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Before the New Sky:
Protracted Struggle and Possibilities of the Beyond for Palestine's New Youth Movement

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Loubna Noor Qutami

September 2018

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Dylan Rodriguez, Co-Chairperson
Dr. David Lloyd, Co-Chairperson
Dr. Jodi Kim
Dr. Fred Moten
Dr. Setsu Shigematsu

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2018

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It goes without saying that a number of conditions of possibility have transpired to realize this project, and for me to grow alongside it. I am indebted to so many people who have contributed their time, energy, smarts and skills to the collective cultivation of this work. I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt love and appreciation to my family, especially my parents, for their unwavering support. They have given me solid ground in a world that effaces any sense of stability and permanence for those who dare to question authority. They have motivated in me a sense of courage necessary to commit my life and scholarship to Palestine while it is constantly under attack.

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Dedication

For my grandfather, who died in exile, warm in his bed, betrayed by the promise of liberation...

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Before the New Sky:
Protracted Struggle and Possibilities of the Beyond for Palestine's New Youth Movement

by

Loubna Qutami

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Ethnic Studies
University of California, Riverside, September 2018
Dr. David Lloyd, Co-Chairperson
Dr. Dylan Rodriguez, Co-Chairperson

Before the New Sky: Protracted Struggle and Possibilities of the Beyond for Palestine's New Youth Movement is a transnational ethnographic account of Palestinian youth movements before and after the 2011 Arab uprisings. Situated in the context of the post-1993 Oslo Accords—or negotiations and peace process paradigm—this work investigates some of the challenges and opportunities posited on Palestinian youth through this period and in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab uprisings. I have compiled my ethnographic archive through attending forty-six Palestinian youth convenings between 2006 and 2017 as a founder, member and leader within the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM). I also conducted interviews with forty-five Palestinian youth from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Turkey and the United States from 2016 and 2018. Building upon the Palestinian literary tradition, I refer to sites of exhausted paradigms and regimes as “the last sky”—that which the Palestinian intellectual and political tradition warned of and attempted to halt its arrival. I argue that the Palestinians have endured three last skies: the first, resultant of an

enclosure of land, sea and skies due to colonial occupation, siege and dispossession marked by the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, or catastrophe, onward; the second, caused by persistent annihilation of Palestinian narrative and testimony in the historic record; and the last arriving with the 1993 Oslo Accords, which foreclosed upon political genealogies of struggle for the new generation and fractured their relationships to history, land and Palestinian peoplehood across ideological and geographic dispersions. I argue that these three last skies constitute a Palestinian ontology of Nakba, whereby Palestinian life, knowledge and movements endure constant catastrophe, forcing new generations to build anew each time. This dissertation thus examines how youth have come to articulate, practice and theorize politics despite, and perhaps because of, this ontology of Nakba, including in everyday forms of resistance and in organized movement-building attempts. My dissertation draws from and contributes to theories on Palestine and the Palestinians, transnational movements, youth resistance, critical knowledge production, and anti/de-colonial political and intellectual methodologies.

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Preface

On Thinking in Movement

"I am here to do research. Here is a letter from the Vice Chancellor of my University." I suspect most academics traveling to Palestine gather notes from their colleagues a few months before their flight into Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. They ask how to answer questions under interrogation so that they do not destroy their chances of getting in. I, on the other hand, had been planning and preparing for this moment for seven years, since my last visit to Palestine. A perfect opportunity had emerged. An invite, finally, to an academic conference. I used this opportunity to push myself to begin my dissertation fieldwork and had planned on staying for four months at least. I thought it was the strongest shot I had of getting in. I could finally disguise my Palestinianness. I could eclipse it if I was capable of bolstering the figure of the intellectual. An academic, from the US, sophisticated, perfect English, tempered, smiley, Northface [sic] backpack, hoop earrings and all.

It wasn't enough. On December 6, 2015, after eight hours of interrogation and waiting at the Allenby Bridge Border crossing with Jordan, I was denied entry into Palestine. No reason was given to me. All that was said was that it was a matter of "national security." I walked away relieved that the moment had finally passed. I walked away slightly satisfied that being an academic in the US didn't lessen an experience of being a Palestinian. But I did walk away wondering what the hell academic freedom really means. Why do we harp on it, when there are people whose general freedoms were never enshrined, honored, or protected? I walked away with a newfound hatred and appreciation for exile... What would it be like to write from the outside by choice? What would it be like to write about Palestine without the messiness and bloodiness? What would it be like to just write—anything—without feeling that the weight of history is forcing your hand?

Nah, I don't want it. I'll take the struggle. Mom always said never to complain, that we have it better than the rest of our people. She taught me to take from her, always, and to give to the cause; that's what "real" Palestinians do.

What characterizes a Palestinian youth epistemology? How does a Palestinian youth epistemology borrow from and lend itself to research methodologies, fields of study, and critical theory produced by oppressed peoples and political movements, particularly those who have come to found and interface with the field of ethnic studies? How does critical theory connect—while at other times diverge from—grassroots movements, collective organizing, and political liberation strategies within the Palestinian context historically and today? How can a Palestinian framework for critical research methodologies lend itself to redeeming and healing a world

divided by the free and unfree, the worthy and the disposable, and the powerful and the oppressed? How can it name the silences, elisions, and anxieties that haunt the question of Palestine within fields of study and within US universities?ⁱ What do hauntings of scholarship on Palestine uncover about settler colonialism and racist state violence in the United States? What do the experiences, desires, aspirations, and collective organizing efforts of Palestinian youth illustrate about the ways critical theory, political practice, and strategies of survival can be achieved? What can critical theory and praxis generated by Palestinian youth offer to other causes and movements, and to the field of ethnic studies? What does a Palestinian ethnographic practice do for Palestine and its people, and how might it be distinct from and/or informed by other forms of ethnographic research? How does a Palestinian-specific ethnography offer new departure points and considerations for other ethnographic practices rooted in an anti/decolonization ethos?

When I started the doctoral program in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Riverside in 2013, I was quite ambitious as to what my dissertation, once complete, could contribute and simply, do. I had sought to write a transnational ethnographic account of Palestinian youth movements before and after the 2011 Arab Uprisings. I had come from the San Francisco Bay Area where I had grown up my whole life and where the social, political, and intellectual community I was part of fueled my scholarly inquiry, political curiosity, and organizational motivation for and commitment to transformative-change. I completed an undergraduate degree in Sociology at San Francisco State University (SFSU) where I was an active leader in the last standing chapter of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in the US. I then went on to receive a Master of Arts in Ethnic Studies, in the

historic College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University. There, I was the first student to graduate through the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diaspora's Initiative (AMED).ⁱⁱ

During my time as an undergraduate student, GUPS had initiated a project to honor the late great Edward Said by inaugurating a Palestinian cultural mural featuring Said and his books on the Cesar Chavez Student Center, alongside the historic murals of Chavez and Malcolm X. During those efforts, I grew closer to Palestine, to my community, and came to understand our struggle and history in more nuanced ways. I also felt a growing appreciation and love for my mother during that time. This is because, growing up, I had always heard from my mom how dangerous it was to outspokenly tell our story, the Palestinian story, freely, without retribution. The mural project fell subject to intensive Zionist scrutiny, media smear campaigns, and punitive measures from administration. Fighting to realize the mural for three years, my GUPS cohort and I came to realize just how much our own stories and histories were subject to suspicion, to interrogation, and just how powerfully our foes would work to eliminate any trace of us. We were forced to make serious concessions, but in the name of achieving advancements for our struggle.

Despite the challenges and constant senses of defeat and struggle, my student organizing made me grow more committed to Palestine. In 2006, I went to Palestine for the first time to study in the Palestine and Arabic Studies program (PAS) at Birzeit University. It was an ephemeral time in my life, but it would leave one of the most formative imprints in my mind and heart. In some ways, I sensed I was making my rightful return as the grandchild of Palestinian refugees displaced from Jaffa during the 1948 Palestinian *Nakba*. On the other hand, the disparate reality of life in Palestine made me feel quite helpless, out of place, and estranged from any sense of home and community. This growing desire for, connection to, and passion for

Palestine led me to more critical and radical political orientations than my earlier years of student organizing. I was a twenty-one-year-old radical organizer, too radical for compromise, too radical even, dare I say, for Edward Said. I came to resent the mural process in a lot of ways. I was, quite frankly, tired of appeasing liberal anxieties about Palestinian claims to freedom. I was tired of being an Arab youth in a post-September 11, 2001 USA which necessitated a constant explanation of how/why we are not the bloodthirsty terrorists and are just as “normal” as all other people. Said, a scholar who had established his career in the West, was the most tolerable Palestinian liberals could appreciate. And my growing grievances because of this repression spurred into a political moment for me that I can best describe as a post-Said era that persisted for a long while.

Upon my return from Palestine in 2006, the SFSU College of Ethnic Studies had just brought on Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi, who was cultivating the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diaspora’s Initiative (AMED) within the College. My commitment to Palestine student activism had intensified significantly following my return and in conjunction with growing opportunities for engaging Palestinian scholarship academically at SFSU. At this same time, I began working at the Arab Cultural and Community Center (ACCC) in San Francisco as a Social Services and Violence Prevention Coordinator. In 2007, just three weeks after inaugurating the Palestinian Cultural Mural honoring Dr. Edward Said, I went to my first Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), hereby referred to as the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), conference in France as a representative of GUPS, and came back as an elected member of the International Follow-up Committee.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2008, I began the MA program in Ethnic Studies at SFSU studying under Rabab Abdulhadi. But I hadn’t come into the COES at just any time. That year, I was one of a cohort of students lucky enough to partake in planning for, participating in, and witnessing the 40th

anniversary celebration of the 1968 Student Strikes. In various events throughout the year, I engaged with some of the strikers themselves, listening to them tell of their efforts as forerunners of the movement and of the internationalist liberation ethos and principles that guided their vision. The following year, 2009, I was able to do the same while preparing for and partaking in the 40th year anniversary of the creation of the COES.

In November of 2008 I was voted in as an International Executive Board (IEB) member of the PYN at the first official general assembly in Madrid, Spain. I found myself increasingly becoming a go-between, liaising between my comrades within the PYN and the various inter-generational academics, scholars, and organizers I was connecting with through the COES and the vibrant political organizing scene in the San Francisco Bay Area. As the years went on, my commitments, priorities, and convictions changed alongside the shifting trajectories of three spheres. The first was the shifting social and political landscapes of transnational Palestinian youth organizing as I was experiencing the potency of the particular political moment through my engagement in the PYN. The second was the new challenges and opportunities for scholarship on Palestine within the US academy and new currents of Palestine activism with the rise of student divestment efforts in 2010. I started to see a world of possibility for Palestine within the University, and specifically within the field of Ethnic Studies. The third was learning about the material needs of my local community and exploring ways to connect social justice frameworks with local service work in the Arab community in the SF Bay Area. I started to become more convinced that our community would not be capable of achieving the political transformation we desperately needed, either within the Bay Area or in contributing to the struggle in our homeland, unless basic forms of wellness, healing, communication, and cultural empowerment could be achieved. I worked within this terrain in my day job, at the ACCC, but it

was much more than just employment. For me and many of the staff members who worked there, it was about making sure we addressed the most pressing needs of our community and played a critical role in the broader San Francisco social, political, and cultural landscape.^{iv}

But making connections in these seemingly disparate yet overlapping spheres, frameworks, and practices of my life and work could never have been possible without the kind of intellectual, methodological, and political guidance I received from Rabab. She was more than a thesis advisor. She introduced me to intellectual frameworks that required a suspension of the way I had formerly compartmentalized these three different categories (academia, political movement work, and community wellness). Moreover, she helped me make connections between Palestine, in its historic and transnational context, and historic revolutionary struggles of the US and globally. That framework, both in scholarship and practice, had never been introduced to me before meeting Rabab and it was she who helped me understand the perilous dangers of what she called “The Foreign/Domestic Divide.”^v Rabab was one of the most politically and intellectually optimistic people I had ever met in my life. She made me believe that a different world could be possible, and that I had to stop displacing my pessimism into my inaction. And as I grew more deeply engaged as a scholar-activist in all parts of my life, my belief that change was on the horizon expanded. I grew hungrier for freedom and more committed to the ethics of the process to get there. I became more committed to the text, to learning and interrogating history, and to moving beyond political slogans and bullet points as a mechanism to define the Palestinian experience.

In 2011, I became both the International General Coordinator of the PYM and the Executive Director of the ACCC. The years that followed were certainly the most difficult in my life. Managing these two distinct yet at times overlapping spheres of community/political work,

meanwhile not having completed my master's thesis, I felt that life and time was passing me faster than I could keep up. I slept very little during that time, worked six days a week, and still felt unable to meet the requirements of my commitments to community and expectations of myself. These years also took a toll on me personally. I was exhausted. But the work never ran dry, and therefore there was no reason that the exhaustion could overcome me. During that time, I had learned a lot and given a lot, maybe even all I could. But eventually, I felt I had reached a ceiling, personally, professionally, politically, and was not quite sure what was left for me to learn or contribute. I felt that all I had wanted to do, within my own capacities and skills and within the constraints of the Non-Governmental framework and funding restrictions of the ACCC, I had already achieved. I wanted to learn more. I wanted to learn more so I could give more to my community and cause. I wanted to learn more to become inspired again, to develop new goals with boundless possibilities. I wanted to have the time and space to reflect on those years and to consider, methodologically, how an intellectual practice can strengthen community wellness and transnational political movement building in the current world. But to be honest, I also wanted to achieve a higher degree to protect me from the backlash of what it means to be an active Palestinian in the US. I also wanted the degree to give me some credence and legitimacy while navigating the many forms of sexism and ageism I was experiencing in my political and professional life as a young woman organizer. I remain aware of this glaring contradiction. I displaced the varying forms of vulnerabilities, exclusion and silencing I had experienced by achieving a higher level of cultural capital, paradoxically through the field of ethnic studies, which was precisely meant to overturn systems that registers people's worth in such ways.

Many of the questions I opened this preface with are questions that I believed were needed for the social and political movement work I was engaging, and I became eager to find the answers. In conversation with Dylan Rodriguez and Setsu Shigematsu for over a year, I felt those possibilities existed in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UCR, where I would be a part of an intellectual community with brilliant thinkers, teachers, and scholars who were profoundly committed to solidarity with Palestine. After five years at UCR, I still feel the way I did before I came. I found a home here, a family and community here, that I could not have had anywhere else.^{vi} The inter-disciplinary training nurtured so many ideas within me, ideas so grand that I haven't even been able to verbalize them quite yet. But those ideas, and the space to engage them in conversation, was not free of complexity and difficulty.^{vii}

By the time I arrived to UCR, I had become quite attuned to the ways in which Palestinian sensibilities, experiences, collective political ambitions, and forms of being, knowing, and practicing life are often erased and silenced within US-based campuses and scholarship, especially within many disciplinary fields of study. Where the mural experience as an undergraduate organizer at SFSU taught me that lesson in a pronounced way early on, I had by this time come to realize just how robust Zionist power was in US institutional life. That experience is in part what made me turn to ethnic studies as a site where I and Palestine could find a home and a sense of security, even if temporary. For me and many of my Palestinian colleagues, ethnic studies has offered us refuge while we catch a breath and protect ourselves from the violence of Zionist disciplining in conventional fields of study. Ethnic studies has offered us a space free of punitive measures for our existence—at least more so than other fields. It also has offered us the space to engage the intellectual vibrancy of other causes and

communities and to revitalize relationships and analytics of joint struggle, which had always been central to the Palestinian political tradition.^{viii}

Yet, even in finding space within ethnic studies—and in finding changing tides in campus life in which Palestine could be included, engaged, and examined—I have become increasingly troubled as to why, with all that is being said and done around Palestine, it seems so unfamiliar. It is a different Palestine than what I had been brought up on at home and what I would come to experience in my own involvement in GUPS and PYN/PYM. It is a different Palestine than what I and many of my colleagues from my community^{ix} engage when we are with one another. There is certainly overlap—a lexicon that utilizes many of the same words—but its orientation, meaning, and sensory impact are not quite the same. At times I wondered if this entity we called Palestine in US campus activism and US scholarship (and in the sites of overlap between the two) was our (Palestinian) Palestine at all.

I spent a good part of the last 10 years attempting to know the cause for such difference, understand its generative and detrimental effects, and offer methods with which we could close the gap between the US academy, US student activism, and Palestinian collective theorizations from the grassroots. But this became a demanding feat for many reasons that I will try to, however inadequately, address. During that time, I became quite seasoned in academic and student activism while maintaining my responsibilities to Palestinian youth communities. In this work, I have developed experience and knowledge of what types of public programming, teaching, curriculum development, student activism, and administrative policy reforms can deepen the relationship between Palestinian/Arab communities and academia. Furthermore, I became privy to the ways community theorizations of politics can be accessed by academic

circuits and how our communities can make use of what is produced within academic institutions.

These strengths primarily manifested themselves in my organizing abilities—albeit a sort of scholar-activist form of organizing—and in my commitment to bringing different people and constituencies together for a vibrant exchange of worlds, epistemologies, frameworks, and ideas. Of all the moments I treasure most in graduate school, and I note that there are so many, one of the most memorable was forerunning coordination efforts for the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM)-USA Branch first summer school which was held at the University of California Riverside in the summer of 2015. In partnership with Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and several faculty, student organizers, labor organizers, departments, and community-based organizations, the summer school brought together 60 Arab youth from across the country for a one-week intensive educational program which sought to mend the hardened gaps between theory and practice, between academia and community-based organizing, and between Palestine and other Third World and Social Justice frames, struggles, and communities.

During the week of the PYM summer school, possibility seemed boundless. Because a rich theoretical engagement could exist, even within the constraints of and under the exceptional forms of scrutiny and repression of US Universities, in ways that allowed for an intellectual engagement with Palestine meant to mobilize action. It was not an intellectual engagement for people to acquire individual profit or gain or for the purposes of general awareness building. It was about the process of developing methodological teaching and learning processes within the University which can be meaningful for social change. But beyond the start and end of that week, life as an Arab graduate student working on Palestine and trying to stay grounded in my commitments to family, community, and the struggle, was difficult.

One thing remained a constant struggle during these years that I have long agonized over, and which continues to haunt me today. Why can't the Palestine that I feel, know, think through, work toward, embody, believe in, organize around, and am inspired by and trust, the Palestine that is also envisioned by the hundreds of Palestinian youth I have come to know from across the world be one that I can produce scholarship for and through? Why can't what I write capture any of the depth of what I know Palestine to be, even and especially when, it can be many things? I know how much is already said about Palestine in scholarship. But I also know that there is so much left out and as my Introduction argues, this has been especially true within Palestine scholarship as the decimations of our historic records and Palestinian narratives has been constant. In 2014, I took a Comparative Literature class with Jeff Sacks. He introduced me to Edward Said's *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* which became, as this dissertation will demonstrate, a major inspiration for my work.^x This book opened opportunity for political, intellectual, and emotional maturity and for the introspective reflection that I was sorely needing. I quickly overcame my too radical for Said/post-Said impulses and thought deeper about what a genuine embrace of radical theory means. I realized that certainly, I needed to maintain anger as a catalyst and instructor of my political practice. But I also realized that what I really wanted to do was find a way to answer questions which both could strengthen my organizing community and simultaneously make the Palestinian struggle more legible on its own terms. And that did not require an evasion or suspension of contradiction. I began to appreciate Said much more, and to become more attuned to his many contradictions as a person and scholar as well. But I just simply couldn't muster up words that seemed to mean anything important.

If I really tried to convey what is left out, could it be legible? Could it be valuable? How could I read, register, and articulate the anxieties that inhibit me from writing, and how much of them are specifically connected to questions of method and to my own positionality?^{xi} If self-determined peoples' narratives, the study of history from the vantage point of historically oppressed groups, and the decolonization of curricula were some of the primary principles that guided the 1968 student movements and resulted in the creation of the field of ethnic studies, shouldn't those principles also apply to Palestine as it has been taken up in ethnic studies scholarship in recent years? I sensed a constant reduction, generalization, and hollowing of nuance and complexity in both activist and academic dialogues on Palestine, even, and dare I say, among brilliant thinkers and allies whose work I admire. In a different world, there would be a more rigorous engagement in scholarship on Palestine within Ethnic Studies, a deeper commitment to Palestine activism in US universities, and less anxiety about being able to access academia and produce research on Palestine among Palestinians who already know so much. The truth is, there has been established a certain rubric of criteria on who is most authentically capable of researching and articulating Palestine. One part of that criteria is access to and extraction of information specifically from the West Bank.

As the auto-ethnographic vignette I have opened this preface with demonstrates, in 2015, I went to Palestine to conduct fieldwork for my project. I was denied entry for a span of between 5 to 10 years. I embarked on a four-month journey through the Arab region and Europe connecting with Palestinian youth, some of whom I had long organized with within the PYM and some of whom I was meeting for the first time. My heart was filled with optimism, with ambition, and with inspiration. I was in awe of the ways new waves of refugee youth from the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Syria and Lebanon, who had lost everything, were finding ways to

survive. Realizing the potential present in the new time—despite and maybe perhaps because of how devastating conditions had become—I grew profoundly hopeful that radical change was in near reach and that I and many of the youth I organize with in the US and academics I work with had a lot to do to make that change possible. But upon returning to the US, it became very difficult to sustain those feelings, and it became harder to feel any kind of ground that was anchoring my project.

The week I returned, the University of California Regents voted on a Statement of Intolerance which attempted to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. After coming back from four months of witnessing how tragic the contemporary conditions have been for Palestinian youth in the recent period and after being denied entry into my homeland, nothing quite felt as if I were lying under a pile of bricks than did witnessing that conversation. The first day I returned to Riverside from the Berkeley Regents meeting, I came back to realize my shared office space had been broken into and vandalized with many pieces pointing to the fact that it was motivated by anti-Palestinian, Islamophobic, and anti-Arab hate.^{xii} For months following the incident, a slew of discussions with the University administration ensued in which the other women of color involved and I attempted to explain why it was important for the University to take an intersectional approach to combatting harassment and stalking. For me particularly during these negotiations, I tried to impart the importance of the University taking more seriously the precarity of Arab and Muslim students and faculty by creating institutional change to end repression campaigns, to support academic programming, and to support student organizing. I was backed by my local union UAW local 2865 who argued that all of these inefficient University responses constituted a hostile work environment. But little did I sense that allies had an understanding of what could and needed to be *done* for institutional change.

There was solidarity, but it was a solidarity of slogan in a way, calling out the University administration for their inadequacies, negligence or exceptionalism when it comes to Palestinian/Arab and Muslim communities. But it was difficult to find an organizing community among allies who were prepared to develop more than just a call out and who were committed and available to realizing an organizing campaign for institutional change. Certainly, there is always an exception to the rare case of a few individuals.

In the years that followed I more acutely wrestled with these questions and tensions about why Palestine couldn't be known, experienced, and engaged in a way that spoke to what I had long witnessed as a part of multiple—sometimes overlapping—Palestinian youth communities. It became an isolating and lonely experience. I sensed that Palestine, as I experienced it, was unintelligible to so many around me in academia and in the Palestine campus-based movements I was involved in. My incredibly supportive dissertation co-chair, Dylan Rodriguez, has offered unparalleled support in listening and counseling me through these intellectual, social, political, and emotional dilemmas through graduate school. Each time I experienced heightened senses of isolation, Dylan offered support by listening and helping me theorize and explain what it was that I was struggling to translate into words. In the end, it was he who helped me understand that what I was struggling to examine was connected to Edward Said's proposal of Orientalism as episteme and the ways, perhaps unknowingly, ethnic studies scholarship and scholar-activist engagement with Palestine partakes in a particular form of Orientalism.^{xiii}

There is much that has been said and can be said about this topic, but I will offer some brief notes on it here. First, I sensed that Palestine was sometimes proposed only through analytics of analogy; so that it is completely illegible and incomprehensible when it stands alone

or introduced through other frameworks. Irene Calis has written a stunning piece on the importance of moving beyond the apartheid analogy for instance and cultivating what she calls 'living heritage.' She states: "This should not be in some nationalist effort to excavate and restore an imagined past but rather to re-inscribe the terms of our future. For this reformulation to bear fruit, it is essential that our youth experience their identity beyond oppression and beyond political slogans."^{xiv} By engaging Palestine only through an analytics of analogy, ethnic studies scholarship can sometimes uproot Palestine from its historic and geographic specificity, what Eman Ghanayem called "extraditing Palestine."^{xv} Second, Palestine is accompanied by a certain level of market-value when it is—albeit controversially—making noise and striking book contracts and speaking events, launching intellectual careers with honorariums paid out to so-called experts. But two critical points must be made. The first is that much of that scholarship is in fact not about Palestine and the Palestinians but rather about the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Second, as Nada Elia has noted, the highest paid of these figures are often Ashkenazi Jewish Israeli men, who she calls 'Mr. Nice Guy.' And as they have become forerunners of the field alongside a slew of other non-Palestinians, we continue to experience an elision, sidelining, and displacement of sorts.^{xvi} Elia notes, "Is Mr Nice Guy not perpetuating his privilege; indeed, is he not shamelessly exploiting the oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people, by making a living out of denouncing it?"^{xvii} Much more can be said about the ways that ethnic studies at times continues to partake in some of these new and reproduced frames of Palestine Orientalism and a heap of words come to mind: the fetishized, the elided, the over-generalized, the reduced, the simplified, the mystified, and so forth.

When I voiced discomfort or grievances with how Palestine was being manufactured in such ways, and as I tried to search for methods of organizing and producing research that was

suitable for a different type of narrative on Palestine, I was met with silence, with support for the sake of solidarity, and/or, at times, with annoyance. Still, those responses were better outcomes than the ways others are pushed into the gutter for their engagement with Palestine by our foes and by those in power who have been seduced or pressured by Zionist forces that require the annihilation of Palestinian voices.^{xviii} The silence, support, and annoyance I refer to here is specifically in regard to our allies within academia. I am certain those who were silent simply did not know how to advise me or engage me or did not know what exactly I was speaking to. Perhaps they simply disagreed and wanted to maintain respect for my own individual opinion. Those who supported me did so because they have been deeply committed to Palestinian freedom but were uncertain of how they could engage me in the questions I was raising. For those who responded to me with annoyance, I suspect they thought engaging Palestine in different ways who hinder the achievements acquired through efforts for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. At times, I imagine that annoyance directed toward me or toward Palestinian/Palestine scholars was simply because asking allies to shoulder the magnitude of possible subjugation for their solidarity with Palestine was more than allies were capable of carrying.^{xix} It is important to note that I am identifying these reactions from colleagues and allies as part of a larger experience that conditions and is conditioned by my subjectivity as a Palestinian academic in the US university. It is not (and should not be read as) a “personal” vendetta, even as this possibility and the very need to offer this disclaimer is symptomatic of the very condition I am attempting to highlight within this dissertation.

Those silences and annoyances, and the perpetual sense that I was interrupting the common-sense consensus largely resembled what I had learned about the ways women’s concerns and grievances within liberation movements (from Palestine to many Third World

liberation movements) were often referred to as secondary issues to the question of national liberation.^{xx} But when it came to questions of gender, especially within Palestine scholarship and activism, those old practices of deciphering between the political and the social were obsolete and highly stigmatized.^{xxi} With the exception of a few Palestinian colleagues who shared my thoughts, I sensed my ideas were quite irrelevant to and deviated from what was tolerable within the academy and the university. For a time, I became convinced that I was not “fit enough” for the academy and that no one else was experiencing the tension, existential dilemmas, and anxieties of writing about Palestine that I was. I sensed that much of the scholarship on Palestine was being produced from a particular vantage point that seemed to be so far from Palestinian realities and that that this scholarship attempted too diligently to name the Palestinian condition, to categorize, document, and circulate it as a fixed doctrine for global consumption. It didn’t speak to our incoherence, which was the only thing I was overcome by. Not much allowed for Palestine to develop methodologically—for it to be engaged in process, from the vantage point of its people and for the purpose of liberation.

The irony lies in the fact that it was also the university, its intelligentsia, and the intellectual projects I was exposed to in ethnic studies that re-grounded me, that made me feel I should not allow these demons of non-belonging and of feeling scattered to limit my commitment to writing and my confidence that I was capable of it. At University of California, Riverside, I found a community of advisors and friends who were incredibly supportive. I do not think I had a typical graduate school experience, since senses of neglect and criticism constitute a common theme for many graduate students.^{xxii} Still, despite all the encouragement, affective support, guidance, and commitment from my committee and colleagues, I was in a perpetual quarrel with the academic industrial complex and particularly its host institution, the university.

This is because for all that was produced on Palestine, I could not find a clear inroad into the discussion. I was in the *last sky* but could not push myself into the site to be able to cultivate a new one.

Stuart Hall once said:

The meaning of a cultural form and its place or position in the cultural field is not inscribed inside its form. Nor is its position fixed once and forever. This year's radical symbol or slogan will be neutralized into next year's fashion; the year after, it will be the object of a profound cultural nostalgia... What matters is *not* the intrinsic or historically fixed objects of culture, but the state of play in cultural relations: to put it bluntly and in an oversimplified form—what counts is the class struggle in and over culture.^{xxiii}

When I came to accept that I have no power to force myself into the discussion on Palestine, I turned away from it for a while. I started to think of what could be said about it from what I know, from what the experience of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) has taught me, and from what being Palestinian has meant for my own family. My committee encouraged me to ignore the ruckus, to stay true to my voice, and to find a way to offer a sustained engagement with Palestine that was not overdetermined by the marketplace demands of academia. Adding on to Hall's understanding of the critical importance of class struggle—the struggle of those enduring racial colonial occupation, dispossession, and constant state surveillance and violence wherever they have ended up—I came to regain the strength, commitment, and mandate to at least try to convey something. I was able to incorporate those real-life material matters in a way that spoke to the particularities of the Palestinian condition by constant interface, engagement, and pull with the PYM. It is the community of Palestinian youth across time and places that I have come to know, work with, and entrust that grounded me and pushed me to find a way out of the writing deadlock.^{xxiv} In retrospect, I realize that the

Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) in particular, since its inception as the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN) in 2006, had always constituted an epistemic as well as political-intellectual home for young Palestinian thinkers, writers, and organizers, myself included. It was a community in process of building an organic archive of critical knowledge producers, in many ways honoring political movements of the past which had long done so even as the PYM diverged from certain characteristics of earlier movements. But still, the lustrous political and intellectual community I found in the PYM was something I struggled to articulate through my positionality within the academy.

In all of the hypothetical documents graduate school asks of us to produce—proposals, prospectus, abstracts, biographies, and so forth—I continued suggesting that my dissertation project and particularly my research methodologies would offer answers to the questions I have opened this preface with. Dr. Jodi Kim, one of my committee members and one of those brilliant thinkers I have come to know, taught me how critical an exercise it is to think of all moments, places, and contexts within broader historic and transnational conditions that make possible what we are thinking through. These exercises helped me deepen my critical thinking skills, my questions, and my commitment to pay homage where it is due. They also helped me read books in new ways, to situate them within their particular contexts, and to understand that critique is intended to be a generative practice rather than an exhaustive negation. I came to read differently. But in doing so, I couldn't shed the impulse that canonical texts within ethnic studies inspired in me; they motivated me to produce greatness. Anything less would be a disservice to the people, causes, and communities that ethnic studies was founded for and by. Anything less would be a disservice to the Palestinian people and to the youth who had sustained me for so long despite all they had been enduring. I unremittingly argued that I would provide a different

kind of knowledge project on Palestinian youth—one that offers a more rigorous, historicized, comprehensive account of Palestinian knowledge, experience, history, and political theory from the collective vantage point of its own people and written on its own terms. One that was in service to our organizing needs and of liberation strategy. Academia has a peculiar way of making one feel worthless if we cannot or do not want to harvest work of profound novelty.

The more I hypothesized what I would do the greater the sense of paralysis became. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months, and I became incapable of putting together words that felt meaningful to my community and to the field of ethnic studies—words worthy of what history has asked of young Palestinian scholars, or what the current catastrophes befalling the Palestinian people made it necessary for us to produce. No words came to signify the gravity of what was happening and what needed to be done. Katharya Um has called this the impoverishment of words. She asks: “When words are injured, what other expressions are possible?”^{xxxv} Omar Zahzah and I have written a sustained analysis on the struggle to find words to convey the magnitude of catastrophe that Palestinians are experiencing and the liberation visions we are attempting to execute. We are particularly concerned with the ways that words that once came to signify the revolutionary tenets and strategies of the Palestinian struggle have become co-opted in the world of meaning-making, which has consumed and disseminated Palestine through neoliberal logics of the free market. In the process of writing that reflection, we came across the work of Mustapha Khayati, founder of the Situationist International and author of what was to become a situationist dictionary. Khayati argued that all revolutionary theory necessitates an invention of its own terms in the pursuit of destroying “the dominant sense of other terms and (to) establish new meanings in the ‘world of meanings’ corresponding to the new embryonic reality needing to be liberated from the dominant trash heap.”^{xxxvi} He also

argued for “disinfection” of words that previously signified radical thought after they have become co-opted. In my own writing process, I attempted to embark on the journey through the topography of wordlessness, but I simply could not find the time to get to a starting point or conjure up an out to wordlessness.

The unacknowledged forms of affective labor often expected of women of color in mediating familial troubles, community wellness, campus and academic service, also took from my time and focus on writing. My commitment to and role within the PYM, something I could not sacrifice, demanded more time than what I could spend writing. And certainly, the exploited labor of graduate students as teaching assistants in the contemporary university, which privileges profit over critical educational experiences, also significantly contributed to limiting the margins of how and when I could write.^{xxvii} Being a Palestinian when Palestinian students and scholars are constantly under attack, when the university and academia is a hostile work and study environment to your being, I struggled to muster the power to write. I will admit, at times, it was a profound sense of intellectual laziness, historical amnesia, and disinterest that held me back. I spent much time begrudging my dissertation. It kicked up all of my own dirt. For one, it made me sorely aware of my loneliness. I often used my sense of obligation to my community as a crutch, as an out, to avoid coming to terms with the painful ways writing can heighten confusion and despair. I was never short on stories, quotes, or arguments, and had a reservoir of PYM archival documents, academic texts, and ethnographic notes, videos, and audio recordings. I was never short on journal entries and reflection pieces. I was low on the motivation to draw any final conclusions from them. I was haunted by the vaunted category of what it meant to be “academic.” I was at a standstill on learning to entwine Palestine into the academic fold. In the end, I still simply could not write about Palestine.

In March of 2017, I spoke with Dr. Fred Moten, one of the advisors of my dissertation committee, about the difficulty I was experiencing in writing. I charted all my areas of confusion, my impulses, and distractions, the constant stress and anxiety of feeling the need to produce something complete and total.^{xxviii} I will never forget his response. He told me that he is not quite sure how to assist or guide me because he himself is not sure how he would do this project if he needed to. He argued that many people do different types of ethnographic research in which they hold a set of ethical and political commitments, distinct positionalities to the cause and to the community they are a part of. He maintained that there is an abundance of scholarship that can demonstrate such techniques in the writing process as well. But he also told me that the distinction with my work is that I have no distance from the research subject, nor do I have the distance of time. I am writing about a condition, an experience, and community that is happening now. Drawing any conclusions in this context, making any final and permanent arguments, would be a demand fraught with difficulty and nearly impossible.

In April of 2017, I spoke of these same struggles with Lila Sharif, a longtime friend who had just completed a dissertation from the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, San Diego.^{xxix} Lila, also a Palestinian living in the United States, had completed an exquisite account of the olive as an optic to reveal what she calls *vanishment*^{xxx} of landscapes in Palestine and neoliberal consumption as a tenet of settler colonialism. I shared my frustrations, insecurities, and sense that Palestine had become a place of consumption—that Palestinians had become figures of a romantic tale or of a science fiction novel—that scholarship on Palestine was increasingly becoming a site of profit and careerism. I spoke of how much of the new scholarship on Palestine was in fact not on Palestine at all, but that it was scholarship

critical of Zionism and Israel, with barely any mention of or gesture to Palestinians except as victims.^{xxxii} I spoke of the torturous irony of how certain iterations of Palestine, which are truer to Palestinian experiences and aspirations, were unintelligible to the US academy or to the mainstream of the US solidarity movement. I told her that I was feeling stuck and that I did not know what to write, how to write, and for what purpose. Lila listened patiently and told me something critical, which she has seamlessly illustrated in her own research. It was not a statement about individual positionality in proximity to a research subject or topic, nor was it a gesture of support for the sake of care, nor a sort of get-it-together, tough-love tip. It was rather about learning to orient our work in the complexity and the messiness of our condition as Palestinians. She argued that we must “learn to write alongside Palestine” as our own lives, histories, and experiences are bound with it. I later would come to know and appreciate Lila’s own research and turn to it as inspiration for finding ways not to overcome or sideline the agony of writing about Palestine but rather to learn a different way of writing through it. In her dissertation, Lila spoke of herself as a diasporic subject living, writing, and being alongside the vanishing landscapes of Palestine. She argues:

As a diasporic Palestinian subject, how do I write alongside intimate narratives of Palestinian land as it is being further decimated, penetrated, and fragmented? How do I write against the endless news stories and narratives of slingshots chucking the remains of destroyed villages crumbled to the ground, sounds of missiles and interceptors ripping the sky, without reproducing a narrative of chaos and dysfunction? In the words of Walter Benjamin, I ask, how do I write Palestinian history against the grain (1969: 256–257)?^{xxxiii}

Lila’s critical advice and notion of writing “alongside” Palestine opened new possibilities for my own writing process.^{xxxiii}

Dr. David Lloyd, one of the co-chairs of my committee, persistently advised that I must find a method of writing despite the imperfect conditions, which would had long pulled me in different directions. I am indebted to him for teaching me that when writing about Palestine, nothing will ever be clear, distinct, and intelligible. Finding the capacity (psychic or material) to write is about learning how to work through nuance and to illustrate it. No time would allow me to get to and through the writing, and I had to find a way to make it happen. Catastrophes befalling the world would not freeze so that I might find the mental space to concentrate on what needed to be said and why. More specifically, David has helped me understand that my work demonstrates both the boundless possibilities *and* limitations of what he calls “thinking in movement.” He argued that thinking in movement is positive in that it is “vital to the life and rigor of our thought, bringing always new pressures to bear on it and forcing change and re-
vision.”^{xxxiv} But he also argued it was negative because of the difficulty, impossibility even, of ever feeling adequate to be able to respond to “the changing demands of every moment or to every voice or location that deserves to be heard and seen.”^{xxxv} In outlining both the importance and challenging elements of thinking in movement, he helped me understand profoundly that theory has historically been informed by an array of disparate practices which culminate to produce a coherent set of thoughts in service to the possibility of transformation. But he insisted that the difficulty exists precisely because “practice constantly forces theory to change in face of the particularity of ever new conjunctures, hopeful or catastrophic.”^{xxxvi}

Dr. Setsu Shigematsu, to whom I am deeply appreciative for her constant support and encouragement, made the same arguments about writing through these shifting conditions and realizations rather than about them or against them. She has also helped me understand the emotional dimensions of the capacity I was struggling to find for writing. Setsu illuminated for

me that while much of the radical scholarship within academia relies on anticolonialism as a critical epistemological frame and political commitment, my work was attempting to be simultaneously anticolonial and decolonial. It was about finding a way to name and contest the givens of colonialism while also working to build up my community, to develop collective political practice, vision, and a re-constitution of the fragmented Palestinian nation as the alternative to settler colonial dispossession and racial occupation. With Setsu's guidance and borrowing from Leigh Patel, I have come to utilize "anticolonial" as a way of identifying what it is that must be countered and "decolonial" as what must be done to ensure material changes, and that "become available once anticolonial stances are enacted."^{xxxvii} Both Setsu and David insisted that Palestine, my community, and the community of radical scholar-activists within the academy needed me to thrive. Accepting this, knowing this to be true, and believing it sustained me in this work.

In this research, my hopes are to illustrate the Palestinian nation, inside and outside, from an array of political vantage points as it is engaged by youth. In this sense, I want to write through Palestine, not through its topography alone, but through the lens, experience, aspirations, theorizations, and desires of its youth as they are collectively theorized. PYM has been a vehicle that has given me access to engaging and witnessing those collective theorizations; what informed them, why they were important, how they took place and what resulted from them. This dissertation is an exercise, a series of ruminations, a piecing together of fragments of truths, which I hope can lend itself to a critical methodological practice we might collectively be able to name in the future. It is an attempt to write through Palestine. Its novelty is found in its methodological piecing together of fragments. I have coupled events of history, with individual Palestinian youth narratives, collective Palestinian youth theorizations,

and theorizations that have emerged from and/or interface with the field of ethnic studies.

The practice of writing this dissertation has allowed for a variety of Palestinian youth experiences, perspectives, and conditions to come together to tell a collective story. This story is not a chronological one. It is not one confined by the borders of any nation-state or by the fixated contours of what is deemed as “real history,” as Emma Perez has once argued.^{xxxviii} This story is also not phantom tales of an imaginary, which is moot—which post-modernism, for instance, would engage as disputable, as all things are disputable.^{xxxix} I write in the attempt to loosen my hand from the weight of history and to allow for a freeing Palestinian writing process—a truly interdisciplinary practice—that can foster and cultivate imagination as political possibility and opportunity. What grounds this imagination, what in turn makes it productive and not exhaustive, is the urgency of the Palestinian struggle for freedom and a commitment to developing the strategies necessary to achieve it. The aspirations, challenges, and experiences of the youth I engage mandate a return to process and to piecing together fragments, assembling our broken nation in pursuit of our collective liberation. As Perez once said, “I do know that fragments coexist, and I want to assign some order to these things, these fragments.”^{xl}

While the questions I opened this preface with have guided this project, I am not certain they have been answered here. Yet, I am not sure that they should be. Perhaps it is here that I am making a larger ethical argument for why questions don’t always need to be answered. It’s a conviction that guides my process, not a matter of my process being catalyzed by some kind of deficiency. If portions of these questions appear to have been answered, I hope not to offer them as prescriptive solutions but rather as a diagnosis of the pain and trouble young Palestinian people are enduring and the way we are finding ways to work, live, and practice

politics through it. This work is a window into the internal worlds of Palestinian youth to account for us in our complexity, not as hyper-racialized subjects of the state, nor as unbroken strugglers, nor as perpetual victims alone. I hope the project offers a template that registers accounts for Palestinian youth as our whole selves, with all our complexity, contradictions, and confusions and with all the vision and tips we can collectively offer our allies in the project of anti/decolonization and transnational political movements.

This project is an offering, a gesture, a gift, and a thank you to other communities and causes that have long genuinely engaged in mutual forms of solidarity, intellectual exchange, and community power building with Palestinian communities. It is an offering to the new Palestinian youth movements in the hope that it may assist in contextualizing their personal lives, ambitions, desires, challenges, and struggles within the collective narrative of generations before them. It is a tool for them to continue building from. It is a template and point of departure from which conversations may be had, perhaps against the grain of some of the arguments made here. It is intended to offer some form of ground in a world that seems to be groundless for Palestinian youth so that we can continue building, not from scratch, but upon our histories and through fragments of time and space. It is a lens for elder generations to come to terms with the differences of the struggle and with the distinct overlaps and dissimilarities between themselves and the new youth guardians of the land and the cause. It is a call to action for US-based scholars who are committed to protecting and enshrining universal academic freedom and who crave more rigorous scholarship that can lend itself to systemic change, a call to action in the interest of building more genuine forms of solidarity, which can offer more credence and urgency to the Palestinian cause. It is an ask for allies within the academy to offer more space to Palestinian collectives navigating sites of siege and exile and to limit the

exceptionalism that has too long been afforded to Zionism. The project is a summation of my takeaways from the PYM experience, not a complete account of that experience nor a monolithic analysis on behalf of the organization. It is, however, deeply informed and inspired by the brilliance, passion, self-sacrifice, heartache, troubles, and dilemmas in the personal and collective lives of the thousands of youth who founded, constituted, interfaced and or/partook in programs of the PYM transnationally from 2006-2016 and to the many more youth I have worked with and known along the way.

Introduction

*In the state of siege,
Time becomes space transfixed in its eternity,
In the state of siege,
Space becomes time that has missed its yesterday and its tomorrow.*

Mahmoud Darwish, *Under Siege*¹

On May 14, 1948, Zionists declared the newly-founded state of Israel. As they celebrated the birth of the new nation-state, Palestinians endured one of the greatest catastrophes of modern history. May 15, 1948, marks the Palestinian *Nakba* (catastrophe), which resulted in the destruction of 531 Palestinian towns, cities, and villages and the dispossession of approximately 800,000 Palestinians from their lands to make way for Zionist settlement.² Those dispossessed Palestinians and their descendants, who constitute more than two-thirds of the Palestinian population, were never allowed to return to their homeland. Since 1948, the United Nations has referred to the Palestinians as the largest – and now oldest – refugee population of the world.³ The *Nakba* marked the beginning of colonization of *all* of Palestine which was calcified after 1967 by which time Israel had annexed the West Bank and Gaza Strip and placed them under martial law military occupation since then and a suffocating siege on the Gaza Strip since 2007. Since 1948, multiple generations of Palestinians have endured ongoing Israeli land left and dispossession, and accruing violence's incurred on Palestinian bodies in hundreds of Israeli operations and wars.

