

Perspectives on the Endless Nakba Palestinian Oral History and Traumatic Memory

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Abstract

The author examines Palestinian oral history from the end of the British Occupation or Mandate (14 May 1948) to the present in terms of the traumatic memory of the Nakba and its impact both on immigrants in the Palestinian Diaspora, and on Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In light of more recent research into “traumatic memories,” it is now apparent that beyond the remembrances of specific autobiographic and personal events that Palestinians experienced, there are other important aspects of traumatic memories: the impact on peoples’ feelings and emotions not only affects the memories of material and personal losses such as homes and gardens, land, photographs, family artifacts, and loved ones, but the intensity of those losses at the time of the trauma affects the emotions over time, more than “snap shot” or first-time memories of the past. Along with the much studied factual information of the Nakba, we now learn that the traumatic memory perpetuates the losses creating a condition of continuous actions or endless memories for those who suffered through the Nakba. Furthermore, comparative studies of global massacres or disasters find that many parallel effects exist contrary to earlier findings.

Keywords

Oral history; Palestine; trauma; Nakba; guilt; physical handicaps; memory; nostalgia.

The Palestinian Nakba is so deeply riveted into the traumatized individual and collective oral and published memories of the Palestinian victims – adults and children, villagers, and townspeople – that it is difficult to sort out the hours from the days or even from the months. The countless murderous actions of Zionist militias, including the Haganah and Palmach, as well as “irregulars” such as Irgun (IZL or Etzel), Lehi (the “Stern Gang”), and other paramilitary underground groups, began in 1946 and 1947, in the run-up to the first Palestine war (1947–49). These Zionist militias and terrorist groups were later assembled into the Israeli Defense Forces and bear full responsibility for expelling some 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and land over the days and months of the war and subsequent years.

Palestinians were so brutalized by shootings, cries for help, killings, and rapes that the collected memories in diaries, journals, memoirs, and oral history recitations appear blurred and, at times, indistinguishable from village to village and from town to town. The specifics of certain events may be vivid and crisp-edged, but these may be difficult to place in the whole disorienting confusion of night and morning raids on Palestinians evacuated from their beloved homes. Childhood memories remain vivid of their rush to safety, but children have different memories than adults. Parents and other elders received harsher treatment or had prior knowledge of the ethnic cleansing occurring around them, leading some to assume postures of disbelief or helplessness – frozen amid the violent conditions in which they found themselves.¹

It took days for families lucky enough to remain together to arrive at a cave or another village distant from the expulsions and explosions. Sometimes, it took weeks before a family felt safe and at peace. It took years, however, for many Palestinians to absorb the consequences of the expulsions, including the loss of family members or separation from them in the confusion and chaos of the moment. Daoud Jabr, for example, was arrested in Jerusalem on 15 May 1948 by an Israeli militia due to his work with electronics and radios. He was released days later, during which time his family in Ramallah presumed that he had been killed.²

The loss of a father, brother, mother, or sister was felt immediately. The loss of home, land, and livestock soon became evident. Realization of the extent of their losses, their haplessness, and their dimmed future crept into family discussions slowly over time. Soon, every tree, every rock, every spring, and street corner began to be woven into the individual and collective memories of Palestinian families, adults and children. The Nakba was verbalized using metaphors, such as the shattering of Palestinian society or the smashing of Palestinians’ identity, name, and self-esteem, by an earthquake or the wrecking ball of Zionism. Held together by the social and cultural fabrics of common experiences, taking shape from Palestinians’ pre-Nakba memories, as well as photographs and other objects associated with a previous life, the Nakba became the national watershed of Palestinian life, history, culture, and society.

Memory is also a tool with which to contest “official” versions of the past. Yet, as a historian, my interest in memory is not only framed by an opposition between the subordinate truth versus the dominant lie, but by a concern with the ways in

which particular versions of an event may at various times and for various reasons be promoted, reformulated, or silenced.³

History and Historiography

History is a process, an argument, and is composed of true stories about the past.

