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The section formerly called Bibliography of Periodical Literature has been renamed Bibliography of Recent Works in order to reflect the broad scope of its contents.

From the Editors



THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION has been the worst in U.S. history for the Palestinians. Given the United States' record of unconditional support for the State of Israel, this is a singular achievement. The three years of Donald Trump's presidency have included the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) mission in Washington,¹ the withholding of \$364 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA),² the suspension of \$25 million in aid to Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem,³ the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,⁴ recognition of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights,⁵ and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's double negative formulation of occupied West Bank settlements as "not inconsistent with international law."⁶ As the *Journal* went to print, the elected leader of the United States, alongside his Israeli counterpart, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—both facing trial in their respective countries—unveiled the ostensible "Deal of the Century," which promises to strip Palestinians of yet more of their land and rights.

On 11 December 2019, the Trump administration moved the dispossession of the Palestinians to new terrain, taking its cumulative record of unconditional support to even higher levels: the U.S. president signed an executive order misleadingly promoted as a way to combat anti-Semitism on university campuses. However, the executive order does nothing to protect against xenophobic and white supremacist attacks on U.S. synagogues, Jewish community centers, or individuals in the rising tide of anti-Semitism that has swept the United States since 2016.⁷ A "Dear Colleague" letter on bullying and harassment in educational institutions released by the Department of Education in 2010⁸ made clear that anti-Semitic acts such as the use of swastikas, stereotyping Jewish people, and other mobilizations of hate speech triggered school administrators' responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Jews, Sikhs, and Muslims are all groups protected from intimidation, harassment, and discrimination under Title VI, and the 2019 executive order adds no new protections to defend Jewish students against anti-Semitic attack.

The real targets of the executive order are students and faculty who work on, speak on behalf of, and/or are from Palestine. The last decade has seen a systematic and carefully orchestrated assault on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, which the executive order legitimizes and amplifies in what is now a century-long issuance of documents that repress, contain, and erase Palestinians. From the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, the Palestinians have been the unnamed objects of the very policy documents that undermine their destinies. By expanding the definition of anti-Semitism to include protests against Israeli state practices, Trump's executive order seeks to stigmatize and punish anyone who criticizes Israeli state violence or advocates for Palestinian rights.

The executive order relies on the definition of anti-Semitism developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Adopted in May 2016, this definition includes two key "contemporary examples" that allegedly threaten academic freedom and freedom of speech: "claiming that the existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavor" and "applying double standards by requiring of [Israel] a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation."⁹

This cynical weaponization of anti-Semitism renders virtually any critique of Israel racist. In recent months, the Department of Education has waged relentless attacks on academic freedom and free speech, targeting faculty, students, and programs, from the joint University of North Carolina-Duke Middle East center to New York University, and from the University of California, Los Angeles to Columbia University. In Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner's Orwellian framing, "anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism."¹⁰ Trump's executive fiat is so sweeping that the author of the IHRA definition himself, Kenneth Stern, has called Trump's adoption of it a suppression of political speech.¹¹ The executive order, which authorizes the use of federal monies to suppress the BDS movement, is, in the words of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel, "first and foremost a response to the success of the BDS movement in the U.S., and the broadening embrace among young students and progressive advocates of Palestinian human rights."¹² Digging deeper, what emerges is an attempt to control and contain what is said in the classroom and in university squares. The charge that calling out racism is itself a racist act will be familiar to many colleagues across temporal and disciplinary divides. More chilling still is the government's attempt to determine what teachers and students can or cannot say.

It is perhaps a tragic irony that at the very moment when Palestine's future appears most bleak, a nonviolent resistance movement like BDS is considered a serious threat to a state whose triumph in terms of territorial and military power has reached unprecedented heights. If nothing else, this executive order should serve as an invitation to reckon with the courtship between Zionism and white supremacy. It is in this context that the *Journal of Palestine Studies* is proud to continue carving out space for scholarship and analysis on Palestine and the Palestinians.

On the topic of quashing anti-Zionist speech and criminalizing Palestine solidarity activism, Ben White offers readers a historicized account of the Israeli government's well-resourced global campaign to undermine and suppress such activism. In his essay, "Delegitimizing Solidarity: Israel Smears Palestine Advocacy as Anti-Semitic," White shows how the concerted effort to equate Palestine advocacy and the BDS movement with anti-Semitism is taking place just as actual anti-Semitism is once again on the rise in Europe and North America. Harnessing such tropes to shield itself from scrutiny, Israel is mobilizing them internationally in concert with close allies like the Trump administration.

In her article "Palestine at the UN: The PLO and UNRWA in the 1970s," Anne Irfan provides a timely examination of the PLO's shifting relationship with the UN agency during a crucial historical period. Tracing a web of tension, competition, and cooperation, Irfan uncovers the PLO's complex struggle for international legitimacy and the centrality of the refugee condition to the question of Palestine.

An article by Laila Parsons is the second of her two-part investigation into the recently declassified secret testimony to the 1937 Peel Commission by exclusively non-Palestinian witnesses. In this installment, Parsons reveals yet more about the degree of collusion between British and Zionist officials, including their shared disregard for the interests and concerns of the Palestinians. The article focuses on the way that the secret testimonies contributed to the Peel Commission's endorsement of the idea of partitioning Palestine.

Two other contributions to this issue, one a report by Aseil Abu-Baker and Marya Farah, titled "Established Practice: Palestinian Exclusion at the Dead Sea," and the other a review essay by

Adam Hanieh of Andrew Ross's *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel*. The Book examines aspects of Israel's exploitation of Palestinian resources and labor in the extension of its colonial project.

Finally, this issue includes a remembrance by Bashir Makhoul of the recently deceased Palestinian artist and critic Kamal Boullata which traces this renowned figure's trajectory and his outsized influence on our understanding of the history and practice of Palestinian art.

Rashid I. Khalidi
Sherene Seikaly

The *Journal of Palestine Studies* is happy to announce that Sherene Seikaly and Rashid Khalidi will, as of this issue, be coeditors of the *Journal* and jointly responsible for its content.

ENDNOTES

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The Secret Testimony of the Peel Commission (Part II): Partition



LAILA PARSONS

This is the second installment of a two-part article on the recently released secret testimony to the Peel Commission. Part I (*JPS* 49, no. 1) showed how the secret testimony deepens our understanding of the structural exclusion of the Palestinians from the Mandate state. Part II now focuses on what the secret testimony reveals about the Peel Commission's eventual decision to recommend partition. It turns out that Zionist leaders were less central to this decision than scholars have previously assumed, and that second-tier British colonial officials played a key role in the commissioners' partition recommendation. British decision-making over the partition of Palestine was shaped not only by a broad ambition to put into practice global-imperial theories about representative government and the protection of minorities; it also stemmed from a cold-eyed self-interest in rehabilitating the British reputation for efficient colonial governance—by terminating, in as deliberate a manner as possible, a slack and compromised Mandatory administration.

THE REPORT OF THE PEEL COMMISSION appeared publicly on 7 July 1937. In its final pages, the report recommended partition as the only viable solution to the conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Partition was cast as a sharp break with previous British attempts to satisfy both the Jews and the Arabs and to convince them to live peacefully with one another. Partition was also explicitly presented as a better solution than cantonization, which, unlike partition, had been publicly discussed in the years leading up to the Peel Commission.

Although they sometimes blur together in the historiography, cantonization and partition were in fact very distinct from one another. Cantonization envisaged dividing Palestine into Jewish and Arab cantons, each with different degrees of autonomy. It did not entail population transfer, nor did it confer statehood on the cantons. Partition, by contrast, envisaged two ethnically homogenous sovereign states—one Arab, one Jewish—and entailed a significant transfer of populations, mostly moving Arabs out of the new Jewish state. But the key difference from cantonization was that partition would confer sovereignty on both states, even if there were to be strong treaty arrangements with Britain, and if certain areas, like Jerusalem, would remain under international control. Partition also meant radically different things to the Zionist and Palestinian leaderships. For the Zionists, it meant that at least some British officials were willing to endorse a

uni-national Jewish sovereign state in Palestine, which was a giant leap beyond the Balfour Declaration's weaker and more ambiguous formulation of a "national home." For the Palestinians, who expected full independence in all of Palestine once the Mandate was deemed to be no longer necessary, partition meant that at least some British officials were seriously considering taking away a significant area of their country and handing it over permanently to a European settler population.¹

Penny Sinanoglou and Laura Robson have described the broader imperial context of the Peel Commission's recommendation, a context in which partition and population exchanges were part of an imperial toolkit employed in places such as Ireland and India where representative government was deemed unworkable because of competing ethno-national claims. Where it seemed that a single, unified nationality could not be created, partition offered a way out. Partition also played an important role in post-World War I discussions of minority rights. Many British policy makers believed that there could be no representative government in territories containing a significant minority population that was unlikely to assimilate into the majority; in the case of Palestine, the Jews were reckoned to be such a minority. Each commissioner had experience working in other parts of the British Empire, including India, Kenya, Ireland, and Burma, where they had grappled with the problem of how to govern amid competing ethnonational claims of sovereignty over particular territories. The commissioners and British witnesses often cited their previous work in imperial administration during the Peel Commission's discussions of representative government, minority rights, and nationality in Palestine.²

Sinanoglou has also shown how cantonization—and even partition—had been discussed in British policy circles since 1929, and that Chaim Weizmann and other Zionist leaders knew about these discussions well before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine. In a recent article, Motti Golani used documents drawn mainly from the Weizmann Archive to argue that Weizmann was the prime mover behind the Peel Commission's recommendation of partition and that he worked closely with Reginald Coupland to achieve his aims. These scholars did not have access to more than a few fragments of the secret testimony when they carried out their research because it had not yet been released by Britain's National Archives. In what follows, I shall describe and analyze the discussions of partition contained in the secret testimony, in order to deepen our understanding of how and why the Peel Commission came to recommend it as a solution. I draw two main conclusions that build upon recent scholarly work: first, that the secret sessions provided the venue where the idea of cantonization was discarded for the more radical idea of partition; and second, that Weizmann's role in recommending partition, while important, was secondary to the momentum driving it forward within the British system.³

The topic of cantonization came up only twice during the entire public testimony to the commission. And partition was never raised in the public sessions. In one of her articles on the Peel Commission, Sinanoglou wonders why partition was not vetted as a solution in the public sessions. She asks: "Why did the commission not take public evidence whilst in Palestine on the question of partition if it was clear that partition was under consideration?"⁴ She speculates that commissioners must have been concerned about breaking with procedure, given that partition was not included in the commission's terms of reference. She also suggests that the lack of

detailed questioning on partition during the public testimony gave the commissioners the excuse to present partition, in the final report, as a general objective, but without providing any detail about how it should be implemented. The secret testimony reveals that partition was in fact the subject of lengthy in-camera discussions by commissioners and witnesses. This explains, at least in part, why the topic was never raised in the public sessions. Indeed, the Arab Higher Committee's decision to refrain from giving testimony in the secret sessions made it all even easier for commissioners to break with their own terms of reference, and to use the in-camera sessions as a venue for exploring the feasibility of partition with Zionist leaders and British officials.⁵

Drawing on correspondence between Weizmann and his close confidant Avigdor Jacobson, and on records of meetings between Weizmann and Benito Mussolini in 1934, Golani shows that Weizmann began to support the idea of partition from as early as 1932. He argues that Weizmann was unhappy with the idea of cantonization because it would not lead to a uni-national sovereign Jewish state in Palestine, whereas partition would. In addition, Golani draws on private correspondence between Weizmann and Coupland to show that a private meeting occurred between the two men on Saturday 16 January 1937, while the commission was still in session in Palestine. This came after Weizmann had delivered his final round of secret testimony, and just days before the commission left Palestine. During this private meeting, which took place in the Jewish settlement of Nahalal, Weizmann and Coupland discussed the idea of partition. For Golani, the fact of this meeting between Weizmann and Coupland at Nahalal (not to mention further private contacts between the two during the ensuing months), when combined with the fact that Weizmann had come to believe in partition as early as 1932, constitutes clear evidence that Weizmann was the main impetus behind partition.⁶

For his article, Golani was able to review Weizmann's secret testimony because Weizmann had retained a copy of his own testimony in his private archive. But Golani did not have the opportunity to consult the entire secret testimony now available in the National Archives. Here, I put Weizmann's secret testimony, and what we now know from Golani about Weizmann's early support for partition, in the context of the secret testimony in general and the discussions about partition contained within it. In particular, I argue that Weizmann's main goal was to shift British thinking away from cantonization because Weizmann was firmly opposed to cantonization and afraid that the idea might be given further weight in the final report of the Peel Commission. I argue that despite Weizmann's undoubted part in the commission's final recommendation in favor of partition, his role was outweighed by the massive British colonial bureaucracy and its practice of devising elaborate solutions to ethnic conflicts. I also show how British decision-making around partition stemmed more from concerns about the efficiency and reputation of British governance than from the desires of interested parties on the ground, even when those interested parties were skilled lobbyists and had connections within the government.⁷

Throughout his secret testimony, Weizmann was asked repeatedly to consider the question of cantonization and—in his final session—partition. During the early questioning, he vehemently opposed cantonization, claiming that it would force the Jews to live in a ghetto. Weizmann also argued that such a solution was unnecessary because the Jews had no desire to dominate the Arabs, only to coexist with them, in a spirit of mutual nondomination, under British rule for the foreseeable future. Along with this principle of mutual nondomination, Weizmann emphasized

the parity principle, which was also official Zionist policy at that time. The parity principle held that in any arrangement for the governance of Palestine, Jews must have equal representation to Arabs. Both principles served to counter recent British attempts to establish a legislative council in Palestine that would have given more representation to the Palestinian Arabs than to the Jews because the Palestinians were the majority population.⁸

In Weizmann's third and final session, Coupland pushed him to spell out his views not of cantonization but of partition. Coupland raised the issue coyly, covering himself by *admitting for the record* that in doing so, he was moving beyond the terms of reference:

I do not wish to take up too much time over this matter, and in a sense I think it may be argued that it is really beyond our Terms of Reference, but looking ahead and supposing for the sake of argument, that your hopeful prospect of harmony proves unrealizable in the course of the next five or ten years, what practicable alternative might there be? With that question in your mind, would you comment on this scheme, which really deserves to be called *more* than cantonization?⁹

Coupland then handed Weizmann a well-known treatise on cantonization written by Archer Cust, who had served as assistant district commissioner in Jerusalem until 1935. After his retirement from service in Palestine, Cust emerged as one of the most forceful proponents of cantonization. As he handed Weizmann the document, Coupland made it clear that he himself was not entirely satisfied with Cust's scheme. He wanted Weizmann's opinion on an even more radical version of the plan:

But may I say that your examination of that scheme is not so interesting to me as your examination of the scheme pushed a stage further, that if after a period of federal partition the only solution, or a solution, seemed to be effective partition, meaning that in due course and under a treaty system these two blocks of Palestine become independent states of the type of Egypt and Iraq in treaty relations with Great Britain. That is really the ultimate point on which I want to get your view.¹⁰

This time, Weizmann replied that he had given the matter some thought and admitted that he had even had conversations with Cust concerning his scheme. Weizmann then presented his own map to the commissioners. The map is not in the secret testimony, but one of the commissioners said of it, "Your map amounts to saying let's create some kind of reserve for the Arabs in the hills and you Jews [will] keep off the hills." Even so, Weizmann was reluctant to commit himself, saying that it would be better to let more time pass before such a scheme was seriously considered. He suggested ten years would be enough: "If we were allowed to work and attend to our work and work more or less in the plains, then it may be more compact and possibly better." He said that the Jews did not yet possess enough land at the time, given that "in the coastal plain we have 550,000 dunums out of 3 million dunums."

Coupland, undeterred, brought Weizmann back to the basic principle of partition by asking: "Might it not be a final and peaceful settlement—to terminate the Mandate by agreement and split Palestine into two halves, the plain being an independent Jewish state, as independent as Belgium with treaty relations with Great Britain—whatever arrangements you like with us—and the rest of Palestine plus Trans-Jordania being an independent Arab state, as independent as

Arabia. That is the ultimate idea.” Weizmann replied: “Permit me not to give a definite answer now. Let me think of it.” Coupland ended the discussion coyly, as he had begun it, clarifying that he was not formally “making a suggestion,” but rather looking for Weizmann’s views on “a scheme that has been put before us.”¹¹

A plain reading of Weizmann’s secret testimony thus indicates that it was Coupland who was the prime mover behind the idea of partition during the secret sessions of the Peel Commission, and that Weizmann saw in him the personal drive and the skills that were required to push the other commissioners away from cantonization (which did not confer statehood on the Jews) and toward partition, and to British support for a Jewish state in Palestine. Yet Coupland’s interest in partition sprang from a different source than Weizmann’s. Sinanoglou and Arie Dubnov have shown how Coupland’s thinking was shaped by other imperial examples such as South Africa, India, Quebec, and especially Ireland, where partition in 1921 was deemed a success. Although understanding Coupland’s ideological commitments is important, the thorny case of Palestine also called for hard-headed pragmatism. Coupland wanted Weizmann’s support for the idea of partition—without Zionist support it would not get off the ground—but the impetus for Coupland’s relentless efforts stemmed more from his dissatisfaction with British rule in Palestine, which had not succeeded in bringing representative government to the Arab and Jewish communities and which appeared to him to be in drastic need of reform. The fact that partition meant the termination of the Mandate in effect solved this problem of bad governance.¹²

The secret testimony contains evidence to support this hypothesis, particularly with respect to the role of Douglas Harris. Harris served as officer for irrigation and development in the Palestine government. He was also seconded as a special advisor to the commission, along with Lewis Andrews, also a development officer in the Palestine government. Harris had already appeared before the commission when he gave public testimony, although he never mentioned in that testimony the issue of partition or cantonization. This was in spite of the fact that he had been involved in plans for cantonization during 1935 and early 1936. Sinanoglou discusses how Harris abandoned those initial cantonization plans in the face of strong opposition from Galilee District Commissioner Edward Keith Roach, who considered them unworkable.¹³ The secret testimony shows that by the time the Peel Commission was underway, Harris had begun supporting the far more drastic solution of partition. It was Harris, not Weizmann, who brought the detailed plans for partition into the secret sessions, and who advocated for it most forcefully and unequivocally. His command of on-the-ground facts, his technical training and expertise, and his previous experience of working on various cantonization plans made his testimony in favor of partition especially compelling. In Harris, the commissioners saw an ambitious young British public servant undertaking the hard work of providing the commission with evidence that was detailed and comprehensive enough to give the idea of partition some actual momentum. The commissioners interrogated Harris on the details of the idea with an intensity absent from the other discussions about partition. It was thus during the last Harris testimony in the secret sessions that partition was explored in enough detail to justify its inclusion in the final report as the only solution to the problem of conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.

Harris’s testimony about partition fills five densely packed pages of the document. This is five times as much text as for any other witness who was questioned about partition, including

Weizmann. In fact, Weizmann's secret testimony about partition looks rather meager when juxtaposed with Harris's much longer discussion of the topic. The commissioners launched straight into questioning Harris about partition in a manner that suggests advance preparation, referring to a lengthy document that Harris had precirculated. There are also hints that substantive discussions between British officials had taken place beforehand. On at least one occasion, Coupland prompted Harris for specific information, prefacing his prompt with the phrase "In private conversations with you I gathered that you have formed views about . . ." ¹⁴ Harris brought a detailed map, which provoked a lengthy discussion about the boundaries envisioned in the partition plan, and about the transfer of Arabs out of the Jewish State. In addition, Harris testified about the status of Haifa; the linking of the putative Arab state to Transjordan; whether the Jews would be allowed an army; whether that army would include aircraft; the status of ports, rivers, and large orange groves; the future of the Rutenberg electricity works; how a customs regime would work; how much money partition would cost; and the status of the Mandate in the new arrangement.

Pushing back against Harris's obvious support of partition, some commissioners asked him if, instead of such a radical solution, simply restricting Jewish immigration and setting up an Arab Agency to balance the power of the Jewish Agency (JA) might be preferable. But Harris insisted that partition would be more attractive to the Arabs than piecemeal measures like restricting immigration. "I do not believe that any solution which closed the door to independence of some kind or another would ever be acceptable to the Arabs," he said. "Personally, I can see no possibility of any peaceful settlement under the present system. If a scheme of partition is possible at all, I cannot see why it is not as possible now as it will be thirty years hence . . . [partition] is a nettle that has to be grasped and the sooner it is grasped the better." ¹⁵

As mentioned in Part I of this article, Harris claimed that partition would eliminate the malaise at the heart of the British Government in Palestine. Coupland prompted him to expand on this: "In private conversations with you I gathered you have formed views about the over-centralization of government in this country . . . but that problem, like others, would be solved by the drastic proposal which you have put before us?" Harris replied: "Quite. There would be no government to decentralize." ¹⁶ To reiterate, the secret testimony shows that partition was seen by British officials as a solution to ineffective governance, and that it was thus Coupland, Harris, and Andrews who drove the idea of partition forward, not Weizmann.

Coupland and Harris also discussed the objections to partition that would inevitably arise, from both Jews and Arabs, and how best to respond. During Harris's testimony, Peel suggested that the British could deal with such objections to partition by presenting the idea in opposite ways to each side; his solution is expressed in a manner that is not only anti-Semitic but dismissive of the intelligence of Arab leaders: "I suppose that [the] hinterland question is the worst because one can see so clearly the Jews with their pushing menacing ways saying 'Yes, now we have filled up this place and you are tying us down.' . . . [So] to the Arab Kings you would say, 'This is a splendid scheme, we are putting Jews down on the Sand Dunes'; to the Jews you would say, 'We are giving you the best land of Palestine.' [In other words] you would have to make two speeches?" ¹⁷

Harris's testimony concluded with the discussion of partition. Commissioners posed no questions to him on any other topic. After a tea break, Harris was followed by Andrews, whose

testimony was similarly dominated by partition. Coupland asked Andrews to confirm that he supported Harris's suggestion of "this division into two states."¹⁸ Andrews agreed wholeheartedly. Andrews's main function, it seems, was to present evidence that, contrary to expectations, leading Arabs in fact favored partition—evidence that Andrews (supposedly) drew from informal conversations. Andrews's testimony almost reads as if he were establishing a formal internal record of a discussion of the Arab point of view in the event that the final report ended up recommending partition.

As usual, it was Coupland who pushed the hardest. He asked Andrews: "Have you any view as to whether the moderate Arabs would regard that proposal with any acquiescence?" Andrews replied, "Moderate Arabs would. In fact several Arabs have discussed it with me. Even the Mayor of Jerusalem has discussed it with me." Andrews went on to say that while the "younger radicals" would of course oppose it, there existed a large body of "moderate people who would, I think, agree to some sort of scheme of this nature. But at the moment they are following the other parties because they are in fear of their lives." Coupland then added, "Unless we said 'stop Jewish immigration for ever' and give them the self-government they demand there will be trouble anyway?" Here Coupland articulated an incipient British rationale for moving ahead with partition. Essentially Coupland was saying: absent our complete acquiescence to maximal Arab demands, we can be certain of some Arab opposition to any compromise; so let us decide to implement the plan—partition—that we think will be most effective, regardless of whether it is supported by a noisy minority of "young [Arab] radicals." Andrews ended his testimony by repeating that "in addition to the Mayor of Jerusalem," other "moderate" Arabs would favor partition.¹⁹

The fact that Andrews played the role of Palestinian spokesman is ironic. His private memos throughout the Peel Commission proceedings showed a level of disdain for Palestinians and their aspirations for statehood that was exceptional even in the prevailing context. For their part, many Palestinians detested Andrews because of his reputation for being unjust and pro-Zionist. The same mayor of Jerusalem—Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi—whom Andrews cited as a supporter of partition, in fact considered Andrews to be utterly untrustworthy, describing him in his memoirs as a clever pro-Zionist British official who played a double game by ingratiating himself with Arab leaders. It is extremely unlikely that al-Khalidi would have confided to Andrews in the way that Andrews claimed he did. Palestinian rebels assassinated Andrews on 26 September 1937, just a few months after he gave this testimony.²⁰

The secret testimony reveals that Coupland, Harris, and Andrews faced an uphill struggle, given the strong opposition to partition from many in the Palestine government. The chief secretary, Hathorn Hall, called the idea "wholly artificial."²¹ When asked by the commissioners what he thought of partition, Mr. E. Mills, the officer for migration and statistics, said that he found the idea "quite impracticable."²² Some Zionists also voiced objections. Moshe Smelansky, president of the Farmers Union, was asked his opinion, and he said he did not believe that the gulf between Jews and Arabs should be "further widened."²³ Norman Bentwich, then a professor at Hebrew University, made a compelling case to the commissioners for cooperation between Arabs and Jews and the need for them to share a single state.²⁴

The commissioners closely questioned High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope on partition during Wauchope's final session. By this point, the idea had gained momentum. Obtaining the

formal endorsement of the high commissioner in official proceedings was a major desideratum, if partition were to be included in the final report. Wauchope remained scrupulously noncommittal in the face of Coupland's aggressive questioning. Viewing Wauchope as too sensitive to Arab reactions, Coupland emphasized that many "moderate" Arabs were on board with the idea, including "a member of the Arab College," also, "the Mayor of Jerusalem," and an "Arab district officer." Coupland even went so far as to claim that "the Jews have not suggested partition, it has come from the Arabs."²⁵ This is one of the most obvious examples of Coupland's dishonesty and manipulation throughout the process. Horace Rumbold, the ex-diplomat on the commission, held Coupland in very low regard. In a private letter to his son written just over a year later, Rumbold referred to Coupland as "an intriguing little professor" ("intriguing" in the sense of "scheming," not in the sense of "interesting"). In the same letter, still referring obliquely to Coupland, Rumbold told his son that partition plans had been made behind his back, that he had felt obliged to agree with partition so as not to split the commission, and that the commission had suffered from a vacuum in leadership because of Peel's grave illness during the proceedings—a vacuum that Coupland eagerly filled.²⁶ Wauchope parried Coupland's questions by saying that he could not comment without knowing more details, including knowing what the boundaries would be. He remained noncommittal on the topic of partition to the end of his testimony.²⁷

To sum up: although discussions of cantonization—and even partition—certainly took place in British and Zionist policy-making circles well before the Peel Commission ever arrived in Palestine, the secret testimony reveals that the in-camera sessions provided a forum where commissioners and witnesses could discuss the possibility of abandoning cantonization, which had been part of public discourse in preceding years, and endorse the more radical option of partition. The secrecy of the sessions in fact enabled British supporters of partition (namely Coupland, Harris, and Andrews) to break with the commission's terms of reference to promote their own vision. Weizmann's support for partition was an important part of this process, but he was not the prime mover, contrary to Golani's claims. Instead, the impetus for partition sprang from the blithe arrogance of particular British imperial actors who seem never to have doubted their competence to solve problems by applying theories far removed from realities on the ground. This conclusion leads us to question the actual extent of Zionist influence and power. True, Coupland and Weizmann had a private meeting while the commission was in Palestine, and they also corresponded with each other when the commission was back in London. But Weizmann instigated the meeting with Coupland in Palestine *after* he had given his final secret testimony. In other words, Weizmann could see in that final secret session how fervently Coupland was pushing for partition, and he used that knowledge to adopt his own interest in partition, an interest which he had developed independently from the British and which, according to Golani, Weizmann had kept secret from many of his own colleagues.²⁸

Golani's account of the private meeting between Coupland and Weizmann is partly based on a fascinating letter that Coupland sent to Weizmann in 1950, just before the publication of Weizmann's autobiography in the United Kingdom. In the letter, Coupland tells how he had been sent a copy of the pre-publication galleys of the English edition of Weizmann's autobiography, in order to review it. On reading the manuscript, Coupland was shocked to find that Weizmann had told the full story of their private meeting in Nahalal in the final days of the commission.

Coupland appears to have felt that Weizmann had broken one of the golden rules of British professional life: never bring private informal conversations into the public space. Coupland informed Weizmann that he had asked Weizmann's publishers to remove the account of their meeting because he was afraid that the "pro-Arabs" would use this information against him, by claiming that he had been "nobbled" by Weizmann and that he had "gone behind the back" of his colleagues on the commission.²⁹ Of course, Coupland *had* in fact gone behind the back of his colleagues, and the letter is evidence of at least some degree of collusion between the two men. But the letter's tone, which Golani does not focus on, is at once patronizing and wheedling: "I am sure you will understand it and forgive me for asking those Jewish friends in America to whom you had entrusted the publication of the book, if they could see their way to cutting out the story of our meeting . . . [and] if you are contemplating any changes in the revised edition you are proposing, might I suggest that the excision as made in the present English edition should also be made in the new American edition?"³⁰

Coupland also told Weizmann that there was no harm in Weizmann's referring to his views as expressed in the *public* proceedings of the commission, or even "that the idea of partition was first broached" by Coupland. Here Coupland makes it clear to Weizmann that the idea of partition came from him, not the other way around, and that he had therefore not been "nobbled" by Weizmann. Coupland goes on to refuse Weizmann's invitation to visit Israel. Weizmann was of course by now president of the new state: "I should intensely like to accept your most kind invitation to come and see how things are going for myself. But alas! I can't manage it this year. I was in Australia last winter and I go to New Zealand this next autumn. The few months at home must be given to a book I am writing on Welsh and Scottish nationalism."³¹ The mixture of politeness and condescension with which Coupland, a professor, turns down an invitation from a head of state, is breathtaking, even for an Oxford don. His underlying message was that he had moved on from Palestine to other academic projects, and that Weizmann should not overestimate their relationship, particularly as he had proven himself unreliable by publishing an account of a private informal meeting.

