, youth leaders, media, ceremonies, and the entire apparatus in the country. My education began in first grade, or I should say more accurately, my indoctrination began then. Starting in first grade on Fridays, before dismissal, the teacher used to pass around the "blue box," asking for donations (which were mandatory) to the Jewish National Fund (JNF). We knew that the JNF was reclaiming the desert, planting trees, creating parks. Not a word about how it was instrumental in the expulsion of the indigenous Palestinians.

We had bible studies three to five hours a week in the second through twelfth grades. The Bible was used as a historical document that gave us, the Jewish people, the right to live in the promised land. In other words, a secular society was using a great collection of ancient writings, putting God in the position of a real estate agent.

We learned how the Holocaust survivors came to rebuild their lives in Israel. The fact that the Europeans had committed these horrible crimes, yet the indigenous in Palestine were the ones paying for them, did not cross my mind. Arabs were described as primitive cowards who took off their shoes and ran away. Or they were described as cruel people, hosting you nicely, but when you turn to leave, stabbing you in the back. We were told only the Zionist narrative, as expressed in Israeli literature, poetry, songs, history, and ceremonies. That is, only the Ashkenazi Israeli narrative. The expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians, and over four hundred villages that were razed to the ground and replaced by Jewish towns, villages, and kibbutzim, or by JNF forests and parks, were not part of the story. I learned that, in the struggle over Palestine, my enemies were the Arabs and the British. I belonged to a particular society, and I knew who I was. It was my identity.

Tzvia with her family in Israel

Photo by Uri Thier

The 1967 war pushed me into thinking more about my political stand. The West Bank occupation, the settlements, and the right-wing settlers were for me the main political wrongdoing. It was not that I ignored the Nakba; I did not know this term at all, and 1948 remained holy in my mind. In this piece of land, Israel-Palestine, the population is divided about half and half between Jews and Palestinians. When Israelis say Palestinians, they can be referring to the Palestinian citizens of Israel—the so-called "1948 Arabs"—or those under military rule in the Occupied Territories who are not citizens.

Through most of my life, I did not have any contact with Palestinians, not one friend, acquaintance, or neighbor. The Palestinians were on the dark side of the moon. I never went to Arab towns, definitely not to the West Bank or Gaza (before the blockade). Sometimes, while driving to the north, I would stop at one of the Arab restaurants located along the roads to eat some good Arabic food. I lived in Jerusalem, the "united Jerusalem," where 40 percent are Palestinians (residents, not citizens). I never went to Occupied East Jerusalem. I saw Palestinians cleaning the streets, planting flowers to beautify my city, working on building construction, carrying products in the supermarkets, and washing dishes in restaurants, but I really did not *see* them.

"Where a man cannot look, he cannot feel," writes Richard Forer in his book, *Breakthrough: A New Perspective on the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, "and where a man cannot feel, he has not really looked. Without both he will never understand." A deep fear has been instilled in our veins. I did not dare to cross the street to the Palestinian side. There is no need for formal segregation in Israel; it is enforced perfectly through this deep fear: two completely separate entities. This is a perfect way to dehumanize the other. "They" become demons, and you keep out of their space.

A major turning point for me came in November 2009. I heard on the news that the court ruled to evict two Palestinian families from their homes in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. I knew nothing about this matter. I only vaguely knew where Sheikh Jarrah was, even

though it sits in a very busy location alongside the Hebrew University, Hadassah Hospital, and the French Hill, where I lived for a couple of years in the 1990s, unaware that I was a settler living in a settlement. What I learned was that two families were being thrown into the street. It infuriated me. But when I heard that there was a group of people protesting the eviction, I did not join. I was not familiar with Palestinian neighborhoods, and on Jerusalem city maps, these neighborhoods are blank.

And … I was afraid. My daughter, Daphna, insisted on going there. I joined her; I had to protect her. Together, we found Sheikh Jarrah. This was the first time in my life—at the age of sixty-five, after living in Israel for fifty-nine years—that I had conversations with Palestinians! I realized that it was not my daughter who needed to be protected, but the Palestinians. My journey had begun. Sheikh Jarrah was my doorway to end the fear. I joined the weekly protests on Friday afternoons, where I met Palestinians and Jewish-Israeli activists. It was then that I started my inquiry. I wanted to see, I wanted to know.

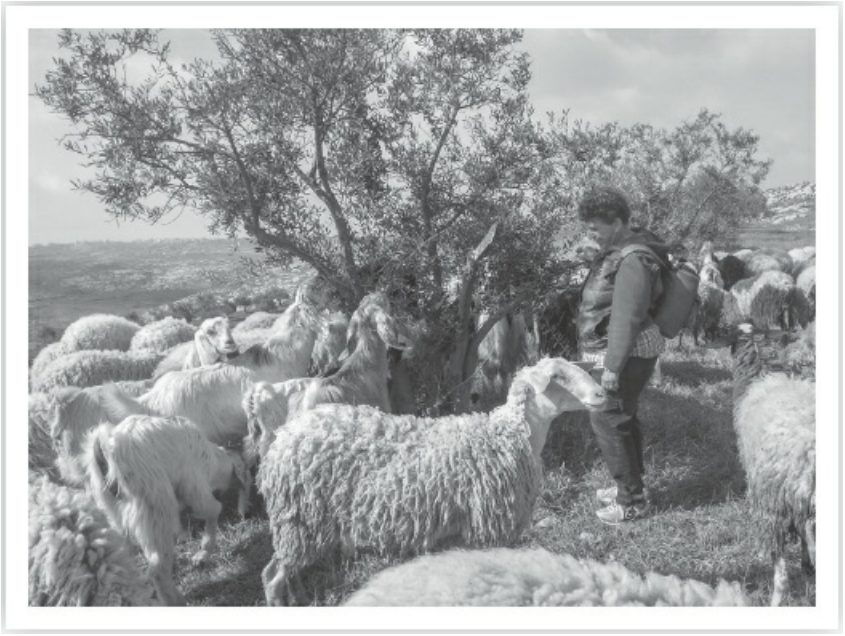
My first tour was with the left advocacy group Ir Amim, to East Jerusalem. I was shocked. It is a third-world city. In this "united Jerusalem," the Palestinian neighborhoods don't look like the Jerusalem in which I lived. We were driving on narrow, bumpy, unpaved roads with no sidewalks. The schools we saw were very poor and inadequately staffed and resourced. There were no playgrounds, and the piled-up garbage was rarely collected. Israeli authorities carry out a tremendous effort to Judaicize East Jerusalem, and house demolitions are an important part of that. Demolishing Palestinian houses that had been built without permit is the pretext, yet permits are denied—a Catch-22. We met Palestinians and listened to their frustrating, sad stories. Their status as residents can be revoked easily, which indeed has been done frequently. Since the Oslo Accords, around fifteen thousand Palestinians have lost their residency; because they dared to go abroad, they lost their right to return home.

Later, I joined Machsom Watch, an Israeli women's group that monitors soldiers and police at checkpoints, to tour the northern part of the West Bank. There, I observed poverty and restrictions on mobility, such as checkpoints that look like passages for cows and separate Palestinian villages and towns from each other. At these checkpoints, Palestinians are kept waiting for hours, from two or three in the morning, as they try to get to work on time or go to school or a hospital. They are processed like herds of animals.

Breaking the Silence is an organization of former IDF soldiers that attempts to show the realities of everyday life in the Occupied Territories. In 2018, I went on a Breaking the Silence tour to Hebron. This is one of the biggest cities in the West Bank, with about 200,000 Palestinians and around 1,000 Jewish settlers. It was hard to believe what my eyes witnessed. The once vivid city market had turned into a ghost town.

In Hebron, the stores are closed, with locked and welded doors. The streets are divided: the larger part for Jews only, and a path (cars are not allowed) for Palestinians. Palestinian apartments are fenced on all sides, protected from the stones and garbage that settlers routinely throw at them. The occupants don't have access to the street; they have to climb over the roof and then down a ladder to go to a store, school, or hospital. Hebron, with its roadblocks, concrete barriers, guard towers, and border police patrol is well controlled.

I felt anger, shame, sadness, and pain.



Tzvia in the South Hebron Hills with Ta’ayush

Photo by Uri Thier

Once, at a Friday demonstration in Sheikh Jarrah, a guy was asking people whether they were willing to volunteer and join *Ta’ayush* (which means partnership) to go to the South Hebron Hills. I did not know what *Ta’ayush* was. I signed up anyway and joined. I showed up at the meeting point on Saturday, at six in the morning, and off we headed south in a van. From that Saturday on, this was what I did every Saturday for three years: working together with Palestinians doing whatever was needed, including harvesting, cleaning cisterns, rebuilding what had been destroyed, and more. Being part of *Ta’ayush* has been one of the most meaningful times in my life, one of the most meaningful things I have ever done.

It has been hard work to examine my own mind. Many questions leave me wondering how I could have not thought about them before. My solid identity was shaken and then broken. I have been an eyewitness to the systematic oppression, humiliation, racism, cruelty, and hatred by “my” people toward the “others.” And what you finally see, you can no longer unsee.

Jerusalem Shadow

for we were strangers in exile

MELANIE KAYE/KANTROWITZ

imagine the desert the cast of light
imagine the day breaks at sundown
imagine the thirst and the cool water

in the desert imagine you never left
the village never burned your voice
was never too loud imagine

you never lugged children and bundles to the sea
for a boat to anywhere
never entered blond neighborhoods
never timed by the sun imagine

you in the desert dark
as your darkest cousin everyone's hair
is coarse and wild the oil on your skin

is good for something
in the desert imagine you never left
your people have been here for centuries
places are named for them

. . .

so the plane sweeps down into the desert
imagine breaking open to hold
what the desert holds

but you're a stranger
the language blurs like any unknown tongue
you feel stupid straining your ear for sense you eat

cake lots of cake *uga* and say

tayeem meod very tasty and it is but then
you're silent your vocabulary exhausted

and the people familiar not
strangers but still
you have to meet them one by one

slow imperfect
like any human encounter

. . .

I came here looking for thirst

I sit drinking tea on the balcony of the house you were raised in
where evenings your grandparents cousins sipped tea
told stories in Ladino but you are named in Hebrew *Chaya*
meaning *life* the sun washes my skin
you talk of walks through East Jerusalem
of the lost backpack returned intact with a gift of fresh *pitot*
these things changed you opened you you fill my cup again
it's morning on the *Rechov Nisim Bekhar* in West Jerusalem
Jewish Jerusalem
I am your guest you are yourself
not a mirror not a statistic

this might be my home but is not
I was born all over the planet this time in Brooklyn
I came here looking for the seas to part and truth
to rise up wet
and obvious

I sit on the pink-grey stone by the Damascus Gate eating hummous
the sun is lavish direct you sit one step up dressed in a black robe
a white headdress beside you a boy *my brother*, you tell me later
after we catch each other's eyes after we smile once
and again until you pat the stone by you motion for me
to come sit your name is *Ma'ha*
you want the English word for my sunglasses
for the digital watch you wear with your black robe
you say, *you like hummous?*
I nod smile speak neither English *yes* nor Hebrew *ken*
though I'm sure you know *ken* I don't know *yes* in Arabic
I think you know I'm a Jew
your watch shows 12:01
it's noon by the Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem

Arab Jerusalem I am your guest you are yourself
not a victim not a symbol

. . .

Yerushalayim
if my heart forget thee

if I walk the winding streets
in the clear gold light

if the past is carved on pink-grey stone
tablets the walls of the city
houses polished in blood

if the future is billowing
formless

shall we count the windows in Kiryat Arba
and call them facts

or discount the nights in shelters at the Northern edge—
are these not facts?

if one is thirsty and will not drink
will not seek water

except the Litani
tempting the desert's need

for milk and honey green

. . .