Al-Nakba has long been a galvanizing day of remembrance and a tenet of the Palestinian national imaginary.⁴ It remains the common denominator that characterizes Palestinian identity(ies), experience(s) and collective common-sense narratives of the national liberation

struggle. It is the term, event and frame by which all moments of heightened violence inflicted upon Palestinian lives are articulated.⁵ It is invoked often to make political claims to rights and to land, to right a moral wrong, and to assert clearly the injustice that has befallen the Palestinian people to the global arena. The common translation for the term *Nakba* in English has come to be known as catastrophe, but the term is actually not found in the Arabic historical record prior to 1948. Rather, the term *carethe* is often used to define catastrophe or disaster. *Nakba* was coined by Constantin Zureiq in 1948 in his canonical text *Ma'na al-Nakba* or the *Meaning of Disaster* and came to offer new experiential meaning in depth to understandings of political disaster or catastrophe based on the Palestinian condition.⁶ A plentitude of texts have chronicled the events of 1947–1949, and have shed light on how Al-Nakba marks a watershed moment for the ongoing and overwhelming suffering the Palestinians have endured, and the reasons why, despite all odds, they continue to resist across generations.⁷

On the 42nd anniversary of Palestinian Land Day, March 30, 2018, Palestinian protestors in the besieged Gaza Strip marched in the thousands to demand the refugee right of return in what became known as the Great Return March. The Great Return March was a campaign comprised of a series of protests, daily actions, and weekly popular mobilizations. The actions were set to proceed through May 15, 2018, which would mark the 70th anniversary of *Nakba*. Rather than relying only on the language of ending the occupation of the Palestinian territories acquired by Israel in 1967, namely, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, or calling for an end to the siege inflicted on the Gaza Strip since 2007, or for Palestinian human rights as they are supposedly enshrined in international law; the protestors in Gaza called for return to their original homes, towns, and villages from which their families were expelled from in 1948.⁸ The Great Return March protesters reminded the world that the current catastrophe Palestinians

are experiencing in the Gaza Strip is rooted in, derivative of, and bound with the original *Nakba* of 1948. The Great Return March protesters reminded the world that the current catastrophe Palestinians are experiencing in the Gaza Strip is rooted in, derivative of, and bound with the original *Nakba* of 1948.

Throughout the month of April and early May, Palestinians persistently demonstrated in the Gaza Strip. Though the protestors were unarmed, they were met with targeted Israeli sniper fire which reportedly killed over 100 Palestinians and injured over 13,000 Palestinians, with more than 3400 Palestinians shot with live ammunition.⁹ The massacre sparked international attention from the press, state actors, and global solidarity networks, placing Israel under increased scrutiny for its violations of international law.¹⁰ On May 14th, 2018, as Palestinians in the Gaza Strip turned out in record-breaking numbers to the protests and as Palestinians worldwide commemorated the *Nakba*, the United States, under the Donald Trump administration, enacted the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.¹¹ As scores of pictures depicting the joyous celebration of Israel's so-called day of independence and the alliance between the two states (Israel and the US) circulated the Internet; pictures of slain Palestinians in the Gaza Strip would torturously accompany them.

Simultaneous to the U.S. embassy move, on May 14 over 60 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip, almost all youth under the age of 35, and over 2,771 Palestinians were injured, making this day the highest of Palestinian casualties in the Gaza Strip since the 2014 Israeli bombardment and war on Gaza, which had killed over 2,000 Palestinians in 50 days.¹² This day was reportedly also the first in which Israel utilized drones to fire tear gas canisters on the protesters, a technology of war that they had tested just a few months earlier.¹³ Activist and

scholar Norman Finkelstein, argues that Human Rights organizations and advocates have misled people by using phrases such as “indiscriminate and disproportionate force” to describe Israel’s attacks on the Palestinian protesters during the Great Return March. Instead, Finkelstein insists that we must recognize what happened as crimes against humanity.¹⁴ Postcolonial studies scholar Hamid Dabashi argues that May 14, 2018 will forever be remembered as a day of calamity for the Palestinians alongside the commemorations of calamities of other nations:

The Wounded Knee Massacre of Lakota people on December 29, 1890, by the US military, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by the British in India on April 13, 1919, and the My Lai Massacre by the US military in Vietnam on March 16, 1968, are a few examples comparable in significance to what Israelis did to defenseless Palestinians on May 14, 2018.¹⁵

Despite the May 14th massacre—and perhaps because of it—and besieged by *land, sea, and sky*; Palestinians, particularly youth, still turned out for the actions on May 15, 2018, commemorating 70 years of *Nakba* and demanding an end to the siege of Gaza and the right to return for *all* refugees to *all* of historic Palestine. In that moment, they demonstrated that so long as a displaced and occupied people continued to face such atrocities, resistance will persist, even and especially, among the new generation, seventy years after the original *Nakba* of 1948.

While *all* Palestinians, no matter where they are, continue to suffer the violence of Zionist settler colonial dispossession and military occupation in some form or another, life in Gaza has undoubtedly become more precarious than in other moments of Palestinian history and in comparison, to other Palestinian geographies that have endured siege and war. Ample scholarly texts and popular education campaigns have illuminated the gravity of the crisis Palestinians in Gaza have endured since the siege began.¹⁶ A 2012 United Nations report determined that the Gaza Strip would become *unlivable* by 2020. In 2017, the UN determined

that conditions were deteriorating “further and faster” than initially projected in the 2012 assessment.¹⁷ Shaun King, a journalist for the New York Daily News, developed an infographic which received millions of shares on social media following the Great Return March massacre. The image was titled “Why are Palestinians Protesting in Gaza?” The graphic stated that 95% of the water is undrinkable, that Palestinians only receive a maximum of four hours of electricity per day, that there exists a 45% unemployment rate, that 46% of children suffer acute anemia, that 50% of children express no will to live, and that two million people are denied freedom of movement.¹⁸

The majority of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are refugees, both survivors and descendants of survivors of the 1948 *Nakba*. For the Palestinians in Gaza, the dream of return has never only been a symbolic slogan. It has long been a deeply-held belief, aspiration, and central principle to the struggle. Aspirations for return have intensified among Palestinian youth who, since 2007, have endured over a decade of siege, over a dozen Israeli military operations, as well as rapidly deteriorating social, economic, and humanitarian conditions. While Israel argues that the siege is a necessary component of maintaining their national security, Ayah Bashir, a Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip, argues that it is in fact about control over Palestinian life, land, and borders. She says:

The Israeli and Egyptian blockade of Gaza has led to skyrocketing unemployment resulting in despair, depression, drug addiction, and recently fatal attempts at migration as people have drowned while attempting to flee Gaza by sea. Prolonging and tightening the existing siege on Gaza is not about destroying Hamas, disabling tunnels, or stopping rocket fire into Israel. It has always been about Israel’s control over our lives, land, and borders. And it has been about killing more of us.¹⁹

As refugees living in what has come to be known as the world's largest "open-air prison," and what Ilan Pappé has described as the "biggest prison on Earth,"²⁰ Palestinians in Gaza continue "risking life and limb to protest the violations of their human rights."²¹

Certainly, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip is unprecedented in contemporary history and is cause for much of the solidarity of the international community with the Palestinian struggle.²² But one of the critical distinctions of the 2018 Great Return March protests is that it has signified a discursive return to the core cause of Palestinian dispossession and oppression, which affects *all* Palestinians wherever they have ended up and whatever their conditions may be. This core cause is Zionist settler colonialism of *all of* Palestine and the continued dispossession and occupation of its native inhabitants. The protestors did not present what was happening in the Gaza Strip as a geographic aberration, as a crisis caused by natural disaster, or as a humanitarian crisis that was ahistorical apolitical without root cause. The Great Return March signified the extremity of Israeli settler colonial violence on unarmed Palestinians who have for too long endured the violences of war, deprivation, dispossession, and containment. But more importantly, it connoted a potent attachment of the youth who participated in the actions to the historical refugee right of return and a demonstration of persistent Palestinian resistance and dreams of achieving freedom.

Though there remains a general heartache for the Palestinian condition in the Gaza Strip, global outrage is heightened when an intimate relationship is formed between certain legible Palestinian bodies and beings and the international community. On April 6, 2018, 30-year-old Palestinian journalist Yasser Murtaja was killed by Israeli sniper fire in Khuza'a at the southern border of the Gaza Strip. Murtaja would become a symbol of the Great Return March amongst the press and particularly within international circuits of solidarity organizers for justice

in Palestine. On March 24, 2018, just two weeks before his martyrdom, he had photographed the Gaza Strip from a drone and posted the photo on social media with the following caption:

I hope the day that I can take this image when I am in the sky instead of on the ground will come! My name is Yaser, I am 30 years old, live in Gaza City and I have never travelled before in my life!²³

Yaser's role as a member of the press heightened the outrage of the global community, as if broadcasting the severity of life under attack in Gaza would have somehow protected Yaser from being a target of Israeli violence. As if sniper fire, bombs, and white phosphorous are even capable of privileging certain life over the life of other Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Journalists Ayman Mohyeldin and Sherine Tadros have brilliantly demonstrated how members of the press are not exempt from Israeli violence in the Gaza Strip in a powerful documentary entitled *The War Around Us*, which chronicles their attempts to report from the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead in 2008–2009.²⁴ Israeli operations in Gaza do not discriminate between civilian and not, between children and adults, between everyday people and members of the press, and between aid workers and bodies suspected of "terror." If there is one form of equality Israelis are known for, it is for indiscriminate killing when the targets are Palestinian.

But the global community's affinities to and for Yaser were in many ways constructed by a sense of knowing him, his work, and his life in a way unavailable to countless other Palestinian martyrs who remain unnamed and unknown. Following his death, Yaser's pictures and quotes appeared on thousands of feeds, articles, and opinion pieces, including some mainstream media forums.²⁵ Over the course of many years, Yaser had chronicled so much of his own life in the Gaza Strip and became, in some ways, an interlocutor between the world and Palestinians under

siege. In scores of photos, videos, and social media posts, Yaser offered a window into life under Israeli siege for millions of viewers and found ways to facilitate relations to and understanding of Palestine even though Palestinians in Gaza had literally been cut off from the world as a result of the siege.

Upon his martyrdom, Yaser's unachieved desire to travel would become a focal point illuminating the gravity of the siege for young Palestinians in Gaza to the outside world. Just a month prior to his martyrdom, Yaser had managed to leave Gaza through the southern Rafah border only to be sent back by Egyptian authorities after waiting in uncertainty for hours. Turned back—along with hundreds of other Palestinians that day—Yaser's story is unfortunately not unique nor exceptional to the experience of captivity Palestinians in Gaza have come to know intimately. His desire to travel and to be free to move would mobilize increased solidarity with the Palestinians, including from players who had not always been consistent in their commitment to realizing freedom for Palestine/Palestinians.²⁶

As the press focused on the closing sentence of his March 24 statement, which outlined that Yaser had never traveled before, I came to reflect on the way travel is often equated with notions of freedom and how it is often hollowed of the political and historical causes of exile and carcerality the Palestinians have endured. Travel becomes synonymous with exile, but it is still preferred over the horrors of entrapment and carcerality by siege.²⁷ In the preface of this dissertation, I discussed the importance of thinking in and through shifting currents of movement. In chapter one, I examine how Edward Said viewed motion, the ability to travel—both literally and intellectually—as the highest form of freedom. But I argue it is critical that we not mistake exile for freedom. While the ability to flee captivity may ensure certain rights and protect lives from imminent danger, refugee-hood and exile is also associated with an array of

conditions of deprivation, vulnerability and risk. It is neither a voluntary decision nor one made of free consent.

The press's narrativization of Yaser's desire to travel hit a strange chord in that the terms of freedom were constricted within a binary. For Yaser, one of two lives could exist: a life unfree, under Israeli siege in the Gaza Strip; or a life that was free, characterized by the ability to travel, to escape siege and the horrors of war and occupation. But why couldn't Yaser's desire to travel be perceived as a desire to be free along with the millions of Palestinians living under siege? Why couldn't it be legible as a desire for a return to Palestine and for Palestine to be returned to the Palestinians? Furthermore, the ability to be outside of the siege in Gaza is not entirely prescriptive of freedom so long as Palestinians remain landless, occupied, and dispossessed. As Salma Khadra Jayyousi has illustrated:

Palestinians in the Diaspora, I among them, carry their forced exile with them everywhere, together with the courage to live, endure and, often to achieve. My own personal love of travel, of seeing the world and its peoples, has never diminished my deep awareness of my exiled state.²⁸

Any Palestinian knows that displacement does not ensure freedom. The historical experience of Palestinian refugees and exiles, those out of bounds, displaced, and prohibited from returning to the homeland and those who have borne the brutality that landlessness and statelessness would prescribe, had no place in such liminal options.

What had resonated with me when reading Yaser's post was his first sentence: "I hope the day that I can take this image when I am in the sky instead of on the ground will come!" What I found critical here was that Yaser's desire to travel was embedded in his desire to see Palestine, to capture it, to articulate it beyond the restraints of siege, beyond the scarcity of food rations, beyond the stench of destroyed sewage systems, beyond the captivity of

militarized borders and the wrath of Israeli military bombardments and killing sprees. But also, Yaser wanted to capture Palestine, not from a place of exile/refugee-hood and displacement, but from a place of freedom, and he thought maybe the sky was one place that could offer him that freedom.

All Palestinians know that it would be impossible to take that picture of Gaza from the sky so long as Palestine was still unfree. Yaser knew this. Thus, Yaser's desire to travel was not a desire to flee Palestine, nor to be forced out of it, to escape it, or to abandon his commitments to realizing freedom for Palestine or Palestinians. It was not a desire to be granted a temporary travel document, temporary visa, and temporary site of refuge watching on as all those he knew and loved continued to be slaughtered and suffocated in his homeland. Yaser's dream to take that picture was a dream of seeing a free Palestine. This desire to see a free Palestine is a sentiment, commitment, ambition, and aspiration that undergirds the sensibilities of almost all the hundreds of Palestinian youth I have engaged over the years. But Yaser articulated this aspiration as a dream because Palestinians have no place to go where they can enjoy freedom. As the great Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once asked, "Where shall we go after they have occupied the last sky?"²⁹

About the Project and Chapter Review

*The Earth is closing on us
pushing us through the last passage
and we tear off our limbs to pass through.
The Earth is squeezing us.
I wish we were its wheat
so we could die and live again.
I wish the Earth was our mother
so she'd be kind to us.*

*I wish we were pictures on the rocks
for our dreams to carry as mirrors.*

*We saw the faces of those who will throw
our children out of the window of this last space.
Our star will hang up mirrors.
Where should we go after the last frontiers?
Where should the birds fly after the last sky?
Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air?
We will write our names with scarlet steam.
We will cut off the hand of the song to be finished by our flesh.
We will die here, here in the last passage.
Here and here our blood will plant its olive tree.*

Mahmoud Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us"³⁰

Where do we go when all space has been closed in on us? Where do we go when our shores are sites of death? When boats filled with hundreds of refugees escaping the horror of siege and genocide die on the coasts of European countries because they did not have the correct visa?³¹ Where do we go when young Palestinians are killed on the shores of the Gaza coast because they thought they could swim for a chance at life?³² Where do we go when our aggressors fire on open waters at solidarity allies on a freedom flotilla bringing aid to those dying in Gaza?³³ Where do we go when our land is confiscated? When our harvests are poisoned? When going anywhere means preparing for strip searches, waiting for hours at military checkpoints, experiencing endless interrogation at airports and border passages, and experiencing brutalization at the hands of colonial soldiers at roadblocks? Where do we go when our schools, hospitals, and families are on the other side of a border or checkpoint and curfews are in place? Where do we go when even our skies have been occupied? When we are denied any chance of thinking that sky is our salvation to a safe space?³⁴ Where do we go when our camps, those meant to be a temporary site of refuge until the war settles allowing our return home, become sites of siege, death, and dispossession again?³⁵ When shelling from warplanes turn entire camps, villages, and districts into rubble? Where do we go when white phosphorus rains from the sky? When tear gas is sprayed from drones? Where do we go when

our being warrants suspicion? Where do we go when our voice, our words, our narrative is criminalized under the rubric of “terrorism”? Where do we go when Palestinian death is a necessary condition of possibility for the erection and sustenance of the Israeli state?

For 70 years, the Palestinian people have had no place in their land, on their shores, in their skies, and even in their camps as a result of dispossession and occupation. For 70 years, Palestinians inside 1948 Palestine have been told they have no place in their own homeland, that they are second-class minority citizens, that there is no such thing called Palestine. Their racialization has constructed them as ahistorical peoples with no claims to the past, to the place they are in today, to their mother tongue, and even to their own stories and to verbalizing that story with the word *Nakba*.³⁶ They are Arabs, but not Palestinians, at least according to the settler regime.

For 70 years, Palestinians of the far *shatat*³⁷ have been under scrupulous forms of surveillance and criminalization.³⁸ In the United States, we have been given a chance to live well, to assimilate, and to ascend into “whiteness,” as we once fought to be classified on the US Census.³⁹ We have been given a chance to prove our benevolence, to demonstrate that we are “good Muslims” whose patriotism to the state is undoubted and who are willing to join the ranks of empire.⁴⁰ But this ascendancy to whiteness is not afforded to all of us, certainly not afforded at all times, and when it is afforded, the exchange means partaking in systemic forms of oppression of empire, those same systems and logics that have stolen our land, occupied our people, and turned us into refugees.⁴¹

If we accept ascension, if we accept uncritically the rights-bearing citizenship of the United States, then we in fact are part and parcel of upholding Israel. Because as Winona LaDuke argues, the United States is Israel.⁴² But where shall we go if we reject this ascension,

this settlement, refuse compliance with empire, refuse to surrender our cause, our land and our freedom, and refuse to partake in the oppression of indigenous peoples, black communities and communities of color? For Palestinians, the audacity to refuse, to reject, to resist, results in another exodus. Where then should we go? Where do we go when exoduses have become inherited across generations and geographies for Palestinians?

Before the New Sky: Protracted Struggle and Possibilities of the Beyond for Palestine's New Youth Movement is a transnational⁴³ ethnographic account of Palestinian youth⁴⁴ movements before and after the 2011 Arab uprisings. Situated in the context of the post-1993 Oslo Accords—or negotiations and peace process paradigm—this work investigates the way youth are collectively theorizing, articulating, and practicing power and politics in sites of literal and metaphysical siege. My ethnographic archive has been built through attending 46 Palestinian youth convenings between 2006 and 2017 as a Palestinian youth organizer myself. I have also conducted individual interviews with 50 Palestinian youth from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, France, Turkey, and the United States between 2015 and 2018.

Explored in this **introduction**, the trope of *the last sky* is borrowed from the Palestinian literary tradition. It first appeared in Mahmoud Darwish's 1984 poem *The Earth is Closing on Us*, reappeared in Edward Said's 1986 memoir *After the Last Sky*, and surfaced again in Rafeef Ziadeh's 2009 poem *We Teach Life, Sir*. This trope is reflected in the questions I have just presented on the relationship between Palestinians and any literal or metaphysical sites where they might enjoy freedom. The question that has undergirded the question of Palestinian space/place through Palestinian poetics—*Where should we go?*—has by all means been the core question for the Palestinian political struggle with the refugee return being the central

principle to the national struggle between the years of 1964-1993. In ruminating on the notion of the *last sky* and its meanings for and from the vantage point of the lives of Palestinian youth after the 1993 Oslo Accords through the 2011 Arab uprisings, my analytical and methodological frames tackle three dimensions of siege and exile that *the last sky* has come to signify. Together, they constitute what I call a Palestinian ontology of *Nakba*. Those dimensions are: **1)** enclosures of land, sea, and sky; **2)** the annihilation of Palestinian narrative in discourse and the historic record; and **3)** the foreclosure of political genealogies of struggle and fracture of the Palestinian nation as a result of the 1993 Oslo Accords.

The primary inspiration for and focal point of this dissertation is the formation, experience, and methodological strategies of the **Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM)**. The PYM began as the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), and its first formal convening was in 2006 in Barcelona, Spain, which brought together youth between the ages of 18 and 35 from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and various countries in Europe. The convening was intended for these youth to collectively consider their role in achieving Palestinian freedom and to explore desires and opportunities to work together in such pursuit. After two years of coordination, the official founding conference of the PYN took place in November 2008 in Madrid, Spain. At its height, the PYN came to engage and mobilize over 1,000 active Palestinian youth in 33 countries across four continents. Its character, vision, activities, structure and organizational identity made the PYN/PYM the most remnant contemporary iteration of the original Palestinian youth movements of the 1950's and 1960's in what became known as the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS).

In the 2011 Second International General Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey, the network would shift to become the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM). This shift was accompanied by

structural, political, and strategic changes. However, as a result of the monumental changes in Palestine and the region as a result of the Arab uprisings, much of those shifts would never be fully realized. In turn, the PYM (on a transnational level) would see its own dissipation by 2016. The challenges PYM experienced in those years demonstrate the profound odds stacked up against Palestinian youth across various terrains. At the same time, the PYM experience and the lessons learned through its methodological process would play a vital role in cultivating possibilities for service, political process and theorization, discourse, and resistance in the years following PYM's establishment as an institutional form.

The varying conferences, convenings, campaigns, and initiatives that the PYM produced and partook in offered both vibrant insights into the worlds of Palestinian youth and the distinct and overlapping ways they (coming from a variety of social, cultural, political, and geographic backgrounds) experience the Palestinian struggle. Through my own involvement as a founder, member, former international general coordinator, and former PYM-USA national advisor, I have come to understand the struggles affecting the new Palestinian generation and the various ways they are engaging in work which can reconstruct what constitutes the domain of the *political*, as Sunaina Maira has exquisitely illustrated in her own book *Jil Oslo*.⁴⁵ Particularly, the PYM experience has allowed for me to understand the complexities of the ways a myriad of Palestinian youth political desires, articulations, actions, and visions have been affected by the Oslo Accords *in systemic and structural ways*, for youth both inside *and* outside Palestine.

The PYM collective experience *and* my experience in PYM, alongside my commitment to scholarship informed by and relevant to liberation praxis, have guided the writing of this dissertation. But, when the Palestinian condition is constituted by a multiplicity of historical and transnational violences by which enclosure of space, annihilation of narrative and fracture of

time is constant, finding ways to produce said scholarship becomes a process fraught with complexity. My own positionality in this work and the multitude of restraints, challenges, and struggles I have been confronted with and opportunities I have been afforded are traced in chapter one.

In **chapter one**, I illustrate the complexity of attempting to write through Palestine while Palestine is still being parceled away, while Palestinians are under constant attack, and while history continues vanishing, just as Palestinian landscapes and bodies disappear. I talk about the complexity of learning to write through Palestine while faint whispers of ghosts wake you from sleep, haunt familiar places, and echo from each breath you take. The hauntings produce existential anxiety that something must be done, that we are not doing enough, that what we have done has failed, and that no time and space is left. Those hauntings descend from the last sky. Those hauntings pulsate within Palestinian youth. They terrorize us as much as the violence Palestinians have endured. But what undergirds those whispers is a question that is often absent from all that is being said and written on Palestine, and all that is being done for and in the name of Palestine: *Where should we go?* Palestinians know well the answer to this question. It is a collective, unifying and quite simple answer, which facilitates perhaps the only consensus among Palestinians these days. The answer is *home*.

The struggle then lies in the fact that we are never able to focus on this question as the departure point. What takes its place among scholarship and activism (especially in the US where I live, work and organize) is how do we get Israel to comply with international law and end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip? The problem starts with the question and the frame it produces. Palestinian youth are fighting just to place this question of return at the heart of our struggle; a question which was the driving one for the years of the national

liberation movement between 1964 and 1993. In heightened moments of violence, the question becomes clearer and easier to situate in our organizing discourses. But then, the question, “Where should we go?” no longer stands alone. It is accompanied by ifs and whens, and as Darwish would illustrate for us, afters: “*Where should we go after the last frontiers? Where should the birds fly after the last sky? Where should the plants sleep after the last breath of air?*”⁴⁶ We become sorely aware that it is not vision or collective need and aspiration that we lack, for we all know what the question is and answer must be. What is missing is a vision of and means to enact a strategy of having place in this world, in our country, freely. How do we realize our answer?

Part one of chapter one interrogates how the US academy and US public universities besiege and exile Palestinian narratives. Borrowing from Kuan Hsing Chen’s erudite book *Asia as Method*, in chapter one I aim to offer some reflections on what might constitute the process of enacting *Palestine as method* for both scholarship and anti/de-colonial liberation practice.⁴⁷ I argue that the second last sky, the annihilation of narrative and the foreclosure of the historic record, has necessitated an ability to *learn to write through* Palestine rather than about it as subject or object.⁴⁸ Further, I argue that scholarship and campus activism can contribute enormously to the Palestinian struggle for liberation by finding ways to push against how Palestine is erased and silenced in university life or positioned alongside Zionist/Israeli narratives on uneven scales, which pretend to reproduce the vaunted category of objectivity.

Part two of chapter one examines how these violence’s and enclosures Palestinians experience in intellectual canons and in campus activism are certainly fashioned by and derivative of histories of conquest, enslavement, colonialism, imperialism, genocide, and dispossession across time and place, which US universities have anchored – sometimes literally,

and at times through the production of a particular *universe of discourse* that elides subaltern narratives.⁴⁹ These histories have come to constitute major ideological tenets of Zionism and pragmatic techniques of the Israeli state and simultaneously have come to make the Palestinian liberation struggle centrally tied to liberation movements of other groups and communities on global and historical scales. The PYM's own political framework, which roots the Palestinian struggle in global and historical struggles against settler colonialism, colonialism, and imperialism, has taught me this. But also, I have found deep-seated connections between Zionism/Israel—ideologically, discursively, and structurally—and other forms of global subjugation as a result of my training in critical ethnic studies. In the process of learning of the intimate bonds between various forms, ideologies, and enactors of systemic oppression, I have also come to deepen my own relationship to, intimacy with, and commitment to freedom for all oppressed, captive, besieged, displaced, and oppressed peoples and places. It is for these reasons that the theory I engage in the dissertation comes from an array of indigenous and Third World texts on anti/decolonization. Attempting to *write through Palestine* from the place of the US academy and public university has strengthened my own affinities to joint struggle.

In **chapter two**, I offer a historical overview of the Oslo Accords'—commonly referred to as the peace process-- and chronicle its' effects on Palestinian youth, on Palestine, and on the liberation project. I examine how these shifts produced a context in which multiple dimensions of Palestinian oppression could no longer be discursively, institutionally, or strategically addressed in their totality because of the way the Oslo Accords fractured Palestinian organization, constituencies and geographies. I argue that the third last sky, which would befall the Palestinians in the form of the Oslo Accords, ruptured the political genealogy of anticolonial insurgency and decolonial praxis for the new generation of Palestinians. It certainly eradicated

the normalcy of visions, tactics, and strategies of *revolutionary war* once critical to maintain the populist character of the Palestinian liberation struggle and to facilitate social cohesion, wellness, and power among Palestinian communities. But it also fractured the national infrastructure, which had facilitated a sense of communal and cooperative patriotism.

The Oslo Accords returned Palestinians to the years between 1948–1964 (before the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) in which shock, chaos, and offense against Palestinian life and land would become salient without avenues to resist on collective, grassroots and strategic levels. What is critical is that this played a vital role in returning the Palestinians to an “everyone-for-themselves” strategy of survival, which would sometimes, in very temporal and unsustainable ways, interface with communal strategies and affinities. The Oslo debacle damaged not only the collective political power of the Palestinians, but their social welfare as it was facilitated through the years between 1964-1993. Chronicling the way, the Oslo Accords marks a moment that divided Palestinian history between the former liberation struggle and the post-neo-liberal capitalism and state building project. Chronicling neo-liberalism's effect on the struggle and the subsequent damage it had produced on Palestinian collectivity, this chapter places the 1993 moment in broader historical and transnational frames as well. How youth came to explore the damage brought on through Oslo, the era of Palestinian resistance prior, and how and why resistance was equally important for the empowerment of Palestinians as it was to pragmatically protecting Palestinian life and land, is more deeply explored in chapter three.

Chapter three aims to elucidate the PYM methodological process of *engaging contradiction*⁵⁰ in pursuit of developing collective theorizations, visions, and strategies for Palestinian freedom. Opening the chapter with a historical background on Palestinian student

movements, I argue that the PYM project was the only post-Oslo initiative which reflected and paralleled, in many ways, the aspirations of the original Palestinian student/youth movements of the 1940's-1960's. Rather than writing a people's history in chronological form—a form which in and of itself can alter the meaning of the experience of said histories—this chapter aims to give weight and meaning to *process* as opposed to *events* of history. Chapter three looks to 10 position papers written by the PYM and chronicles the methodological process of developing consensus-based political ideals and visions, which led to their adoption in June 2012. It also examines how those positions changed and deepened in the context of the rapidly shifting political conditions as a result of the Arab uprisings. These texts include PYM position papers on **a) Palestine and the Palestinians, b) Arab dimension, c) the rights-based approach, d) resistance, e) international solidarity, f) movement, g) the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Palestinian Authority (PA), h) youth, i) anticolonialism, and j) liberation.** I also engage the *Until Return and Liberation Framework* adopted by PYM, which was to guide its general public discourse, strategic plans, activities, and short- and long-range goals.

The exploration of Palestinian youth collective theorization as *method* for political and intellectual thought is precisely what I believe distinguishes this research project from others conducted on Palestinian youth movements in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords. Rather than looking at the external, already established discourse of a group, or looking at a group itself—its composition and activities, and so forth—as subject, I look at the internal methodological process of the formation and shifting trajectories of a group that I am centrally a part of. As Elena Zambelli, Ruba Salih, and Lynn Welchman have demonstrated in their research on the PYM, the culture of the group and specifically its commitment to and practice of an affective

ethos in which the social and political are deeply embedded with one another plays a vital role in shaping the formation of these doctrines and the processes that constitute them.⁵¹

Furthermore, the fact that this group has interfaced with broader Palestinian, Arab, and global dimensions, conditions, causes, and communities is key to this work. This component has provided the contradictions PYM would intentionally engage and which have lent themselves to the development of PYM politics. How I, as a central stakeholder in, contributor to, and beneficiary of Palestinian liberation, position myself in relation to this work is what adds an additional layer to why this project is as much about critical methodologies as it is about Palestinian youth movements.

In the **conclusion** of this dissertation, I reflect on how the 2011 Arab uprisings posited new challenges and opportunities for these youth movement practitioners. Though the events of the region had brought on increased catastrophe, despair, fragmentation, loss, and confusion, the Arab uprisings also marked a shift to a new phase of *accepting the arrival of the last sky* brought on through Oslo and reimagining what the new political era would have in store for Palestinian youth. At the very least, this period generated a popular consciousness among Palestinian youth that relying on establishment politics, waiting for someone else to ensure or bring about Palestinian freedom, or cooperating with Israeli and US demands, would only facilitate increased loss. It forced Palestinian youth to assume positions as the forerunners of new possibility, in all places and at all levels. In one obvious example here in the United States, it is in this context that a resurgence of Palestinian youth activity would be born in groups such as the PYM but also and especially within the growing student movement for justice in Palestine.⁵²

Unfortunately, the Arab uprisings also instilled in Palestinian youth a realization of just how unprepared and weakened our nation has become since the Oslo Accords and particularly

made young people sorely aware of the gap between their desire and their ability to seize the seismic opportunities the changes in the region had offered and demanded. And while youth became aware of how the Palestinian people, land, and liberation struggle is in a precarious time and place—besieged on all fronts, literally and figuratively—they also knew that popular insurgency on all levels was necessary to cultivate possibility to construct forthcoming political phases. Traces of this turn are found both in chapters two and three. I borrow from Asef Bayat’s notion of art of presence, which he defines as “the courage and creativity to assert collective will in spite of all odds, to circumvent constraints, utilizing what is available and discovering new spaces within which to make oneself heard, seen, felt, and realized” to account for the ways Palestinian youth moved through the Arab uprisings context.⁵³

The necessity and desire to instate some form of centralized infrastructure to facilitate vision, strategy, and goals is widely felt by Palestinian youth. But not from the vantage point of high politics, that of the Palestinian establishment, but rather from that of the grassroots, from the everyday people suffering the brute force of colonial terror and from those experiencing the ills of dispossession and estrangement from Palestine for youth in *ghurba* (refuge) and in *al-shatat* (exile). Chapter two details those sensibilities and desires at length, and chapter three examines how they lend themselves to collective political theorization. At present, by engaging in *nonmovement* protracted struggle⁵⁴ in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and in maintaining a commitment to collective theorization of the Palestinian condition, the youth are contributing to the making of a new phase of Palestinian political history, marking this current juncture as the time *and* space “before the new sky.”

Ultimately, the project illuminates how youth organizers can make exhausted regimes productive for survival, critical knowledge production, and theorizations of power, even as they

function in sites of full literal and/or epistemological siege (literal siege by land, sea, and sky; epistemological siege in political infrastructure and in intellectual canons). Through their political practice with limited time and space, these youth are holding together Palestine and Palestinians, from all that is meant to obliterate it and them. They maintain its form, Palestinian attachments and responsibilities to resistance, and a sense of collective and communal forms of cultural and political affinities until such a time that radical transformation is made possible again. When the next seismic reorder of power in the region comes, such as what we had seen with the 2011 Arab uprisings, we want to have contributed to it and to be prepared and ready to achieve Palestinian freedom. This freedom will be from both the formal colonial reign and from Palestinian and Arab agents of empire, dictatorship, and monarchs, who have beaten out of everyday people the belief that attaining a true freedom is possible.

Sprinkled throughout the dissertation are citations that I have pulled from a handful of prominent Arab poets and writers to demonstrate that for the new generation, much of their pain, anxiety, troubles, aspirations, and desires are continuous with those of former generations. For in the end, the Palestinian condition is one of prolonged *Nakba*, catastrophe. But this *Nakba* is not an extended event, nor is it the afterlife of the exodus of 1948. It has become a signifier of Palestinian existential being. Siege and exile by land, sea, and sky; an international legal system that aids and abets the catastrophe that befalls the Palestinians rather than limits it; elimination by the war of narrative and erasure of and from historic records; and foreclosures of political genealogies and transnational vehicles to hold together the Palestinian nation – all these forms of enclosure have become attributes of this *ontology of Nakba*.

After the Last Sky: Analytical and Methodological Frames

I argue that Palestinian youth who have grown within the Oslo framework inhabit the site of the *third and final last sky* but that the 2011 Arab uprisings marked the beginning of a new political chapter in history, the space and time *before the new sky*. This period constitutes a *spatial-temporal arrangement* fraught with uncertainty and despair for these youth but also with the brilliance of anti/decolonial and liberatory possibility. In this spatial-temporal arrangement, dreams and imagination are necessarily less restrained and generate possibility for a vision and practice which has long been eclipsed by the liminalities of aspirations for statehood.⁵⁵ In chapter three, I examine how the Arab uprisings ushered in a phase in which Palestinian youth's collective theorizations of the Palestinian colonial condition, based on their own real-life experiences, would dismember monopolizing constructions and definitions of time and space. Specifically, their theorizations would recalibrate what David Harvey has called *time-space compressions*,⁵⁶ which Joseph Massad describes, in the case of the Zionist project, as an *epistemological transformation* necessary to enable Jews to apprehend Palestine in multiple ways.⁵⁷ Instead, these youths' definitions of time/space would be informed by anti/decolonial ambitions and undo the foreclosure of epistemological frames and annihilation of Palestinian narrative that Zionist time-space compressions have long produced.

While my dissertation engages the collective theorizations and political practices of Palestinian youth, I situate my contribution within critical ethnic studies and it is these works that inform my analytical and methodological frames rather than the literature of social movement theory or of youth studies. Social movement theory often relies on the transformation and reform of the state. This framing takes the state and the notion of civil society as a given unit of analysis and rarely considers the intersections of landlessness,

statelessness, refugee hood, and dispossession in understanding transnational movements.⁵⁸ Because I'm thinking of a population that lives scattered across multiple different militarized borders and nation-states, I wanted to think of what constitutes them as a transnational Palestinian nation that is not bound to the nation-state model. At the same time, the Arab uprisings constructed a new moment in which I believe Palestinian youth continually engage in what Bayat has called "social nonmovements," which refers to "the collective actions of noncollective actors."⁵⁹ While I would agree that social nonmovements came to signify the main form of protest and dissent through the Arab uprisings, and even among the simultaneous movements in Europe and the US,⁶⁰ this form of protest also had tremendous influence on the means by which Palestinians were engaging in popular protest following 2011. However, I argue it cannot fully accumulate into political power gains in a context of settler colonial siege and dispossession because the nation-state—and its demarcated territorial boundaries—remain the center of gravity and extent of possibility. For Palestinians, as landless and stateless people scattered across the world and fragmented from one another by borders, siege, and occupation, collective actions produced by non-collective actors are not always as generative as they may be in other places and times. It is for these reasons that I do not rely on the literature of social movement theory for the framing of this dissertation.

Collective action, in the Palestinian case, necessarily relies on some form for collective actors to overcome the divisions of colonial obliteration, siege, and exile. The archipelago of Palestinian topography; the besiegement of Palestinian land, sea, and sky; refugee camps; narrative and political infrastructure; the scattering of the Palestinian nation, their ideas, and beliefs; and ambitions all require *organization* to resist. At the very least, this organization is necessary to maintain a collective consensus on the goals of struggle and to mobilize true,

genuine, selfless consent by the Palestinian people to uphold said goals and to hold leadership accountable to a liberation project for everyone. This is not a form of accountability that would further burden the Palestinians. It is a form, which would deeply empower us, as we had seen throughout our historical struggle. This attempt to organize movement, despite all which privileges spontaneous collective action by noncollective actors and even when such action appears to be the only form available to exercise, is highlighted in chapter three, particularly in the way the PYM came to theorize movement *and* resistance.

While it is the spatial and national frameworks of social movement theory that I believe make these theories less applicable for the Palestinian case, it is the temporal dimension of youth studies that is out of sync with the way the Palestinian youth I talked with theorized and articulated it as. Several works in youth studies articulate youth as a particular age sector or talk of them as part and parcel of a historical teleology of progress. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang argue,

because youth as a structural location is conflated with youth as a developmental category, youth resistance often gets special treatment, gets made precious. When youth resistance is treated like a precious thing, the real theories of change being theorized through youth resistance, gets trumped by a larger theory of change as youth as pre-adults.⁶¹

As chapter two demonstrates, an outcome of the 1993 Oslo Accords was the calcification of neo-liberal development industries in Palestine which played a critical role in eliding and/co-opting youth resistance theorizations and praxis. Additionally, of the biggest crises' Oslo had produced, was the foreclosure of political genealogies of resistance and the subsequent fracture of Palestinian communal sensibilities, practices and institutions once devoted to harness ideals of collectivity including inter-generationally.

The Palestinian youth I talked to were critical of teleology's of progress because they were more interested in a return to the pre-Oslo era when a Palestinian nation could exist despite Palestinian geographic dispersion and the perilousness of Palestinian life and land. Palestinian youth desires for return (both return of the refugees to Palestine and return to the era of Palestinian resistance pre-Oslo) demonstrates just how intimately *time* bound with *space* in that the Oslo Accords marks the way both were enclosed/foreclosed upon and how it had come to leave the new generation to endure ongoing old catastrophes and a multiplicity of new ones. That is what led me to be concerned with a comparative analysis of how the old and new Palestinian generation, and how those inside and outside the homeland, experience *Nakba* as a Palestinian condition rather than as an event confined by geographic boundaries or time brackets.

In 1966 Amilcar Cabral would give an address titled The Weapon of Theory at the first-Tri-Continental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The address would be in Havana, Cuba signifying the promise of the Cuban revolution for other national liberation movements globally. In his address he said:

It is with the intention of making a contribution, however modest, to this debate that we present here our opinion of the foundations and objectives of national liberation in relation to the social structure. This opinion is the result of our own experiences of the struggle and of a critical appreciation of the experiences of others. To those who see in it a theoretical character, we would recall that every practice produces a theory, and that if it is true that a revolution can fail even though it be based on perfectly conceived theories, nobody has yet made a successful revolution without a revolutionary theory.⁶²

Paolo Freire's insistence on the dialogical process necessary for theory and practice to produce liberation praxis is what I argue has and remains missing in Palestinian youth spheres today. He says, that dialogue constitutes "two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers"⁶³ But for Palestinian youth, the absence of a forum in which theory and practice could be more intimately bound, is resultant of the lack of freedom of time and space to engage in this dialogue in the aftermath of Oslo. Little space exists for us, on all levels, and so much/many catastrophes befalling our people and homeland demand urgent response rather than introspective reflection. While an array of critical theory forums exist, which engage in the question of Palestine, they remain relatively segmented from political practice, social wellness service and organizing.

The hardened division between theory and practice is in large part what the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) was responding to. It sought to understand how and why political movements produce their own theorizations of struggle, to inform a more relevant practice, and to provide a framework for youth resistance in the post Oslo era. But the relationship between theory and practice became even more frail through the 2011 Arab Uprisings in Palestinian political life and in the broader region which chapter three and the epilogue demonstrate. This is why I argue that Palestinian youth inhabit the site *before the new sky*. Both theorizations informed by action and action informed by theorization exist,⁶⁴ but a place for both to be explored for vision and strategy on collective transnational levels remains absent. The institutional form where that dialogue and convergence used to take place was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO),⁶⁵ and many Palestinian youth are sorely aware of just how out of reach the PLO has become for the grassroots, everyday people and especially for the new generation. But as chapter two illustrates, the Oslo Accords' harrowing decimation of the PLO,

altering the organization's vision, purpose, and strategies, was among the greatest of defeats of the coup de grâce, the third last sky. Mostly, Oslo de-sutured Palestinian youth from our own political genealogies of struggle⁶⁶ and the methodological practice (re)formulating theory and practice as inseparable components of national liberation strategy.

In the end, this dissertation traces how Palestinian youth navigate *non-autonomous zones of space and time*. How do they generate possibility, collectively theorize power and politics, and act out resistance if their access to non-autonomous zones of space and time are conditional, if the terms require them to comply with all meant to destroy them? What moves them to keep trying despite all that has not worked? What I have found impels them most is that the ghosts of the past Nakba carry with them real-life death warrants in each home invasion, demolition campaign, air strike, assassination attempt, bomb, bullet, and in every exodus and siege. These death warrants produce another coordinate on the *spatial-temporal complex* these youth inhabit, and that is the *spectrum between despair and hope*.⁶⁷ We must not perceive of it as a pendulum in which despair is stigmatized and seen as wasteful, dried up, and old and in which hope is glorified as something immaculate, youthful, and only aspirational for an imagined future. Chapter three illustrates the colossal ways perceptions of what it means to be a *youth movement* is either hollowed out of radical liberation philosophy and strategy or criminalized as overzealous, hyper-racialized, untamed, egregious violence. Palestinian youth demonstrate that from the simultaneous experience of the enormous effects of both despair and hope, profound possibility can be born, and it is not a possibility born of naïve innocence and hopefulness as much scholarship on youth studies has suggested. Rather, despair for Palestinian young people is caused by feeling no one is on their side, no institution can safeguard their so-called rights, and no space or time is in their favor.

When nothing is left to lose, hope can galvanize emotional, political, intellectual, and sensual imagination beyond all odds. Together despair and hope make it so that anything that must be done to survive will be. This is what sustains Palestinian insurgency today. Hope can see those actions through the dimmest of roads, the bleakest of conditions, and the most dangerous of journeys. When despair is caused by having nothing to lose, trekking through those last skies in the cultivation of a new one just becomes a fact of life. That fact becomes generative for political possibility when a more intentional naming, assigning meaning to, and theorization of the last skies galvanizes hope that freedom is near and that something can be done to see it through.