Correspondence in the spring and early summer of 1937 between Harris and Coupland and between Coupland and William Ormsby-Gore, the secretary of state for the colonies, has a more professional tone, one used by British imperial operators with each other, especially when collectively manipulating a deeply entrenched bureaucratic and procedural culture to get what they wanted. The correspondence took place as the report was being drafted, and just before its rollout on 7 July 1937. A letter from Harris to Coupland, written on 15 April, shows that Coupland had asked Harris for his views on details of particular aspects of the partition plan. Much of the language in Harris's eight-page reply ended up in the final report. And in a letter that Coupland wrote to Ormsby-Gore on 11 July, Coupland expressed his low opinion of the government in Palestine, and his concern that those at the top of that government might not be capable of the efficient and decisive work required to implement partition. He followed this by suggesting that Harris be promoted to head a new Department of Development that would, under the partition plan, help the new Arab and Jewish states develop their infrastructures. Coupland also recommended that Andrews be promoted and appointed district commissioner in the "Northern Division." According to Coupland, the success of partition rested on there being

someone able to show “firmness with both parties [Arabs and Jews] and Andrews [was] the only senior official who could be trusted to be as firm with the Arabs as with the Jews.” Of course, partition did not happen as Coupland expected it to in July 1937. But Andrews was promoted anyway, and Palestinian rebels assassinated him on 26 September of the same year. Coupland’s letter leads us to conclude that Andrews’s hard work to help Coupland achieve his objectives during the proceedings of the Peel Commission got him both promoted and killed. For all his grand theorizing about empire, Coupland was an academic, not a colonial official. The “intriguing little professor” was operating at a level far above his actual competence, a level with real-world consequences that continued to unfold long after he had moved on to his next project.³²

The same Colonial Office file that contains these letters also contains an internal memo marked “Very Secret.” Dated 29 June 1937, just a week before the commission’s report was published on 7 July, it addressed the delicate question of who outside of British government should be paid the courtesy of being told of the contents of the report before it was made public. The memo itself asserts that it was prompted by the fact that Weizmann was “pressing strongly for an advance copy of the Report.”³³ Weizmann did meet with Coupland a couple of times in the weeks leading up to the report, but there is no evidence that Coupland let him see the language he was drafting. On the contrary: the diaries of Blanche Dugdale, Arthur Balfour’s niece and a well-known supporter of Zionism, indicate that Weizmann was sent the report only after Cabinet had signed off on it, and just three days before it was released to the public. Here is how she describes Weizmann’s reaction:

God! What a day! Went to Zionist Office and found Chaim raging, after a telephone talk with Boyd (Billy Gore’s secretary) in which he learned he was not to get the report until Monday—i.e. three days before publication. I have never seen him so angry. . . . He made seeing the Report a question of confidence and [in a subsequent telephone conversation with Ormsby-Gore] finally warned Billy that H. M. G. could not in [the] future count on the co-operation of the Agency. I do not blame him. I blame Billy for the folly of denying Chaim this report.³⁴

The fact that Weizmann was not given a copy of the report to read and edit before publication allows us to surmise that the British wished to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1931, when Weizmann was allowed to edit the MacDonald letter before it was issued as policy. By contrast, it was some of the ideas in Harris’s 15 April memo to Coupland that were copied and pasted into the report itself. Harris’s lengthy testimony in the secret sessions was thus one phase in his sustained involvement in shaping the language of the report’s partition recommendation. The tendency in the historiography to overestimate Zionist prowess can obscure a proper understanding of the breadth and depth of British power during the Mandate. Coupland used Weizmann, just as Weizmann used Coupland, but for Coupland, Weizmann was an outsider. Coupland, Harris, Andrews, and Ormsby-Gore, on the other hand, worked together intimately, committed to the common codes and expectations of British imperial culture. Having said this, Weizmann and the JA were certainly closer to British power than the Palestinians were. They used their connections and lobbied relentlessly to obtain the most advantageous terms they could, including on the boundaries to be drawn into the final map. Despite Coupland’s and Andrews’s citation of conversations with “moderate” Arabs in order to claim, falsely, that the idea actually

came from the Arabs, the leap to partition occurred without the participation of the Palestinian leadership.³⁵

As mentioned above, Sinanoglou has traced the history of cantonization and partition thinking in British imperial circles to well before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine. She and Dubnov have also explained Coupland's ideological background as a member of the Round Table movement and an imperial federalist, an ideological background that explains his commitment to representative government and the protection of minorities. But the discussions about partition in the secret testimony tell us that we also need to look for a more prosaic and practical explanation of why partition appealed to particular British decision makers at this particular moment: partition was attractive precisely because it would bring an end to the Mandate as it currently stood. Partition avoided the messiness of having to undertake internal reforms of an inefficient government preoccupied with the expensive military management of a widespread Palestinian revolt. It allowed the British to disentangle themselves from their responsibility to adjudicate between the Arabs and the Jews. And because the partition plan envisioned Britain's maintaining strong treaty relations with both states, it came at little cost to British influence in the region.

Toward the end of July 1937, Ormsby-Gore wrote to the conservative politician Lord Dufferin, asking him to sit down with Rabbi Stephen Wise, an American Jewish leader, who had requested a meeting with a British minister. Anticipating that Wise wanted to complain about the boundaries of the partition map in the Peel Report, Ormsby-Gore told Dufferin to encourage Wise (whom he referred to as "a very Americanized Jew, who likes arguing for arguing's sake") to face reality:

The Jews have got to consider whether they do or do not want a Jewish sovereign state. If they do, they can get it now, if they refuse now, they will never get it. . . . In default of a better alternative HMG must stick to the general lines of the Royal Commission's report. One thing is clear, the Royal Commission's report has blown the existing Mandate sky high. Why the British government should be willing to go on governing Palestine in the teeth of hostile Jewish criticism and Jewish attack on everything we have done, and are doing, while at the same time we British have, because of Palestine, aroused the hostility of the whole Arab and most of the Moslem World, we cannot see.³⁶

Ormsby-Gore went on to describe the British responsibility in Palestine as an "odious burden which has become intolerable, constituting a constant drain on British military and other resources and we get no thanks or gratitude from Jew or Arab." He told Dufferin to tell Wise that "failure to reach a settlement now may well result in a movement in our democracy to clear out and leave the Jews and the Arabs to fight it out with bloodshed."³⁷ The attitude here on the part of the secretary of state for the colonies is similar to that shown by Harris and Coupland in the secret testimony, when they discussed how partition would solve the problem of bad government. By this stage in the Mandate, at least some British colonial officials, exhausted by the prospect of cleaning up the mess they had made in Palestine, were thinking seriously about an exit strategy. It was time for Britain to move on. The same can be said of many individuals who worked for the colonial service, as well as those who participated in colonial commissions. Very few were deeply invested in the decisions they made in one place because most had moved on or were about to move on to other roles in different parts of the Empire.

This is the prosaic flip side of the global-imperial framework employed by Sinanoglou, Dubnov, and Robson, where the focus is on the *ideas* that traveled across imperial contexts. We can build upon and add depth to this scholarship by considering the effect that professional mobility had on the willingness of participants to fight for their ideas. Think of Rumbold, who said in the letter to his son that he went along with partition because he didn't want to split the commission. Rumbold had retired from the diplomatic service when he sat on the commission. He was returning to his garden in Tisbury, Wiltshire, after his stint in Palestine. Harris, who had served in India before coming to Palestine, did remain connected to Palestine policy for several years, becoming chairman of the Palestine War Supply Board in 1943 and secretary of the Ministerial Committee on Palestine in 1945. He was even involved in last-ditch attempts by the British to come up with a new partition plan before Britain announced its withdrawal from Palestine to the United Nations (UN) in September 1947. But then he moved on to Uganda, where he served as development consultant to the Uganda Government from 1947–56. Even Coupland himself, who was not a member of the colonial service, moved on after the partition plan failed to materialize in 1937. In 1942, he was appointed as a member of Stafford Cripps's mission to India and published his book *The Cripps Mission* shortly afterwards. This was just one of a series of publications by Coupland on Quebec, India, Scotland and Wales, and Africa. Palestine was one small piece of a long career made from empire; and apparently not an important enough piece for Coupland to warrant a book in its own right.³⁸

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One general lesson to be drawn from this two-part article is that the sheer grotesqueness of British racist discourse can deflect the historian's attention away from the prosaic mechanics of the day-to-day exercise of British imperial power in Palestine: the development projects, the government reforms, the visiting commissions, the problem-solving, and so on. Attending to the details of these events and processes will produce a more fine-grained analysis of the cooperation between the British government and Zionist institutions than we currently possess. The secret testimony confirms the structural exclusion of the Palestinians from British decision-making. No amount of paternalistic affection could counterbalance the day-to-day contact between Zionists and British colonial bureaucrats. The fact that some of those British bureaucrats held and openly expressed anti-Semitic views was not an obstacle to working closely with the Zionists. With every joint endeavor, the Zionists showed the British exactly how a Jewish state would work. They asserted their political rights; but they brought maps and irrigation plans into meetings. They debated the technicalities of government procedure with a detailed knowledge of how government functioned. They could do this because the terms of the Mandate encouraged cooperation between Zionist and British institutions in Palestine. By contrast, Palestinians built their own political structures without the support of the Mandate state, and many of those structures emerged from long-standing resistance to the British occupation of Palestine. The fact that the terms of the Mandate denied the Palestinians' political rights meant that it became increasingly difficult for Palestinian leaders to participate in the Mandate's institutional life without negating their own existence as political subjects. This structural exclusion of the Palestinians meant that the Mandate government and its subcontractor, the Zionist settler-colonial project, rolled on relentlessly without them.³⁹

A decisive moment in this unfolding Palestinian disaster was when the Peel Commission endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine by recommending partition. Weizmann and other Zionist leaders supported partition in principle, even if they were not happy with the proposed boundaries of the Jewish state. They gave it their support because, unlike cantonization, it bestowed statehood on the Jews. But the limits of Zionist influence were exposed when the Woodhead Commission arrived in Palestine in 1938 to ascertain whether or not the Peel partition plan was actually feasible, and decided it was not. By the time the Woodhead Commission report was presented to Parliament in November 1938, the momentum behind partition had dissipated, and it became clear that the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate would continue to underpin British policy in Palestine in the near future. This was despite Weizmann's intensive lobbying to keep partition alive. The British White Paper of 1939, motivated in part by the cost of suppressing the Palestinian revolt, rejected partition and called for an Arab state to be established in all of Palestine after ten years. British policy thus lurched back and forth, buffeted by immediate concerns, and without any overriding regard for Zionist desires to make partition the default outcome.⁴⁰

But the fact that a British official body had endorsed partition in 1937, and that a map of the Jewish state had been published in a British official report, was one of the factors that led to the emergence of partition as the organizing principle for Zionist plans after 1937. The Zionist leadership had been more privy to British thinking during the Peel Commission proceedings than the Palestinians were, partly because they had been in the room during the secret sessions whereas the Palestinians had not. This meant that Zionist leaders had a strong sense that at least some British officials were starting to think about the benefits of ending the Mandate. What is more, Ben-Gurion himself, who replaced Weizmann as the central figure of the Zionist movement after 1937, had been open to the idea of Jewish autonomy within a federated system before 1937, not only in Palestine but also in Europe. According to Dmitry Shumsky, the author of a recent book on the history of Zionist political ideology, it was "the Peel Commission's vision of implementing a maximal separation between the Jews and the Arabs of Palestine . . . that caused the Zionist leadership to imagine Jewish national life as uni-national, without Arabs living alongside Jews as a national collective. It is at this point that we see the first signs of a historical turning point in Ben-Gurion's consciousness."⁴¹ On the ground, technocrats in the Yishuv started to lay out the detailed infrastructure of the Jewish state with the Peel map in mind. The fact that the years immediately following 1937 also saw the widespread persecution, and then genocide, of European Jews, intensified these efforts, and rendered any alternative to Jewish uni-national statehood in Palestine moribund in the eyes of most Zionist leaders.⁴²

On the Palestinian side, the Peel recommendations were the final straw. The partition plan proved once and for all that British commissions of inquiry would never bring Palestinians the justice they sought. Palestinians intensified their efforts to elicit support from Arab leaders who exhibited strong pan-Arab sentiments. Convened by the Arab Higher Committee in early September 1937, the Bludan Conference in Syria was the largest pan-Arab meeting up to that point. The conference flatly rejected the Peel Commission's partition recommendation and affirmed that Palestine was an integral part of the Arab nation. Two weeks later, revolt broke out again in Palestine and continued until 1939. In the wake of Andrews's assassination, British repression was even more brutal than

before, and most of the Palestinian leadership was imprisoned or sent into exile. In the light of the human cost of the revolt for Palestinians, any Palestinian leader who negotiated with the British did so without the support of their population. The British White Paper of 1939, which did not give the Palestinians everything they wanted, but which was more favorable to them than to the Zionists, came too late. Before the Peel Commission, the White Paper could have been used by Palestinians to leverage British support for the work they were already doing to strengthen their institutions and to work toward full statehood. By 1939, any faith that might have once existed in British promises had vanished. To add insult to injury, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who continued to command the majority of popular support in Palestine as the exiled head of the Arab Higher Committee, was not even invited to the Saint James Conference in London that led to the 1939 White Paper.⁴³

Above and beyond Zionist plans on the ground, and Palestinian solidarity with pan-Arabism, the idea of partition remained in the background at the international level. In early 1947, the British finally announced that they were washing their hands of the Palestine problem and handing it over to the newly formed UN. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, the investigative body commissioned with the task of devising a solution for Palestine, used the Peel maps as the starting point for their own eventual partition maps. That partition recommendation was voted on in the General Assembly and passed on 29 November 1947. Following the vote, war broke out in Palestine and the fight over partition moved from the halls of the UN to the battlefield. That fight led to the establishment of the State of Israel, the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians, and the erasure of Palestine from the map. Just ten years had passed since the Peel Commission first recommended partition, yet so much had changed. The terrible fact of the Holocaust provoked greater sympathy for Zionism worldwide, and the United States had replaced Britain as the great power in the Middle East.⁴⁴

Given that partition happened anyway in 1948, why should we care about who said what to whom during the secret sessions of the Peel Commission? A macroscopic approach would proceed on the assumption that the broad historical forces at work make the details of how power was actually exercised at a particular moment and in a particular place, such as the Peel Commission's secret sessions, trivial by comparison. I have argued that you cannot truly understand the workings of power without attending to the details of exactly how and why decisions were made by those who wielded it. By constructing a detailed narrative that focuses on the minutiae of how these decisions crystallized, we can shine a light down into the depths of power.

About the Author

Laila Parsons is professor of modern Middle East history at McGill University. She is the author of *The Druze between Palestine and Israel, 1947-1949* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2000), and numerous journal articles on the 1948 war, on rebel soldiers in the interwar period, and on the place of narrative and biography in the historiography of the modern Middle East. Her most recent book, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914-1948* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2016), was the recipient of the 2017 Palestine Book Award and the Society for Military History's 2017 Distinguished Book Award.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Palestine Royal Commission Report*, pp. 370–96. For the details of cantonization, see Archer Cust, “Cantonization: A Plan for Palestine,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 23, no. 2 (1936): pp. 194–220.
- 2 Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), pp. 105–68; Penny Sinanoglou also has a recent article, “Analogical Thinking and Partition in British Mandate Palestine,” in *Partitions: A Transnational History of Territorial Separatism*, ed. Arie M. Dubnov and Laura Robson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), pp. 154–72, where she discusses the broader imperial context of partition plans for Palestine.
- 3 Penny Sinanoglou, “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine, 1929–1938,” *Historical Journal* 52, no. 1 (March 2009): pp. 131–52; Motti Golani, “The Meat and the Bones’: Reassessing the Origins of the Partition of Mandate Palestine,” in *Partitions*, pp. 85–108; For Coupland and his ideological context, see Arie M. Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions or a Federalist Daydreamer? The Curious Case of Reginald Coupland,” in *Partitions*, pp. 56–84.
- 4 Sinanoglou, “British Plans,” p. 150. In a later article, Sinanoglou speculates that partition must have been discussed in the secret sessions. See “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936–1938,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p. 125.
- 5 For two brief mentions of cantonization, see Stein testimony and Jabotinsky testimony in Aaron Klieman, ed., *The Rise of Israel: The Royal Commission Report, 1937*, vol. 23 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), pp. 279–80, 375.
- 6 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” p. 108. Golani argues here that Weizmann devised the plan and then gave it to the British, who presented it as their own. For the meeting between Coupland and Weizmann, see pp. 103–8. I consulted the same letter where Coupland mentions his meeting with Weizmann and asks him to remove any mention of it from his autobiography. The letter is in the Weizmann Archive, Coupland to Weizmann, February 18, 1950, WA 14-2911. Norman Rose also has a detailed account of Weizmann’s connections to Coupland. See Norman Rose, *The Gentle Zionists: A Study of Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929–1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), pp. 123–50, which Golani does not cite. Golani’s account of when Weizmann started to support partition is different from that of Rose, who puts it four years later, in 1936. Dubnov discusses the transition from cantonization to partition during the period of the Peel Commission. He supports Golani’s position that the idea came from Weizmann to Coupland, not the other way around: Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions,” pp. 74–76.
- 7 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” 316n14.
- 8 Secret testimony (henceforth ST) NA, FO 492/19, Chaim Weizmann testimony, pp. 214–16. For the Zionist policy of mutual nondominance, see Nimrod Lin, “The Arithmetic of Rights: Zionist Intellectuals Imagining the Arab Minority, May–July 1938,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 6 (November 2018): pp. 948–64. (My thanks to Dan Heller for alerting me to this article.) For Weizmann on the parity principle, see ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 212. Weizmann went so far as to assert, on the basis of the principle of mutual nondomination, that even if the Jews were to become the majority in Palestine, Palestine would not become a Jewish national state: ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 211. (I am grateful to Gabriel Larivière for helping me develop this point.) By the end of 1935, Zionist leaders vehemently opposed the creation of a legislative council that reflected the then-current balance of populations; some figures in the Zionist movement opposed a shared legislative council even with parity. On this, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), pp. 149–54. In the House of Lords debate on Arthur Wauchope’s 1935 legislative council proposal, Lord Melchett forcefully represented the JA’s opposition to a legislative council. See 99 Parl. Deb. H. L. (5th ser.) (1936) cols. 772–79. (My thanks to Caroline Stitt for this reference.)

- 9 ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 380.
- 10 ST, Weizmann testimony, p. 380.
- 11 ST, Weizmann testimony, pp. 380–81. Sinanoglou has a thorough discussion of Cust in “British Plans,” pp. 142–44. Golani narrates the contact between Cust and Weizmann in “The Meat and the Bones,” pp. 100–102. Rose’s *The Gentile Zionists* has a similar account of the way that partition was raised during Weizmann’s secret testimony. Like Golani, Rose also draws on Weizmann’s secret testimony available in the Weizmann Archive, but he obviously did not have access to the entire secret testimony when he wrote the book in the early 1970s; see Rose, *The Gentile Zionists*, pp. 127–29.
- 12 Dubnov, “The Architect of Two Partitions”; and Sinanoglou, “Analogical Thinking,” pp. 167–72. In her “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine,” p. 135, Sinanoglou argues that the British saw territorial division as a possible solution to the problem of representative government in Palestine.
- 13 For Harris’s involvement in previous cantonization plans, see Sinanoglou, “British Plans for the Partition of Palestine,” pp. 145–47. Harris was also closely involved in issues relating to land sales during the Mandate; see Charles Anderson, “The British Mandate and the Crisis of Palestinian Landlessness, 1929–1936,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 2 (March 2018): pp. 171–215.
- 14 ST, Douglas Harris testimony, p. 444.
- 15 ST, Harris testimony, pp. 439–41.
- 16 ST, Harris testimony, p. 444.
- 17 ST, Harris testimony, p. 443. Coupland’s low opinion of the Palestine government is confirmed in a private letter that he sent to William Ormsby-Gore several months later, CO 733/351/2, Coupland to Ormsby-Gore, 11 July 1937.
- 18 ST, Lewis Andrews testimony, p. 444.
- 19 ST, Andrews testimony, pp. 444–45.
- 20 One example of Andrews’s hostility to the Arabs can be found in CO 733/344/4, which is a long memorandum to the commission from ‘Izzat al-Atawna representing the Bedouins of the Naqab. Andrews, whom the Bedouins had trusted to deliver the memorandum, refuted every one of their claims in the margins. For al-Khalidi’s view of Andrews, see *Wa mada ‘ahd al-mujamalat: Mudhakkirat Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi* vol. I (Amman: Dar el-Shorouq, 2014), pp. 204–5.
- 21 ST, Hathorn Hall testimony, p. 432.
- 22 ST, E. Mills testimony, p. 385.
- 23 ST, Moshe Smelansky testimony, p. 316.
- 24 ST, Norman Bentwich testimony, pp. 348–52.
- 25 ST, Arthur Wauchope testimony, pp. 455–56.
- 26 For Rumbold on Coupland, see Horace Rumbold to Tom Rumbold, 10 February 1938, Rumbold Private Papers, dep. 42, Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
- 27 On the split between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office over partition in 1937, see Aaron S. Klieman, “The Divisiveness of Palestine: Foreign Office versus Colonial Office on the Issue of Partition, 1937,” *Historical Journal* 22, no. 2 (June 1979): pp. 423–41. For more on disagreements between the commissioners (including between Coupland and Hammond) during discussions about the final report, see Sinanoglou, “The Peel Commission and Partition, 1936–1938,” in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 121–25.
- 28 Golani, “The Meat and the Bones,” pp. 96–100.
- 29 Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.
- 30 Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.
- 31 (Emphasis in the original) Coupland to Weizmann, 18 February 1950, WA 14-2911.

- 32 NA, CO 733/351/2 Harris to Coupland, 15 April 1937; Coupland to Ormsby-Gore, 11 July 1937.
- 33 NA, CO 733/351/2. Memo dated 29 June 1937, on who should be given copies of the report before it was formally published.
- 34 Norman Rose, ed., *Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale, 1936–1947* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1973), pp. 48–49. Rose also has an account of this in *The Gentile Zionists*, pp. 136–37.
- 35 Roza I. M. El-Eini also details Harris's role in the language of the final report in *Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 318–24. For evidence that Weizmann was consulted on the boundaries and met with Coupland before the report was issued, see Rose, ed., *Baffy*, pp. 44–45. On the tendency to exaggerate Zionist prowess: Zionist leaders certainly had successes as shown in some of the traditional historiography of Zionism, which has a triumphalist tone, for example, see, Walter Laquer, *A History of Zionism* (London: MJF Books, 1972). Works that are very critical of Zionism also tend to emphasize long-term Zionist planning, for example, Nur Masalha, *The Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992). The work of Norris, Fredrik Meiton, and others on development projects that are cited in this article also tend to emphasize Zionist success, albeit from a critical point of view. To my knowledge there is no work that focuses on the history of Zionist political and economic failures during the Mandate.
- 36 Ormsby-Gore to Lord Dufferin (n.d.), CO 733/351/2.
- 37 Ormsby-Gore to Lord Dufferin (n.d.), CO 733/351/2.
- 38 For the global-imperial framework employed by Dubnov and Robson, see the introduction to their edited book, *Partitions*, pp. 1–27. For Sinanoglou's most recent article that employs this framework, see "Analogical Thinking." For Harris's involvement in partition plans in 1947, see El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, pp. 360–69. Coupland's books included *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism: A Study* (London: Collins, 1954); *The Cripps Mission* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942); and *East Africa and Its Invaders from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1938). He was most famous for *Kirk on the Zambesi* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1928).
- 39 For the Zionist movement "acting like a state," see, Natasha Wheatley, "Mandatory Interpretation: Legal Hermeneutics and the New International Order in Arab and Jewish Petitions to the League of Nations," *Past and Present* 227, no.1 (May 2015): pp. 205–48. The fact that the British could both hold anti-Semitic views and support Zionism goes right back to Balfour himself, who in 1905 introduced the Aliens Act, which banned Jews from Eastern Europe from entering Britain. Balfour saw no contradiction between this and promising the Jews a "national home" in Palestine in 1917. For a history of the structures created out of Palestinian resistance, see, Abdel Razzaq Takriti, "Before BDS: Lineages of Boycott in Palestine," *Radical History Review*, no. 134 (May 2019): pp. 58–95.
- 40 For the decline of partition option, and Weizmann's efforts to keep in alive, see Rose, *The Gentile Zionists*, pp. 151–73. Although the White Paper remained British policy after 1939, there were continued attempts from within British policy circles to revive partition. See Lucy Chester, "'Close Parallels'? Interrelated Discussions of Partition in South Asia and the Palestine Mandate (1936–1948)," in *Partitions*, ed. Dubnov and Robson, pp. 140–53.
- 41 Dimtry Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation State: The Zionist Political Imagination from Pinsker to Ben-Gurion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 209.
- 42 Shumsky, *Beyond the Nation State*, pp. 208–11. Shumsky convincingly debunks the view that Ben-Gurion was planning for Jewish statehood from the 1920s and that his writings that indicate otherwise were just a smokescreen. For a fascinating account of how the Peel maps guided the planning on "the new towns" in the Yishuv, see Shira Wilkof, "New Towns, New Nation: Europe and the Emergence of Zionist-Israeli National Planning between the Wars," in *Planting New Towns in Europe in the Interwar Years: Experiments and Dreams for Future Societies*, ed. Helen Meller and

Heleni Porfyriou (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), pp. 195–227. For the connection between the Peel map of the Jewish state and the electricity grid serving the Yishuv, see Fredrik Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), pp. 209–13.

- 43 For the effects of the Peel Commission and the ensuing outbreak of the revolt on Palestinian political structures, see Takriti, “Before BDS.”
- 44 For how the Peel maps connected to the UNSCOP map, see El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, pp. 360–69.

Palestine at the UN: The PLO and UNRWA in the 1970s



ANNE IRFAN

This article examines the relationship of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) during the 1970s, the period when the PLO reached the zenith of its power in Palestinian refugee camps throughout the Levant. Based on archival United Nations (UN) and UNRWA documents, as well as the PLO's own communications and publications, the article argues that the organization approached its relationship with UNRWA as part of a broader strategy to gain international legitimacy at the UN. That approach resulted in a complex set of tensions, specifically over which of the two institutions truly served and represented Palestinian refugees. In exploring these tensions, this article also demonstrates how the "question of Palestine" was in many ways an international issue.

UNRWA was a crucial hub for the Palestinian refugees. . . . It became very important for us [in the PLO] to focus on those who constituted its cadres [and] take advantage of the means that UNRWA could offer.
–Shafiq al-Hout, PLO representative at the UN, 1974–91

IN NOVEMBER 1979, Yasir Arafat wrote one of his regular letters to Olof Rydbeck, commissioner-general of UNRWA. In the letter, Arafat acknowledged the importance of UNRWA's work and thanked Rydbeck for his efforts on behalf of Palestinian refugees. His wording was warm and solicitous, even addressing Rydbeck as "dear brother."¹ Nothing in the letter suggested anything other than a friendly working relationship. Yet only ten months earlier, Arafat's PLO had openly accused UNRWA of capitulating to "imperialist and Zionist pressures."² And less than two years before that, the PLO had berated the agency for "playing with the lives of Palestinians."³

The contrast between these communications cannot be explained by any major changes in the PLO-UNRWA relationship at the time. Rather, the PLO's approach to UNRWA was consistently paradoxical, at times even contradictory. The organization variously criticized, praised, exploited, and berated the agency—sometimes changing tack within a short space of time. To understand this apparent inconsistency, it is necessary to situate the PLO's stance on UNRWA within the organization's broader internationalist strategy during its 1970s heyday. It is also important to

Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (Winter 2020), p. 26, ISSN: 0377-919X; electronic ISSN: 1533-8614. © 2020 by the Institute for Palestine Studies. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2020.49.2.26>.

consider UNRWA's positioning, role, and mission—subjects that hold particular weight in light of UNRWA's contemporary crisis and struggle for survival.⁴

Recent years have seen increasing historiographical engagement with the PLO's international diplomacy, spearheaded by Paul Chamberlin and building on Yezid Sayigh's earlier study.⁵ Influenced by Matthew Connelly's work on the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)⁶—and arguing that the PLO itself was inspired by the FLN's example—Chamberlin contends that the historiography on the PLO has wrongly subordinated its diplomatic efforts to a preoccupation with its militancy. In fact, global political diplomacy was a core tenet of the PLO's strategy, as demonstrated through the organization's continual engagement with the UN. The PLO was in many ways an internationalist organization, both ideologically and strategically. It positioned the question of Palestine as one that had international dimensions and significance, and accordingly sought to promote itself, as well as the cause, in the international arena. As Noura Erakat writes, the PLO was determined to have the UN recognize it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the 1970s were a critical period here. Changes in the UN's membership resulting from widespread decolonization, along with the rise of Third Worldism, provided an opportunity for the PLO to progress in its international standing.⁷ With that premise in mind, this article examines a question that both Chamberlin and Erakat have overlooked: how did UNRWA fit into the PLO's international strategy?

The question matters because UNRWA's work encapsulates the UN's long-term involvement in Palestinian affairs. The agency was established in 1949 as a central plank of the UN's institutional system for dealing with the “question of Palestine.” The UN General Assembly (UNGA) issued the agency with a short-term mandate to provide essential relief services to registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza (known as the “five fields”).⁸ Meanwhile, the UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) was responsible for finding a durable political solution to the crisis.⁹ Within this setup, UNRWA's role was constructed as apolitical.¹⁰ Like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and in keeping with post-1945 humanitarian norms, UNRWA was bound by the principle that humanitarianism should be neutral and separate from politics—itsself a problematic and elusive notion.¹¹ Moreover, the continuation of UNRWA's work was always precarious, given the temporary nature of its mandate, which had to be renewed by UNGA on a regular basis, meaning that the agency's termination was an ever-present possibility. To complicate matters further, by the late 1950s the UNCCP had become inactive, leaving UNRWA as the only effective body mandated to work with the Palestinian people.¹²

The repercussions of this setup were highly significant. Fundamentally, it meant that a stateless people came to rely on a UN body for essential services while lacking international political protection. As a result of this deficit, Palestinian refugees continually turned to UNRWA to pursue their political rights, particularly repatriation—but, of course, UNRWA's apolitical mandate did not allow it to take up their demands.¹³ The agency's actions were further constrained by the fact that the majority of its funding came from Western governments, which were politically opposed to the refugees' return.¹⁴ Thus, notwithstanding its ostensibly apolitical stance, UNRWA was deeply entangled in the politics of humanitarianism from its inception.