I came here seeking a thread
and see a shadow or is it a woman
or two women shifting back and forth on the same spot

looking alike though at first you
wouldn't see it the hair skin language close
almost comprehensible *shalom* *salaam*

and which is the stranger
whose flesh was torn
who grabs whose sleeve
who eats dark bread and potatoes
whose teeth stain dark from the tea

whose tongue was formed abruptly in kitchens
in whispers *quick* *quick*

and which century do we mean
when does one woman become the other
when does the rooted one who belongs transform
into the one forced out
when does the one forced out and out and out
return to force out
and when does the other return
and how

. . .

Yerushalayim shel zahav
the golden city

I came here looking for home or exile
not both

I came here looking for women
but there are men in front

the Arabs without their *kaffiyehs* would pass for Jews
the Jews without their *kipot* would pass for Arabs

the *Hasidim* who walk to prayer when the day dips
into shabat

the Muslims washing their feet to enter the Mosque
radiant over the city

and the Mosque was nearly blown up
like the Jewish bus like the Arab bus

enter the market they check my pack for bombs
this is a fact

. . .

here are some facts:

peace is not an absence

victims are not ennobled

home is the storm's eye

unless the stranger too is welcome

we were strangers in exile

a people is bound in memory

I thirst for my people

. . .

borukh ato adenoy elohenu

let my people
in to history

let me not wait outside

let me not freeze in the posture of victim

let me break open to hold
the *khet-raysh* sound
the goat-honey smell
the light on the stones of Jerusalem
where I lived on hummous and sweet dark tea

let my people heal

omeyn

Women in Black

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE

I could be one when I grew up.
Hovering, so watchful outside
government buildings, black T-shirts,
black jackets and scarves and gowns—
till then I am a girl in stripes.

They hold a belief—we could all
get along—Arabs, Jews, Swedes,
people with candles, or without.
Even if taunted or hit by stones,
rubber bullets,
we would keep watching,
No Violence!
No War! Trying to be more like
the peaceful village oasis,
Wahat al-Salaam, Nevi Shalom—
half-and-half everything,
school administrators, village counselors,
grocers, gardeners, kids, founded by
a Christian Brother,
why couldn't all villages be like that?
What is wrong with us?

I flip the pages of the tattered Benetton catalogue
my friend's mother still keeps in a drawer—
from before we were born,
Arabs and Jews as true friends
on every page, real people
telling their stories, you could not tell which
is which—aren't there more?

Surely there are more. Red plastic chairs
sitting outside stone and stucco houses,
waiting for us. Waiting for us to sit together.

A project called UNHATE vs. guns.
Which would you choose?
But look how many guns!

Who did this to us?
Money? Guilt?
People in other countries did this to us?
Some people carrying guns look 12 years old.

My father always told me beware of righteousness.
If you are too right, everyone else is wrong.
Illegal settlements creep up the hills at night
erasing our old villages. Boxy white houses
with red roofs marching toward
our old stone terraces. Would you like that?
Americans, would you?

Women in Black don't carry brooms
but I want them to sweep away our pain.
Here by the hills where angels once appeared,
my mother heard of a journalist who answered
How to solve this dilemma?
by saying, Put everything in the hands of women!
Women in black, women in white.
The men had their chance and failed.
Sure, a few women like Golda
said Palestinians didn't exist—
she must have had bad eyesight.
So many voices without a chance yet.
Mine, for example.
It is our turn now.

Palestinian children witness their homes reduced to rubble

Photo by WAFA/Baha Nasr

Diving into the Wreck

STEFANIE FOX

I came to explore the wreck.
The words are purposes.
The words are maps.
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.
I stroke the beam of my lamp
slowly along the flank
of something more permanent
than fish or weed

the thing I came for:
the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth
the drowned face always staring
toward the sun
the evidence of damage
worn by salt and sway into this threadbare beauty
the ribs of the disaster
curving their assertion
among the tentative haunters.

—Adrienne Rich

One of my favorite Jewish sages and JVP advisory board member, Adrienne Rich, may her memory be for a blessing, talks about confronting hard truths in her classic poem “Diving into the Wreck” (*Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971–1972*). In it, before the excerpt I just read, the narrator puts on a diving suit, climbs down a ladder on the side of a boat, and all by herself plunges into the ocean. She’s there to find something.

I came to explore the wreck.

Looking at Zionism, diving into the wreck of all it has wrought, past and present, has been a perilous but powerful journey for me personally. Much as the narrator of the poem holds a flashlight to make sense of a shipwreck at the bottom of the sea, different moments in my life were like a beam of light over a hidden truth.

I’m a teenager, and I hear racist, hateful words from a relative I love and trust. She’s talking about how “they” are out to kill us, but it’s the bloodlust in her eyes that shakes me to my core.

I came to explore the wreck.

I read Ella Shohat's writing in my early twenties. I am shocked to learn that I know nothing about the devastations and damages of Zionism to Mizrahi and Sephardi Jewish life, community, and culture.

I came to explore the wreck.

Sometimes I am surprised by how I can still be surprised. On November 9th, with all we faced, the Jewish communal world stays largely silent. It was clearer more than ever that Jewish institutions, built to prioritize Israel's own right-wing agenda above all, have gutted their own capacity to show up to the intersectional fight needed now.

I came to explore the wreck.

When visiting the occupied West Bank city of Hebron, I see a mural that depicts the alleged history of the city in three panels. In this mural, all of Jewish histories—centuries of biblical tradition—are condensed into a linear narrative that leads to this city where Stars of David haunt Palestinian shops and children can't walk to school without being spit on and people have to travel by roof because they are not allowed on their own streets. The narrative in that mural was one of inevitability—that all of Jewish history pointed us to this twisted role of brutal occupier in a land that isn't mine but is offered for my taking. I felt physically sick.

I came to explore the wreck. And no matter how long I have been scanning my flashlight against the hull, I continue to see new things.

What I have found over the years is that to find, as Rich says, *the wreck and not the story of the wreck, the thing itself and not the myth*, is a tall order given the layers of familial and communal mythology that surround Zionism in my life and in the Jewish world.

The thing itself and not the myth.

How many of you were raised, like me, to understand Israel as "a land without people for a people without land," or were inculcated from a young age with fear that Palestinians wished only to drive us into the sea?

A few years ago, when sorting through some of the amazing curricular resources from our partners at Badil within JVP's Facing the Nakba curriculum, I came across some pictures from 1948 of thousands of Palestinians from Jaffa fleeing the Zionist attack on their city.

By this point I am well acquainted with the ideology and violence behind the founding of the state: the upheaval and trauma and devastation that Palestinians call the Nakba, or catastrophe. But this photo stopped me in my tracks.

In the background of the photo, the beautiful buildings speak to the vibrant metropolitan life of the 100,000 Palestinians—Muslim, Christian, and Jewish—who were living there before the establishment of the state. But in the foreground of this photo, we see those thousands fleeing the city, loaded at gunpoint onto boats to Gaza and Egypt, literally forced into the sea. There, in the sea, scores drowned. This picture of terrified Palestinians: a woman holding a baby in one arm and whatever she could grab from her house in the other, literally driven into the sea.

The wreck and not the story of the wreck.

I had not ever seen the exact picture of this Jewish fear played out, but backwards. It broke my heart. This was the wreck rather than the twisted story of the wreck I'd been told. This was the thing itself and not the upside-down myth around it. This was Jewish militias rounding up Palestinians and forcing them into the sea, to drown, *not* the other way around.

The thing itself, and not the myth.

I think Rich says something profound about confronting hard realities: the truth is not relative. The wreck is there. Whether we look at it or not, whether we choose to put on the equipment and find our way into the water, the truth lies just under the surface. It's our job to know it is there, and to look at it.

I recall a time when I wanted to understand the Nakba as Palestinian history, a sort of parallel track next to the history of European Jewish experience. Zionism, I told myself, meant many things to many people. But I think this is one more way I was clinging to a story of the wreck and failing to see the wreck itself. I think for me the real journey into the water of Zionism has been about endeavoring to understand one whole story.

There, under the surface, is the whole story. The drowned face is always staring toward the sun. It's ours to look squarely at it. It is devastating, yes. But what I want to say is that for me something has happened inside of that devastation. Once I got past those layers of denial, once I learned to acknowledge what has been stolen, once I could feel these truths about Zionism, not just as someone else's story to feel bad about, but as my own story, my own history, something else happened. I came to see the damage that was done and the treasures that prevail.

In moving past the false comfort of mythology, it is easier to see where justice and healing must enter. The more I come to understand and see the ongoing Nakba, the greater my yearning for Palestinian refugees to finally return to their homes. The more I understand the interconnections between white supremacy, antisemitism and Zionism, the more I dream of a day when we live free of all of them. I think of my dear Palestinian friends turning the keys to their grandparents' homes, my Israeli Jewish friends living in a free and equal society, preparing a picnic for a beach dinner together with those returning home, and I literally cannot imagine a deeper joy in my own heart.

The treasures that prevail.

For me, taking on the truth, as one whole story, I feel a reconnection to shared humanity. I feel a patching together of what looked torn apart in my relative's eyes when she spoke with such hate. For me, connecting to and understanding the wreck of Zionism has opened up the possibility of a fuller participation in fighting for true liberation for all people.

— Plenary address at the 2017 Jewish Voice for Peace National Membership Meeting

My Only Weapon Is My Pencil

MOHAMMED RAFIK MHAWESH

The light rain on the other side of the window had stopped when I finished my writing class and sat near the window to look at the mean square of Gaza City, Al-Remal Square. The depression seems about to go away, yet the hot chocolate cup that I made after my students left is still pushing warmth into my heart. My colleague says, “Today, six years back, we were all listening to the radio to know where that horrific bomb that had just shaken all of Gaza had exploded, and where that louder one that followed had too. Can’t you remember?”

I nodded while looking outside, as a sign of agreement. He could be right, but not accurate. He meant only the last war he witnessed. He forgot to count the two wars that had preceded. Ghassan and I shared painful memories of three wars. But those aren’t everything brutalized Gaza suffered from. My father and Ghassan’s father had survived two different massacres: the one in 1948 and the one in 1967. Our mothers lived through the 1967 attack but not the Nakba in 1948. Everyone has their own calculations, but we all share the same experience of horrifying, scary moments.

I miraculously survived three destructive wars within seven years only, while many of my loved ones and close friends didn’t survive, and left me heartbroken. It sounds painful to me, but my friend has a prodigious memory. He remembers almost everything. And I’m quite the opposite of him. I remember little of my life between the ages of eight and eighteen. Friends, teachers, events—all a blur. But I remember every supernatural book and dystopian novel I read during that time and every rocket I heard and saw during the wars with an alarming vividness. This remembrance is like a mind notification that keeps flashbacking nightmare-like days in front of my eyes and in my head.

I created an excuse to leave work early. I went out for a walk to refresh my soul after the exhausting memories my friend just threw into my head. I hoped a brief walk would heal my memory scars. Walking in my city is special. There are so many faces—some young and still looking like they are about to leap into the future with excitement, some looking ancient (probably beyond their actual years) and resigned. So many approaches to religion—some women wearing a full face covering and others with their hair flowing freely. So many “stations” in life—some looking fashionable and others wearing worn-out, secondhand clothes.

Mohammed playing football (soccer) with kids in a Gaza City street in 2019

Photo courtesy of the author

There are many contradictions; we are not the monolithic "Gaza Palestinian" label the world wants to attach to us. Some people, those who don't live here, see Gaza City as a hotbed of militancy and terrorism. But those who visit see an ancient culture and an insistence on living and hope.

Amid this chaos of perceptions rises a massive olive tree, so big it obscures a third of the school next to the home of a widow, Um Ahmed, whom I met during my wandering. The tree is seventy years old, she tells me—almost older than the Israeli occupation of Palestine. It has witnessed both the Nakba and our survival firsthand.