— John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*⁴

History is both a process and an argument about the past. It is also an exercise in memory and remembrance. We might divide historical sources into three types: (1) *archival sources* such as diaries, reports, parish records, letters, broadsheets, posters, photographs, and paintings; (2) *living sources* or people whose autobiographical pasts are filled with events, places, peoples, and traditions; and (3) *material sources* such as coins, statues, buildings, streets, neighborhoods, coastlines, forests, and tombstones. The first is produced by people in documentary form, while the second is present in people's minds or in the collective retelling of the past; the last manifests in material form shaped by nature or by human contact. In the best scenario, all three kinds of sources may be available to the historian.

In each case, historians have methods and techniques to question, analyze, and interpret the “true stories of the past.” No single historical source is entirely and unquestionably valid or historically “true” in itself. For that reason, historians are forever seeking corroborative primary, or timely sources to substantiate their various evidence. Palestinians’ written memoirs and autobiographies provide insight on various aspects of twentieth-century Palestine, for example, and can often be used to corroborate or complement oral histories.⁵ Other works have brought memoirs, autobiographies, and oral histories into conversation with archival and material sources to reconstruct local histories of Palestine, histories of Palestinian social movements before the Nakba, or particular events within the Nakba itself.⁶

In recent decades, historians have begun to pay closer attention to the context of historical remembrance or memorialization – public versus private and individual versus collective. In the United States, especially since 2017, national discussions and protests revolved around the presence of Confederate monuments, historical markers, and battle flags in public places, opening larger questions of how the remembered histories of Black and Brown Americans, Asians, and Native Americans challenged accepted White American national narratives. The American poet Walt Whitman stated that the horrors of the U.S. Civil War would never be properly written but deeply remembered.⁷ The same may be said of the Palestinian Nakba.

Memories of the Palestinian Nakba might generally be seen as having four features:⁸ Firstly, due to the fact that expulsions, brutal occupation, and armed conflict continue today throughout historic Palestine, it can be said that “the story is not over yet.”⁹ Secondly, the principal consequences of the Nakba reshaped the social,

economic, political, and cultural life conditions of *all* Palestinians, whether refugees or not, both in historic Palestine and in the diaspora. Thirdly, traumatic memory is a social matter insofar as memory involves both an individual and a collective such as a family, neighbors, a village or town, or a larger community. Finally, traumatic memories of the Nakba continue to shape the lives and identities of descendants of its eyewitnesses.

History is filled with problems, gaps, and silences that make little sense when left alone. (That is to say, that without a nuanced or broader context added to a historical narration, other meanings may be missed.) Some questions are persistent: Why did particular events occur at a specific time and place? Why did peoples act in a certain way? How and why do people as individuals or as communities seek to remember certain historical events or actors via commemoration? Indeed, if the past was an intelligible and coherent narrative in itself, there would be no need for historians. The historian's task is to examine the problems of the past, sift through the historical evidence for explanations and interpretations, and produce a coherent narrative that is supported by the evidence. If the results resolve some problems or fill some gaps, well and good. But chances are that the historian's work is never complete. As new historical evidence emerges, new questions about past narratives challenge older interpretations, and active exchanges between historians and social scientists, as well as scholars in other humanities and, more recently, the natural sciences, raise new questions and offer new tools.

Thus, historians constantly engage in arguments over the availability or validity of evidence, propose theories to explain past changes and continuities, and establish schools of interpretations of the past. In a sense, historians shape history from the sources about events, traditions, activities, and lives of peoples. The past is yet unborn in texts we call primary or contemporary sources. Once the interpretation of the historical evidence is made known, we then have a "history," or approximately true stories of the past. As the Italian historian Benedetto Croce reminds us, all history is essentially "contemporary history." Or as another often repeated maxim puts it, every generation shapes its own history.