This took several forms. Most fundamentally, UNRWA was the product of political dynamics, having been established and mandated by Western political actors—chiefly the United States and

the United Kingdom—on the basis of political calculations.¹⁵ Political dynamics dominated the context in which the agency operated, including, most importantly, the lived experiences of the Palestinian refugees it served. The realities of such a setting raises questions about what it really means to be “apolitical,” and whether this is either desirable or possible. Generally, the concept of political neutrality is constructed around the idea that humanitarian actors should remain detached from political or ideological disputes in order to maintain their independence and trustworthiness. However, such detachment comes with inherent problems; it can require humanitarians to be silent in situations of oppression and abuse, to neglect the cause of those who are suffering, and to further strengthen those who wield unjust power.¹⁶ In so doing, of course, their “apolitical” detachment can end up having highly political outcomes, which may contravene the very principles of humanitarianism. UNRWA has regularly faced criticism as a result.

Arguably, the idea of political neutrality is also based on a narrow interpretation of what constitutes “the political,” disregarding the fact that modern international humanitarianism and the global refugee regime are themselves products of particular political circumstances after World War II.¹⁷ By constructing humanitarian aid as something idealized and objective, rather than an order embedded in political power structures, it becomes possible to implement a selective view of what constitutes “the political” in a way that often disadvantages marginalized groups. For example, the human rights discourses that often drive humanitarian work are presented as universal and apolitical, disregarding the reality that, as Lori Allen contends, these discourses are grounded in specific political paradigms.¹⁸

To complicate the issue of neutrality even further, humanitarian actors such as UNRWA often serve, either intentionally or inadvertently, as witnesses to events that are inescapably political. This is especially significant in the case of the Palestinian refugees, who face multiple layers of marginalization as a stateless and displaced people dispersed across the Middle East. Both Ilana Feldman and Randa Farah point to how the agency has served as an international witness to the realities of Palestinian displacement, an issue with an undeniably political nature. At the same time, UNRWA’s work in improving the refugees’ socioeconomic conditions inevitably fed into debates about their future and the possibility of their permanent resettlement in Arab host states.¹⁹ As such, UNRWA’s relationship to the politics of Palestinian displacement was far more complex than its apolitical claims would suggest.

What did all this mean for the PLO? On the one hand, UNRWA’s constraints reinforced the PLO’s claim to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, as it could point out that no other actor was fulfilling this role. Yet, at the same time, the PLO did not have the resources to replace UNRWA as the refugees’ primary service provider, and it knew that the latter’s dissolution—a possibility frequently discussed in view of its temporary mandate—would not be in Palestinian interests. As a result, its relationship with UNRWA was comprised of competitive tension, juxtaposed with cooperation and support.

The relationship was further complicated by the role that UNRWA inadvertently took on in affirming Palestinian refugee identity—another potential threat to the PLO’s claim to be their sole representative. Although UNRWA was established as an apolitical aid agency, in practice it developed a *de facto* quasi-governmental function for refugees registered with the agency.²⁰ This was manifested most obviously through its large-scale healthcare and education programs,

which operated on a scale similar to that of a national government.²¹ To this day, UNRWA fulfils more of the administrative functions of a state than almost any other humanitarian organization.²² This was hugely significant in the context of Palestinian statelessness. In particular, UNRWA-issued IDs have become significant as the only “official” proof of identity for many Palestinian refugees, the majority of whom are stateless.²³ While UNRWA management has insisted that the ID cards hold no significance beyond verifying the eligibility of the holder for services, in practice, refugees have also used them as proof of identity when applying for a laissez-passer or for permission to work in one of the host states.²⁴ In this sense, the cards have served as vital documents for a stateless people needing to engage with state bureaucracy. Again, the PLO could not compete with UNRWA here.

There were other reasons, too, why the PLO never supported UNRWA’s dissolution. Strategically, the PLO understood UNRWA as an important component of its internationalist strategy in the 1970s. The agency comprised a local address for the UN in the region, making it a route by which the PLO could access the organization’s supranational system. In a further demonstration of international humanitarianism’s deeply political implications, UNRWA’s work also provided valuable evidence of the refugees’ plight and the problem of Palestinian statelessness,²⁵ which the PLO could use to support not only its defense of refugee rights but also its demand for recognition as the Palestinians’ representative. These dynamics meant that the PLO’s relationship with UNRWA was characterized not only by rivalry but also by political strategy. In showing how, this article enriches the historiography about the PLO’s place on the world stage. Assessing UNRWA’s role augments key existing scholarship by Chamberlin and Erakat, as well as scholarship by Helena Cobban, Kemal Kirişçi, Augustus Richard Norton, and Michael Greenberg.²⁶ In the process, it deepens historical and political perspectives on both organizations.

The article is organized into two sections. The first looks at the PLO-UNRWA relationship in the sphere of high diplomacy, examining UNRWA’s place in the PLO’s international strategy at a time when the organization was seeking legitimacy and formal recognition at the UN. The second section explores day-to-day interactions between the PLO and UNRWA in the refugee camps across the long 1970s, when the former enjoyed its greatest prominence and power in the camps; it takes the analysis of the PLO’s UN strategy to a more quotidian level, assessing the difference that formal international recognition of the PLO in 1974 made on the ground.

The Politics of High Diplomacy: Internationalizing the Palestinian Struggle

The PLO’s strategy toward UNRWA is best understood in the internationalist context of modern Palestinian history. Palestinian national politics had been entangled with internationalism—meaning international authorities and the notion of globally fixed standards—ever since the early twentieth century, when the League of Nations provided a mandate for the British governance of Palestine. International intervention in Palestinian politics continued with the 1947 UN partition plan,²⁷ as well as the numerous UNGA and UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions that followed the 1948 establishment of Israel and the resulting Nakba—the dispossession of the Palestinian people.²⁸

The UN's role in the creation of Israel, which became a member state in 1949,²⁹ led former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir to later describe the country as "the first born of the United Nations."³⁰

UNRWA's establishment, and the continuation of its work, typified the UN's ongoing presence in Palestinian—as well as regional—affairs.³¹ After beginning operations in 1950, the agency quickly became the dominant service provider for Palestinian refugees in the Levant. It was also a major employer, as Palestinians comprised the majority of its lower- and mid-echelon staff.³² Partly as a result, tension quickly arose over ownership of UNRWA, with refugee communities pushing for it to demand and represent their full political rights.³³ Many feared that anything less would simply facilitate their protracted exile. Further tensions emerged over the agency's services, which many Palestinians saw as entitlements stemming from their refugee status.³⁴ Accordingly, they viewed any service cuts as an infringement on their rights, something that became an increasingly heated issue after UNRWA introduced new restrictions in the 1960s.³⁵ The refugees' grievances against UNRWA were reinforced by their underlying suspicion of the UN, which they perceived as having abandoned them during the Nakba.³⁶

For much of the 1950s and 1960s, these grievances were expressed by grassroots groups in the Palestinian refugee camps. Although the PLO had been established in 1964, it was constrained in its early years by the Arab League, which had created the organization as a means to contain Palestinian nationalism. The PLO was thus relatively toothless until the late 1960s, when Arafat's Fatah party took control and pried it away from Arab state management. Thereafter, the PLO embraced a more radical agenda, presenting itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians and seeking self-determination as a party separate from the Arab states.³⁷ In 1969, these efforts gained a major boost when the Cairo Agreement granted the PLO *de facto* sovereignty over parts of Lebanon, most notably the south and the refugee camps, along with the right to hold arms in these areas.³⁸ It thus gained formal recognition as a pseudo-state actor, albeit in a regional rather than an international context. This served as a basis from which it then sought global recognition. From the late 1960s, the PLO twinned its militant campaigns against Israel with a diplomatic offensive on the world stage, aiming to reach out to potential allies and raise awareness of the Palestinian cause among as many parties as possible.³⁹

In particular, the PLO engaged with the ideas of Third Worldism, an international post colonial movement that had first emerged in the mid-1950s and gathered pace in subsequent decades as decolonization swept Africa and Asia. The Third Worldist movement sought to challenge the Global North's political and economic hegemony through South-South cooperation and solidarity. Many of its leading figures, most notably Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, also called for postcolonial states to resist dominant power structures by refusing to align themselves with either of the Cold War superpowers (although some Third Worldist governments did end up in alliance with the United States or, more often, the Soviet Union).⁴⁰ As Steven Salaita writes, the emergence of Third Worldism as a self-consciously internationalist movement served to crystallize the notion of progressive solidarity across the Global South.⁴¹ These ideas, and the explicit internationalism underpinning them, all aligned ideologically with the PLO.

In particular, Third Worldism was grounded in people's experiences of colonialism and their struggles for self-determination. This was a natural ideological fit for the PLO, which cast Israel as the colonizer and the Palestinians as the colonized⁴²—a characterization that gained added weight

following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the birth of the illegal settler movement.⁴³ By characterizing Israel and Zionism as part of the Western imperialist order, the PLO cast itself in the resistance mold of the global anticolonial movement.⁴⁴ Like its counterparts across the Global South, it spoke of its struggle in terms of justice and rights; also like them, it positioned itself as part of a broader international movement.⁴⁵ To underline this, the PLO regularly highlighted its commonalities with other revolutionary struggles, producing posters to celebrate the emergence or victories of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the Polisario Front, among others.⁴⁶

The PLO's communications from this period reflect not only its emphasis on international diplomacy, but also its self-conscious positioning within Third Worldism. In 1969, its dominant Fatah party declared the Palestinian struggle "a model of resistance to neo-imperialist domination," thus asserting both its solidarity and its wider relevance.⁴⁷ This turned out to be prescient; the "model" of Palestine became central in decolonial circles in subsequent years, helped by the major cultural output that the PLO produced from its base in Lebanon in the 1970s.⁴⁸ In particular, the PLO's success in gaining global recognition at the UN in 1974 marked a huge victory for Third Worldism,⁴⁹ coming a decade after seventy-seven Third World countries formed the G77 voting bloc at the UN.⁵⁰ As such, its campaign became a model pursued by others, including the indigenous rights movement and African American political radicals.⁵¹ When the PLO leadership wrote in 1980 that it was "part of the world liberation movement and the shared struggle" (*juz' min harakat al-tahrir al-'alami fi al-nidal al-mushtarik*), it was describing both a practical and an ideological reality.⁵²

Of course, the PLO's engagement with Third Worldism had an instrumental component as well as an ideological purpose. Aligning with Third Worldism served to strengthen the PLO's clout on the world stage by presenting the organization as part of a global movement and thus increasing the perceived feasibility of its goals.⁵³ In particular, the FLN, which was prominent in the Third Worldist movement, and to which the PLO had close ties, provided a strong example of a nationalist militant movement that had achieved independent statehood.⁵⁴ When the PLO celebrated the Algerian revolution as a fellow popular uprising against a Western-backed imperialist regime, its ideological solidarity also came with practical benefits: the FLN regime went on to share arms and training facilities with the PLO.⁵⁵

Yet the PLO's international positioning went further than the postcolonial sphere. Like many other non-state actors of the era—and along with numerous Third Worldist leaders (most prominently, Gamal Abdel Nasser)⁵⁶—the PLO also participated in the global binary of the Cold War. Specifically, its political opposition to the West, particularly the United States, facilitated links to the Soviet bloc,⁵⁷ with Arafat visiting Moscow for talks and continually referring to the Soviet Union as a friend and ally.⁵⁸ It also forged close alliances with so-called Communist regimes in Romania,⁵⁹ China,⁶⁰ Cuba,⁶¹ Czechoslovakia,⁶² and Yugoslavia. It was Yugoslavian president Josip Broz Tito who first suggested that the PLO go to the UN in the 1970s, ushering in a watershed moment for the organization's international standing.⁶³

PALESTINE AT THE UN

As mentioned above, Palestinians—including leading PLO officials⁶⁴—were generally suspicious of the UN because of its role in partitioning Palestine in 1947 and its subsequent failure to recognize

their political rights in UNSC Resolution 242 twenty years later.⁶⁵ Yet, notwithstanding this hostility, UN-targeted diplomacy became a central plank of the PLO's strategy from the late 1960s. In a 1976 issue of its English-language information bulletin, *Palestine*, the organization stated that "exposing the Zionist-imperialist enemy to world opinion through the U.N. bodies" was one of the three strands of its struggle, the other two being "defending the Palestinian Revolution's existence in Lebanon" and "resisting the Zionist occupation forces in occupied Palestine."⁶⁶

Fatah was the driving force behind this UN-focused strategy. It had long been aware of the importance of international diplomacy, having sent its first recorded communication to the UN secretary-general in June 1965, only a few months after formally launching its armed struggle.⁶⁷ After coming to dominate the PLO, Fatah continued to pursue opportunities at the UN. A 1980 Fatah document for political planning, later seized by Israeli occupying forces in south Lebanon, listed securing more pro-Palestinian UN resolutions among its objectives.⁶⁸ This approach provoked considerable censure from some of the Palestinian diaspora, particularly in the Arab world, who continued to regard the UN as an enemy force. Shafiq al-Hout, who represented the PLO at the UN from 1974–91, recalls in his memoir how some Palestinians demonstrated against the organization's overtures to the UN as a betrayal of their stance against it.⁶⁹

Despite this opposition, the PLO—or at least its dominant Fatah contingent—insisted that winning over the UN was vital to the nationalist movement's success. The rationale was simple: while many in the leadership shared the general Palestinian suspicion toward the UN, they also recognized that it had been crucial to historical Israeli successes and Palestinian defeats. They accordingly concluded that in order to reverse Palestinian fortunes, they would need to persuade the UN of their case.⁷⁰ Arafat in particular believed that UN recognition would legitimize the PLO's representative status and generate pressure for its inclusion in negotiations.⁷¹

In the context of the 1970s, the PLO's view on the UN was further influenced by the changes that had occurred in the latter's membership. As several leading Palestinian officials noted, by this time the composition of the UN—and particularly that of the UNGA—looked very different from the 1940s. The large-scale decolonization of Africa and Asia had precipitated the entry of dozens of newly independent states, which were largely sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.⁷² Moreover, as noted above, the PLO had direct ideological and practical ties to many of these postcolonial governments, often made up of former liberation movements with whom it identified.⁷³ The increasing prominence and power of Third Worldist states at the UN thus reinforced the PLO's commitment to internationalism.

Indeed, the significance of these states' UN membership quickly became evident. From 1969 on, the UNGA passed a slew of resolutions in the Palestinians' favor, most notably, resolutions 2535, 2787, and 2955, which collectively upheld the Palestinian right of return and right to self-determination.⁷⁴ Crucially, these resolutions aligned with the PLO in addressing the Palestinian issue as political rather than humanitarian; UNGA Resolution 2649 drew explicitly on the PLO's declaration of solidarity with the rest of the Global South by comparing the Palestinian situation to that in southern Africa.⁷⁵ The PLO also gained a new voice on the world stage in 1970 when its representative participated in a discussion on the "question of Palestine," held by the UNGA's Special Political Committee.⁷⁶

This shift toward a pro-Palestinian stance reached its apogee in 1974.⁷⁷ In October that year, the UNGA voted by 105 to 4 to invite the PLO to participate in its plenary discussions on Palestine.⁷⁸ The following month, it formally invited Arafat to address the assembly in New York. Israel opposed the move vehemently to no avail.⁷⁹ Arafat's speech, which was broadcast around the world amid simultaneous fanfare and controversy, articulated the PLO's internationalist strategy, calling on UN member states to implement the Palestinians' national and political rights.⁸⁰ He asserted both the Palestinian right to self-determination and the PLO's right to represent Palestinians internationally.⁸¹ Also in November, UNGA Resolution 3237 invited the PLO to participate in UNGA sessions as an observer entity, with a similar status to that of the Vatican.⁸² The PLO thus gained its longed-for recognition as the legitimate Palestinian representative on the world stage.

The events of 1974 marked a turning point in the international status of the Palestinian cause.⁸³ Resolution 3237 gave the PLO a higher level of UN recognition than any other non-state actor at the time and allowed it to participate in the UNGA's work and sessions. There were also limitations: the PLO was not a full UN member and remained excluded from the more powerful UNSC. Yet even the latter shifted slightly, inviting the PLO representative to address the council after the UNGA requested that it establish contacts with the new observer entity.⁸⁴ The PLO was now unmistakably part of the UN and much harder to ignore.

The PLO was quick to take advantage of its new opportunities, appointing permanent observers to UN headquarters in both New York and Geneva.⁸⁵ Its representative had a private meeting with the UN secretary-general in 1976, and it continued to appeal regularly to the secretariat and other member states for support in subsequent years.⁸⁶ In 1978, Arafat wrote to Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, calling for "[the Palestinian refugees'] right to return to their homes and property in accordance with the rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations resolutions, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."⁸⁷ Arafat's invocation of the UN Charter and UN resolutions is highly telling here. By framing his argument in international norms, he implies that it is the UN's responsibility to support the Palestinian national cause. The letter is a clear case of the PLO's internationalist strategy in action. The question that remains is what this meant for UNRWA, as the UN's local address for Palestinians in the Middle East.

UNRWA AND THE PLO'S INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

UNRWA's work manifests the long-running connections between Palestinian refugees and the international order as encapsulated by the UN. Specifically, it exemplifies the involvement of the UNGA, the agency which provides UNRWA's mandate and to which UNRWA is answerable.⁸⁸ As such, UNRWA was directly affected by the UNGA's formal recognition of the PLO in 1974. Commissioner-General John Rennie acknowledged this in his annual report the following year: "The granting to the PLO by the General Assembly of observer status at the UN and the Assembly's request to the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the PLO on all matters relating to the question of Palestine," he said, "were of significance to the Agency."⁸⁹ This fleeting reference did not do justice to what this "significance" would mean in practice.

Formally, 1974 marked the beginning of UNRWA's official relationship with the PLO, as relations could only be established once the UNGA had recognized the organization.⁹⁰ In reality,

the agency's interactions with the PLO long predated this. On some level, the relationship was an organic one, as many of the PLO's cadres had studied in UNRWA's schools and were therefore closely familiar with the agency from a young age. Some senior Palestinian officials, including Abu Iyad and Ghassan Kanafani, even worked as teachers in UNRWA schools for a time. As Jalal Al Hussein and Randa Farah have both written, this intimately shaped the link between UNRWA and the PLO, with the former having directly informed the life experiences of many of the latter's members.⁹¹

From UNRWA's operational perspective, the PLO became a significant actor not as a result of UNGA recognition in 1974 but prior to this, when the organization gained prominence throughout Palestinian refugee camps in the late 1960s. It loomed particularly large in Lebanon, where the aforementioned Cairo Agreement gave it de facto sovereignty over the camps. This meant that the agency had to work with the PLO in order to implement its mandate. Yet it had to proceed with care. The norms of international humanitarianism bound UNRWA to political neutrality—the demands of the refugees notwithstanding—and the refugee camps were designated civilian areas.⁹² The PLO's authority in the camps posed an obvious risk to their supposedly civilian nature, and to the agency's ostensibly apolitical status.

There were also practical considerations. UNRWA's dependence on voluntary donations meant that it could not afford to alienate its donors, the largest of which—the United States—continued to classify the PLO as a terrorist organization until 1988.⁹³ As if to underline the issue, in 1970, the United States had attached to its funding of UNRWA the condition that the agency remain totally detached from the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) and *fida'iyyin* groups.⁹⁴ The agency therefore walked a tightrope in its relations with the PLO for five years after the Cairo Agreement. Its task was complicated further by the fact that the PLO was also gaining increasing prominence outside Lebanon at this time. In 1970, the Arab host governments, on whose support UNRWA also relied, requested that the PLO participate in meetings on the agency's education program.⁹⁵

UNGA Resolution 3237 thus made things slightly easier for the agency by providing an official framework within which it could conduct relations with the PLO. After the UNGA's formal recognition of the PLO in 1974, the PLO-UNRWA relationship was formalized,⁹⁶ with Rennie calling on Arafat in Beirut "to inform him more fully of the Agency's financial difficulties and their implications for services to the refugees."⁹⁷ Thereafter, the two organizations held regular official meetings in Lebanon, chaired by Lebanese government representatives, to discuss operational issues regarding the refugees.⁹⁸

At the same time, the PLO increasingly made use of UNRWA to buttress its calls for Palestinian political rights, sometimes quoting its reports in official speeches at the UN and other international arenas.⁹⁹ Whenever possible, the PLO cited statements by UNRWA officials as evidence of the justice of their cause. A 1977 issue of the PLO's *Palestine* proudly proclaimed that the UNRWA director in Gaza had "expressed his strong criticism of the Zionist authorities' policies in the Gaza Strip," particularly the forced relocation of refugees.¹⁰⁰ The bulletin was printed in several European languages and designed to reach a Western audience. Evidently, the PLO perceived UNRWA to have sufficient clout and authority on the world stage to make the agency's words worth disseminating to this audience.

Everyday Politics: The PLO and UNRWA in the Refugee Camps

While Resolution 3237 of 1974 was transformative at the high diplomatic level, its impact on the ground was more muted. The PLO had been on UNRWA's radar since its creation ten years earlier, and for much of the 1960s the relationship between the two was ambiguous. Formally, UNRWA prohibited its employees from publicly identifying with the PLO, in view of its neutrality obligations as a UN agency. It accordingly protested the PLO's conscription of its staff in 1965–67. Yet the PLO's role as *de facto* government of many Palestinian refugee camps in this period—first in Jordan and then in Lebanon—meant that the agency could not ignore the organization altogether.¹⁰¹

As Al Hussein and Benjamin Schiff have both detailed, the PLO's rising power in the camps in the late 1960s greatly complicated the situation for UNRWA, whose mandate remained the same, despite the changes on the ground.¹⁰² The agency first directly encountered the PLO in Jordan after the organization rose to prominence among the country's large Palestinian population following the 1967 Arab defeat. This prominence proved unsustainable, however, as the PLO contested the Jordanian regime's approach to Israel and ultimately launched a military offensive against it. The ensuing civil war resulted in the PLO's expulsion from Jordan in 1970, in events known as Black September.¹⁰³ While the PLO's era of dominance in Jordan was short-lived, it precipitated new themes in the organization's relationship with UNRWA that would dominate the subsequent decade.

After Black September, the PLO established its headquarters in Beirut. In view of the Cairo Agreement, UNRWA had little choice but to engage with the PLO directly in Lebanon. At the same time, the PLO demanded that the agency recognize its role by sharing information and consulting with it over changes in service provision. Relations gradually moved from "uneasy coexistence to active partnership," in the words of Al Hussein.¹⁰⁴ From UNRWA's perspective, the impact of this shift was mixed. There were some benefits: Schiff and Sayigh both argue that at a time when UNRWA was facing severe financial difficulties, the PLO's provision of additional services in the camps, as well as its creation of job opportunities, helped relieve the level of need among the refugees and thus reduce pressure on the agency.¹⁰⁵ Yet, as Al Hussein points out, the legitimacy of the Cairo Agreement did not make any difference to the Western donor states' classification of the PLO as a terrorist organization, with the resulting challenges for UNRWA.¹⁰⁶

The PLO took a similarly multifaceted approach to UNRWA, reflecting the views held by many refugees about the agency. Al Hussein contends that from the mid-1970s, PLO policy regarding the agency had two main aims: to maintain and increase UNRWA's services, and to ensure that UNRWA decisions were consistent with Palestinian political and humanitarian interests.¹⁰⁷ Yet these aims did not always result in consistent policy. It is, in fact, possible to identify three key strands in the PLO's stance toward UNRWA at this time: first, the organization was vocal in its endorsement of the refugees' grievances against the agency and was keen to align itself with their criticisms; second, and simultaneously, the PLO recognized that UNRWA's services were vital to the welfare and wellbeing of many refugees, and thus it campaigned behind the scenes for the agency's work to continue; and third, and most interestingly, the PLO also sought to use UNRWA's camp

infrastructure and services for its own political and nationalist purposes, particularly in Lebanon after the Cairo Agreement. Each of these three strands is now examined in turn.

CRITICIZING UNRWA: THE PLO AS OPPONENT

The PLO's criticisms of UNRWA were largely grounded in the grievances of camp refugees. By aligning itself with their criticisms, the PLO underlined its claims to represent them. Like them, it always stopped short of calling for UNRWA's abolition or questioning the grounds for its existence. Instead, it endorsed the camp inhabitants' criticisms that UNRWA was patronizing toward the Palestinians; that it was politically aligned with their enemies, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom; and that it did nothing to put an end to the refugees' plight by working to realize their political rights.¹⁰⁸ The PLO also advocated for long-running demands by the refugees for the agency to improve its health clinics and increase its ration provisions.¹⁰⁹

Many PLO officials were particularly keen to take up the charge that UNRWA was part of a Western-backed plot to permanently resettle the refugees in the Arab host states, and thus undermine their struggle for self-determination. The fact that UNRWA did not participate in Palestinian national politics—something attributable to the limitations of its mandate—was taken as evidence of this. As early as 1965, the PLO in Syria had issued a questionnaire for Palestinian UNRWA staff there, seeking information about their personal backgrounds and their potential to contribute to the nationalist movement. The questionnaire also asked recipients to name up to twenty acquaintances who could participate “in preparing for the battle of liberation.”¹¹⁰ UNRWA's refusal to distribute the questionnaire, on grounds of its inappropriate political and military content, was cited as evidence that the agency was “conspiring” against the refugees' cause—a claim made in numerous PLO pamphlets over the years.¹¹¹

The PLO also cast UNRWA's service cuts as politically motivated, seeing them as a precursor to the agency's dissolution and the international abandonment of the refugees.¹¹² In a 1977 statement, the PLO accused UNRWA and the United States of “playing with the lives of Palestinians” by deliberately providing inadequate welfare services.¹¹³ Four years later, a PLO official warned the UNRWA field director in Damascus that service cuts would not be accepted, hinting that the PLO would organize grievous demonstrations against the agency if it continued with its planned cutbacks.¹¹⁴ Such opposition thus became another factor that UNRWA had to take into general consideration when deciding on possible cutbacks.¹¹⁵

All of the above notwithstanding, the PLO's influence on UNRWA's work remained generally limited. The organization failed to prevent many of the decisions it opposed, such as the relocation of UNRWA's headquarters from Beirut to Vienna in 1978; it also failed to bring in many of the changes it demanded, such as the explicit inclusion of protection activities and political negotiations within UNRWA's mandate. This presents a striking contrast with the success of the refugees' grassroots campaigns, most notably in the 1950s, when refugee communities had successfully lobbied UNRWA to expand its education program at the expense of its job creation schemes.¹¹⁶ Explaining the PLO's contrasting lack of success in engendering any major changes in UNRWA's operations, Al Hussein suggests that the PLO's leverage with UNRWA was limited by the fact that it could never establish comprehensive alternatives to the

agency's services. As it could not threaten to replace UNRWA completely, the PLO retained some elements of dependence on its work.¹¹⁷

The time and effort that the PLO expended on criticizing UNRWA's work indicate that it saw the agency as a significant, if flawed, player. Unlike its political opponents, the PLO never called for UNRWA's abolition. On the contrary, it aligned itself with the refugees in insisting that UNRWA must continue its work until their plight was resolved. For the PLO, this insistence translated into action, as its criticisms were coupled with behind-the-scenes efforts to ensure that UNRWA's programs could continue. This aspect of the PLO's relationship with the agency is examined in depth below.

SUPPORTING UNRWA: THE PLO AS FUNDRAISER

Officially, the PLO shared the Arab states' position that responsibility for funding UNRWA lay with the Western-dominated international community on the grounds of its political responsibility for the refugees' plight.¹¹⁸ However, in private, the PLO recognized that UNRWA's work was crucial to the refugees' wellbeing; it was therefore willing to lobby for Arab funding to UNRWA in order to prevent the agency from floundering. UNRWA staff themselves stated internally, "There can be no doubt whatsoever about [the] desire of Arab host governments and [the] PLO that UNRWA should continue [to] provide services to refugees."¹¹⁹ In the PLO's case, this was not simply a desire but a driving force behind active fundraising work for UNRWA.¹²⁰

In 1974, faced with a serious deficit, UNRWA approached the PLO for help in seeking emergency funding from the Gulf states, where the agency had previously had difficulties even getting appointments to see high officials.¹²¹ It also considered asking the PLO to approach Cuba and other Communist states on its behalf¹²²—further evidence of the PLO's success in establishing itself as an influential party in the non-Western world. The agency's overtures to the PLO on this front provide one example of how the relationship was symbiotic, with each organization seeking to use the other to its own advantage whenever possible. It is also a clear case of UNGA Resolution 3237 making a difference on the ground; without it, UNRWA would not have been able to approach the PLO for fundraising assistance.

The PLO leadership was receptive to the agency's requests. In 1974–75, it helped secure large emergency contributions to UNRWA from various Gulf states. Although these states refused to commit to regular contributions to UNRWA's General Fund, their emergency donations helped keep UNRWA afloat that year.¹²³ UNRWA acknowledged the PLO's vital role in raising these funds. In 1975, Commissioner-General Rennie reported to New York that "reconsideration by Arab Foreign Ministers of increased contributions to UNRWA is result of approach to PLO [*sic*]."¹²⁴ Nor was this a one-off; in 1975, Arafat asked to be kept informed of UNRWA's financial situation.¹²⁵ Indeed, it was Arafat in particular who was responsible for many fundraising efforts on UNRWA's behalf. Over the 1970s, he traveled to numerous Arab and Muslim states to appeal for donations, and the PLO made specific efforts to fundraise for the agency at the 1978 Arab League Summit in Baghdad.¹²⁶

The records indicate warm and solicitous relations between the PLO and UNRWA leaderships over this issue, with the former speaking positively of the agency's work in support of the

refugees, notwithstanding its aforementioned claims that UNRWA was aligned with the Palestinians' political enemies. In one letter in 1979, Arafat wrote, "We cannot but express our appreciation for your concern and interest in seeking solutions to the financial crisis faced by UNRWA, in order to muster sufficient support for the maintenance of its activities. . . . We are in fact exerting efforts through our contacts with the responsible international circles concerned with a view to participating in helping UNRWA financially."¹²⁷ The fundraising partnership remained active throughout this period. In 1980 and 1981, Commissioner-General Rydbeck met with Arafat repeatedly in Beirut to discuss the UNRWA deficit, and the PLO chairman promised to again help raise money.¹²⁸ Arafat subsequently approached Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and even Japan on the agency's behalf. Faruq al-Qaddumi, head of the PLO's political department, also appealed to France to increase its contribution.¹²⁹ Again, emergency donations helped stave off total disaster for the agency.¹³⁰

Paradoxically, these fundraising efforts occurred simultaneously with PLO criticism of UNRWA for being part of an alleged international plot to liquidate the "Palestinian problem."¹³¹ This apparent inconsistency is a sign of the divisions that existed within the PLO, sometimes to the degree of generating incompatible policy positions. These internal tensions were exacerbated by the fact that, like UNRWA, the PLO had to navigate pressures on it from numerous parties. For the PLO, this meant assuring its Arab constituency that it was not "selling out" on the principle of Western responsibility for funding UNRWA. Publicly, it held fast to the official Arab line; when asked in a 1975 interview, PLO spokesman Abdul Mohsen Abu Maizar denied reports that the organization had appealed to Saudi Arabia to help fund UNRWA, stating that such funding was an international responsibility.¹³² These public denials were necessary for the PLO to maintain its credibility and hold together despite internal conflict.