I saw children playing football in the street. I joined them and played together with them until their mothers called them in to do their homework. I love football. I celebrated every victory of my favorite foreign teams in a restaurant or café, crowding in with everyone else, eager for any reason to celebrate. Each time our favored team won, my friends and I shared exciting moments and feasted on chocolate mousse, fruit pies, chocolate crepes, banana splits, and milkshakes.

For the time being, my people's suffering has forced me to switch from football to writing. Now I feel writing stories, poetry, and diaries is my only way out of daily life stress. My pencil is a sincere friend who cares about my deepest thoughts and transfers them into written feelings. I've always loved my pencil and still love to vent to it in times of uncertainty. I started reading and writing more to give my voice power; we suffer so much. I write my people's dreams, hopes, ambitions, and the message of our freedom.

I went on walking and smelled the distinctive fragrance of *mana'ish*, bread baked with Palestinian thyme, wafting through the windows. I remembered when, in winter, my grandma would toast bread on the heater in the middle of the living room. We would all sit around her and dip the bread into zeit (olive oil) and za'atar (thyme) while sipping a cup of Jaffa's famous tea—heavy on mint and sugar.

Gazan children have different memories of fighting over the "soba" heater to keep themselves warm. Soba battles were fierce, especially if you were the kid standing in front of it and blocking the heat for the other twenty people in the room.

Memories of my childhood flooded my head. I remembered how misery attacked my first years in life. During normal school days, rockets would drop. The fear that I felt as a scared child running out of school is unforgettable and still strikes my head. My friends and I were running from one place to another to find a cover from the missiles we heard dropping.

On other calm days, I remember kicking the chair of the pretty blonde girl in front of me. And when she would turn around to nag me, I would flash the biggest smile and my dimples at her. That was how I would get myself out of trouble with her.

Another memory: My friends and I were finishing our classes for the day and watching the girls from the nearby prep school walk by, swinging their books with confidence, dazzling us with their smiles, and sending us into confusion and guilt when they looked at us, while pretending not to. We kept our eyes on them until they disappeared.

Everything has changed since my school days, when Israeli settlers and the soldiers who hovered around them were ever present. Although this occupation continues to control our borders, air space, and sea, we can breathe a little easier; we are masters of our own streets. And to me, the scent of falafel and hummus at dinnertime, charcoal kebab fires, and even the sweat of bodies packed together is the smell of life, love, dreams, and ambitions.

When my walk took me through the Old City of Gaza, I reveled in the sense of history. I must confess that I know little about its origins, but I know that the oldest of the buildings, Omari Grand Mosque, dates back to the seventh century. Our history is all about a struggle to survive, just as it is today, which is why we cannot separate politics from life.

As I continued walking, I strolled by a coffee shop whose owner is widely known because of his distinctive blends. I am a coffee lover. I bought a strong, black cup, then walked on. I was surrounded by tiny shops with colorful advertising slogans and dessert stalls.

Later, I saw an old, wrinkle-faced man sitting in front of his shoemaking shop and holding a small radio; he was clearly lost in his thoughts. On a whim, I walked over and sat down with him. He greeted me warmly, almost as if he wanted to hug me. This man must have been waiting for someone, anyone, who would listen to him and to whom he could vent. The sad drone of the evening news on the radio was drawing a sign of despair on the old man's cheeks.

Among the top stories of that afternoon was the shooting by Israeli soldiers of a farmer, a father of four, while he was planting his land with citrus trees near the border. Apparently, he had ventured too close to the wall for the guards' comfort. Yet it was the farmer's land, and the most fertile acres are to be found by the wall.

The other top news was happier: some students who had finally passed through all the checkpoints to start a new chapter in life by studying abroad on scholarship. There are so many barriers facing young people who dream of studying outside of Gaza—including me. I couldn't make it out two times because of the siege that has been imposed on us for fifteen years now, and because of financial obstacles that topped my family's dire circumstances.

We must earn a fully funded scholarship; we cannot afford any of the expenses. Then we have to persuade the other country to give us a visa; too many governments discriminate against Palestinians. And finally, we must get permission to leave and then leave safely. But, at least for these students, their dream of seeing the world outside had finally come true!

"You see these kids?" the old man asked, gesturing to children playing in the street nearby.

He answered without waiting for a reply: “None of the outside world’s kids have been raised under tough times like these kids have.” The man, named Abu Ali, a father of six, coughed continuously while he spoke, a lit cigarette between his fingers. “Their families always complain about their heavy responsibilities; they can barely feed or educate or clothe them.”

I attempted to insert a positive note: “Isn’t there a possibility of a different life, different prospects, a different future?” I suggested.

“Future?” he responded, as if adding a spoonful of melancholy to my coffee. “The bullet that takes their life will come before their chance to liberate their lands, homes, and villages.”

Abu Ali then turned his ire on the local government: “There is money but in the hands of our officials. They fly around the world with our money, aiming to make the world pity and sympathize with us. But as Palestinians, we don’t want anyone to pity us. We want to be treated with humanity, justice, and equality.”

He switched course yet again: “Are you in college?” Without giving me any time to answer, he continued: “I have a shoe shop, and I work almost the whole day, but I can barely afford the school transportation cost for my sons. Education here costs thousands of Palestinian shekels per semester. Sometimes, ‘nothing’ is the hardest and the only thing you can do.” He sighed. His monologue moved me. I gave up trying to answer. I prayed for him and me, and left.

As I left, the sun was setting. I felt drained. I waved down a taxi and got in. In Gaza, we are burdened with so much hardship. Yet, as the sun blazed in a last fit of orange and red glory, I couldn’t deny the beauty. We must never stop appreciating that, and we must always dare to dream.