As Frantz Fanon said:

In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation. If we wish to describe it precisely, we might find it in the well-known words: 'The last shall be first and the first last.' Decolonization is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonization is successful.⁶⁸

In the spirit of overturning relations of colonial power, the analytical and methodological frames of this project name and call into question the dimensions of Zionism that have encroached on all *time and space* Palestinians inhabit. Palestinians have survived—against all odds—the passing of three last skies. If Fanon was right when he said, “the last shall be first,” then a glorious freedom awaits Palestine in the years ahead. Realizing that the last shall be first and the first, last is the first critical step to decolonization. The 2011 Arab uprisings taught us that we were last albeit in violent and jarring ways. That lesson allowed us to more appropriately name our colonial situation as Fanon has called on us to do. These analytical and methodological frames attempt to name three last skies which contribute to shaping of the

Palestinian youth colonial situation today: **1)** enclosures of land, sea, and sky; **2)** the annihilation of Palestinian narrative in discourse and the historic record; and **3)** the foreclosure of political genealogies of struggle and fracture of the Palestinian nation as a result of the 1993 Oslo Accords.

Enclosure by Land, Sea, and Sky: Law as a Facilitator of Zionist Settler Colonialism

The first last sky survived by Palestinians comes by way of the developments of **technological capacities** for and **legal justification** of enclosures by land, sea, *and* sky at the onslaught of their Nakba in 1948. It is important to clarify that I am situating my analytical frame for the Palestinian condition within a larger global-historical context. While my ultimate focus is on the particularities of the Palestinian colonial condition, it is crucial to realize how this does not exist in a vacuum and in fact occurs as part and parcel of a larger, ongoing process of global Indigenous erasure, dispossession, and racial capitalism. This historical and transnational framing is crucial for two reasons.

First, contrary to its stated intent, international law (including human rights law) has and continues to act as a prime *facilitator* of this centuries-long process of dominance, accumulation, subjugation and erasure,⁶⁹ from which the Palestinian plight is inseparable.⁷⁰ As Antony Anghie argues, international law did not precede colonial encounters at the advent of discovery of the new world but rather was constructed resultant to it and in many ways to offer legal justification to colonialism.⁷¹ It thus enabled colonial projects, which would render certain racial bodies as worthy and others as disposable and certain cartographies as free and others as subject to siege and colonization.

Second, technological capacities to control land, sea *and* sky, what Ian Shaw calls *atmospheric enclosure*, would become more fully realized between WWI and the end of WWII by which time the Zionists were realizing colonial ambitions in Palestine.⁷² Whereas colonial ambitions post 1492 would necessitate an international legal apparatus to justify colonial invasion and settlement vis-à-vis land and sea and generate a demand for technological capacities in order to realize such aspirations, those technological capacities and international codes of law for control of space would not be realized to include sky until the end of the first half of the twentieth century. In other words, while other settler-colonial endeavors colonized by land, and post 1492, by sea as well, Zionism would be the first project realizing colonial fantasies in a time where invasion/enclosure by sky would be possible as well. The strategic templates and technological tools utilized to ethnically cleanse/clear, invade, control, exclude and exploit in various geographies throughout history meant that the Zionists were not instantiating a new project, but rather concluding one that was quite old, only now with more sophisticated technologies for control of skies in addition to land and sea.

As Carl Schmitt would define *nomos* as a division of the earth as well as a rule of law⁷³, these historical projects of conquest and control would be co-constitutive with the creation and development of an international legal framework that would exonerate and in fact facilitate systemic forms of indigenous erasure, racial warfare, capitalist accumulation, and colonialism. But this historical analysis posits new questions to understand a project of settler colonialism in which the ideological, political, and military technologies of controlling sky are unparalleled. In this context, the project of Zionism, as settler colonialism, cannot be de-contextualized from the historical and transnational reorganizations of world power and colonial plunder, which emerged in new form as a result of World War II and as part of the expanding Cold War context.

Thus, Zionist settler colonialism became a literal and discursive intersectional site of the new world order, which manages to couple a capacity for siege and control unlike the previous era, along with a moral and political justification (because of their former victim status), a legal justification (because the creation of the United Nations and its facilitation of the Palestinian Nakba), a Western hegemonic agenda (because of Western necessity to reconfigure the former colonial order in the so-called Middle East), and a military mandate (to sustain and expand technologies of warfare and colonial dominance). The enclosure of spatial terrains practiced by the Zionist, settler colonial enterprise at the onset of the conquest of Palestine was calcified in 1948 and more so after the 1973 war.⁷⁴ Indeed, the first last sky has made both physical space and international law—two sites in which the colonial power has force, control, and advantage—sites of siege for Palestinians.

By 1948, teleologies of international law, which had long facilitated, legalized, and permitted colonization, chattel slavery, and racist state violence, would become established in their supreme form with the construction of the United Nations. Randall Williams has taught us that human rights became cultivated as an “international ethic,” created in the West through Eurocentric cultural values, authority and hegemony following the construction of the UN.⁷⁵ Thus, human rights became a tool of US power since its inception and functioned as a litmus test for other peoples and groups of the world to demonstrate their proximity and belonging to modernity and civilization, especially in the “post-colonial” cold-war context.⁷⁶ For these reasons, rights-based discourses and human rights law—which have become monopolizing frameworks for articulating Palestinian non-violent struggle and in particular axioms of global solidarity—are necessary targets of critique in my work.

As the Palestinians would experience al-Nakba of 1948, a reliance on moral sensibilities of global state actors and a newly found international legal apparatus to protect them would be fruitless. Surely, ample doctrines exist that have ensured indigenous rights to resistance, refugee rights to return, and human rights in general, and in theory they appear to be productive. But the Palestinians are profoundly aware that the same international community that would construct and adopt international human rights law would be the same parties to partition Palestine in 1947 and produce al-Nakba for the Palestinians.⁷⁷ In this sense, the first last sky began in 1947 when Palestinians would realize that international law and human rights law were not in their favor and not a space through which they could access power or mitigate loss of life and land. Thus, the Zionist project in Palestine is not necessarily an exception to the rule of law, to events of history, and to the technological capacities for settler colonialism, siege, and military occupation as we have witnessed in other places and times in the world.

The distinction of the Zionist project lies in the temporal axis. Where enclosure and control of land and sea were central elements in the formation of settler colonial projects throughout history, Israel would become the first settler-nation-state to launch itself when technological capacities and legal apparatus for the enclosure of sky would become supremely in place. In this context, Zionism presents a neo-settler colonial model in which its victims must come to consider how to resist when all space is enclosed upon by land, sea, and sky and in which a reliance on the framework of international law has and will not mitigate said violences.

Palestinians, particularly after the formation of the PLO in 1964, were sorely aware that their military technologies and capacities for resistance paled in comparison to those of the Israeli state. This is one reason that the armed resistance strategies of the Palestinians did not assume that acquiring military capacities and technologies equal to or greater than that of their

colonizer was a necessary requirement for national liberation resistance. The Palestinian national movement's insistence on *revolutionary war*, in fact, saw the assumption of needing to acquire high technical capacities to match that of the colonizers as a form of bourgeoisie sensibilities and counterintuitive to the guerrilla warfare strategies, which were key to the liberation process.

In this context, my project is deeply informed by the historical and transnational forms of systemic dispossession, erasure, violence, and exploitation that have shaped the world as we know it today. Ethnic studies has offered a window into understanding Zionism as a teleological extension of these global histories and systemic forms of colonial violence and also helped me more deeply situate the Palestinian struggle as part of global liberation insurgencies. This first analytical and methodological frame has allowed me to situate the project of Zionist settler colonialism as neither exceptional nor distinct despite the Israeli state's persistence in presenting itself as such.⁷⁸

Annihilation of Narrative and the Historic Record

In 1986, Edward Said teamed up with esteemed photographer Jean Mohr to produce the photographic book *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*. The project was inspired by an experience in which Said, at that time a consultant to the United Nations for its International Conference on the Question of Palestine, proposed the idea to hold an art exhibit with photographs illuminating the life of Palestinian refugees from across the region by photographer Jean Mohr. Following Mohr's return from a UN-sponsored trip to several places in the region, the official response to the original idea was that the photographs may be displayed without text. Said pushed back. In the end, they settled on an agreement in which some text may be

displayed, that is, the country in which the photograph was taken, “but not one word more.”⁷⁹

Said then teamed up with Mohr to write a book pairing the photographs with text that illuminates Palestinian life in its transnational context, times, and places.

This project successfully managed to encapsulate the heterogeneity of Palestinian experiences, including the ways in which to be scattered, both through the process of dispossession and through occupation, has become a central characteristic of the collective experience. Most importantly, the project was meant to create a narrative of Palestine and Palestinians looking at their lives and experiences not as sites of extraction, but as primary sites of knowledge and theorization. This project thus enabled the telling of a narrative that is far too often erased or distorted by the enclosures Palestinians have come to survive. Said noted:

Let us use photographs and texts, we said to each other, to say something that hasn't been said about Palestinians. Yet the problem with writing about and representing—in all senses of the word—Palestinians in some fresh way is part of a much larger problem. For it is not as if no one ever speaks about or portrays the Palestinians. The difficulty is that everyone, including the Palestinians themselves, speak a very great deal. A huge body of literature has grown up, most of it polemical, accusatory and denunciatory. At this point, no one writing about Palestine—and indeed, no one going to Palestine—starts from experiencing its millennial presence and power, or actually living there for periods of time. It is a terribly crowded place, almost too crowded for what it is asked to bear by the way of history or interpretation of history. Yet, for all the writing about them, Palestinians remain virtually unknown. Especially in the West, particularly in the United States, it is certainly correct to say we are less known than our co-claimants to Palestine, the Jews.⁸⁰

It is Said's complication of the ways in which Palestinians and Palestine are believed to be known, to be understood and spoken for/about in the historical record, particularly that of the Western academy, that grounds my methodological approach. On the one hand, the

passage illuminates how Palestine and Palestinians' narratives are muted, flattened, and elided in knowledge-making spaces in the United States, especially by the convention of discipline. Said is speaking to the exceptionalism of how it is that Palestinian narratives come to be buried alongside the Palestinian dead and how Palestinians are relegated to the margins when they attempt to record their contest, in the historic record. This project of erasing Palestine has long been a central tenet of Zionist settler colonial naturalization, of its claims to Palestine, to history, and to modernity. On the other hand, Said discusses how the Palestinians have become overdetermined. Everyone is talking about the Palestinians, defining us and Palestine, but without collective Palestinian theorizations and articulations of our being, lives, and struggle. For Said, this creates an "over-crowded place" that is "too crowded to bear what it is asked to by the way of history or the interpretation of history."⁸¹ Why must Palestine and Palestinians remain a case study from which to draw a conclusion about suffering, pain, sorrow, and violence? Both processes – narrative erasure and overdetermination – are constitutive of our placelessness as a people, our disappearance, and our death. Both processes make it so that we Palestinians literally and metaphysically have no place to go. I certainly have felt suffocated by both practices alongside the many Palestinian colleagues I have come to know who specifically work within academia. Chapter one traces these experiences and engages Barbara Harlow's understanding of the power of writing.⁸²

The antagonistic relationship between these two, largely dialogical processes, is brewing on university campuses today. For so long, Palestine was ignored and invisible on university campuses, especially in the United States. Even when it would clandestinely appear, universities were committed to its containment or assuagement. Now, it has exploded across fields of study and is galvanizing student movements perhaps beyond any other issue in US universities. But

even with the monumental advances organizers and academics have made on university campuses and in scholarship – materially, discursively, and structurally bringing Palestine to the fore of debate and discussion – the parameters of the framework nevertheless exclude any conversation on full Palestinian liberation. Parameters impeding the possibility of imagining and discussing full Palestinian liberation on university campuses include: 1) an over-reliance on the language of *rights* in exchange of rather than in service of full liberation de-colonization of the land and people 2) even with the growing attention and margins afforded to engaging Palestine, even still, Palestine has less legitimacy in discourse than Israel which always must be included, honored, represented; 3) even in sympathetic scholarship, Israeli contributions are given more or all weight to the erasure of Palestinians as intellectual producers in their own right.

In this process of looking at two sides of a relationship dialectically, as Hegel suggests, the side of “pro-Palestine” or “pro-Israel,” we give weight and power to the legitimacy of the relationship itself. A relationship produced in, through, for, and because of the erasure of the Palestinians. Nur Masalha demonstrates an overturning of this relationship in a poignant critique of the work of Benny Morris. Masalha argues:

Morris’s description of the works by the ‘new’ Israeli historians—while ignoring the recent works by non-Zionist scholars on 1948—gives rise to the impression that these discourses are basically the outcome of a debate among Zionists which unfortunately has little to do with the Palestinians themselves.⁸³

My research is concerned with the polemic that Said and Masalha have both spoken of in their reference to how Palestine/Palestinians are thought to be known in scholarship, particularly in Western academia. For all that is produced and spoken of Palestine and the Palestinians, much remains left out. Perhaps some things are omitted intentionally and play a

role in protecting the Palestinians from further forms of surveillance, scrutiny, and consumption. But I am certain that much is also overlooked precisely to cater to disciplinary standards of legibility to Western canons rather than to diagnose the power frames that construct and govern those canons and what is rendered legible. However, Said's concern with legibility to the West in fact guides a significant amount of his work on Palestine and Palestinians, particularly in his book *The Question of Palestine*.⁸⁴ Palestinians are unknown on their own terms yet have become very well known as digestible, consumable subjects manufactured by colonial canons and disciplinary approaches to "knowing."⁸⁵ Productions of Palestinians as legible creatures is precisely what in many cases has deformed and disarticulated the nuances of Palestinian livelihood and the complexity of our political subjectivity and condition.

Ample scholarship sensitive to the Palestinian plight has done well to illuminate the multiple ways the Zionist occupation has dispossessed Palestinians of their land and placed Palestinians under a suffocating occupation and siege.⁸⁶ But fewer works (at least in English) have illustrated how Palestinians find ways to act out resistance, life, and politics in such liminal time/space, largely governed by the colonial archive, regime, and epistemology. Even less works pay tribute to the way these forms of siege and exile are experienced by Palestinian youth in the aftermath of the 1993 Oslo Accords. For those works that have come to illuminate the complex ways Palestinian youth are enduring various forms of state violence, settler colonial dispossession, and occupation, repression, and containment by the Palestinian political establishment and Israeli colonialism, they very often omit the prospective liberatory ideals, visions, practices, and strategies youth are cultivating. For all that is said on Palestine, how Palestinians are *collectively* theorizing their conditions, their aspirations, their struggles, and developing and envisioning strategies for liberation is not a critical feature of Palestine

scholarship within the US academy. **Where should we go when the historical record has been foreclosed upon by the last sky?**

In the above section, I have outlined how the notion of the last sky metaphysically aligns with the process of erasing Palestine, Palestinians, and Palestinian liberation from the historical record. But for Darwish, Said, and Ziadeh, the last sky is not only a metaphysical signifier of enclosure. It is quite literal. And it is this trope, within the Palestinian literary tradition, that has made me question why the *last sky* does not appear as an infinite descriptive feature in the literature of other sites, causes, and histories of (settler) colonialism, siege, and exile. My process of thinking through the distinctions of Zionist conquest, settlement, and occupation from other forms of racial colonialism and settler colonialism is not intended to hierarchize levels of severity, priority, causes, or to produce a hollow form of overlapping and shared solidarity. It is rather about learning how to look at differential contexts, examine intersections and overlaps, without eclipsing the ability to deeply know distinctive features between them. This is key for any project that privileges survival and liberation because philosophies and strategies utilized for certain causes, people, and places may not work or be desired for others.

The most impressive forms of scholarship on Palestine that I have come across have allowed me to reconceptualize strategies, optics, discourses, and frameworks of the Palestinian collective liberation project. They are not works that simply tell a story of an event nor do they offer an analytical or methodological frame *for* scholarship *on* Palestine the place, literal or phantasmatic. Rather, they are texts that offer stories of Palestine and the Palestinians and allow the analytical and methodological frames embedded in those stories to speak for themselves. The author's role is then to highlight and pronounce said frames. Works that are produced for the purpose of Palestinian (and all oppressed peoples) survival, political struggle,

and liberation are those that I revere most and that I aspire to engage and reproduce. These works allow for a scrupulous interrogation and redress of history, of the political struggle—both its monumental achievements and the impossible odds stacked up against the Palestinians—which has opened the margins for a conversation on what can be done to revitalize generative methodologies of liberation from the past and alter strategies to fit the reality of the present.

Rosemary Sayigh's *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* has been a canonical piece for my own political and intellectual growth, precisely because it has offered a template that reflects how oral history projects are not used simply to document a narrative for the sake of the historical record. Rather, she allows the narratives of the people she interviews to tell the story of how peasants who became refugees, who had lost everything, found ways to remember, connect, and partake in the national struggle against all the liminalities catastrophe would produce. Sayigh's work demonstrates how and why oral history is not just about self-determined narrative, for the sake of recognition, legibility, or representation alone. Instead, her work demonstrates how chronic conditions—real life material conditions—though they produce serious forms of trauma and loss, also produce profound possibility for resilience, memory work, survival, and resistance. This is an analytical and methodological form of *being Palestinian*, which Sayigh has exquisitely captured, and it allows for Palestinians and their optics to have a place in the historic record. I cannot stress how important this is in light of the perpetual *placelessness* Palestinians have endured. Her work has come to inspire my own ethnographic practice and purpose for highlighting transnational Palestinian youth collective desires, practices of power and politics, visions, and narratives as sites of theorization. Rather than treating the PYM as a case study, or Palestinian youth as subjects of study for theoretical abstraction, consumption, or imposition, my ethnographic practice does not distinguish

between scholarship and political practice. It all is in the pursuit of a *method* for Palestinian survival and liberation which necessarily relies on story-telling as a vernacular practice of theory for the oppressed.

Finding ways to keep Palestine and the Palestinians alive, thriving, and resisting when they have come to be erased from maps and dictionaries, as Elias Sunbar and Salman Abu Sitta have both illustrated for us, is quite a feat.⁸⁷ Even more difficult is finding ways to offer space to Palestinian histories and narrative when Palestinian archives have been a major target devastated in each Israeli incursion across time and place. Rona Sela argues that:

Israel conceals Palestinian treasures not only by physical means (seizing of booty or looting), but also by a strict system of management, control and 'knowledge production'—laws, rules, norms, methods and archive procedures such as censorship, restricted study, access prohibition/limitation, control over what is declassified (to whom and to what extent), cataloging and labeling according to Zionist codes and terminology that differ from the original Palestinian terminology, signifying Israeli⁸⁸ ownership over the material and more.

What Sela defines as Israeli ownership over the material, Ariella Azoulay borrowing from Walter Benjamin defines as a project of “constituent violence; that which utilizes force to impose a new political regime”⁸⁹ *but also* “an entire scopic regime that supports it.”⁹⁰ In a profound retrieval of photos from and critical examination against the colonial archive, Azoulay’s book *From Palestine to Israel* seamlessly outlines how the formation of the Israeli state would be co-constitutive with Palestinian dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and death. However, what is critical in Azoulay’s reading of the photographic record of the act of conquest is that she would expose how Zionist definition and meaning making would eliminate any trace, not only of the Palestinians, but of their own settler invasion, conquest, and constituent violence.⁹¹

The colonial archive could profoundly illustrate the events of 1947–1949 if it were not accompanied by a particular narrative established to give credence and consent to the project of settler colonialism and native elimination by eliding the full frame of constituent violence. Azoulay explains how, while Israelis have long been haunted by the term *Nakba* and have tried to deny its existence, in recent years, as it has surfaced intensely, they have disavowed any relation to it by identifying it as a signifier of “their” story, the story of the Palestinians. This demonstrates how Zionist narratives work to disentangle Palestinian narratives not only from the historical archive but also from the remembrance of their *Nakba* as being a critical condition of possibility of the Zionist project. But for Azoulay, there is no “their” and “our,” just as the term *war*, which has come to shape Israeli discourse of the events of 1947–1949, falsely suggests that two hostile sides engaged in wartime battles. Still, retrieving different accounts of history is an act that challenges the political regime that constituent violence has put in power. As Benjamin would note,

The chronicler, who recounts events without distinguishing between the great and small, thereby accounts for the truth that nothing which has ever happened is to be given as lost to history. Indeed, the past would fully befall only a resurrected humanity. Said another way: only for a resurrected humanity would its past, in each of its moments, be citable.⁹²

The Zionist narrative elides the complete account, suspends it, renames, recodes, re-catalogues, relabels it and produces and imposes it onto the transmitters of history. But Zionists do not eliminate any narrative trace of the Palestinians purely to settle their lands and naturalize their presence.

Whereas other European nations had long utilized colonization for the expansion of empire, Faye Sayegh has argued that the project of Zionist colonization of Palestine was

centrally a project of fulfilling the construction and consolidation of a Jewish nationalism.⁹³ For the early Zionists, settlement in Palestine became a project of creating a nation, utilizing colonization as a technique, while constructing a discursive regime that could conceal the settler colonial bases of the Zionist ideology and the act of conquest.. As Joseph Massad has profoundly illustrated, the Zionist unilateral Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948 resulted in the destruction and renaming of 385 Palestinian towns, the expulsion of nearly one million Palestinians, and Zionist control of 77% of historic Palestine.⁹⁴

Though the Declaration would be popularly consumed and articulated not as the creation of a state, but through Zionist discourses as a Declaration of Independence and a victory in the War of Independence, Massad demonstrates that there are no clear counterparts to the Zionist forces who, in fact, did not engage in a war of any kind. Massad argues that the Palestinians did not have an army, that the Arab armies had not been occupying any part of Palestine, and that the Zionists largely enjoyed global North endorsement for their ambitions in Palestine.⁹⁵ There is no better example of this than United Nations Resolution 181, 1947 partition plan in which the international community would vote to parcel away Palestinian lands and allocate them to a newly founded Israeli state. Massad argues that the naming of this event as a Declaration of Independence was part and parcel of the Zionist ideology, which would conceal Zionism as a settler colonial project and present itself rather as a form of anticolonial independence, often in comparison to the anticolonial independence in India.⁹⁶

Claims to socialist values and anticolonial independence became instrumental for the Zionist ideology and political project. At the same time, as Patrick Wolfe has argued, settler colonialism simultaneously relies on and requires the elimination of the native.⁹⁷ Palestinians can attest to this in what we know of our condition. However, in the previous iterations of

conquest and settler invasion, the process that led to so-called declarations of independence did not exactly posit the indigenous peoples as the embattled enemy of war from which settlers attempted to achieve independence. Rather, projects of independence were declared against the European states, the mother country, which birthed the colonies. In those movements of independence, the reliance on elimination of the native is simultaneously bound with the settlers' desire to shed the restrictions of empire from afar. Utilizing egalitarian principles, especially in the case of the 1776 US Declaration of Independence, these efforts relied on the language of freedom, modernity, progress, and democracy as major mobilizations to naturalize and declare a settler-state in contest to the power of British empire. In the case of the Zionist conquest of Palestine, which did not have a colonial empire it was detaching from or overturning and which enjoyed the support of the Global North from the United States to Britain to the Soviet Union, the embattled enemy of war thus became the figure of the Palestinian.

Zionism imagining and purporting itself to be an anticolonial enterprise has generated distinct paradoxes, which have determined the long-term ways the Israeli state and Zionist forces would deal with the Palestinians. On the one hand, the Declaration of Independence (DOI) and its constituent erasure of Palestinians, were necessary to naturalize Zionist presence and historical, political, spiritual, and linguistic claims to historic Palestine. This process of naturalizing Zionist power through declaring independence lays claim to an anti-colonial status in relation to the British Mandate in Palestine, while simultaneously suggests that Israel exists before its actual foundation. Here, we see how what Massad regarded as a *time-space compression* and what Benjamin and Azoulay describe as *constituent violence* mobilize the necessity to destroy and rebuild and rename atop of. This has been found in both the spatial terrains in Palestine as well as in the way Zionists generated archives and narratives to describe

the so-called War of Independence in order to, in Ariella Azoulay's words, "bury a stinking secret."⁹⁸ As Ann Stoler's work demonstrates by examining the colonial archive as a process and epistemological experiment rather than a fact or thing, the process of archiving is critical in shaping the narrative, epistemologies, structure, policies, and function of colonial states.⁹⁹

On the other hand, the phantom figure of the Palestinian enemy as infiltrator—a foreign, extra-vigilant, inherently violent, terrorist threat—played and continues to play a critical role in constructing, sustaining, and consolidating a Jewish identity and nationalism that is entangled in Zionism and invested in maintaining a Jewish-only Israeli state. Here is where the tensions between theories of settler colonial logic of elimination of the native and theories of racialization mandate an alternative reading. They are not antithetical projects to one another, as Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini have argued.¹⁰⁰ Prominent settler-colonial theorists have argued that franchise colonialism necessarily relied on the racialization of the Native vis-à-vis constructing a Master-Slave dialectic, whereas settler-colonialism intended to eliminate by dispossession, genocide and cultural assimilation. Veracini argues that the Israeli state operated as a settler colonial project up until 1967, but by acquiring the territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and absorbing it under martial military occupation, (which in turn work to hyper-racialize the Palestinians) it had exhausted itself as a settler-colonial project precisely because the primary goal of its project was no longer elimination but rather racial containment.¹⁰¹

While scholars of settler colonial studies have long argued that the question of labor has played a critical role in differentiating franchise colonialism from settler colonialism and in deciphering the way racial logics and policies are implemented, the Zionist project, and particularly its ideological and discursive functions, demonstrates that both forms could exist simultaneously. Palestine presents two points which challenge Patrick Wolfe's theorization

regarding the elimination of the Native.¹⁰² First, Wolfe falls short of seeing that both genocidal elimination, transfer and dispossession can intersect upon the same population at the same time or across different moments and in the same geography. Forms of Israeli racial containment, policing, and occupation of Palestinians, especially after 1967, and the enactment of policies of cultural, spiritual, and physical elimination, demonstrate that these two strategies can certainly co-constitute a colonial ideology and system.¹⁰³

Second, Israeli dependence on Palestinian labor has changed its form across place and time. Whereas Israel relied, to a limited degree, on exploitable Palestinian labor in the initial years, that changed after Israel acquired the West Bank and Gaza Strip as occupied territories in 1967. Since then, Israel has diligently attempted to disentangle the states reliance on exploitable Palestinian labor and thus the replacement of their labor with labor of other migrants in many ways constitutes a form of native elimination. Though Israel has managed to eliminate reliance on Palestinian labor, this does not mean that the bodies of Palestinians experiencing racial containment, siege, captivity, and violence is not in fact a form of generative labor for the colonial power. For one, the testing of weapons technologies on Palestinian bodies in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank has made the Israeli state a leading player in the global arms trade and a pioneer in crowd control and surveillance technologies.¹⁰⁴ Achille Mbembe notes that, “the most accomplished form of necro-power is the contemporary colonial occupation of Palestine.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, these forms of labor that Palestinians practice, which have come to both overlap and define their existential being, signifies a parrallel with the ways imprisoned bodies must be registered as a form of labor in the context of racial capitalism.¹⁰⁶

The Zionist project not only relies on dispossession, exile, and elimination to naturalize settler presence and the Israeli state, but it also relies on Palestinians to function as an

existential enemy so that it can continue consolidating a Jewish national identity as embattled with and interchangeable with the Israeli state. The Palestinians come to stand in for and shoulder the responsibilities of European anti-Semitism, Nazi Germany, and the Third Reich's enactment of ethnic cleansing, because it is precisely these narratives that necessitate an exception for Israel. Where the world can no longer tolerate de jure forms of racial segregation and apartheid, one exception can be overtly made in Israel because of the historical catastrophes that befell the Jews within Europe's own territories. Never mind that such catastrophe had befallen most colonized places of the global South. Anti-Semitism became the only form of legible, intolerable hate in the historical record. This is not necessarily because it is distinct from the forms of human suffering, ethnic cleansing, and catastrophe other racial bodies and cartographies have underwent, but rather because it is this specific history that has offered a vital legitimacy to the existence of a Jewish-only state. Said history has enabled the moral, legal, and political justification for a project of settler colonialism to commence at the same time anticolonial insurgency would shake the foundations of European colonial hegemony.

In other words, what could maintain the national cohesion of the Israeli state if it were not for its identity as both an exception and norm, and its position as both an ongoing victim of the wrath of history and a profoundly powerful state on both geo-political and global scales? As Sherene Razack notes, and as I expand on in chapter one, Palestinianness has been constructed through racial logics as the antithesis of modernity.¹⁰⁷ If Israel is to sustain its ideological and discursive regimes that anchor, partake in, belong, and contribute to modernity, then it must always have an existential enemy threatening its ambitions that exists outside of, and can never belong to, modernity. It is in this context that much of the scholarship, narrative, and discourse

on Palestine in the West is either silenced, erased, or made invisible while simultaneously hyper-contained, besieged, scrutinized, surveilled, and subject to accusatory claims of terrorism.

Unraveling the layers of methods used to vanish any trace of Palestinian narratives is a daunting task in light of the way Zionist enclosures of narrative and the historic record have limited Palestinians' space for intellectual exchange. What is even more difficult is finding ways to produce scholarship meaningful and relevant to Palestinian liberation while Palestinian narratives are enclosed through persistent attacks, criminalization, and surveillance. In attaching myself to the concept of *method* for scholarship *and* political practice of liberation as interchangeable, I have continuously struggled with the liminal space afforded to Palestinians to explore our stories, access our histories, assert our narratives, and construct epistemological frames both within scholarly circuits and political genealogies. Even more narrow avenues exist to link these two dimensions in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords, as chapter two will demonstrate. But in confronting these troubles, certain works have saved me, works that provide robust, full accounts of Palestinian history and experiences, and critical overviews of the shifting political variables of the Palestinian cause. These works offer order as an asset, not a bureaucratic burden, when the Palestinian condition is seemingly orderless. They offer in-depth archival work when Palestinian archives have been destroyed and replaced by colonial archives. They offer a form of precision in their writing techniques, indexes, dictionaries, acronyms, figures, and statistics, all while maintaining an authorial tone with a profoundly consistent political conviction.

Walid Khalidi's *All that Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* offers a brilliant account of the topography of Palestine before and after 1948 and the Zionist strategies to destroy and depopulate Palestine as it would realize its settler colonial

ambitions. For youth, especially youth of the *shatat*, Khalidi's book offers the most intimate connection we might have to this place called Palestine and to how our ancestors were dispossessed of their homes and lands. Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* provides a similar feeling of connection, though it also considers the co-constituted forms of violence that instituted a new settler-nation-state while simultaneously executing the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages, committing numerous massacres, and driving out nearly one million Palestinians in what would become one of the greatest exoduses of modern history.¹⁰⁸ Samih K. Farsoun's and Naseer Aruri's *Palestine and the Palestinians* has offered, on a parallel track to Khalidi and Pappé's work, one of the most laborious accounts of Palestinian social and political history from the turn of the 20th century through the Oslo Accords. Particularly, it synthesizes and elaborates critical outcomes of the national movement between 1964 and 1993, years when it had experienced several major moments of political crisis and interfaced with regional and global shifting power arrangements.

These works have been particularly critical for me and have heightened my desire to produce scholarship on Palestine that is bound to liberation objectives amidst the tumultuous terrain of the annihilation of Palestinian narrative. I argue that these methods of annihilation constitute the second last sky, that is, the site where Palestinian narratives are under persistent attack, foreclosed upon, and erased from the historic record. Through the destruction of archives and monuments, through establishing specified rubrics of objectivity and neutrality, through presenting Zionism and Israel as an exceptional case at times and as part of an anticolonial current at other times, through the persistent criminalization of Palestinian aspirations, voice, language, narrative, and meaning making; the second last sky has become a central characteristic of the Palestinian condition. It has made it so that even articulating truths

of Palestinian social worlds becomes a process entangled with, at best, surveillance and suspicion and, at worst, punitive measures, including imprisonment, deportation, and death. This form of annihilation of Palestinian survival, liberation, and resistance discourses and theorizations is another form of displacement for Palestinians in order to give place, credence, and legitimacy to the exceptional status of Zionism and its institutional form, the Israeli state.

Foreclosure of Political Genealogies of Struggle

The third last sky came with the 1993 Oslo Accords, in which the new Palestinian generation experienced a foreclosure of genealogies of struggle and the subsequent fracture of the Palestinian nation transnationally. Internationally heralded as the best promise for peace the region had ever seen, the Oslo Accords facilitated the sustenance and intensification of Israeli settler colonial land theft, dispossession, and racial colonial violence. Simultaneously, Oslo facilitated the de-suturing of the Palestinian people from one another on both political and social levels and a fractured of a unifying liberation vision and national infrastructure to act out grassroots popular modes of resistance at all levels and in all places, which could lend itself to cumulative gains of political power. However, Oslo was not an abrupt disjunction from the Palestinian national trajectory, but the result of historical and transnational conditions of possibility. Retrospectively, it is clear that an array of figures within the leftist Palestinian intellectual and political tradition experienced anxieties regarding the forthcoming last sky; they warned of and attempted to suspend and intercept its arrival, unfortunately without success.¹⁰⁹

For Palestinian youth, the Oslo regime made finding meaningful ways to partake in the national struggle a process fraught with complexity. They came to be a generation that would shoulder burdens of history—burdens of Zionist violence, of a Palestinian comprador class

capitulation to such violence, of Arab regime corroboration with the occupying forces, and of global endorsement or silence and “neutrality” to their oppression—but they were unable to retrieve the generative elements of history, which could prepare them to resist the multiplying forms of oppression they were enduring and to protect their land, themselves, and their people. For these youth, finding ways to shoulder the burdens of colonial violence coupled with multiple forms of fragmentation among the Palestinian nation – including geographic, ideological, and political fragmentation – in the so-called “post-peace-process” era became an insurmountable feat as conditions became even more dire and Palestinian collective power continued to plummet. While this era has seemingly suggested that there is nothing left to be done, conditions of constant death, siege, and deprivation continuously evoked impulses in these youth that something must be done. This paradox has fueled a sense of possibility, despite all odds. At the advent of the 2011 Arab uprisings that sense of possibility became heightened when on popular levels, attachments to revolutionary possibility put the last nail in the coffin for any hope of redeeming the Oslo framework.

Chapter two of this dissertation more deeply elaborates the ways the Oslo Accords devastated Palestine and the sustenance of the Palestinian collective resistance. The effects of the Oslo Accords illustrate how the Palestinian condition presents a striking paradox. How is it that a people who have endured settler colonial dispossession and martial law occupation for so long were able to establish a nation with national infrastructure for the purposes of revolutionary liberation but without a state? How did the Oslo Accords present the Palestinians with all of the burdens of statehood but destroy the Palestinian nation? Here, I outline four devastating impacts of the Oslo Accords, which continue to largely shape the struggles for the

new generation of Palestine's youth movement. It is due to these catastrophic effects that I consider the 1993 Oslo Accords to mark the third and final last sky for the Palestinian condition.

The Oslo Accords mark a critical juncture for the Palestinian people, liberation project, strategy, movement, and leadership. Palestinians characterize this era in history as the crystalizing moment where our movement shifted from an anticolonial, national liberation project to a project of state building. First, the rampant fragmentation across geographic, political, class, and socio-political lines limited the revitalization of a unified liberation project in which all stakeholders could engage and be represented. Second, the ascendancy of a Palestinian political governing body organized through the new Palestinian National Authority—hereby referred to as the Palestinian Authority (PA)—shifted the Palestinian leadership's role from that of the forerunners of a liberation project to that of a territorial governing force. Since its inception in 1993, but particularly after 2007 in which new economic development plans and security cooperation with the Israeli forces would become strengthened, many young Palestinians have come to view the PA as more of an impediment to a revitalized liberation struggle and as gatekeepers to the Israeli occupation. These changes resulted in the nullification of any legitimate role for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the umbrella organization comprised of most Palestinian political parties, unions, and associations, which had cultivated and forerun the Palestinian liberation project from 1964–1993.¹¹⁰

The transnational institutional arrangement and function of the PLO had demonstrated that an entire infrastructure for a nation could exist across a multiplicity of borders, and without a state. Moreover, finding ways to engage its people, to care for and respond to the crisis of violence, war, refugeehood, and exile had been a critical function of the PLO's transnational infrastructure. Palestinian trade unions advocated for rights of Palestinian workers in various

Arab countries. In the field of medicine, the Palestinian Red Crescent Association had established seven hospitals in Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt and would come to establish 25 popular clinics in nine countries, which served both civilian and commando populations.¹¹¹ On educational levels, the PLO established summer education programs, subsidized educational costs (especially after the 1967 exodus of Palestinian school-aged children to Kuwait), and an array of educational support programs and services to the children of martyred Palestinians. For instance, the Association of Workshops for the Children of Martyrs offered the families of martyred Palestinians vocational trainings, scholarships, and educational access services.¹¹² On research and development levels, the PLO established the Palestine information center with several offices in different locations. They would come to produce famous newspapers, including *Falastin al-Thawra*, and news agencies, such as *Wafa*. They would also produce a research center committed to establishing a Palestinian library, archival sources, and intellectual journals and books that address the question of Palestine through research on revolutionary theory, strategy, and tactics.¹¹³ The Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), had developed three military substations in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria.¹¹⁴ The PLO's businesses, which had sustained a certain level of self-reliance and service to the people, played a major role in limiting the ability of debt to alter the political vision and trajectory of the movement. The function of the Palestine National Fund (PNF), which arranged a fixed tax levied on Palestinians by Arab governments and solicited revenue from Arab governments and friendly global nations, established a semi-autonomous financial substructure.¹¹⁵ Anyone familiar with critical perspectives on neo-liberalism understands that financial autonomy also can and has sustained elements of political self-determination, sovereignty.

Following the birthing of the PA in 1993, the role and function of the PLO drastically changed. While the PLO historically had internal schisms around questions of their role as leaders of the liberation project versus their role as representatives for the Palestinian people, following the 1974 Rabat summit resolution, they came to serve both purposes. However, they had maintained that their representative position was not one of governance over particular jurisdictions or territories in order to sustain their position as the forerunners of a liberation project rather than a government par excellence. The 1993 formation of the PA saw, on the one hand, the declining political power of the PLO and its supplementation with the role of the PA. This caused the meaning and mandate of the PLO to deteriorate and contributed to the neglect of reorganizing and revitalizing PLO unions, associations, and businesses, which had largely halted activities after 1993. Within this new political context, it became increasingly difficult to reactivate the PLO and its national institutions and to reorganize its composition to include Palestinian forces that did not fall under the PLO's umbrella, including both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.¹¹⁶ The exclusion of up-and-coming Palestinian forces from partaking in the PLO contributed to the hollowing of the PLO of its historical significance and mandate and facilitated increasing political and geographic fragmentation of the Palestinian nation. On the other hand, the PA began to take up an international diplomatic position as the representative of Palestine; this became more pervasive after the 2011 and 2012 Palestinian bid for statehood recognition to the United Nations and contributed to the fragmentation of the Palestinian people inside Palestine and across the world. Where the PLO was a representative body of all Palestinians in the world, the PA was intended to act as a governing force for only slivers of historic Palestine. Eventually, the PA would come to be both a representative body as well as a policing force, but

it was not an anchor for a liberation political project for all Palestinians and it was certainly not in the business of ensuring refugee return to historic Palestine.

The third impact of the Oslo Accords was the proliferation of a new Palestinian national bourgeoisie and comprador class, which pursued a project of building a capitalist Palestinian economy without achieving true political self-determination and territorial sovereignty. In this context, the Oslo Accords marks a hardened line in which Palestinian political and economic life would become engulfed by neo-liberalism's frames, policies and demands. The new Palestinian elite class, in privileging profit and individual accumulation of capital rather than collective freedom for all Palestinians, thus acted as impediments to a collective political liberation project. Their pursuit of a capitalist economy threw the Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (OPT) into escalating debt to international agencies, such as the IMF and World Bank, and to international state and non-state actors. This form of debt-based society also deeply entangled the Palestinian and Israeli economy with one another, but while the Israelis maintained their occupation, Palestinians became increasingly less self-reliant and autonomous.

These changes drastically altered organized political activity in Palestinian society. Political decisions among the Palestinians were increasingly made based on coercive concessions resulting from unsustainable and desperate economic living conditions. It also launched an expanding non-profit industrial complex as a main employer in the OPT, which played a critical role in flattening asymmetrical power in the OPT and inhibiting the resuscitation of the social infrastructure that had long been a staple in popular resistance prior to the Oslo Accords.¹¹⁷ It also played a critical role in introducing capitalist consumer rationalities and

bureaucratic functions of logistics as an additional layer of violence upon Palestinian life in the OPT. As Jake Alimahomed-Wilson notes:

Israeli aggression enacted on the Palestinian logistics infrastructure should be contextualized within the broader history of the role of logistics in imperialist wars, state making, capitalist expansion, and colonial violence. As Laleh Khalili (2017) notes, 'across time, logistics have proven crucial to the work of conquest.' Relatedly, we argue that Israel's colonial domination of Palestine's logistics and goods movement infrastructure (ports, roads, and supply chain) remains a central aspect of subsidizing both the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine and the broader Zionist settler colonial project.¹¹⁸

While logistics have thus historically played a role in "imperialist wars, state making, capitalist expansion, and colonial violence," Israel's domination of the Palestinian logistics infrastructure has served as a method of both consolidating the Zionist settler colonial project and preventing Palestine from functioning as a sovereign nation-state even as it bears all the burdens of statehood.

Following the Oslo Accords, the Israeli project of occupation and dispossession persisted exponentially, yet Palestinians found themselves with little power to be able to resist through organized vehicles as they once had because of the split in national unity, political coercion facilitated by economic aid, a disarmed movement, and the intensification of physical siege, splintering of land, and Israeli military aggression. Though all these dynamics have impeded the success of any attempts at reigniting a Palestinian liberation project, Palestinian youth remain at the core of the variegated organized and decentralized forms of Palestinian individual and collective resistance and symbolize the fighting spirit of Palestinian peoplehood and history. Though they may inhabit temporal and physical sites of siege limiting genealogical and

geographic mobility, their resistance is constantly in flux because it is demanded for the survival of a people trying to fight a project of erasure and racial occupation.

The ways in which Palestinian youth navigated the post-Oslo intellectual, infrastructural, political, economic, and geographic forms of fragmentation and paralysis is testament to this persisting relationship between young people and their desires and attempts to reverse the effects of the Oslo Accords in order to reconstitute the Palestinian peoplehood/nation and its collective liberation visions and strategies. What then becomes difficult is how to retrieve knowledge, power, and maintain some form of institutional history when it is constantly enclosed upon. The 1993 Oslo Accords demonstrates an enclosure of the political genealogy of the national movement as it was anchored in 1964 and destroyed in 1993.¹¹⁹ Its legacy, learned lessons, and many of its critical figures are still available to Palestinian youth; however, it takes intentional commitment, work, and study to retrieve such knowledge as it no longer stands as the common-sense narrative within Palestinian societies both inside and outside Palestine.

Of all of the Palestinian youth today, it is those youth who formally belong to members of Palestinian political parties who have the most access to these genealogies of struggle, and particularly to genealogies of strategies on how to constitute the nation and establish a political program. But because of how drastically Palestinian social and political life has changed after Oslo, the knowledge of these histories alone does not allow for a continuation of such genealogies. In chapter one, I detail the way this rupture from history and from genealogies of struggle produced a persistent sense of historical and genealogical enclosure for Palestinians across time and space. The paralysis that inhibits Palestinian youth from enacting and engaging in politics as part of genealogies of struggle is accompanied by insurmountable levels of despair, exhaustion, and pain, and it has become an unceasing feature of the Palestinian ontology of

Nakba. A critical distinction of 1993 was that there no longer remained a liberation project for all Palestinians, for all of Palestine, with a vehicle, structure, and strategies equipped to assist the Palestinians in picking up and starting again. In the end, the third and last sky for Palestinians was the enclosure of the national liberation project of 1964–1993, facilitated by the Oslo Accords. This third last sky exacerbated settler colonial violence and dispossession and resulted in the de-suturing of Palestinian visions, strategies, and tactics for self-defense, collective empowerment, and social cohesion. This has become a critical dimension of what I argue has always constituted a Palestinian ontology of *Nakba*.

A Palestinian Ontology of Nakba

*The last time you saw me, I had a white heart with a black dot...
Now, I have a black heart, a hard heart, with a tiny white speckle right in the middle*¹²⁰

The Great Return March mobilizations signified a popular cross-generational and cross-border return to the historical discourse of return that had long shaped the Palestinian narrative prior to the 1993 Oslo Accords. This discursive turn is surely a result of the deterioration of conditions in Palestine and for Palestinians everywhere over the last quarter century, particularly since the 1993 Oslo Accords and the *Nakbat* it has initiated. But I argue that a return to these historical tenets of the national struggle has been made possible because of a reconceptualization of *al-Nakba* among Palestinian youth who are shouldering the pain and suffering of increasingly egregious Israeli assaults, exile, and military siege. Rather than referencing only the events of 1948, Palestinian youth have come to define *Nakba* as a constant experience for the Palestinian people. They examine how their current conditions are produced through multiple *Nakbat* (catastrophes) across multiple times and spaces, both within and outside of Palestine. As they come together, in meetings and conferences, such as through the

PYM or through digital means—as in the case of the transnational mobilization for the Great Return March—these youth constitute what I have termed a spatial-temporal arrangement that could tie together *Nakbat*, define them as an existential colonial condition of the Palestinian people, and work to theorize strategies in which they might achieve Palestinian liberation from such a condition.