POLITICIZING UNRWA: THE PLO AS PSEUDO-STATE IN LEBANON

The ramifications of the Cairo Agreement meant that the PLO in Lebanon came to present UNRWA with many of the problems the agency usually faced from the host governments. Questions of access, personnel, and the use of facilities all became topics of potential disagreement between UNRWA and the PLO. The huge controversy that surrounded the PLO in the eyes of many Western states—the same states that comprised UNRWA's major donors—rendered this especially sensitive for the agency.¹³³

To complicate matters further, an increasing competitiveness between the PLO and UNRWA took hold in this period as the former gained its foothold in the camps.¹³⁴ The PLO's new authority meant that its patronage became as important and desirable to the refugees as their connections to UNRWA, if not more so. This in turn undermined UNRWA's authority, disrupting its previously exclusive status as the camps' *de facto* government.

In practical terms, the PLO made increasing use of the same sites and installations as UNRWA, albeit for different purposes. For example, the PLO Higher Political Committee for Palestinian Affairs in Lebanon sought the use of UNRWA schools to hold classes for children on the Palestinian struggle.¹³⁵ Farah writes that this was sometimes due to a lack of alternatives,¹³⁶ and it is true that in the case of the schools, there were not many other buildings in the camps of

suitable size and design. Yet the reasons were not merely practical. As this article's opening quotation from al-Hout shows, the PLO was well aware of the strategic potential that the agency's work provided. Schiff, Al Hussein, and Riccardo Bocco all note that from the late 1960s, the PLO sought to use UNRWA's infrastructure to extend its own authority and legitimacy.¹³⁷

The PLO's efforts on this front took different forms. Al-Hout recalls that the organization particularly targeted UNRWA employees in its recruitment drives, aiming to take advantage of the agency's own network as a way to reach as many Palestinians as possible.¹³⁸ For this reason, the PLO was keen to align itself with UNRWA's Palestinian staff in their tensions with the agency, in order to win their trust and loyalty. Al Hussein argues that it was in this arena that the PLO actually enjoyed its greatest influence over the agency, albeit informally. By loudly endorsing the demands of organizations like the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, it could turn small-scale grievances into national issues and win itself a place at the negotiating table in the process.¹³⁹ The PLO accordingly endorsed the teachers' demands for higher salaries and supported their complaints about the prohibition of political discussion in schools.¹⁴⁰ The latter issue was of particular interest to the PLO, as UNRWA's regulations on staff neutrality, and specifically its ban on employees joining the PLO, severely limited its scope for recruitment to its ranks.¹⁴¹

The PLO also took up the refugees' demand for a "Palestinianized" curriculum as a key issue.¹⁴² The absence of Palestinian history and geography from the curricula in UNRWA schools was a long-running grievance among many refugees, and it served to reinforce their suspicions about the agency's political positioning.¹⁴³ Like many other Third Worldist groups, the PLO regarded the role of education as central to its liberationist ideology. In that vein, a 1974 issue of the PLO organ *Falastin al-thawra* called attention to the agency's "suspicious attempts to keep the people ignorant."¹⁴⁴ At the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization General Conference two years later, PLO observer Ibrahim Souss spoke of the need to "reevaluate" UNRWA's education system as part of the burgeoning relationship between the two organizations.¹⁴⁵ This is a key example of how, in alliance with the grass roots among the refugees, the PLO sought to influence the agency's policies and programs along its favored nationalistic lines.¹⁴⁶ Souss's intervention also shows how the UN's formal recognition of the PLO could intersect with the refugees' demands on the ground, in this case by giving them a voice on the world stage and boosting their leverage.

The PLO had some success in its usage of UNRWA structures in this period, albeit indirectly. When Arafat addressed the UNGA in November 1974, for example, the PLO instructed UNRWA staff in Lebanon to suspend work so as to participate in demonstrations of solidarity. UNRWA reported that nearly all field staff left work early in the morning in response.¹⁴⁷ To a lesser degree, the PLO was also able to mobilize refugees in Gaza for the same cause, using the UNRWA school network; the agency reported agitation in Jabalia and Shati' camps on the day of Arafat's speech.¹⁴⁸

From UNRWA's perspective, the PLO's encroachment on its facilities and services caused both political and practical problems. Hasna Rida, who worked as a research assistant for UNRWA in Lebanon at this time, recalls that the agency's relationship with the PLO was an anxious one. Agency management were nervous about the PLO's power in the camps and the accompanying desire of many refugees to be actively involved in the nationalist campaign.¹⁴⁹ The possibility of

the camps becoming non-civilian areas was a major concern for the agency, not only because of its apolitical mandate, but also for fear that perceived politicization would lead its Western donors to withdraw funding.¹⁵⁰ The PLO's use of UNRWA installations for its own purposes also caused serious practical problems, as these buildings were increasingly targeted in Israeli air raids.¹⁵¹

The agency's inability to prevent the PLO's infringement of its spaces in the 1970s contrasts starkly with its straightforward refusal in 1965 to distribute the PLO's questionnaire in Syria. By the 1970s, the PLO's leverage had greatly increased, and the situation was much more politically difficult for UNRWA, particularly in Lebanon. The agency's problems only worsened as the Lebanese civil war escalated and UNRWA's field office in Beirut found itself frequently cut off from both headquarters and area offices, forcing the agency to appeal increasingly for PLO security assistance.¹⁵² This development exemplified UNRWA's long-running, complex, and contradictory relationship with the PLO in the camps.¹⁵³

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Analysis of the PLO-UNRWA relationship is vital for deepening understandings of the PLO's historical bid for legitimacy and recognition on the world stage. Analysis of the two organizations' historical relationship is no less important for understanding the full complexity of the dynamics surrounding UNRWA's role and work. Such a subject holds particular weight in view of the agency's post-2018 financial crisis and struggle for survival. UNRWA's operational reality has long compelled it to function at the nexus of politics and humanitarianism, nationalism and internationalism. The resulting tensions are critical in explaining its numerous paradoxes, especially at a time when the agency faces increasingly prolific criticism.

Ultimately, the PLO's approach to UNRWA reflects how the "question of Palestine" was inextricably tied to the international arena, particularly at the UN, and how the Palestinian nationalist movement responded to this. The relationship between UNRWA and the PLO served as a microcosm for the juxtaposition of the apparently contrasting notions of nationalism and internationalism in Palestinian history, at both the institutional and the grassroots level. Palestinian refugee history occurred not only in the regional context of the Levant but also in the context of its relevance to the history of the UN, globalism, and postcolonial constructions of nationalism.

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- 70 This strategy has not disappeared. In 2011, the Palestinian Authority applied to become a full UN member state. The following year, it gained non-member state status. See UNGA Res. 67/19, Status of Palestine in the United Nations (4 December 2012), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/19862D03C564FA2C85257ACB004EE69B>. In his accompanying address to the UNGA, Mahmoud Abbas explicitly referenced UNGA Resolution 181 and the long history of UN involvement in Palestine. See “Statement by President Abbas before the Adoption of Resolution 67/19 on the Status of Palestine in the United Nations,” Mission of the State of Palestine to the UN, 29 November 2012, <http://palestineun.org/692/#more-692>.
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- 72 Rajeev Patel and Philip McMichael, “Third Worldism and the Lineages of Global Fascism: The Regrouping of the Global South in the Neoliberal Era,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): p. 241.
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- 75 UNGA Res. 2649, Importance of the Universal Realization of the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination and of the Speedy Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for the Effective Guarantee and Observance of Human Rights (30 November 1970), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/UNISPAL.NSF/796f8bc05ec4f30885256cef0073cf3a/14da6eceed5f088a8525630a0072450d?OpenDocument>; UNGA Res. 2762, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (8 December 1970), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/E7C4B66C913ECO DC852560DE006E8F1B>.
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- 77 Chamberlin, "Struggle against Oppression," pp. 26–27.
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- 80 For the recording of Arafat's speech, see "Yasser Arafat General Assembly Speech (Part 1)," UN Audiovisual Library, <http://www.unmultimedia.org/classics/asset/C792/C792a/>. For the transcript, see Statement by Yasir Arafat, S-0899-0013-03, UNA.
- 81 Erakat, *Justice for Some*, pp. 97–100.
- 82 UNGA Res. 3237 (XXIX), Observer Status for the Palestine Liberation Organization (25 November 1974), <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0738/39/IMG/NR073839.pdf?OpenElement>.
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- 130 The seriousness of UNRWA's financial situation in this period can be observed in its annual reports. In 1979, Commissioner-General Rydbeck reported that "financial crisis" risked the agency's "very existence"; the following year, he spoke of the "grim prospect" of "financial collapse." See Olof Rydbeck, *Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA*, ¶ 33–34, UN Doc. A/34/13 (13 September 1979), <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/E8149C637F38D5398525684200539E62>; Olof Rydbeck, *Report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA*, ¶ 4, UN Doc. A/35/13 (18 September 1980), <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-176552/>.
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Established Practice: Palestinian Exclusion at the Dead Sea



ASEIL ABU-BAKER AND MARYA FARAH

The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, is one of the natural wonders of the world. Rich in minerals and salt, the lake has attracted visitors for millennia, and the economic value of its mineral riches has been important to both the local Palestinian population and to every colonial power that has ruled the area. Today, Israel exercises total control over the Dead Sea, the northern basin of which lies in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israeli settlements and international businesses, aided by state-funded initiatives, have established a profitable tourism sector and extractive industries based on the Dead Sea's natural resources, while Palestinians remain effectively excluded from pursuing such opportunities. Qumran National Park, private beach resorts, and the cosmetics company AHAVA, among others, reap enormous profits from settlements in the Dead Sea area, benefiting from Israel's occupation and unlawful policies and helping to drive a self-serving narrative of the area's history.

THE DEAD SEA is one of the most renowned natural wonders of the world: the lowest place on Earth, it is rich in unique minerals and salts. Tourists flock there to immerse themselves in its medicinal waters and to take photos while floating in its hypersaline water. However, behind the allure of the Dead Sea lies a misleading portrayal of the land. Since 1967, Israel has maintained total control of the area, erasing the Green Line that effectively divides the lake into its northern and southern basins, respectively located in what is now the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and Israel.¹ In doing so, Israel has unlawfully appropriated vast tracts of Palestinian land, established illegal settlements, and implemented an array of restrictions on movement and planning for Palestinians in the northern Dead Sea area. The lack of access to land has prevented Palestinians from developing lucrative extractive and tourism industries, resulting in the loss of an estimated \$1.4 billion annually to the Palestinian economy.² At the same time, international and Israeli businesses have reaped enormous benefits from Israel's total control of the Dead Sea area.

This report examines the history of Palestinian exclusion from economic development in the Dead Sea region, and how Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory has entrenched both Palestinian exclusion and Israeli and international exploitation of the area. The report highlights the intertwined interests of the Israeli settlement enterprise and the Israeli extractive and tourism

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industries. Using the latter as an example, the paper emphasizes the responsibility of international businesses to respect human rights in their operations, including their obligation not to support or profit from Israel's appropriation and exploitation of Palestinian land and resources in the Dead Sea area.

Historical Context: Foreign Powers and Palestinian Exclusion

THE BATTLE FOR CONCESSIONS

Many early explorations of the Dead Sea area—and of what is still referred to as the Holy Land—were influenced by what one scholar has termed “geo-pious” motivations, or a desire to retrace what is considered biblical history.³ Colonial interests were never far behind,⁴ attracted by the prospect of exploiting the area's natural resources.

Indeed, the vast economic potential of this salt lake did not go unnoticed whether by the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate authorities, or the Zionist movement and, ultimately, Israel.⁵ As early as 1888, the Ottoman Empire commissioned expeditions to begin exploring the economic potential of the Dead Sea.⁶ Similarly, by 1890, the Zionists had set their sights on the possibility of benefitting from the Dead Sea's vast resources.⁷ In his book *Altneuland*, the founder of the Zionist movement, Theodore Herzl, discussed the economic potential of the Dead Sea as a vital component of his plans for the future Zionist state.⁸ In 1904, he commissioned a German geological party to explore the Dead Sea for its economic potential.⁹ Two years later, their report was shared with Moses Novomeysky, a Russian mining engineer who was at one time president of the World Zionist Organization in Siberia, and who expressed interest in a concession from the Ottoman Empire as early as 1907.¹⁰

Novomeysky later traveled to Palestine in 1911 to further explore the possibility of exploiting the Dead Sea.¹¹ Around the same time, the Ottoman authorities issued concessions to Ottoman subjects for the extraction of bromine that were ultimately annulled.¹² Although Novomeysky would not return to Palestine until 1920, the Zionist movement “adopted the Dead Sea Concession as a national project of the Jewish people.”¹³

These foreign parties, alongside Israel later on, often attempted to justify their control over Palestine's natural resources on the grounds that the native population was either incapable of or had no interest in developing and monetizing them.¹⁴ Yet, as early as the mid-1700s, the local Palestinian population had recognized the natural wealth of the Dead Sea and engaged in small-scale salt farming on its shores.¹⁵ Palestinians also had more ambitious hopes to develop the Dead Sea economy and indeed made plans to benefit from its riches.¹⁶

In 1913, Ibrahim Hazboun, a Palestinian from Bethlehem, began exploring the development of a mineral extraction plant on the Dead Sea.¹⁷ Hazboun is reported to have expressed his interest to the Ottoman governor at the time, but he was not awarded the concession.¹⁸ Instead, he was given a managerial position in the Ottoman transportation operations at the Dead Sea, which served as a transport route during World War I.¹⁹ Hazboun's family claimed that he accepted the position based on the understanding that it would lead to a mineral concession after the war.²⁰ Hazboun later acquired the transport business, and repeatedly

reiterated his interest in the concession to the British, but the British and the Zionists had their own plans to exploit the Dead Sea.²¹

In 1918, the British commissioned a research team to survey the area, and quickly reported on the potential for a “large and profitable industry in the Dead Sea,”²² emphasizing the large quantities of potash and bromine available.²³ The British were interested in securing their supply of potash, in particular, as an alternative to near-total reliance on Germany for the mineral.²⁴ At the same time, the promise of the “Jewish national homeland” had already been elaborated, and in support, British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour had clearly set out Britain’s intent to assist the Zionist movement in establishing economic dominance in Palestine. This is reflected in statements attributed to Balfour in 1919 noting that Zionists would be given preference, even over British interests, for developing concessions in Palestine.²⁵ Bolstering this support, the 1922 Mandate for Palestine expressly outlined the special treatment reserved for the “Jewish population.”²⁶

Meanwhile, despite financial difficulties, Hazboun continued to operate his transport business based on the purported promise that he would be granted a salt concession after the Mandate for Palestine was officially ratified.²⁷ At the same time, Novomeysky was making offers to purchase Hazboun’s business in what he called “a way to establish myself legally on the Dead Sea.”²⁸ Hazboun attempted to maintain his footing and continued to communicate his demand for the concession. But with rising business debts, in 1921, the British Mandate government urged Hazboun to accept Novomeysky’s offer.²⁹

Enticed by the prospect of Zionist funding and keen to fulfill the promise of a Jewish national homeland, the Colonial Office in London supported Novomeysky’s concession application.³⁰ Lord Melchett, a member of the House of Lords and the president of the Economic Board of Palestine, reflected this support in a communication to Novomeysky: “You will readily understand that the matter is of more than industrial significance. The Dead Sea represents the only important mineral wealth of Palestine, and those of us who are interested in establishing there a National Home for the Jews cannot contemplate with equanimity the control of the passing into the hands of the American group, who are not interested in the economical development of the country.”³¹ The Zionist Department of Trade and Industry also endorsed Novomeysky’s application.³²

In 1925, Britain’s Crown Agents office for the colonies formally solicited tenders for the Dead Sea concession, allowing Novomeysky and others, including a British group, a U.S. industrial consortium,³³ and assignees of the Ottoman concession to submit tenders for consideration.³⁴ It is unclear whether Hazboun filed a formal tender at this time, as he was embroiled in bankruptcy proceedings related to his business. However, the process paved the way for Novomeysky to acquire the lease for the Dead Sea land and Hazboun’s transport business in 1925.³⁵ Despite London’s objections, most of which favored direct British control of Dead Sea resources,³⁶ Novomeysky was officially granted the concession in 1930.³⁷

Palestinians protested the British government’s decision, describing the concession to Novomeysky as “robbery” and a “stolen treasure.”³⁸ An official protest letter was delivered to the British House of Lords by Haj Amin al-Husseini, the president of the Supreme Muslim Council and the most prominent leader of the Palestinian national movement at the time. The letter

affirmed that granting the concession to a Zionist was a “political weapon against the rights of Arabs and their interests.”³⁹ The Palestinians’ objections were ignored.

Novomeysky went on to establish Palestine Potash Ltd., headquartered in what is now the Israeli settlement of Kalia, and began production in 1930.⁴⁰ The company headquarters was destroyed during the 1948 war, but a factory on the southern shores of the Dead Sea, known as Dead Sea Works, remained.⁴¹ This concession, among others awarded to the Zionists in the early twentieth century, proved to be a “significant pillar”⁴² of the future Jewish state, providing the Zionists the political capital to further their settler-colonial aspirations.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE POTASH INDUSTRY

Discussions on the regional development of the mineral extraction industry from the Dead Sea were well underway when Hazboun and Novomeysky were vying for the concession. In 1922, Dead Sea mineral extraction was central to the battle over the delimitation of the boundary between Transjordan and Palestine, during which Zionist demands were given undue consideration.⁴³ After his successful concession bid, Novomeysky is reported to have reached an agreement with King Abdullah I of Transjordan to extract minerals on a profit-sharing basis, both men being convinced that such an industry was central to the region’s economic growth.⁴⁴

It was not until 1956 that Jordan established its own mineral extraction company, the Arab Potash Company (APC). In 1958, the Jordanian government granted APC an exclusive one hundred-year concession for the exploitation of the Dead Sea (on the Jordanian side) for salts and minerals.⁴⁵ APC’s plant did not begin operations until 1982. Today, the mining industry plays a significant role in the Jordanian economy.⁴⁶ According to APC’s 2018 annual report, potash sales surged to an all-time high of 2.44 million tons that year,⁴⁷ reaping net profits of JD 124.9 million (approximately \$176 million), compared to JD 90 million (approximately \$75 million) in 2017.⁴⁸

In comparison, Israel Chemicals Ltd. (ICL), the parent company of Dead Sea Works and sixth-largest potash producer globally, registered profits of \$5.55 million for 2018.⁴⁹ According to ICL’s annual report, its total potash production reached 4.9 million tons in 2018, of which 3.8 million tons were produced inside Israel (the company produces potash elsewhere).⁵⁰ While failing to disclose how much of its revenue comes from the Dead Sea, ICL notes that there are practically unlimited supplies of minerals in the Dead Sea and that Israel is one of nine countries in the world that account for 94 percent of world’s natural potash reserves.⁵¹

Although outside of the scope of this paper, it should be noted that mineral and mud extraction, alongside other practices by both Israeli and Jordanian government authorities and companies, has contributed to the Dead Sea’s ecological degradation.⁵²

Israel’s Occupation in 1967: Continued Economic Control and Exploitation

By the time Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, its economic interests in the Dead Sea area were abundantly clear, and it quickly confiscated vast portions of land to secure the area.⁵³ Through a series of military orders, the Israeli authorities manipulated existing land codes to seize control of

Palestinian land and the natural resources therein, including the entire northern Dead Sea coastline.⁵⁴ Specifically, state land declarations were used to acquire large swaths of land in the Dead Sea area,⁵⁵ including the shoreline that had been exposed by the shrinking of the lake.⁵⁶

Within ten years of occupying the West Bank, the Israeli government had initiated the establishment of nineteen settlements in the greater Jordan Valley region, including the Dead Sea area.⁵⁷ Israel continues to develop settlements around the Dead Sea in particular, allocating some NIS 417 million (approximately \$116 million) to settlement expansion there in 2018.⁵⁸ Today there are six settlements in the Dead Sea area—Mitzpe Shalem, Vered Jericho, Avnat, Beit Ha'arava, Almog, and Kalia⁵⁹—out of a total of thirty-seven settlements and outposts in the Jordan Valley.⁶⁰ The six Dead Sea area settlements are primarily involved in exploiting Palestinian natural resources, including via the extraction of raw materials, agriculture, and tourism.⁶¹

In addition to settlements, accompanying infrastructure, including settler-only roads, checkpoints, roadblocks, closed military zones, and other constraints, severely hamper Palestinian access to the Dead Sea area.⁶² This was exacerbated in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Accords, which designated most of the Dead Sea region as “Area C,” placing it under complete Israeli control.⁶³ As a result, Palestinians cannot construct or rehabilitate any structure absent a permit from the Israeli Civil Administration, which is rarely if ever granted.⁶⁴ These obstacles severely limit, indeed, practically prohibit, Palestinian economic activity in the area.⁶⁵

STIFLED MINERAL EXTRACTION: WEST BANK SALT COMPANY

The only Palestinian factory that operates on the shores of the Dead Sea is the West Bank Salt Company, which faces an array of difficulties due to Israeli restrictions.⁶⁶ Othman Hallak established the factory in 1964 when the northern Dead Sea was still under Jordanian rule. After Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, it declared the area a closed military zone and demanded the closure of the factory. Hallak resisted and filed court proceedings against the military orders, which eventually allowed him to continue operations, implicitly conditioned upon noncompetition with the Israeli extractive industry.⁶⁷ As a result, despite having licenses from Israel for both mud and mineral extraction from the Dead Sea area of the occupied West Bank, the West Bank Salt Company only produces natural salt and exports a limited quantity of mud.⁶⁸

The factory operates in a closed military zone and is located directly next to an Israeli military installation. Consequently, the premises and workers are heavily monitored and subject to random searches by the military. Due to its location in Area C, Israel has prohibited the factory from expanding or upgrading its operations for over fifty years.⁶⁹ In addition, Israeli restrictions kept the factory from being connected to the electricity grid until 2010. Such restrictions have all had a significant impact on the company's production and profitability.⁷⁰

A number of studies have estimated the potential value of the extractive industry to the Palestinian economy. For example, a 2013 World Bank report dedicated to the economic prospects of Area C noted that the “potential incremental value added to the Palestinian economy from the production and sales of potash, bromine and magnesium has been conservatively estimated at \$918 million per year, or 9 percent of GDP [gross domestic product].”⁷¹ Similarly, in 2015, the Jerusalem-based Applied Research Institute estimated that the development of the

Dead Sea mining industry could produce an average \$1,642 million per year or 12.9 percent of Palestine's GDP.⁷² Despite such economic potential, and because of its lack of access to the Dead Sea, the Palestinian Authority has not included the extractive industry in its national policy agenda.⁷³

THE ISRAELI DEAD SEA TOURISM INDUSTRY

In addition to obstructing the Palestinian extractives sector, Israel has used its control over the northern basin of the Dead Sea to establish a lucrative tourism industry and consolidate Israel's narrative regarding Palestinian land.⁷⁴ In its 2013 report, the World Bank noted that "Israel has been generating revenues from historical and nature tourism sites in the Dead Sea area and around Jericho since 1976."⁷⁵ These revenues have likely increased over the past few years, as Israel has seen record numbers of tourists entering the country. Nearly half of the 3.6 million⁷⁶ tourists that visited Israel in 2017 went to the Dead Sea.⁷⁷

Tourists regularly visit Qumran, the Dead Sea beach, and the AHAVA factory store,⁷⁸ all settlement sites established on occupied land that are often packaged together for tour groups.⁷⁹ The sites, both jointly and individually, contribute to the Israeli national and settler economy, while obscuring the character of Israel's occupation and violations of international law.⁸⁰ Conversely, due to Israeli restrictions throughout the oPt, tourism contributes to the Palestinian economy only minimally,⁸¹ despite the commitment under Oslo II (the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) to develop tourism in the Dead Sea area, including via "Palestinian private projects as well as joint ventures in accordance with the DOP" (Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, or Oslo I).⁸²

QUMRAN: WHOSE HISTORY?

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the caves of Qumran in 1947. Following the end of the 1967 war, when Israel occupied the West Bank, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority took over the site. The Authority claims the caves were "settled by members of the Essene sect, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls,"⁸³ while the Israeli NGO Emek Shaveh asserts that "[t]here is no unequivocal answer to the question of who were the [original] inhabitants of Qumran."⁸⁴ Be that as it may, Israel has invested heavily in the area to establish the Qumran caves as a site of uniquely Israeli Jewish heritage. In 2010, it launched a five-year national heritage sites project to emphasize the "Jewish and Zionist history" of Israel,⁸⁵ with \$190 million allocated to the development of Qumran and other sites in the occupied West Bank.⁸⁶ Israel continued its increased investment in parks in the West Bank, including Qumran, by allocating an additional NIS 12.1 million (approximately USD 3.3 million) to such parks at the end of 2017.⁸⁷

Israel's seizure of Qumran has enabled it to excavate and remove Palestinian cultural property from the site, in violation of its duties as an occupying power.⁸⁸ Some of the artifacts removed can be found in the Israel Museum.⁸⁹ Accordingly, the Palestinian economy loses potential fees from entry to Qumran,⁹⁰ alongside those that could be gained from displaying artifacts in a Palestinian museum.⁹¹ This sum is not insignificant; revenues from Qumran entry fees alone were estimated at \$2.05 million in 2011.⁹²

AHAVA

The settlement of Mitzpe Shalem, which was established in 1970 on land belonging to the Palestinian Bedouin village of ‘Ayn Trayba,⁹³ is home to the most prominent Dead Sea cosmetics company, AHAVA Dead Sea Laboratories, Ltd. AHAVA was founded by the settlements of Mitzpe Shalem and Kalia in 1988, and in 2004 the Israeli authorities gave it exclusive rights to extract mud from the shores of the Dead Sea in the oPt.⁹⁴ In addition to benefiting from this illegal mining, AHAVA runs a visitor center and gift shop for tourists in Mitzpe Shalem.

In September 2016, a subsidiary of the Chinese holding company Fosun purchased majority shares in AHAVA for approximately \$80 million.⁹⁵ At the time of the sale, media reports noted that the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement might possibly have impacted the company, referencing a 25 percent decrease in the number of employees between 2013 and 2015.⁹⁶ By the end of 2018, however, Fosun had established a 100 percent equity interest in the company and seen two years of positive growth.⁹⁷ This was in part due to increasing sales revenue inside Israel, which the company attributed to Chinese tourists.⁹⁸ Fosun has further detailed its targeting of the Asian market, and specifically China,⁹⁹ with the aim of making AHAVA one of China’s top-selling “luxury” brands.¹⁰⁰

It should be noted that in April 2016, the Israeli Civil Administration claimed that AHAVA no longer held the license for mud excavation.¹⁰¹ While it is unclear where AHAVA procures the mud for its products, AHAVA continues to contribute to and benefit from Israel’s unlawful settlement enterprise due to its production site and visitor center in Mitzpe Shalem.¹⁰²

ENJOYING THE DEAD SEA: EXCLUSIONS APPLY

Israel’s full control of the Jordan Valley, and of the Dead Sea coast in particular, has been central to its tourism sector. Kalia settlement’s eponymous beach alone attracts an estimated six hundred thousand tourists annually,¹⁰³ potentially bringing in close to \$10 million a year in revenue.¹⁰⁴ Palestinians, for their part, are prohibited from developing hotels and other tourism-related infrastructure in the area, creating an estimated loss “of some \$126 million per annum,”¹⁰⁵ according to the World Bank. The entry fee schedule at Kalia Beach is another example of how Palestinians are exploited. Kalia Beach charges an entry fee of NIS 59 (approximately \$16) per adult, and NIS 48 (approximately \$13) for Israeli soldiers and veterans.¹⁰⁶ Given that army service is compulsory in Israel, meaning that nearly all Israelis are either current or former members of the military, the fee schedule effectively means the beach can charge higher rates for Palestinians than for Israelis.

Alongside discriminatory pricing, settlement beaches have tried to exclude Palestinian customers altogether by denying them entry “mainly but not exclusively on weekends and Jewish holidays,” a rule enforced by the Beit Ha’arava checkpoint that was established in 2007.¹⁰⁷ During a court case over the legality of this step, an Israeli brigade commander is reported to have stated, “The arrival of Palestinians from the Territories to the beaches harms tourism and the economy of beach owners. The district council contacted the defense ministry on this issue and that is why there is a checkpoint at the Beit Ha’arava junction.”¹⁰⁸ A petition, brought by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, demanded the removal of the checkpoint in 2009, but the court denied the action

arguing that since the checkpoint was no longer used to prohibit the entry of Palestinians and served only for “checking activities” at various times, the “essence of the petition” had been granted.¹⁰⁹

Irrespective of the case’s outcome, tourism at Dead Sea beaches in the oPt provides financial support to the maintenance of an unlawful and blatantly discriminatory business sector.