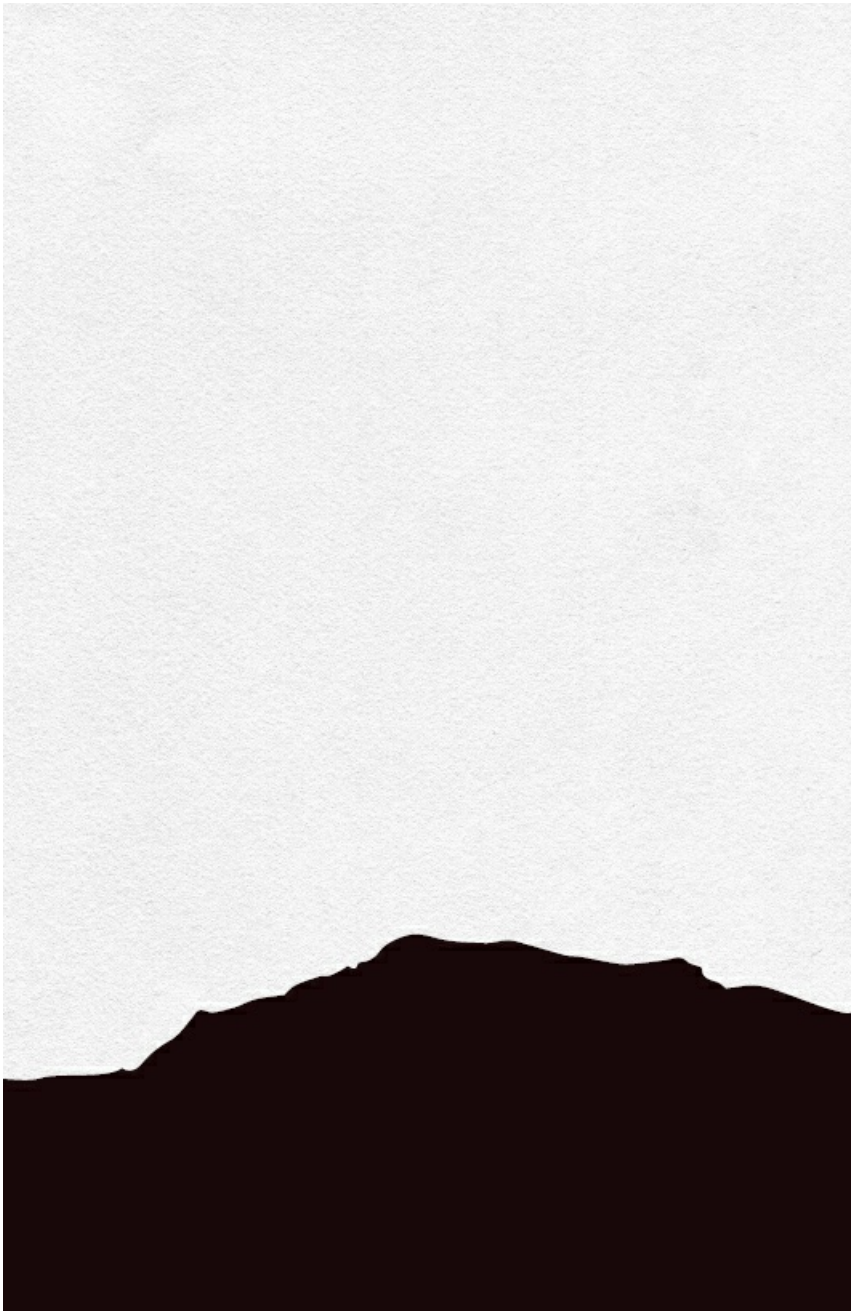
And We Have a Land

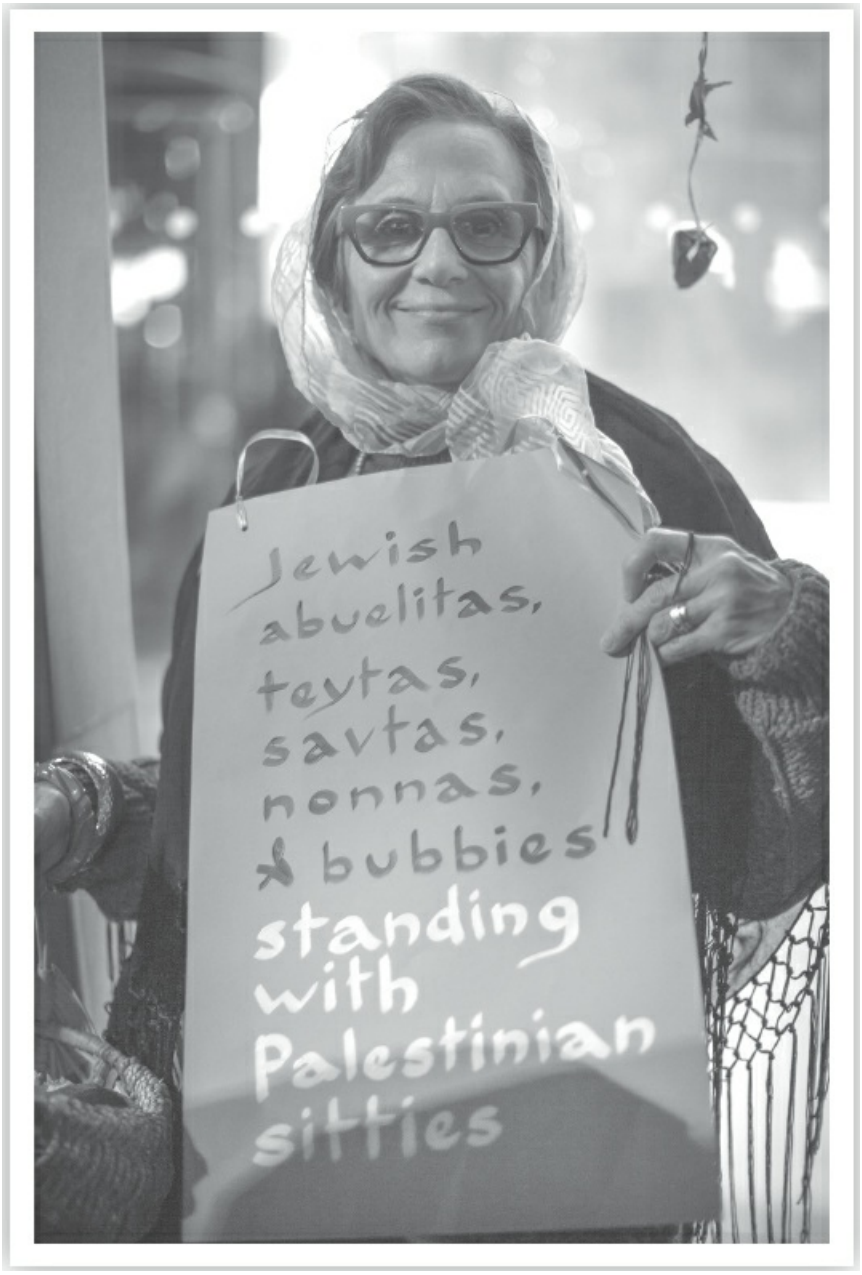
MAHMOUD DARWISH

And we have a land without borders, like our idea
of the unknown, narrow and wide. A land …
when we walk in its map it becomes narrow with us,
and takes us to an ashen tunnel, so we shout
in its labyrinth: And we still love you, our love
is a hereditary illness. A land … when
it banishes us to the unknown … it grows. And
the willows and adjectives grow. And its grass grows
and its blue mountains. The lake widens
in the soul's north. Wheat rises in the soul's
south. The lemon fruit gleams like a lantern
in the emigrant's night. Geography glistens
like a holy book. And the chain of hills
becomes an ascension place to higher … to higher.
"If I were a bird I would have burned my wings," someone says
to his exiled self. Then scent of autumn becomes
the image of what I love … The light rain leaks
into the heart's drought, and the imagination opens up
to its sources, and becomes place, the only
real one. And everything from the faraway
returns as a primitive countryside, as if earth
were still creating itself to meet Adam, descending
to the ground floor from his paradise. Then I say:
That's our land over there pregnant with us … When was it
that we were born? Did Adam get married twice? Or will we
be born a second time
to forget sin?

(Translated from the Arabic by Fadyjoudah)

APPENDICES





After Israel banned Representative Rashida Tlaib from visiting her sitty (grandmother) in the West Bank in 2019, #MyPalestinianSitty trended on social media as Palestinians shared stories honoring their fierce grandmothers. Jewish Voice for Peace's Bubbie Brigade of Jewish women elders (here, Pamela Sporn) took to the streets of New York City to express their solidarity.

Photo by Jake Ratner

JVP's Approach to Zionism

JANUARY 2019

"Solidarity is the political version of love."

– Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz,
Jewish American lesbian feminist, author, and activist (1945–2018)

Jewish Voice for Peace is guided by a vision of justice, equality, and freedom for all people. We unequivocally oppose Zionism because it is counter to those ideals.

We know that opposing Zionism, or even discussing it, can be painful, can strike at the deepest trauma and greatest fears of many of us. Zionism is a nineteenth-century political ideology that emerged in a moment when Jews were defined as irrevocably outside of a Christian Europe. European antisemitism threatened and ended millions of Jewish lives—in pogroms, in exile, and in the Holocaust.

Through study and action, through deep relationship with Palestinians fighting for their own liberation, and through our own understanding of Jewish safety and self-determination, we have come to see that Zionism was a false and failed answer to the desperately real question many of our ancestors faced of how to protect Jewish lives from murderous antisemitism in Europe.

While it had many strains historically, the Zionism that took hold and stands today is a settler-colonial movement, establishing an apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others. Our own history teaches us how dangerous this can be.

Palestinian dispossession and occupation are by design. Zionism has meant profound trauma for generations, systematically separating Palestinians from their homes, land, and each other. Zionism, in practice, has resulted in massacres of Palestinian people; ancient villages and olive groves have been destroyed; families who live just a mile away from each other are now separated by checkpoints and walls; and children still hold the keys of the homes from which their grandparents were forcibly exiled.

Because the founding of the state of Israel was based on the idea of a "land without people," Palestinian existence itself is resistance. We are all the more humbled by the vibrance, resilience, and steadfastness of Palestinian life, culture, and organizing. It is a deep refusal of a political ideology founded on erasure.

In sharing our stories with one another, we see the ways that Zionism has also harmed Jewish people. Many of us have learned from Zionism to treat our neighbors with suspicion, to forget the ways Jews built home and community over the centuries, wherever we found ourselves to be. Jewish people have had long and integrated histories in the Arab world and North Africa, living

among and sharing community, language, and custom with Muslims and Christians.

By creating a racist hierarchy with European Jews at the top, Zionism has erased those histories and destroyed those communities and relationships. In Israel, Jewish people of color—from the Arab world, North Africa, and East Africa—have long been subjected to systemic discrimination and violence by the Israeli government. That racist hierarchy also creates Jewish spaces where Jews of color are marginalized, our identities and commitments questioned and interrogated, and our experiences invalidated. It prevents us from seeing each other—fellow Jews and other fellow human beings—in our full humanity.

Zionist interpretations of history have taught us that Jewish people are alone, that, to remedy the harms of antisemitism, we must think of ourselves as always under attack, and that we cannot trust others. It teaches us fear, and that the best response to fear is a bigger gun, a taller wall, a more humiliating checkpoint.

Rather than accept the inevitability of occupation and dispossession, we choose a different path. We learn from the anti-Zionist Jews who came before us, and know that as long as Zionism has existed, so has Jewish dissent to it. Especially as we face the violent antisemitism fueled by white nationalism in the United States today, we choose solidarity. We choose collective liberation. We choose a future where everyone, including Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, can live their lives freely in vibrant, safe, equitable communities, with basic human needs fulfilled. Join us.

A Timeline of Zionism

CARA LEVINE AND GABRIELLE SPEAR

1843	Christian Restorationist Alexander Keith publishes an early version of the phrase that becomes remembered as “A land without a people for a people without a land” (*The Land of Israel According to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob*, 1843).
1878	First agricultural Zionist settlement in Palestine, Petah Tikva, founded.
1881	First Aliyah begins, a relatively small wave of Jewish immigration mostly from Russia, amid rampant pogroms.
1884	Reverend William Hechler writes *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine According to the Prophets*, prophesying a Jewish “restoration” to Palestine in 1897.
1896	Theodor Herzl writes *The Jewish State*, seminal text of the Zionist movement, which, upon reading, prompts Hechler to lend his political connections and support to Herzl.
1897	World Zionist Organization is established and hosts the first World Zionist Congress.
1899	Jewish Colonial Trust founded to serve as a bank providing capital and credit to the Zionist movement.
1901	Jewish National Fund set up to acquire land for settlement.
1902	Philosopher Martin Buber becomes editor of the leading Zionist newspaper, *Die Welt*.
1907	First kibbutz established during the Second Aliyah wave of Jewish settlement.
1909	Tel Aviv established.
	HaShomer becomes first militant “self-defense” Jewish group in Palestine.
1916	Sykes-Picot Agreement divides Ottoman territory between the British and the French, creating the British Mandate of Palestine.
1917	British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, who as prime minister championed the 1905 Aliens Act to keep Jewish pogrom refugees out of Britain, issues Balfour Declaration announcing British support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine.
1920	Haganah, the underground Jewish military and forerunner of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), formed with British support.

	Winston Churchill pens “Zionism versus Bolshevism,” advocating support for Zionism to combat the fervor of Jewish internationalist revolutionary activity.
1929	Haganah begins smuggling arms into Palestine.
	Irgun, also referred to as Etzel, splits off from the Haganah, forming an anti-British and aggressively anti-Arab militant organization.
1933	Hitler’s rise to power and the world’s refusal to provide asylum to Jewish refugees leads to an increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine beyond those Jews who had settled earlier for ideological reasons.
1935	Haganah arms smuggling is discovered at Jaffa, sparking the Great Palestinian Revolt. The Great Palestinian Revolt was the longest sustained rebellion against British Mandate control of Palestine.
1936–39	The British military, in collaboration with Irgun and Haganah, kills 5,000 Palestinians in retaliation for the Great Palestinian Revolt.
1939	British government issues White Paper following suppression of Palestinian Revolt, nullifies Balfour Declaration, states objective of an “independent Palestine State” of Arabs and Jews, and limits Jewish immigration.
1942	In opposition to the White Paper, Zionists adopt the Biltmore Program, formalizing the call for a Jewish state.
1947	United Nations Resolution 181 partitions historic Palestine into a Jewish state and Palestinian state. Mass expulsion begins.
1948 March	Haganah launches Plan Dalet, a blueprint for destroying and depopulating Palestinian villages.
April	Zionist paramilitary groups massacre over 100 Palestinians at Deir Yassin.
May	Israel declares statehood, prompting a war with neighboring countries; forms the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF); and occupies land beyond that partitioned in 1947, creating borders known as the Green Line.
Dec	United Nations passes Resolution 194 establishing the Palestinian right of return.
1949	War with neighboring countries ends, leaving 750,000 Palestinians displaced and exiled.
1950	Israel passes its Law of Return, stating any Jewish person in the world can live in Israel and receive citizenship.
1956	Israel invades the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, backed by England and France, in order to gain access to the Suez Canal.
1950s–60s	The height of the Jewish Zionist summer camp movement in the United States; many summer camps were socialist or labor Zionist and bolstered American Zionism.
	Israel attacks its neighbors and takes over the Egyptian Sinai, the Syrian Golan Heights,

1967	Egyptian-controlled Gaza, the Jordanian-controlled West Bank, and East Jerusalem. 300,000 Palestinians are exiled, and all remaining Palestinians are placed under Israeli occupation.
1975	United Nations adopts Resolution 3379, naming Zionism as a form of racism.
1978	Camp David Accords lead to a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, which includes the return of the Sinai Peninsula.
1979	Reverend Jerry Falwell founds the Moral Majority, a Christian evangelical organization that strongly supports Israel, invigorating Christian Zionism. The movement believes Jews taking over the biblical land of Israel will bring about the second coming of Christ and the end of the world; according to the prophecy, all non-converts to Christianity will be killed.
1980	Israel passes the Jerusalem Law, declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel and effectively annexing East Jerusalem. International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is founded by Evangelical Christians supporting the move.
1981	Israel officially annexes the Syrian Golan Heights.
1982	Israel invades Lebanon, where the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is based. In September 1982, the Lebanese Phallange, a right-wing Christian party, and the IDF collude in the massacre of 3,500 Palestinian and Lebanese Shiites in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut. The PLO is expelled. Israel occupies South Lebanon until 2000.
1987	The First Intifada (Arabic for “shaking off”) begins. Israel responds to the uprisings with large-scale and systematic injuries.
1993	The first of two Oslo Accords is signed between Israel and the PLO, heightening the rhetoric of a two-state solution (without realizing it) and creating an interim Palestinian Authority with limited power.
1994	Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty.
1995	The Oslo II Accords are signed, fragmenting the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C, each with different levels of Israeli control.
2002	As retaliation for the Second Intifada, Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank, the largest ground assault on the region since 1967. Israel begins construction of apartheid wall.
2004	Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announces Unilateral Disengagement Plan from Gaza.
2005	Israel’s Unilateral Disengagement Plan from Gaza begins. Thousands of Israeli settlers leave the region. Palestinian Authority governs Gaza, but Israel controls Gaza’s borders.
2006	American Pastor and televangelist John Hagee founds Christians United for Israel, which becomes the largest pro-Israel organization in the United States with 2,000,000 members.
2007	Hamas takes control of Gaza, and Israel begins imposing blockade on the region.
2008–09	Israel launches three-week assault on Gaza known as Operation Cast Lead, resulting in the killing of 1,400 Palestinians. Israel destroys Gaza’s infrastructure, leaving Gaza reliant on aid.