Historians' digging up historical evidence in pursuit of solving historical problems and creating historical narratives show why history may rightly be considered *a social product*, that is, an intimate interaction between the researcher and the peoples, events, and things of the past. In each generation, this interaction has addressed social, economic, and cultural topics unattended by earlier generations. A field once dominated by the political and military decisions of elite men has been reshaped by studies that center women, workers, peasants, and the long-term impact of religion, rituals, and culture. New questions are being asked about the environment and climate, diseases and pandemics, and the power and production of history.¹⁰ Social history has expanded its horizons with social scientific methodologies and new uses of oral history and memory studies, innovations that have changed how historians approach the past.¹¹

By the twenty-first century, historians had looked well beyond written accounts as

the *only* sources available for analyses and interpretation of the past. In their search to know the true stories of the past, they drew on material evidence, such as coins, gravestones, buildings, memorials, maps, soil and agricultural patterns, and evidence of changing coastlines, wind patterns, and climate. Earthquakes, abnormal weather changes, and famines have become important benchmarks for devising chronologies. For example, the July 1927 earthquake in the vicinity of Jericho, measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale and causing nearly six hundred casualties, including two hundred deaths, in various towns and villages from the Jordan Valley to Nablus, Ramallah, and Jerusalem, became a moment inscribed in Palestine's history. A Franciscan priest who at the time was living in the San Salvatore monastery inside the New Gate of Jerusalem's Old City wrote: "On 11 July 1927, in the afternoon, an earthquake struck with great force shaking the building. Pieces of plaster from the ceiling fell on our heads and we got up and fled the area."¹² More than a half-century later, several individuals with whom I conducted oral histories for my 1993–96 research project "Voices from the Schoolyard" noted with uncanny accuracy the date, day, and time of the 1927 earthquake. Farid Jouzi, born in 1917 and living in the Musrara quarter in East Jerusalem near the Dominican Monastery of Saint-Étienne, told me that the "July 11 earthquake hit around 3:00 PM" since he remembered that "it knocked me off my swing and I never fell off that swing."¹³ Another oral history reciter told me that she remembered well the earthquake of "July 11 that came around 3:05 PM to Jerusalem since I was having my afternoon snack with my brothers and I was sitting against the wall when the shelf of my mother's cups came tumbling down on top of me!"¹⁴

Historians now rely increasingly on the autobiographical memory of peoples and their eyewitness accounts of what they saw, remembered, reflected upon, and recited collectively with others. Social movement activists in the United States began to use oral history research seriously in the 1960s; professional historians were slower to adopt its techniques until the 1970s, gaining prominence in England and the European continent through the efforts of public historians, in particular Paul Thompson.¹⁵ African and then Asian historians achieved successes with living memories and oral traditions, using the former to present twentieth-century African and Asian voices as the continents emerged from an era of elitist and racist colonial historiography, while oral traditions, handed down over for more than four hundred years, experienced a rebirth as an indispensable historical research tool.¹⁶ Aided by exemplary work in the field of memory and cognition along with the continued popularity of oral history among activist and professional historians, oral historiography found a firm place among historians worldwide.¹⁷

Oral and Social History

[I]t is precisely in revealing the ways in which memory, even when it seems most real and definite, is not a certain guarantee of truth, that oral history has developed into such a fruitful area for thinking about memory.

. . . The focus of historical analysis shifts from the notion of memory as either “true” or “mistaken,” to an emphasis on memory as process and how to understand its motivation and meaning. How do people recollect events they were involved in or witnesses to, and what can be learned from their narratives. These are the questions now posed by oral history.

— Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, in John Tosh, ed.,
*Historians on History*¹⁸

Exploring the effects of fascism upon the Italian working class in Turin in 1979, Luisa Passerini concluded that oral testimonies needed a far more sophisticated conceptual approach with which to understand the ways in which culture and psychology influenced memory. She argued that historians “should not ignore that the raw material of oral history consist not just in factual statements, but is preeminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires.”¹⁹