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM TO THE DEAD SEA

While each settlement site profits independently from Israel’s occupation, they also function together to support and benefit from Israel’s tourism industry. For example, AHAVA and the Dead Sea are both frequent stops for tour groups visiting Qumran. Many trips also include Masada and begin in Tel Aviv, serving to blur the Green Line for naive tourists.¹¹⁰

Critically, online tourism companies advertise and facilitate reservations for such tours and for properties in Israeli settlements.¹¹¹ Viator and Expedia, among others, market tours to the Dead Sea and Qumran,¹¹² including those that stop at the “famous Ahava cosmetics shop.”¹¹³

As noted, settlement sites are also independently profitable and marketed. For example, Booking.com, Travelocity, Expedia, and Tripadvisor all advertise Kalia Kibbutz Hotel, alongside other settlement properties.¹¹⁴ Booking.com describes the location of Kalia Kibbutz Hotel as an “Israeli Settlement.”¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Travelocity, Expedia, and Tripadvisor, cite the location as “Palestinian Territories” or “Kal[i]a,” but do not indicate that it is an Israeli settlement.¹¹⁶ While it is unclear how each site determines the definition of its locations, as will be discussed below, the varying designations do not alter the companies’ responsibilities pursuant to international law.¹¹⁷

Beyond tourism operators, other business enterprises also bolster Israeli settlement sites. For example, stores in the United States and other countries that sell AHAVA products not only generate profits for the company but also provide continued brand exposure and legitimization. As noted in an interview by the Fosun group’s director in 2016,¹¹⁸ this likely translates into purchases by tourists visiting Israel/Palestine. Other business enterprises may serve to provide guidance and expertise for the settlement tourism sector. For example, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, along with other government partners, initiated the “Dead Sea Valley Tourism Complex” to make the Dead Sea an “international attraction for international elite tourism.”¹¹⁹ Although the complex itself will be developed inside the Green Line, the project will be reliant on, and indeed advertise sites in, the Dead Sea areas that lie within the oPt.¹²⁰ Notably, Deloitte (London) prepared the strategic plan for the complex.¹²¹

Business Obligations under International Law

Businesses connected to Israel’s settlement tourism sector are not only obscuring the reality of Israel’s occupation, but are also violating their responsibilities under international law. Indeed, it is incumbent on both state and non-state actors to respect international law, and both may be held criminally liable for violations. These obligations and responsibilities exist irrespective of the domestic laws in force in a country. In the case at hand, Israel’s legalization of settlements does not impact their unlawful nature under international law.

Accordingly, business enterprises operating in or with settlements and/or in coordination with the Israeli occupying authorities in the oPt must respect international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law.¹²² As noted in the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the responsibility to protect human rights requires that businesses “seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products, or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.”¹²³ Businesses must ensure that they are not involved in gross human rights abuses and should treat such risk as a legal compliance issue.¹²⁴ In conducting their due diligence, businesses should also recognize the international consensus on the illegality of Israeli settlements in the oPt as well as Israeli policies that violate the right of Palestinians to “permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources.”¹²⁵ International crimes, such as the transfer of settlers into the occupied territory, the extensive destruction and appropriation of property, and pillage,¹²⁶ have all been alleged to have occurred in the oPt, including in connection with businesses operating in settlements.¹²⁷ These and other Israeli policies and practices have a broad impact on the individual and communal rights of Palestinians in the oPt, including obstructing the right to self-determination, the right of peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources,¹²⁸ the right to freedom of movement,¹²⁹ the right to development,¹³⁰ and the right to an adequate standard of living,¹³¹ among others.

Importantly, the UN is mandated to establish a database¹³² of all businesses that have “directly and indirectly, enabled, facilitated and profited from the construction and growth of the settlements.”¹³³ While businesses with a direct presence in settlements, such as AHAVA, have an immediate connection to violations of international law, tourism companies and others based outside Israel and the oPt may also contribute to adverse human rights impacts due to their business relationships.¹³⁴ For example, the aforementioned travel sites, such as Booking.com, provide a service for marketing and reserving settlement properties,¹³⁵ creating a veneer of legitimacy as well as profits for businesses that are in effect operating unlawfully; accurately distinguishing these properties as being in an Israeli settlement does not diminish their unlawful presence or the company’s legal responsibilities.

It should be further noted that tourism companies catering to foreign tourists also have an obligation to adhere to the domestic laws in the countries in which they operate when in conformity to international law. Because states at large do not recognize Israel’s sovereignty over the oPt, settlement locations cannot be labeled as “Israel.” This was highlighted in 2008 when the British Advertising Standards Authority affirmed that the Israeli Ministry of Tourism misled consumers by placing a picture of Qumran under the heading “Israel.”¹³⁶

In sum, such business activities, whether resulting from a business enterprise’s direct presence or as an entity in its value chain, are conducted at the expense of the Palestinian people and economy.¹³⁷

* * * * *

Throughout Palestine’s colonial history, Palestinians have been systematically excluded from freely enjoying and benefitting from the wonders of the Dead Sea. This exclusion is now perhaps at its most severe juncture, with Israel exercising full control over the resource. Key to this situation of exclusion and adverse impacts on the rights of Palestinians today are businesses that

use and exploit Palestinian land and other resources; participate in a system that discriminates against Palestinians, including via access restrictions; and facilitate the transfer of Israeli settlers into the oPt. At the same time, countless tourists flock to the Dead Sea in the oPt, visiting Qumran, AHAVA, and the coast itself, unaware of or indifferent to the situation faced by Palestinians due to such settlement sites and Israel's occupation.

Given the reliance of these businesses on tourists, and in the case of AHAVA, foreign markets at large, third states could take measures to limit and help end the adverse impacts on Palestinians caused by Israel's unlawful policies and the businesses that benefit from and support them. Such measures would be in line with states' legal obligations under international law, as detailed in UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016), which requires states to "distinguish in their relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories it occupied since 1967."¹³⁸ This may include adopting legislation to ensure that businesses neither directly nor indirectly contribute to the Israeli settlement enterprise. It may also necessitate warning multinational businesses of the potential for legal liability, reputational risks, and other consequences for engaging with settlements, and businesses therein. Such risks have been underscored in international campaigns against AHAVA and settler tourism.¹³⁹

While these initiatives have raised awareness and may potentially impact the behavior of companies, an environment of impunity persists. What will remain of the precious resources of the Dead Sea for Palestinians to enjoy and use when foreign rule over Palestine comes to an end remains in question.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 For a map of the Dead Sea which shows how the Green Line separates the lake, see "Humanitarian Fact Sheet on the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea Area," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 8 February 2012, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-fact-sheet-jordan-valley-and-dead-sea-area-february-2012>.
- 2 In 2013, the World Bank stated that the potential value added to the Palestinian economy from the mineral extraction sector was conservatively estimated at \$918 million per year; the corresponding figure for the tourism sector was \$126 million. See, World Bank, *West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*, 2 October 2013, pp. 13 and 24, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/137111468329419171/pdf/AUS29220REPLAC0EVISION0January02014.pdf>.
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- 4 Salman Abu-Sitta, *Atlas of Palestine, 1917-1966* (London: Palestine Land Society, 2010), p. 25. The Palestine Exploration Fund played a central role in surveying Palestine as a prelude to land conquest in the nineteenth century.
- 5 Jacob Norris, "Toxic Waters: Ibrahim Hazboun and the Struggle for a Dead Sea Concession, 1913-1948," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 45 (2011): pp. 25-42, http://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/jq-articles/45_toxic_2.pdf.

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- 9 Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in British Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920–1929* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 126.
- 10 Barbara Kreiger, *The Dead Sea: Myth, History, Politics* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press of New England, 1997), pp. 141–42.
- 11 Bernard Regan, *The Balfour Declaration: Empire, the Mandate and Resistance in Palestine* (New York: Verso, 2017), p. 161.
- 12 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 28. Another source suggests that the Ottoman sultan issued a concession in 1913 to three Ottoman nationals to extract potash, common and other salts, and the sole right to produce bromine from the resulting brine, but it does not mention that such a concession was annulled. See A. H. Lane, *The Alien Menace: A Statement of the Case*, 5th ed. (London: Boswell Publishing, 1934), p. 171.
- 13 In time, Novomeysky secured financial support from influential Zionists such as James de Rothschild and U.S. Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis. See Michael J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–48* (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 202–4, quote at p. 202.
- 14 During a House of Commons debate, Winston Churchill stated that "the Arabs of Palestine . . . would have been quite content to dwell—a handful of philosophic people—in the wasted sun-scorched plains, letting the waters of the Jordan continue to flow unbridled and unharnessed into the Dead Sea." See 156 Parl. Deb. H.C. (5th ser.) (1922) col. 335, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1922/jul/04/colonial-office#column_335.
- 15 Early Palestinian salt farmers dug small pits on the shores of the Dead Sea, which would swell with water as the Jordan River rose. Once the water had evaporated, a bed of salt was exposed, which was then collected and sold to merchants in Jerusalem. See Kreiger, *Dead Sea*, p. 143.
- 16 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 26
- 17 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 28.
- 18 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 28.
- 19 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 28.
- 20 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 29.
- 21 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 32.
- 22 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 29.
- 23 "Dead Sea's Vast Mineral Wealth Healing to Offset Losses to Axis," *International Herald Tribune*, 4 October 1942, RG 44, Division of Press Intelligence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 24 Potash became increasingly important during World War II for use in munitions. See "Dead Sea's Vast Mineral Wealth," *International Herald Tribune*.
- 25 Smith, *Roots of Separatism*, p. 117.
- 26 Article 11 of the Mandate reads, "The Administration may arrange with the Jewish agency mentioned in Article 4 to construct or operate, upon fair, and equitable terms, any public works, services and utilities." See *The Mandate for Palestine*, Council of the League of Nations, 24 July 1922.
- 27 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 32.
- 28 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 32.
- 29 Norris, "Toxic Waters," p. 32.
- 30 Major Thomas Tulloch of the British Navy had also sought the concession but could not solicit the necessary funds. He was encouraged by the Colonial Office to partner with Novomeysky, who had access to Zionist capital. See Smith, *Roots of Separatism*, p. 127.

- 31 Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine*, pp. 201–2.
- 32 Smith, *Roots of Separatism*, p. 126; the monetary and political support of the likes of Rothschild and Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, were “undoubtedly critical in securing the concession for Novomeysky.” See Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine*, p. 202.
- 33 Large U.S. companies including General Motors, Du Pont, and Standard Oil reportedly submitted tenders. See Kreiger, *Dead Sea*, p. 147.
- 34 Lane, *Alien Menace*, p. 171.
- 35 Norris, “Toxic Waters,” p. 33.
- 36 During a British House of Lords debate following the granting of the concession, Viscount Templetown stated, “Only a British control can do justice amid the varied interests and ensure for this great wealth the development due to the inhabitants. It therefore becomes a matter of grave concern to the British public in what way, and under what influence, the Dead Sea and the most strategic areas of Palestine are being dealt with.” See 73 Parl. Deb. (5th ser.) (1929) cols. 731–58, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1929/mar/20/dead-sea-salts-concession>.
- 37 Smith, *Roots of Separatism*, p. 129.
- 38 Norris, “Toxic Waters,” p. 36.
- 39 The letter, “Supreme Muslim Council Protests against Granting Dead Sea Concession to Zionists, 1929” [in Arabic], is archived on the Institute for Palestine Studies website at <https://tinyurl.com/t9kphl>.
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- 41 Green, “1961.”
- 42 Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine*, p. 208.
- 43 Gideon Biger, *The Boundaries of Modern Palestine, 1840–1947* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), p. 180.
- 44 Kreiger, *Dead Sea*, 153–54.
- 45 Arab Potash Company, *Partners in Food Security*, 2018 annual report, 24 April 2019, p. 17, <http://www.arabpotash.com/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/PDFEN/APC%202018%20Annual%20English.pdf>.
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- 47 Representing the highest recorded volume in the company's history according to a statement by Arab Potash Company. See “Arab Potash Company Achieves ‘Record’ Production in 2018; Revenues up by 39%,” *Jordan Times*, 13 February 2019, <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/arab-potash-company-achieves-%E2%80%98record%E2%80%99-production-2018-revenues-39>.
- 48 Arab Potash Company, *Partners in Food Security*, p. 11.
- 49 Israel Chemicals Limited (ICL), *Annual Report for the Period Ended December 31, 2018*, p. 26, <http://iclgroupv2.s3.amazonaws.com/corporate/wp-content/uploads/sites/1004/2019/02/ICL-2018-Annual-Report-20-F.pdf>.
- 50 ICL, *Annual Report*, p. 59.
- 51 ICL, *Annual Report*, pp. 36 and 45.
- 52 For more information on the degradation of the Dead Sea and plans to revive it, see Clive Lipchin, Deborah Sandler, and Emily Cushman, eds., *The Jordan River and Dead Sea Basin: Cooperation amid Conflict* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).
- 53 Israel now controls the entire Dead Sea area west of Jordan, as the southern basin of the Dead Sea is located inside the Green Line.
- 54 Claudia Nicoletti and Anne-Marie Hearne, *Pillage of the Dead Sea: Israel's Unlawful Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Ramallah: Al-Haq, 2012), p. 14,

- <http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/pillage-of-the-dead-sea-israel-s-unlawful-exploitation-of-natural-resources-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory>.
- 55 “Through Military Order No. 59 of 31 July 1967, Israel defined ‘State property’ as any property – movable or immovable, which prior to 7 June 1967 belonged to a hostile State or to any arbitration body connected with a hostile State.” See Nicoletti and Hearne, *Pillage*, p. 16.
- 56 In one specific case, four Palestinian villages made a claim to the local preliminary registration committee that the exposed land was rightfully theirs given their ownership of the shoreline prior to the occupation. The committee rejected their claim and declared the exposed shoreline state land, paving the way for Israeli developers to move in and expand tourism projects in the area. See Chaim Levinson, “Israel Rejects Palestinian Claims, Registers Dead Sea Land as State Land,” *Haaretz*, 28 March 2013, <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-pa-claim-to-dead-sea-land-denied-1.5236033>.
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- 60 Peace Now, “The Dispossession of Palestinians in the Jordan Valley,” 18 April 2017, <http://peacenow.org.il/en/jordan-valley>.
- 61 Nicoletti and Hearne, *Pillage*, p. 20.
- 62 B’Tselem, *Dispossession*, p. 38.
- 63 Nicoletti and Hearne, *Pillage*, p. 18.
- 64 For example, between 2010 and 2014, only 1.5 percent of Palestinian permits were approved. See OCHA, *Under Threat: Demolition Orders in Area C of the West Bank*, 2014, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/demolition_orders_in_area_c_of_the_west_bank_en.pdf.
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- 69 Hallak, in discussion with the author, 21 May 2019. During a visit to the factory, Hallak revealed that the company is currently building a visitor center based on an “oral permit” provided to them by the local Israeli military commander. Nevertheless, the company is being forced to demolish a small annex built off the side of the original factory for failure to obtain a construction permit.
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Delegitimizing Solidarity: Israel Smears Palestine Advocacy as Anti-Semitic

BEN WHITE

In response to growing Palestine solidarity activism globally—and particularly in countries that have been traditional allies of Israel—the Israeli government has launched a well-resourced campaign to undermine such efforts. A key element of this campaign consists in equating Palestine advocacy; the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement; and anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. The concerted effort to delegitimize solidarity with the Palestinians is taking place even as genuine anti-Semitism is on the rise, thanks to the resurgent white nationalism of the Far Right in Europe and North America—political forces that Israel is harnessing to help shield from scrutiny and accountability its apartheid policies toward Palestinians, both citizens of the state as well as those under military rule. In its efforts to conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, the Israeli government is assisted by non-state organizations that nonetheless enjoy close ties with the state and its agencies.

ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2019, Israel’s Minister of Strategic Affairs Gilad Erdan (who doubles as public security minister) went to the European Parliament in Brussels with the simple message that the Palestinian-led BDS movement was “an anti-Semitic campaign.”¹ Erdan was in Brussels to launch an Israeli government report dubbed *Behind the Mask: The Antisemitic Nature of BDS Exposed*. Sitting alongside the minister at the subsequent press conference was Elan S. Carr, the U.S. State Department’s special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, who slammed BDS as “classical old anti-Semitism, repackaged and rebranded, cloaked poorly as anti-Israel rhetoric.”² According to a press release by Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the report, which was the work of the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, headed by Erdan, demonstrates “how the BDS leadership hides behind a mask of liberal values and human rights, while disseminating content relating to Israel which is blatantly antisemitic.”³ The document describes Erdan’s department as “responsible for coordinating the Government of Israel’s response to delegitimization and the boycott campaign” and notes that it “aims to show that . . . the BDS movement is an important contributor to contemporary antisemitism.”⁴

At the press conference in Brussels, European Jewish Association director Rabbi Menachem Margolin went even further, declaring the BDS movement “responsible for the vast majority of physical attacks and social media hatred against Jews in Europe.”⁵ Such comments were particularly

extraordinary in light of the clear evidence linking the concurrent rise of right-wing populism and anti-Semitism in Europe, and as attested to by figures published in February 2019 showing that “an overwhelming majority of violence against Jews is perpetrated by far-right supporters.”⁶ In addition to the press conference, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) hosted a committee room meeting for Erdan, who was joined by the European Union’s Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combatting anti-Semitism Katharina von Schnurbein.⁷ Speaking immediately after Erdan, von Schnurbein told the gathering of MEPs and activists, “It is crucial to make people understand where criticism of Israel crosses the line into antisemitism,” an example of which, she claimed, was evident “when people question the right of existence of the State of Israel.”⁸

A month later, the lower house of the Czech Parliament easily passed a nonbinding resolution on what it called “growing anti-Semitism.” The resolution included rejecting “any questioning of the State of Israel’s right of existence and defense” and a condemnation of “all activities and statements by groups calling for a boycott of the State of Israel, its goods, services or citizens.”⁹ Jan Bartošek, the head of the Christian Democrats faction who introduced the resolution (that was also partially formulated by the Czech Foreign Ministry) hailed Israel as the Czech Republic’s “strategic partner and ally in the Middle East.” Afterward, Israel’s ambassador to Prague expressed appreciation for the chamber’s “unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitism and steadfast support of Israel,” while Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz tweeted his own thanks, calling “on more Parliaments to follow suit.”¹⁰

Erdan’s public relations exercise in Brussels and the resolution passed in Prague are developments illustrative of wider trends. There is an intensified effort by the Israeli government—and its allies—to tarnish the Palestinian struggle for basic rights and, in particular, to equate BDS and anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. As Israel consolidates its de facto apartheid state in historic Palestine, such an effort is intended to stifle, or delegitimize entirely, any global opposition to, or criticism of, a reality on the ground that only gets grimmer with each passing day. As Joshua Leifer, an editor at *Dissent Magazine*, wrote in *+972 Magazine* in August 2019, “The Israeli government long ago adjusted its public relations strategy for the post-two-state reality” so that “today, the Israeli hasbara apparatus’s most active front is the attempted redefinition of anti-Zionism as anti-Semitism, with the goal of rendering any opposition to the occupation [or] Zionism—or even simply Israeli policies themselves—beyond the pale of mainstream acceptability.”¹¹

Meanwhile, Israel’s propaganda drive, or *hasbara*, includes alliances with a resurgent Far Right in Europe and North America, nationalist political forces that have been playing a key role in fomenting often violent and sometimes lethal anti-Semitism. The support expressed by far-right Czech politicians for the aforementioned resolution was emblematic of a trend that has seen the Israeli government seek close alliances with a cluster of far-right and conservative governments in Europe. In January 2019, the Associated Press (AP) noted that the “warm welcome” offered by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Lithuanian prime minister Saulius Skvernelis marked “his latest embrace of an eastern European leader who has offered strong political support while promoting a distorted image of the Holocaust.”¹² Strikingly, the AP article went on to point out that even though an official Israeli government report had concluded that the majority of global anti-Semitic attacks in 2018 were “carried out by neo-Nazis in Europe and white supremacists,” during a cabinet meeting on the day of the report’s release, Netanyahu singled

out “Islamic anti-Semitism and the anti-Semitism of the extreme left, which includes anti-Zionism.”¹³

Such an approach is extremely dangerous, even setting aside its impact on Palestinian advocacy. In the introduction to their 2017 booklet on the imperative of understanding anti-Semitism and the ways to do so, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), a U.S. activist and advocacy organization, emphasizes that there are “antisemites in the White House and neo-Nazis marching through Charlottesville, advancing a right-wing, white nationalist agenda.” Anti-Semitism not only hurts Jews, JFREJ points out, but it “undermines, weakens and derails all of our movements for social justice and collective liberation.”¹⁴ Yet, in precisely this moment of resurgent white supremacy and anti-Semitism, Israel and its allies are not only dedicating their energies to equating the BDS campaign and Palestine solidarity movement with anti-Semitism but are working hand in hand with the same far-right forces fanning the flames of anti-Semitism in order to shield a de facto, single apartheid state from critical scrutiny.

Historical Context

Israeli officials, as well as Israel advocacy organizations internationally, have a long history of charging Palestinians and their allies, as well as Israel’s critics and human-rights campaigners, with anti-Semitism. Prominent individuals are not exempted. Famously, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter was excoriated by pro-Israel advocates for his 2006 book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Speaking at a town hall meeting in January 2007, Carter described how he had “been called a liar . . . an anti-Semite . . . [and] a bigot,” even though not a single critic of the book had “contradicted any of the basic premises.”¹⁵ The very same weekend, renowned Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt used an op-ed in the *Washington Post* to charge Carter with “almost ignoring the Holocaust” and thus giving “inadvertent comfort to those who deny its importance or even its historical reality.”¹⁶ Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a leading light of the anti-apartheid movement, faced similar smears after comparing “what happened to us black people in South Africa” with what Palestinians experience under Israeli rule.¹⁷ In 2009, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) slammed the choice of Nobel Peace Laureate and globally renowned human-rights advocate as a commencement address speaker on two U.S. college campuses, claiming that “his statements about Israel have time and again conveyed outright bigotry against the Jewish homeland and the Jewish people.”¹⁸ A year later, liberal journalist Michelle Goldberg leveled heavy criticism at the ADL for having “shown itself willing to smear human-rights activists when it thinks Israel’s interests demand it.”¹⁹

An important part of the background to such attacks is the emergence—and in some contexts, dominance—of the “new anti-Semitism” analysis and discourse. Judith Butler, in a critical review of Bari Weiss’s *How to Fight Anti-Semitism*, traces this discourse’s origins to *The New Anti-Semitism*, a 1974 book by then-leaders of the ADL, Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein. That book, according to Butler, “claimed [that] a novel form of Jew-hatred—made manifest in viewpoints critical of the State of Israel—was emerging on the left.”²⁰ In 2004, Oxford University scholar Brian Klug also identified (and critiqued) “a spate of recent articles and books assert[ing] the rise” of this new discourse.²¹ Writing in *The Nation*, Klug highlighted other titles—including

one by then-ADL head Abraham Foxman and another by Israel advocate Alan Dershowitz—which all made a similar claim, namely that a new form of anti-Jewish bigotry was on the rise, especially in Europe. In answer to the question “What puts the ‘new’ into ‘new anti-Semitism?’” Klug concluded that the answer lay in one word: anti-Zionism. Antony Lerman, who served as director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in 2006–9, has described how the concept initially “emerged from serious discussions about the relationship between antisemitism and anti-Zionism.”²² Writing in the global media platform OpenDemocracy in 2015, Lerman points out that the concept’s “ubiquity by the mid-2000s was a direct result of a concerted campaign” to persuade governments and various multilateral bodies of its validity.²³ According to Lerman, “This campaign resulted from a much closer nexus between Jewish communal leaderships, national and international Jewish organisations, pro-Israel advocacy groups, institutional arms of the Israeli government and academics and researchers promoting the idea of the ‘new antisemitism.’”²⁴

In recent years, Israeli officials have enthusiastically embraced the “new anti-Semitism” framework in their attacks on Palestine solidarity activism. During a 2016 interview with the *Washington Post*, then-justice minister Ayelet Shaked declared, “In the past, we saw European leaders speaking against the Jews. Now, we see them speaking against Israel. It is the same anti-Semitism of blood libels, spreading lies, distorting reality and brainwashing people into hating Israel and the Jews.”²⁵ For Shaked, BDS supporters are “using the same kind of anti-Semitism but instead of saying they are against the Jews, they say they are against Israel.” Also in 2016, Israel’s Ministry of Diaspora Affairs published a report on global anti-Semitism in which it describes “the traditional definition of Antisemitism” as being unsuited to what it calls “diverse new and complex expressions of current Antisemitism.”²⁶ The report goes on to praise the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism adopted the same year, highlighting the definition’s inclusion of “expressions of Antisemitism directed against the State of Israel, when it is perceived as a Jewish collective.”²⁷ The official Israeli report concludes that the IHRA “definition also refers to anti-Zionism . . . as a form of Antisemitism.”²⁸

Thus, while the conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism by the Israeli government is not new, we are currently witnessing a concerted campaign to advance such a smear in what constitutes a response by Israeli officials and allied organizations to a growth in Palestine solidarity activism in Western Europe and North America, in general, and the BDS campaign, in particular.

Palestine Solidarity Surges—BDS Is Born

A global wave of solidarity with the Palestinian people swept the world in the shadow of the Second Intifada. While this may have been worrisome from Israel’s point of view, the truly concerning development was the launch of the BDS movement by dozens of Palestinian civil society groups and organizations a year after the key International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the illegality of Israel’s “separation wall.” In response to Israel’s violations of Palestinian rights, and the concomitant impunity of the Israeli authorities, the BDS call urged a sustained, strategic campaign of economic and other forms of pressure, making three specific

demands of Israel: first, “ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall”; second, “recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality”; and third, “respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.”²⁹ These three demands, grounded in international law and human rights, resonated for many people already actively involved in other social justice issues, whether on university campuses, within trade unions, or simply in their communities. Gradually, the BDS movement became a genuinely global campaign.

The birth and growth of the BDS movement around the world, but especially in countries considered Israel’s traditional allies in Western Europe and North America, exacerbated a challenge that Israel had been facing since the outbreak of the Second Intifada and could, to a certain extent, be traced as far back as Israel’s 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the Palestinians’ subsequent launch of the First Intifada in 1987. Used to relying on support across political party lines, whether conservative or liberal, Israel found there was growing opposition to its policies toward the Palestinians among the liberal Left or progressive opinion formers in spaces such as academia and student organizing—changes that were also reflected in racial and age-based demographics. Put simply, BDS emerged into a context—where it has since acted as a turbo-charged catalyst—in which Israel was already suffering from a significant and longstanding public-relations problem. In the early years of the BDS campaign, the Israeli government placed significant emphasis on “rebranding” as a purported solution. Following the devastation that Operation Cast Lead wrought on the Gaza Strip in 2008–9, one Israeli official put it this way: “We will send well-known novelists and writers overseas, theatre companies, exhibits. This way, you show Israel’s prettier face, so we are not thought of purely in the context of war.”³⁰

A number of pro-Israel organizations, however, including some enjoying close ties with the government, were not interested in “rebranding” or “marketing” Israel; they were convinced that the best approach was to go on the offensive, smearing and attacking key Palestinian, Israeli, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with accusations of ties to what they called terrorism and, inevitably, anti-Semitism. As BDS garnered increasing support around the world—among labor organizers, students, scholars, artists and cultural workers, and faith communities—the Israeli government decided on a change of tack. While not abandoning its efforts at rebranding, it mandated the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, and other branches of state, to go on the attack. The goal? To see BDS, anti-Zionism, and Palestine solidarity itself equated with, criminalized, and outlawed as a form of anti-Semitism.