2014	Israel launches a seven-week siege on Gaza known as “Operation Protective Edge,” resulting in the killing of over 1,800 Gazans.
2017	U.S. President Trump recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, making good on his campaign promise to Christian Zionists, and orders relocation of the U.S. embassy.
2018	Trump opens U.S. embassy in Jerusalem, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of Israeli apartheid.
	Knesset (Israeli parliament) passes the Nation-State Law, enshrining Israel as a Jewish-only state and entrenching an apartheid system.
2020	Israel halts large-scale annexation of the West Bank on the condition that diplomatic relations are established with the United Arab Emirates. Normalized relations with Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan soon follow.

An Abbreviated History of Resistance to Zionism

JAY SAPER

1885	American Reform Movement of Judaism adopts the Pittsburgh Platform recognizing a "universal culture of heart and intellect" opposed to Zionism.
1897	Union of German Rabbis protests Theodor Herzl's First Zionist Congress, forcing its relocation from Munich to Basel, Switzerland.
	Central Conference of American Rabbis issues resolution denouncing Zionism, affirms the object of Judaism is "peace, justice, and love."
	The General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia, known as the Bund, is founded. The anti-Zionist group promotes Yiddish and *doikayt* (hereness), entailing a struggle for rights in the diaspora and justice for all oppressed groups.
1898	Writer Nathan Birnbaum, originator of the term Zionism, breaks with the movement over its negative view of Jews in the diaspora.
1899	Mayor of Jerusalem Yusuf Diya al-Din Pasha al-Khalidi writes in a letter given to Herzl, "In the name of God, let Palestine be left alone."
1901	Historian Simon Dubnow, rejecting both Zionism and assimilation, advocates for autonomism as a movement for diasporic rights and Yiddish culture.
1903	Chaim Zhitlovsky, socialist philosopher, rejects Herzl's request for the Bund to stop its revolutionary struggle against Russian Tsar and embrace Zionism: "We will not renounce the path upon which we have embarked—the path of the revolutionary struggle against the Russian government, which should also lead to the freedom of the Jewish people."
1905	Satmar Hasidic sect is founded in Hungary. Grand Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum denounces Zionism as an imminent danger to the Jewish people.
	Najib Nassar begins publishing anti-Zionist *al-Karmil* newspaper in Haifa, later shares editing duties with his wife, Sadhij Baha'i.
1913	Ahad Ha'am protests the Zionist boycott of Palestinian labor: "And if this be the Messiah, I do not wish to see him coming."
1917	Edwin Montagu, only Jewish member of the British Cabinet, sharply pushes back against the Balfour Declaration as an invitation for antisemites around the world to expel their Jewish populations, condemning Zionism as a "mischievous political creed."

1919	First Palestinian Arab Conference denounces the Balfour Declaration.
1920	Palestinians revolt during the festival of Nebi Musa in response to escalating tensions caused by the Balfour Declaration.
1920s	Sephardic rabbis in Palestine order their communities to refuse the attempt of the British Mandate government to register every Jew under the Zionist National Council.
1921	Palestinian Women's Union leads demonstrations against the Balfour Declaration.
1922	Palestinian politician Jamal al-Husseini invites Mizrahi Jews to join in forming a united front with Palestinians against Zionism: "To our Jewish compatriots, who have understood the goals of the Zionist movement and the damage it will cause, we open our arms to them today and call: Come to us! We are your friends!"
1925	Martin Buber breaks with the Zionist movement for trampling on Palestinian rights and becomes active in a group called Brit Shalom, for the creation of a bi-national state.
1929	Buraq Revolt takes place in response to the raising of the Zionist flag at the Western Wall and to escalation in immigration and land purchases.
	First Palestinian Arab Women's Congress convenes in Jerusalem.
1932	Leaders of Mizrahi groups meet in Jaffa to discuss holding a Jewish-Arab summit.
	Palestinian Independence Party, Hizb al-Istiqlal, is founded in opposition to British imperialism and Zionism.
	Arab Youth Congress meets in Jaffa.
1933	Palestinian women demonstrate at holy sites in protest of British General Allenby's visit.
1936–39	Jews from the Palestine Communist Party and across the world travel to Spain to support the internationalist struggle against Francisco Franco, calling "For your freedom and ours."
	Great Palestinian Revolt begins with a general strike in Jaffa, setting in motion the longest sustained rebellion against the British Mandate control of Palestine.
1938	Neturei Karta, religious group of Haredi Jews, breaks from Orthodox political party Agudath Israel, forming their own anti-Zionist Orthodox sect.
	Emma Goldman, the most prominent voice within the vibrant Jewish anarchist movement, denounces Zionism as "machinery to protect the privileges of the few against the many."
1942	Hashomer Hatzair, socialist-Zionist youth movement, advocates for a bi-national community instead of a Jewish state, voting against the Biltmore Program.
	Reform rabbis, led by Elmer Berger, create the American Council for Judaism to oppose Zionism and support a democratic Palestine with equal rights for all.
1943	Broad coalitions of Jews, in face of global indifference to genocide, rise up against the Nazis in Poland's Warsaw ghetto, as well as ghettos, camps, and forests across Europe, asserting right to

	live in the diaspora.
1944	National Liberation League in Palestine emerges from the Palestine Communist Party.
1945	Iraqi Jewish intellectuals found the Anti-Zionist League.
	Arab League begins economic boycott of goods supporting Zionist political ambitions.
1947	Arab Higher Committee calls for general strike to protest the adoption of the United Nations Partition Resolution.
1947–1948	Arab League forms the Arab Liberation Army, enlisting volunteers to fight back against the unfolding Nakba.
	Jewish intellectuals, including Hannah Arendt and Albert Einstein, condemn the terrorist attack on Palestinian village Deir Yassin and denounce Irgun commander Menachem Begin as fascist.
	Democratic Arab Women Movement and the Progressive Jewish Women Movement merge to form TANDI, the Movement for Democratic Women in Israel.
	Jewish musician and pacifist Joseph Abileah, regarding Palestinians as his brothers and not enemies, becomes the first person in Israel to go on trial for refusing to join the military.
1949	U.S. attorney and author Alfred Lilienthal writes in the *Reader's Digest* "Israel's Flag Is Not Mine."
	Palestinians in Gaza begin crossing the Israeli border to collect crops from their fields, search for family members, as well as participate in militant *Fedayeen* activity.
1951	Henri Curiel, along with fellow exiled Jewish-Egyptian Communists in Paris, forms the anti-Zionist Rome Group.
1952	Albert Einstein turns down offer to become president of Israel: "My awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state."
1956	Anti-colonial Jews, including Algerian Daniel Timsit, fight against France in the Algerian War of Independence.
1957	Palestinians in Israel found al-Ard underground movement.
1958	Druze youth in Palestine, opposing Israeli conscription, form Free Druze Young People Organization, which later grows into Druze Initiative Committee to support conscientious objectors.
1959	Fatah is founded as the secular Palestinian national liberation movement.
1961	Mahmoud Darwish, national poet of Palestine, faces first of several arrests for poetry and activism.
1962	Matzpen is founded, calling for revolutionary struggle and full equality for Palestinians.
1964	Palestine Liberation Organization is founded as an umbrella political organization of the Palestinian national movement.

1965	General Union of Palestinian Women is founded.
1967	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is founded, advocating for secular democratic Palestine.
	Moroccan political prisoner Abraham Serfaty writes “Being a Jewish Moroccan and Fighting Against Israel” (Parti de Libération et Socialisme, *al-Kifah al-Watani*, July 1967).
1968	SIACH Israeli student movement, influenced by global New Left, grows in opposition to the occupation.
1969	Leila Khaled, PFLP member, hijacks plane in effort to bring attention to the plight of Palestinians.
	Anti-Zionist Holocaust survivor Israel Shahak organizes a sit-in of Hebrew University faculty to protest the Israeli administrative detention of Palestinian students. Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights elects Shahak chair.
1970	Black Panther Party issues statement proclaiming support for the Palestinian struggle.
	Young Lords publish “Free Palestine Now!” in *Palante* newspaper.
1971	Inspired by the revolt against racism in the United States, Mizrahi activists form the Israeli Black Panther Party (IBPP) to confront racism in Israeli society and build solidarity with Palestinians.
1972	Palestinian Black September Organization takes Israeli athletes hostage at Summer Olympics in Munich, demanding release of prisoners held in Israel. Eleven Israelis killed.
1973	American Jews found Breira to challenge unquestioned support for Israel.
1974	Mahmoud Bakir Hijazi becomes first Palestinian political prisoner released from Israeli prison, initiating annual Palestinian Prisoners Day (April 17) commemoration.
1976	IDF murders Palestinians protesting land theft, initiating annual commemoration of Land Day (March 30) to honor Palestinian resistance.
1977	Members of the Black Panthers and Israeli Communist Party found Hadash, building a coalition of Mizrahim, Palestinians, and Ashkenazim.
1978	Women’s Work Committee is established in Ramallah on International Women’s Day.
	Jewish Alliance Against Zionism, formed in San Francisco in outrage to Israel’s invasion of Lebanon and unjust treatment of Palestinians, issues statement of principles denouncing Zionism and U.S. military support for Israel.
1979	Holocaust survivor Felicia Langer defends Nablus mayor Bassam Shakaa against deportation order for criticizing Camp David peace agreement.
	al-Haq is established in Ramallah to protect and promote human rights.
	Edward Said publishes his essay, “Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims” (*Social Text*,

	Winter 1979).
1980	New Jewish Agenda is founded as an outspoken U.S. group for the rights of Palestinians and queer Jews.
1981	Committee for Solidarity with Birzeit University protests Israel's closure of the university.
1892	Committee Against the War in Lebanon is formed.
1983	Mubarak Awad founds the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence in Jerusalem.
1984	The Alternative Information Center-AIC, an anti-Zionist Jewish Palestinian news and political education organization, is formed jointly by Israeli activists from Matzpen-Jerusalem and left-wing Palestinian activists from Beit Sahour in the West Bank.
1987	First Intifada begins period of intense Palestinian uprising, much of which is led by women activists. Women's committees, local unions, mutual aid networks, student associations, and political party chapters throughout Palestine unify to create localized "popular committees" rooted in radical democratic management of their neighborhood and villages.
	The Stone Theater in Jenin refugee camp, predecessor to the Freedom Theater, begins to foster cultural resistance.
	Hamas is founded.
1988	Women in Black, a feminist antimilitarist organization, begins weekly demonstrations in Jerusalem.
	Clare Kinberg, Irena Klepfisz, and Grace Paley, in the United States, form the Jewish Women's Committee to End the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.
	Rabbis for Human Rights is founded in Israel.
	Ella Shohat publishes "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims" (*Social Text*, Autumn 1988). Initiates wave of Sephardi and Mizhrahi feminist critique of Zionism.
	The "New Historians" emerge to interrogate declassified Israeli government papers—evidence of massacres, expulsions, and other crimes against humanity are uncovered within the Israeli government's own files.
1989	Beit Sahour refuses to pay taxes to Israel.
	Reverend Naim Ateek formulates Palestinian Liberation Theology, eventually founding Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.
	The organization B'Tselem forms in Jerusalem to document and combat denial of human rights violations by Israeli forces in the West Bank.
1992	Addameer is founded in Ramallah and begins supporting Palestinian political prisoners.
1993	Students for Justice in Palestine is formed in UC Berkeley and grows into a national network.