In examining Palestinian schools during the British Mandate, it became clear that the voices of the school children were generally exuberant and optimistic. Reckless and absorbed in their songs, sports, and field trips, these children resembled so many the world over. Ihsan Abbas, the renowned Palestinian literary intellectual, spent four years at the prestigious al-Kulliyya al-‘Arabiyya (Arab Government College) “playing ping pong every waking hour,” staying up secretly at night to finish English and Latin lessons, and taking daily walks to the nearby village of Sur Bahir with faculty such as the Oxford-trained historian Albert Hourani.²⁰ Hala and Dumia Sakakini, the daughters of Khalil Sakakini, an inspector for the Mandate Education department, were feared by their Arabic literature classmates when they first arrived at the Jerusalem Girls College – the classmates assumed naturally that their classical Arabic was nearly perfect given the importance of their father. But Hala and Dumia had spent their first years at the German Deutsche Schule and were soon being tutored privately at home to catch up with the other students. Such memories inform us of the historical processes that shaped and continue to shape Palestinian lives and aspirations.²¹ It was in the schoolyards of Jerusalem that many Palestinians learned their “real life” lessons, and the memories of those school days shaped the interpretations of those lessons. The arrival of British military forces along with the imperial pomp and ceremony of British colonial administrators left a deep impression in Palestinians’ memories of their youth.

Oral history is a social historian’s strategy to harvest the memories, feelings, and aspirations of the living autobiographical past through eye-witnessed accounts. Oral history testimony represents a living archive of historical data about major and minor events in the daily lives of Palestinians, young and old. Following some interview techniques of social scientists, the historian sets out to resolve a problem or an argument with a set of questions; that is to say, to establish and prove a thesis. The memory of a political demonstration, the destruction of a home or village, or a street clash with Jewish or British troops – or even a more mundane confrontation, as when

Hala Sakakini related her encounter with Jewish students in the early 1940s on her way home via Rehavia, during which the Jewish students shouted that she should go back to her own land²² – is interesting in itself, but the oral historian will also be searching for patterns of demonstrations, destruction, or confrontations from accounts in order to say something about the reasons for those events occurring at that time and in that place. The oral historian might also draw on other primary or secondary sources, asking eyewitnesses to try and explain what they saw and how they interpreted an event in the time and place it occurred. Material and written primary sources, as well as other oral recitations, can also be used to corroborate oral histories.

With the permission of those who have given their oral history, historians may record, publish, or place these histories in a depository for public access and use. Oral history then becomes not only the autobiographical past of the reciter but also a living memory archive of events, families, and communities. By definition, then, oral history is a social history of people, communities, places, and events.

Traumatic and Emotional Memory

An increasing number of cognitive and clinical researchers have been concerned with the characteristics and functions of autobiographical memory for traumatic experiences over the last two decades. This field of research has to do with how people encode, process, and retrieve highly stressful events occurring in the real-life, and how memory for these events may affect their health and psychological functioning.

— Igor Sotchu and Maria Louisa Rusconi, “Autobiographical Memories,”

*Journal of Psychology*²³

Psychologists and neurobiologists have devoted considerable time to a range of issues surrounding cognition and memory, including traumatic and emotional memories. Intense psychological stress caused by unwanted, troublesome memories can cause brain structures such as the amygdala, hippocampus, and frontal cortex to become activated as they process the memory. Studies involving post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have offered evidence that trauma stemming from natural disasters (such as earthquakes and tsunamis) or human violence (riots, war, rape, and so on) is linked to a reduction in the size of the hippocampus. Studies also show that children who have experienced trauma suffer fragmentation of memory, intrusive thoughts, dissociation, and flashbacks, all of which may be related to hippocampus dysfunction.²⁴ In the field of memory studies, research indicates that:

Traumatic experiences were remembered more consistently over time relative to positive [emotional] experiences – in particular, vividness and overall memory quality associated with traumatic experiences is not significantly changed between the first and the second interview, whereas a decline was observed for positive experiences.²⁵