The Israeli State Mobilizes

The BDS campaign was ten years old when the Israeli government became focused on fighting what pro-Israel advocacy organizations had already identified as a serious problem. After Netanyahu declared BDS a “strategic threat” in June 2015, considerable resources were mobilized to go on the offensive.³¹ According to a *Haaretz* report, in October 2015 Israel’s security cabinet gave the Strategic Affairs Ministry a brief to “guide, coordinate and integrate the activities of all

the ministers and the government and of civil entities in Israel and abroad on the subject of the struggle against attempts to delegitimize Israel and the boycott movement.”³²

The following summer, the ministry’s director-general and former head of the military censor’s office, Sima Vaknin-Gil, told a Knesset committee that the government was making progress in its efforts against BDS and what Israeli official parlance refers to as the “delegitimization of Israel.”³³ In 2016, Vaknin-Gil told Israeli parliamentarians that the ministry’s budget for anti-BDS efforts that year was NIS 44 million (\$11 million), but she refused to disclose details of the ministry’s activities. “A lot of what we do is under the radar,”³⁴ she told committee members. In 2018, Vaknin-Gil’s boss, Erdan, established a public-benefit corporation in order to covertly carry out public relations efforts as part of the fight against the so-called delegitimization of Israel globally. The corporation received NIS 128 million (around \$36 million) in government funding, a sum supposed to be matched “in private contributions.”³⁵ Official records also revealed that Erdan had “cooperated with the Mossad in the fight against the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.”³⁶

Over time, some aspects—and indeed, some of the fruits—of the ministry’s work have emerged into the public domain. In February 2016, an Israeli government spokesperson told the *Financial Times*, “We have stepped up our efforts directly and indirectly, dealing with friends of Israel in a variety of countries in which we have the BDS movement, fighting it with legal instruments.”³⁷ Later that year, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Danny Danon, claimed that his government was “advancing legislation in many countries . . . so that it will simply be illegal to boycott Israel.”³⁸ This was no idle boast. In the United States, more than one hundred measures targeting boycotts and Palestinian-rights advocacy have been introduced in state and local legislatures and Congress since 2014; and, as of April 2019, twenty-seven states had adopted such anti-boycott laws, including five executive orders issued by state governors.³⁹ On Capitol Hill, congressional representatives and senators have been actively seeking to restrict the right to boycott under the guise of combating anti-Semitism, including—thus far unsuccessful—efforts to outright ban BDS.⁴⁰ Encouraged by such developments, as well as by initiatives in European countries such as Britain, France, and Spain, Erdan announced in December 2018 that his ministry would invest more than NIS 3 million (about \$800,000) in the first two years to create an “international legal network” to fight BDS.⁴¹ In 2017 and 2018, Al Jazeera’s documentary *The Lobby* exposed elements of the offensive by Israel and its advocates against Palestine solidarity campaigning and the BDS movement, including the use of the charge of “anti-Semitism.”⁴²

Another tactic pursued by the Israeli government in its drive to associate BDS and anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism is to claim close links between BDS and armed Palestinian factions.⁴³ As reported by AP in February 2019, “Most of the cases were based on somewhat vague accusations of affiliation or expressions of sympathy . . . in some instances connected to acts that took place years ago,” and two people named by the report had even “received international recognitions for their human rights work.”⁴⁴ Still, the Israeli government’s efforts have met with some success. In June 2019, Israeli media reported the government’s claims to have brought about the closure of “dozens of fundraising accounts” associated with Palestine solidarity and BDS groups on the grounds of alleged connections to “terrorism.”⁴⁵ As part of its efforts, the Strategic Affairs Ministry had “apparently directed pro-Israel activists (legal [rights] NGOs, Jewish groups based in the United States and France, and international journalists)” to approach fundraising platforms with the

allegations.⁴⁶ According to Tzahi Gavrieli, Vaknin-Gil's replacement at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, the drive to associate BDS with terrorism "has led to Canadian, British and German leaders calling out BDS as anti-Semitism."⁴⁷

While the Ministry of Strategic Affairs has been officially charged with coordinating attacks on BDS and delegitimization, other government organs also play an important role. One such example is the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs—in particular, its coordination and hosting (along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) of periodic conferences under the rubric Global Forum on Combating Antisemitism (henceforth the Forum). The Forum's first international conference was held in 2007, and it was followed by conferences in 2008, 2009, 2013, 2015, with the sixth, and most recent such gathering, convened in 2018 in Jerusalem.⁴⁸ Over the years, Forum conferences have served as an important space for the Israeli state, along with local and international non-state actors, to strategize and coordinate efforts to fight the BDS movement, including through the conflation of Palestine solidarity and anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

From the very first conference in 2007, the framing of the "new anti-Semitism"—which, the official blurb explained, "seeks to undermine the legitimacy of Israel and disguises hatred of the Jewish people by means of hatred towards the Jewish state"—was dominant.⁴⁹ In 2008, Forum conference materials declared that "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism have joined forces in order to fight Antisemitism in its newest manifestations, in the guise of Anti-Zionist and anti-Israel standpoints."⁵⁰ Panels included "Antisemitism in the Guise of Anti-Zionism: Defining the Borders of Legitimate Criticism" and "Antisemitism in International Organizations and Human Rights Groups." At the 2015 gathering, Netanyahu succinctly summed up the prevailing view by saying that the current "treatment" of Israel was no different from that "of our forebears. The Jewish state is being treated among the nations the way the Jewish people were treated for generations."⁵¹

Particularly from the third Forum conference onward, the gatherings became an opportunity for the Israeli government and pro-Israel advocacy organizations to strategize ways of combating BDS. In 2009, an anti-BDS working group was convened, proposing "legislative prohibitions" against the boycott campaign while "acknowledging the different legal traditions" in various countries.⁵² At the 2013 conference, a "BDS and Delegitimization Task Force" produced a plan that included proposals to "lobby elected officials to adopt and strengthen anti-discrimination laws" and "educate officials about the connections between delegitimization and anti-Semitism."⁵³ At the 2015 conference, a working-group-produced plan on "Antisemitism in the Guise of Delegitimization and Anti-Zionism" recommended "going on the offensive" by "expos[ing] connections between the BDS movement and antisemitism," as well as by "work[ing] more closely with donors, trustees and high-level university officials to make them aware of antisemitism on their campuses in the form of BDS."⁵⁴

The Role of Quasi-official Bodies

At the same time as the Israeli government has been making strenuous efforts to equate Palestine solidarity activism, BDS, and anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, an important role has also been played by a number of groups that are formally NGOs but enjoy close ties to, and work with,

Israeli officials. In fact, some of these organizations—dubbed “GONGOs” (government-operated NGOs) by Israeli journalist Yossi Gurvitz⁵⁵—were working to conflate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism and toxify support for Palestinian rights long before the Israeli government dedicated resources to targeting, in particular, the BDS movement. These “GONGOs”—two examples of which are considered below—not only seek to delegitimize BDS activism but frequently target Palestinian, Israeli, and West-based mainstream human rights organizations for simply campaigning against the international law and human rights violations perpetrated by the Israeli state and the Israeli military. In the Israel advocacy ecosphere, such groups serve to produce and disseminate the materials subsequently used by both Israeli officials and diplomats, as well as pro-Israel civil society organizations, to target charities and NGOs working on Palestinian rights.

NGO MONITOR

In August–September 2001, at the height of the Second Intifada, an international anti-racism conference took place under UN auspices in Durban, South Africa. The gathering made headlines, however, for the withdrawal of the United States and Israel over the conference’s support for the Palestinian struggle, as well as language that Washington saw as legitimizing reparations for slavery. More than a month prior to the conference, U.S. officials hinted that they might boycott the conference, citing a “series of insertions into the draft declaration . . . equat[ing] Zionism with racism and accus[ing] Israel of ethnic cleansing.”⁵⁶ The United States did indeed walk out. The *New York Times* reported how then-secretary of state Colin L. Powell said negotiators “had failed to persuade Arab delegates to remove criticism of Israel from proposed conference documents that assail ‘the racist practices of Zionism’ and describe Israel’s treatment of Palestinians as a ‘new kind of apartheid.’”⁵⁷ The final declaration adopted by a majority of delegates was characterized by Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres as “an outburst of hate, of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism without any consideration.”⁵⁸

Among Israeli officials and pro-Israel groups, the conference quickly became—and has remained—a watchword for the supposedly anti-Semitic singling out of Israel for criticism (or, conversely, of the Palestinians, for solidarity). For Israeli academic Gerald Steinberg, the Durban conference confirmed his worst fears. A year earlier, in October 2000, with the Second Intifada only days old and dozens of Palestinians already killed by Israeli forces, the Bar Ilan University-based analyst published a piece in the *Jerusalem Post* in which he argued that “the first priority” was “fighting the propaganda war.”⁵⁹ A few weeks later, in an op-ed titled “Child Sacrifice Is Palestinian Paganism,” Steinberg claimed Palestinians were guilty of “willful child sacrifice.”⁶⁰ And in April 2002, in the aftermath of the Durban conference, he penned another op-ed where he talked about assailing “non-governmental organizations and aid agencies” that he described as “tainted by their support of anti-Israel political agendas.” The time had come for the long-overdue “dismantling [of] these UN groups and NGOs,” he wrote.⁶¹

Steinberg had found his niche. That year, he founded NGO Monitor, initially run from the Institute of Contemporary Affairs within the well-known right-wing Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA).⁶² From the very beginning—origins which the organization today avoids publicizing—NGO Monitor had close ties to the Israeli government;⁶³ at the time of its launch, JCPA head Dore Gold, named as NGO Monitor’s “publisher,” was also serving as a senior advisor

to then-prime minister Ariel Sharon, after having previously worked as an Israeli diplomat and negotiator.⁶⁴ In addition, as reported by +972, Steinberg himself claimed to be working for, or of having worked for, the Israeli government as a consultant *after* founding NGO Monitor.⁶⁵ During NGO Monitor's early days, Steinberg coauthored a piece laying out the project's goals and the context for its establishment.⁶⁶ The article goes over familiar ground, with accusations that "humanitarian NGOs" had "played a major role in the ongoing ideological campaign to delegitimize Israel" and were engaged in "distorting basic norms." Thus, Steinberg continued, "NGO Monitor has set itself the task of monitoring the activities of such NGOs" with the "fundamental objectives" of analyzing "core agendas, biases, and long-term goals of . . . [NGOs] with regard to Israel."

From the very beginning of its output, NGO Monitor sought to highlight—and call into question—external (often European) funding for local, Palestinian rights-focused NGOs,⁶⁷ and it continues to do so. In 2017, the organization was part of a joint campaign with the Israeli state to "cut off foreign government funding for Palestinian human rights groups" using "smear tactics and misinformation."⁶⁸ A spokesperson for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs publicly acknowledged that the ministry worked closely with NGO Monitor. "There is a level of coordination and we share information," the official is quoted as saying by Middle East Eye.⁶⁹ "The aims of the Israeli government are no secret in this instance . . . and when NGOs have pertinent aims and objectives, then we are happy to cooperate."⁷⁰ In 2017, NGO Monitor was described by Israeli rights group B'Tselem's Sarit Michaeli as "a partner in the Israeli government's war against NGOs that resist the occupation."⁷¹ In the same vein, Israeli human rights lawyer Michael Sfard has described NGO Monitor as "a militia of the Israeli government that works symbiotically with it to promote the same agenda: perpetuating the occupation by slandering and thwarting the funding of organizations that are working to end it."⁷²

NGO Monitor has thrown itself into the Israeli government's more recent campaign to sabotage the BDS movement and advance a definition of anti-Semitism that delegitimizes anti-Zionism. In June 2016, the Knesset hosted an NGO Monitor event to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Durban conference at which Erdan told attendees, "We must go from defense to offense and . . . display the truth about pro-BDS organizations and activists."⁷³ At the same event, former Member of Knesset (MK) Michael Oren described the Durban conference as "a war to prevent us from being a sovereign Jewish state in the land of Israel. . . . The BDS is very similar to ISIS. ISIS is an organization in an area, but ISIS is firstly an idea, a very dangerous idea." In a presentation titled "Applying Working Definitions of Antisemitism to the NGO and UN Communities," Steinberg made clear his efforts were based on the IHRA working definition. During the March 2019 conference where he presented, which was held at Indiana University, Steinberg stated, "The purpose of the work that I'm doing now and my colleagues at NGO Monitor is to try to expand the normative impact of the [IHRA] working definition . . . particularly in the realms of the United Nations and of nongovernmental organizations."⁷⁴

SHURAT HADIN

Another example of a "GONGO" is Shurat HaDin. Founded in 2003 by attorney Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, Shurat HaDin is "dedicated to protecting the State of Israel" by "fighting

academic and economic boycotts, and challenging those who seek to delegitimize the Jewish State” using “court systems around the world to go on the legal offensive against Israel’s enemies.”⁷⁵ When it was launched, Shurat HaDin portrayed itself as a “a non-political and independent body which is not affiliated with any branch or agency of the Israeli government nor any political party.”⁷⁶ A U.S. diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks told a different story, however.⁷⁷ The leaked cable reports Darshan-Leitner telling U.S. officials during a 2007 meeting that “in its early years” Shurat HaDin “took direction from the GOI [Government of Israel] on which cases to pursue,” and that “in many of her cases she receives evidence from GOI officials.”⁷⁸ The cable goes on to quote Darshan-Leitner directly: “The [Israeli] National Security Council (NSC) legal office saw the use of civil courts as a way to do things that they are not authorized to do.”⁷⁹

Shurat HaDin has grown over the years and Darshan-Leitner has gone on to reiterate the above statements. In a 2014 YouTube interview with Swedish Jewish Dialogue (which describes itself as “the only independent and prominent pro-Israeli NGO in Scandinavia that aims to create a legitimate and correct attitude towards Israel and the Jewish People”), Darshan-Leitner says “governments cannot do what we do.”⁸⁰ Citing “political restraints” and “international treaties,” the Shurat HaDin founder adds that “private lawyers can play a role . . . the government cannot do.”⁸¹ Israeli state officials, for their part, have expressed gratitude for the organization’s work. Education Minister Naftali Bennett has hailed Shurat HaDin as “a true strategic asset to the very security of the State of Israel,” while Yesh Atid party leader MK Yair Lapid has been forthright about the links between the official Israeli sphere and the organization.⁸² “We are partners,” he is quoted as saying on Shurat HaDin’s website. “You are leading the legal fight; we are leading the fight in the media and in the political arena.”⁸³ Speaking at a Shurat HaDin-organized event in 2015, then-defense minister Moshe Ya’alon praised the organization for “fighting one of Israel’s challenges of today—lawfare, BDS, delegitimization of the State of Israel and its right to exist as a Jewish state,” and thanked Darshan-Leitner personally “for what you’re doing for the State of Israel.”⁸⁴

Shurat HaDin’s efforts are deployed through a plethora of lawsuits, including one in 2011 (that “went nowhere”) claiming that Carter had “defrauded consumers” with *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*⁸⁵ and another against a pro-BDS Australian academic on the grounds that he was “in breach of the country’s anti-racism laws” (the case was dismissed by the Federal Court of Australia).⁸⁶ In 2019, Shurat HaDin worked with the Israeli government on the latter’s protracted and ultimately successful efforts to deport Human Rights Watch official Omar Shakir.⁸⁷ When the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the expulsion, Shurat HaDin publicly cheered the decision, proud of its contribution.⁸⁸

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On 4 November 2019, president Reuven Rivlin hosted a number of international officials tasked with combating anti-Semitism in Europe and the United States, including the EU’s von Schnurbein; U.S. envoy Carr; UK special envoy for post-Holocaust issues Lord Eric Pickles; German government commissioner on anti-Semitism Dr. Felix Klein; and French special representative on racism, anti-Semitism, and discrimination Frédéric Potier.⁸⁹ “Anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism is anti-Semitism. There are no gray areas,” the Israeli president told his guests. “The moment it [criticism of Israel] turns to boycotts and actions against Israel that are influenced by anti-Semitism—we will not accept it.” This conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism does not bode well for fighting the

genuine threat posed by anti-Semitism, but it does promise yet further, and intensified, efforts to censor Palestinians and their allies.

Nevertheless, there are signs of a growing resistance to Israel's efforts to equate fighting anti-Semitism with delegitimizing the Palestinians' struggle for basic rights—part of what Butler, in her review of Weiss's book, calls "forms of solidarity," which establish that "the relations among us are not mere analogies, but living connections." The 2020 platform of the U.S. activist group IfNotNow makes plain that white nationalism and U.S. support for Israel's military occupation of the Palestinians constitute the Jewish American community's most urgent crisis today. "As people in America, Israel, and all over the world face the threat of racist authoritarian politicians, it is clearer than ever that the fate of Jews is inextricably tied to the fate of all those who are oppressed, including Palestinians. In particular, we know that the struggle against antisemitism is linked to the struggle for Palestinian freedom," the platform states.⁹⁰ Such initiatives become increasingly valuable in the face of the continuing offensive by the Israeli government and its allies to criminalize critics of Israel and BDS activists.

About the Author

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Stone, Labor, and the Building of Israel



ADAM HANIEH

Andrew Ross's *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel* is a significant contribution to an emerging literature on Palestinian labor. Through an examination of various facets of the stone industry in both Israel and the West Bank, Ross develops a series of insights into the nature of settler colonialism, patterns of urban development, the political economy of Palestinian class formation, borders and migration, and the ecological impacts of occupation. By highlighting the ways in which Palestinians actually *built* Israel, Ross's book carries important implications for how we think about Palestinian political strategy and the debates around one- or two-state solutions.

IN A WIDE-RANGING AND INSIGHTFUL SURVEY of labor historiography in the Middle East, Kevin Jones has recently noted that scholarly attention to the history of working classes in the region underwent a major decline through the 1990s and early 2000s. While earlier decades had seen landmark studies of labor and class across the Middle East, the “marginalization of organized labor by post-populist authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, the sudden rise of political Islam as the dominant paradigm of political opposition to the state, and the general abandonment of class analysis by historians in the wake of the ‘cultural turn’ . . . all contributed to [a] decline of academic interest in the lives of Middle Eastern workers.”¹ Jones argues, however, that this began to change in the wake of the uprisings that emerged across the region in 2011. This wave of social struggles has led to a renewed interest in questions of class, labor, and political economy more generally. The possibility now exists, according to Jones, that “the promising theoretical debates of the early 1990s might finally bear fruit in a reinvigorated field of labor history.”²

Arguably, the overall regional trend identified by Jones is even more apparent in relation to Palestine. Despite the long-standing academic debate on labor markets during the formative years of Zionist colonization, Palestinian workers were to feature much less prominently in writing on Palestine during the 1990s and early 2000s.³ Over the last decade, however, growing numbers of scholars, activists, and journalists have become more attentive to the lives and conditions of Palestinian workers in the post-Oslo period. This new literature explores a range of important issues including the emergence of independent Palestinian labor struggles and trade union movements,⁴ the highly segmented nature of Palestinian labor markets⁵ and the position of women workers,⁶ and the widening gulf between Palestinian elites and ordinary Palestinian

Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (Winter 2020), p. 80, ISSN: 0377-919X; electronic ISSN: 1533-8614. © 2020 by the Institute for Palestine Studies. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2020.49.2.80>.

workers that has arisen alongside the neoliberal state-building paradigm of the Palestinian Authority (PA).⁷

Andrew Ross's *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel*, a monumental study of stone—and the Palestinian workers who extract, fashion, and build with it—needs to be situated within this new literature on Palestinian labor. Although Ross's narrative extends far beyond the eponymous “stone men” whom he has spent many hours interviewing and observing, a pivotal contribution of this book is a deep concern with the everyday lives of those Palestinians who literally *built* Israel. This discussion is deftly linked with wider debates on the nature of settler colonialism, urban development and design of the built environment, the political economy of Palestinian class formation, borders and migration, and the ecological impacts of occupation.

The importance of stone to Palestine cannot be overstated. Strikingly, Palestinians are the twelfth largest stone and marble producers in the world, ranking just behind the United States and Russia.⁸ Mirroring other key Palestinian commodity exports from the West Bank, about 70 percent of Palestinian stone is exported to Israel. Around half of this figure is sent across the Green Line, and the rest is utilized in the building of settlements.⁹ This stone, and the Palestinian workers who build with it, has been essential to the accumulation and growth of Israel's largest conglomerates. More broadly, of course, stone has an important symbolic and discursive meaning for Palestinians—embodied in songs, literature, and narratives of resistance and uprising.

Given these clear facts, Ross utilizes stone as a lens for rethinking various aspects of the settler-colonial experience in Palestine. He begins with the “conquest of labor” strategy advocated by Zionist leaders such as Aaron David Gordon, Berl Katznelson, and David Ben-Gurion during the 1920s and 1930s. This strategy—the exclusion of Palestinian labor from employment in the early Yishuv and the attempt to ensure a “European wage” for Jewish settlers—was an important element in the eventual hegemony of the Labor Zionist movement and its ability to lead the colonization process itself.¹⁰ In the stone and construction industries, however, this strategy faced major challenges—Palestinian labor was not only cheaper, and thus more attractive for private builders, but Palestinians also tended to control the quarries that supplied the stone for new building projects. Most significantly, Palestinians possessed the skilled knowledge and technical expertise necessary to work with *kurkar*, the distinctive quartz limestone found throughout the coastal plains of Palestine that was widely used in buildings across the country.

It is in this context that Ross presents some fascinating insights into how stone has shaped the modalities of Zionist colonization. One example is the move by early Zionist architects and city planners to replace *kurkar* with concrete and silicate brick, a technological shift that Ross identifies as a significant turning point in the conquest of labor. Cheapening the costs of construction—and reducing the need for the specific stonemasonry skills monopolized by Palestinians—was key in enabling the exclusion of Palestinians from both labor markets and urban spaces during the 1920s and 1930s. Of course, this exclusion was never fully complete—Palestinians remained part of the construction workforce in the pre-1948 period, particularly among private builders—but the new building techniques “meant that the factories and construction sites would potentially be freed from any reliance on local Arab labor . . . offer[ing] the prospect that the Conquest of Labor could be brought about, not by fractious, and racist, hiring decisions, but technical efficiency.”¹¹

The shift in building technique not only facilitated Palestinian exclusion, it also ushered in new architectural forms. Ross refers here to the distinctive architectural style of Tel Aviv—marked by its clean lines, white plaster, and Bauhaus functionalism. This architectural style has been widely feted in international circuits, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaiming Tel Aviv’s “White City” a World Heritage site in 2003.¹² Ross points out that this global depiction of Tel Aviv actually serves to estrange aesthetic form from social history, arguing instead that Tel Aviv should be viewed much like the spatially separated European enclaves found in other colonial cities—its style representing “the architectural equivalent of ethnic cleansing because it expunged all visual references to the surrounding Arab habitat.”¹³ Seen from this perspective, Tel Aviv’s portrayal on the international stage acts “to sideline, if not entirely erase, the urban scale and sophistication” of Arab cities such as Jaffa, and serves as “nostalgic cover for a city built on violent dispossession.”¹⁴

Stone and Labor in the West Bank

Through these kinds of arguments, *Stone Men* resembles many of the global commodity histories that have been published over the last couple of decades. One of the great strengths of this kind of writing is that by following a simple commodity (such as stone) through its various connections, we open up the familiar and mundane to new and unexpected ways of thinking. But Ross’s book goes much further than this. His careful attention to the social relations that are configured around the stone industry—particularly the labor involved in extracting and building with stone—helps to bring out aspects of settler colonialism that are often underplayed in accounts that focus more on the machinations of political elites or the materiality of infrastructure.

This strength can be seen most clearly in the second half of *Stone Men*, which moves away from Israel to a detailed examination of the stone industry in the West Bank.¹⁵ Here, Ross describes the ways in which the West Bank has been utilized by Israel to effectively “outsource” pollution and other harmful effects of stone quarrying.¹⁶ Quite remarkably, Israeli-owned firms operating in Area C of the West Bank supply around one-quarter of Israel’s sand and gravel needs. Half of the West Bank’s twenty-five integrated crushers (which process stone at the quarry site itself) are Israeli owned and permitted to utilize explosives to break up the stone (a technique denied to Palestinian producers). Constrained by lack of access to Area C (where most stone deposits are located), and deprived of energy and water resources, the Palestinian stone industry has become largely subordinated to the needs of the larger Israeli economy.

Ross presents a perceptive account of the structure of this industry and the working conditions in the quarries, where many workers suffer from a lack of health and safety protections and lax environmental regulations. This has meant the widespread emergence of serious illnesses such as blood cancers, kidney disease, pneumonia, and other pulmonary ailments due to the small particulate pollution involved in quarrying. Palestinian quarry workers suffer from these illnesses (according to the hospital nurses and doctors interviewed by Ross), at levels far in excess of the general population.¹⁷ These environmental impacts extend beyond the workers directly involved in the quarrying industry. In this regard, Ross points to the struggle waged by Palestinian

Bedouins living near Bethlehem who have opposed the building of a cement plant adjacent to their communities on the basis of its deleterious environmental consequences. This factory is owned by Sanad Construction Resources, a new company run by the Palestine Investment Fund that is closely connected to some of the wealthiest businesspeople in the West Bank. The proposed site of the factory is located in Area C and has been approved by Israel. Given Israel's long-standing practice of outsourcing environmentally damaging industries to the West Bank, local activists have raised suspicions about its relationship with the Israeli cement industry.

Ross continues this discussion of working conditions in his final chapter, where he examines the construction industry inside Israel and within Israeli settlements. He makes the critical point—echoing the conclusion of much recent migration and border studies literature—that borders should not be seen as impenetrable barriers but rather as filters, whose function is to sift labor and establish differential costs of labor power.¹⁸ Israel's Wall and the closure and permit regime instituted over the last three decades play precisely this role. By establishing barriers to movement and thereby making labor more precarious, these measures drive down the cost of Palestinian labor and simultaneously benefit a complex array of middlemen and subcontractors who facilitate the movement of Palestinian workers across the Green Line. Within this discussion, Ross pays careful attention to the various migrant workers who have also been central to Israel's labor markets in the post-Oslo period. He points out, however, that Palestinian labor from the West Bank has a specific attraction for the Israeli construction industry: Palestinian workers are relatively skilled, possess good Hebrew language skills, and most importantly, return to their homes at night. They constitute “human gold” in the words of one of the workers interviewed by Ross.¹⁹

All of this has naturally met with resistance, and recent years have seen a significant resurgence in Palestinian labor organizing and worker struggles in the West Bank. Ross spends considerable time examining these developments, including the new independent trade unions in Palestine that have emerged in opposition to the undemocratic and unrepresentative structures of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions. He also discusses the recent wave of worker protests against new PA laws, as well as wildcat strikes in the industrial zones that straddle the border areas with Israel. All of these struggles have generated new political questions, forcing workers to navigate a complex political terrain that involves organizing for their rights against both Israel and the PA.

Political Rethinking

Like all good writing, Ross's book opens up many more questions and new avenues of exploration than it can possibly answer. In the opinion of this author, there are three key themes that deserve highlighting. First, Ross makes a convincing argument that the social polarization that has marked the post-Oslo period must be central to any account of contemporary Palestinian society and to the elaboration of a viable strategy for liberation. This theme emerges frequently through his narrative and the voices of his interviewees: the highly unequal structure of the stone industry in the West Bank; the nature of Palestinian urban planning and the impact of new urban development schemes such as Rawabi; the subcontracting chains that mediate the movement of

Palestinian labor into Israel; the displacement of populations and ecological consequences of the stone industry; and the emergence of new forms of worker mobilization and strikes that specifically target the policies of the PA (such as the recent Social Insurance Law).²⁰ All of these examples confirm that it is not enough to view the occupation simply from the perspective of Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As Franz Fanon observed many decades ago, one of the ways in which settler colonialism functions is through the creation of a dependent social class among the colonized, one that is tightly linked to the colonizer and which helps mediate the exigencies of occupation itself.²¹ Ross's interviewees make this point repeatedly, and one of the lessons of *Stone Men* is the utility of foregrounding class and social polarization as an analytical lens for understanding Palestinian society.

Second, the construction and stone industry presents a valuable entry point for unpacking the complex relationships between Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories and those living in Israel or across the wider Middle East. In this respect, one wishes here for a more detailed analysis of Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCIs) in the contemporary period. While Ross does mention the importance of the construction sector for PCIs today, much of his discussion of Israel is concentrated on the early period of the state. We need a more systematic study of how this industry functions inside Israel itself, including its connection to labor in the West Bank and its role in the political economy of PCIs.²² All of this is part of a wider intellectual project that is yet to be written: a history of Palestinian construction labor across the wider Middle East. Palestinian refugees brought their skills of stonemasonry and construction to Lebanon and have been widely employed throughout Jordan, the Gulf, and elsewhere. Palestinian-owned construction firms remain among the largest across the region today. But the story of workers in this industry—and of their complex intersection with migrant workers from other countries—is one that remains to be told.

Finally, as Ross emphasizes repeatedly throughout his book, all of this carries important political implications. One of his most interesting arguments is that by highlighting the ways in which Palestinians actually *built* Israel, we are forced to shift how we think about any future resolution of the conflict and the debates around one- or two-state solutions. Instead of speaking solely about pre-1948 property ownership and restitution for refugees—however crucial these may be—we also need to consider the ways in which the wealth that exists in Israel today has arisen through the systematic exploitation of Palestinian labor over the last seven decades (and counting). This points to the importance of thinking beyond frameworks grounded simply in appeals to international law, which often valorize the rights of those with preexisting titles to property over those who have had little recourse but to sell their labor power. It is not the goal of Ross's book to suggest how this insight might figure within any future political strategy, but his careful attention to voices “from below” makes the critical importance of such a rethinking abundantly clear.

About the Author

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- 8 Andrew Ross, *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel* (London: Verso, 2019), p. 2. It should be noted, however, that there is a very pronounced global concentration of stone production, with over 90 percent of the world's stone produced in just ten countries.
- 9 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 3.
- 10 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 32.
- 11 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 60. The technological secrets to these new building techniques, Ross points out, were allegedly pilfered from an Egyptian factory by one of the main construction owners of the time.
- 12 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 69.
- 13 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 65.
- 14 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 69. The heavy use of concrete—which Ross describes as a "full-blown patriotic cult" (p. 67)—was later carried over into the Brutalist style of the development towns constructed through the 1950s, and after 1967, into the settlement blocs built across the West Bank. In more recent years, however, *kurkar* was to reappear in the "artist colonies" and high-end apartments of Jaffa and other historic Palestinian towns inside Israel. Here, mirroring similar tourist-driven gentrification projects across the world, the use of *kurkar* was brought back and lionized for its supposed authenticity and expression of tradition. These processes have created new forms of exclusionary urban spaces inside Israel itself.
- 15 For reasons of access, Ross concentrates his account on workers in the West Bank, dealing in much less detail with the Gaza Strip.
- 16 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 161.
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- 19 Ross, *Stone Men*, p. 215.
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- 21 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).
- 22 Indeed, a recent spate of PCI deaths on government-owned construction sites through 2019 has been the subject of campaigns by nongovernmental organizations and Palestinian political parties in Israel.



Kamal Boullata (1942–2019): Squaring the Circle

BASHIR MAKHOUL

ON 6 AUGUST 2019, Kamal Boullata passed away in Berlin, Germany, leaving a formidable legacy of art and scholarship for generations to come. He was certainly a significant figure in the development of my early career as an artist, helping to shape my understanding of my own historical and cultural context. Therefore, in writing this, it came as something of a shock to realize that I had actually met him only once.

We met in the late 1980s, when I was a studio assistant to Abed Abdi, and Boullata, who was conducting research for an international curatorial project on Palestinian art, came by Abdi's Haifa studio. For me, as a very young, aspiring artist from a small village, Boullata was an impressive figure—living as he was in the United States with an established international reputation for both his writing and his painting. Speaking about the international art scene, and particularly the state of diasporic Palestinian art, he came across as vastly knowledgeable, and I gathered that contemporary Palestinian art reached far beyond the borders of the homeland. In retrospect, I think it was partly this encounter with Boullata that helped in my decision to join the Palestinian diaspora. I had been aware of the importance of influences beyond Palestine in the work of artists such as Abdi and Sliman Mansour, and Abdi had encouraged me to seek education abroad, as both he and Mansour had done. But meeting Boullata gave life to the idea of an active international network of Palestinian artists, which I could aspire to join.

Shortly afterward, I left home to go and study painting in the United Kingdom. There, I began wrestling with Western modernism and postmodernity, as well as the cultural and political legacies of being Palestinian. In so doing, I found Boullata deeply inspiring; when I later conducted an in-depth study of Palestinian art for my PhD, his work and research were key, particularly his articulation of the disparate strands of Palestinian art history. Throughout his long career as an artist, and as an art historian and theorist, Boullata wove these strands together in a sustained and focused investigation of new forms of artistic expression. He did so as an émigré in the context of an emerging globalized art world, playing an important part in putting Palestinian art on the map both with his own work as an artist and also as a curator and promoter of Palestinian art in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world.