1996	Jewish Voice for Peace is founded in the San Francisco Bay Area as a grassroots organization to support justice for Palestinians and receives support from Judith Butler, Noam Chomsky, and Naomi Klein.
	Haifa-based Adalah, Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, is formed; over ensuing years, Palestinians of ’48 (those who remained after the state of Israel was established) send several cases to the Israeli High Court.
1997	Four Mothers, an antiwar movement named after the biblical matriarchs and led by Israeli mothers, calls for an end to the occupation of southern Lebanon. Militant offshoot, the Red Line, later emerges.
	Nelson Mandela declares, “Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.”
	Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions is founded, advocating for a single democratic state.
	Disparate tribes of Bedouin in the Naqab Desert unite, organizing themselves into the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (RCUV).
1998	Feminist activists in Israel launch New Profile, a movement to demilitarize Israeli society.
1999	Mossawa Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel is established.
2000	Second Intifada begins intense period of Palestinian uprising.
	al-Awda, the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, is founded.
	Ta’ayush grassroots movement of Palestinians and Jews is founded.
	Coalition of Women for Peace is founded.
2001	U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights builds national network.
	Israeli feminist peace activists begin documenting human rights abuses at checkpoints, founding Machsom (or Checkpoint) Watch.
	Eyewitness Palestine begins activist delegations to Palestine, originally as Interfaith Peace-Builders project of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.
2002	Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, calls for an end to Israeli apartheid.
	Zochrot, Israeli organization, begins to challenge Israeli public about ongoing injustices of the Nakba and supports the right of Palestinian refugees to return.
	Yaakov Manor, Israeli human rights activist, founds the Harvest Coalition. Solidarity activists accompany Palestinians during olive harvest to fend off settler violence.
2003	In March, an Israeli bulldozer operator kills U.S. activist Rachel Corrie while she defends a Palestinian home from demolition in Gaza as part of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). Less than three weeks later, in Jenin, Israeli forces shoot ISM activist Brian Avery in the face and he barely survives. Within a week, ISM activist Tom Hurndall is killed by a sniper

	while escorting children to safety from Israeli gunfire in Gaza.
	Budrus, Palestinian village, begins holding weekly demonstrations against the construction of the apartheid wall, forcing its rerouting. Israelis form Anarchists Against the Wall to take direct action in solidarity with Palestinians rising up against the expropriation of their lands.
	Palestinian, Ethiopian, Mizrahi, and refugee communities form Coalition Against Racism in Israel.
2004	Former Israeli soldiers establish Breaking the Silence to protest military occupation of a civilian population.
2005	Palestinian BDS National Committee is founded as a broad civil society coalition leading the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement for Palestinian rights.
	Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall begins weekly demonstrations.
	Students at the University of Toronto hold the first Israeli Apartheid Week, which spreads to other campuses across the globe.
2006	American Muslims for Palestine is founded in California.
2007	al-Qaws for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Palestinian Society is founded to build a vibrant, just, and queer-inclusive Palestinian society.
	Gazans construct tunnels to Egypt and Israel, to defy blockade and procure necessary humanitarian supplies.
2008	Youth Against Settlements begins pressuring for the opening of Shuhada Street and recognition of human rights in al-Khalil (Hebron).
	Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem installs massive Key of Return on the entrance gate to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Nakba and assert the right of return.
	Queers Against Israeli Apartheid is founded in Toronto, Canada, to challenge pinkwashing, the use of gay rights to divert international attention from the violation of Palestinian human rights.
	International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network is established.
2009	Palestinian Christians issue Kairos Document, a theological statement calling for an end to the occupation.
	Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity Movement emerges to stop the forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem.
	Silwan Defense Committee protests demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem.
	Jews Say No! begins holding monthly demonstrations on Manhattan's Upper West Side.
2010	Gaza Freedom Flotilla, sailing from Turkey and Greece, defies blockade, attempts to deliver humanitarian aid and construction materials to the Gaza Strip.

	Laylac Palestinian Youth Action Center at the Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem is founded.
2011	Palestinian Freedom Riders, inspired by the tactic used in the U.S. Black Freedom Movement, ride on an Israeli commuter bus and face arrest.
	High Steering Committee of the Arabs of the Naqab protests displacement of the Bedouin from this desert region in southern Palestine, also known as the Negev.
	Indigenous and women of color feminists delegation from the United States, led by Rabab Abdulhadi, Palestinian-American professor and organizer, visits Palestine.
2012	Chicago-based Palestine Legal begins supporting rights of those who speak out for Palestinian freedom.
	Critical educators in Israel launch This is Not an Ulpan to counter Zionist narratives pervasive in Hebrew education programs, and promote language learning as a tool for social justice.
2013	Defense for Children International-Palestine and American Friends Service Committee challenge ill treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention with No Way to Treat a Child Campaign.
2014	Grassroots al-Quds, Palestinian organization started in 2011, publishes *Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem*, putting Palestinian existence in Jerusalem back on the map.
	Young Jews gather in Manhattan to recite the Mourner's Kaddish for Palestinians killed during the siege on Gaza, founding IfNotNow.
	Ferguson Uprising, following the August 9, 2014, police killing of Michael Brown, unarmed Black teen in Ferguson, MO, reinvigorates legacy of Black and Palestinian solidarity embodied for decades by Angela Davis and expressed in the Movement for Black Lives Policy Platform.
2015	Galilean poet Dareen Tatour posts on Facebook and YouTube "Resist, My People, Resist Them" and faces imprisonment for "inciting terrorism."
	International activists replant trees uprooted by the IDF at the Tent of Nations, Daoud Nassar's farm near Bethlehem, giving birth to the Center for Jewish Nonviolence.
2016	Palestinian Youth Movement issues statement of solidarity against colonization from Standing Rock to Palestine.
2017	Palestinians pray outside the entrance to al-Aqsa Mosque, refusing to enter in protest of the installation of metal detectors and surveillance cameras.
	New York communities, including Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, support Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour in delivering commencement addresses at the City University of New York after she is attacked for anti-Zionism.
	Sixteen-year-old Ahed Tamimi slaps an Israeli soldier who walks onto her family's land with a rifle slung around his neck in Nabi Saleh, site of weekly demonstrations since Israeli settlers seized land and a spring from the village in 2009. She was charged with assault, incitement, and throwing stones, and spent months in Israeli prison.

	Adalah Justice Project emerges from the U.S. chapter of Adalah—the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel.
2018	Great March of Return begins weekly demonstrations in Gaza, demanding the right of Palestinian refugees to return, and continues despite violent suppression. Jewish Voice for Peace activists face arrest in the United States for protesting the refusal of U.S. politicians to denounce the bloodshed.
	The website “Against Canary Mission” begins countering attacks on anti-Zionist activists.
	Marc Lamont Hill delivers impassioned speech to the United Nations, supporting Palestinian right to self-determination, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.
2019	U.S. Representative Rashida Tlaib plans congressional delegation to Palestine. Israel ultimately bars their entry.
	Josef Gluck, administrator of Orthodox synagogue next door to a Chanukah party in Monsey, New York, prevents massacre by throwing coffee table at machete-wielding attacker. Gluck turns down an award from the Anti-Defamation League because of its embrace of Zionism: “I was not willing to offer my soul.”
2020	Maher al-Akhras, a West Bank resident detained by Israel without charge, goes on hunger strike, a widely used tactic by Palestinian political prisoners, for 103 days to protest his administrative detention.
2021	Broad international coalition calls on Israel to end medical apartheid and provide Covid-19 vaccines to Palestinians.
	Palestinian Feminist Collective, a U.S.-based Palestinian and Arab organization, advocates for Palestinian liberation as a critical feminist issue.
	Palestinians stage general strike to protest Israel’s latest bombardment of Gaza, round of housing evictions, and escalation in racist attacks. Solidarity demonstrations held across the globe.

GLOSSARY

Aliyah The act of a Jewish person immigrating to Israel; “making Aliyah” is a basic tenet and aspiration of Zionism. Literally meaning “ascent” in Hebrew, the term implies Jews in the diaspora are beneath those who live in Israel.

Annexation The forcible acquisition of territory by one state or people at the expense of another state or people. Both the Fourth Geneva Convention and the United Nations Charter define such acquisition as a form of conquest in armed conflict situations and a prohibited form of aggression when exercised by an occupying power. (See Occupation, Law of Belligerent Occupation, below.)

Anti-Defamation League Jewish-led civil rights organization founded in the United States in 1913 to combat antisemitism and other forms of hate. In recent decades, critics have pointed to its resolutely Zionist positions and definition of a “new antisemitism” as efforts to shut down criticisms of Israel and foment Islamophobia.

Area C Area of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, designated by the 1992 Oslo Accords as temporarily under full Israeli control but intended gradually to transfer to Palestinian jurisdiction. With over 60 percent of the West Bank’s territory, Area C remains occupied and controlled by Israel; nearly 400,000 Jewish settlers have colonized the area. Palestinians have limited governance over Areas A and B.

Ashkenazi/Ashkenazim (pl.) Jews of Central and Eastern European origin who historically spoke Yiddish. The vast majority of U.S. Jews are Ashkenazi. In Israel, they are a minority but hold more power in government and other institutions than do any other group, including Jews of North African and Middle Eastern descent. (See Mizrahi/Mizrahim and Sephardi/Sephardim, below.)

Balfour Declaration A public statement contained in a letter from Lord Balfour, Britain’s Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, in November 1917, declaring Britain’s support for establishing a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. This was a key step in Zionist aspirations to found a Jewish state.

Bar Mitzvah Religious ceremony by which a 13-year-old Jewish boy becomes considered a man by the Jewish community.

Bat Mitzvah Religious ceremony by which a 13-year-old Jewish girl becomes considered a

woman by the Jewish community.

B'nai B'rith (in Hebrew, "Children of the Covenant") The oldest and largest Jewish service organization founded in 1843, with chapters across the globe. B'nai B'rith International is dedicated in modern times to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, as well as to combating antisemitism and bigotry.

BDS The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement, launched by Palestinian civil society in 2005 as a nonviolent means of pressuring Israel to comply with international law. It was inspired by the successful South African anti-apartheid movement.

Birthright Birthright Israel, a program that, since 1999, has given over 500,000 young Jews from around the world free trips to Israel in order to inculcate them with a Zionist worldview. The organization is funded by the Israeli government as well as wealthy U.S.-based donors and Zionist organizations.

Canaan Ancient region and civilization spanning parts of present-day Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, but often used to refer to the land west of the Jordan River. In the Old Testament (Torah), God promises the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants.

COINTELPRO Shortened name of the "Counter-Intelligence Program" carried out by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1956–1971. Originally formed to combat the U.S. Communist Party, it used surveillance, infiltration, assassination, and other disruptive tactics to crush and divide left-wing groups like the Black Panthers and others, such as anti-Vietnam War, feminist, environmentalist, LGBTQ+, Puerto Rican independence, and civil rights groups.

Covenant of the League of Nations International agreement signed at the end of the First World War to promote peace and stability. The Covenant established the Mandate system by which colonies/territories of defeated Germany and the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine, would be controlled by Western powers.

Damascus Gate Also called Bab al-Amoud, one of the historic gates to the Old City of Jerusalem and a popular place for Palestinians to gather, socialize, and protest. Israel has set up checkpoints for Palestinians entering the occupied Old City, imposed heavy military restrictions, and killed scores of Palestinians there.

Deadly Exchanges Programs that connect local and federal U.S. agencies (police, ICE, border patrol, and FBI) with their Israeli counterparts to promote and exchange their worst practices, including racial profiling, massive surveillance, deportation and detention, and targeting of human rights defenders. Jewish Voice for Peace popularized the phrase with its campaign of the same name against these programs.

Deir Yassin Palestinian village whose residents were massacred by Jewish terrorist groups, Haganah and the Stern Gang, on April 8, 1948. The massacre, in which over one hundred unarmed Palestinians were slaughtered, is thought to have initiated the Nakba (see below) and the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. It was intended by Jewish military planners to intimidate

Palestinians into fleeing historic Palestine en masse.

Eid al Fitr Major Muslim holiday, the "Festival of Breaking the Fast," that marks the end of the month of Ramadan.