At the onslaught of the Great March of Return, Al Quds News Network conducted an interview with Heema, a Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip. He said, “People inherit houses, they inherit money, they inherit dollars, they inherit tons of gold. But the Palestinian people inherit *Nakbat* (catastrophes), they inherit tragedies, they inherit hell.”¹²¹ The three minute, fifty-five second video illuminates the harsh reality of living under siege in the Gaza Strip, including the lack of access to work, water, food, money, and so much more. Heema goes on to state, “I lost many of my friends. Many of them were wounded. Many of them were martyred. I lost some of my dearest friends. Every day, every day, every day, we lose the people dearest to our hearts.”¹²²

On March 30, 2018, the massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip at the onset of the Great Return March sparked a new wave of fury and dissent among Palestinian youth in different places. The Transnational Mobilization of Palestinian Youth – a group initially formed in 2015 to coordinate a series of protests in support of Palestinian uprisings against escalating Israeli land theft and settler-vigilante violence¹²³ – reactivated itself with just a few of its original members. These members passed on information about the 2015 mobilizations to a handful of younger Palestinian youth who would become the key leaders of the new mobilization efforts. These young leaders developed a new network of Palestinian youth, most under the age of 25, who lived in 13 different countries. Together, these youth launched a new call to action and

quickly developed a collective organizing infrastructure to see through the mobilizations, which the urgency of the conditions in the Gaza Strip had demanded.¹²⁴ They created a coordination committee comprised of 60 people from 13 countries, including youth inside the besieged Gaza Strip.¹²⁵ This newly formed group called itself the Transnational Great Return March and were insistent that despite where Palestinians had ended up, all Palestinian youth had both a right and responsibility to enact political protest to support our people in Gaza but also to remedy 70 years of occupation and dispossession, which had impacted the broader Palestinian nation.¹²⁶

At the beginning of the transnational coordination efforts, the youth discussed the importance of not framing the mobilization as one in solidarity with the people in Gaza. They instead emphasized that they were all Palestinian youth experiencing Zionist violence—at varying forms and uneven levels—and in the end, there remains one Palestinian people, one common oppressor, and one common event of history from which all contemporary forms of our oppression and subjugation stem, *al-Nakba*. These youth engaged in an array of conversations in which the key element was the political insistence on generating one common, unified Palestinian voice to demand the refugee right of return to all of Palestine on the 70th year anniversary of the Palestinian *Nakba*.

On April 19, 2018, Yarmouk Refugee Camp on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria—once known as the political headquarters of the Palestinian *shatat*—experienced a renewed military offensive by the Bashar Al-Assad regime, which decimated all remaining parts of the camp.¹²⁷ The camp had been under regime siege since 2012 and constantly embattled in the Syrian civil war, resulting in multiple mass exoduses of Yarmouk’s population and innumerable deaths caused by war violence and starvation.¹²⁸ By 2014, the people who had remained in Yarmouk resorted to eating cats to survive perilous food shortages under siege in the camp, and

conditions only continued to worsen.¹²⁹ In the days that followed the April 19 attack, several of the youth who comprised the committee for the transnational mobilization of the Great March of Return shared voice notes over the WhatsApp coordination list.¹³⁰ The messages were sent by friends and relatives of the youth in the coordination committee, outlining in detail the devastation that the camp was undergoing.

The group debated what they could do to illustrate a shared experience among the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip to Yarmouk and how they could discuss what was currently befalling Gaza and Yarmouk in relation to historical massacres, sieges, and exoduses in Palestinian history. Despite distinctions and dissimilarities between these youth and their life experiences and even though few had ever actually met one another in person, they were able to agree to a unifying discourse of the Palestinian condition as rooted in the *Nakba*. However, for these youth, *Nakba* was not exactly an event of history but rather a descriptive feature of the Palestinian collective condition. There was not an impulse to define one event of *Nakba* as worthier for the historic record or more damaging to the Palestinian people than another. It was not a comparative assessment or measure of the severity of catastrophe in different locales or in different moments in history. Rather, *Nakba* was understood as an ontological condition that linked Palestinians across time and space through a shared experience of catastrophe and displacement.

On May 8, 2018, a video produced by a group called “Voice of Yarmouk Camp,” surfaced and circulated the Internet. It featured Palestinians from Yarmouk Camp who had been displaced and were currently staying in cloth-tent refugee camps in Deir Balut camp in Afrin.¹³¹ The video features interviews with two Palestinian men, who seamlessly outline the precarity of

the Palestinian cross-generational experience of *hisar* (siege), *ghurba* (refugee-hood), and *shatat* (exile). When discussing his re-location to Deir Balut, the first man says:

It is what it is, you are witnessing. Tents, refugeehood, suffering. History will repeat itself. This is what it was for our parents and grandparents. And we are renewing the new chapter of the Palestinian people's story. We have come back to camps [tent camps]. As if all these years have come and gone and nothing has changed. You can see with your own eyes. The disaster that our ancestors lived, we are living too. The only difference is the first one for our parents and grandparents was caused by Israel and for us, the Arab regimes. And you can see for yourself what has become of us. Yes, this is our unfortunate reality resisting for life. Tents! People said we were camp people, this is true, I guess. May God protect my children.... With the anniversary of Nakba coming, what do we need as a better example? If we are the camp people, then we have come and gone from camp to camp to camp to camp. Every time we hear we are a citizen [naturalized], turns out we are not citizens [naturalized]. We always go back to the camp. The camp has become the homeland. Wherever we go, the camp basically is my national identity. In all of our locations of exile, it's prohibited to set up a home, except the camp. The camp is home. It's the truth.¹³²

In discussing his experience in Yarmouk, the man utilizes the term *mukhayyam* (camp), a descriptive word of the temporal, fleeting refugee camps composed of cloth tents and often placed in desolate areas, which Palestinians have long ended up in after each hot war and exodus across time and place. But he also utilizes the term *mukhayyam* to reference the concrete refugee camp where Palestinians had made a home, lived for extended periods of time, raised new generations, and built anew after their original expulsion from Palestine in 1948—after the first last sky. For this man, the term *mukhayyam* evokes the excruciating pain, loss, and trauma that accompanies the Palestinian condition, but he simultaneously describes it as a perpetual existence and as the only home he and other Palestinians have ever known.

The second Palestinian man who was featured in the same video shares similar sensibilities that the experience of dispossession, loss, and destruction has become an intrinsic feature of the Palestinian condition across generations and places. He defines this condition of perpetual uncertainty and vulnerability as one that, in part, stems from systemic forms of aid that continues to make Palestinians dependent on handouts of global systems complicit in their subjugation and which does not strengthen or support their desires to be truly free people. He says:

Only God knows, what will happen to the Palestinian people? Where will our children be raised? My father lived in a camp, my grandfather in a camp and now me in a camp. Who knows where we are going? Hunger, siege, suffering and the destruction of the camp over our heads. And then they sent us and said go get help from the aid organizations, which ones? Who is going to look for us? There are no civil Palestinian organizations, the United Nations isn't asking about its people, no one is asking about the Palestinian people. We have been in this condition for 70 years and no one is concerned with us. Now what? We don't want aid brother, we don't want it. The dogs aren't hungry! Don't give us aid, we don't want it, we are not hungry, we don't want it. We want freedom. We want to live in a home, live in our land. Where, where every 20 years they send us to new camps. We build concrete homes and they destroy them, collapse them over the bodies of the people who live in them. This is what the Arab regimes are. No one wants us.¹³³

These two narratives illustrate the way Palestinians of Yarmouk Refugee Camp do not come to remember the *Nakba* as a past event or story passed on.¹³⁴ Rather, they come to experience *Nakba*—both the millennial impact of the events of the war of 1947–1949 and the current *Nakba* they are enduring and surviving.

The story of Yarmouk and of the many Palestinian camps burned to ash in Syria is certainly not the first time and place where catastrophe would dispossess Palestinian refugees

and destroy that which was once to be their temporary home but which had become the only home they knew. Yarmouk, however, signifies how the Palestinian refugee position as stateless subjects would persistently warrant their imprisonment, besiegement, death, and exile. Those experiences have been shared for Palestinians across place and time since 1948. In Lebanon, the 1976 siege and massacre of thousands of Palestinians in Tel al-Zaatar refugee camp and the 1982 siege and massacre of thousands more Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila camps are some of the more well-known cases.¹³⁵ In 2006, over 1,600 Palestinians from Iraq became displaced as a result of the war. Because of their position as stateless, they were left stranded at the Iraq–Syria Waleed Border Crossing with little access to food, water, and aid for nearly three years.¹³⁶ Thousands more impending exoduses, massacres, sieges, and denaturalization processes have made the lives of Palestinians in *ghurba* and *shatat* precarious, even when not directly as a result of the violence of the Israeli Defense Force.

For Palestinians of the *shatat*, detentions and deportations have also become an ongoing signifier of being Palestinian. For example, in 1991 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who were expelled from Kuwait spent 12 days sleeping in the Cairo International Airport.¹³⁷ In 1993, Palestinians who were expelled from Libya spent weeks stranded between the borders with Egypt.¹³⁸ Just a few years ago, the Jordanian kingdom threatened to revoke the naturalization papers of scores of Palestinians who had lived in Jordan their entire lives.¹³⁹ Hundreds of political figures have been exiled from Palestine as well, including Palestinians who were Israeli citizens and played a role within the Israeli political system, such as in the well-known case of Azmi Bishara.¹⁴⁰

For Palestinians of the far *shatat*, a permanent sense of safety, security, and naturalization also remains a process fraught with complexity. In some cases, Zionist Mossad

operations have deliberately targeted Palestinians of the shatat in multiple forms, including through assassinations and assassination attempts.¹⁴¹ Numerous Palestinians have been assassinated over the last 70 years across various countries, mostly through Europe but also in the United States. Among the most famous of cases was that of Wael Zuaiter, who was accused of participating in the Munich Massacre; on October 16, 1972, he was shot 13 times by Israeli agents outside his apartment in Rome, Italy.¹⁴² Another well-known case is that of Alex Odeh, the West Coast Regional Director of the American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. Odeh was killed in a bombing in his Santa Ana, California office on August 17, 1985 by members affiliated with the Jewish Defense League.¹⁴³ Following September 11, 2001, scores of Palestinians in the US faced trumped up terrorism charges, rendering them further vulnerable to state repression and persecution on behalf of Zionist-inspired Islamophobia. At least thirty-three cases of the one-thousand charges of terrorism were charges brought against Palestinians, among them the famous cases of Dr. Sami Al-Arian, the Board members of the Holy Land Fund, and the case of Ramea Odeh.¹⁴⁴ The Palestinian shatat have experienced thousands more cases of criminalization, deportation, and denaturalization processes by state operatives, which have become central to the lack of permanence of home, safety, and security as stateless and landless subjects.

Rashid Khalidi argues that borders, crossing points, checkpoints and airports—all those modern iterations of belonging and exclusion and security and suspicion—“illustrate[s] the most basic issues raised by Palestinian identity.”¹⁴⁵ But these issues, which are embedded in the Palestinian experience, are not only experienced by the Palestinians who live under occupation or only by the Palestinian refugees whose mukhayamat—those temporary camps, which were intended to offer refuge from the violence of dispossession and siege—became sites of

dispossession and siege themselves. The quintessential Palestinian experience of constantly experiencing an enclosure of the Zionist project of elimination is felt in acute ways even for Palestinians who have acquired other forms of citizenship and who attempt to return, even for a visit, to the homeland. Rabab Abdulhadi says:

In the Palestinian case, going home assumes further complications, especially in view of the Israeli Law of Return, which bestows automatic citizenship on Jews arriving in Israel while denying the indigenous Palestinian population the right to return to the homes from which they were uprooted in 1948. For the Palestinian exiled, going home brings back memories of one's worst nightmares at international borders: interrogation and harassment, suspicion of malintent, and rejection of one's chosen self-identification.¹⁴⁶

If one common theme links these uneven scales of precarity among Palestinians in different times, places, and contexts, it is the perpetual feeling that at any given moment, everything could be stripped of you, and the feeling of having to start again will be resurrected. In my own familial experience, this sense shaped many of the day-to-day habits of my grandfather, including making him an exceptional archiver and notetaker who documented almost everything in his life.

Ample critical works have linked the Palestinian *Nakba* to questions of how it is remembered, re-lived, and how memory work recognizes and mobilizes *Nakba*.¹⁴⁷ For example, Lila Abu-Lughod and Ahmad H. Sa'di have defined al-Nakba as “both in Palestinian memory and history, the demarcation line between two qualitatively opposing periods” and a “key event in the Palestinian calendar—a baseline for personal histories and the sorting of generations.”¹⁴⁸ Samera Esmeir argues the *Nakba* of 1948 signifies conquest and that what would come to be Israel would not have been made possible if it were not for the destruction of conquest. This is why she argues there remains a perpetual need to turn away and deny the *Nakba*, but “this

denial is equally impossible because the 1948 death was not total; it left behind, in the scene of destruction, some witnesses and later they would remember.”¹⁴⁹ Abu Eyad, a founding member of the Palestinian Student Union (PSU) and General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in Cairo in 1959 who later became a critical figure of the Palestinian national movement, spoke of the immediate effects of the 1948 *Nakba* for Palestinian youth. He argued:

No one knew that this was our last days in Palestine, that this chaos would leave a gap in our soul. And we, the children of it, did not know that the memory of it was later to haunt the inner history of our whole generation.¹⁵⁰

His description of the 1948 *Nakba* as leaving a “gap in our soul” strikingly resembles the quote that I have opened this section with. Noor, a Palestinian from Yarmouk Refugee Camp newly displaced to Lebanon as a result of the war, argues that the events of the recent years have left him with a black, hardened heart with only a small speckle of white. That speckle resembles the hope that still persists despite all that has been laid to rubble, despite all he has witnessed and lost, and despite the violence incurred on the Palestinian people as a result of yet another siege, another massacre, and another exodus. Much scholarship refers to the years between 1948 and 1964 as the lost years, the hopeless years, the years of shock and of grief.¹⁵¹ But in reviewing almost 30 texts on *Nakba*, it dawned upon me that something was missing.

In an abundance of the texts written on *Nakba*, it remains referred to as an event of history. But as Patrick Wolfe has demonstrated, invasion is not an event but a structure. Various forms of Palestinian remembering, memorializing, commemorating, and an array of techniques of memory work demonstrate the profound attachment Palestinians have to the events of 1948 as a descriptive feature of Israeli dispossession and violence and of the Palestinian struggle as it continues on. Several of these works articulate how Zionist settler colonialism operates as a

structure and as a discursive regime. But no works that I have found have argued of the way Nakba has come to be a persistent condition for Palestinians across time and space. It has come to be a definitive feature of Palestinian insecurity and lack of permanence. It has become a constant experience of displacement, exodus, siege, imprisonment, and death across generations.

I argue that this absence of articulating Nakba as an ontology rather than event, memory of the past, or structure of settler colonial invasion is in part because the Palestinian national movement played a critical role in forestalling narratives of catastrophe and victimization during the years of 1964–1993. Various scholarship defines this period as a phase of monumental shifts within Palestinian social conditions, forms of being, existing, and understanding of their condition.¹⁵² Describing the 1948 Nakba's social effects on the Palestinian people, Constantin Zureiq, historian of and critical figure in the Arab national movement, noted how both people and "their views and the ideas of their fellow countrymen" were displaced and "left to roam."¹⁵³ While the Palestinians remained stateless, landless, scattered, and dispossessed, a vehicle, strategy, and trajectory would gather these roaming views and offer some form of ground for Palestinians with the formation of the PLO in 1964. The movement amplified images, songs, narratives, and sensibilities of Palestinian resistance, survival, freedom, and liberation. These notions were informed by a Palestinian ontology of Nakba but suspended a realization of such ontology for the purpose of keeping open the possibility to escape it. Enclosed upon by land, sea, and sky and by international legal frames and the historic record, Palestinians have long experienced catastrophe without having time or space to escape it totally or to wait away the uncertainty of the moment. Instead, between the years of 1964 and 1993 (some phases within this span being more critical than others), Palestinians found ways to resist,

survive, take space, and construct time, despite having undergone two major enclosures. Palestinians had always existed in a perpetual ontology of Nakba, but the third and final last sky, the 1993 Oslo Accords, ruptured even their own ontology as a nation, of Nakba. It fractured the Palestinian catastrophes so that they would become zoned, provincialized, individuated, and disconnected from a broader historical and political frame. The Oslo Accords made the Palestinian ontology of Nakba an existential crisis of having to endure, tend to, and account for a multiplicity of catastrophes, *Nakbat*. But the third last sky had exhausted the violences the Palestinians could bear and gave rise to a realization of a perpetual condition of catastrophe and to an insistence on that condition being caused by Zionism.

For an array of youth who constituted the Transnational Mobilization coordination committee for the Great Return March—and they were all young people, some from the refugee camps, some from the occupied homeland, and some from the far *shatat*—they each, in distinct ways, articulated al-*Nakba* as not an event of history alone. For these youth, the experience of *Nakba*, past and present, was a constant feature of being Palestinian. That no matter where Palestinians had ended up or remained, no matter what new variables history would introduce into the Palestinian struggle, and despite the differences of power and method of each generation of Palestinian strugglers, histories of mass exodus, besiegement, massacres, imprisonment, and death would repeat themselves.

Following the destruction of Yarmouk Refugee Camp, the youth collectively determined that they would pay special tribute to Yarmouk and develop an exposure campaign that could highlight the catastrophe, which few were speaking of or attuned to. As part of that exposure campaign, they decided that the Friday actions of April 27, 2018 would feature the hashtag #WeAreAllYarmoukCamp alongside #TransnationalGreatReturnMarch. Drawing the links

between Gaza and Yarmouk was not a symbolic way of demonstrating a shared experience of suffering among different Palestinian communities for these youth. Rather, it was about cultivating *definition* to the Palestinian historical and contemporary experience. Similarly, Ahmad Diab, speaking of the catastrophe that had befallen Yarmouk Camp in 2012, addresses the inheritance of catastrophes as producing a form of sociality:

In coming to terms with its impermanence, the memories of *al-mukhayyam* for the second- and third-generation refugees are what the memories of Palestine were for the first. They are not a reminder of a previous place or a past life as much as they forge a fragmentary incoherent community amongst those who lost it all, yet somehow still manage to start anew anywhere they are allowed entry. Rather than enduring existential crises, Palestinians learn to deal with existence as crisis. History suggests that this is the stuff of nation building.¹⁵⁴

These linkages demonstrate that these Palestinian youths necessarily rely on construction of narrative, culture, and discourse, and even memories, history, and the acts of commemoration as Laleh Khalili has taught us, not only in their methods but also in their aspirational objectives and their nationalist claims.¹⁵⁵ Similar to the first generation of Palestinian strugglers, these youth did not perceive narrative, culture, and discourse as distinct from material conditions. For these young organizers, drawing the links between Gaza and Yarmouk was about finding ways to reconcile the struggles they have endured, feeling pushed and pulled to tend to a multiplicity of moments, places, and contexts of catastrophe. It was a way for them to address—and perhaps re-constitute—the broader frame and experience of catastrophe that Palestinians endure, and which other Arabs (including Iraqis, Syrians, Yemenis, Libyans, and those in other affected areas that have experienced catastrophe in recent years) have come to endure, rather than contend only with microcosmic crises in distinct places and locales at different moments and times. It was a way they could assert a shared human

experience, a sense of integrity and dignity as strugglers, and a collective ethereal bond with one another even as they are separated by these borders and barriers.

For these youth, overcoming the fragmentation of geography and history and eliding the far too often invoked narrative of scarcity of rights and resources was critical in their commitments to tending to Palestinian catastrophe wherever it is endured and no matter who is pulling the trigger of the gun.¹⁵⁶ In some ways, their nationalist claims are intended to undo what the nationalist claims of the Palestinian elite have constructed.¹⁵⁷ The youth on the WhatsApp group insisted that what was key was to bring together the Palestinian people, inside and outside, to fight against Zionist settler colonialism and dispossession of Palestine and for the Palestinian refugee right of return to our historic towns and villages from which our grandparents and great-grandparents were displaced during the 1948 *Nakba* and the subsequent mass exoduses. Certainly, all those who have in some form or another partaken in the catastrophes befalling the people and the region, including those who have maintained neutrality and silence, would come under scrutiny in more intensive Palestinian youth political interrogations.¹⁵⁸ But for the purpose of loose-network political mobilization, these youth insisted that drawing a direct link between the current catastrophes endured by Palestinians and the events of 1948 was critical.

The dreams, desires, perspectives, practices, articulations, and visions of Palestinian youth in the spatial-temporal arrangement I have described has produced an urgent mandate to redress the history that has brought them to this current juncture.¹⁵⁹ In practicing this redress, I am concerned with a redress of the term “Nakba” and how it has come to be contained by its 1948 definition as an event of history rather than a *structure* of invasion. I argue that the Palestinian condition, the existential experience of Palestinians across time and place, is shaped

by the constancy of catastrophe. Though the term Nakba has come to be, to borrow from Anahed Al-Hardan, a *contingent signifier* of the shifting meanings, trajectories, and moments of Palestinian history, I look at Nakba as it is lived inter-generationally, not only in relation to the past but directly tied to the many catastrophes Palestinians are facing today, such as in the Gaza Strip and Yarmouk Refugee Camp.¹⁶⁰ While I have defined Nakba(at) as a people's condition and form of existential being in crisis, I am concerned with what possibilities might emerge from the spatial-temporal arrangement of Palestinian youth today who have endured the third and final last sky as a result of the Oslo Accords. In the end, the Palestinian ontology of Nakba(at) is caused by multiple dimensions of enclosure and annihilation. However, in attending to how Palestinian youth collectively construct articulations of how these dimensions shape a common colonial condition, visions for cultivating new liberation possibilities become more pronounced.

Chapter One

Writing Through Palestine: Traversing Exile and Siege *as* Method

I begin this chapter by offering ethnographic accounts of what it has meant to write through Palestine from the vantage point of Palestinian youth organizing. Here, I outline how Palestinian youth have had to mourn and grieve phases the de-suturing of relations to history, land, and peoplehood as a result of ongoing catastrophes across multiple locations and times. I illustrate the complexity of writing through Palestine, through movement, and through constant catastrophe that has affected Palestinians—what I call the *Palestinian ontology of Nakba* in the Introduction.¹⁶¹ I then come to examine how learning to write through Palestine mandates a dual process of learning to write through both siege and exile *and* learning to decipher between the research methods of disciplinary academic training and those inter/trans/anti-disciplinary approaches commensurate with Palestinian youth relationalities and collective movement building processes. Interdisciplinary ethnic studies research methodologies has offered me an arsenal of exemplary texts to constitute this practice and I couple it with the perspective of anti-colonial political thinkers, leaders, and scholars who long developed a critical understanding of the dialogical relationship between theory and practice.

Part two of this chapter examines how the Palestine that is (de)constructed, consumed, circulated, engaged, contested, and contained within US-based scholarship and universities has in some ways created liminal and narrow avenues for more rigorous, liberatory, and generative engagements with Palestine.¹⁶² I examine the distinct ways that campaigns for human rights must not operate as a stand in for anti/decolonial Palestinian scholarship and activism. I extrapolate the causes of the tightening margins on Palestine within) the US academy by considering the foundations, mandate, and functions of the public university. I offer brief notes

to scholars of the US academy, especially those within ethnic studies, on the ways we might utilize available resources to strengthen more rigorous, generative, and critical knowledge production in our various fields; in essence, to encourage writing through Palestine, rather than on it.

Part I: Learning to Write Through Palestine from Palestinian Youth Optics

Writing is a displacement, a displacement from the normal social contract. A displacement from the habitual, the pattern, and the ready form. A displacement from the common roads of love and the common roads of enmity. A displacement from the believing nature of the political party. A displacement from the idea of unconditional support. The poet strives to escape from the dominant used language, to the language that speaks itself for the first time.¹⁶³

Learning to write through Palestine from youth optics means learning to write without conclusions. It also means being uncertain of where the story begins, or that perhaps there are too many beginnings. The struggle of finding a start point and an end point chronologically is equally difficult spatially. Learning to write through Palestine means finding ways to write wherever Palestinians are, in whatever context they are in. It means learning to account for multiple languages, lexicons, and forms of expression and to pull common threads together to constitute a collective narrative. It means necessarily banking on a poetics at play within an anti-colonial condition that can maintain survival for peoples under such duress.¹⁶⁴ It means learning to account for what is not in the story and to explain why it is excluded. It means learning to write when words are not at the tip of the tongue, when no words capture what the spiritual and emotional depths of *being* would tell. It is about learning to write what it means to be Palestinian in *all* ways rather than in the singular and monolithic forms that have become iconized as representative of all Palestinians and that excavate and blindly celebrate ultra-

nationalist dogmas of our political tradition. Learning to write through Palestine mandates a genuine care, knowing, love, and respect for other causes and communities struggling against the folds of oppression. It means learning how to connect oppressions through forged links and commonalities because we Palestinians are not an exception and because we depend on people to genuinely be with us.

Learning to write through Palestine means learning to write from a position of exhaustion, a place of sorrow and anger, as well as confusion and grief. It means learning to write without access to the institutional memory of our histories in their totality. It means sifting through what Gramsci once defined as “episodic and fragmentary pieces of subaltern histories” to constitute a story, while the hegemon reserves the ability to present itself as the only singular, complete, unilateral, and unified history to tell.¹⁶⁵ Learning to write through Palestine means finding a way to do so without relying on the order of convention or the boundaries of the discipline; constantly under occupation and dispossessed; borders and order are not in the favor of the Palestinians. It means learning to write when all that we have written before may have been destroyed, while mustering up the commitment and the will to write anyway. Learning to write through Palestine means finding ways to register our narratives even if no resources to write are present, and even if there are a range of forces that will invest all their resources to mute our narrative, criminalize our existence, and erase any trace of us. It is about learning to write while navigating an already narrow space that is constantly closed in on. It means learning to write even though we will hit dead-end roads and have to find another clear path, time and time again.

Learning to write through Palestine means recognizing that we are compelled by a mandate to strengthen our people, cause, and community and not only to critique our

oppressor. It is just as much about writing about our messiness, our disjunction, and our disunity. It is about writing our weakness and fragmentation. And it is certainly about ensuring to not mistake a hollow and surface-level understanding of unity as a resolve for fragmentation. It is writing about Palestine and Palestinians as we are, neither as a romanticism of agency and resistance nor an overly pessimistic story of defeat. It demands writing to produce possibility, to inspire, to mobilize, to empower, and to create strategies toward liberation. It means having to account for and accommodate the needs of multiple constituencies, though sometimes competing, that constitute the Palestinian nation. It means learning to write through senses of abandonment and betrayal. It means finding utility in gaps, disjunctions, and silences. It means finding a way to illustrate urgency for solidarity without exposing our wounds in too much detail. If we witness our wounds too lucidly or too often, it will be quite difficult to assemble the strength to continue persisting in our individual acts of resistance and our collective attempts to revitalize our movement. It is about finding a way to articulate desire through sites that render it as secondary to national liberation. It is about finding a way to write when Palestine is a stigma, when it becomes a fashion, and when it is thrown into the trash-heap of words that constitute the lexicon of "terrorism." It is about writing in a way that provincializes Zionist power, that does not give it more strength and credence than it deserves. Finally, it is about finding a way to write, to tell, to think, to engage, to commit to collective processes, through narrow unsuspecting places, because all of Palestine, every part of it, is under attack, besieged, and exiled.

The Grief of Mourning the Past

Here is a present
Without time

No one here found anyone who remembered
How we left the door, a gust of wind. Or anyone who remembered
When we fell off yesterday. Yesterday
Shattered over the floor, shrapnel gathered together
By others, like mirrors for their image, after us...

Mahmoud Darwish, *The Owls Night*¹⁶⁶

On a cold and rainy night sitting on the floor of a friend's living room in Istanbul, the uneasiness of my social and political positionality as a youth organizer, as a Palestinian of exile, and an academic based out of US institutions, becomes acutely salient. The group discussion prompts an internal buildup of emotions—a knot in my throat and sting in my eyes—which I attempt to conceal. With me are four other Palestinian youth, two who have recently left the Gaza Strip to Istanbul, one from the West Bank, and another still living in Nablus, Palestine. I had met my new friends in a meeting in days prior, which was established for Palestinian youth. The meeting was dedicated for us to find a way for youth, both inside and outside Palestine, to more succinctly coordinate our activist efforts with one another. We founded a new formation, *Fael: The Active Palestinian Forum*, which we determined would utilize social media and virtual technologies to forge cultural bonds of peoplehood among Palestinian youth in various locations across the world. The formation was responding to a particular void within the Palestinian youth cultural and political scene. In the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings, many people asked how Palestinian youth partook in and effected changes in the region and how these changes would affect them.¹⁶⁷ Few asked how the revolutions and their sub-sequential effects in the region demonstrated the profound ways that Palestinians, especially youth, were unprepared for the watershed moment and were made to pay an extraordinary price for their lack of preparedness. Few forums were established for young Palestinians to engage these questions with one another and to collectively theorize and strategize for a re-configuration of their political

strategies in light of these monumental changes. The capacities and activities of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) in the international arena could no longer be this forum, which chapter three will illustrate in more detail.

The coffee table in front of us was covered in phone chargers, ashtrays, small Arabic coffee cups filled with black, sugarless coffee, and a box of half-eaten See's candy that I had brought as a treat from the United States. The room was filled with clouds of smoke and chatter. In the background, an Arabic news broadcast on the television communicated the catastrophe still befalling Syria. Every few minutes, we stopped the chatter, turned to the television screen running scrolls of images of dead children and destroyed cities, and all paused. We watched, then we moved on to the next conversation about love and relationships, our educational ambitions, the upcoming Israeli elections, the various movements emerging in the Arab street, and more. We looked back to the images on the television and Nadia, one of the youth, said, "I am afraid our eye is becoming accustomed to such death." We paused again, escaped the harrowing statement, and then we moved on to the next conversation. In many ways, all conversations for me and these youth are political ones and as an ethnographer I have certainly learned that the most potent political points are found in what others see as the mundane details. As Mourid Barghouti says:

Politics is the number of coffee cups on the table, it is the sudden presence of what you have forgotten, the memories you are afraid to look at too closely, though you look anyway. Staying away from politics is also politics. Politics is nothing and it is everything.¹⁶⁸

Those moments of silence, as we stared at the television screen, were among the most political of lessons in that moment. It indicated to me just how necessary it was for something to be done, for someone to do it, and the misery that accompanies that which we, as Palestinian

youth, felt we had no control over.

It was precisely the need to reconstitute a new iteration of Palestinian youth organizing that this new formation was responding to. It was also perhaps one reason why I experienced psychic stress, anxiety, and an arsenal of emotions engaging new Palestinian youth from different locations once again after all these years. The new convening made me feel that I, that we within the PYM, had failed in our vision, project, and purpose. I felt that we had failed the younger generation of Palestinian youth who, by this point, should have been able to inherit a vehicle to develop and engage transnational communal responsibilities, collective political strategy development, and critical knowledge production had the PYM been able to achieve its ambitions. I looked at these new Palestinian friends (who were not nor had ever been members of PYM), and I became overcome by a feeling of exhaustion, grief, and sorrow. I sensed that we, as Palestinian youth from different locations, were starting all over again, with the same passion and urgency that scores of Palestinian youth possessed when they/we(?) started the PYM project in 2006.

In this moment, I became sorely aware of how the generations who had engaged in the Palestinian liberation struggle in the decades before us must have felt, and continue to feel, each time a strategy, formation, and organization fell apart. They at least had the chance to witness a more whole Palestine. They at least were able to partake in a vibrant political struggle, which mobilized all sectors and demographics of the Palestinian nation within and outside the homeland before the Oslo Accords. Despite the monumental sacrifices, losses, pains, and challenges they endured in those times, they were still able to partake in struggle that they believed could alter their fate. Chapter two examines the distinctions of pre-post Oslo Palestinian political communities and strategies, though reduced in scale from the attention it

deserves. In this moment in 2015, I realized I may have been experiencing only a small fraction of what generations before us have had to withstand. In light of our condition of perpetual Nakba, Palestinians were made to go back to the drawing table and start anew over and over again, in dismal conditions. Many generations before us were expected to continue tethering through worsening conditions and to keep opportunity alive. I imagined how those generations must feel witnessing the losses incurred day by day, generation by generation, and the sense of helplessness that must accompany witnessing historical phases recurrently foreclosing upon them. The monumental changes of the Arab region in 2011 demanded a more prepared body than the PYM was prepared for. In this moment, I wondered if the inability of the PYM project to respond to the needs of our youth after the monumental changes of the Arab region in 2011 had chipped away at the Palestinian elders' spirits of hope in the new generation. Had we not only failed for the new generation, but also for the older ones who put the last remaining hopes they had in us?

For older generations, the foreclosure of multiple critical political phases of history coupled with ample attempts to revive, revitalize, and reorganize existing institutions and frames or to create new ones must have equated to a persistent state of mourning. Contrary to other forms of mourning, this was a mourning where the person incumbent with sorrow is not properly given the time or space to grieve before they are expected to start again, to re-create, to triumph and to overcome. Time is not a luxury afforded to Palestinians. Time is our greatest regret, enemy, and facilitator of the violence we have endured. For elder generations, they must experience, to a certain degree, a perpetual sense that all we have tried to create has failed; all that we have tried to preserve has been laid to rubble; and all that that we have attempted to revive has been buried under the stones of bulldozed homes and broken dreams. Here I was, a

30-year-old woman whose own body and family was not at the frontlines of destruction and who, by this time, had only put in eight years into Palestinian liberation work, and yet I was overcome by a sense of exhaustion in the realization that we had to start over *again*. But it was in the years following the 2015 convening that made me come to understand that mourning the unachieved ambitions of previous iterations of politics was both a constant feature of the Palestinian condition and not a complete foreclosure on the possibility that these phases could accumulate to produce *something*. It was both negatively and productively a characteristic of the Palestinian ontology of Nakba. In this sense, what we often viewed as *failure* was in some ways a constant enabler of revision, of radicalizing potential, and of profound possibility.

War-Time: Organic Refugee Intellectuals and the Grief of Insecurity

In the summer of 2017, I volunteered with a group of Palestinian refugee youth from Syria who were displaced by the war. They were all organizers with the Jafra Foundation for Relief and Youth Development-Greece Branch, a founding member organization of the PYM. The Jafra Foundation for Relief and Youth Development-Greece Branch was originally from Yarmouk camp in Syria and had expanded its bases to Europe, a place where its own refugee youth volunteers had ended up as a result of becoming secondary and, in some cases, third-time displaced subjects. Being youths themselves, the founders realized the need to develop the capacities of Palestinian youths, paving their way for a better future.¹⁶⁹ The Jafra youth were offering critical services to other refugees, including offering children and women's empowerment programs, aid and relief distribution, arts and cultural programs, and more. The Greece chapter slogan, *Refugee to Refugee (R2R)*, was established to speak to their specific methodological approach to community service. Their goal was to fulfill the needs of refugees

stranded in Greece following the European Union-Turkey Deal of March 20, 2016, and to provide refugees with avenues to engage in community building work.¹⁷⁰ Utilizing culturally relevant and trauma-informed methodological approaches in which refugees were not treated as helpless victims awaiting saving, Jafra insisted that refugee agency and dignity must be central to their work. Jafra viewed the importance of their work to be as much about the refugee youth volunteers in their team as it was for beneficiaries of their programs, which they acknowledged would mean that the two groups were often not mutually exclusive. They believed that, through this work, refugees could maintain a sense of purpose, develop a commitment to service and transformative justice, and exercise a meaningful political practice in a world where politics had become hollowed of any relevance to the realities unfolding in the streets and in the lives of everyday people. They argue that this work is critical to providing refugee youth with a sense of worth and collective power in sites of complete hopelessness and uncertainty; as such, they saw that this was a vital element to assisting refugee youth in the process of overcoming the trauma of war, dispossession, and the violence incurred on global refugee communities and on Palestinian stateless subjects. Through this work, community building, the development of new iterations of solidarity, and creating new forms of family outside of the ideals of the hetero-patriarchal nuclear family were not only necessary but also critical for refugee survival.

Muath, one of the youth volunteers, had come to be a good friend. He was only 22 at the time but was seen as a leader by everyone in the group and within the Athens refugee community, including the elders. Muath had a strong presence and an accessible demeanor. The first time I noticed these qualities was when we went to a nearby wholesale distributor to buy loads of diapers for the community. Outside, an elder refugee man with torn clothes

approached Muath. Instinctively, and perhaps as part of a lived conditioning in the United States, I imagined that Muath would shake his head and say, “No, sir. Sorry, I don’t have any money.” Instead Muath stepped up to the man, shook his hand and said, “Yes, uncle. How can I help you?” The man said he is struggling on all levels and that he needed support. Muath introduced himself and the Jafra team to the man and asked the man what he needed. The man said he needed money to buy a fake passport and pay a smuggler. Muath told him that, unfortunately, he could not help with that, but he and the Jafra team could offer baby milk, diapers, food baskets, sanitary baskets, and programs for women and children. Rather than leave the man without any options, Muath took the time to share how Muath could support him. The man took Muath’s phone number and said, “Yes, I need formula and diapers,” and the two of them continued talking about the difficulties they have both endured as survivors of the war in Syria and as refugees in Greece. The man thanked Muath and continued to bestow blessings upon him. He argued that he has not always been this frail, thin, and wounded. He pulled his shirt up to show Muath his war-wounds and said, “I was once a strong man,” and that it is just a particularly difficult time. Muath told him he understands and that the man should not feel bad; this time is something they had all endured together. Muath assured him that it will get better and easier soon.

In that moment, I saw firsthand what a politics of aid could look like. Specifically, a politics of aid that was rooted in experiential and trauma-informed service, genuine love for the people, and a belief that the people must be full and whole as part of pursuing our collective political visions. Dian Million argued for a way to feel/think and feel/link process to knowledge with the intent to illuminate an understanding that “the affective precedes any thought or meaning making. This is in powerful agreement with knowing, understood in many indigenous

communities as 'coming from the heart,' i.e., their felt intuitive knowledge rather than any solely rationalized logic."¹⁷¹ In this moment, I was able to envision what the new generation of Palestinian refugee youth could bring to Palestinian politics, which was highly stigmatized even for youth of my generation; that is, a politics of embodiment, of affect, of care, which could be publicly expressed and central to the discourse and practice of politics. It was they who could find a way to entangle the social/personal with the political, as Judith Butler has called for.¹⁷²

During my time in Greece, Muath and I regularly discussed politics, the experiences of refugees in Greece, and the details of events that had happened during the war in Syria (particularly the siege and exodus of Yarmouk camp). We engaged in a range of critical exchanges regarding the role of Palestinian leadership, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Syrian regime, the many Syrian political opposition forces, the European and Greek asylum systems, and the non-governmental organization (NGO) landscape in Greece. We discussed how each of these institutions, whether because of their weakness or because of their political interests, were complicit in the trauma and violence endured by refugees.¹⁷³ Muath was a true organic intellectual, the kind Gramsci spoke of and which Mjriam Abu Samra described as central to the original Palestinian youth after the 1948 Nakba that went on to found the Palestinian student movement and parties while eventually becoming forerunners of the liberation struggle.¹⁷⁴ His smarts were in service to the people, rooted in real lived experience, comprehensive, overlapping, transnational and historical in scope. His ethical compass was motivated by an affective ethos, in which his bonds to his cause and his people were deeply intertwined with his own struggles and traumas as a refugee that endured the violence of the war, the dispossession of people, the destruction of his home in Yarmouk camp, with countless losses of friends, cousins, relatives, and mentors and more.

I learned so much from Muath. He made me think of politics in an entirely new way and ruptured the often-liminal narrow tunnels of thinking of politics of war and siege. As peoples living in the West with a series of previously conditioned and default options, we try to synthesize, generalize, and make a distinction between right and wrong, for example, between imperialist and anti-imperialist. Muath demonstrated a way to navigate systems that were all hollow of affective ethos, that were in service of profit rather than remedying wounds of the refugees, that were appropriating the pain of everyday people for a political agenda, which was not in their interest. Muath made me realize the array of political, humanitarian, and state forces making refugee lives precarious and the way that this array partakes in constructing an intersectional conglomeration of systemic oppression.¹⁷⁵ He made me realize that attention to the violence of the war, the dangers of the perilous death voyages, and the distinct experiences of refugees, especially those of the younger generation who had to rely on themselves to survive the siege of the Palestinian camps, was critical. This way of embodying experience of being a refugee in the process of meaning making is what Katharya Um has referred to as *refugitude*.¹⁷⁶

On September 12, 2017, we gathered in the home of some of the young men in the group in Athens for a final party to say goodbye to Muath who had just been granted his refugee resettlement paperwork to Sweden and who was set to leave at three in the morning the next day. That evening in his home, he asked all of us to play a game. We would go around in a circle and say a positive and negative attribute of everyone in the group. He argued that a genuine honesty with members of the group was critical to a healthy team dynamic in the organizing and refugee support services they were involved with together. When it came time for Muath to speak about me, he said that I was very smart, a real leader, “a school, seriously you know

soooo much” he said. He said that I was eager to share and build, to discuss ideas with everyone, and to get to know everyone in a meaningful way, to listen, to participate and even to share tips and advice. Muath then said “but,” and looked down and smiled, looked back up and said, “You and the PYM failed us.” He asked where we have been throughout all that is happening and argued that we have a responsibility to “teach” them and that it is not right that the new generation doesn’t know our history the way we need to. He argued that rather than participating in supporting activist efforts including fundraising and outreach, we had a more important role to play in political education. Ibrahim, another one of the youth from Jafra, later told me that I should not take the rant personally and that Muath, like all of them, was quite frustrated that their formative years of political consciousness was spent in war time. He never had the chance to go to school, and the generation of youth in the PYM failed the younger generation in gathering them, guiding them, and teaching them.

Ibrahim, who was 28, argued that though only six years separates him and Muath, he understands his frustrations and the particularities of Muath’s generation:

...for me at least, I was a network [Palestinian Youth Network] member, and I also joined many activities in the youth group, [of the left] which allowed me to learn, to read, to discuss our histories but that for the younger shabab [youth], they didn’t have that chance.¹⁷⁷

For youth who grew up during their formative years in total catastrophe, the conditions of the camp required a suspension of personal growth because they had to respond to the immediate needs of their own families, communities, and people. Muath argued that when he was younger, he was very eager to join PYM, to fulfill its legacy, and that he was taught by important figures, like Khaled Bakrawi, who was both a vital player in Jafra and the PYM and

who was martyred by the Syrian regime in 2013. Muath argued that Khaled taught him a lot about history, through practice in the work they were doing, and guided Muath to the right path. However, the PYM had become invisible now. Amidst all the catastrophe that has plagued Syria and the hopelessness and desires of young Palestinians, the PYM did not assume its responsibility.

In that moment, I felt paralyzed. I did not respond. I nodded. Though inside, what I sincerely wanted to tell Muath was that we do not necessarily know more than them or have insights, visions, or direction clearer than he might. If we did, perhaps it would have been commensurate with and accommodating of, in some way, the shifting social, humanitarian, and political conditions of war time, of secondary and, in some cases, third time dispossession. The truth was the catastrophe that befell the region, and Syria specifically, created a sort of aspirational despair and political paralysis within the PYM. We simply did not know what to do and what was to be done. Real-time conditions shifted faster than we could follow, make sense of, reflect on, and respond to. This “thing” that had to be done was beyond our means of knowing and enacting. We were not capable of it and coming to terms with that—though we had maintained so much momentum in our group on the promise of our collective power—was a huge blow.

I wanted to tell Muath that I saw him—his practice with his peers, his service to the people (which was rooted in a political commitment to Palestinian liberation), his heart for understanding the sorrow, loss, and trauma of everyday people, and his engagement in this work—as the future of politics for our people. I wanted to tell him that he and his team had found a way to do what many of us considered impossible: to find a way to organize despite the fact that no vehicles and structures for organization have proven to function in sites of full on

catastrophe, displacement, and the precariousness of placelessness. I wanted to tell him that it is true, as the PYM, we could not survive the ruptures incurred through the Arab uprisings, but that no Palestinian political force, party, group, and frame have been able to survive the array of catastrophes that historically have befallen us as a people. I did not speak. What became clear to me in that moment was that I should own the blame Muath placed on me and the PYM. The condition of Palestinians has re-produced this same history, time and time again. Perhaps for Muath, maybe the need to find probable cause and a resolvable problem, to place responsibility and blame, was a critical component of mourning and of maintaining the hope to continue trying.