It is as a result of Boullata's work that the trajectory of Palestinian art grew to be understood as more than simply the emergence of nationalist liberation art after the rupture of 1948. His groundbreaking research into the Jerusalem school of iconography provided an invaluable

perspective on the roots of Palestinian painting, in addition to being a vital influence on his own work, as he acknowledged. Crucially, Boullata revised Ismail Shammout's historical account of Palestinian iconography, tracing it back to an earlier period than that of Nicola Saig's work. Boullata also extended Shammout's commentary on Daoud Zalatimo, arguing that Zalatimo had produced a visual equivalent to the popular nationalist poetry of Ibrahim Tuqan and 'Abd al-Rahim Mahmud. Despite the many records and works of art lost or destroyed during the Nakba, which Boullata highlighted, his subsequent, meticulous reconstruction of the 1850–1948 period remains one of the most important and detailed histories of nineteenth-century Palestinian culture—in addition to being an invaluable intellectual gift to the Palestinian nation.

Boullata also laid the groundwork for a historical and theoretical understanding of twentieth-century Palestinian painting. In his contribution to *The Palestinian Encyclopedia*¹ covering the 1935–85 period, he divided the various roots of artistic style and expression into four useful categories: (1) the *illustrative*, which included romanticized images of the Palestinian struggle exemplified by the works of Shammout and Tamam al-Akhal; (2) the *narrative*, which provided a more folk-art oriented representation of Palestinian life, exemplified by artists such as Ibrahim Ghannam; (3) *surrealist* or *fantastic art* in the work of artists such as Mustafa al-Halaj and Ibrahim Saba, both of whom were inspired by the Egyptian surrealist movement; and (4) the *lyrical*, represented by the poetic work of artists such as Ibrahim Hazimeh.

One of Boullata's most important insights was the recognition of the crucial part played by literary and poetic traditions in the development of twentieth-century Palestinian art. He argued that many of the ideas and images in figurative painting, as well the approaches to that genre, drew their inspiration from classical literature, oral traditions of storytelling, poetry, and music. That Boullata made these connections was unsurprising, as he had a deep knowledge of and abiding love for Arabic poetry. As he wrote in his introduction to the collected texts he commissioned for the Sharjah Biennial 7 catalog in 2005, "Poetry has continued to be treasured as *Diwan al-'Arab*, meaning the Arabs' chief register of their collective memory."² He stressed that the uses of poetic symbolism and metaphor were particularly important and continued to be central characteristics of later, more conceptually oriented contemporary art. At the same time, Boullata also emphasized the importance of traditional crafts and technologies in the development of uniquely Palestinian approaches to art, from the incorporation of the ancient skills of icon painting to those of ceramics and embroidery, as well as his own use of geometry and calligraphy.

For Boullata, painting was where all his wide-ranging interests converged, providing a form of spiritual home for the almost lifelong exile that he was. And Jerusalem was the place he turned to repeatedly, especially in his later work. No matter where he lived or what he did, Boullata was always a Jerusalemite and a painter, and these two things became increasingly indissociable. In his paintings of the 1980s and 1990s, he successfully combined his vast knowledge of and admiration for Western abstract art with classical Arabic traditions of geometry and calligraphy. The paintings from that period include some of the best examples of their kind, and certainly the most accomplished ones of his generation. His fascination with the square (a commonality he shared with his friend Abdulkader Arnaout, who created squared Kufic calligraphic designs) was a formal and spiritual anchor that Boullata traced back to his Jerusalem childhood. In discussing his own

particular abstractionism, Boullata described the square as the “root” of his “new language”³ and attributed his deconstruction of the square’s internal space to inspiration from ancient mathematics.

The square also underlaid his fascination with the eight-pointed star formed by two intersecting squares whose points describe a circle; and it was this mysterious ability of geometry to square the circle⁴ that more than anything else brought him home to *the navel of the world*, Jerusalem.⁵ He recognized the infinitely variable power of this geometric form not only in Islamic art but also in the mandorlas surrounding the figure of Christ in icons. As he wrote in an article titled “To Measure Jerusalem: Explorations of the Square,” a beautiful account of this convergence between his personal origins and the origins of his painting:

Once I saw the link between the central motif in the icons of my childhood and the octagonal star from which radiated those mesmerizing arabesques evolved in Islamic art, I realized why all three monuments I could see from our roof in Jerusalem shared a common building plan. By circumscribing the intersection of two squares within a circle, the earliest ground plan of the Basilica of the Resurrection, the Church of the Ascension and the Dome of the Rock all sought to mark the divide between heaven and earth.⁶

Boullata has now completed the circle of his life and returned to Jerusalem to be buried beside his ancestors. His life can be regarded as one spent squaring that circle and finding endlessly generative ways to accommodate apparent opposites in the same space. Boullata managed to synthesize the word with the image, the material with the spiritual, Western modernism with Arabic art, and the traditions of Islam with those of Christianity. He has undoubtedly provided Palestinian culture with an enduring legacy.

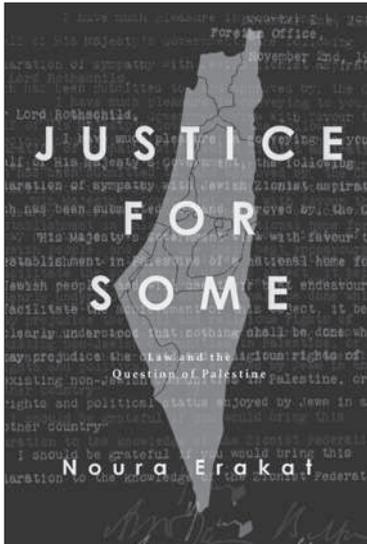
About the Author

Professor Bashir Makhoul is the vice-chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts in the United Kingdom.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Kamal Boullata, *Al-fan al-tashkili al-filastini khelal nusf qarn, 1935–1985*, Palestinian Encyclopaedia, vol. 4, Studies in Civilization, Second section (Beirut: Encyclopaedia Palestina Corporation, 1990), pp. 784–888.
- 2 Kamal Boullata, ed., *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art and Culture* (London: Saqi Books, 2005), p. 11.
- 3 Kamal Boullata, *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (London: Saqi Books, 2009), p. 320. Boullata originally discussed this concept in an article titled “The View from No-Man’s Land” that appeared in the Fall 1992 issue of the *Michigan Quarterly Review*.
- 4 Boullata refers to the idea of squaring the circle directly in *Palestinian Art*, p. 320.
- 5 The “navel of the world” is a term for Jerusalem.
- 6 Kamal Boullata, “To Measure Jerusalem: Explorations of the Square,” *JPS* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 83–91; see also Boullata, *Palestinian Art*, p. 329.

Recent Books



Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine, by Noura Erakat. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019. 352 pages. \$30.00 cloth, \$22.00 paper, e-book available.

REVIEWED BY ASLI BÂLI

Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine is both a book about Palestine and a meditation on the risks and benefits of international law for national liberation movements in pursuit of decolonization and emancipation. The book briskly covers an enormous expanse of Palestinian history, as refracted through the international law framings that have facilitated Palestinian dispossession. Much recent scholarship on legal aspects of the Palestinian case has focused on the rise and demise of the Oslo peace process. In contrast, Noura Erakat provides a comprehensive history of the conflict centered on the international law dimensions of the Palestinian struggle. She does this in fluid, accessible

prose, setting forth arguments of equal interest to scholars of international law and of Middle East studies, as well as broader audiences.

There are two important concepts that recur throughout. The first is “legal work,” a term Erakat borrows from Duncan Kennedy to convey how powerful actors’ deliberate efforts to bend legal doctrine to their objectives may serve to transform law (p. 7). She demonstrates how legal work has been central to Israel’s expansionist project, from the legal entreaties that enabled Jewish settlement in Mandate Palestine after World War I, to the use of international institutions and frameworks to gain recognition for Jewish sovereignty following World War II, to the use of martial law, occupation law, and the rubric of a “peace process” to expropriate Palestinians and facilitate settler colonization of their lands over the last seventy years.

The second equally significant concept for Erakat’s work is that of the “sovereign exception,” drawing on the writings of Giorgio Agamben and others (p. 15). Erakat shows that from the Mandate period to the present, British and Israeli officials have wielded sovereignty to manufacture exceptional categories of law that exclude Palestinians from the benefits of otherwise applicable

Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (Winter 2020), p. 90, ISSN: 0377-919X; electronic ISSN: 1533-8614. © 2020 by the Institute for Palestine Studies. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press’s Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2020.49.2.90>.

protections. The ability of the British and the Israelis to suspend and/or adapt international law in the case of Palestine is, for Erakat, a form of sovereign exception producing not lawlessness but the adaptation of the law. The original sovereign exception was the British decision to use its mandate authority to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in a territory where the native Palestinian population's corresponding right to self-determination was effectively suspended. From this flows the *sui generis* framework that resulted in the United Nations (UN) partition plan, the erasure of the juridical status of Palestinians as a people and, following the establishment of the State of Israel, the removal, dispossession, and containment of the Palestinian population.

These two concepts allow Erakat to analyze the legal strategies deployed by Israel to consolidate control over territory after 1949 and eventually to occupy and colonize the remaining Palestinian territories after 1967 (chapter 2). But she also examines Palestinian legal work to pursue international recognition of national liberation movements (chapter 3) and, in the context of their armed struggles, what Erakat aptly describes as the “right to fight” (p. 107). She shows how these efforts shaped the 1977 additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions, which extended international humanitarian law to address wars of national liberation. Even more striking is her detailed account of how Palestinian leaders gained recognition for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) at the UN, illustrating both the significant legal victories won by the PLO and the limits of advocacy at the UN.

The book makes fascinating use of Erakat's original interviews with principals from the delegations on both sides involved in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (chapter 4). Through these interviews, she offers fresh insights into how and why the PLO eventually exchanged hard-won international recognition of Palestinian rights for a bilateral and politically defined peace process brokered by the United States. She also shows how the legal framework engendered by Oslo—with the PLO's acquiescence—accelerated the dispossession and containment of Palestinians. Ultimately, she argues that “the buy-in and collaboration of the Palestinian leadership” has become essential to Israel (p. 218).

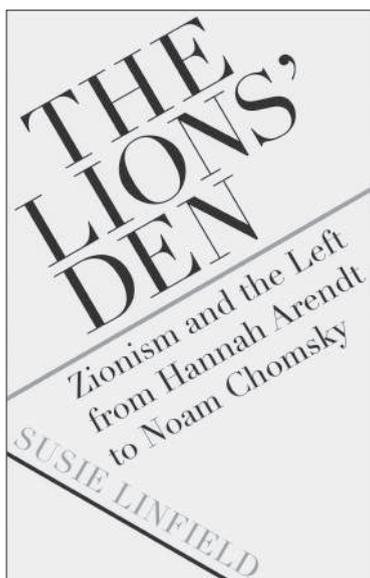
Turning to the period from the outbreak of the Second Intifada (2000) to the disengagement from, and subsequent siege of, Gaza (2005 to the present), Erakat addresses how Israeli legal work reverberates throughout the international order (chapter 5). Her account of the Israeli strategy of breaking laws to make new laws is incisive. An interview with Daniel Reisner, the head of the Israeli military's international law division, yields a concise statement of this approach: “The whole of international law is now based on the notion that an act that is forbidden today becomes permissible if executed by enough countries” (p. 186). Israeli advocacy for broad recognition of its own *sui generis* interpretations of the lawfulness of so-called preemptive self-defense and targeted assassination, and its preferred interpretation of so-called direct participation in hostilities and force protection have left Gazan (and other Palestinian) civilians vulnerable to indiscriminate and disproportionate military attacks (p. 205). Moreover, Israeli campaigns to legitimize such interpretations have produced new legal understandings that compromise civilian protections worldwide in the context of the U.S.-led “war on terror” (pp. 188–91).

Justice for Some provides a gripping and sobering account of the ways that law serves the powerful by intensifying the vulnerability and disempowerment of those it targets. But Erakat also acknowledges international law's “counterintuitive utility” (p. 13) when weaker actors use strategic

and tactical ingenuity to leverage the law's emancipatory potential. That said, as Erakat shows, the law alone will never recalibrate the balance of power.

In this elegantly written and carefully argued book, Erakat strikes a delicate balance that makes an important contribution to the scholarly literature on both Palestine and critical international law. She combines a profoundly realistic assessment of the limits of international law with a hopeful account of the power of political mobilization, armed with the normative force of law, and argues compellingly that the pursuit of a political strategy for emancipation should embrace principled legal opportunism. Erakat's clear-eyed analysis is not only an excellent account of the law and politics of the Palestinian struggle but also a remarkable and often inspiring assessment of the relationship between law and liberation.

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The Lions' Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky, by Susie Linfield. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. 400 pages. \$32.50 cloth, \$20.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY DAVID LLOYD

The Lions' Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky bears a subtitle that is a grave misnomer. Of the "Left" intellectuals treated in this book, all but one—former *New Left Review* editorial board member Fred Halliday—are Jewish. Not that there is anything wrong with Susie Linfield's focus on Jewish intellectuals in itself. At a time when critics of Israel are being wantonly targeted as anti-Semites, a book that offers a broad spectrum of Jewish responses to Zionism valuably reminds us of the long and venerable tradition of Jewish anti-Zionism.

It is no accident that this selection sells the Left short. It is one thing that the anti-Zionist Left is rarely invoked except as an anonymous block ("Many if not most leftists rejected the very existence of a state for the Jewish people" [p. 209]); it is another thing that this "Left," despite being supposedly in thrall to third-world nationalisms, is almost entirely Euro-American. How is it possible to write a book that pretends to be an account of Zionism and the Left without including—except in perfunctorily negative asides—Edward Said, whose "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims" remains a classic and remarkably generous Left engagement with that ideology and its consequences.* The absence of

* *Social Text*, no. 1 (Winter 1979): pp. 7–58, doi:10.2307/466405.

any analysis of Palestinian leftists, except as instances of terrorism or irredentism, strikingly subserves the overall picture of a backward, fanatical Arab world that Linfield promotes.

A dispassionate analysis of Zionism is the furthest thing from this book's aims. Linfield makes no secret of her principles of evaluation (pp. 6–7). Only thinkers who defend “the right of the State of Israel to exist,” or who evolve to embrace that position, enjoy her imprimatur. Those who question the Zionist project, critique its nationalist ideology, or acknowledge the colonial ambitions that shaped Zionism from the start are castigated as confused, conflicted, immature and, in a somewhat sophisticated version of the tired trope, as self-hating Jews.

All of this is wrapped up in a crass pop psychology that attributes critical responses to Zionism to the upbringing or prejudices of the perpetrators. Maxime Rodinson, suffering the disappointment of the European Left with Stalinism, simply transfers his loyalty to third-world and Arab decolonizing movements. His principled anti-Zionism turns out to be “a kind of frozen fidelity” (p. 136) to the anti-Zionism of his working-class parents, implicitly a displacement of mourning for their death in Auschwitz. There is something quite distasteful in deploying this kind of psychologizing to dismiss Rodinson's inconvenient analysis of Zionism as a colonial enterprise. Examples could be multiplied in the cases of Arendt (“obsessed with Jewish shame, Jewish honor, and Jewish dignity” [p. 25]); Arthur Koestler (with his “juvenile insistence on seeing complexity and weakness as synonymous” [p. 98]); or Isaac Deutscher (“a deeply conflicted Jew” [p. 164]). Only those who “mature” to what Linfield considers a complex and “realistic” position—Halliday, the mature internationalist (p. 209), is her model here—are exempt from this mind-numbingly conformist mode of judgment.

Perhaps the most revealing chapter is on Albert Memmi, whose profound contradictions are papered over largely because this great anticolonial theorist later became a committed if critical Zionist. For Linfield's Memmi, the pivot lies in the strange notion that Zionism was “neither more nor less than the national liberation movement of the Jewish people” (p. 179). This would have surprised early Zionists, who openly understood Zionism to be a colonizing project at a time when colonization was an honorable trade among the European powers whose support they sought. Linfield has to perform the extraordinary maneuver of ignoring the first part of Memmi's classic analysis of settler colonialism, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Beacon Press, 1957), in order to cast Zionism as a decolonizing ideology. But Memmi's analysis of settler colonialism remains prescient regarding the unfolding of the Zionist project. There could hardly be a better characterization of the evolution of Zionism nor a better explanation of the dilemma of the left-wing Zionist than Memmi's portraits in that work of the “colonizer who refuses” (the left-liberal Zionist) and the “colonizer who accepts” (the right-wing Zionist). Colonialism and nationalism are fundamentally contradictory processes. The indubitable pain that inhabiting those contradictions causes cannot be dismissed as confusion or immaturity any more than contradiction can be wished away by invoking “complexity” and “experience.”

Linfield remains fixated on a thing of the past, the two-state solution. This is the respectable fantasy of intellectuals whose leftism has been overtaken by the inexorable drift of Zionism rightward. It stands as a delusional litmus test: whoever denies the two-state solution is guilty of demonizing Israel and its legitimate aspirations to realize its national destiny. But Israel was never just another decolonizing nation. The most cogent left-wing analysis of Zionism has understood it

as a typical, if belated, settler-colonial project. Rodinson's "Israël, fait colonial?" (1967)[†] was not the first to theorize Zionism as colonialism, nor the last. He was anticipated by Fayeze Sayegh's "Zionist Colonialism in Palestine" (1965)[‡] and followed by a number of Israeli sociologists, such as Baruch Kimmerling and Gershon Shafir, and eventually by contemporary theorists, such as Patrick Wolfe, all unmentioned by Linfield. Like most settler colonies, Israel maintains an apartheid system, exacerbated by its failure to complete the replacement of the native population. Israel's apartheid is sui generis: the charge depends not on a flimsy analogy with South Africa (p. 310), a shopworn Zionist fallacy, but on the definition given by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The evolution of the settler colony toward an increasingly intransigent determination to displace the native population was foreseen by many of the critics of Zionism Linfield discusses and by many she omits.

The ultimate *bête noire* for Linfield is not Palestinian resistance, but the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. *The Lions' Den* is one long prolegomenon to a tendentious and mostly erroneous polemic in its conclusion (pp. 308–10) against a nonviolent, nonsectarian, antiracist movement that attracts the support of a global Left that is consistently critical of the terrorism inflicted both by states and by nonstate actors and that is grounded in precisely the principles of universal rights and self-determination that Linfield claims to value. "Realism" now means coming to terms with what it will mean to confront a racial state across historic Palestine. And only in the terms that the BDS movement has elaborated is a Left resolution of the Zionist question imaginable.

David Lloyd is distinguished professor of English at the University of California, Riverside. His most recent book is *Under Representation: The Racial Regime of Aesthetics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

From the River to the Sea: Palestine and Israel in the Shadow of "Peace," edited by Mandy Turner. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. 354 pages. \$110.00 cloth, \$104.50 e-book.

REVIEWED BY MAIA CARTER HALLWARD

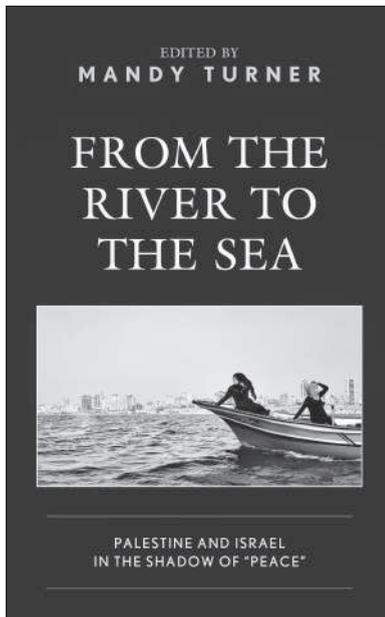
From the River to the Sea examines the current context of various communities in Israel/Palestine more than twenty-five years after the Oslo Accords. While the contributors vary in their views regarding what the future holds for the region, they approach the topic as "an unjust and violent colonial situation that must be documented, opposed and resolved in a way that advances human dignity and rights" (p. x).

This is not an introductory-level text, but rather is aimed at those with basic knowledge about the region, given the authors' sophisticated arguments and detailed discussions that involve a range of political actors, agreements, and geographical contexts. In keeping with the principle that research can be "objective" but cannot be "neutral" (p. ix), the contributors in

[†] See Rashid Khalidi's review of the English translation in "The Colonial Foundations of Israel," *JPS* 3, no. 4 (1974): pp. 137–39, doi:10.2307/2535455.

[‡] See Fayeze Sayegh, "Zionist Colonialism in Palestine (1965)," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): pp. 206–25, doi:10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648833.

this volume critically examine the “victor’s peace” that has resulted from the Oslo process. More specifically, the authors seek to transform international public perception of the situation through their scholarship (p. x).



The book’s eleven chapters can be divided into three sections. The first four chapters provide a critical examination of the Oslo agreements and their consequences for Palestinians, with chapters that explore the impact of the Oslo Accords on local Palestinian politics and economy. The second section explores the unique challenges of various constituencies affected by the failed Oslo process, illustrating sociologist Jamil Hilal’s observation that “each Palestinian community has found it necessary to tackle its own problems in the absence of overall national institutions representing the Palestinian collective” (p. 54). Interestingly, the first chapter in this section, titled “Politics of Exclusion of Palestinians in Israel since Oslo: Between the Local and the National,” focuses on the distinct challenges of the Palestinian minority within Israel; and the second, “A New Nationalistic Political Grammar: Jewish-Israeli Society 25 Years after Oslo” discusses the rise of hawkish politics within Israel. The inclusion of these chapters underscores the interrelatedness of the various populations living

between the river and the sea even though, as aptly demonstrated by the chapters in this volume, the Oslo framework sought to fragment and divide them. Such political and discursive divisions allow for the dehumanization of the Other, and as linguist Yonatan Mendel suggests, provide justification for the occupation in the eyes of Israelis, portraying Israeli military and settler violence always as a “response” to Palestinian violence (p. 164). Chapters on the Gaza Strip, occupied East Jerusalem, and Palestinian refugees in Jordan round out the section.

The selection of these various population groups as the basis of chapters is unconventional in comparison to many compilations about Israel/Palestine, given that it brings together groups commonly considered distinct. Refugees and Palestinian citizens of Israel, for instance, lie outside of the typical geographic focus of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the discussion of those living in occupied East Jerusalem underscores the uniquely precarious position of a population that has no governing body looking out for its interests, as it lies outside of the Palestinian Authority’s jurisdiction, and is excluded from Israeli governance as well. Although they pay taxes to the Jerusalem municipality, the city does not provide Palestinian residents with adequate services, and fifty years after Israel’s annexation, there is no municipal plan for the eastern portion of the city, thereby preventing Palestinian construction and economic development.

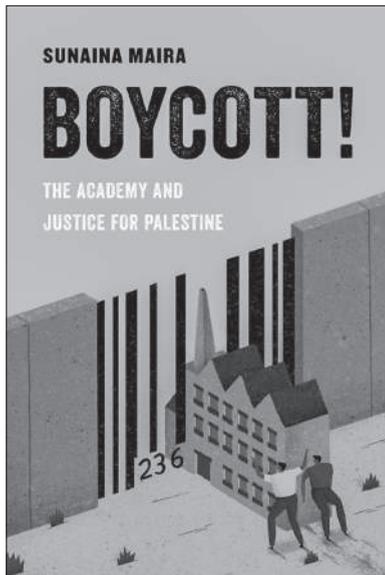
Although no chapter explicitly documents the experiences of Palestinians in the West Bank outside of East Jerusalem, their situation is implicitly discussed throughout the book, such as with Diana Buttu’s discussion of the various elements of the Oslo Accords, or Mandy Turner’s

reporting on increasing donor activity in the areas of the West Bank deemed “Area C” in recent years. Further, many reports on Palestinians over the past twenty-five years have perhaps unduly focused on the West Bank, particularly urban centers such as Ramallah, to the exclusion of other portions of the population. However, the book might benefit from a chapter that contrasts the “Ramallah bubble” with the experiences of other Palestinian communities in the West Bank, such as Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem, and Jenin. Similarly, there is no chapter documenting more rural agricultural communities of Palestine or those Israelis living in West Bank settlements.

The third section of the book, comprised of chapters ten and eleven, asks, if the Oslo process has failed to bring “peace,” what is “Plan B”? In a series of interviews with Western donor representatives, Turner concludes that the international community has no “Plan B,” which results in a continual push for resurrecting what is seen as a dead process. Even as governments maintain their “Plan A” policies, Turner demonstrates that representatives on the ground often question this mandate, particularly in Area C, the territorial majority and predominantly agricultural portion of the West Bank where Israel maintains full military control, under the auspices of international humanitarian law. While “Western donors and multilaterals have therefore assisted in creating a colonial peace by supporting the persistence of a peace accord and framework that has allowed Israel to control Palestinians while continuing to grab land and expand settlements” (p. 274), in-country representatives have also tried to offset this through providing aid to local municipalities, working in East Jerusalem, and providing development support in Area C (p. 288). While donors may have no “Plan B” to the two-state solution, a single binational state is sometimes offered as an alternative. In a review of the single-state solution, Cherine Hussein finds that while it has some support, particularly within the Palestinian diaspora community, it has not succeeded in galvanizing a grassroots popular resistance movement (p. 324). Further, the one-state solution is challenged by the uneven power relations between Palestinians and Israelis as well as inequality and racism inside 1948 Israel.

All together the chapters in this volume provide a critical analysis of the failures of the Oslo agreements, tracing out the policies, discourses, economic frameworks, and power structures that have contributed to the existing political stalemate. The authors, who are primarily based in Europe or Israel/Palestine, challenge conventional discourse on the situation found in the United States, asking “how [it is possible] to liberate Palestine from the violence of Israeli settler colonialism” (p. 12), interrogating the enabling role of Western donors and policymakers for the continuation of a status quo that sustains and creates inequality and oppression. While the authors do not point to a single path forward, they identify several key themes and issues that must be addressed in any sustainable resolution to the conflict, including the importance of human rights and justice for all people in the region.

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Boycott! The Academy and Justice for Palestine, by Sunaina Maira. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. 184 pages. \$85.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper, \$16.95 e-book.

REVIEWED BY OMAR ZAHZAH

One of the great paradoxes that besets any intellectual attempting to disentangle the wider significance of contemporaneous events from the hegemonic discourses within which they would otherwise remain trapped is that such an effort necessitates a historical appraisal of the present moment. One is tasked not so much with putting the present in *conversation* with the past, but rather, thinking of the present *as* the past, thereby taking seriously Walter Benjamin's imperative to "brush history against the grain." This is precisely what Sunaina Maira does with her latest volume, *Boycott! The Academy and Justice for Palestine*, one of the first intellectual histories of the growing scholarly movement advocating for a

boycott of Israeli academic institutions. She argues that the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement has the potential to force academia as an institution to become truly accountable to its presumptions. Maira notes that individuals who criticize BDS as insufficiently radical miss the true character of the work BDS performs: the mobilization of institutional and juridico-legal precepts *on their own terms* to accommodate the Palestinian liberation struggle forces these logics either to acquiesce to sympathetic engagement with the question of Palestine or else crumble under the weight of their own hypocrisy. It is the ultimate litmus test of the notion that justice cannot be authentic unless it is truly comprehensive. The volume holds an important space in the larger archive of scholarship and activism for Palestine, as well as Palestine studies more broadly.

The author is a professor of Asian American studies at the University of California, Davis, and a longtime scholar-activist for Palestine who has written extensively on the Palestinian struggle, how the "war on terror" implicates Arab and South Asian subjects alike, and the imperative to place Asian and Arab American studies in conversation as part of a larger anti-imperial intellectual project. The novelty of *Boycott!* within her intellectual oeuvre thus lies not so much in its topical concerns as much as the political and historical scaffolding she erects around them. Maira takes pains to lay bare the core tenets of BDS, but the work is no mere rehashing of principles. The text is artfully staggered between historical indexing and contemporaneous analysis. In this manner, the writer compartmentalizes pivotal milestones such as the launch of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) in 2004, the issuing of the Palestinian call for BDS in 2005, and the inauguration of the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI, of which Maira herself is a founding member) in 2009 before moving into more nuanced analysis.

For instance, Maira provides a useful overview of how BDS dovetails with the history of boycott as a tactic of resistance within U.S. contexts of struggle before she advances the reader's analytical comprehension of BDS's transnational sociohistorical significance. Chapter 1 demonstrates how

boycott as a tactic of resistance is far from unprecedented within Palestinian histories, but in fact was used from the 1880s through the Mandate era and onward (pp. 41–48). This situation of the centrality of boycotts to the First Intifada helps demonstrate how BDS activism may be seen as a *resumption* of pre-Oslo Palestinian collective resistance within and without the Palestinian homeland. Also crucial is the author’s clarification of how descriptions of Israel as an “apartheid state” as well as the use of apartheid as a wider, actionable rubric within which to frame and agitate against Israel’s oppression of Palestinians did not suddenly arise alongside the BDS call, but can be traced to the linkages anti-apartheid activists began to make in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre (pp. 30–31).

Maira references how neoliberalization and liberal ideologies are uniquely primed to accommodate Zionism at various points, as establishment invocations of “rights” and the need for “dialogue” themselves become tools for silencing academic support for Palestinian freedom (pp. 97, 107, 116–17). Yet while she makes generous reference to Stephen Salaita—the premier scholar to address this intersection in works such as *Israel’s Dead Soul* (Temple University Press, 2011)—it would have been fascinating to read a more sustained consideration of why this is the case. While space does not permit the tracing out of an extensive genealogy, such an investigation might consider the particulars of American liberalism as adumbrated by figures such as John Dewey, Eric Voegelin, Judith Shklar, and Edmund Fawcett, to name but a few. If not precisely ahistorical in character, such thinkers (often liberals themselves) at times depict liberalism as an atomized reaction to particular historical *incidents*, a reaction that in turn spurs a retreat to individualistic idealism. This could provide one solution to understanding how liberal thought can often unquestioningly defend Israel as necessitated by the Holocaust and ignore outright or retrospectively validate *preceding* histories of Zionist settlement and dispossession of Palestinians. Given the current prevalence of the question of academic freedom, a historical overview of the concept—not as an otherwise enshrined but presently embattled guarantee so much as a tenuous framework that has *always* been put even further into question, and fortified, at moments of antagonistic conjuncture between donor interests, faculty speech, and research—would have been particularly timely.⁵

These minor points aside, *Boycott!* should be required reading for all new to BDS work and seasoned organizers and scholars alike.

Omar Zahzah is a PhD candidate in comparative literature at the University of California, Los Angeles.