Fatah Secular, democratic, socialist Palestinian national liberation movement founded in 1959, which became a political party in 1965 and the dominant faction within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (see **PLO,** below) under Yasser Arafat. Today, Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, is also Chairman of Fatah.

Great March of Return Weekly nonviolent protests that took place in Gaza, 2018–2019, spurred by youth from Gazan civil society (not Hamas). Tens of thousands of Palestinians protested against the blockade of Gaza and demanded the right to return to their homes in historic Palestine. Israel responded brutally, killing 214 and injuring over 36,000 Gazans.

Green Line The de facto border of Israel from 1949 to 1967, delineating the boundaries of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Since the 1967 War, Israel has pushed its military control, settlement-building, and apartheid wall (see **Separation Wall,** below) far past the Green Line, which now exists in imagination only.

Hadassah Charitable organization also known as the Women's Zionist Organization of America, which operates hospitals and youth programs. Also the largest supporter of the Jewish National Fund (see below), which "reclaimed" land seized from its Palestinian owners. Currently implicated in funding West Bank settlements.

Haganah A Zionist militia formed during the British Mandate period that carried out terrorist attacks against both Palestinians and the British. In 1948, it was reconstituted as the official army of the state of Israel, known as the Israeli Defense Forces. (See **IDF/IOF,** below.)

Hamas Palestinian nationalist-Islamic movement founded in 1987 and political party that rules Israeli-besieged Gaza. Hamas moderated its religious-fundamentalist and classically antisemitic positions after winning popular elections in Gaza in 2006. As an organized military force that resists Israeli aggression, Hamas has long been considered a terrorist organization by the United States, European Union, and, of course, Israel.

Haredi Fundamentalist, ultra-conservative, often right-wing Jews who reject secularism and modernity and self-segregate in their own communities. They are exempt from military service, and Haredi men receive state subsidies for full-time Torah study. Some sects hold staunchly anti-Zionist beliefs and, as a result, refuse both to accept this money and to cooperate with the Israeli government in any way.

Hasbara Literally "explanation" in Hebrew. In ordinary usage, the word refers to Israeli government propaganda that works to whitewash the occupation and shape Western public opinion, thereby foreign policy. Israel maintains a Ministry of Hasbara which operates, in part, via NGOs and numerous social media "influencers."

IDF/IOF Israel Defense Forces, the U.S.-funded Israeli military responsible for carrying out the occupation and policing of the West Bank and the siege of Gaza. Often referred to by Palestinians and allies as the "Israel Occupation Forces" to indicate their offensive purposes.

Iftar The evening meal, eaten after sunset, with which Muslims break their daily fasts during the month of Ramadan.

IHRA (regarding definition of antisemitism) In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance put out a working definition whose examples of "hatred toward Jews" include "claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." This has been interpreted by Zionists to mean that criticisms of Israel and of Zionism are intrinsically antisemitic. U.S. national and state officials and media corporations such as Facebook have used this definition to shut down critics of Israel and deny funding to critics of Israel. (See **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism,** below).

Intifada (First and Second) Popular Palestinian uprisings across the Occupied Territories and Israel, 1987–1993 and 2000–2005. The First Intifada consisted largely of nonviolent demonstrations and boycotts, but the Second was far bloodier, including suicide bombings and rocket fire. Both were brutally and disproportionately repressed by Israel, which meted out collective military punishment on civilians.

Iron Dome Israel's U.S.-funded aerospace defense system to shoot down short-range rockets fired by Hamas into Israel.

Israel Nation-State Law Passed in 2018 by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), this ethno-nationalist, anti-democratic law enshrines Jewish supremacy in Israel. Among other things, it declares that Jews are "uniquely" entitled to self-determination; that settlements are a legitimate form of national development; that the sole official state language is Hebrew; and, contrary to international and U.N. agreements, that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism Document released in 2021 by a large group of international scholars in response to the IHRA definition of antisemitism (see above). In contrast, this declaration offers a more nuanced approach, saying that anti-Zionism and criticisms of Israel are not automatically antisemitic, and distinguishing between these criticisms and acts of hatred or disrespect toward Jews as Jews (whether in Israel or elsewhere).

Jewish National Fund (JNF) Powerful nonprofit organization founded in 1901 as an arm of Jewish settler colonialism in Palestine. Since 1948, with the assistance of the Israeli government, the JNF has raised and funneled enormous sums of money to secure Israeli control over Palestinian land and property (often under the pretext of "planting trees in Israel"). A law enacted in1960 gave the JNF control over 70 percent of Israel's public land.

Kibbutz/Kibbutzim (pl.) Jewish-only agricultural collectives established in Palestine, beginning in 1910, on land secured by the JNF. Collective and socialist in philosophy and in their social arrangements (for example, children live in separate quarters from their parents), they are nevertheless an integral part of Zionist colonial settlement of Palestine.

Land Day Annual holiday to honor the Palestinian struggle to hold on to their land. It commemorates six Palestinians murdered by Israel during mass protests against land expropriation plans on March 30, 1978.

League of Nations Mandate for Palestine International agreement in 1919 that established British mandatory control of Palestine. The Mandate was a paternalistic form of control that only "provisionally recognized" Palestine as an independent nation.

Maqam Centuries-old musical tradition of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, based on a system of scales, rhythms, ornamentation, melodic phrases, and improvisational conventions.

Mizrahi/Mizrahim (pl.) Jews of North African, Middle Eastern, or Central Asian background. The Mizrahi identity originates with the founding of Israel and the waves of immigration from the region that followed. Mizrahim have been historically marginalized in Israel, though they comprise the majority of the country's population. (See **Ashkenazi/Ashkenazim,** above and **Sephardi/Sephardim,** below.)

Mossad Israel's national intelligence agency, which not only infiltrates Palestinian organizations such as the PLO, but also carries out undercover operations, including assassinations worldwide, in service of Israel's foreign policy and its allies (e.g., the United States).

Muezzin The crier who gives the call to prayer at a mosque, keeping faithful Muslims on their correct schedule of worship.

Nakba "Catastrophe" in Arabic, the word for the Israeli dispossession and ethnic cleansing of Palestine beginning in 1948, in which Israeli forces expelled 750,000 Palestinians, killed many hundreds, and destroyed over five hundred Palestinian villages.

Nationality Law of 1952 Israeli law that allowed all Jews from anywhere in the world to acquire Israeli citizenship, while at the same time formally forbidding the right of Palestinian refugees who fled or were expelled in 1948 to return and become citizens. This law relegated Palestinian refugees in neighboring countries to statelessness.

Nebi Musa Festival Annual Muslim festival that erupted into skirmishes between Palestinian Arabs and Jews in Nablus, Jerusalem, and elsewhere in April 1920.

Occupation, Law of Belligerent Occupation International law, Article 42 of the Hague Regulations, defining what constitutes an occupation: a temporary state during which one state's military exerts control over another state without declaring formal sovereignty.

Operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, Protective Edge Israeli military's code names for IDF invasions and bombings of Gaza, 2008–2009, 2012, and 2014, respectively.

Orientalism The Western depiction or study of aspects of the Eastern World; later, a word used by Palestinian scholar Edward Said to refer to the prejudiced views of Westerners toward the

East, shaped by centuries of imperialism. Said's foundational 1978 book *Orientalism* became a major text in the field of post-colonial cultural studies.

Oslo Accords Internationally moderated agreements, begun in 1993, between Israel and the PLO. The two sides officially recognized each other, and the PLO renounced armed resistance and sketched a path toward a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. However, the Accords, which created the unequal division of the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C (see **Area C,** above), were weak, unpopular, and ineffective in securing Palestinian self-determination.

Ottoman Empire One of the major historical world empires, with Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) as its capital. From the fourteenth century until the early twentieth, the Ottomans controlled a vast territory including Southeast and Central Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. Palestine was under Ottoman rule from 1516 until its demise at the end of the First World War.

Oud A type of lute from the Middle East and North Africa.

Payot Long sidelocks worn by many ultra-Orthodox Jewish men and boys.

PLO The Palestine Liberation Organization, founded in 1964 under the leadership of Yasser Arafat with the goal of achieving Palestinian self-determination through resistance. It has also served as an umbrella organization for different Palestinian factions and parties. In 1993, the PLO and Israel mutually recognized each other with the Oslo Accords, and Israel considers the PLO to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Ramadan The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed from sunrise to sunset in fasting, prayer, reflection, and community by Muslims throughout the world.

Separation Wall Enormous barrier that Israel began constructing in 2003, after the Second Intifada, for alleged security purposes to separate Israel '48 from the West Bank. In reality, the Wall, expected to reach a length of 440 miles upon completion, serves as a tool of apartheid and annexation, ghettoizing Palestinians into Bantustans while protecting Israeli settlements inside the West Bank.

Sephardi/Sephardim (pl.) Jews who trace their ancestors to the Iberian Peninsula of Spain and Portugal. (See **Ashkenazi/Ashkenazim,** and **Mizrahi/Mizrahim,** above.)

Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan Neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem where dozens of Palestinian families, who fled there during the Nakba in 1948, faced new expulsion and demolition orders in May and June of 2021. These threats of another displacement of Palestinians from their homes and businesses provoked massive protests and social media campaigns (#FreeSheikhJarrah, #FreeSilwan) not only in East Jerusalem but also the West Bank, Gaza, and across the globe. Israeli forces countered with stun grenades, teargas, rubber-coated bullets, and mass arrests.

Shujaiyya A densely populated neighborhood of Gaza City indiscriminately shelled by Israel in

July 2014. The massacre killed dozens of civilians, possibly more, and buried many under the rubble of their own homes.

Six Day War (or 1967 War) Conflict begun when Israel attacked its neighbors and took over the Egyptian Sinai, the Syrian Golan Heights, Egyptian-controlled Gaza, the Jordanian-controlled West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Three hundred thousand Palestinians were exiled, and all remaining Palestinians were placed under Israeli occupation.

Sumud Literally "steadfastness" in Arabic, this is a Palestinian cultural value and political strategy of resilience and resistance in the face of the ongoing violence of oppression and colonialism.

Tatreez Traditional Palestinian embroidery, one of the most distinctive art forms practiced by Palestinian women and incorporated into their customary dress.

Tent of Nations Palestinian educational and environmental farm near Bethlehem with the mission of building connections among people and between people and the land.

Tikkun Olam Literally "repair the world" in Hebrew. Tikkun Olam is a Kabbalistic concept referring to the observance of Jewish law as a means of restoring the universe. Many American Jewish community organizations use the term to describe their social justice work.

UN Resolution 194 A resolution passed by the United Nations in 1948 establishing the Palestinian right of return to their land and, in cases where such return is impossible or undesirable, providing that appropriate compensation be paid to the refugees. This resolution has never been implemented or enforced.

UN Resolution 242 Passed by the United Nations Security Council in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six Day War, this resolution called on Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories it had taken over in that war, in exchange for long-standing peace with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Vague in its details and failing even to mention the Palestinians, this resolution, too, remains an unimplemented piece of paper.

UNRWA The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, established by UN General Assembly Resolution 302 in 1949, continues to run refugee camps and schools for children and to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. Dependent on voluntary contributions from member states and perceived as one-sided by pro-Israel groups, the agency often operates with inadequate funds.

Yom Kippur War (1973) In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in order to regain land taken over by Israel in the Six Day War. While they had early military successes, eventually the conflict ended with a ceasefire and little change of territory. The power demonstrated by the Arab coalition paved the way for the eventual peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1979, which returned the Sinai to Egypt.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dorgham Abusalim grew up in Deir Albalah, a coastal farming town south of Gaza City. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in 2012 from the College of Idaho, followed by his Master of Arts in International Affairs in 2015 from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. He currently resides in the United States where he is passionate about screenwriting.