Earlier that week, I sat outside of the new Jafra center as we were painting the corridor of the entrance and cleaning the staircases. Many of the youth had gone for a lunch break. Some were upstairs cleaning the new community room. Outside sitting next to me was Hatem, a 19-year-old Palestinian youth from Yarmouk camp in Syria. He was listening to music through large ear headphones. Hatem was the youngest of the group—soft-spoken, quiet, and reserved and a bit disconnected from the constant chaos of the group. By this day, I had already been with the team for about a month—usually in large groups or with the older youth on more individual levels. But in this moment, it was only Hatem and me sitting outside. We had never really spoken directly to each other before this moment. I looked at him as he was listening to his music and said, “The weather is really beautiful.” Hatem looked up from his phone and agreed. He looked back down then up again, looked directly at me and said, “You know my brother was martyred.” I was a bit shocked. I was not shocked in hearing the news, but rather in realizing that Hatem may have been wanting to say those words, to tell me this, for some time and that he had not quite found a moment to do so, free of being constantly inundated with

everyone in the group. It was an abrupt disclosure. I spoke with Hatem for a while longer and asked him if we could get a coffee and talk.

We spent nearly an hour talking in great detail of his multiple attempts at embarking through the death voyages to Europe. We discussed why he left, what he was hoping to achieve in his future, and the many struggles he had endured along the way. He told me of the countless failed attempts, of the many times he was taken advantage of by smugglers, caught by Syrian opposition or regime forces or Greek border-control and sent back to Turkey. He spoke of all that he had lost in between the four real attempts to leave—the death of his brother, the violence his family was subjected to, and the destruction of his home. Yet for Hatem, there was one particular thing that seemed to evoke a sense of frustration and anger more than anything else. As a 19 year old, Hatem was only 12 when the revolution in Syria began. In between the multiple times that Hatem had tried to flee Syria, he endured multiple attempts at completing exams for the ninth grade. He spoke of all the obstacles impeding him from completing school: forced relocation, the death of his brother, school closure, and many more. Hatem looked at me and said, “I am not like these other guys!” I asked him what he meant by that. He said:

I mean I am not like them. I love Palestine, I really do. And one day I want to do something really meaningful for Palestine. But I can't do that now! I have no skills, no expertise, and no education. And I am here just waiting and wasting away my life.¹⁷⁸

For Hatem, the community service and youth organizing work that he was doing in Athens felt like a waste, because he had already lost so much time, and he felt he was not fit to offer support if he had not established a solid foundation in his own life. His desires and ambitions to contribute to Palestinian youth organizing work and service was present, but he felt ill-equipped to do anything for the cause from a position of what he identified as weakness.

Hatem's anxieties of the loss of time and of feeling weak, particularly his disappointment in not being able to complete the ninth grade, is a common feeling among refugees across time and place. The sense that nothing is stable and that catastrophe may hit at any given moment awakens desires and ambitions to be stronger, more prepared, and more secure. Often, education is considered part of facilitating that security and strength. Like the Palestinian refugees of 1948, Hatem's desire to seek education was pronounced. Ghazi Hassoun tells of his own memories of the 1948 Nakba when he and his family would be made refugees in Lebanon.

He says:

At age thirteen, I, with two older friends, decided to post homemade leaflets to a free food ration distribution centre for refugees. The posters demanded 'NO to hand-outs' and 'RETURN to our homes in Palestine.' Weeks later, I saw some schoolboys going back to their homes in the afternoon and a question flashed in my head: 'How come I am not going to school?' In the evening I asked my mother if I could go. It had been over fifteen months since my schooling had been interrupted by the collapse of law and order in Haifa, accompanied by an upsurge of communal armed clashes. Mother lovingly said, 'Tomorrow morning I'll take you to the school and find out what it will take to enrol [sic] you.'¹⁷⁹

Ghazi articulated that for him, the 1948 Nakba awakened his desire and passion for education because he sensed it would "close the gap with the West and help redress the wrong." He would come to question this commitment to education, specifically studying in the West, because it could in many ways force him to set aside his commitments to and concerns for Palestine. Like the first generation of Palestinian refugees, the current generation of newly displaced refugee youth aspires for education as a solace and resolve for their sense of powerlessness and instability.

When Hatem shared with me his troubles and anxieties, I realized that, like Muath,

feelings of being ill-equipped, unfit, uneducated, disconnected from history, operating from a place of chaos, and structure-less-ness were both productive and de-generative for these youth in the services and community they were building in sites of refuge. On the one hand, they were inventing new affective modalities of politics, tapping into the arsenal of war-time catastrophes that they had personally endured to inform a new form of service and theorizing collective conditions. This new form of service and collective theorizing could offer all of us a bit of inspiration and political vision outside of the constrained political terrains we have become besieged by. These forms of experiential knowledge can certainly inform an alternative popular university, knowledge canon, and method of re-connecting to the relationship between theory and practice. On the other hand, war-time catastrophe has generated profound forms of loss that has destroyed a sense of hope, security, and confidence among many of these youth. Of these losses, the sense of the loss of time seems insurmountable for many of them and feeds the sense that others are better suited/equipped for Palestinian liberation work. More than anything, it hinders their confidence as well as takes away the time and space necessary to realize and enact the relationship between common sense, in the Gramscian sense, and philosophy. Stuart Hall notes that,

This is the basis of Gramsci's critical distinction between philosophy and common-sense. Ideology consists of two, distinct floors. The coherence of an ideology often depends on its specialized philosophical elaboration. But this formal coherence cannot guarantee its organic historical effectivity. That can only be found when and where philosophical currents enter into, modify and transform the practical, everyday consciousness or popular thought of the masses. The latter is what he calls common sense. Common sense is not coherent it is usually disjointed and episodic, fragmentary and contradictory.¹⁸⁰

Certainly, major forms of pain and anger are directed by Palestinian youth toward the

Palestinian, Syrian, and global systems, parties, forces, and states that have caused such loss. But much of their anger is also directed at history, at Palestinian elders, even at generations a bit older than them who did not have to miss essential life experiences, like schooling, and live their formative years through war time. These grievances have been central in establishing some form of common-sense among these young refugees that in some cases establishes them as a subaltern class of their own. However, in the absence of time, space, and intentional process to place these grievances into conversation with vision, action, and process in organized ways, these grievances have rarely developed into a philosophical and theoretical articulation. Situated within this context, the failure of PYM to provide that time and space is a legitimate grievance and call for critical introspective reflection.

Drawing from what many of the youth had shared with me, it is important to realize that some of this anger was rooted in their own insecurities and that situated within this war-time catastrophe many believed that they were truly of little worth and were disposable. In December of 2017, I would come to meet and discuss many of these same questions with an array of young Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who had also arrived to Athens en-route to various European countries. They too expressed similar grievances—that no one was there to support them, guide them, teach them, and offer them an out to the situation they were in. They also expressed a profound insistence and commitment to the liberation of Palestine but argued that they just needed a bit of time to secure citizenship, financial stability, to become educated, to grieve what they had lost, to make sense of everything that has happened, to uncloud their minds and hearts, and to gain some distance from the trauma of home in order to be full and complete people who could productively give to the cause. In these conversations, I became increasingly reflexive of the history of the PYM and considered all the possible ways the

PYM(?) body and project could have been redeemed had we not made certain mistakes. Still, I remembered a critical conversation I had with the PYM international general coordinator just a year prior.

Learning to Deal with Existence as Crisis

In February of 2016, Tamer, a Palestinian youth from France and the former International General Coordinator of the PYM, told me of the prodigious lessons he had learned about the Palestinian struggle through his involvement in the PYM and through his study of the history of the Palestinian parties as compared to that of Lebanese and other Arab revolutionary forces. He argued that, unlike other Arab political forces through history, Palestinians were not afforded the same incremental phases of necessary political development and strategies due to the precarious position of landlessness; rather, landlessness interfered this process for the Palestinians. He said:

We were in Egypt, and then Kuwait, and then in Jordan and boom! Everything collapses on top of our heads, and then we move once again, to Lebanon, and a civil war ignites, that we partake in, and then again, history is shattered and crumbles on top of us....and we leave for Tunis. Each phase became harder to recuperate any power acquired in former phases, any knowledge of those periods didn't get transmitted to the new phases. Our institutions were devastated and the people who upheld them, killed or dispersed again and again and again...¹⁸¹

Tamer argued that the inability to accumulate upon our own phases of history and the inability to preserve institutional knowledge because it was destroyed in each new political phase weakened our political strategy development because we are always operating in chaos.

The chaos of landlessness and *Shatat* has rendered Palestinians precarious by a range of forces and powers, including that of Arab dictators and monarchs as well as global powers. In

this decree, the notion of nested sovereignty as Kahnawake Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson outlines as “a sovereignty... within sovereignty” has in many ways remained a critical aspirational desire for Palestinian refugees and exiles.¹⁸² They had long enacted and today remain enacting a politics of refusal of the settler colonial apparatus’ definition of citizenship, belonging, existence, and sovereignty, and demand refugee return as part of this refusal. A politics of refusal, rather than a politics of recognition, had long shaped the Palestinian political experience and been a generative element to radical political strategy and vision.¹⁸³ However, in the context of being dispersed across multiple nation-states—and experiencing ongoing Nakba, which would make them second, third, and sometimes fourth time refugees—the Palestinian political experience of exile could not totally sustain a nested sovereignty and the cumulative stability that the politics of refusal might suggest. This may certainly be true for those Palestinians who remained within the historic Palestinian lands of 1948, but for the 70% of Palestinian refugees, the persistent collapse of history caused by chronic de-sutures, ruptures, catastrophes, and exoduses, made a politics of refusal exhaustive rather than generative.

Tamer’s interpretation on the (im)possibility of the PYM project deepened my own understanding of the Palestinian struggle. He helped me come to a more nuanced notion of catastrophe, or Al-Nakba, as a perpetual ontology for the Palestinian people, which I have outlined in the Introduction. Wherever we go, wherever we end up, the lack of permanence and stability coupled with the dependence on so many shifting variables, groups, and conditions have rendered the development of genealogies quite difficult. This set of conditions has facilitated the destruction of our temporal homes, of our political institutions, epistemological canons, and ruptured our links to history and to our access to produce it in intentional and organized forms. I am of the mind that disorder can facilitate a profound creative, emotional,

intellectual, and political form of being, knowing, and praxis. But in the context of landlessness, disorder adds to the already catastrophic conditions that our patience has unfortunately been unable to wait out. In the grief of mourning—all our attempts, initiatives, ideas that did not pan out, structures that could not maintain form, strategies that were disrupted by ongoing and reproducing Nakbas—we came to deal with catastrophe as a fundamental feature of the Palestinian condition. It did not become any more normal. It did not come to be any less painful. But we have become quite acquainted with mourning ambitions and strategic attempts for liberation and starting anew all over again. We have learned to live through crisis. As Ahmed Diab notes, “Rather than enduring existential crises, Palestinians learn to deal with existence as crisis. History suggests that this is the stuff of nation building.”¹⁸⁴ It is this condition that learning to write through Palestine demands. Nothing is certain, stable, and foreseeable other than the expanding power of settler colonialism, and still we cannot surrender hope and attempts to try something else.

In 2015, I had yet to mourn the unachieved ambitions of the PYM and come to terms with the fact that the sense of our tireless work, profound aspirations and accomplishments could not be preserved and ushered into new political phases as a platform in the way we had hoped. I had not yet realized that mourning phases of history and experiencing the impulse to start anew generation after generation was a quintessential characteristic of the Palestinian condition. When we organized the 2015 Fael convening in Istanbul, in that moment, politics had become messier, bloodier, and more complex than it was when the PYM was founded in 2006. My conversations with Tamer in 2016 and with Muath, Ibrahim, and Hatem in 2017 had illuminated that for me later on. But at the time, I sensed that we were engaging politics in a shallow way, less refined and rigorous than we were capable of, less ambitious than what the

context of catastrophe demanded of us, and certainly less promising than what the political conditions in Palestine, among Palestinian refugees and exiles, and within the Arab countries necessitated. More than anything, it was difficult to shake the impulses of urgency.

Time was not in our favor, and I was reluctant to scale back ambition in a time when losses were accumulating. But Mohammed, one of the founders of Fael living in Istanbul, insisted that a slow, less politically dogmatic, less ambitious project was necessary for the current moment we were in. He argued:

We used to only have the split between the Palestinian parties and the Israeli occupation as our barriers to freedom. Today, Palestine is locked into and inseparable from the geo-political wars, political rivalries between competing forces in the region backed by competing global powers. And we have no idea which direction this will go. The fate of Palestine is wrapped up in a web of thousands of factors and we have no mechanism to navigate them all.¹⁸⁵

In the absence of an alternative vision, I followed his lead. We were forced to turn to the basics of cultural expression by utilizing social media techniques in an attempt to reconvene Palestinian youth dialogues, affinities, and relationships with one another, which could play a role in maintaining a Palestinian nation despite new iterations of fragmentation and loss of Palestinian life, land, and political power. Our belief was that this process could lend itself—later down the line—to transformative political alternatives when we were strong enough to adopt political positions, philosophies, and directions. The formation was intended to allow for Palestinian youth to look at one another as a reflection in the mirror of the state of Palestinian communities in a post 2011 Arab revolutions context. It demonstrated the complex relationship between cultural praxis and politics.

In late 2015, I assumed a position as an International Board Member of Fael: The

Palestinian Active Forum. In February of 2016, we met for our first board meeting in Istanbul. We expanded membership of the transnational coalition to include Palestinian youth in different countries whose official title would come to be “country key.” The concept was that these youths would be responsible for regional and national coordination, recruitment, outreach, and engagement with Palestinian youth in their places of residence. In many ways, these country coordinators would be responsible for producing a cultural and social census of Palestinian youth in their country and document and upload portfolios that allows for a brief social, political and cultural description of varying community landscapes. The framework and vocabulary for the project was under way. The membership structure and participation were in place. Research conducted on various Palestinian communities in different locations had already commenced. And construction for the global interactive web forum had begun as well. By 2017, the project came to a complete standstill as a result of technical difficulties with website construction. The web developers were not willing to release the material constructed by that point or work more to fix the technical errors and complete the project. However, by this time, our group had already spent all of the funds we had gathered, and the individual members were too overstretched to find new alternatives.

The lack of resources, the minimal capacity of individual members, and the loss of collective momentum are all factors that have long contributed to the dissolution of dozens of initiatives to reconstitute Palestinian communities over the course of the last decade and even within the PYM project at various junctures. Between 2008 and 2018, I had sat in on 13 national and transnational (other than those of the PYM) founding convenings, meetings, or conferences with the intent to launch a new formation, organization, or initiative that could reconcile the fragmentation of Palestinians, the paralysis of the liberation project, and the conundrum of the

Oslo paradigm.¹⁸⁶ Many more convenings of the sort had all assembled during this time which other PYM members had attended on behalf of our group.¹⁸⁷ Around another dozen initiatives had taken place as well, which the PYM was attuned to but in which we were not invited or decided to decline participation. Nearly all of these initiatives were unable to get past the first convening. A few became actual organizations but reduced in scale and novelty and were unable to sustain momentum, direction, and attract new young leadership or overcome the main issues affecting Palestinian transnational communities in the Oslo context, which Chapter Two will examine.

Certainly, the lack of transparency among leadership of these various initiatives, competing political visions (which exacerbated fragmentation), and the lack of a meaningful democratic process for engagement or a clear vision with a pragmatic trajectory have all played a role in the inability of these formations to develop past an initial stage. Unfortunately, these issues have become predictably common in Palestinian political organizing spaces. Surely, many of these initiatives were not in fact genuinely intended to reconcile the struggles of the Palestinians, revitalize organic grassroots Palestinian participation in national politics, or to mend the wounds of fragmentation, which were ultimately hindering collective strength and vision. Rather, many of these initiatives were produced to stifle alternative formations from achieving popular consent and weight, and intended to find new ways to contain Palestinian grievances (especially those of youth), and to sustain the status quo of the existing party system as well as the fragmentation of the Palestinians politically and geographically. Relatedly, defamation campaigns from both rivaling Palestinian forces as well as Zionist smear campaigns, state surveillance and containment, and the criminalization, imprisonment, and deportations of Palestinian communities across the world have also played a major role in limiting the ability of

these formations to achieve their preliminary ambitions.¹⁸⁸

A critical feature of learning to write through Palestine means learning to write through the sense that perfection of technique may not matter as much as it does for other communities, causes, epistemologies, and fields of study that are able to partake in the (re)formation of genealogy. If we are forced to start again, time over, then the accumulation of knowledge, mastery of subject, and execution of prose may not, in the end, form into a coherent narrative. Palestinians have come to witness the death of their dreams and ambitions even when, especially when, we were close to victory. Yet Palestinians remain committed to rebirth of new initiatives and processes at starting points with less power, resources, and promise than previous attempts. Palestinians continue doing the work to piece together bits of history, of narrative, of life, of resources and political practice to establish some form of a complete account. Ambitions to create such an account, runs the risk of replicating the ambitions and trajectories toward an attendant territory and state; that by its very foundational logics necessitate a right to exclude.¹⁸⁹

Palestinians have come to deal with their existence as crisis and, in the end, crisis fuels the need and desire for opportunity if we can manage to survive/organize through it. Crisis arouses novel ideas, visions, and methods. If crisis refers to the trouble, the difficulty, and the pain of our lives, then catastrophe refers to those incremental moments of complete destruction and disaster that sustain a perpetual experience of crisis. The Palestinian ontology of Nakba is something that produces the necessity and the mandate to do something, anything; the void that tells us so is what Avery Gordon once referred to as hauntings.¹⁹⁰ She argued that “For many people, haunting means exactly the opposite—aberrant mourning, traumatic paralysis or dissociative repetition.” But Gordon makes a distinction between haunting and

trauma. For Palestinians, haunting, “unlike trauma by contrast, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done.”¹⁹¹

What I have struggled to understand then is why it is that the urgency of the something-to-be-done, which is magnificently traceable in the impulses, gestures, expressions, and practices of Palestinian youth among one another, does not always get translated to our outer worlds? Why is it that the Nakba expressed in US-based scholarship is one fixed in time? Why does it not always highlight the ways Palestinians have, are, and will continue to frame Nakba as a tenet of action, as a pulse for emotional resonance of linking pain to aspiration, and as an expression of past and contemporary iterations of survival as it is calcified by resistance? Amidst all the fragmentation that has broken down the Palestinian nation, the one thing all Palestinians, wherever they are, whatever they believe, can come to a consensus on is that the Palestinian condition is rooted in the 1948 Nakba and its ongoing legacy. I have come to consider a probable cause, from my own methodological mishaps, that might account for this gross ailment of why Palestinian crisis can/cannot be captured within much of the scholarship produced on Palestine in the English language. One cause is the vaunted specter, the ghost of the terrorist, and the apprehension to express solidarity or sensitivity with Palestinian agency and action for fear of being deemed an advocate of terrorism and an anti-Semite. I will return to this in part two of this chapter. The second disjunction, perhaps, lies purely in the methods for knowing Palestine—how the Palestinian condition is captured, generatively and detrimentally, through ethnographic research methods. Do these dilemmas then necessitate a conceptualization of *Palestine as method* and what might that method look like?¹⁹²

Between Start and Pause: Capturing Existence as Crisis

Back in my friend's living room in Istanbul in March of 2015 was 20-year-old Yazan, the youngest of the group. He has levels of energy, optimism, and commitment that some of us elder youth have forgotten we once possessed. He tells jokes of his life as an exile and his determination to free our homeland while also improving his rusty English-language skills. He misses Gaza, his mother's cooking, his friends, family, and home. He shows us his Turkish-language-translation workbook and how far he has come in his language mastery in the short time he has been in Istanbul. He shows me how to access the hippest social media sites and tells us stories of who's who on Twitter. I pause for a moment and say, "I love how the child of Gaza is schooling me on technology and social media." My friends laugh, and Mohammed says, "You have no idea how good the Gaza youth are at these things; this is their vehicle for their relationships with all of us."¹⁹³

A few hours later, a conversation about music emerges as the other youth play music videos on the television screen, drowning out the broadcast from Syria we watched just an hour before. Yazan begins telling us how the surge of resistance songs that emerged last summer (2014) during the Israeli attack were so critical to maintaining resilience among Palestinians in Gaza. He says, "There was something about the songs that made us feel alive through it all, no matter how much they tried to get us to feel the death, we felt alive, this was different than the war in 2009." I ask Yazan if he would do an interview with me for my research. He is overjoyed and says "yalla," which is a common Arabic euphemism for "let's do it" or "come on." I gather my notebook and audio recorder, get up off the floor, sit across from him on the couch, and begin a "formal" interview.

I begin to ask the first question but before I can he says, "Don't worry, I know what you

academics want.” I laugh and let him proceed. He begins speaking right away stating his name, age, where he is from, and what he does. He proceeds to talk about the youth in Gaza, their life under siege, and what they want the international community to know. He argued that Palestinians in Gaza were suffering, that they do not have access to food and medicine, to electricity, and to sanitary water. He spoke of how the food provisions of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were not nearly enough to sustain Gaza’s population and that the youth unemployment rate has skyrocketed.¹⁹⁴ He spoke of how the depression rate in youth was soaring. He spoke of what it feels like to be imprisoned and what it’s like to feel no escape from the horrors of the siege. He starts talking, but he goes on so fast that I can barely take any handwritten notes. I interject to ask a more concrete question, and he seems a bit agitated by my interruption. His interview response was already prepared.

Somehow, between a click of a button, the audience for Yazan’s words, emotions, and narrative changed, and he registered me too as someone else. Just 10 minutes prior, Yazan spoke to us of how the youth in Gaza used to build new homes from war waste. He spoke of how Palestinians in Gaza established communal principles on the distribution of food in moments of extreme scarcity. He had spoken of how the youth would work the system, to retrieve power or electricity, to hustle, to get goods in through the tunnels, or to get themselves out of the Gaza Strip. He had spoken of why the resistance songs played a critical role in the 2014 war in maintaining a sense of life for people on the ground, and how distinct that common feeling was from the earlier wars. All the things that Yazan discussed in our context as friends and co-organizers he now saw as trivial and less important for the historical record. His narrative became scripted, not based on a script we Palestinians cultivate among or with one another, but

one that has in fact been shaped outside of and often imposed on us by humanitarian organizations, Western journalism, academia, and international law discourse, which has conditioned us to speak to a specific tune, utilizing certain words to express a particular story. Perhaps it was conditioned by the racialized attribution of any form and expression of Palestinian agency and resistance as subject to suspicion, surveillance, criminalization, and stigmatization under the banner of “terrorism.” His script reinforces our isolation from the world, particularly our people in Gaza, and affirms the desperate victim status of our people in dire need of saving by the world’s guilty conscience. Yazan’s voice was suspended between start and pause.

I interjected again and asked Yazan a different set of questions. These questions perplexed him to hear. He later conveyed to me he thinks of these questions every day but would never think of or expect them to be asked in the context of an interview. Such questions included what he thought the world could learn from the Palestinians and how youth in Gaza are gaining, retaining, (re)making knowledge, practices of resistance, and techniques of survival. Other questions asked about how the youth in Gaza engage with other Palestinian people outside of Gaza and what importance that has had in shaping consciousness of the struggle. Soon, I was able to redirect Yazan back to the kind of conversation we were having through the several prior days of discussion we had with each other. His posture loosened, his speech slowed down, and he became more engaged with me. He tells me at the end of the interview when I pick up the recorder, “Oh, I forgot we were doing an interview!”

I realized in that moment that my anxieties in my capacity as an exilic researcher blocked my own abilities for organic engagement. My role as a researcher and his position as a subject also blocked Yazan’s ability for organic engagement. Somewhere between start and

pause and between the pen and the notebook, I lost myself; I was estranged from my people and struggle and, too, became illegible to them. Somewhere between start and pause, the formality I proposed in the structure of an interview shifted the places in which knowledge comes from and the audience to which it is directed. Somewhere between start and pause, both Yazan and I became facilitators of another's vocabulary, agenda, and experience. Somewhere here, the violence of fragmented memories, constituencies, lands, and desires became reinforced. The narratives, considerations, and anxieties of our oppressors and of people who could sympathize with us were more important than our own. In this sense, I wondered if ethnography was the method I was attempting to do at all. Did ethnography capture this desire to explore what Palestine *as* method could mean? I learned in this instance that in some ways my work was working against the limitations of the ethnography I had been "trained" to do and rather my work was more closely aligned with participatory action research in that the knowledge I was attempting to capture was one developed through my own engagement in sites and among constituents where, as Avery Gordon has stated, something needed to be done.¹⁹⁵

I discussed what had happened with Mohammed and Nadia, two of the other youth there that evening as they had witnessed the abrupt transition. Nadia argued that she thought that this was one of the most damaging things affecting the younger youth, who were never able to witness popular resistance phases of the Palestinian struggle like the period of the second intifada. She argued that contemporary conditions have made them reliant upon the narrative of rights, victimization, and suffering alone, hoping that it will enable a strengthening of solidarity which will free us. Mohammed interrupted and argued that for him, it was an especially common utilization among the young youth but specifically the youth from Gaza who

had long been isolated from the world and who had cultivated a strong belief that if people simply knew what life was like in Gaza, conditions would change on their own. Where Nadia attributed the process of how the language of suffering became the new common sense to time, Mohammed argued that a spatial component was more critical. He urged us to think about it:

Yazan was only 12 when the siege on Gaza happened. The youth in Gaza had no ability to connect with the world, with other Palestinians, no way to see anything other than the siege, and the siege became a psychological one as well.¹⁹⁶

I pushed back against Mohammed and told him that this narrative is not a constant one; it is not one that comes up amongst us as Palestinian youth when interfacing with one another, but rather one that becomes pervasive and dominant if we introduce an external audience. In making that argument myself, I had realized that I, without knowing, had brought in an external audience. It was an audience of gaze, a specter, a possible savior, through the introduction of the recorder, and it erased the knowledge that we were capable of producing through our relations as Palestinian youth from different places.

Ethnographic research was a primary site that highlighted the epistemic engine of settler colonial erasure, dispossession, and oppression. Here, at the nexus of ethnographic methods and exile, I tried to organize the Palestinian narrative, though our lives do not come with a prescriptive order. We are landless, stateless, occupied, and scattered across the world. The benefits of “organization,” as it is practiced through the bureaucracy of the modern nation-state for the bodies that belong to its national imaginary, do not apply to us. We have only shouldered the burden of that form of organization in so many ways, as chapter two more acutely demonstrates. And so, it is for these reasons that I embrace dis/anti-organization in constructing a modality to express our condition and a method of learning to write through

Palestine rather than about it.

This dis-organization of expression, of telling a narrative, lends itself to finding a means to organize through the crisis of or existence. It allows for us to collectivize a common goal, strategy, and vision and to implement it in whichever narrow allies we have access to in differential forms of organization. It allows us to capture the nuance, salience, and depth of Palestinian youth desires, knowledge, and aspirations. It allows us to remain rooted while in motion and to do what we must to survive. American-Indian scholar Taiaiake Alfred has poetically outlined a central tenant to this form of survival in processes of transcending colonial identities. He says,

Survival is bending and swaying but not breaking, adapting and accommodating without compromising what is core to one's being. Those who are emboldened by challenges and who sacrifice for truth achieve freedom. Those who fail to find balance, who reject change or who abandon their heritage altogether abandon themselves. They perish. The people who live on are those who have learned the lesson of survival: cherish your unique identity, protect your freedom and defend your homeland.¹⁹⁷

I am committed to an ethnographic practice where the recorder does not stand in as specter and does not frame the narrative. On theorizing scholar-activism and activist-ethnography, Rabab Abdulhadi notes "I am not an outsider looking in nor am I solely an insider to community dynamics. I continue to feel the responsibility this doubled-up position implies."¹⁹⁸ Like her, I am committed to a research practice in which the subject is the *process* of sustaining already established relationships while building new ones. By making process a subject rather than an outcome, I share Abdulhadi's view that this work "must be seen as a modest attempt to tell a particular narrative of Palestinian activism as much as it is about critically reflecting upon the activist history my comrades and I collectively made".¹⁹⁹ I am

committed to an ethnographic practice that is not burdened by capitalist rationalities of profit, productivity, and individualism, which is pervasive in the academy—one that sheds the gross commodification of pain and trauma of oppressed peoples. I am committed to an ethnographic practice in which the borders and boundaries of convention, of nation-states, of historical compartmentalization and of spatial segmentation are traversed and, if I were to dream big, exploded. I am committed to an ethnography that relies on the precarious position of refugees and exiles as agents of profound knowledge. In which the techniques of moving when mobility is prohibited, of staying in place when the settler nation criminalizes steadfastness, of bending and swaying when order would rather have you break, shapes collective strategies.

I am concerned with an ethnography where the story is tethered to past stories, to forthcoming ones, and to numerous dimensions—the stories that barely have a break, a period, or comma, and are embedded with thousands more stories. I am concerned with the stories in which the wink of the eye, the faint smile, the gesture, or the silence can tell more than the words. I am concerned with an ethnography that conveys trauma without abstracting agency, which speaks to resistance without hollowing the pain and violence that accompanies it or that is consequential of it. I am committed to an ethnography in which not all things can be said, should be said, and which does not render certain racial and colonial bodies to increased state surveillance. Audra Simpson teaches us that we must navigate a peculiar calculus of ethnography determining what the reader needs to know and what we refuse to write in.²⁰⁰ This is precisely what it means to learn to deal with existence as crisis. It is to also find a way to know and record existence as crisis.

An Ethnography of Survivance

If the following ethnographic accounts illuminate anything, my hopes are that they offer testimony to ways of learning to write through Palestine from the struggles, experiences, desires, theorizations, organizing efforts, and relationships of Palestinian youth. Writing this is a process that is in pursuit of the methodological project of youth movement building and maintaining Palestinian survival. It is an intellectual process and can be but not necessarily ought to be an academic one. It can be made to fit in an academic fold, when/if necessary and when/if Palestinians permit for it to be—so long as it does not disfigure its original meaning and purpose. In thinking through what work offers poignant examples of this emancipatory method for knowledge production, I pull from three seemingly disparate yet—for Palestinian epistemologies—overlapping theorizations of survival. The first considers how **transnational ethnographic practice** necessarily provincializes the meaning and subsequent limitations and burdens of the state and territorial borders. The second looks to an array of **American Indian and Indigenous resistance** literatures, which emphasize the power of documenting narrative, of valuing alternative epistemological forms than that of disciplinary study, and of centering survival as a catalyst for any meaningful work. The third draws from the critical **introspective reflections of Palestinian—and for that matter Third World Liberation—political leaders** who offer lucid examples of how to produce knowledge that enables and is informed by a strengthening of movement culture, strategy, structure, and political theory.

To produce a *transnational* ethnographic account of Palestinian youth movements, my impulse to resist the constraints of the academic institution is coeval with the necessity to resist

constraints of borders. Soyini Madison argues that that defiance of borders is critical for the practice of critical ethnography. She says:

What does it mean for the critical ethnographer to “resist domestication”? It means that she will use the resources, skills, and privileges available to her to make accessible—to penetrate the borders and break through the confines in defense of—the voices and experiences of subjects whose stories are otherwise restrained and out of reach. This means the critical ethnographer contributes to emancipatory knowledge and discourses of social justice.²⁰¹

If breaking through the restraints of borders are necessary requirements for a critical ethnographic practice, then the transnational, displaced, stateless condition of Palestinians has in many ways prepared me to do so. It allows and necessitates an engagement with a rich tapestry of theories and ideas from across the world, from varying epistemological frames to a peoples’ history, and allows for Palestinianness to exist despite its temporality and its permanent impermanence. In one of the most comprehensive chronicles of the Palestinian shatat, Helena Lindholm Shulz states,

there is thus an intense and acute difference between the lived, transnational, unbounded and out-of-space experience of Diaspora and the memory of a nationalized, rooted, placed and essentialist past and identity. Being placeless is the fundamental symbol of the decreased role and meaning of the nation-state.²⁰²

Certainly, the necessity to traverse and transcend borders was and remains a great philosophical characteristic of Palestinian youth political practice specifically seen in the PYM. This necessity guides my hand in the writing of this transnational ethnographic account especially as it is most demonstrated in chapter three. Beyond disabling the intellectual shackles of methods of the disciplinary studies and borders of the state, the ethnography I aim to pursue is one that is rooted and in the service of the liberation of Palestine and the survival of the Palestinians. But

what goes beyond survival? As Palestinians have survived three last skies and an ongoing ontology of Nakba, how can theories of indigenous resistance literatures assist Palestinians in fortifying and expanding our own epistemological transformations?

What does it mean to engage an ethnographic practice where survivance shapes not only the intellectual and political point of what is written, but also the *method* of writing?²⁰³ Gerald Vizenor once referred to survivance as survival *and* resistance, as a standpoint and a worldview. He says, “Survivance, in the sense of native survivance, is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are an active presence.”²⁰⁴ When engaging in a conversation on the distinctions of survival and survivance practices among Palestinians in Syria, Salim Salamah shared with me that Palestinian-Syrians enjoyed freedoms that were unimaginable for Palestinian refugees in other countries, but that this did not mean Palestinian refugees enjoyed full rights, and all the possibilities of human life. He argued that their struggle was one of survival but not of survivance and that in many ways they were forced to accept the minimal parts of surviving and to not hope or aspire for more.

I believe that Vizenor’s insistence on the active presence necessary to thrive is critical to sustaining and enabling Palestinian life and resistance at all levels. I also believe this is critical to Palestinian youth capabilities in anti/decolonial theory and practice amidst persistent catastrophe. But amongst various American Indian and indigenous theorizations of survivance, there exists an insistence that a revival of traditional indigenous knowledge is a critical component to de-colonization.²⁰⁵ What then can a writing practice that centers survivance as both an intellectual and political goal rely on in the absence of a land base for Palestinians and, specifically, how might I engage it considering my own position as a Palestinian denied entry

from my homeland? These factors can in many ways limit the restoration of much that has been destroyed.

If my ethnography is one of survivance, then it is not an ethnography of retrieving what might be within the soot covered boxes of the archive or under the debris of demolished homes alone, and to recuperate and restore it to its original form. In what he calls "*living on*" David Lloyd has critically illustrated how Irish peoples have taken what has been through the gutter—all that has been damaged—and willed it into a mode of survival. He asks:

In the living on of this voice in the darkness, in the ruptures and silences of its discontinuous breathing, is there anything that—beyond the destruction of the subject—persists in suggesting the conditions of another possible life? Or is it no more than the enraged negation of a negation, a cry of pain at the ruination of human life that was the price of the erection of humanity as a universal value?²⁰⁶

Such questions invoke a desire in ethnographic practice that can acknowledge damages of the past as it is present in real-time conditions, conversations, and processes. It accounts for ghosts, silences, and elisions as they manufacture and effect/affect active presence. There is a literal death warrant that is prescribed in the Palestinian ontology of Nakba, and it demands an exploration of ways out. On Saturday, August 11, 2018, a Palestinian youth in the Gaza Strip posted videos online of a group of youth singing songs of freedom atop the ruins of one of the largest cultural centers that had been destroyed by Israeli bomb air strikes just a couple days prior.²⁰⁷ The practice of life, atop of all that has been destroyed, despite all that would rather have Palestinians disappear, is an act of survivance. Yet, in this context, how can writing lend itself to strengthening these practices on popular and in more organized levels of Palestinian political and social life?

An ethnography of survivance is a life practice. There is no time stamp deciphering between work and pleasure. In ideal moments, I will have a paper and pen and will be sitting down for a one-on-one discussion. In other times, this may not happen. It may be a conversation on a walk, in a car, or in a meeting. It may be a memory of a learned lesson while organizing an event, protest, campaign, or collectively writing a political statement. It can happen in bleak moments, through moments of despair and crisis, through moments of joy and celebration. It is my responsibility to commit to complete transparency of who I am and what my research is on. As such, it is also my responsibility to acquire the consensual participation of Palestinian youth, to negotiate and discuss what what Palestinian youth know and would want to have included in this work. At times, that ask is strange and out of place, because for most of the people I have engaged, they do not classify me as what they assume a “researcher” to be. When I do ask, the default answer, the obvious one for them is “of course.” And I think it may be so because they are certain that my research is in the interest of Palestinian youth and our survivance and freedom.

I believe survivance is the animating force of any good intellectual scholarship produced through Palestine. It must be inherently foundational to the methodological approaches particularly because Palestinians need and rely on platforms to affirm and attest to their experience as part of our cultural practice of survival and resistance and because we rely on the text to know the full Palestinian context and to better our movement praxis and resistance strategies as dispossessed and besieged people. I also realize that this method is fraught with contradictions and compromises. I realize also that a conglomeration of ethical and procedural concerns are also persistently present. Survivance as a method for knowledge production is not to be thought of as a process that is clean, free of difficulty, and even insulated from the

reactionary tendencies, risks, and pain that accompany struggles for survival, literature, theory and archives which are in service of liberation. In a roundtable discussion on the historical Palestinian armed resistance, Bilal Shalash discusses the complex relationship Palestinians have historically had with the question of the archive. On the one hand, learning from past mistakes and acquiring stronger lessons for organizational practice and armed resistance strategies could only be made possible if/when strong documentation and archival registries allow Palestinians to institutionalize struggle. On the other hand, Shalash discusses how these archives have been surveilled, raided and have become instrumental in both anchoring Israeli assassinations of Palestinian strugglers and infiltrating political party strategies.²⁰⁸ How then can an ethnography of survivance navigate the necessity to document narrative—ironically necessitated because Palestinian history, knowledge and narrative is persistently under attack—if the act of documenting produces further risks and vulnerabilities?

Ethnography of survivance means thinking and writing of the Palestinian colonial condition as we are and not through the romantic narrative that portrays us as monolithic national movement heroes or unbroken and unscathed freedom fighters. It means the author must consider deeply how/what to say, when, why and to assess the benefits and risks with each statement made. It means a consideration for community, and to assess whether or not the ethnographic account makes further vulnerable community struggles. But it also means that a reductive view of the Palestinian as an inherent, perpetual victim can be just as damaging to the project of survivance as Zionist occupation and dispossession. Survivance means coming to terms with the ways in which we inhabit multiple and overlapping contradictions between what we believe and ethical principles versus what is (im)possible to do to survive. It means considering how discursive regimes like ethnography, which are normally deployed to ‘fix’ us,

may help us to assess where we are, what our needs are, and how we might better our practices in movement. After all, discursive regimes were central to the logics and structures that work toward our elimination—who said they should have no place in animating our survival?²⁰⁹

It is critical to understand the origins of ethnography as part of a discursive and structural regime targeted at native elimination. However, the ethnography I speak of and that many others have long practiced is an appropriation or manipulation of its form embedded in the settler colonial contours shaping disciplinary fields' methodologies. It is my obligation to my people to piece together various (con)texts of engagement so that we might uncover, realize, produce, revitalize, or borrow a collective political strategy for liberation. In chapter two, I cover the necessity for this collective process, vision, and strategy as a remedy to the Oslo Accords conundrum. Redefining ethnographic practice in a way that accommodates the conditions and needs of our communities turns the academic industrial complex's objectives outward. Rather than producing knowledge for the sake of production, circulation, and consumption, ethnographic scholarship can truly speak with, to, and through our own communities and with allies who I genuinely join us in a conversation on the role of scholarship and academics in de/anticolonial ethnography. But I recognize that this thing called ethnography is in fact another way of methodologically defining a process to capture a story and to ruminate on its meaning and significance.

This is a process that Palestinian resistance leaders have long practiced. In January of 2018, Sobhi, a member of the PYM-USA national board shared with me reflections of what he believed could assist PYM develop its movement culture in stronger ways. He argued that historically, leaders of the Palestinian struggle had engaged in something he called reflections of "criticism/self-criticism" in which a process of developing stronger forms of accountability within

movement spaces coupled with acknowledging one's own shortcomings and mistakes could make for healthier organizational dynamics.²¹⁰ After this conversation, I revisited a book that I had long revered as one of the few English available works that convey reflections on movement strategies by leaders of the various Palestinian parties. The book, *Palestine Lives: Interviews with the Resistance Leaders*, features several introspective reflections where leaders of the movement (in the early 1970's) share political analysis of events of the region, the successes and shortcomings of the movement, and areas where new and reformulated strategy is necessary based on learned lessons.²¹¹ The leaders each offer a set of sharp critiques of other forces and players in the region in defining their set-backs in achieving their goals, but do not do so without offering introspective critiques of their own parties and the role of leadership as well.

In this text, I saw firsthand how/why the theoretical frameworks and ideologies guiding the various parties' trajectories were deeply informed by their own practices and vice-versa. But I had not quite realized just how entrenched the belief in the dialogical relationship between theory and practice within the Palestinian political tradition was until I compared their interviews with the work of other Third World resistance leaders.²¹² I came to realize that the former generations of struggle—not unlike the new generation—did not have a perfect calculus of experience, vision, and capital before or throughout the implementation of their strategies. Here is where what I have called the grief of insecurity pervasive among the new generation mistakes the capabilities of the former generation, in that this grief assumes lack of preparedness while former generations were in fact equipped with what was needed to execute strategy. However, the intellectual tools produced regarding Palestine at the time often emerged from the movement, demonstrating its contradictions and complexities, demystifying its image and genuinely seeking reformulated theoretical frameworks in light of what practice

taught them. However, the Palestinian political/intellectual tradition did not rely only on practice to inform its theory. It deeply engaged in the study of theory from other places, struggles, movements and resistance leaders to consider what was useful and generative for the Palestinian struggle. In 1973, a group of Palestinian thinkers (who were also political leaders) convened for a roundtable discussion that paid scrupulous attention to the pitfalls and advantages of comparative theory and movement study. In that roundtable discussion Tahsin Bashir states,

The period of suffering experienced by the progressive Arab forces and the Palestinian revolution pushes us to research other revolutionary experiences, and so, the most successful of the modern experiences is the Vietnamese experience, serving as a good way to study ourselves **more than it is a study of the Vietnamese issue.**²¹³

Where these leaders of the resistance movement allowed for practice to inform theory and to engage in a study of comparative models to inform both theory and practice, they did so while paying close attention to cultural and regional specificity and the dangers of comparison as well.

Bashir continues,

However, we must take into account the dangers of using comparison as a method of historical understanding, logical demonstration, or even for revolutionary criticism. Because using comparison in Arab thought, and in modern revolutionary thought, was one of the greatest pitfalls that pushed Arab thought away from the realm of reality. Any real revolutionary thought—any revolutionary thought that seeks to change society—must occur in a new and real framework, and we must caution ourselves against using the victory of others as a means of intellectual opium that prevents us from criticism, above all self-criticism. In many of the Palestinian writings, we find this comparison repeatedly, and we use it as a means of unending self-excuse. We also use comparison as a means of not succeeding, or postponing success to an unending time; this type of thinking was used in many religions and many movements, and they did not lead to success.²¹⁴

In the end, while political leaders engaged both introspective and comparative analyses of movement strategies, they did so in a way in which theory and practice were constantly interfacing and developing the urgency to attempt anew, building upon historical lessons, and revising formulations of practice and theory based on these lessons. However, much of these internal dialogues were not passed on to the new generation in the aftermath of the 1993 Oslo Accords and, in their absence, not only were the learned lessons of previous phases not passed, more importantly the methodological process of dialogically engaging theory and practice for stronger praxis also disappeared.

To produce knowledge informed by and in the service of liberation praxis for the new generation, I argue that an inter-disciplinary transnational ethnographic practice informed by indigenous epistemological frameworks and a dialogical relationship between movement theory and practice is critical. Thus, this work is not a tell-all project in which the scars and wounds of Palestinian youth are displayed to trigger an emotional awakening, in which the reader is more valued than the “subject.” It is not to archive a history once lost as though it does not condition our current realities. It is not to try the Palestinian people’s claims for political sovereignty, return, and liberation for approval of its authenticity or legitimacy by both direct and indirect profiteers of our suffering. An ethnography of survivance does not attempt to construct an epilogue of tears, museums of ghosts, nor reports for jurors of a courtroom.