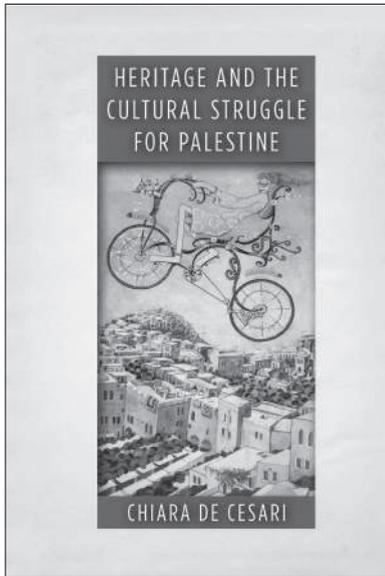
Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine, by Chiara De Cesari. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019. 288 pages. \$90.00 hardcover, \$28.00 paper, \$28.00 e-book.

REVIEWED BY RASMIEYH R. ABDELNABI

Chiara De Cesari’s *Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine* is the product of fifteen years of research and writing on heritage making, cultural preservation, and resistance through development in

⁵ Michael S. Pak, “Academic Freedom and the Liberation of the Nation’s Faculty,” *Thought and Action* (Fall 2007): pp. 83–93, http://www.nea.org/assets/img/PubThoughtAndAction/TAA_07_09.pdf.

Palestine. De Cesari—an anthropologist and senior lecturer of European studies and cultural studies at the University of Amsterdam—has authored numerous articles and coedited an anthology on transnational memory, but this is her first book. De Cesari conducted the bulk of the



research for this book in 2005 and 2006, over a fifteen-month period, with short trips to the region in subsequent years. The book is an ethnography that focuses on the proliferation of urban regeneration initiatives and museums in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by Palestinian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). De Cesari argues convincingly that NGOs and museums are initiating processes of institutionalization and governance in the absence of a stable state and against the daily struggles produced by Israeli settler colonialism, while putting Palestine (unofficially) on the map through their involvement in transnational cultural and development processes.

In chapter 1, De Cesari focuses on historical efforts toward heritage preservation sans state building before and after 1948 by Palestinians. She focuses on two main shifts: the first is before 1948, when Palestinian intellectuals worked to document Palestinian culture and folklore; and the second begins in the 1960s, when the Palestinian liberation

movement politicized peasant material culture to shape a collective Palestinian identity and history based on a specific narrative using music, dance, and embroidery with deep connections to historic Palestine. The rest of the book focuses on De Cesari's larger thesis regarding development by way of heritage making. De Cesari documents how certain organizations have shifted from practicing and protecting folklore to initiating urban regeneration and creating museums (p. 197) and argues that Palestinian heritage organizations are resourcefully developing state-like institutions despite the insurmountable difficulties of statelessness, Israeli military occupation, and settler colonialism (p. 200).

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on two NGOs: the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC), founded by Yasir Arafat to gain control of the Old City over Israeli settlers but lacking formal political power, and Ramallah-based Riwaq, which focuses on restoring old Palestinian buildings, helps draft legislation and bylaws on heritage preservation, and maintains a national registry of historic buildings in Palestine (p. 120). While De Cesari's argument about NGOs taking over state-building efforts is an important one, this argument could have been stronger if she had more deeply engaged with the literature on the adverse effects of NGOization on Palestinian civil society. She cites all the relevant works but does not fully connect the ways HRC and Riwaq respond to the consequences of their establishment such as disruption of social cohesion, the creation of an elite population as a side effect of professionalization, and the loss of grassroots mobilization efforts. For example, De Cesari discusses the social fallout in the Old City of Hebron as the HRC brings people from all over the West Bank to live in the city's buildings to prevent it from becoming a ghost town, but she also indicates that the HRC, which depends heavily on foreign development agencies to maintain its programming and support of the Old City's residents (pp. 90–97), has not been able to stop Israel

from advancing its plans to settle more of the Old City. Just recently, Israel announced that it would be razing the Old Hebron Market to build a new Jewish settlement.

In chapter 4, De Cesari examines the ways in which private citizens and NGOs have taken it upon themselves to create museums in light of the Palestinian Authority's failure to create a national museum. During the post-Oslo period, Palestinians saw a need to display the collective Palestinian experience in public spaces (p. 176). De Cesari argues that these efforts—like the newly built Palestinian Museum—institutionalize heritage work, “promote radical, democratic practices,” and provide a space for citizens to participate in the making of a Palestinian state (p. 194), and furthermore, that heritage and culture making provide an avenue for “material claims to sovereignty” (p. 5). Palestinians connect to the land through their lived experiences and cultural practices. While this argument is a critical one because these spaces keep Palestine alive locally and globally, it does not take into account the role of foreign funding and its influence on NGOs and their projects, as other scholars such as Rema Hammami, Tariq Dana, Sari Hanafi, Linda Tabar, Toufic Haddad, Raja Khalidi, Sobhi Samour, and Mandy Turner have explored.

This book provides an important opening for a critical discussion regarding the ways in which the word “Palestine” has not lost meaning and the ways in which Palestinians continue to assert their existence tangibly despite an aggressive and unrelenting Israeli settler-colonial project bent on erasing Palestinians as natives of the region. De Cesari also illustrates the ways in which Palestinian NGOs expertly inserted Palestine in the development narrative on a global scale. A further investigation of her informants' ambivalence toward a state and its impact on their work would have been welcome. What does statehood mean to them? The NGOs she focused on work in the absence of state institutions, but is the role of a state only to draft policies, provide some limited services to a certain group of citizens, maintain some semblance of sovereignty, and help build a more aware citizenry? What about advocating for legal and civil rights for all or working to dismantle the Israeli settler-colonial project?

Rasmieyh R. Abdelnabi is currently working on a PhD dissertation titled “The Feminization of Resistance, Social Reproduction, and Palestine: Women's Work toward Surviving and Thriving” in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

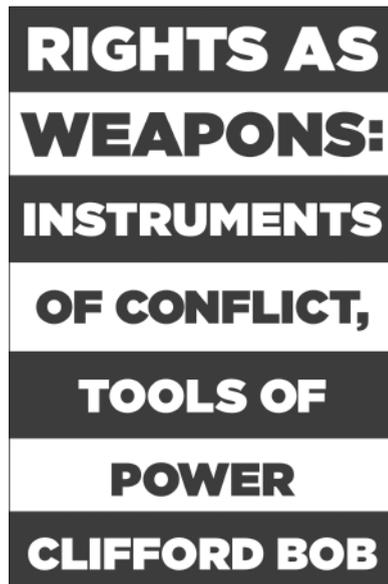
Rights as Weapons: Instruments of Conflict, Tools of Power, by Clifford Bob. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. 280 pages. \$29.95 cloth, \$18.00 e-book.

REVIEWED BY YOUSEF MUNAYYER

“How and why are rights used for aggressive purposes?” (p. 2). This is the central question Clifford Bob sets out to answer in *Rights as Weapons: Instruments of Conflict, Tools of Power*. The author answers this question by providing a typology for classifying various tactics in which actors use rights in offensive, aggressive, defensive, and calculated ways against opponents. The breakdown is thorough and analytically useful beyond the cases he uses for empirical assessment.

Bob, a professor of political science at Duquesne University, has focused his career on the study of transnational civil society and has made important contributions to this field with previous works

such as *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics* (2012) and his earlier book *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (2005), both published by Cambridge University Press. Throughout his work, analysis of rights-based advocacy has been



consistently highlighted. In this most recent of his books in this area, Bob challenges the reader to think beyond the ways in which we would normally conceive of rights. He uses an analytical frame that does not define rights within a moral context, which then allows us to think of rights as claims.

Within the context of human rights, we often think of rights as an entitlement that protects the weak against the powerful. But just as other weapons, rights can be deployed also, and often, by the powerful against the weak. Bob reviews how rights can be used as “rallying cries” (to mobilize support [chapter 2]), “shields and parries” (to counter threats [chapter 3]), “camouflage” (to mask motives [chapter 4]), “spears” (to overturn laws [chapter 5]), “dynamite” (to destroy cultures [chapter 6]), “blockades” (to suppress subordinates [chapter 7]), and “wedges” (to break coalitions [chapter 8]).

For example, in chapter 2, Bob explains how rights can be used as rallying cries, which he defines as the “use of rights within a political movement to mobilize support among the movement’s constituents and its potential third-party allies” (p. 27). Types of rallying cries broken down in the chapter include “humanizing and naturalizing,” “universalizing,” “depoliticizing,” and “absolutizing.” In chapter 4, the author looks at how animal rights in the conflict around Catalonia show how “adaptable nationalist politicians exploit rights that extend well beyond those of their own communities to advance their cause and hurt their foes” (p. 78). Animal rights groups and Catalan nationalists found common cause in a common enemy: Spain’s Constitutional Court and Castilian domination. Throughout the book, Bob weaves analytical categories with case evidence that illuminate the often-unseen underside of rights advocacy.

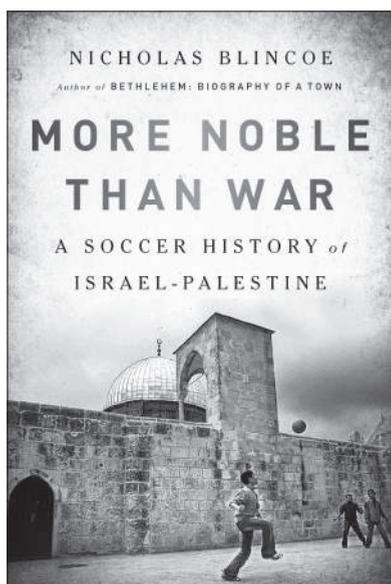
For readers familiar with the topic of and discourse around Israel/Palestine, Bob cites several examples of rights as weapons that should be eminently familiar. For example, he references Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon’s book, *The Human Right to Dominate* (Oxford University Press, 2015), in which they demonstrate that “Israel’s Jewish settlers now employ indigenous and property rights to deprive Palestinians of land and ultimately to undermine Palestinian activism, if not Palestinian society itself” (p. 7). Further, in describing rights weaponized as “wedges,” Bob explains the use of pinkwashing by Israel as an effort to weaponize LGBT rights to divide the Palestine solidarity movement. “LGBT rights are a useful tool for backers of Israel aiming to weaken the international support network for the Palestinians. . . . When a political tactician inserts a wedge, he seeks to exploit and widen these latent cracks in the opposing coalition to gain an advantage in the larger conflict. Put another way, rather than making a frontal assault on the

foe or the core issues, the tactic represents a flank move against the foe's support coalition, using a rights claim to loosen vulnerable members" (p. 187).

In sum, Bob's contribution in *Rights as Weapons* builds on his previous work as well as the work of others who have developed the literature on the role of civil society in international relations and contentious politics toward advancing an understanding of civil society not merely as a countervailing force to the traditional forces of power politics but rather as a unique arena in which traditional power politics can play out in different ways, including through the weaponization of rights. "As tools of politics," Bob writes in the book's conclusion, "rights can be put to any number of defensive and offensive uses" (p. 217).

Clifford Bob stresses that this realpolitik assessment of rights is not intended to pass a supportive moral judgement on the use of such weapons by the powerful against the weak but rather to provide a clear-eyed analytic framework for understanding how rights are utilized by different actors with varied relationships to power. In doing so, he has provided students and scholars of international politics and civil society a useful guide.

Yousef Munayyer is an independent scholar and a member of the *JPS* editorial committee.



More Noble Than War: A Soccer History of Israel-Palestine, by Nicholas Blincoe. New York: Bold Type Books, 2019. 304 pages. \$16.99 paper, \$10.99 e-book.

REVIEWED BY AUBREY BLOOMFIELD

Sports and politics do not, and should not, mix. Or so goes the tired cliché. Yet this has always been an absurd stance. There is a long history of sports being used by repressive regimes as a vehicle for normalization and also by their challengers as a venue for political protest and activism. Nicholas Blincoe's fascinating and accessible new book, *More Noble Than War: A Soccer History of Israel-Palestine*, traces the history of soccer in Palestine/Israel while exploring the history of the conflict. Through a mixture of historical research, interviews, and firsthand reporting, Blincoe clearly demonstrates how soccer and politics have been intimately linked from the sport's introduction to Palestine by the British up to the present day.

Blincoe is not new to the subject of Palestine/Israel. He is the author of *Bethlehem: Biography of a Town* (Constable, 2017), coeditor of *Peace under Fire: Israel/Palestine and the International Solidarity Movement* (Verso, 2004), and coproducer of the documentaries *Jeremy Hardy vs. the Israeli Army* (2003) and *Open Bethlehem* (2014). However, this is his first book about soccer. Blincoe describes becoming a soccer fan in 2004 while living in Palestine, following the English

Premier League as a way to deal with homesickness. This led to him taking an interest in the local game, the result of which is *More Noble Than War*.

Part 1, which makes up the majority of the book, focuses on the parallel, and sometimes intertwined, development of soccer in Palestinian and Jewish communities before 1948. The first standing team in Palestine was at St. George's School in Jerusalem in the early 1900s. Early members of the school's team included Izzat Tannous and Jamal al-Husseini, who would later achieve political prominence. Blincoe then takes the reader through historical developments such as the role of Yosef Yekutieli in the Maccabi Games and successful Jewish efforts to gain international recognition through soccer (and prevent Palestinians from doing likewise), the British banning the game following the 1929 riots, and the violent foundations of Beitar Jerusalem Football Club ("from the start, Beitar Jerusalem was a terrorist organisation that played football on the side," p. 129).

Part 2 covers the period from 1948 up until the present day. In it, Blincoe discusses topics including the significance of Palestine joining soccer's global governing body, FIFA, in 1998 ("the first international body to recognise Palestine as a state," p. 219); the disproportionate presence of Palestinians in Israeli soccer; the influence of controversial Palestinian official Jibril Rajoub on Palestinian soccer; and the struggles of Palestinian soccer in the face of Israeli occupation. Blincoe concludes by considering whether the soccer field, one of the few spaces where Jews and Palestinians regularly interact, provides a vision of what a shared future in Palestine/Israel could look like, although he rightly notes that "the level playing field . . . only goes so far" (p. 250).

Given soccer's global prominence, it is somewhat surprising that this book has not been written already. Certainly, many aspects of this history have been previously covered by other authors including Amir Ben-Porat, James M. Dorsey, Yair Galily, Issam Khalidi, James Montague, Magid Shihade, and Tamir Sorek. Yet Blincoe's contribution is to bring this history together into an overview that allows the reader to follow the development of soccer in Palestine/Israel from its beginnings to the present day, making the book a welcome addition to the field.

Covering over one hundred years of soccer and related political history in just over three hundred pages inevitably means that the book suffers from some notable omissions and limitations. Central among these is the failure to mention the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement and growing efforts to build pressure on Israel over its use of soccer (and other sports) as a tool of normalization. In chapter 27, Blincoe does cover moves to get Israel suspended from FIFA and calls for Argentina to boycott a game against Israel, but the focus is on the role of Rajoub with no mention of civil society involvement. On the subject of boycotts, Blincoe does not discuss the history of Israel's membership in the European soccer confederation, known as UEFA, which it joined in 1994 following boycotts by Arab and Asian nations. (Palestine plays in the more geographically relevant Asian confederation, of which Israel also used to be a member.) There are also only brief, passing mentions of women's soccer (in chapters 2 and 26). In addition, the book would have benefited from a deeper analysis of a range of issues. These include the significant impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian soccer (aspects of this such as restrictions on movement, arbitrary arrests, and deliberate targeting of players by the Israeli military are mentioned in chapter 26) and the intriguing situation of Palestinians who play for teams in Israel—and even for the Israeli national team (mentioned in chapters 23, 25, and 28).

Recent Books

Nevertheless, *More Noble Than War* remains an informative and thought-provoking read and represents a good entry point for anyone seeking to understand the history of soccer in Palestine/Israel. It lays the groundwork for further exploration of the topic in a subsequent contribution, one that covers the contemporary situation and the issues outlined above in greater detail.

Aubrey Bloomfield is an independent writer and researcher. He has written about the intersection of sports and politics, including the role of sports in the BDS movement, for a range of publications including *Africa Is a Country*, Al Jazeera English, *Guardian Australia*, Mondoweiss, *The Nation*, and *Palestine Square*.

Photos from the Quarter

This sample of photos, selected from hundreds viewed by *JPS*, aims to convey a sense of Palestinian life during the quarter 16 August–15 November 2019.



Palestinians in Khan Yunis examine the ruins of a house destroyed in Israeli airstrikes that were purportedly targeting members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad. *Haaretz* reports that thirty-two Palestinians were killed over the course of four days, 11–15 November. (13 November, Khaled Omar/Xinhua via Getty via Getty Images)



A Palestinian family harvests olives from their land on the Israeli side of the separation barrier in the occupied West Bank village of Dura. Because their Israeli permit grants them only one month of access to their land every harvest season, they must wake early and harvest all day. (30 October, Hazem Bader/AFP via Getty Images)



An Israeli guard frisks a Palestinian woman during a demonstration in support of Hiba al-Labadi, a twenty-four-year-old Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent who was detained without charge by Israeli authorities on 20 August. Al-Labadi staged a hunger strike for most of her months-long administrative detention and was released on 6 November following pressure from Jordan and international human rights groups. (31 October, Mostafa Alkharouf/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)



A Palestinian worker in a Khan Yunis olive oil mill stacks briquettes made of olive pomace—the solids that remain after oil extraction—which are used as a source of fuel. (31 October, Said Khatib/AFP via Getty Images)



Dozens of Detroit community members join U.S. representative Rashida Tlaib at Pallister Park to observe a Shabbat service and stand in solidarity with her commitment to justice for Palestine. The community event was organized by Jewish Voice for Peace. (16 August, Jeff Kowalsky/AFP via Getty Images)



The demolished remains of the three-story home belonging to the family of Ali Khalifa, who was killed by Israeli forces in 2011. The Qalandia residence, which continued to house Khalifa's family, was evacuated before being demolished by the Israeli army. (23 October, Ahmad Gharabli/AFP via Getty Images)

Photos from the Quarter



An elderly woman is escorted away from the site of demonstrations against the construction of Jewish settlements in Ramallah. (17 October, Issam Rimawi/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)



An officer of the Israeli Border Police restrains a member of the Cassia family as the family's home and nearby restaurant in Bayt Jala are demolished. Shortly after the demolitions took place, displacing the five-person family, a settler outpost was erected on the site. (26 August, Wisam Hashlamoun/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)



An Israeli soldier constrains a Palestinian boy in Kafr Qaddum during a weekly nonviolent Friday protest against settlement expansion. (23 August, Jaafar Ashtiyeh/AFP via Getty Images)



Friends and family are gathered in Lydda to mourn the death of seventeen-year-old Rina Shnerb. The Israeli teenager was critically injured by the detonation of an improvised explosive device while on a hike near the Israeli settlement Dolev with her father and older brother, both of whom were injured but survived. (23 August, Ilia Yefimovich/picture alliance via Getty Images)



An audience of Druze women in Daliyat al-Karmil is seated for a campaign talk by centrist Blue and White Party members Orna Barbivay, a retired Israeli army general, and Gadeer Kamal Mreeh, the first Druze woman to be elected to the Knesset. (29 August, Jalaa Marey/AFP via Getty Images)



Hundreds of women in Haifa participate in an international day of protest against gender-based violence triggered by the killing of twenty-one-year-old Israa Ghrayeb, a Palestinian woman from Bethlehem by her male family members on 22 August. The protesters, who identify as part of the feminist Tali'at movement, march under the banner of "No Free Homeland without Free Women." (26 September, Mati Milstein/NurPhoto via Getty Images)



Palestinians in a factory in Jericho convert palm tree waste to paper napkins through a multistage pulping process. (18 October, Issam Rimawi/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)



Mayada al-Sayad, a German-born Palestinian distance runner, competes in the women's marathon at the 2019 World Athletics Championship in Doha, Qatar. (28 September, Michael Kappeler/picture alliance via Getty Images)

Photos from the Quarter



A Palestinian shepherd gives water to his flock in Masu'a. Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised to annex the Jordan Valley if he was reelected on 17 September. (11 September, Amir Levy/Getty Images)



Palestinian Bedouins from the Negev await their turn to vote at a polling station in Shaqib al-Salam during Israel's general election. (17 September, Hazem Bader/AFP via Getty Images)

Palestine Unbound

Published each issue, this section strives to capture the tenor and content of popular conversations related to the Palestinians and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which are held on dynamic platforms unbound by traditional media. Therefore, items presented in this section are from a variety of sources and have been selected because they either have gone viral or represent a significant cultural moment or trend. A version of Palestine Unbound is also published on *Palestine Square* (palestinesquare.com), a blog of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

This Quarter's Topics

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#MyPalestinianSitty

On 18 August, Twitter was bursting at the seams with *sitty* love in support of U.S. representative Rashida Tlaib (D-MI). In an unprecedented decision handed down from the Israeli government, the congressperson was denied access to the country and her family there. Tlaib and her fellow representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN) had long been planning a trip to the occupied West Bank. In mid-August, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the two Muslim representatives would be denied entry, explaining in a tweet that “they listed the destination of their trip as Palestine and not Israel, and . . . did not request to meet any Israeli officials.” From there, he made the dubious leap to conclude that the representatives’ objective was to “strengthen the boycott against us and deny Israel’s legitimacy.”

Changing tack, Tlaib—whose nonagenarian grandmother (or *sitty* in Arabic), Muftiya Tlaib, lives in the West Bank village of Bayt Ur al-Fauqa—petitioned the Israeli Interior Ministry to be admitted into Israel on humanitarian grounds. Though her request was ultimately approved, the conditions of this approval stifled her so thoroughly that she canceled her travel plans. “When I won, it gave the Palestinian people hope that someone will finally speak the truth about the inhumane conditions,” Tlaib tweeted.



Screenshot of a NowThis News video about the trend. (19 August, Twitter)

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Tlaib shares the *Washington Post's* interview with her *sitty*. (16 August, Twitter)

#MyPalestinianSitty. The story was picked up by domestic and international news and media outlets from *Vogue* to *Gulf News* to *The Guardian*.

“I can’t allow the State of Israel to take away that light by humiliating me & use [sic] my love for my sit[t]y to bow down to their oppressive & racist policies.”

In typical fashion, U.S. president Donald Trump mocked Tlaib and her *sitty*, tweeting sarcastically that “the only real winner” was Tlaib’s grandmother. “She doesn’t have to see her now!”

A 16 August *Washington Post* article quotes Muftiya Tlaib as firing back: “May god ruin him.” She goes on to say she is proud of the Michigan representative and that she hopes, “inshallah, . . . she will come back.” It has been twelve years since Muftiya Tlaib has seen her granddaughter. “I’m waiting for her,” the old woman promises.

In response to Tlaib’s story, Palestinian Twitter users posted pictures or their own grandmothers and their incredible stories, accompanied by the heart-warming hashtag



A Twitter user employs the trending hashtag. (18 August, Twitter)



Mixed martial arts fighter Ramy Daoud shares memories of his *sitty*. (17 August, Twitter)

#Kullna_Isra' al-Ghrayyib (#We are all_Israa_Ghrayeb)



Screenshot of an AJ+ video documenting the story. (4 September, Twitter)

widely believed that after seeing the video of her date, three male members of Ghrayeb’s family beat her so brutally for her “immodest” behavior—a public appearance with a man to whom she was not formally engaged—that she had to be hospitalized.

The story went viral. The subsequent demon-strations in her name owe much credit to Do You Know Him?—a feminist Palestinian Facebook group that outs abusers—which posted a broadly circulated video that appears to capture Ghrayeb’s further abuse at the hands of her family inside the hospital where she was supposed to be recovering.

Grief and outrage over her abuse and death sparked the #Kullna_Isra'al-Ghrayyib (#WeAreAll_Israa_Ghrayeb) social media campaign and inspired protests outside the Ramallah office of

In September, the name Israa Ghrayeb became a rallying cry for Palestinian women seeking redress for and protection against gender-based violence. Women in Palestine and throughout the diaspora raised their joint voices through social media campaigns and widespread protests after Ghrayeb died on 22 August as a result of complications stemming from physical trauma, including a fractured spine.

Ghrayeb, a twenty-one-year-old makeup artist from the West Bank village of Beit Sahour, was a student at Bethlehem University with a significant Instagram platform (now closed), which she used to post popular beauty tutorials and life updates, like the one that allegedly incited her male relatives (whose names are protected) to fatal violence: a video of a public outing with a man who had recently proposed to her.

Though legal proceedings related to her death are ongoing at the time of writing, it is



Palestinian political analyst Omar Baddar urges followers to examine systems of oppression. (4 September, Twitter)

Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh. Protestors demanded a thorough investigation into Ghrayeb's death and stronger legal protections against abuse, especially for women and children. Similar protests took place in Beit Sahour and across many other West Bank towns and cities.

In spite of the stark and irreversible reality of Ghrayeb's death, there is reason to think that her memory is infused with some hope. In addition to the international attention Ghrayeb's story has received, hours after the Ramallah protests, three male members of Ghrayeb's family were detained for questioning; the Palestinian Authority opened an investigation into the conditions of her death; and on 12 September, the three men detained were charged with murder.

Protesters carried signs reading "There is no honor in honor killing," but Attorney-General Akram Khatib rejected the label. Ghrayeb's family, meanwhile, continues to deny all allegations of culpability.

The UN Commission on Palestinian Women reports twenty-seven so-called honor killings in 2018, and at the time Ghrayeb's story broke the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, a Palestinian NGO documenting domestic violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, was reporting eighteen such killings thus far in 2019.

Women suffering and dying at the hands of men isn't a phenomenon unique to Palestine, or any Arab country. As activist-founder of BabyFist (see Photos from the Quarter in *JPS* 191) Yasmeen Mjalli wrote in a post on the website of the Palestinian feminist clothing line, "This is a universal phenomenon which takes places [*sic*] in nearly all corners of the globe." Toxic masculinity, and its resulting violence, is a worldwide epidemic, Mjalli pointed out; "Patriarchy exists everywhere."

#Tal3at

What is #Tal3at?

"[#Tal3at] is a scream from Palestinian women [that starts today in different places across the country and abroad to demand an end to all forms of gender oppression and to stop postponing the issue of the violence against women until after national liberation," Hala Marshood, a researcher and activist in the movement, told Arab 48.

The campaign's first organized event, a march coordinated across several locations on 26 September, fulfilled its namesake. #Tal3at means women going out onto the streets in colloquial Levantine Arabic, and the campaign mobilized feminists from twelve cities spanning Gaza and the West Bank, as well as inside the the Green Line in Israel, along with Beirut and Berlin. Marchers



Palestinian politician and activist Hanan Ashrawi employs the trending hashtag. (2 September, Twitter)

gathered under the slogan “No liberated homeland without liberated women” to illustrate the paradox of fighting for a decolonized homeland while considering the control of women’s bodies a “personal” problem. Lema Nazeeh, a #Tal3at organizer in Ramallah, told Mondoweiss that the goal of the action was “a homeland” devoid of “all kinds of oppression.”

Although the movement emerged in direct response to the 22 August death of Israa Ghrayeb (read about Ghrayeb in the story above), the campaign extends beyond Ghrayeb to the rights and freedoms of all Arab women—including political prisoners who “are subjected to the most brutal forms of violence and repression,” according to a #Tal3at Facebook event promoting a 31 October march in Berlin. There, activists marched especially for Hiba al-Labadi, a twenty-four-year-old Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent detained without charge by Israeli authorities on 20 August. Al-Labadi (who has since been released) was on her thirty-eighth day of hunger strike at the time of the scheduled Berlin demonstration.

The #Tal3at movement utilized a grassroots press campaign that included coordinated events promoted via its Facebook page (followed by over thirteen thousand people) and its Twitter account (@tal3at_sept26) as well as a series of



A #Tal3at Facebook event poster for a march in Berlin. (31 October, Facebook)



@Tal3at_sept26 shares a collage of images to Twitter capturing the first #Tal3at marches. (26 September, Twitter)



A screenshot of the video campaign #Tal3at launched to promote awareness of domestic violence. The caption reads, “Most cases of physical, psychological, and sexual violence . . . against women happen in their homes at the hand of one of [their] relatives. Tal3at to stop the violence and to build a free and safe society for all of us.” (18 September, Twitter)

Palestine Unbound

videos posted in advance of the first march that dramatize real stories of domestic violence enacted against Palestinian women in different rooms of the home. The vision of #Tal3at's organizers was the creation of an "[un]-fragmented action that included many parts of the diaspora and historic Palestine." Marshood told *JPS*. She hopes "to be part of a feminist space that redefines liberation and feminism" according to a "holistic vision of the world" with "justice at its core."

This quarter's Palestine Unbound stories deliver the unequivocal message that Palestinian women are bound and determined to forge a just future—one that is inseparable from their own liberation.



Bibliography of Recent Works

16 AUGUST–15 NOVEMBER 2019

COMPILED BY NORBERT SCHOLZ

This section lists literature and reviews of books relevant to Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Entries are classified under the following headings: Palestine in Global and Comparative Perspectives; Palestine and the Palestinians; Literature and the Arts; Middle East and the Arab World; Israel and Zionism; and Recent Theses and Dissertations.

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AHR	(American Historical Review)
BESA	(Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Mideast Security and Policy Studies)
BRIJMES	(British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies)
CM	(Confluences Méditerranée)
DPE	(Defence and Peace Economics)
ES	(European Security)
IA	(International Affairs)
IJFA	(Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs)
IJMES	(International Journal of Middle East Studies)
INS	(Intelligence and National Security)
ISA	(Israel Affairs)
IsLR	(Israel Law Review)
IsS	(Israel Studies)
IsSR	(Israel Studies Review)
JHLPS	(Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies)
JMEWS	(Journal of Middle East Women's Studies)
JPS	(Journal of Palestine Studies)
JQ	(Jerusalem Quarterly)
MA	(al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi)

Bibliography of Recent Works

MDF	(Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya)
MEC	(Middle East Critique)
MEJ	(Middle East Journal)
MEP	(Middle East Policy)
MES	(Middle Eastern Studies)
MP	(Mediterranean Politics)
RC	(Race and Class)
SD	(al-Siyyasa al-Dawliyya)
ShA	(Shu'un 'Arabiyya)
ShF	(Shu'un Filastiniyya)
StA	(Strategic Assessment)
WDI	(Welt des Islams)



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