Abdullah Aljammal is a Palestinian Jordanian who studied journalism in Egypt in the 1960s. He is now a writer, living in Amman, and very happy for the opportunity for his daughter, Shurouq Aljammal, to have translated his story for this book.

Hala Alyan is the author of the novel *Salt Houses*, winner of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize and the Arab American Book Award and a finalist for the Chautauqua Prize, as well as four award-winning collections of poetry, most recently *The Twenty-Ninth Year*. Her latest novel, *The Arsonists' City*, was released by HMH earlier this year. Her work has been published by *The New Yorker*, the Academy of American Poets, *LitHub*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *Guernica*. She lives in Brooklyn, where she works as a clinical psychologist and teaches creative writing and graduate psychology at New York University. halaalyan.com

Dr. Shirly Bahar's writing and curatorial work explores the relationships between representation, politics, and the body. Shirly teaches in the School of the Arts at Columbia University. She is also the co-director of Tzedek Lab, a network of practitioners in the Jewish social justice field. Shirly's first book, *Documentary Cinema in Israel-Palestine: Performance, the Body and Home*, is forthcoming in September 2021.

Riham Barghouti is a Palestinian-American political activist, cultural worker, and educator. She lived in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for ten years and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York, where she works as a teacher and instructional coach.

Talia Baurer is an educator, writer, and activist living in New York City. She is a self-loving anti-Zionist Jew who spends most of her time fighting for sexual and reproductive justice and a free Palestine. She wrote her essay at a crucial turning point in her own journey of confronting Zionism, and she is honored to be included in this volume alongside many whose words and work have transformed her worldview. Talia is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Health at the Hunter College School of Public Health.

Micah Bazant is a white, Jewish, transgender visual artist who works with social justice movements to reimagine the world. They create art as an act of love and solidarity with struggles

to free ourselves from Zionism, white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, and the gender binary. micahbazant.com

David Bragin is a designer and artist with a Bachelor of Industrial Design from Pratt Institute. He works as a design consultant in the commercial world, having engaged in decades of progressive activism with groups like War Resisters League, Committee of Returned Volunteers, Venceremos Brigade, and most recently, Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC.

Asaf Calderon was born and raised in Tel Aviv, graduated from Tel Aviv University and moved to the United States in 2016. He currently works as an independent Hebrew teacher and is a member of Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC. He recently graduated with an MSW at the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College.

Shirien Creates is a Palestinian artist, designer, and community organizer born and raised in Chicago. She brings her social justice organizing background into her art, seeking to challenge systems of oppression and uplift heavy and bleak topics with boldness, color, and hope. She uses her creativity as a tool to uplift social justice movements and campaigns, to amplify marginalized groups, to promote community healing, and to envision a better world. Shirien's work can be found on Instagram @shirien.creates.

Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) was born in al-Birwa village in Galilee, Palestine, to a family of landowners. After the 1948 Nakba, he went into exile in Lebanon. He returned to Palestine in 1996, dividing his residence between Ramallah and Amman. Regarded as the most distinguished Arab poet of his generation, he published more than twenty books of poetry and ten of prose, and was the recipient of many literary awards. He also edited the international literary journal *al-Karmel*, based in Ramallah. Among his books that have appeared in English are *Memory for Forgetfulness; The Adam of Two Edens; Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?*; and *The Butterfly's Burden*, from which his poem in this book was taken.

Susan Eisenberg is a poet, visual artist, and oral historian who works within and across genres. Her most recent books are *Stanley's Girl*, her fifth poetry collection, and *We'll Call You If We Need You: Experiences of Women Working Construction*. She curated the online installation, *On Equal Terms: gender and solidarity*, and speaks nationally on gender issues in the workplace.

Esther Farmer *(co-editor)* is a Palestinian Jew and a native Brooklynite whose passion is using theater as a tool for community development. She is the director of Wrestling with Zionism, a Readers Theater project that has been performed throughout the NY metropolitan area. She is the author of several published articles (Routledge) on theater and community development. She is an active member and on the leadership team of Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC.

Stefanie Fox is currently Executive Director of National Jewish Voice for Peace where she previously spent a decade on staff. She launched the organizing program and then built the organization as a whole. Prior to JVP, Stefanie spent years as a grassroots organizer, policy advocate, and educator. She holds a Masters in Public Health and a deep love for the beautiful, messy, exhilarating, sometimes-slog of grassroots movement-building toward a more just world.

Sagiv Galai grew up in a West Bank settlement, and has spent much of his life fighting against Israel's apartheid regime and military occupation. Sagiv moved to Queens, NY, as a young teen. In New York, he attended an overpoliced school, and often found himself down overpoliced streets. Sagiv's deep passion for justice stems from personal experiences. Sagiv earned his bachelor's degree in Human Rights from Bard College, where he received the New Generation Scholar award, and he is currently enrolled in the University of Washington School of Law, where he is a Gates Public Service Law Scholar.

Lena Ghannam is a Palestinian cultural worker practicing graphic design within the Palestinian liberation movement, with a background in education, architecture, and journalism. Her past includes creative direction for the DC Palestinian Film and Arts Festival and teaching architectural graphics at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design at George Washington University. She is uncompromising in her commitment to justice and the struggle for liberation through her work. lenaghannam.com

Amira Hurriya is a Palestinian organizer in New Orleans, Louisiana. Outside of working for a free Palestine, her work primarily revolves around Southern organizing, socialism, and labor.

Kenan Jaffe teaches Latin, Greek, and philosophy at a public high school in New York City. He is engaged in education and union politics as well as Jewish religious and political life.

Nadia Kader is a Brooklyn-based educator who loves storytelling, film, and art. She has participated in the Queer Storytelling project, "Queer Memoir," twice, and hopes to see the end of Zionism in her lifetime.

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz (1945–2018) was an American essayist, poet, academic, and feminist political activist. She was a founder of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ). Melanie played a pivotal role in the women's movement and the movements for LGBT rights, against racism and antisemitism, and for Palestinian rights. Among her more galvanizing ideas was what she called, in her important book, *The Colors of Jews* (2007), "radical diasporism."

Remi Kenazi is a Palestinian-American performance artist, poet, hip-hop artist, and organizer based in New York City. Recently, his commentary has been featured in news outlets throughout the world and streams widely on social media. He is the author of two collections of poetry, *Poetic Injustice: Writings on Resistance and Palestine* (2011), and *Before the Next Bomb Drops: Rising Up from Brooklyn to Palestine* (2015). remikanazi.com

Lama Khouri is a Palestinian who was born and raised in Jordan. She's a resident of New York City, where she has a private psychotherapy practice. Lama is also a clinical supervisor at the Arab American Family Support Center in Brooklyn, where she works with immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and domestic violence survivors. Her many published essays have appeared in scholarly journals of psychoanalysis and clinical psychology.

Cara Levine is a recent graduate of Middlebury College, where she studied Arabic, Gender Studies, Art History, and French, and spent a lot of time thinking about Palestinian art, memory, and the Holocaust. Currently, she is a case manager working with survivors of gender-based

violence, a sometimes substitute teacher, and an intern with the Jewish Women's Archive. She is a member, educator, and leader with Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC.

Lynne Lopez-Salzedo is a British poet, author, and artist. She has exhibited her art in London and New York and published her poetry, art criticism, and political commentary in British and American magazines.

Aurora Levins Morales is a Puerto Rican Ashkenazi Jewish poet, storyteller, activist, historian, author, and healer. Her writings are widely used in progressive synagogues around the United States. A longtime member of JVP, she is an important voice within Latina and Jewish feminism and has been active in many social justice movements, including those for Puerto Rican independence, environmental justice, disability justice, and Palestinian liberation. auroralevinsmorales.com

Nader is a Palestinian Christian from Bethlehem who immigrated to the United States sixteen years ago. An avid cook and world traveler, he is passionate about Palestine and the Palestinian struggle and wishes to move back home at some point in the future.

Naomi Shihab Nye is a writer, editor, and educator, born to a Palestinian father and an American mother. She has written or edited more than thirty books of poetry, young-adult fiction, picture books, and essays. *19 Varieties of Gazelle* was a finalist for the National Book Award. *The Tiny Journalist* won both Texas poetry prizes. She is Young People's Poet Laureate for the Poetry Foundation and lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Rachel Packer is an LA-based Jewish lesbian culture worker dedicated to creating art that makes revolution irresistible. She has created motion graphics, billboards, pamphlets, and other media for radical organizations from LA to Detroit to Philadelphia to Palestine.

Rosalind Petchesky *(co-editor)* is Distinguished Professor Emerita of Political Science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York and recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. Her research, writing, and advocacy for many years has engaged with transnational feminisms and sexual and reproductive rights. Since 2013, she has been an active member of Jewish Voice for Peace and part of the_New York City-chapter's leadership team.

Mohammed Rafik Mhawesh is a Palestinian writer who has been interested in reading and books since his childhood. He is from Gaza City in occupied Palestine, but was born and grew up in the western part of the Gaza strip. He studied English-language literature and is now working in English, teaching and writing. Mohammed is also a storywriter with the We Are Not Numbers Organization and writes on social media about the political struggles of his homeland, Palestine.

Sara Abou Rashed is a young Palestinian poet, storyteller, and public speaker. Her works appear in over twelve publications, including a grades 9–12 language arts curriculum by McGraw-Hill. Some of Sara's accolades include giving a TEDx Talk and getting nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Sara wrote and starred in her debut one-woman show, *A Map of Myself*, on immigration, hyphens, and finding home across borders. She lives in Columbus, Ohio, and

recently graduated from Denison University. Currently, Sara is pursuing an MFA in poetry at the University of Michigan. saraabourashed.com

Eman Rashid is a mother to one child and two cats, and a teacher to many adorable children who constantly make her think, laugh, and smile.

Abir Saleh is a Palestinian-American born and raised in Brooklyn, keeping to traditional roots of her Palestinian homeland. She is a mother of two and a guidance counselor working with young adults. She is passionate about social justice issues, especially the plight of the Palestinian people, as well as all marginalized people.

Jay Saper is an artist, educator, translator, and organizer who lives in Brooklyn, New York, and in Michigan. Creator of Antifascist Yiddish for Beginners, Jay blends the teaching of language with history to fortify activist communities. Jay is a Yiddish Book Center Translation Fellow, focusing on partisan poetry. Jay's papercuts of Jewish women in the resistance to the Nazis appear in the book *There Is Nothing So Whole as a Broken Heart: Mending the World as Jewish Anarchists*. Jay is a proud member of Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC.

Sarah Sills *(co-editor)* is a lifelong artist-activist, graphic designer, organizer, and event producer. Over the years she co-led a Teamsters trade union delegation to China, organized clerical workers at Columbia University, raised money for women's cooperatives in El Salvador during the civil war in the 1980s and early 1990s, and worked at a pro-Aristide Haitian newspaper. In addition to being a Jewish Voice Peace-NYC chapter leader, she is currently involved with producing storytelling workshops and the Wrestling with Zionism Readers Theater.

Gabrielle Spear is a poet and history educator raised in northwest Arkansas. Her poetry has appeared in *Anomaly*, *Fields Magazine*, *Lumina*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *Sonora Review*, *Glass: a Journal of Poetry*, and other publications. She is currently working on her first poetry collection.

Tzvia Thier, an Israeli American citizen born in Romania and a Holocaust survivor, lived in Israel most of her life. She was a Zionist educator. At the age of 65, she was exposed to the Palestinian reality and to the truth about Zionism. Tzvia became an anti-Zionist activist and has participated in JVP's work in New York City and New Jersey.

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The struggle for justice in and for Palestine and ending all racisms, including antisemitism and Islamophobia, will continue for the rest of our lives. The shared experience of producing this book affirms that, like the struggle itself, documenting the work can only happen through a loving and diverse collectivity.

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