It is a tool to be re-deployed that I have borrowed from Native American and Indigenous studies and offer to my community, so that we may collectively engage a process of self-reflection. It is theory, in motion, with movement; always shifting as our needs and learned lessons change, but always rooted in the clarity of knowing what our collective cause is and to

continue cultivating the conviction to maintain our responsibilities to it. I aim to tell a particular story of method, of process, that can in no way speak on behalf of or be a complete account of Palestinian youth. I have learned to be honest about the limitations and ethics of my own scholarly ambition. As Rabab Abdulhadi notes: “On the one hand I feel that I must try as much as I can to express and articulate the sentiments of my comrades who participated in making this history of Palestinian activism. On the other, I realize I cannot narrate the stories of every community activist or capture the richness, diversity and subtlety of events’ interpretations.”²¹⁵

Despite the limitations to produce something complete, something deep enough to convey what Abdulhadi referred to as the “richness, diversity and subtlety of events’ interpretations,” the youth I have engaged through my involvement in the PYM have grounded me to attempt to produce something meaningful. They will hold me accountable to them as Palestinian youth across various places. They will pull me out of the physiological, intellectual, and material isolation so many academics encounter and remind me that my work is only as valuable as the collective of our people who inform it and for whom it is written. They will ensure that belonging will be closed off to me if I become “one of them,” those who profit from our struggle more than they sacrifice, those who make our struggle a show or a “carnival” of sorts. It is they who offer me the ability to piece together the greatest archive our people can have. This archive is made up of fragments of stories, emotions, contradictions, and incommensurability across time and place. But most importantly, they offer me a dynamic treasure chest of our people’s relationships with one another, with our past, and with the collective nightmares of our current realities and dreams of a new world. It is these relationships that come together to produce collective memories and oral history out of our engagement with one another, with our elders, with our land, our cause, and our struggle. This is the kind of

ethnography I mean to do, an ethnography which so many people who come from struggle have always practiced, because a collective project of survival relies on it. This is an ethnography that I encourage critical ethnic studies to support and to validate as legitimate, critical knowledge making.

It is for these reasons that I advance this project from and through my people, for them, and as a part of them. It is for these reasons my methodological approach is simultaneously the most important political intervention of the project itself. Redefining how, where, why, and with/by whom research is conducted is as critical to this work as a reconceptualization of what constitutes research in the first place. In the process of writing, I have felt deeply indebted to decolonial methodologies, scholarship, and knowledge-making projects that have, do, and will radically transform the university and its intelligentsia.²¹⁶ In the next section, I illustrate some of the barriers within the US academy and public university and how these forms of organic engagement and critical theorizations from the vantage point of Palestinian youth are often elided in the way Palestine is engaged.

Part II: Besieged by Incorporation, Exiled by Exclusion: Palestine and the University

In “The World, the Text and the Critic,” Edward Said talks about how texts, being necessarily caught up in sites and moments of historical particularity, necessarily reveal their “worldliness” through their textuality.²¹⁷ But as a Palestinian academic navigating the colonial dispossession of the tenets and terms of my respective anticolonial struggle, I am thus subjected to several layers of separation, symbolic as well as physical which being denied entry into Palestine verified. All of this leads to thinking through the question of “worldlessness,” which I have mentioned earlier, for even if my textual production can betray the varying registers of displacement in my methods and in the strategy of piecing together fragments, there is, at the

bottom of it all, a constant if not constantly re-negotiating set of forces that seek to *inhibit* my textuality from the possibility of a worlded grounding within Palestine as place and politically familiar trope. Where then have I found ground if not Palestine, literally or figuratively? The University is one place where that ground pulls at me, where it offers stability of sorts but also an arsenal of replications of the broader Palestinian ontology of Nakba. How then does the liberal university restrain and determine a methodology of survivance?

Edward Said once suggested that two models of a university could exist. The first relies on power and authority to reign: Teaching becomes fixed, requires a suspension of the search for knowledge and is accompanied by an attachment to dogma. The second model relies on motion rather than power; it is thus useful to cultivate skepticism and critique, to pose questions that challenge authority, and to place into debate the question of authority itself. In the second model, Said articulates motion through the image of the traveler's "willingness to go into different worlds, use different idioms, understand a variety of disguises, masks, rhetoric's, and be free to do so, and to be critical, to think for one self."²¹⁸ He argued that to do so with care and love for knowledge alone demonstrated the "highest form of academic freedom."²¹⁹ A Palestinian exile himself, it is of no surprise that Said traced what he called "the highest form of academic freedom" to the periphery, the margins—sites out of bounds, out of place, and constantly in flux. Said once said he was happiest in an airplane.²²⁰ His longstanding contributions to both the Palestinian intellectual tradition and political struggle placed exile as a site of intellectual excellence and critical knowledge production, which I will further explore.

Importantly, however, in Said's essay "On the University," he never identifies these two models of the university as antithetical to one another or as distinct and disentangled modalities. Said's reflections on the university refer to a complex paradox. The university is a

site that can cultivate skepticism and critique and challenge authority while maintaining and expanding that same authority. However, the vexed relationship between the power to impose authority and the assumed freedom to critique authority has become particularly apparent when it comes to the ability of students and academics alike to express a commitment to the freedom of Palestine and Palestinians in class curriculum, campus activism, and in scholarship. Particularly, the Palestinian exilic experience, condition of refugeehood, and aspirations for return to Palestine undergird some of the most cataclysmic events that have created a fury in defense of academic freedom and freedom of speech on US campuses in the last decade. In other words, while it is barely tolerable to be against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in US universities and the US academy, it is unfathomable to support the refugee right of return to their historic towns and villages from which they were displaced in 1948.

I argue that the way in which university administrations and the academy manage Palestine scholarship, activism, and Palestinian communities appears to contradict but in fact perfectly align with the aspirations of the university as a beacon of liberal multicultural democracy and the paradox that Said spoke of. Though Palestine is contained in extraordinary ways and Zionism is afforded exceptions persistently in campus life and scholarship, I argue that the distinctions of Palestine in the public university have less to do with differences from other radical theorizations and movements historically and today and more to do with the temporality of the Palestinian political struggle and its ontology of both siege and exile.

Perhaps without knowing so student, academic campaigns, and scholarship for justice in Palestine have exposed another grave contradiction of the public university today. That is, in their efforts to make Palestine legible and tolerable on campuses and in scholarship, these campaigns often take on the university's own liberal discourses appealing for recognition,

inclusion, and incorporation of Palestine in the institution. On the other hand, any incorporation of Palestine unsettles Zionist logics, interests, and exceptionalism, which the university is deeply invested in. In the end, the university is forced to deal with Palestine extraordinarily, and it appears to be contrary to the other techniques it uses to co-opt radical theorizations and movements, political projects, and constituencies. Thus, while student and academic activism and scholarship on Palestine has exposed such contradictions in the university, without turning their attention to this paradox and to the particularities that constitute it, academics and student activists advocating for the Palestinian cause might also participate alongside Zionist repression in tightening the margins for rigorous, free, liberation-based engagement on Palestine and eclipse what Roderick Ferguson has called “critical possibilities.”²²¹

It is this paradox that has led me to investigate why university administrations treat Palestine with such scrupulous attention. I do this by examining the following: (a) the limits and opportunities of the public university for radical transformation; (b) the way in which multicultural liberal democracy may be co-constitutive with the exclusion of Palestinians, Arab, and Muslim communities in the War on Terror context; (c) the exceptions afforded to Zionism and Israel; and (d) the precarity of a Palestinian ontology of Nakba. I offer ethnographic accounts of my own experiences as a student organizer at San Francisco State University to illuminate how and why addressing these questions became central to my own intellectual and political pursuits.

What Is Barely Tolerable and What Is Unspeakable?

The growth of student and academic solidarity with Palestine has surged in the last eight years, as campaigns for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) have expanded, as chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) have grown, and as conditions in Palestine have

deteriorated.²²² Palestine has also increasingly become a site of critical intellectual inquiry in the US academy.²²³ However, this surge has also been met with severe forms of containment, policing, and repression by university administrations. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) issued a report surveying the various ways Israel advocacy organizations have organized a long-term strategy to stifle political critique of Israel across US campuses.²²⁴ In 2015, the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN) also offered a report following a small group of Zionist funders organizing backlash campaigns to the growing movement for Palestine. IJAN reports that “over \$300 million in propaganda, surveillance and lawfare” had been invested to stifle Palestine activism across the country.²²⁵ In September 2015, Palestine Legal and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) also issued a report titled the “Palestine Exception to Free Speech,” which chronicled widespread efforts of pro-Israel forces across the country to lobby governmental officials and university administrations to censor the free speech of activists advocating for justice in Palestine.²²⁶ The report outlined thematic institutional measures to limit free speech, critique of Israel, and academic freedom. Between January 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, Palestine Legal responded to over 305 cases of repression across the United States. The report identifies the following archetypes of repression as most reported: 1) Cancellations and alterations of academic and cultural events; 2) Threats to Academic Freedom; 3) Lawsuits and Legal Threats; 4) Legislation; and 5) Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions.

For Palestinians, these extraordinary measures used to silence and stifle dissent are not new and predate the War on Terror context, which I will return to. For decades, Palestinian communities—especially in the United States, which has long acted as the anchor of the Zionist project following the British mandate period—have experienced punitive backlash in the form of state violence and surveillance, criminalization, and repression.²²⁷ What has perhaps become a

new predicament for Palestinians is that the current strand of Palestine activity and discourse on campuses largely follows a civil and human rights-based approach, one that boasts of its non-violent strategies and relies on international law and rights to appeal to liberal sensibilities; but specifically only in reference to the human rights violations experienced by select Palestinians, in fractions of historic Palestine. Often spearheaded by non-Palestinians, this approach not only relies on a discourse of “civility,” but also requires a narrative of Palestinian victimization that erases the full personhood, agency, and some of the full liberatory political goals of Palestinians. For example, though the 2005 BDS call includes supporting the Palestinian refugee right of return, many divestment efforts in the US specifically focus on the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israeli human rights violations in these territories while ignoring Palestinian refugee claims to return to all of historic Palestine thereby effacing refugee experiences, political aspirations and demands in their solidarity discourses and campaigns.

This relatively new approach is resultant of a shift in the historic Palestinian political program from a liberation project encompassing all of historic Palestine to that of a statehood-building project on only fractions of historic Palestine following the 1993 Oslo Accords, which ample scholarship has argued has been devastating for the Palestinian people, political project, and leadership.²²⁸ Yet even these limited forms of Palestine scholarship and activism are still met with as much, if not more, repression than those forms that existed prior to 1993. Advocates for justice in Palestine have established a careful calculus of what is (un)sayable when it comes to Palestine and critique of Israel. They rely on the language of rights, democracy, inclusion, and law, ideals that the US national imaginary prides itself on; however, this reliance is largely applied to Palestinians who reside in the de jure occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip rather than the entirety of historic Palestine and the Palestinian population who

live in exile. While these discourses only address the most basic fundamental rights on only fractions of historic Palestine and only for a specific constituency of Palestinians, they are barely tolerable. Thus, a refusal to engage Zionism as a normalized, accepted, and *done* settler colonial project—by insisting on refugee return or centering the transnational dimension of the political struggle—becomes unspeakable.

The intensification of Zionist smear campaigns, repression, and bullying tactics has perhaps falsely suggested that Palestinians have acquired more space, power, and advantages in universities across the United States. It could also suggest that the major symbolic victories accumulated by these movements directly translate into hard power for Palestinians. Neither of these things are quantifiable and in my opinion, are in fact contrary to the reality for many Palestinians, particularly when it comes to how these advancements have affected the ability of Palestinians to reorganize a collective political program, strategy, and leadership. But one thing is certain: Whereas Palestinians have made grave concessions to our own narrative and national aspirations in these discourses, particularly by focusing only on certain components of the occupation and eliminating an insistence of the right of return to all historic Palestine in clear and overt ways, repression has not stopped. This experience has led me and surely many other Palestinian scholars and students to question the particularities of our struggle, the exceptions afforded to Zionism, and the logics that shape and structure the university as one site where our protracted struggle currently unfolds in the United States. Why have Palestinians, the oppressed in a relationship of asymmetrical power, had to concede and capitulate and still have not been able to enjoy the privilege of tolerance? This predicament has pushed us to think of these issues because we are, like the transnational Palestinian community, quite unsure of what work there is to be done to achieve our liberation and what space is afforded to us to explore these

uncertainties. Also, it limits us to know how to join and genuinely engage allies in the cultivation of a trajectory to achieve this clarity.

Student Perspectives on the Edward Said Mural at SFSU and the Creation of AMED

As an undergraduate student leader of the last standing chapter of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS)²²⁹ at San Francisco State University (SFSU), I was one of the students who helped spearhead the campaign to inaugurate the Palestinian cultural mural honoring Dr. Edward Said, which was realized November 2, 2007. My student life at SFSU began in 2003 as the United States renewed its War on Terror with a new invasion of Iraq. My first semester at SFSU was the first semester GUPS was permitted to resume activities after the university placed sanctions on the group the year prior for what the administration argued was a violation of procedures and guidelines for rallies and demonstrations at the GUPS' May 7, 2002, Nakba Commemoration event.²³⁰ Certainly, the GUPS students and the university's "management" recount the day quite differently, but that is a story for another time. Arab community organizations and students and faculty on campus, while weary of the university administration's decades-long censorship and repression of Palestinian students, had galvanized a mobilization strategy to address the hostile work and learning environment for Arab, Muslim, and especially Palestinian students on campus. Filing an official grievance with the Department of Education, the Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) led the community effort to assist students at SFSU in applying pressure to the university administration and the President's Task Force on Inter-Group Relations. These efforts later resulted in the student and community recommendation for the creation of an Arab and Muslim studies program housed in the historic College of Ethnic Studies (COES). In 2006, in an unprecedented gesture, the university approved

the hiring of Rabab Abdulhadi as a senior scholar of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative (AMED).

Certainly, the second Palestinian Intifada, the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the alienation of growing up Arab in a post-9/11 context all motivated and shaped my political consciousness and commitments. But by 2005, for GUPS and for many Arab organizations in the Bay Area, the immediate urgency of protests and backlash defense had dissipated as it became more difficult to mobilize in mass numbers due to the normalcy of the war and the loss of power within the US anti-war movement. I and other students in GUPS found that this moment offered us a bit of breathing room to think about what kind of activism could strengthen our sense of identity, purpose, and cultural survival on campus and in our community. While we were eager to begin a new project, we had not given up efforts to pressure the administration for the academic program we craved and had long fought for to be housed within the COES. We explored ideas and hosted a joint mini-conference on divestment at Stanford University with Students Confronting Apartheid in Israel (SCAI) and the UC Berkeley chapter of SJP. We also continued dialogue with Arab and Palestinian student clubs across UC, CSU, and community college campuses, that together comprised the Arab Student Coalition (ASC) of California.²³¹

In the fall of 2005, our friends in the SFSU chapter of the Student Council on Intertribal Nations (SKINS) told us that they were working on a cultural mural that would be inaugurated alongside the murals of Malcolm X and Cesar Chavez in the SFSU student center. They encouraged us to think of cultural survival projects as integral to our political activism. We dreamt up what it would be like to inaugurate a Palestinian cultural mural alongside these icons of liberation history, those whose stories we were brought up on and had more access to than those of our own Palestinian freedom fighters. We considered the thought of inaugurating a

Palestinian political giant equivalent to the likes of Malcolm X. But for us, it was also critical to honor a Palestinian whose contributions were well known to communities other than our own. That is how and why we decided to honor Dr. Edward Said. By spring 2005, GUPS announced plans to work on a mural project, and we passed our first phase of approval from the Associated Students (AS) and Student Center Governing Board (SCGB).

Working on the mural project gave the members of GUPS the chance to engage a collective process through which we were exploring questions of the Palestinian experience of siege and exile, resilience and resistance, and comradeship and collaboration with other movements fighting for liberation. We explored our own identities as Palestinians of the shatat and argued over which images most demonstrated our collectivity. The olive tree, Jerusalem, the wall, the cactus plant, and Palestinian *debka* (folkdance) were among the 28 images that we deeply studied, discussed, and agreed to include in the mural. We passed all the requirements mandated by the SCGB mural policies through multiple phases of the process. We engaged the process for over a year and a half and generated strong campus and community support. We developed a collective vision of what our mural would look like and articulated it to the co-muralists, Faye Oweis and Susan Green, who then drafted many versions of the mural until we were satisfied. Once we had a final draft of the mural, we submitted it for the final stage of approval in the spring of 2006 and were met with a crushing response from the university administration.

SFSU President Robert Corrigan called mural supporters “bigots” and said that the mural represented “a culture of violence” and “hate to Jews.”²³² President Corrigan then put a moratorium on all murals until such a time that the SCGB could draft a new mural policy that could address the issue of “finite space.” He also demanded the removal of one image from the

GUPS mural. The image was that of a small boy named Hanthala holding a key, drawn by the famous Palestinian political cartoonist Nagi Al-Ali. To me and to many of my friends in GUPS, Hanthala—this image of a boy with his back facing the world, disheveled and wearing ragged clothing—represented an undeniable truth intrinsic to the collective Palestinian narrative. *Hanthala*, which means bitterness in Arabic, represents all that was lost in the 1948 Nakba. He represents the silence of the world, the corruption of the Arab dictators colluding with Zionist settlement, and the brutality of Zionist dispossession and aggression against the Palestinian people. Hanthala holds an image of the key, reflecting the Palestinian refugee right to return to our historic towns, cities, and villages from which we were displaced in 1948 in accordance with UN resolution 194. For the Palestinian shatat, these two images—of Hanthala and of the key—are not only reminiscent of our pain, loss, and yearning for return but also of our steadfastness and resilience. They remain vital icons of the collective Palestinian narrative and national aspirations. Mira Nabulsi interviewed members of GUPS to understand how they viewed Hanthala as a visual ideograph. Nabulsi draws the link between their narratives and argues that the shared definition is as follows: “Hanthala is potent because he is timeless, steadfast and witness; Hanthala is relevant personally and collectively; Hanthala is revolutionary, radical and seeks universal justice, Hanthala is accessible, collective and ambiguous.”²³³

In 2007, the Palestinian cultural mural honoring Edward Said was inaugurated on the Cesar Chavez Student Center at SFSU. Noticeably absent were the images of Hanthala and the key. In their place, following President Corrigan’s demands for their removal, we resorted to depict a cactus, the Palestinian national plant, which represents steadfastness and the ability to wither the awful conditions of crisis. In Arabic, cactus is called *saber*, which also means patience. The day of celebrations for the mural’s inauguration paid special tribute to Hanthala and the

key, and in each word spoken, the GUPS students insisted that the Palestinian story included us, the shatat, and especially included the Palestinian refugees still living in camps awaiting their return to the homeland. However, the compromise the university exacted from us felt like a sense of betrayal to our cause. We masked our defeat by arguing that this was the first and only Palestinian mural on any public institution in the United States and that this was a great accomplishment. But we always knew it was never fully our story. Through the fight, we grew ever more committed to the refugee right of return and more deeply tied to the story of Hanthala.

The story of the Palestinian cultural mural is unfortunately not particular to me or to my friends in GUPS. Any Palestinian student or faculty member will tell you of the concessions they have had to make to be legible and tolerable to campus life and scholarship and of the sense of betrayal and shame that accompanies such concessions. But the story of the mural highlights the paradox of the university of which Said spoke: how the university can be both a site to impose authority and a site to critique that same authority. Palestine and Palestinians can be included, tolerated, and incorporated into the university's management of difference and diversity, but at what cost, on what grounds, and on whose terms? What is it about the university that can celebrate Palestinian culture while also deeming it a "culture of violence"? How do university logics of incorporation and diversity management lend themselves to this duality? How are these same logics of incorporation and diversity management challenged when it comes to the case of Palestine and Palestinians?

By the time of the GUPS mural inauguration, Rabab Abdulhadi was already at SFSU and organizing a series of colloquia to discuss how students and the community could engage in building the AMED program, an intellectual pursuit that prioritized closing the gap between the

academy and community in tune with the spirit of the ideals of the historic COES at SFSU. In 2008, I began the master's program at SFSU in ethnic studies as the first student in the AMED initiative. In 2009, President Corrigan halted the search for AMED hire lines as punishment because the COES, AMED, and GUPS co-sponsored an event that featured Omar Barghouti of the BDS movement as a keynote speaker for the mural anniversary. Since then, GUPS and AMED students have been advocating, organizing, and pressuring SFSU to reinstitute the hire lines and offer resources to AMED so that we could realize the program. Today, the AMED program, while having been fought for nearly 15 years, has not fully been realized.

GUPS, Abdulhadi, and Arab and Muslim student and community leaders have been the targets of a new slew of Islamophobic, anti-Arab, and anti-Palestinian racist attacks at SFSU since 2013.²³⁴ These attacks include accusations of anti-Semitism and affiliations with terrorism by the AMCHA initiative,²³⁵ which utilizes lawfare²³⁶ to pressure the university to institute forms of bureaucratic harassment on Palestinian/Palestine student activists and professors across the country. In addition, three poster smear campaigns by the David Horowitz Freedom Center featuring pictures and names of GUPS student leaders and Abdulhadi were met with minimal response from the university administration.²³⁷ Both Abdulhadi and the GUPS leaders have had profiles written about them accusing them of endorsing violence, terrorism, and anti-Semitism on the notorious Canary Mission website, which was created to demonize student and faculty advocates for justice in Palestine and interfere in their professional employment opportunities across the United States.²³⁸ Canary Mission strikingly resembles Campus Watch, which was created in 2002 with similar goals.²³⁹ The vitriolic cyber and print media campaigns have resulted in the normalization and escalation of right-wing, racist, Islamophobic forces across the United States targeting student and faculty advocates for justice in Palestine. In some cases,

these campaigns result in actual punitive measures from university administrations, including the firing of Steven Salaita at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champagne²⁴⁰ and the cancellation of the Edward Said professor search line at California State University, Fresno.²⁴¹

Limits of the Public University for Radical Transformation

Historically, the university has prided itself on its liberal values. It purports itself as a place of free intellectual exchange and knowledge making, a site of critique, skepticism, public access, progressive pedagogy, and political autonomy, or at least political neutrality. More recently, “diversity,” “civility,” “inclusion,” and “tolerance” have become critical to the lexicon that mobilizes the university as the forerunner of liberal multicultural democracy in the United States. This is especially true for public universities and has become more pervasive throughout the eight years of the Obama administration. To more deeply explore the relationship between liberal logics that are the lynchpin of the universities discourse and policies and particularly how Palestine is managed by such, it is critical to re-examine the relationship of the university with the state and its economic and political projects. Furthermore, it is critical to place into question some of the particularities that the War on Terror context plays in shaping ideals of multicultural liberal democracy that the university reveres and upholds.

Today, the university’s professional and intellectual dimensions embody an entangled investment in expansive neo-liberal capitalism and state interests at the expense of critical education. The public university promotes itself as embodying not only an ontology but *also* an economy of multiculturalism, whereby it relies on capitalist rationalities of inclusion for the sake of production and profit.²⁴² The university’s pedagogy and scholarship is thus affected by the demands of the market and not by the guidance of educational practitioners, nor by the

students or public. When the market demands the production of knowledge for the sake of increased policing, the expansion of the prison-industrial complex, weapons, surveillance, and crowd control and war technologies, it should be of no surprise that the university, as determined by both its state and private contracts, will reflect and respond to these demands. The university has become an increasingly vital institution to an economy controlled by neo-liberal monopolies and ensnared in industries of containment, security, policing, and militarization. There is no more evident proof of this entanglement than the appointment of the former Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, as the 20th President of the University of California and the decades-long developing contracts between the University of California and state and private military contracts. In this sense, the US–Israeli alliance is central to the intellectual, political, and economic project of US universities and not an open topic for free intellectual exchange and debate. This is particularly true following September 11, 2001 in which Israel would more fervently purport of itself as a leading expert in combatting terrorism and strengthening its own arms trade and surveillance industries.²⁴³ It is also true that questions of academic freedom when it comes to Palestine scholarship and activism on campuses will be foreclosed upon before ever even truly being allowed to be engaged.

Christopher Newfield explains how the project to privatize public universities that began some 40 years ago pushed working class people and people of color out of the university and was the result of right-wing culture wars that hijacked the momentum that followed the advancements of student and peoples' movements of 1968. This privatization foreclosed public universities' capacities to effect a more progressive and democratic influence in US social, political, cultural, and economic terrains by affecting who could belong to the university, the purpose of education, and what market the university was conditioning people to participate in,

uphold, and expand.²⁴⁴ While the privatization of universities has left millions of students across the United States unable to access affordable education and made student loans the largest form of debt in US society, the scale, effectiveness, and rigorous politicization of student movements today does not parallel those of 1968, a moment in which student movements reflected one element of broader anti-war, anti-capitalist, feminist, Black Power and Third World liberation upheaval and social transformation. Equally critical was the monumental efforts of the 1980's student movement which launched boycott campaigns against apartheid South Africa as well.

However, what is critical here is to turn back to the post-1968 context to reflect upon how universities contained student insurgency through processes of incorporation, inclusion, and institutionalization not unlike the strategies used to diffuse dissent by the state in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To a certain extent, if we examine the topography of discourse in Palestine scholarship and activism on campuses today, we can see that the demands—critical and relevant education and scholarship regarding Palestine that unearths the one-sided dominance of Palestinian co-claimants, divestment from the role of the university in sustaining an illegal occupation, and ending Draconian treatment of political activity and free speech on campus—are in fact not all that different from those of student movements in 1968 or the 1980's. Why then should such demands be treated so extraordinarily if the student movements of the 1960s and 1980's have supposedly achieved such objectives? One crucial distinction lies in the fact that the US support for apartheid South Africa was considered an embarrassment in the cold-war context in which the US purported of itself as a post-racial democracy which valued equity and political freedoms. But in the post 9/11 context US support for Israel consistently relies on reformulated iterations of neoliberal racial configurations by

which support for Israel is about defending democracy and freedom rather than endorsing its negation. And because the War on Terror conjuncture embattles US and Israeli doublespeak simultaneously, I find it fruitful to turn back to these student and University histories rather than to indulge in the particularities of Zionist repression of the Palestinian struggle here.

The advent of the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in massive transformative change within US educational institutions, including the creation of fields such as ethnic studies. Nicholas Mitchell describes a gap in the historical record, which contributed to the confusion, conflation, or consolidation of the intellectual projects fought for by peoples' movements in the 1960s with the state-allocated institutional formations to house those communities and projects. Because the university manages and centralizes these institutional formations, the institutionalization of such knowledge projects is often conditional on political concessions (departments of ethnic studies are one example). Thus, the communities that founded and were supposed to profit from and lead such knowledge projects must pare back their original demands and vision. To refuse to accommodate the concessions often demanded by the university results in cuts to funding, threats of academic freedom, repression and censorship, or other punitive measures. Arguing against this conflation of intellectual projects with their institutional incorporation, Nicholas Mitchell explains that while "intellectual projects can take specific institutional forms, they are not ultimately reducible to them. And while institutional forms attempt to organize intellectual projects in a certain way, they do not *necessarily* require the presence of a specific intellectual project."²⁴⁵ Mitchell's analysis offers important insights for teachers and scholars engaging the question of Palestine, particularly now as we sit at the nexus whereby Palestine can be engaged, incorporated, and possibility institutionalized in universities on specific—but possibly damaging—terms.

Since the university is an institution that informs and is informed by the developments of state-crafted racial violence, Dylan Rodriguez's notion of multiculturalist white supremacy at the advent of the election of Obama in 2008 offers a lucid illustration of Mitchell's claims. He says,

To be clear: the political work of liberation from racist state violence and everything it sanctions and endorses, from premature death to poverty becomes more complex, contradictory, and difficult now. The dreadful genius of the multiculturalist Obama moment is that it installs a 'new' representative figure of the United States that, in turn, opens 'new' possibilities for history's slaves, savages, and colonized to more fully identify with the same nation-building project that requires the neutralization, domestication, and strategic elimination of declared aliens, enemies, and criminals. In this sense, I am less anxious about the future of the 'Obama administration' (whose policy blueprint is and will be relatively unsurprising) than I am about the speed and effectiveness with which it has rallied the sentimentality and political investment (often in terms of actual dollar contributions and voluntary labor) of the purported U.S. 'Left.'²⁴⁶

While Newfield has suggested that neoliberal privatization of public education eclipsed the aspirations of the student movements of the 1960s, Roderick Ferguson cautions us against relying on the explanation of the academy as derivative of the capitalist market and its changing demands.²⁴⁷ He calls on us to consider that "the struggles taking place on college campuses because the student protests were inspirations for power in that moment, inspiring it to substitute redistribution for representation, indeed encouraging us to forget how radical movements promote the inseparability of the two."²⁴⁸ If we account for Ferguson's analysis of the limits of the student movements of the 1960s and how they became co-opted by logics of incorporation and inclusion, what Rodriguez argued would be the equivalence of multicultural white supremacy, then how do we make sense of the current campus and intellectual movement for justice in Palestine today? Particularly, how does the current form of Palestine scholarship and activism on US campuses, as it is primarily organized through the discourse of

Palestinian subjugation and victimization alone and strategies of BDS for solidarity activist, limit scholarship that can engage Palestinian modalities of knowledge making, resistance, survivance, and activism, which can honor Palestinian resistance and agency as well?

Disconnected from an organized Palestinian collective political project and liberation strategy, the movement for justice in Palestine finds its political reference largely from human rights law and international law, two sites that have done little to mitigate Palestinian oppression and dispossession. Randall Williams argues that human rights became cultivated as an international ethic, created in the West through Eurocentric cultural values, authority, and hegemony.²⁴⁹ In this sense, human rights became a tool of US power since its inception and functioned as a litmus test for other peoples and groups of the world to demonstrate their proximity and belonging to modernity and civilization in what Williams called a “divided world.”²⁵⁰ Using the optics Williams offers us, we can come to see that the tools and goals of Palestine scholarship and activism today become conflated. Demonstrating images and narratives of Palestinian oppression and subjugation in the absence of their survival and liberation strategies eclipses the goal of this work. What then becomes the goal of Palestine scholarship and activism is recognition of Palestinian subjugation and the attempted removal of one’s own institutional complicity in such subjugation. Neither version addresses Palestinian self-determined representation and agency or a redistribution of wealth and power, though radical movements as outlined by Ferguson reflect the inseparability of the two.

Ferguson illuminates for us what went wrong in the 1960s context, how representational politics stood in for and replaced substantive change fueled by radical theorizations of power from movements. This is not untrue in the Palestinian context. The distinction lies in the temporality. While the 1960s marked this juncture for movements in the

United States, the 1993 Oslo Accords marked it for Palestinian radical theorizations of power. Taher Al-Labadi attributes this shift to the changes in the post-1993 context in which the project of capitalist state-formulation while under occupation exacerbated asymmetrical power relations and animated debt economy as a tool of colonial violence.²⁵¹ Mira Nabulsi argues that this caused an absorption of Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip into the international aid and NGO system and thus reorganized the Palestinian intelligentsia so that they could no longer play their historic “militant” role separate from a centralized, political liberation project.²⁵² In other words, the Palestinian political project swapped redistribution for representation and inclusion and as a result, the formerly organized Palestinian intelligentsia had no role to play in generating radical theorizations of power and strategy in the absence of the national movement. Palestinians must come to terms with this predicament and convey it to our allies in the interest of building atop of the Palestinian intellectual tradition and revitalizing more critical and animating theorizations of power and liberation.

While the politics of representation signify the turn to the framework of the “post” in US movements and scholarship, it is tumultuous in the case of Palestine. Though the Palestinian leadership officially shifted its political frame and concerns to representation in 1993, the Israeli state and the Zionist project more broadly, refuses to incorporate Palestine and naturalize post-conflict relations and discourses. For any radical Palestinian political thinkers and theorists, this is perhaps generative in that it limits the normalization of asymmetrical power relations and leaves open for exploration a return to more liberatory political strategies and theorizations of power. Chandra Mohanty argues that “none of these ‘post’ frameworks are useful in making sense of the landscape of violence, oppression, and incarceration that constitutes everyday life for Palestinians in the 1948 territories and in the occupied West Bank.”²⁵³ She cautions critical

feminist scholarship to realize the danger and limits of the “post” framework when it comes to Palestine.²⁵⁴

If BDS campaigns create the ruckus they do, then what about campaigns that invoke a more insurgent historical polity, vernacular, and reverence for the theorizations of the Palestinian intellectual tradition pre-1993? This was surely the case at SFSU with the GUPS mural and the creation of the AMED program and probably the reason SFSU has been experiencing excruciating backlash by Zionist media, organizations, and administrative repression. How do the limits and advantages of Palestine’s (un)incorporation signify and necessitate a re-examination and articulation of the limits and possibilities of the university and the dangers and prospects of representational politics?

The integration of social movement demands into the university is often thought of as a signifier of transformative change. However, this understanding does not account for how the university’s liberal foundations enable it to function as both a site of state power and hegemony *and* a site of skepticism and critique, a duality that has long allowed for the incorporation of oppositional views. When flirting with the prospects for the university to strengthen its critical and progressive pedagogy within its existing framework, we risk reproducing the exact modality and structure that our opposition utilizes. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney shed light on such considerations by offering an important analysis of Derrida’s engagement with Hegel’s pursuit of progressive pedagogy. They write:

Derrida notices the way that Hegel rivals the state in his ambition for education, wanting to put into place a progressive pedagogy of philosophy designed to support Hegel’s worldview, to unfold as encyclopedic. This ambition both mirrors the state’s ambition, because it, too, wants to control education and to impose a worldview, and threatens it, because Hegel’s State

exceeds and thus localizes the Prussian state, exposing its pretense to the encyclopedic.²⁵⁵

Hegel's progressive pedagogy of philosophy is thus both an imposition of encyclopedic knowledge, one that strikingly resembles the structural and cultural hegemony of the state, as well as a threat to state power. In this sense, it is critical to explore how we might engage, (re)vitalize, and nurture radical theorizations of power that are not only for rivaling the oppressive order but able to undo it and have a proposed alternative that might exceed it. This is one thing that the push back to incorporating Palestine might offer us. But to be more astute to the generative elements that sites/fields and communities of exclusion could offer, it is critical to interrogate the historical and contemporary organizing tenets by which exclusion co-constitutes what/who is capable of belonging.

Contemporary Iterations of Secular Modernity: Anchors of Multicultural Liberal Democracy

To re-envision how we might strengthen our own commitments to political transformation, we must reflect on what is possible in sites of such historic violence. Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira refer to this project as one of “manifest knowledges—what is, and what can be, known about histories of genocide, warfare, enslavement, and social death and what are manifestly insurgent truths.”²⁵⁶ Part of tending to manifestly insurgent truths means realizing the conditions of possibility that have shaped the contemporary universities we inhabit. Craig Wilder illuminates the historical role of US universities in colonialism, enslavement, and the afterlife of enslavement, including how some of the earliest academies and colleges were founded for the purpose of Christianizing and “civilizing” so-called “heathens” and “savages.”²⁵⁷ This language must always remain poignantly within our consciousness when engaging debates of civility and civilization as they are presented to us in the current fold of

liberal democracy. They remind us that for all free beings and civilized geographies, historically, someone was made unfree and some place was made “uncivilized.” Steven Salaita says that “anybody familiar with age-old colonial discourses about the suitability of natives for self-governance understands that the language of civilization is profoundly compromised.”²⁵⁸ What would it mean to recognize the freedoms afforded within the US academy and university as those made possible from those lands and body freedom was stolen from, extracted from, and beaten out of? Fred Moten and Stefano Harney argue:

The maroons know something about possibility. They are the condition of possibility of the production of knowledge in the university—the singularities against the writers of singularity, the writers who write, publish, travel, and speak. It is not merely a matter of the secret labor upon which such space is lifted, though of course such space is lifted from collective labor and by it. It is rather that to be a critical academic in the university is to be against the university, and to be against the university is always to recognize it and be recognized by it, and to institute the negligence of that internal outside, that unassimilated underground, a negligence of it that is precisely, we must insist, the basis of the professions.²⁵⁹

Today, the language of civility hardly surfaces without its companions “tolerance,” “inclusion,” and “diversity.” These words have become central to university discourses, programs, and policies that uphold national imaginaries of the United States as the forerunner of multicultural liberal democracy and freedom and the University which could enact policies of diversification. On the one hand, this post 9/11 moment displaces notions of “rights” among historically oppressed groups within the University and thus replaced them with anchored notions and criteria for individuated responsibility and merit. The slashing of affirmative action programs and public education budgets coupled with the soaring tuition fees demonstrate how

the process of diversification became based on individualized notions of merit thus kicking out of place demands from racialized communities for desegregating education.

On the other hand, the post 9/11 national imaginary became largely entangled with the language of emphasizing the ethical task of bringing “rights” to those people and geographies the US sought to invade. How the language of rights anchored US imperialist programs across the global South was cultivated long before 9/11 though it became especially a crucial alibi to the post-9/11 US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁶⁰ It is critical to address the co-constitutive relationship between contemporary ideals of multicultural liberal democracy and the War on Terror because it has reorganized the age-old binary of the free/unfree and created a set of criteria for inclusion, incorporation, and belonging that Palestine and Palestinians are incapable of—and perhaps uninterested in—achieving. For example, Maira notes that historical and transnational processes culminated to classify Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and Afghan youth as “the objects of the War on Terror.”²⁶¹ Thea Renda Abu El-Haj claims that these same processes made Palestinian-American youth “impossible subjects.”²⁶² Nadine Naber examines how the 9/11 moment coupled liberal polities with the context of national crisis to reorder constructions of the Other. She argues that the policies and discursive regimes used reflected a striking similarity to the Alien Sedition Acts of the 1790s up through the era of McCarthyism and COINTELPRO.²⁶³

While national crisis has historically played a vital role in justifying and waging US imperialist wars, there is a reorganization to the tenets of secular modernity—and the ideals that constitute its rubric, including civility, tolerance, diversity, national security, democracy, and so forth—which is critical here. An array of scholars have argued that following 9/11, new iterations of secular modernity’s rubric (which includes multicultural liberal democracy) were

deeply rooted in the racialization of the Arab/Muslim Other. However, somehow, a sustained specificity of Palestine has become obscured in the abundance of literature on this topic.²⁶⁴ I argue that this collapsing is in part informed by negligence and in part deeply intentional as a method to remove Zionism as a subject of interrogation of historical European and US projects of (settler) colonialism and racial warfare. It enables a disentangling of Zionism as an ideology from settler colonialism, which is why it is often placed as an exception to such histories rather than a perfect outgrowth of it. In other words, anyone familiar with matters of race in the United States will tell of the historical ways Arab/Muslim's have been othered and have been subjects of state surveillance and cultural scrutiny because of the cultural depictions and policy lexicons, which racialized them through the language of terrorism, national security threats, and enemies of the state. The liberal remedy then has become a sort of kumbaya tolerance making with the intent of countering demonized depictions of such communities, affirming their contributions and role within the US cultural, social, and political life and a richer understanding of Arab/Muslim culture, regional politics, and histories. What is rarely attended to, which I argue is critical, is the relationship between the juridical and discursive constructions and evolutions of the language of "terrorism" and the case of Palestinian insurgency.

While 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror is often invoked as the galvanizing moment that initiated state-sanctioned Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism in the United States and in the global sphere, this narrative is reductive and problematic. It mistakes scale for novelty and obscures how racialization had functioned as a disciplinary technology of political and social control over the Muslim/Arab "Other" for decades prior. National anxiety surrounding the stability of imperial and colonial projects and interests determined the degree to which this technology was deployed. As the work of organizations, such as the Arab American Association

of University Graduates (AAUG), has shown, the aftermath of the Six Day War resulted in the solidification of the US's military-imperial alliance with Israel, resulting in a new wave of demonization of Arabs and Muslims in news and popular media, which founded the national crisis and legitimized the inauguration of more robust military and imperialist ties between the settler colonies of the United States and Israel.²⁶⁵

Post 1967, the reorganization of US imperialism in the "Middle East" and the crystallization of deepening ties with Israel resulted in a searing clampdown on individual rights among Arab/Muslim Others in the United States. But this clampdown was neither un-ideological nor equally egregious against all Arab and Muslim communities. It was intentionally bound to preserving and bolstering Zionist settler colonialism of Palestine and Zionist/US imperial hegemony of the region and therefore specifically targeted Palestinian students or Arab students politically active against US imperialism and Zionist hegemony. This is evidenced by 1972's Operation Boulder, under which the Nixon administration spied on the phone calls of scores of politically active Arab students, or the case of the "Los Angeles Eight" in which seven Palestinians and one Kenyan woman were arrested and jailed under a McCarthy-era anti-Communist law and faced deportation charges for 20 years before the case was finally dismissed.²⁶⁶

September 11, 2001, did not instantiate the archetype of the Arab/Muslim "terrorist" or its attendant backlash. Furthermore, while the kaleidoscopic interchangeability of markers pertaining to variously Arab, Muslim, black, and brown cultural and "biological" subjectivity has always been a constitutive feature of this archetype, it is the optics of Palestinian insurgency and resistance in opposition to Zionist colonialism and US imperialism that provided its original template. In other words, all those who were deemed to be terrorists, whether state actors or

non-state actors, whether Islamist or secular-leftists, were forces that had unapologetically denounced Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine and Zionist and US imperial hegemony of the region. This certainly has changed since 9/11 where an abundance of new forms of Islamic extremism, which do not have ideological ties to or commitment to Palestinian liberation, are present within the political terrain of the region. All this is to say the anti-Arab/Muslim sensibilities that were ripe following 9/11 were not ahistorical. United States foreign and domestic policy and cultural regimes have spent decades conjuring up the figure of the Arab/Muslim terrorist and particularly tied it to any/all forms of anti-Zionist resistance.²⁶⁷

However, 9/11 did mark a different kind of discursive shift, one which could be seen in the structural changes of US domestic and foreign policy as well. The language of secular modernity had functioned throughout history as a means of consolidating an ideal of selective humanity (white, male, moneyed) and resultant projects of imperial, colonial, and settler colonial plunder and dispossession and racial subjugation and coercion. But the 9/11 era in the United States gave rise to its mobilization for, and at times by, many of those whose humanity secular-modernity had elided, now as the result of a struggle against a “common enemy.” The terms of the Bush administration’s War on Terror were strategically nebulous, implying an existential struggle of the highest order against an enemy that was simultaneously internal and external—“out there” in the savage/barbaric/freedom-hating *Muslim* East, or “Orient,” but “right here at home” as well—hence the “need” for the erosion of civil liberties via the PATRIOT Act, or the de facto Islamophobia of domestic programs, such as NSEERS.²⁶⁸ Donald Pease has argued that, from the Cold War on, US national identity has been defined in various ways by “exception:” Locked in an *exceptional* struggle against an *exceptional* enemy, it is the duty of good US citizens to accept the *exception* placed upon their otherwise considerable rights.²⁶⁹ So,

as the Bush administration embarked on what they classified as the making of “the New Middle East,” what was simultaneously taking place was the construction of a new US national identity, criteria for national belonging, and requirements of patriotism. That new criteria welcomed—at least appeared to—any and all racial and gendered bodies willing to join rank.

But if the Cold War was defined by nationalist contempt for the socialist “unfree” of the Eastern bloc, the post-9/11 era witnessed the proliferation of the discourse of *spreading* freedom. It was not war-making or military/neo-colonial occupation, seizure, and plunder that informed US activities in Iraq and Afghanistan but a kind of military beneficence that purported to “teach” democracy to the underdeveloped minds and societies of the East through a pedagogy of arms. “Rights” and “identities” of various sorts became mobilizing agents for this newest iteration of weaponized secular modernity. As an empire’s global military parade celebrated the diversity of those in its ranks, there was a clear indication of all there was to “teach” to variously repressed/repressive bodies with the barrel of a gun, or with the emptied guts of a fighter jet, and to simultaneously construct a common enemy that can become a mobilizing catalyst to solidify the contours of American national belonging and unity. David Harvey notes that the attacks of 9/11 became interpreted as an assault on American freedom, and thus the language of the United States shouldering the responsibility to re-constitute freedom to the world was incorporated in the US National Defense Strategy.²⁷⁰ Sunaina Maira and Thea Renda Abdel-Haj argue that in this moment, women’s rights and gay rights become alibis for American imperialist aggression and war mongering.²⁷¹

The new enemy was amorphous, simultaneously existed within and beyond nation-state boundaries but was represented in the figure of the Arab/Muslim “Other” boogie man. The distinction here lies in the multicultural national belonging, which would include Arab/Muslim

communities in the ranks of the wars in the region and enjoin Obama at the White House for Ramadan *Iftar* dinners.²⁷² The “Bad Arab” as Jack Shaheen once said, or the “Bad Muslim” as Mahmoud Mamdani has noted, was not based on lack of proximity to whiteness, to modernity, to secularism or to the progressive values of the West, as much of the scholarship in the field would argue.²⁷³ United States and Israeli alliances with theocratic Arab regions demonstrate this. Rather, the figure of the Arab/Muslim terrorist was tied to any/all contests to Zionist settler colonialism and US imperialism. The inundation of new iterations of Islamic fundamentalism that has emerged in the region following 9/11, which neither have roots in projects of national liberation or decolonization, would obscure that fact. They are often organizational outgrowths of Gulf state theocracies and while they may purport to support anti-imperialism, they are in fact deeply opposed to it.