Thus, long-term traumatic memories of survivors may be seen as “more reliable” than other memories recorded by the oral historian. The lingering impact of trauma on Palestinian memories of the Nakba can be seen in a number of oral histories that I collected. For example, Tony Bakirjian, who sought refuge during the first days of the battle for Jerusalem known as “the May days,” remembered in detail the number of shells and mortars fired into the Armenian Convent in the Old City – “May 16 being the worst day.”²⁶ Zuhdi Hashweh, a lawyer in the Jerusalem courts, remembered well his land cases in the Jericho region before and after the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, particularly the cases involving upper-class Palestinians such as Musa ‘Alami and the Husayni family. These continued into the 1950s, though Zuhdi’s work in Jerusalem ended with the 1948 war.²⁷ But we can also see how trauma, even if it preserves memory, can suppress the transmission of “true stories of the past,” as in the case of Farid Jouzi, who did not report that he had had a nervous breakdown in June 1948, as many others had who suffered the impact of the Nakba – including the loss of land and lives – in silence.²⁸

As Rosemary Sayigh points out, meanwhile, studies of traumatic memory have generally not examined field recordings or oral history evidence collected on the Palestinian Nakba. Instead, scholars have focused on post-traumatic experiences of the Holocaust, the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, or the Armenian genocide during World War I.²⁹ Like the Holocaust and the Nanjing and Armenian massacres, the Nakba occurred in both colonial and wartime contexts, and was characterized by nationalist violence undertaken by militias and paramilitary groups. In all four cases, villagers and townspeople suffered an invasion into their lives, manifesting in rape, unmitigated violence, and the loss or destruction of personal items. However, whereas international intervention brought the violence to an end in Germany, China, and Ottoman Turkey, the 1947–49 expulsion of 750,000 Palestinian villagers and townspeople did not mark the end of traumatic experience. As Rosemary Sayigh writes:

Any argument that the Nakba was minor because it did not involve – at the time – as great a loss of life as at Hiroshima, the Holocaust, or the Armenian *Aghed* is invalidated, first by the proliferation of Palestinian suffering since 1918, and second by the absence of rational hope that their suffering will end in a just settlement.³⁰

Expulsions and exile, military and settler violence, destruction of homes and other property, and surveillance and other mechanisms of occupation continue into the present, shaping Palestinians’ memories and their written and oral testimony.

Oral History and Palestinian Youth

Given the ongoing nature of the Nakba, it may be worth thinking about the role that youth have played as both narrators and collectors of oral history in the last three or four decades. Three examples come to mind. The first is a two-staged oral history of Palestinian *shabab* (youth) and the first Palestinian intifada (1987–92) collected by

Adel Yahya and Mahmoud Ibrahim from participants in the Ramallah and Nablus regions. The former Birzeit University historians first interviewed youth who were actively involved in the confrontations with the Israeli occupation forces in the early stage of the intifada and then conducted a second set of interviews several years later. The resulting publication was divided into four parts: a chapter by Yahya on the technique of oral history interviewing; a chapter by Ibrahim on the particular significance of oral history as a research tool during the intifada; my own chapter on the theory and practice of oral history; and a chapter of transcriptions of a number of the oral histories collected at both stages of the interview process.³¹

The two oral histories published by Rawan and Dima Damen stand out as a second example. Wishing to learn more about the lives of the Palestinian refugees before 1948, Rawan and Dima interviewed a large number of Palestinians in UNRWA camps in Jordan, resulting in a publication titled *Atfal Filastin* (Children of Palestine).³² They then followed up on that publication with a second oral history of refugees' childhood memories of the Nakba itself. The second publication, like the first, is deeply moving in its recitation of events unfolding in the hours and days following the Palestinians' expulsion and subsequent banishment from their homes and villages.³³ These two energetic and highly resourceful Palestinian women were twelve and fourteen years old, respectively, when they conducted their first oral history project, and then fifteen and seventeen when they completed their second publication. As young researchers, they quickly learned both the methods and strategies of oral history research through their oral history work. More importantly, they breathed life into the stark statistics about Palestinian refugees in Palestine and Jordan and uncovered through their interviews the depths of the refugees' painful memories and the degree to which these recitations affected the Damen sisters and their own views of the past.³⁴