Racially tinged moral panic has long been the state’s protocol for justifying the intensification of various disciplinary measures and mechanisms.²⁷⁴ The War on Drugs, the expansion of the prison system, the growth and militarization of police presence, the proliferation of borders—all of these acts are legitimized through appeals to anxiety about non-white deviance and “criminality”—even in periods that witness a statistic *decrease* in so-called criminal activity.²⁷⁵ The United States creates a similar moral panic around Islam, and particularly the Palestinian insurgency that has become characterized by its most contemporary iteration: the discourse of secular modernity. And now, secular modernity as spurred on by US imperial nationalism accepts all who will fight in its armies against the non-secular, or share the names of all who “hate freedom” to the proper authorities. “De-realized,” as Judith Butler would call it, and interminable, the War on Terror is fought on all fronts, at home and abroad,

and a nationalist war against “Islam” (Palestinian insurgency) becomes a binding catalyst for a motley crew that includes secular modernity’s human and inhuman.²⁷⁶

What to me appears most obvious here is that this new US national imaginary would rely on the inclusion of oppressed peoples, a multicultural white supremacy, which Rodriguez spoke of at the advent of the Obama inauguration. Perhaps Obama’s election was only made possible by developing a commonly nebulous threat to American freedom, to construct new tenets for who could belong to American freedom. What we once called Bush practices, we later referred to as Obama policies in which minimal but nonetheless meaningful political dissent could be extensively criminalized. Because it was not only about allowing for a critique of the state, but it is a critique of the foundation of the new US national imaginary, which anchors all forms of institutional life. It is a de-stabilization of the state itself, not a critique of its mistakes or policies (domestic/foreign).

This period has resulted in a new phase of a more Draconian crackdown of university administration repression on Palestinians and Palestine political activity in the United States hurled by the well-known case of the Irvine 11, in which students from the University of California, Irvine and Riverside interrupted a speech by Israeli ambassador Michael Oren and were thus arrested, prosecuted, and convicted by the District Attorney.²⁷⁷ In 2013, students at Northeastern University exercised similar acts of nonviolent protest by interrupting and walking out of an event that featured a panel of Israeli soldiers. The university administration placed the campus chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) on probation and then forced the students to sign statements of “civility.”²⁷⁸ In almost every reported case of repression, “civility,” that which signifies the project of multicultural liberal democracy, also becomes a weapon of the War on Terror, which is inherently racialized and colonial. For these reasons, the university

struggles with its own paradox on Palestine. How can the university incorporate Palestine underneath its liberal ideals of diversity and management of difference while also being at war with it as it is constructed as the enemy of the state?

More importantly, how can we come to challenge the way we understand the importance of the war for the United States? Most establishment-left political spaces in the United States, to borrow from Dylan Rodriguez, articulate the United States' goals for the war as a stealing of resources, as a maintaining of hegemonic control and sustaining and propping up new neo-imperial allies.²⁷⁹ But what if the purpose of the war was just the war? What if the war was meant to consolidate and strengthen US nationalism, to sustain its own domestic order in the name of unity, scarcity of freedom, and national security? What if the purpose of the War on Terror was the profitability of the war, the plunder, and underdevelopment of the nations affected by it? If this could be the case, then perhaps Palestine solidarity activism and scholarship in US campuses and academia is not just a critique of US foreign policy and its alliances with Zionist settler colonialism; perhaps it is a threat to the very foundation of US settler colonial warmongering. Perhaps the paradox lies not in Palestine's distinction but in its heightened ability to signify and mobilize all those causes and communities that constitute the unfree in the division of the world today. How can we navigate the university if this paradox both enables space for Palestine on certain terms while also closing in on Palestinian life, survival, and freedom? Sara Ahmed tells us that for power to be redone, it must first be imagined to be undone.²⁸⁰

Chatterjee and Maira note that "as in all imperial and colonial nations, intellectuals and scholarship play an important role—directly or indirectly, willingly or unwittingly—in legitimizing American exceptionalism and rationalizing U.S. expansionism and repression, domestically and

globally.”²⁸¹ How then do we begin to map or trace the types of power that can unsettle the university as a site of warfare, oppression, and violence if skepticism of authority is already built into such an institution? The incorporation of social movement demands in the fold of representational politics into the university is not enough and in fact played a central role in compromising the actual purposes and goals of these movements. Yet without any form of incorporation, communities struggling against projects of erasure cannot make use of spaces afforded to them. The Palestinian condition of exile and refugeehood, of struggling for space and place, and of struggling against siege, can offer us tools for how to envision university and academic sites in the United States.

Thus, acknowledging the historical foundations of the US university, which was built on stolen lands of American Indians by the hands of enslaved Africans and exploitable immigrant labor, does not suffice. It is critical to understand how and why the university continues to function as a site that simultaneously buries knowledge of its foundational project juxtaposed by an appropriation of such history in the first place. The university will fragment its current functions from its historical role obscuring the very fact that it remains today, whether private or public, the intellectual machine of state power and repression, racism, continued Native erasure and imperialist expansion, warfare, and genocide. This age of multiculturalist white supremacy, in which the intellectual project of indigenous peoples, Black communities and people of color as well as women and LGBTQ communities are considered harmoniously aligned with the institutional forms carved out for them, obfuscates our ability to see the university as a site that operates as such. In this context, what must it take to rupture the foundations of the university and its knowledge projects if it already allows for questions and voices of dissent, but its fundamental position in oppression is ever more pervasive?

These questions bring to the fore the intellectual, moral, and political mandate of ethnic studies. Furthermore, these questions underpin the political intervention of my project. That is, why ethnic studies as a field and radical US-based intellectuals should not take up Palestine as an ethnic issue or geographic-based cause to which we can displace our privilege onto or into our “solidarity” marked by cyclical rhetorical verbiage. Rather, Palestine and its people, particularly youth, offer us an opportunity to reconceptualize decolonization in all forms, all places, starting with the very locations of profit we inhabit. This is precisely because the struggle of the Palestinians is in its final stages of what seems to be a traditional settler colonial project in which the lines between the oppressed and oppressor are succinct, in which the Palestinians continue to resist loudly, and in which the face of oppression is still blatantly, explicitly racist, and denies any existence and former presence of Palestinians on “their” land. To consider how Palestine today offers us a live feed of the various moments of colonialism, apartheid, genocide, and imprisonment that the liberal university assumes passed us in the 1960s, we are afforded new ways of knowing the power to combat epistemological erasure and oppression. This, I call a Palestine analytic.²⁸²

Part III: What Is to Be Done: A Note to Scholars of the US Academy

(Academic) Freedom and Its Unfree Condition of Possibility

It is valuable to place into question academic freedom as an assumed, inherent, given right. The extraordinary measures that university administrations have taken to police, repress, contain and silence scholarship on Palestine and Palestine student activism demonstrates the importance of unpacking the assumptions that accompany the concept of academic freedom. Ample scholarship, especially produced by women of color, has summoned critical theorists to do this. Yet their narratives persistently have been buried by excuses of finite space, liminal

powers of administrations for substantial change, and the reliance on policies and bureaucratic measures, which are hostile to non-normative subjects. I have already problematized the notion of a universal notion of rights and freedom in this chapter and have humbly attempted to show their direct linkage to the denial of rights and freedom to certain racial and colonial subjects. Much critical scholarship has done the same and talked of the violence of all that has come to be registered as “free” across time and place.²⁸³

Samera Smeir speaks of the paradox of the free/unfree as a co-constitutive relation. She says, “What is the geopolitical distribution of academic freedom in the world and how our struggle to advance academic freedom here might not validate this division?”²⁸⁴ Rajini Srikanth argues that to be alert to this unequal power can allow us to level this asymmetry within and outside of our institutions.²⁸⁵ In a world divided by the free and unfree, by the worthy and the disposable, by the powerful and the oppressed; if we are to commit ourselves to releasing intellectual exchange and knowledge production of the shackles of empire, we must come to see all freedoms enjoyed by certain lives as a condition of possibility from its theft from other racial and colonial bodies and cartographies. Realizing that academic freedom as a notion, policy, and discursive regime as one which has always been rooted in the fact that it is dialectally tied to the unfree in a Manichean form is key to mitigating expectations we have of our institutions that may guide, more effectively, the ethical mandates of our practice. An academic freedom that is truly free can never be so without the freedom of all people, including the Palestinians. To start, we can afford more support, resources, and space to Palestinian scholars, narratives, communities, and collectivities. If they are to acquire space, even if temporal, and especially if it allows for us to remain in motion, we may foster new structural methods of developing free intellectual exchange within the terrain of the US university,

academia, and among its intelligentsia. But this affordance of space means that we must also prepare defense strategies for when Zionist repression intensifies. We cannot run in that instance or retreat because we were naively too ambitious or negligent of fully understanding what the Palestinians and their allies are up against. We must prepare ourselves, and we must stay true to principles and defend all those scholars and students who have been bearing the brute force and extremity of Zionist repression all these years.

The Ghost of Objectivity: On the Destruction of Palestinian Archives

Offering Palestinians and Palestinian collective knowledge projects more space and support in campus life and scholarship can unearth the organizing principle of so-called objectivity that narrates dominant articulations of the “Israeli–Palestinian conflict.” Discussing the challenges she encounters when teaching Palestine, Sherene Seikaly states:

I think these challenges reflect a political economy where some people have more capital than others. This capital, this power often takes shape in another spectral form, the ghost of objectivity. Who gets to claim the vaunted category of the objective?²⁸⁶

She asks us to consider who is being allowed to teach Palestine and the difficulties of salvaging Palestinian knowledge as it has been pummeled by colonial erasure, especially as each historic Israeli incursion since 1948 has deliberately targeted and destroyed Palestinian archives. Where Palestinian archives have been persistently under attack since 1948, these histories have been transplanted by Zionist archives, which have worked to naturalize Zionist settler presence in Palestine. Ariella Azoulay argues that these archives have worked to “bury a stinking secret.”²⁸⁷

Linda Tuhwai Smith,²⁸⁸ Audra Simpson,²⁸⁹ Haunani Kay Trask,²⁹⁰ and many other indigenous scholars have offered compelling cases for why indigenous survival/survivance must be the animating force of any meaningful intellectual project. The ethics involved in methods for

knowledge retrieval when knowledge is under siege and attacked, banished and exiled, or only accessible through the colonial canon is critical here. As Ann Stoler has argued,

Grids of intelligibility were fashioned from uncertain knowledge; disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things, epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order, because papers classified people, because directives were properly acknowledged, and because colonial civil servants were schooled to assure that records were prepared, circulated, securely stored, and sometimes rendered to ash.²⁹¹

Finding ways to undo/read against the colonial archive is critical in supporting Palestinians to construct their own. As I have demonstrated in part one of this chapter, Palestinian oral traditions, relationships, experiences, and desires all can coalesce to create the dynamic treasure chest of knowledge Palestinian youth may constitute, retrieve, and rely on. This can enable Palestinians to be more equipped to learn to deal with existence as crisis. It can enable them to retrieve elements and fragments of the past rather than having to grieve and reinvent in every stage of struggle and period of time. In this sense, a commitment by scholars to opening space for Palestinian narratives, stories, knowledge and histories to be recorded in the historic archives is key. It is also critical to assist Palestinians in constituting their historic archive, which has been destroyed in almost every incursion, as Sherene Seikaly has noted.

Decolonizing Curriculum

In March of 2018, the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) program at SFSU teamed up with the Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies and the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University to produce a series of transnational conferences called *Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice*.²⁹² The initiative seeks to engage the rich legacy of how autonomous Palestinian universities have

historically played a critical role in decolonizing curriculum, which has been central to the Palestinian anticolonial liberation movement. The initiative roots the project of decolonizing curriculum in teaching Palestine as part and parcel of the historic movements of people of color, indigenous peoples, and Third World struggles across the world. This initiative is a significant example of the ways we can continue to foster intellectual dialogue that engages questions of decolonial education within the classroom, academic circuits, our universities and how it can be deeply informed by and lend itself to strengthening movements for freedom outside campus life.

The process of decolonizing curriculum both within the classroom and in public programming can be especially complex and difficult because Palestine (in the West and specifically in English canons) has not yet been, and may never be, given the space to establish an organized, centralized, institutional intellectual canon accessible to and generative for critical theorists and movements in complete ways. AMED is one place that is attempting such an act and as I have outlined, has underwent the extremity of Zionist, Islamophobic, and anti-Arab repression campaigns and administrative punitive measures. Similarly, projects committed to Palestine studies and journals and special editions of Palestine studies are attempting this as well, and are subjected to heightened scrutiny.²⁹³ But without engaging in the difficulty of learning to think, write, teach, and archive through Palestine, a limited vantage point is concocted in which the Palestinian ontology of Nakba, practices of survivance, liberation strategies, and relationships of joint struggle with other causes and communities cannot be fully known. Ethnic studies has offered productive tools on how to do this work for me and to many other critical Palestinian colleagues and for this we are forever indebted.

Academic Freedom Must Be Tied to the Freedom of Political Action

We must defend, ferociously and unwaveringly, the belief that true academic freedom allows all beings the ability to engage in political action. While Said spoke about the highest form of academic freedom as that which allows us to seek and attain knowledge for the love of knowledge alone, we cannot forget that Said played an intrinsic role in the Palestinian liberation movement. Ajaz Ahmed attributes Said's most vital contributions to the field as those found in his own positionality as a Palestinian exile and as a contributor to the Palestinian national movement.²⁹⁴ I, for one, have long been curious as to how Said's scholarship is often deciphered from his role, position on, and commitment to the Palestinian struggle among Zionists within the field who, say, will engage Orientalism but disregard the question of Palestine or *After the Last Sky*, or who will elide the fact that Said was an elected member of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the legislative body of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).²⁹⁵ Yet, many of these scholars are often those who purport of the importance of academic freedom meanwhile disavowing the mandate of academics to play any role in political action.

As Angela Davis said, academic freedom is an "empty concept" if "divorced from freedom of political action."²⁹⁶ Likewise, Abdulhadi articulates the painstaking experience and political refusal of having to "tread lightly" when teaching in US universities.²⁹⁷ Instead, she calls on us to challenge the paradigm of neutrality. She says, "In times of war, the recognition that teaching neutrality or simply studying systems of domination without taking a stand amounts to complicity is central to serious scholarship and pedagogy."²⁹⁸ Abdulhadi, time and time again, has demonstrated her political commitments, not as taking the place of intellectual rigor but rather as informing its critical importance not only in her writings but in her actions.²⁹⁹

Recognizing the Limits of the Institutions We Inhabit

In today's university, we have taken up Palestine but only on the terms that the university, as a pillar of empire, allows for. We have taken up Palestine in some cases without the Palestinians and, perhaps unknowingly, have participated in Palestinian erasure. The university's repression and pushback is excruciating even when all we do is say we are against an already internationally illegal military occupation. We must come to terms with the fact that the cultivation of skepticism within universities is constitutive of the university's power in the first place.³⁰⁰ This is the first step to de-romanticizing the liberal university and to knowing our limitations in such an institution, particularly as it will become perceived as the most left of sites in the ultra-nationalist/nativist right turn of the Trump era. But it is precisely the Trump moment that gives us the tools and mandate to redress liberalism as a framework, polity, and vocabulary. While the university is inherently limited, it is the navigation of narrow space, which critical feminist and ethnic studies scholars have long cultivated and which I argue appeals to the sensibilities of Palestinian intellectuals because of our own political struggle of navigating the misfortunes of catastrophe, particularly matters of finite space within the experience of siege and exile: the site after the last sky. But as this dissertation illustrates, the productive and generative elements of being out of the bounds of the state, that which Palestinian youth are taking up in their own critical theorizations, which I examine in chapter three, offers new opportunity.

Ethnic Studies as Refuge

Ethnic studies has offered refuge to me and to my Palestinian friends, both those in and outside the university. While the space is narrow and can close in on us frequently and painfully, it remains one of the only spaces that allows us to exist while we weather the storm of siege and

placelessness. Moten and Harney urge us to think of what it is that we can “steal” from the university. They say,

It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can.³⁰¹

If ethnic studies can offer a site of refuge to Palestinians, then perhaps we must consider the university through optics of motion, which Said has called on us to do as well. To travel to and through different idioms, frameworks, histories, communities, and places, the site of refuge allows us to temporarily escape the horrors of the state and statelessness and to learn how to survive. But as we saw in the Palestinian refugee camps, no temporal site can protect us from besiegement for the long haul. Critical ethnic studies must then consider how to be a site of refuge for Palestinians and Palestine while always allowing us to be in motion until we can exercise our return to Palestine until we can cultivate the site of a new sky. The task does not come without its challenges, but it also comes with great rewards.

Chapter Two

The Afterlife of the Oslo Accords: Protracted Struggle for the New Generation

The last walls of embarrassment have fallen
We were delighted
and we danced
and we blessed ourselves
for signing the peace of the cowards
Nothing frightens us anymore
Nothing shames us anymore
The veins of pride in us have dried up.

We stood in columns
like sheep before slaughter
we ran, breathless
We scrambled to kiss
the shoes of the killers.

They starved our children
for fifty days
And at the end of the fasting
They threw us an onion.

Granada has fallen for the fiftieth time
from the hands of the Arabs
History has fallen
from the hands of the Arabs.
All the folk songs of heroism have fallen.

We no longer in our hands
have a single Andalus
They stole the walls, the wives, the children
the olives and the oil
and the stones of the street.

They stole Jesus the son of Mary
while he was an infant still.
They stole from us the memory of the orange trees
and the apricots and the mint
and the candles in the mosques.

In our hands they left
a sardine can called Gaza
and a dry bone called Jericho.

They left us a body with no bonds
A hand with no fingers.

After this secret romance in Oslo
we came out barren.
They gave us a homeland
smaller than a single grain of wheat
a homeland to swallow without water
like aspirin pills.

Oh, we dreamed of a green peace
and a white crescent
and a blue sky.
Now we find ourselves
on a dung-heap.

Who could ask the rulers
about the peace of the cowards
about the peace of selling in installments
and renting in installments
about the peace of merchants
and the exploiters?
Who could ask them
about the peace of the dead?
They have silenced the street
and murdered all the questions
and those who question.

There was to be no Arab dancing at
the wedding.
Or Arab food, Arab songs
or Arab embarrassment
The sons of the land were not to be there
at the wedding.

The dowry was in dollars.
The diamond ring was in dollars.
The fee for the judge
was in dollars.

The cake was a gift from America
and the wedding veil
the flowers, the candles

and the music of the marines
were all made in America.

And the wedding came to an end
And Palestine was not to be found
at the ceremony.

Palestine saw its picture
carried on the airwaves,
she saw her tears
crossing the waves of the ocean
toward Chicago, New Jersey, Miami.

Like a wounded bird
Palestine shouted:
This wedding is not my wedding!
This dress is not my dress!
This shame is not my shame!³⁰²

Nizar Qabbani's infamous poem *The Hurried Ones* would become one of the most revered texts signifying the profound sense of loss, political despair, and defeat among Arab intellectuals and revolutionaries following the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords. Lauded as one of the most profound love poets in the Arab intellectual tradition, Qabbani in his read of Oslo speaks of Palestine—at once the place and its gesture of spectacular struggle—as the figure of a bride. She is overdetermined by the violence of colonial patriarchy that is stripping her of agency, selling her into the shackles of a wedding contract with her perpetrator, and rendering her a lifeless object of desire. The wedding, representing the Oslo Accords, parades itself as a romance: two equal sides conjoining in a consensual partnership, each conceding power and overcoming squabbles of history. As Qabbani's poem illustrates, the "wedding"/Oslo obscured relations of colonial domination but also further re-inscribed Palestine as an object of hetero-patriarchal colonial desire and conquest.³⁰³ But if Palestine were the object, what then were the Palestinians?

As Zionist aspirations fomented in the 1890s, a fact-finding mission was sent to Palestine to discover prospects for Jewish settlement. A message sent back from the delegates stated, “The bride [Palestine] is beautiful, but she is married to another man.”³⁰⁴ Ghada Karmi notes that the “other man” referred to the Palestinians. Yet, she writes, despite all that the Zionist project has attempted to do to settle Palestine and do away with the Palestinians, “The Palestinians are still there—damaged, fragmented, occupied, and oppressed, to be sure—but still there, both physically and politically, and in fact more than ever before.”³⁰⁵

In this chapter, I use this depiction of Palestine and Palestinians as a point of departure to discuss the way Oslo produced Palestinians as both subjects and objects. Next I offer an examination of the conditions of possibility that produced the Oslo Accords and place the Accords into their broader geo-political and historical context. I then discuss the effects of the Oslo Accords on the Palestinian people and political movement and incorporate the perspectives of the Palestinian youth I have met through the PYM and engaged with, organized with, and interviewed between the years of 2006 and 2018. Finally, I illustrate the various historical moments that accumulated to produce Palestinian youth critique, anger, and frustration with the Oslo Accords paradigm and the various means Palestinian youth used to contest and mobilize around particular incidents and moments in time. I argue that the severity of conditions brought on through the Oslo framework mobilized a perpetual protracted struggle among the new generation of Palestinians. However, in the absence of a collective structure, vision, and strategy, those forms of protracted resistance could not shoulder the intensity of Zionist subjugation.

Palestinian youth who have grown within the Oslo Accords paradigm—shouldering its burden, witnessing its devastation, and navigating the tiny inches of space allotted through the cracks between its checkpoints, roadblocks, walls, and security posts—play an instrumental role in the possibilities that might emerge out of protracted struggle. It is a torturous set of intersecting oppressions that history has asked them to bear which mobilizes common-sense narratives among youth of what Oslo did to Palestine and Palestinians. It is their examination of the Accords and its catastrophic consequences and their aspirations for an end to Oslo that guides my hand in the writing of this chapter. For young people who have only ever known the Oslo regime, the precarity of life depends on the redemption of Palestine that existed before Oslo and a remedy for the wounds it has caused. In Chapter Three, I return to the experience of the PYM as transnational collective and illustrate how they came to engage the many contradictions of their colonial condition which the Oslo Accords framework had come to define.

Palestinian Co-Habitation of Subjecthood and Objecthood

While the analogy constructed by the early Zionists – of Palestine as bride and the Palestinians as the man to whom she is wed – attempts to render their proposed intervention as some sort of benevolent arrangement of family squabbles, for me this analogy speaks to how colonial projects gender and sexualize both objects and subjects of their violence. In this decree, I suggest that the Zionists viewed Palestine as object to be consumed, taken, accumulated upon, and the Palestinians as subjects of obstacle. The Palestinians thus became *the problem* standing in the way of invasion, conquest, extraction, naturalization, and normalization of Zionist ambitions.

But if Palestinians are rendered subjects, they must then have agency? Certainly, Palestinians had, have, and will have agency so long as they are constructed as the problem and so long as they continue to survive, resist, maneuver, and navigate Zionist subjugation. But the possession of agency does not exactly indicate the power for consent. The global celebration of the Oslo Accords portrayed the union as one in which both parties, Israelis and Palestinians, would maintain their full personhood, status as human, and agency of subject. But as Saidiya Hartman has noted, acknowledging the agency of the subject requires a suspension of its romance, even and especially if it is a romance of resistance.³⁰⁶ The colonized, though they may be actors of agency, cannot enjoy the privilege of truly free consent in a context of asymmetrical power relations of domination. Their agency is impacted by a set of restrictions, constraints, and liminalities, making them vulnerable to consequences of subjugation, which can in turn further render them objects of racial/colonial violence. For Palestinians, this happens alongside the way their lands have been objects of Zionist invasion and settlement.

For the Palestinians, the co-habitation of being both subject and object would be realized under Oslo. The Palestinian national elites spoke of the Oslo deal as the realization of Palestinian self-determination.³⁰⁷ They promised their people that Oslo would pave the road to the realization of a Palestinian state—the best deal we could get—no matter what was lost in exchange and no matter who was sacrificed in the process. In this instance, the Palestinian leadership redeemed their agency as subjects, deciders of Palestine’s future fate, and proliferated the illusion of their position as protagonists in the Palestinian romantic tale of unscathed freedom fighters. However, this romantic tale was incommensurate with the soon-to-be-realized political realities. They achieved their final return to Palestine, a return they had long

dreamed of. But Oslo dismembered the Palestinian collective body, redirecting the violence of the Palestinian leadership; once reserved for the illegal occupying force in the pursuit of liberation, they now directed it inward, against those more vulnerable than them. Palestinian violence became a violence of authority rather than a resistance method of becoming human.³⁰⁸ The Palestinian leadership returned to Palestine, leaving behind, leaving for dead, their people who still resided in refugee camps and in exile globally. They returned to Palestine and brought with them a security force to police Palestine's youth, those who had never left their homeland and who had already withstood decades of brute force from the colonial regime.

The Palestinians arrived to Oslo as the protagonists of an impossible resilience novel and left Oslo as lifeless objects. Oslo left Palestinians, the everyday people, especially the new generation, as objects of a multiplicity of violences. One form of such violence was that of their own ancestors—the Palestinian political leadership—who were themselves survivors, inheritors of past traumas as well as the heroes of the historic record. Oslo also made the Palestinians subjects capable of agency, responsible for governing their own sovereign state, although without any of the freedoms, power, or privileges of sovereignty, and thus their subjecthood rendered them as punishable, as responsible for bearing the punishment of the occupying force for their failures to govern properly. Oslo made the Palestinian leadership responsible for shouldering the burden of the occupation of their own lands and for standing between the everyday acts of resistance of people brutalized by occupation and the colonial forces enacting such violence. Oslo made the Palestinian leadership guardians of Zionist settler anxieties and the mediators between their own people and the colonial force. And in that construction of the new post national liberation movement (1964-1993), the Palestinian subject which Oslo produced was born as an object as well.

Constructing Palestinians as simultaneously subjects and objects, the 1993 Oslo Accords produced the third last sky that the Palestinian people had come to endure, and which solidified the Palestinian ontology of Nakba that I have defined within the Introduction of this dissertation. Oslo demanded the Palestinians surrender their lands. Oslo required that the Palestinians accept defeat and their own death. Oslo commanded the Palestinians to die cooperatively, on their knees with a smile on their faces, to enact a willing compliance with their own degradation. And as the land was parceled and sold away, the injury incurred on the Palestinian collective body would send the faint memory of Palestinian collective survivance³⁰⁹ and resistance into a void. Palestine was shattered, and its beloved people were scattered. Palestine was exploded from within, and its people drifted—like fragments, like dust molecules—into an untraced site of refuge and exile; disconnected from the homeland, from one another, and from their historic role in the sustenance of a peoplehood struggling against their occupation and dispossession and for liberation. For the new generation, Oslo de-sutured genealogies of struggle as it was held together by the national liberation framework and its vehicles.

Omar Zahzah, a member of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM)-USA chapter National Executive Board (NEB), states that “all Palestinians die at least twice. The first death is metaphysical, and begins with conditional projections of derivative land allotment, of the false promise of “statehood...”³¹⁰ Oslo made Palestine just a name, hollowed of its own historical and geographic *raison d’être*. In the final instance, Oslo made a new Palestine. A Palestine which eclipsed the Palestinians. A Palestine whose children living through the Oslo Era would be asked to shoulder the traumas of the past, the violence of the present, and the contractual obligations

of pacification that Oslo prescribed.³¹¹ And it is in this context, through these de-sutures and abstractions, that Palestine was made available for the world's consumption. Oslo facilitated Palestine as an object to be abstracted, consumed, and accumulated upon. Oslo made Palestine a laboratory to test global innovations in weapons technology and made the Palestinians lab-rats.³¹² But Oslo also facilitated Palestine as a gift, a template to be poetically waxed upon; for the world to witness the horrors of military occupation, the terror of living under systemic *de-jure* violence, and the sorrow of an entire peoples' homelessness.

The years that followed the Oslo Accords are often referred to as *sneen el salam*, or the years of peace. Valorized as the best offer the Palestinians could ever get, the Oslo Accords were the final nail in the coffin for the twenty-year-long language of a "peace process" that the United States had pressed for since the Carter administration. William Quandt argues that:

sometime in the mid-1970s the term peace process became widely used to describe the American-led efforts to bring about a negotiated peace between Israel and its neighbors. The phrase stuck, and ever since it has been synonymous with the gradual, step-by-step approach to resolving one of the world's most difficult conflicts. In the years since 1967 the emphasis in Washington has shifted from the spelling out of the ingredients of "peace" to the "process" of getting there...³¹³

But as Qabbani and an abundance of Arab thinkers illustrate for us, it is critical to understand the language of the "peace process" as a deceptive stand-in for Palestinian silence and capitulation.³¹⁴ Qabbani said, "They silenced the street and assassinated all questions and all the questioners."³¹⁵

As Israeli land confiscation, dispossession, and occupation persisted through the so-called years of peace, a new generation of Palestinian youth would only ever know life through what Sunaina Maira has referred to as the "fatigued and exhausted Oslo paradigm."³¹⁶ This

paradigm facilitated ongoing Israeli occupation and dispossession coupled with the paralysis of the Palestinian political leadership, a split in national unity between the dominant Palestinian factions—Fatah and Hamas—and the rupture of a collective Palestinian liberation vision and strategy. Worsening material conditions on the ground with no viable and strategic out for the Palestinians is definitive of the exhausted Oslo paradigm. In other words, Oslo facilitated a process that weakened the Palestinians insurmountably, strengthened Israeli occupation, and left a void of avenues in which Palestinian youth could meaningfully engage in transformative change collectively as political agents, not only as spectators of history or as actors of individuated forms of resistance. To illustrate, one Palestinian youth from Gaza states that “our roof is the occupation and our floor, the political factions.”³¹⁷ Where once there existed a direct confrontation between colonizer and colonized, that which Frantz Fanon argued was critical to the process of de-colonization,³¹⁸ Oslo facilitated the introduction of a third variable. That variable was the participation of the colonized as gatekeepers for the colonial regime, what Fanon once called the national bourgeoisie or the comprador class.³¹⁹ It would be called the Palestinian Authority. Oslo in Geo-Political and Historical Context

Palestinians mark the Oslo Accords as the crystalizing moment where our movement shifted from an anti-colonial national liberation project to a project of state building. This shift replaced collective, popular, organized resistance—that which Rosemary Sayigh has argued was critical to the collective wellness and empowerment of the Palestinians—with negotiation-based frameworks with the Israeli state and diplomatic strategies in the international arena.³²⁰ Ample scholarship has suggested that this shift began long before the 1993 agreement. Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) founding member Mjriam Abu Samra argues that the road to Oslo began in 1974, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) focused on the concept of

“pragmatism” and appealed to the international community for political recognition to become classified as the “sole legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.”³²¹ This was also the year in which the PLO charter was ratified to include aspirations for a Palestinian state within its language.³²² However, Abu Samra suggests that the 1988 declaration of independence was the crystalizing moment in the shift of Palestinian political strategies from fighting for full liberation for all of historic Palestine to accepting just a fraction of historic Palestine.³²³ Abu Samra contends that while the 1988 declaration was rooted in the nationalist heart of the PLO and there were later clarifications of their apparent concessions, it was undoubtedly a shift in their tactics and their emphasis on pragmatism. It would prove to be the moment the door began to close on radical liberation and the right of full return.³²⁴ Nonetheless, the official re-haul of the Palestinian political, social, and economic infrastructure, liberation project, and anti-colonial resistance methods, officially commenced following the Madrid Peace Talks in 1991, with the signing of the Oslo I Accords in 1993 marking the summation of these talks.

Conditions of possibility that led to Oslo were saturated with uncertainty, for both the Palestinians and Israelis had much to lose. On the one hand, Oslo was resultant of the mounting Palestinian political gains acquired through the first Palestinian Intifada (Uprising), which began in 1987 and which forced Israel to the negotiation table alongside the US as the brokers of the “peace process.” Neither the US nor Israel could afford continued Palestinian popular resistance and insurgency, which disrupted both daily Israeli life and Jewish migration and consent to the philosophical project of a Jewish-only state.³²⁵ On the other hand, what led Palestinians to the surrender that would become known as Oslo was multiple decades of defeat for the Palestinian Liberation Organization’s (PLO) militant strategies in the surrounding Arab countries, the fall of

the Soviet Union, and the decline of the non-Aligned movement's power in the new global order.³²⁶

The Palestinians found themselves and their project isolated from the historical geo-political and global alliances formed through anti-colonial and/or anti-capitalist political agendas in coordination with other nation-states and liberation forces which had reached the height of their power in the 1960s.³²⁷ These factors all left the PLO with limited resources and eliminated the previously established regional and global alliances necessary to sustain militant insurgency as a primary anti-colonial method. Particularly, no Arab country was willing to house the PLO—which was largely comprised of refugees and exiles—and allow it to continue its militant activities following (and especially because of) the protracted global and geo-political involvement in Lebanon's devastating twenty-year long civil war.

Certainly, some Arab countries were more sensitive to the Palestinian plight than others. However, the gradual development of normalizing Arab-Israeli alliances that resulted from the Great Arab defeat of the 1967 Six Day War,³²⁸ the 1973 oil crisis,³²⁹ the 1973 October War,³³⁰ and the 1978 Camp David Accords³³¹ all played a role in decreasing the potential for Arab countries to play an active role in confronting Zionist hegemony in the region and in supporting the Palestinian liberation project. Where there once was a relative regional consensus regarding anti-Zionism and opposition to the naturalization of Israel as a settler-state, these events of history – particularly following the death of Gamal Abdel-Nasser, the Egyptian President and forerunner of the project of Pan-Arab socialism, in 1970 – would lead to the normalization of relations between Arab states, Israel, and the US.

Various Arab states such as Syria, Iraq, and in some ways Algeria, had not established formal ties with, recognition of, or alliances with Israel. This allowed for more flexibility in their

dealings with the Palestinian political leadership and, for Iraq and Syria, relative political and social freedoms for the Palestinian refugees, particularly in comparison to their counterparts, Lebanon and Jordan. These nations were more accommodating to the contractual arrangements made with the PLO up until 1993. These Arab nations offered PLO leaders asylum following their exile from Palestine and other Arab countries, as well as permission and/or resources to resume political activities within their countries, but they would be highly monitored, surveilled, and restricted.³³² At the very least, these regimes allowed the PLO and its political parties to keep open offices, libraries, and unions, which allowed them to sustain their political role in regional and global politics. However, these agreements were certainly not enshrined as permanent relations that the PLO could bank on to ensure protections from outside forces or state operatives, or for ongoing monetary support. For example, the Palestinian leadership had long had a turbulent relationship with the Syrian regime under Hafez Al-Assad, who in 1976 would commit a bloody massacre in Tel Alza'tar camp in Lebanon and order multiple assassination attempts and imprisonments against leaders of the Palestinian resistance including Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, and Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine (PFLP), George Habash.³³³ In the end, the Palestinian relationship with Arab regimes, even those who were central stakeholders in and committed to resisting Zionist settler-colonialism, remained tumultuous.

The relationship between the Palestinian leaders with the Arab countries drastically shifted between 1970 and 1993, leaving the Palestinians relatively isolated and weakened. In 2015, an old black-and-white video surfaced on social media of an interview between journalist Richard Carleton and spokesperson for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and icon of the Palestinian literary tradition, Ghassan Kanafani. The interview took place in 1970

in Beirut, Lebanon, amidst the PLO's battle with the Jordanian Hashemite Kingdom and their impending exodus to Lebanon. Kanafani states:

We consider the Arab governments' two kinds. Something we call reactionaries who are completely connected with imperialists. Like King Hussein's government, like Saudi Arabian government, like Moroccan government, Tunisian government. And then we have some other Arab governments which we call the military petit bourgeois governments. That's like Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria, so on.³³⁴

Kanafani's interview precedes the defeat of the PLO in Jordan (the Black September Massacre of September 1970) and Lebanon (Sabra and Shatila Massacre of 1982) and their resultant exile to Cyprus and Tunisia prior to their return to Palestine following the signing of the Oslo Accords. However, his commentary is critical to understand the way in which the Palestinians engaged the Arab regimes. While they viewed the reactionary regimes as part and parcel of the imperialist fold and an enemy to the cause, they also viewed the military petit bourgeois regimes as strategic allies but not entirely as friends of Palestinian self-determination, militant resistance, and full freedom. What has become a widely-adopted narrative of history within the Palestinian nationalist tradition argues that the complexity of these relations and the sense of precarity of the Palestinians as refugees and stateless/landless peoples led to the increased nationalization of the Palestinian cause, disconnecting it from its broader geo-political context. Leading up to and especially after 1974, the Palestinians embarked on a Palestinization project which would facilitate the drastic expansion of PLO businesses, health, education, and welfare services, engagement of masses in both militant and popular insurgency, and the creation of diasporic unions, including farmer, journalist, women, student, engineer, and many more types of unions, both inside and outside of Palestine.³³⁵

In an edited anthology featuring interviews with the various Palestinian resistance leaders and an outstanding introduction by Clovis Maksoud, some of the Palestinian resistance leaders argue that this decision was one of the Palestinian leadership's worst decisions, for it facilitated the further splintering of the Palestinian cause from the Arab people.³³⁶ Others argue that this decision was a tactical one, made to maintain their own sovereign institutions and forms of self-determination without being totally reliant and at the whim of Arab regimes, and because the broader geo-political and global conditions left them no other options.³³⁷ These debates were even present within the PLO. The far-left political parties such as the PFLP wanted to maintain the Palestinian cause as a broader Arab struggle, while Fatah pushed for the increased nationalization of the Palestinian political programs. But the changes in the region caused a multiplicity of Arab political forces to experience one of the first major splits among them, particularly regarding the impending Iraq/Iran war. Many Palestinian forces supported the Iranian 1979 revolution which ousted the Shah Regime, while others supported the Iraqi Baath opposition to a Shiite majority rule in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini. These schisms would unfold in history, but in general they did not prohibit a unified collective vision for the PLO and the parties that existed within its umbrella. The expansion of Palestinian national institutions in the far *shatat* maintained – at least structurally – the coherence of Palestinian unity.

Jamil Hilal argues that the eventual adoption of a two-state solution as the political ideal for the PLO resulted from a variety of regional and historical shifts which re-calibrated prospective possibilities by the late 1980s. Hilal understands the first major factor as deeply connected to the PLO's lack of its own territorial base which, as has been stated, made them dependent on a multiplicity of factors and unable to exercise sovereignty. But for Hilal, the PLO

became limited by its own bureaucracy, which became increasingly robust through the 1970s.

He states:

It is also important to stress that the PLO bureaucracy grew rapidly during the 1970s, which limited its agility and created interests specific to this bureaucracy that made it resist change; at the same time it was able to use the relatively large 'rent' generated from Arab (mostly from oil-rich states) and international sources (mostly Soviet and socialist countries) to create a kind of a 'rentier' relationship with the Palestinian communities, particularly with the Palestinian camps.³³⁸

As Hilal notes, the PLO's rentier relationship with oil-rich Arab regimes gave power to them for political counsel, while their desire to engage in broader diplomatic relations with Western nation-states required them to formally recognize Israel. All of this, coupled with their exodus and dispersal from Lebanon, isolated the PLO, hollowed much of their power, and led to the acceptance of a Palestinian state on only 22% of historic Palestine by the late 1980s.

By 1990, the PLO found itself in a more precarious position as a result of two main factors. The first was the total collapse of the Soviet Union and the more global socialist and non-aligned block. This collapse created both political and financial isolation for the Palestinians.³³⁹ Second was escalating political tensions as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the resultant US involvement in the Gulf War.³⁴⁰ By that time, the PLO had enjoyed considerable financial resources from both Iraq and Kuwait. But under Arafat's leadership, the PLO attempted to broker a peaceful Arab regional resolution to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. On August 20, 1990, the Arab League hosted an emergency Summit in Cairo. There, Arafat said, "Let us not believe the West is going to stand up for us or it is after our interests. No, the West does not want our benefit, does not want our independence, the only thing it is after, is our wealth and its interests."³⁴¹ With the PLO taking a neutral position on the invasion of Kuwait in the

name of maintaining Arab solutions to internal regional conflicts, the PLO suffered an exodus of nearly 250,000 Palestinians from Kuwait as punishment for their support of Saddam.³⁴² These events also resulted in escalated isolation and siege of the PLO as retaliation. The consequences of the first Gulf War of the early 1990s made Arab regimes, who were in ways supportive of the Palestinians, no longer in political positions to support the PLO, either based on what they saw as betrayal or because they were unable to risk confrontation with US imperialist forces or their allies in the region.

With the onslaught of the new US invasion and sanctions of Iraq during the Gulf War and following the historic civil war in Lebanon (in which the PLO was deeply implicated and had lost significant popular legitimacy), regional alliances with the PLO could make Arab regimes further vulnerable to US imperialist invasion. The PLO had already endured major punitive effects from the Arab regimes as well. Further, the egregious consolidation of alliances between Egypt and Jordan with Israel, cultivated in the previous twenty years, were becoming increasingly absolute, and the PLO's highly bureaucratic institutional structure could no longer be maintained. The PLO could no longer rely on Arab countries to protect them and their activities, nor withstand another defeat from reactionary Arab countries like that in Jordan in 1970. Nor could the PLO rely on broader internationalist alliances, resources, and political programs forerun by the Eastern block. In the end, the experience of the PLO signified the global re-ordering of power through neoliberalism in the "post" colonial and "post" cold-war context.

For these reasons, the Oslo Accords must not be considered a marker of the genealogical evolution of the Palestinian nationalist trajectory alone. Rather, we must accept that the Oslo Accords were deeply entrenched in a reconfiguration of alliances – both regionally and globally – in which both Israel and the US had gained expansive hegemonic control in the

neoliberal economic and political fold. While the nationalization of the Palestinian cause would give critical agency to the Palestinian refugees to become protagonists of their own self-determination struggle, it would also slowly isolate the Palestinian cause from the rights and responsibilities of Arab regimes to enter direct confrontation with Zionist regional hegemony.

While both the Palestinians and Israelis had much to lose in refusing to participate in negotiations by the early 1990s, the conditions for Palestinians post-Oslo have confirmed that only the Israelis could gain anything from the decision to enter negotiations and commence a peace process. The Oslo Accords had various devastating impacts on the Palestinian condition which largely shaped the struggles for the new generation of Palestine's youth movement, and which became the catalyzing issues up for debate and collective articulation in the first gatherings of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), which will be further explored in Chapter Three.

What Was Oslo? What did it do?

The Signing of Oslo I Accords

The Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, here referred to as the Oslo Accords, were devised on August 20, 1993 in Oslo, Norway and officially signed in a public ceremony in Washington, D.C. on September 13, 1993. Talks which led to the signing of the Accords officially began with the Madrid Peace Talks of 1991. The infamous photograph taken on the White House Lawn of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shaking hands as US President Bill Clinton smiles and looks on would come to signify the beginning of the new framework of peace negotiations and cooperative relations between Palestinians and Israelis on the global scale. Hailed as one of the most critical political

moments in modern history and celebrated across the world as the beginning of the end of the too-long, bloody, “Middle East Conflict,” the world sighed in relief that the end had finally come. They believed that history was behind them, and that the realization of a Palestinian state, however small, however fragile, would foreclose the persistent violence de-stabilizing the region. Endorsed by two global world powers, the US and Russia, the documents were officially signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Mahmoud Abbas (who would later come to be the PLO Chairman and PA President) on behalf of the PLO, United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Andrej Kozyrev, Foreign Minister of Russia.

Oslo I as a Framework and Sub-Sequential “Peace Talks”

The Accords were intended to be less of a final solution to the so-called conflict rather than an establishment of a framework which would lend itself to continual Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and cooperation as part of a prolonged peace process. This framework tabled the most critical issues -- which is in part why a legitimate peace could not be realized. Article V, titled “Transitional Period and Permanent Status Negotiations,” outlined that future negotiations, which should not be conducted any later than three years from the date of Oslo I, must address the tabled issues. Clause V.3 provides: “It is understood that these negotiations shall cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and co-operation with other neighbors, and other issues of common interest.”³⁴³ Since Oslo I, both the Palestinians and Israelis have returned to the negotiation table at least 40 times. These further negotiations include the 1994 Cairo Agreement; the 1995 Taba Agreement also known as Oslo II; the 1996 Hebron Agreement; the 1998 Wye River Memorandum; the 2000 Camp David Summit; the 2006-2008 Olmert-Abbas Talks which

included the 2007 Annapolis Meeting; the 2010 Talks; and the 2013-2014 Talks. Yet the original framework of Oslo I has limited the ability to establish lasting final solutions in all these subsequent gatherings. In fact, the inverse has happened. The more talks the Palestinians participated in, the longer the Palestinian Authority worked to stifle Palestinian resistance, and the more the Palestinians have lost. The most important outcome of Oslo I was the establishment of a Palestinian governing force, distinct from the PLO, which the Israelis would thus engage as the primary “partner for peace” through the next two decades.