A third example of oral history practices involving Palestinian youth was a collaboration between the Arab Educational Institute (AEI), a local community institute in Bethlehem, and the Bethlehem St. Joseph's School for Girls (SJSG) during the second Palestinian intifada (2000–05) Coordinated by Toine van Teeffelen from AEI and Susan Atallah, an English teacher at SJSG, the "memory project" resulted in three publications. The first presented diary entries of eleventh-grade girls from SJSG about their memories and reflections on the street protests and battles with Israeli troops in the military occupation of the Bethlehem area, accompanied by a series of essays by teachers, principals, a university student, and the staff of AEI.³⁵ The second publication was an oral history project by the eleventh-grade girls of SJSG, in which they collected their parents' and grandparents' memories of Palestine's past. One of its objectives was "to document real life experiences and personal stories from the different periods that Palestine was occupied, and compare that life with the present situation (2001–2)" and thus "to preserve our history." The majority of those students involved said that they enjoyed "being part of their grandparents' past."³⁶ In a sense, the capstone project of SJSG and AEI was the publication of the diaries that eleventh-grade girls at Terra Sancta/SJSG had begun to write from 2000 to 2004 while in Susan Atallah's English classes. The project was created to help the "students gain a feeling

of control and . . . to deal with personal insecurity and traumatic experiences in a constructive way”; to help “create a sense of identity and . . . meaning to an uncertain world”; “to help building community and empower students in searching for shared solutions to their problems,” and finally to “encourage students to get a voice and to communicate the Palestinian experience to a broader public.”³⁷ The ultimate success for the three publications came in 2005, when ten of the St. Joseph high school girls were invited to the annual international Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2005 to present a seven-act play, “Our Diaries through the Wall,” based on their family oral histories and personal diaries.³⁸

Conclusion

For historians who live in an era of global change, it is important for us to see the value of oral and social historiography in our work. It is also critical for us to view oral and social history as part of the new global history whose contributions and contributors worldwide continue to grow. As oral and social historians, our contributions to the Arab, Islamic, and Middle Eastern past within the growing body of local, regional, and global histories is not only pressing but necessary. The voices from the Middle Eastern past and present need to be heard in all their forms. Careful documentation, vigorous research and argumentation, and close association with oral and social history colleagues in the region and beyond can address many of the difficulties of historiography while illuminating the shadows and voicing the silences of the past.

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Endnotes

- 1 See: Rawan al-Damen and Dima al-Damen, *al-Tahjir fi dhakirat al-tafula: shahadat Filastiniyya hayya* [Displacement in childhood memories: Palestinian living testimonies] (Ramallah: National Palestinian Fund for Education, Culture, and the Arts, 1997); Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, "Introduction: Claims of Memory," in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, ed. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 1–22.
- 2 Author interview, Daoud Jabr, in his home, Nablus Road, Jerusalem, 27 August 1995.
- 3 See: Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, "Introduction," in *Contested Pasts*, ed. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (London: Routledge, 2003), 1–6, reprinted in John Tosh, ed., *Historians on History: Readings* (London: Routledge, 2017), 271–77.
- 4 John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.
- 5 See, for example: Staughton Lynd, Sam Bahour and Alice Lynd, eds., *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians* (New York: Olive Branch, 1994); John H. Melkon Rose, *Armenians of Jerusalem: Memories of Life in Palestine* (London: Radcliffe, 1993); Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage, 1999); Hala Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I: A Personal Record* (Amman: Economic Press, 1990); Jamil I. Toubbeh, *Days of the Long Night: A Palestinian Refugee Remembers the Nakba* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1998). Memoirs and autobiographies have proven to be valuable historical sources for social history in other Middle Eastern societies, too. Leila Ahmed's autobiography places her family's history within the social history of Cairo from the 1940s to the 1970s: Leila Ahmed, *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America: A Woman's Journey* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000). Sattareh Farman Farmaian's memoir narrates her maturation within one of Iran's elite families in Tehran and the United States from the 1930s to the 1970s: Sattareh Farman Farmaian, *Daughter of Persia: A Woman's Journey from Her Father's Harem through the Islamic Revolution* (New York: Bantam, 1992).
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- 7 See, for example: Walter Lowenfels, ed., *Walt Whitman's Civil War* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1960), 191; and Louis P. Mansur, ed., *The Real War Will Never Get in the Books* (Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 8 David Rubin, ed., *Remembering Our Past* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219; Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, "Introduction," 5–15.
- 9 See Rawan al-Damen, dir., "al-Nakba 1948," *al-Jazeera*, 2008.
- 10 See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).
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- 14 Author interview, Mary Saadeh (b. 1920, Musrara), at her home in Bayt Hanina, Jerusalem, 20 August 1993.
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 - 20 Author interview, Ihsan Abbas, early July 1995 in Amman, Jordan.
 - 21 Author interview, Hala and Dumia Sakakini, at their home on Nahda Road, Ramallah, 16 July 1994.
 - 22 See Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I*.
 - 23 Igor Sotchu and Maria Luisa Rusconi, "Why Autobiographical Memories for Traumatic and Emotional Events Might Differ," *Journal of Psychology* 148, no. 5 (2014): 523–24.
 - 24 See: Sotgiu and Rusconi, "Why Autobiographical Memories"; and John A. Robinson, "Perspective, Meaning, and Remembering," in *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory*, ed. David C. Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 199–217.
 - 25 Sotgiu and Rusconi, "Why Autobiographical Memories," 527.
 - 26 Author interview, Tony Bakirjian, at his home near Bab al-Asbat, Jerusalem, 22 June 1994.
 - 27 Author interview, Zuhdi Hashweh, at his Ramallah home, 1 July 1994.
 - 28 Author interview, Farid Jouzi, at his home in the Old City, Jerusalem, 29 August 1995.
 - 29 See, for example, Moshe Zeidner and Eynet Aharoni-David "Memories of Holocaust-related Traumatic Experiences, Sense of Coherence, and Survivors' Subjective Well-being in Late Life: Some Puzzling Findings," *Anxiety, Stress and Coping* 28, no. 3 (2015): 254–71; Zhang Lianhong "The Nanjing Massacre and the Traumatic Memory of Nanjing Residents," *Chinese Studies in History* 50, no. 4 (2017): 258–65; and Ayhan Aktar, "Debating the Armenian Massacre in the Last Ottoman Parliament, November–December 1918," *History Workshop Journal* 64, no. 1 (Autumn 2007): 240–70.
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 - 31 Adel Yahya, Ibrahim Mahmoud, and Thomas Ricks, *al-Tarikh al-shafawi li-l-intifada* [Oral history of the intifada] (Ramallah: Tamer Institute, 1994).
 - 32 Rawan al-Damen and Dima al-Damen, *Atfal Filastin ayyam zaman: yawmiyyat afal Filastin qabl 1948* [The children of Palestine in days of yore: diaries of Palestine's children before 1948] (Amman: al-Mu'assasa al-Urduniyya li-thaqafat al-tifl, 1994).
 - 33 Al-Damen and al-Damen, *Tahjir fi dhakirat al-tufula*.
 - 34 See Sa'adi and Abu Lughod, "Introduction."
 - 35 Toine van Teeffelen and Susan Atallah, eds., *When Abnormal Becomes Normal, When Might Becomes Right* (Bethlehem: Arab Educational Institute, 2001).
 - 36 Susan Atallah and Toine van Teeffelen, eds., *Your Stories Are My Stories: A Palestinian Oral History Project* (Bethlehem: Arab Educational Institute, 2002), 8–9.
 - 37 Susan Atallah and Toine van Teeffelen, eds., *The Wall Cannot Stop Our Stories: Diaries from Palestine, 2000–2004* (Bethlehem: Sisters of St. Joseph, 2004), 6–7.
 - 38 The performance was funded by the American Friends Field Service. Susan Atallah stated that "the play was a hit. We did 14 performances instead of [the planned] 12 because of the number of people lining up to attend it. We had full-house attendance during all 14 of them. We were given 3 stars in the *Guardian* newspaper and 4 stars out of five that is, in the *Scotsman* newspaper. They were great reviews about the Palestinian teenagers telling their stories. People were stunned by the beauty and elegance of the girls who excelled. I'm very proud of them. They did a wonderful job. We have two performances this month in Bethlehem for the teachers, school students and parents." Email correspondence with author, 10 October 2005.