Oslo I: Creation of the Palestinian Authority and Its Distinctions from the PLO

The Accords established a Palestinian National Authority (PNA), hereby referred to as the Palestinian Authority (PA), which was mostly comprised of the PLO *a’edeen*, or returnees to Palestine. Oslo would thus facilitate the establishment of a new Palestinian political entity, the PA, which differed from the PLO in three main ways. First, the PA was based in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and only had representational rights for Palestinians living in those areas, whereas the PLO represented all Palestinians wherever they had ended up in the world. Second, the PA was created for the purposes of governance and representational politics, whereas the PLO had long struggled with questions of representational politics and hadn’t agreed to be a representative entity of the Palestinians until 1974 (but had still always refused to be a governing body of specific Palestinian demographics and territories). In this decree, the PLO was a leadership umbrella comprised of all of the Palestinian political parties and hundreds of community-based and grassroots unions, associations, businesses, and institutions which mobilized and engaged Palestinian masses in the national liberation struggle. The infrastructure of the PA would aspire to replicate that of a

modern-nation state in which its emphasis on governance would be more pronounced than the development of a ground-up public sector organized for the purposes of anti-colonial liberation work. Third, where the PA was committed to establishing the institutional infrastructure of a Palestinian state on only a fraction of historic Palestine, the PLO was still officially guided by its national principles which included a clause for full liberation of and return of the refugees to historic Palestine.

The birthing of the PA and its composition of historic PLO leadership hollowed out members of the PLO and placed them into one of two categories. The first were members of the PLO who protested the signing of the Oslo Accords and disavowed the PLO leadership's return to Palestine and building of the PA. Some of these leaders had left their official PLO posts or posts within their political parties. Others maintained their posts but no longer had an active role with as much importance within them. Most of this group did not sign on to becoming a part of the new PA. The second group of PLO leaders were those who agreed to maintain their PLO posts as well as a new PA position or who agreed to switch from their former PLO ranks to the newly established PA. This development kept the PLO alive as an institution of historical national imagination, but it no longer served any real function or purpose. It became a shell organization.

Oslo I: Withdrawal from Jericho and Gaza as Critical Catalyst

One key clause in the Oslo I Accords was the Israelis' biggest promise, the one that had motivated the Palestinians to agree to future talks: the intended withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho and the transfer of power over these territories to the newly established Palestinian Authority. Article XIV of Oslo I was followed by the 1994 Agreement on

the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area, also known as the 1994 Cairo Agreement. In May of 1994, Israeli troops withdrew from town centers in the Gaza Strip, but a full military withdrawal of Gaza including all Israeli settlements did not take place until 2005. One year later, Israel would implement the longest siege in modern history on the Gaza Strip (2006-present). While many Palestinians critiqued the very concept of entering negotiations in the context of colonial domination, others had opposed not the negotiations, but the specific framework Oslo I had produced. For the few Palestinians who supported Oslo I, the belated withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, two sites which sit at borderlands and would anchor the soon-to-be new states' control over their own borders with Egypt and Jordan, the lack of Israeli compliance in withdrawing from these territories is thought to be what led to the failure of the peace process. In the end, though Oslo demanded enormous concessions from the Palestinians for a faint promise of a state, the Israelis couldn't even hold up their end of the bargain. The dissolution of Palestinian hope in the Oslo framework would only be furthered by the Oslo II agreements.

Oslo II: Taba Agreement and the Creation of Areas A, B and C in the West Bank

Oslo I established a framework that would permanently alter the long trajectory of the PLO. But it was the second Oslo convening, the Taba talks of 1995 (also known as Oslo II) that birthed some of the more dangerous policies felt by everyday people on the ground, especially in the West Bank. Oslo II created three administrative zones within the West Bank and assigned each zone a governing regime. Divisions located in area A were to see a full Israeli withdrawal and transfer of governance to the PA. Area B would establish cooperative joint Israeli-Palestinian administrative oversight. Finally, Area C, which included the illegal Israeli settlements within the West Bank, was to be primarily governed by Israel in cooperation with the PA security

and policing apparatus when needed. The Taba Agreement legalized illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and locked the Palestinians into a position of governance without sovereignty over land, economy, or borders. This agreement also facilitated ongoing Israeli land annexation in Area C for settlement expansion, and the implementation of road restrictions and security measures that fractured the West Bank into hundreds of geographic enclaves, making day-to-day mobility disastrous for Palestinians.

What was said to be a generous Israeli offer to the Palestinians in fact forced the Palestinians to concede much more than the Israelis, though they received very little in exchange.³⁴⁴ On the ground in Palestine, the occupation was not over or close to ending, yet the infrastructure to facilitate and sustain collective, organized Palestinian resistance had been destroyed. The Palestinian leadership was limiting any attempts to restore such a liberation project as well as the infrastructure to mobilize Palestinians, wherever they were in the world. In that vein Linda Tabar and Omar Jabary Salamanca refer to Oslo as a ‘false decolonization’ which they define as, “An apparatus that has persistently silenced and neglected the political realities on the ground and, most problematically, has contributed to sustaining and exacerbating the structures of settler colonialism and apartheid while enforcing rapacious neoliberal policies.”³⁴⁵ The Palestinian leadership was no longer responsive to the will of its people; it was now at the mercy of its colonizer and engaged in neoliberal development in Palestine. This neoliberalization would further destroy prospects to get out of the Oslo deal by burying Palestinians under debt and paying it back in political concessions.

The Palestinian political establishment was slowly acquiring more authority in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), particularly in the arena of policing and security, but

without political or economic sovereignty from the Israeli occupation. This lack of independence made it difficult for Palestinians to imagine an end to the Israeli occupation between 1993-1999. During the second Intifada, there was a short disjunction in which the PA was at a breaking point with its Israeli alliance. Various militant arms of the Palestinian parties, including FATAH, partook in the popular resistance alongside factions outside of the PLO; however, at the same time, as Tariq Dana notes, “key security leaders collaborated with the Israeli security services.”³⁴⁶

The role of the PLO during the second Intifada was quite different than in the first. They were implored to have a say, position, and role within the resistance by the more militant trends within their parties and by masses rising up. Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari note:

Throughout the first month, no directives emanated from the PLO Executive Committee, the PA Executive Authority, or the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), none of which even convened. In contrast, during the first intifada, the PLO leadership in Tunis rode the tide of the uprising and gave it essential political momentum through various kinds of logistical support as well as strategic direction provided by Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad), at the time the commander of the PLO’s “Western Front,” which were transmitted through local Fatah cadres and the UNLU.³⁴⁷

The PLO and PA did not offer directives for the second Intifada as they had for the first. But because of the mass-scale insurgency of the people and of components within the parties, they were pressured to partake. However, in light of these facts, it is not surprising that the PA would resume normalizing collaborative efforts with the Israelis at the inauguration of Mahmoud Abbas as the first PA Prime Minister in 2003, and again after 2006 when the widespread sustained mobilizations of people on the ground had dissipated and no longer mandated their refusal to cooperate with the Israelis. Furthermore, Israel would assassinate and imprison some of the more militant icons of the various parties to quell the resistance efforts among them.³⁴⁸

The Palestinian Authority's cooperation with Israel was one of the most achieved outcomes of the Oslo I Accords. Cooperation was outlined in the doctrines in three ways: (1) politically in accordance with Article X, which founded a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee; (2) economically through Article XI, Israeli-Palestinian Cooperation in Economic Fields; and (3) in security coordination in accordance with Article, VII Public Order and Security.³⁴⁹ These three areas of cooperation were the sole outcomes of the Oslo framework. They did not ensure Palestinian rights or allow for the Palestinians to acquire any more power to offset the increasingly robust Israeli military occupation. Palestinian grievances have since soared. Palestinian youth in particular did not reap any of the benefits of the peace process but bore all the violence of its repercussions.

Effects of the Oslo Framework on Palestinian Youth

Palestinian Refugees

The PLO's acceptance and commitment to the project of statehood building on only a fraction (22%) of historic Palestine meant that the Palestinian leadership gave up its pursuit of the end of Zionist colonization of all Palestine. In turn, it fell under sharp criticism by Palestinians for negotiating away the rights of exiles and refugees—who make up more than 70% of the total Palestinian population—to return to their original homes, cities, and villages in accordance with United Nations resolution 194.³⁵⁰ This concession removed the refugee right to return to historic Palestine as a key organizing principle and political commitment of the Palestinian project. It also altered the role of refugees and exiles, who had previously been participants in the Palestinian national, social, and cultural community, and central stakeholders and contributors

to the Palestinian political struggle. Finally, it alienated the Palestinian shatat from any legitimate political or legal claims to participate in the liberation struggle.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian refugees, today totaling approximately 5 million, remained stateless, often living in the miserable conditions of the refugee camps in Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and the OPT, with no political strategy to advocate for their naturalization, resettlement, or right to return. Their educational, social, and humanitarian needs were also neglected. The 2003 US invasion of Iraq and the war in Syria following the Arab revolutions would displace the Palestinians for a second and, in some cases, third time as their camps and communities were destroyed. Leith, a newly displaced Palestinian refugee youth from Syria who I met in Sweden in 2016, argues that Oslo was a great betrayal for the Palestinian refugees. He says, “Here we were, year after year protesting alongside our people in the occupied homeland, every time the Israelis would confiscate more land or kill another Palestinian, only for our own leadership, who were refugees themselves, to forget about us.”³⁵¹ Othman, a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk Refugee camp in Syria who currently resides in Lebanon, shares Leith’s sentiments. He believes that Oslo was a greater *Nakba*, or catastrophe, for the Palestinians than the 1948 Nakba was because it was Palestinians who agreed to its terms and not only our colonizers.³⁵²

Hundreds of Palestinian refugee youth I have engaged from various camps and gatherings (mostly from Lebanon and Syria, a few from Jordan) share similar sentiments regarding Oslo’s alienation of the refugee right of return. While many of these youths identify as politically independent, not belonging to any party or faction, many of them also partake in the youth wings of a range of Palestinian parties. However, their involvement in the Palestinian parties does not necessarily limit their own critique of the Palestinian political establishment,

particularly the PA and the Ramallah-based leadership of the parties. Some of these youths argue that while it is critical to speak against the corruption within the Palestinian leadership, it is more important to remain focused on the broader colonial forces prohibiting our return to Palestine and limiting Palestinian power.

Zaid, a Palestinian youth from Burj Al-Barajneh camp in Lebanon, argues that he respects any Palestinian youth who critiques the Palestinian leadership for their compromise on the right of return, as he too is a refugee who remains in the camp and who has never given up the desire of return passed onto him from his parents and grandparents. But Zaid also argues that it is critical for us as youth not to allow too much space for other young people who wish to critique the establishment without engaging in any form of politics that might bring about some sort of change for our people. He says he will remain a member of Fatah, because he still believes in its legacy and its ability to facilitate freedom for the Palestinian people, and he feels a sense of responsibility to his cause. He would rather do what he can within the limited possibilities of the party and remain loyal to its tenets. Finally, he argues that this is both a more honest and real way to do something for his people than to remove himself, as he argues many other “so-called radical youth have done,” and critique from the sidelines.³⁵³

Hanan, a Palestinian refugee youth from Yarmouk camp currently residing in Lebanon, shares that she understands Zaid’s philosophy, but that the conditions for Palestinian-Syrians no longer allows for them to have faith in the Palestinian parties (what she calls “factions”). She states:

“When the Palestinian camps first came under siege by the Syrian regime in 2012, and then when forces such as ISIS came into Yarmouk in 2015 for example, that was the outcome of Oslo and of the weakness and corruption of the Palestinian parties and of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

(UNRWA). She argued that these forces were more concerned about staying in good graces with the regime or about their trucks not getting attacked in the camps and they let the people die in there, starve in there.”³⁵⁴

Bayan, a Palestinian youth who is also from Syria but currently resides in Holland, argues that the Palestinian forces demonstrated higher levels of corruption than the youth’s already low expectations of them predicted. She says, “For many of them it became a matter of joining the ranks of the war to protect themselves or to profit. They made a lot of money by selling the rights of the people away.”³⁵⁵ Similarly, Atef, who is also from Syria but currently resides in Lebanon, shares both Hanan and Bayan’s sentiments. He argues that forces who took different sides on the Syrian war still all had blood on their hands. But for him, the forces that took positions of neutrality and did not try to assist ahel al Yarmouk (Yarmouk’s families or children) when the regime imposed the siege were the most guilty of betraying the national political principles of the Palestinians, which necessitated the protection and uplifting of the refugees.³⁵⁶

Like Hanan and Bayan, Atef and many of the Palestinian youth from Syria I have engaged in Greece, Turkey, Sweden, the US, and Lebanon express heightened levels of anger and frustration with the Palestinian parties for their inability (or unwillingness) to do anything to ensure protections, safe passage routes, or humanitarian aid and assistance for the Palestinian refugee camps and gatherings during the war in Syria. Many have come to envision mechanisms of engaging politics, aid work, and protection services entirely outside of the UNRWA establishment and the PLO and its factions, or the Palestinian parties that exist outside of the PLO, including both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. However, it is critical to note that many of these youths argue that the Arab Uprisings and the war in Syria proved something that they had always believed to be true, at least since the Oslo Accords: that the role of the Palestinian

political establishment had little rights, responsibilities, interests, or mandate outside of the localization of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and that they were a refugee youth population with no true Palestinian leadership or liberation guardians.

Nidal, a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk camp who currently resides in Northern California, says that four main consequences of Oslo affected the PLO parties and institutions in Syria. First, several unions, associations, and smaller political parties literally just died. Second, those that were left remained as symbolic institutions, devoid of any real power and depleted in resources. Third, several groups ended up having splits, and so new groups born out of the former parties or PLO organizations were created to demonstrate an anti-Oslo position. For example, the Palestinian Student Union in Syria was disconnected from the broader PLO General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) after Oslo. This was a deliberate break created to signify a refusal of the Oslo concession and framework altogether. Fourth, the Palestinian groups that maintained power were directly tied to the Syrian regime, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. For Nidal, these changes made it difficult for Palestinian youth to find a real role in Palestinian politics, community building, and sustenance of the nation.³⁵⁷

Many efforts emerged since Oslo to reconvene important figures in the Palestinian struggle and community in Syria to partake in loose network coordinating committees. For example, groups like the Al-Awda (or Return) association, would organize a series of political discussions and cultural activities engaging young people both in and out of the official Palestinian parties.³⁵⁸ While Nidal's testimony parallels the accounts of many of the Palestinian youth from the refugee camps and the Shatat, it is important to note the critical importance of the infrastructural collapse of the Palestinian national institutions in Syria specifically. Yarmouk

Refugee Camp had long become known as the political headquarters of the Palestinian *shatat* with the most vibrant number and forms of Palestinian national institutions, both social and political. The drastic changes caused by Oslo in Syria signifies just how damaging the Oslo effect was on the broader Palestinian *shatat*. Yarmouk at least was able to retain some social programs for children and youth post Oslo.

Ibrahim, a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria displaced by the war and currently residing in Holland, discusses how important Palestinian social and cultural settings were for him in his own political development. He says that when he was about six or seven years old, he joined the Palestinian scouts where he primarily partook in childrens' activities. However, through the scouts he was exposed to political ideas, concepts, and activities which planted the first seeds of his political consciousness and also made him recognize, accept, and embrace himself as a political being. He argues that like the scouts, there were many social and cultural centers that stayed alive for the Palesitnians in Yarmouk and they did play a fundamental role in planting political seeds which could be nurtured in later phases of a youth's life.³⁵⁹ The importance of cultural and social spheres post-Oslo in Syria remained a vital component in these youths' lives as the testimony of many youth from Syria demonstrates. But the effects of Oslo on the cultural domain was more poignantly illustrated in my interviews with refugee youth from Lebanon.

Ayman, a Palestinian refugee and cultural worker from Rushidieh camp in Lebanon, argues that one of the greatest disasters of Oslo was that it pummeled Palestinian arts, intellectualism, and cultural work. Ayman speaks of the way that our own arts have come to fetishize our oppression rather than mobilize our sense of courage. He argues that before Oslo, Palestinian art celebrated our existence and our reverence for land, embraced our desires for

return, and encouraged us to be selfless and brave in the face of oppression. This played a critical role in mobilizing our psyche, sense of power, and courage. But after Oslo, much of the cultural work that has been produced speaks of our victimization and oppression as Palestinians. This made Palestinian refugee youth believe that we have no power to do anything. For refugees who do not have access to a direct confrontation with our occupier, this made the position of being a refugee a hopeless one.³⁶⁰

Nael, a Palestinian refugee youth from Shatila camp in Lebanon, elaborates by telling of the effect of Oslo on the Palestinian unions, which utilized arts and culture as a form of empowerment. He tells stories of youth attending various cultural events, learning debka, and absorbing Palestinian history and the legacy of resistance through different artistic mediums. In college, Nael continued participating in music ensembles and debka groups as well as direct action political protest, but he says that the community's commitment to maintaining these forms of learning and expression has diminished, and that few artistic outlets exist for children anymore.³⁶¹ In both Ayman's and Nael's testimonies, these changes in the Palestinian cultural and artistic landscape, both content-wise and institutionally, played a role in decreasing the new generation's sense of identity, connectedness to Palestine, and rights and responsibilities to the struggle. But as many of the other Palestinian refugee youth I have spoken with illustrate, especially in Lebanon, the chronic conditions of camp life, including the sense of alienation and bigotry in the broader society against Palestinians, maintain the Palestinian youth's connection to their position as stateless subjects. In this sense, refugee youth remain among the greatest stakeholders in a revitalized liberation project that incorporates them, their desires, and their political aspirations, and gives them a vibrant role in the struggle.

Conditions of camp life constantly inspire a necessity for a reformulation and reiteration of Palestinian political prospects. On the one hand, this is generative because a consensus among young people in the camps in Lebanon exists in support of the liberation struggle and the deep desire for return to Palestine. On the other hand, the urgent need for a political solution for Palestinian youth in Lebanon often leads to direct confrontations between non-affiliated youth and the political parties, as well as between the parties. It has allowed for new militant formations to grow in Lebanon's camps, and it has fueled the delicate situation among armed forces competing for territorial control in high-density zones of the camp. The internal Palestinian condition of political fragmentation is most salient in Lebanon's camps, where various parties attempt to coordinate security with one another, but clash at the drop of a hat. Considering both the Palestinian political fragmentation and the Lebanese sectarian tensions existing within and at the periphery of the Palestinian camps, Palestinian youth in Lebanon have become among the most vulnerable to a new Nakba. The broader context of the Lebanese government's surveillance, criminalization, and isolation of the Palestinians and the camps – coupled with chronic poverty as Palestinian Lebanese are unable to integrate into the Lebanese workforce and economy – generates conditions ripe for sectarian civil tensions, and makes Palestinian youth vulnerable to recruitment into underground economies, including trafficking of drugs, weapons, and more.

These conditions have worsened since the Oslo Accords and especially since the collapse of Palestinian unions and businesses in Lebanon, which had offered Palestinians an infrastructure of sustenance that they no longer have access to post-Oslo.³⁶² The increased attacks on camps in Lebanon, including the 2007 Lebanese Armed Forces destruction of Nahr-Al Bared Camp, highlight the ways in which life for Palestinian refugee youth in Lebanon in the

post-Oslo context is increasingly precarious, while at the same time no collective political strategy offers them a comprehensive out. Ahmed, a Palestinian youth active in Burj-al Barajneh Camp, argues that just as conditions in Palestine worsened post-Oslo and the Palestinians became weaker, conditions for the Palestinian refugees have also worsened since Oslo, and Palestinian refugees have become weaker.³⁶³ Raed, a Palestinian refugee from Lebanon who currently lives in Denmark, says that, "it has been a gradual slow death for the Palestinian youth in Lebanon. Now [in 2016], Palestinian kids are so desperate that they can be armed to them to fight in a war, an aimless war, not a revolutionary war, for 50 US Dollars per month -- they are this desperate."³⁶⁴

The Localization of Palestine

The Oslo Accords resulted in a localization of the leadership of the PLO, which led to the removal of the refugees as central actors in the political structures of the PLO and the removal of the refugee right of return as a central component of the political project. Simultaneously, Oslo facilitated the return to Palestine of nearly 100,000 PLO members and their families, who were themselves Palestinian refugees and who had spent decades outside the homeland.³⁶⁵ This return shifted their role from that of forerunners of the transnational liberation project to a governing body in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These returning PLO leaders would become known as *a'edeen*, or returnees, and many would come to comprise the new political elite in Palestine, holding positions of power within the newly established Palestinian National Authority (PNA), here referred to as the Palestinian Authority.³⁶⁶

In exchange, PLO leaders called for the closing of hundreds of Palestinian unions of the Shatat. This structurally facilitated the alienation and estrangement of the new generation of

refugee and exilic Palestinians from Palestine the place, as well as from a connection with Palestinian peoplehood globally and inside Palestine. Palestinians refer to the centralization of the Palestinian leadership—which was once transnational in scope as the refugees themselves became the forerunners of the Palestinian parties, militant insurgency, popular protest, and diplomatic endeavors—as a structural shift in the methods, philosophies, and trajectory of the political project. Palestine became centralized in the form of land allotment in search of a state on only a fraction of historic Palestine as the returnees would build their new political infrastructure and economic capital in Ramallah and Gaza, leaving behind their people in the process.

Numerous works have demonstrated the profound sense of betrayal and treason this alienation has caused among the Palestinian refugees and exiles.³⁶⁷ Oslo facilitated an inside/outside binary, creating an implied scarcity of rights, authenticity competitions, and debates around who had the legitimacy to belong to the Palestinian national imagination, construct and represent Palestinian national principles, and partake in realizing Palestine's freedom. At best, the inside/outside binary would produce tensions over cultural differences in perceptions and conceptualizations of Palestine, Palestinianness, belonging, and homeland. At worst, these differences would turn into disputes over who had rightful claims to return to Palestine, live in Palestine, and acquire rights-bearing Palestinian citizenship. The truth is, even for those Palestinians living within the OPT (territories which were to become the new Palestinian state), acquiring rights-bearing citizenship has not been possible under the continued colonial occupation after Oslo. Riham, a Palestinian youth from Jifna, a small village next to Birzeit in the West Bank, argues that in principle she is supportive of the refugee right of return and feels that refugees outside of Palestine belong to the fabric of our society, but that

sometimes she does have the uneasy feeling that it was precisely the political leadership of refugees who made the decision to accept Oslo and in turn came back to Palestine after decades in exile, bringing with them the misery that youth in Palestine would experience through the Oslo years.³⁶⁸

Hani, a Palestinian man who currently resides in London, was a youth in the communist party during the first Intifada in a small village near Ramallah. We met in a café in Paris where he told me of the salient ways he remembers the changes to the society on the ground in Palestine following the return of the *a'edeen* to Palestine and the beginning of the building of the infrastructure of the PA. He argues that:

...these Palestinian youths who we knew from our village, who had never partaken in any popular resistance, who had never sacrificed anything, never lost a loved one in the struggle, became the new faces of diplomats representing our struggle on a global level. It was a painful feeling, you know, very painful. We had heard tales of the heroes of the PLO and finally come to see them in person, driving fancy cars, implementing systems of nepotism for political power, for personal profit...so we felt all that all of these years we struggled, stayed steadfast in our lands fighting the colonial enemy, all the people we loved who were martyred in the process, it was all in vain.³⁶⁹

The localization of the Palestinian struggle and PLO leadership, in the form of the PA, produced a harsh fragmentation among those inside Palestine as well as the Shatat. However, this split was caused by and further facilitated a growing fragmentation between the everyday Palestinians who had long endured the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the newly established institutional authority that came from the outside.³⁷⁰ Nidal, a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk Camp in Syria, argues that the PLO was pressured to strike the Oslo deal because they were losing credibility as the rightful leaders of the cause to a group of organic

leaders who were responsible for organizing the popular resistance of the first Intifada on the ground in Palestine.³⁷¹ In the final instance, the tension between various Palestinian geographies, ideologies, and constituencies resulting from Oslo, only ever speak of the fragmentation that they have witnessed from their positionality, which is why the inside/outside binary has become an increasingly polarized outcome of Oslo. But Oslo even played a role in facilitating breaks between members of Palestinian society who might live within the same town or village in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. These tensions will be further explored in the following chapter, as they became major challenges and contradictions that surfaced in the early PYM gatherings. The complex ways these tensions surfaced reflected how deep the impact of Oslo would be in shattering a sense of one Palestinian nation, whether in the homeland or in exile, among the new generation of Palestine's youth.

Palestinians of 1948 Palestine

The localization of the Palestinian political establishment also left the Palestinians in 1948 Palestine³⁷² to consider alternatives to their fate as second-class citizens of the Israeli state, with no prospective institutional infrastructure with which to demand full rights within the state nor to partake in the liberation of Palestine. Palestinians of 1948 Palestine had long been officially alienated from the political project of the PLO, but had always maintained varying forms of organized and quotidian modalities of, to borrow from James Scott, "everyday resistance"³⁷³ in their steadfast contestation of Zionist settler-colonialism. They organized on local collective levels in conjunction with the broader framework, strategies, and efforts of the PLO institutions in Shatat and the local coordinating committees in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Their role in the struggle, while structurally severed from the PLO institutions, was still a critical component to the national imagination of Palestinians and to the liberation project. The most salient example is the transnational Palestinian yearly commemoration of the Israeli massacre of six 1948 Palestinians on March 30, 1976. In response to a declaration by Israel of the annexation of thousands of dunams of land to expand settlements, Palestinians within the 48 territories marched in protest from the Galilee to the Negev desert and were met with violence by Israeli forces. This event would become known as Palestinian Land Day, one of the national days of the Palestinian political program commemorated by Palestinians everywhere.³⁷⁴ Yet symbolic reverence for the Palestinians of 1948 was not always commensurate with the foreclosure of possibilities for institutional forms of engaging politics brought on by Oslo.

The PLO's shift from a liberation project to a statehood project in the early 1990s resulted in a realization among the Palestinians of the 1948 territories that they must cultivate their own formal institutional forms. This shift resulted in a project of cultural revitalization for Palestinians in 1948 and included the development of steps toward establishing Arab political parties, which would later participate in the Israeli Knesset. For Kareem, a Palestinian youth from 1948 Palestine, this was critical because prior to Oslo, a majority of Palestinians living as citizens of Israel were active participants in the Israeli communist party, which advocated for social justice, particularly around class lines, but did not account for racial subordination or challenge the very merits of the state as settler-colony. Kareem states that the decision to form an Arab political block was critical in two ways because:

first, [it] allowed the Palestinians structural avenues to demand rights and social justice as racialized second-class citizens who had long been stripped of equity within the Israeli state. Our needs, including just access to housing, health care, education, and other social justice demands, were facilitated through these

new mechanisms of engaging politics, even though it was through the Israeli state's political apparatus. Second, and more importantly in my opinion, it allowed us to maintain the Arabness of our demographic, which lent itself to always politicizing our youth in understanding that while we access the institutions of the state, we have never not regarded it as a settler-state and that the political battle remains with the Zionist ideology first and foremost. Had we not had these parties post-Oslo, our community would have become individuals, engulfed in the Israeli state with no vehicle to cultivate a Palestinian/Arab politicized and cultural identity and political program.³⁷⁵

Kareem's statements speak to the varying ways many of the Palestinian youth from 1948 whom I have spoken with have articulated a struggle with members of their community and the question of what they call *indimaj*, or cultural assimilation and/or integration.

Ayah, another Palestinian youth from 1948 who I met while the two of us were providing refugee support services to Palestinian youth from Syria in Greece in the summer of 2017, argues that *indimaj* is a danger that many Palestinian youth have fallen into despite the formation and function of the Arab political parties. Ayah did not necessarily see the formation of the Arab parties as a solution to the risk of *indimaj* and the consequences it has produced. She argues that the concept is highly revered within Israeli society, as it is in Europe, but that it is one that she and many of her Palestinian youth organizer peers attempt to spread awareness of as something counterproductive for Palestinian survival. She says:

indimaj is code for us becoming equally a part of the Israeli system, or Western for that matter. But these are colonial systems, that were only ever meant to destroy us, confiscate our lands, and dispossess our people. It is an opening, so that Palestinians of 1948 give up much of their own cultural heritage, including our Muslim faith, as well as our Arabic mother tongue, but most importantly, our political loyalties to our people, under occupation and in the shatat.³⁷⁶

Ayah also speaks to how Orientalist discourses utilize the language of *indimaj* as a vehicle of respectability politics, so that Arabs demonstrate their proximity to the West and negate the so-called backwardness of their own communities. In addition, she problematizes the concept of *indimaj* as a mechanism of cultural erasure, bringing to the forefront the range of various indigenous communities' troubled histories with cultural genocide.³⁷⁷

Many of the Palestinian youth I have met, engaged, and spoken with from the 1948 territories express conflicting sensibilities regarding the function of the Arab political formations participating within the Israeli political landscape. On one hand, youth critique of Israel as a settler-state, one that is not normal in any way, and one that inflicts violence and racism, is critical to maintain as a common sense understanding. This would allow for persistent de-normalization of Zionist ethnic cleansing and occupation. On the other hand, the precarity of their position as racialized subjects of the Israeli state, susceptible to its racial violence and institutional inequity, mandates mechanisms for collective strength and political mobilization.

While many of these youth express strong senses of Palestinian national belonging, their sense of alienation from the broader Palestinian community and liberation project since Oslo has often left them experiencing political, cultural, and social isolation. Hussein, a Palestinian youth who grew up in Jerusalem and now studies in Southern California, argues that the experience for youth in Jerusalem post-Oslo is a bit different than the broader 1948 experience. Geographically, culturally, and politically, Jerusalem Palestinians exist in much closer proximity to the Palestinian community in the West Bank. Hussein says that as a youth growing up post-Oslo in Jerusalem, the sense of anger among young people at the Palestinian Authority was profound. Palestinian youth felt like their leadership had given up on one of the core national principles of the struggle, that Jerusalem would be the capital of a free Palestine one day, and

that the *ahel Al-Quds*, or the Jerusalem families, are central to the broader liberation project.

Hussein sees the Oslo deal as surrender of Jerusalem and argues that the Palestinian establishment did all it could to disavow Palestinian youth from being part of the broader Palestinian community. He says:

...we weren't allowed to have any role in political organizing, any say in decision-making of what would happen to our cause and country, and we weren't even allowed to participate in any Palestinian elections. The *sulta* [Palestinian Authority] wouldn't even allow *shabab ahel al-Quds*, (the youth of Jerusalem) the right to play on the Palestinian football team! They basically threw us to the Israelis. In some areas, like area C, areas where the Palestinians had some political role, they came around to police us, surveil, and repress Palestinian youth political activity. This was especially true after 2006, when the *sulta* was basically operating as informants on youth affiliated with or revering Hamas. In these same areas, like Qalandiya and Ram, there was an explosion of drug trafficking, violence, and theft, and the *sulta* intelligence would do nothing to police the violence happening but were primarily there to collect information on possible political opposition.³⁷⁸

Hussein's testimony demonstrates what many of the Palestinian youth from Jerusalem have also shared: that they find themselves desiring integration and belonging to the Palestinian nation and its national institutions, and to be allowed to engage politically in determining the future of their cause, people, and country; yet they find themselves barred from doing so because Oslo, in facilitating the Palestinian political establishment's localization, played a critical role in fragmenting them both socially and politically from Palestinian society.

Hussein, and many of the youth from Jerusalem I have spoken with, agreed with Ayah's sentiments: that the formation of the Arab political parties within 1948 and their role in the Knesset was not a remedy to Oslo and could not prevent individual *indimaj* nor cultivate the advancement of Palestinian rights, especially as Israeli land confiscation in Jerusalem, violation

of human rights, and continued unequal *de jure* racial segregation persisted following 1993. However, almost all the youth share the opinion that the Palestinian establishment's refusal to account for them as part of the Palestinian nation – and particularly their role in policing Palestinian youth political desires, ambitions, organizing, and resistance – played a central role in fracturing Palestine and altering the vision of the Palestinian liberation project that had long guided the people prior to Oslo. While the alienation of Palestinian youth in both Jerusalem and 1948 territories from Palestinian national politics limited their abilities to enact politics in the formal political sphere, their conditions as second-class citizens of the Israeli state heightened a sense of critical politics for many of them. They argue that the post-Oslo period has, in many ways, fostered their more critical analysis of Israel as a project of settler-colonialism, and heightened their critique of both the peace and negotiations framework and of normalizing any form of relations between colonized and colonizer.

Palestinians of the Far Shatat

Though the formation of a political home was developed because of Oslo for the Palestinians in 1948 territories, the opposite was true for the OPT and the Shatat. Inside the OPT, the newly established Palestinian Authority began building the political and economic infrastructure of a state even though it had not secured its own sovereignty, including control over its own economy and border. This resulted in dire conditions on the ground in Palestine, which I will return to. However, it is critical to understand how Oslo would also broker the liquidation of hundreds of unions across the world, including the largest PLO union, the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS).³⁷⁹ Jihan, a member of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) USA Chapter and a former member of the last standing chapter of GUPS in the USA (at

San Francisco State University), is among the older members of the PYM. She states that she remembers vividly how her own community changed after 1993. Jihan says:

when I was young, I remember being a part of so many activities in the Palestinian community. Fundraisers, Arabic language classes, debka classes, and so much more. And then suddenly, boom; it all vanished. It wasn't until I was older and became a member of the GUPS [that] I realized why I suddenly felt a void in my own childhood. You see, through my own training in International Relations and Ethnic Studies and my activism with GUPS, I started to ask questions and realized all that our community had lost because of Oslo. It was a total disruption of our senses of community and our role in our own struggle.³⁸⁰

Jihan comes from a large Palestinian Christian family, originally from Gaza and Jaffa, now living in the San Francisco Bay Area. She tells of how community institutions replaced the sore absence of the former Palestinian unions. She says that what took the place of the Palestinian community institutions were the religious institutions, mosques and churches, and that they played a role in re-organizing the social landscape of the Palestinian community. She also speaks of the various Palestine solidarity formations that emerged following the Oslo Accords, but says that in many ways, they were not logistically, culturally, or politically accessible to Palestinian communities of the Shatat. Jihan's testimony strikingly parallels the way some of the older shatat Palestinian youth I spoke with, who remembered the years prior to the Oslo Accords, discuss the drastic effect Oslo had on the political sensibilities, organizational infrastructure, and social and cultural landscape of the Palestinian Shatat. In this sense, the fracturing of the global Palestinian nation was not only about ideological and geographic fragmentation across expansive territories. The absence of functional Palestinian institutions in the Shatat made it so that even local communities, living in the same city, could only ever meet and connect with one another in other spaces, including broader Arab

organizations,³⁸¹ village and city associations and networks, religious institutions, and Palestine solidarity organizations or temporal Palestinian campaigns or initiatives.

Mariam, another PYM member from the San Francisco-Bay Area whose mother and grandmother were active members of the Union of Palestinian Women's Association (UPWA), tells of the stories she heard from her mother of what community organizing looked like pre-Oslo. She says:

I was brought up on these stories because my family is very proud to be Palestinian and committed to the struggle. My mother and grandmother raised my sisters and I to do all we can for Palestine and I have always felt a deep passion for my people and country. But also, I didn't know what I could do for Palestine. I knew I was different than other American children... I am Muslim, Arab and Palestinian, but also I didn't feel so confident in what that meant. I was raised on these stories of Palestine and of the organizing of the Shatat, but I never saw this community that my mother spoke of. It wasn't until I joined PYM that I started tracing this history, meeting people my own age active in the struggle whose parents were involved with my parents in the Palestinian unions before Oslo.³⁸²

Although many youths maintained the same passion and commitment to Palestine their parents had on individual levels, the loose networks and informal ways Palestinian communities met with one another post-Oslo caused a de-politicization in that it hollowed out any sense of *collective* agency, responsibility, and rights to the struggle. The difference between the youths' situation and that of their parents was that the liquidation of the national institutions left a gap of political education and consciousness-raising; there was no vehicle for these youths to act out their political insistence.³⁸³ Some metropolitan cities across the globe had more avenues for social cohesion of the Palestinian communities that maintained informal Diasporic networks. But these informal networks were not conducive to organized, sustained, organic engagement

in political work that could connect their efforts structurally and organizationally to those put forth by other communities, for instance to both Palestinian efforts and to other national liberation struggles with which the PLO had established strategic alliances. In this sense, the Oslo Accords marked not just a post-Cold War juncture for the Palestinian struggle but also for all Third World and national liberation movements.

For the Palestinian community in the US post-Oslo, the community would turn out sporadically for cultural events, protests, and mobilizations, particularly through the Israeli onslaught of the second Palestinian Intifada and especially during the 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon, the Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2009, 2012, and 2014, and the US declaration of Jerusalem as the capitol as well as the mobilizations for the Great Return March in 2018. At various times, there have been significant efforts to revitalize Palestinian community institutions that could reinvigorate a critical role for the Palestinians of the Shatat.³⁸⁴ But isolated from a sustained connection to Palestine, and because of the increased scrutiny, criminalization, and repression these communities have endured in the post-September 11, 2001 War on Terror context, these efforts have not fulfilled the void of the Palestinian national institutions following the Oslo Accords.

The desire for a Palestinian formation resembling the PLO was something unanimously shared among the youth organizers of the far Shatat I have engaged over the years. They often considered it a retroactive remedy to the Oslo conundrum. However many had deep reservations about efforts to invest labor and efforts to actually revitalize the PLO. As Karma Nabulsi notes:

With the disintegration of the PLO institutions in exile, many Palestinians had abandoned the framework of the PLO to work

in single-issue political movements, or in Islamic organizations, and sought to consolidate their own political positions and views. As the loss of representation increased, many saw the national institutions of the PLO as increasingly corrupt and ineffective, and many new and emerging civic groups and individuals believed it was not worth strengthening or restoring them, nor putting time into any mobilizing towards this endeavour, especially as the PLO itself was seen to have abandoned its constituents.³⁸⁵

Like the various Palestinian communities Nabulsi has engaged in her own work, the youth I have engaged also acted out their political practice in an array of institutions and frameworks distinct from the national institutions that existed pre-Oslo.

Depending on location, Palestinian youth were socialized in social and political spheres distinct from one another. For example, in the United States, many Palestinian youth connected and organized with one another through Arab-American service-based organizations and/or Islamic philanthropic and humanitarian organizations. Student organizing and solidarity formations also played a critical role, which I will return to. Palestinian familial networks and village and town associations were also vital in maintaining the bonds of these communities. In many countries in Europe, Palestinian community associations still associated more overtly with various Palestinian political parties and were more closely tied to homeland politics than in the United States.³⁸⁶ This is in part because European Palestinian communities were in closer geographic proximity to Palestine and the Arab countries, and in part due to the history of immigration waves to Europe. Unlike in Latin America, which saw some of the earliest waves of Palestinians, including communities who had left Palestine before the Palestinian Nakba of 1948 and established financial stability, many of the Palestinian migrants to Europe arrived as a result of historic moments of catastrophe. This included, for example, mass waves of Palestinian

refugees displaced again as result of the massacre of the Palestinian camps during the Lebanese civil war. The Palestinian community's proximity to homeland politics is also connected to the post-Oslo, new waves of Palestinian youth immigrants who were primarily going to Europe.

Compared to the European Palestinian Shatat, North and South American Palestinian Shatats are largely older Shatats, with smaller migration waves within the last twenty-five years since Oslo. In Latin America, Palestinian youth in the post-Oslo context largely engaged with one another through village and town networks, like the networks in the United States, but also through Palestinian associations, which survived and were re-formed in the post-Oslo context in ways distinct from the United States and Canada. State-sponsored support for the Palestinian cause in countries like Venezuela and Chile, along with the political and economic strength of the Palestinian communities in these countries, has brokered stronger relations between the states and the PLO and Palestinian Authority.³⁸⁷ Much of the Palestinian community in these countries maintained Diasporic cultural and political activities post-Oslo, but it was largely brokered, cultivated, and tied to establishment Palestinian politics in the form of the PLO embassies. This is also true for countries such as Greece, where the existing Palestinian community associations are tied to the embassy. Naima, a Palestinian youth who is a part of the General Union of the Palestine Students (GUPS) Athens Chapter, says that she sometimes feels frustrated with how territorial and possessive of the union the PLO embassy can be, because it doesn't allow for an independent youth group that can design and implement its own politics and activities. But she also sees the benefit of this relationship. She says, "we really wouldn't have all these Palestinian youths here from Bethlehem on full state-sponsored scholarships if it wasn't for the embassy. We also wouldn't have the money to do all our activities, like our

football team jerseys, and our debka performances and other activities.”³⁸⁸ In these places, the cultural landscape for Palestinian youth was more vibrant than in places which saw major breakdowns of former PLO unions.

Samia, a Palestinian youth from Venezuela, also argues that the presence of the Palestinian embassies in community-based activities is both productive and reductive. She says that the strength of popular support in Venezuela for the Palestinian struggle allows for a continuation of activities among the community without being repressed and surveilled the way Palestinian youth are in Western countries. However, in the post-Oslo context, the strength of state-sponsored support for Palestine has allowed for formal developed ties with the PLO and the Palestinian Authority. In some ways, the line of establishment politics has taken the place of more radical forms of solidarity for Palestinian liberation and is now reducing it to solidarity for a Palestinian two-state solution, the preference of the PA. Samia argues that this prescribes a very specific politics of solidarity with Palestine, and that it has limited the ability to develop a more critical, vibrant role for Palestinian youth in the country because many of the associations are supervised and monitored by the Palestinian establishment. She argues that there is no pressing urgency among the youth to move to action because there is an illusion that solidarity already exists and that they have no role in altering Palestinian institutions overrun by the Palestinian parties and establishment politics; there is no institutional space to critically examine or partake in our liberation struggle because its politics are already established.³⁸⁹ Yasmine, a Palestinian youth from Chile, argues that a similar issue impacts Palestinian youth in the post-Oslo context in her community. She says, “it is almost like there is nothing to be done, though we are sure that is not true by what we see happening in Palestine.”³⁹⁰

Amani, a Palestinian youth from Brazil, offers a sharp critique of establishment Palestinian politics and the effects of Oslo. Like Yasmine and Samia, Amani is demoralized by the role that Palestinian establishment and party politics play in dictating the activities, demands, and desires of youth in the community. But Brazil is distinct from Venezuela and Chile. On the one hand, Brazil has long cultivated stronger relations of solidarity with Palestinians; on the other, it has done the same with Israel. Amani argues that the presence of Zionism is more pronounced in Brazil and that this demands a radical Palestinian community prepared to play a critical role in both supporting Palestinian rights and in fighting social, racial, economic, gendered, and sexual forms of state violence and subordination. Amani says that she has struggled to find a space to do this type of work within the Palestinian community networks in Brazil and has thus become more deeply entrenched in Brazilian labor and anti-racist organizing, which has helped her sharpen her critique of and rejection of the normalization framework in which Oslo has trapped the Palestinians.³⁹¹ In reading Amani, Yasmine, and Samia's narratives side by side, we see that a space for the development of critical politics is open in local organizing regarding other issues. However, the ability for youth to develop critical politics, cultivate meaningful roles in the struggle and community, and revitalize the role of youth in political movement building is limited in the Palestinian sphere.

Rise of Hamas, the Second Intifada and the Split in National Unity

In the years following Oslo, the continuation of the Israeli occupation, coupled with the weakness of the Palestinian leadership and its role in coordinating security measures with the Israelis, generated popular grievances among many Palestinian young people. These conditions gave rise to another growing Palestinian political formation in the political sphere which played a major role in Palestinian insurgency. Hamas—the Palestinian derivative of the Muslim

Brotherhood, once thought of as a social, cultural, spiritual and service-based institution—became among the most important political formations in the aftermath of the 1993 Oslo Accords. Jamil Hilal notes that the rise of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, began in the late 1980s and was in many ways informed by the introduction of political Islam to regional politics following the 1979 Iranian revolution.³⁹² But in the early 2000s the strength of Hamas would mount as a result of the second Palestinian Intifada following the failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit. Hamas came to signify the populist Islamist camp while Fatah represented the populist nationalist camp. These two distinct political trends contributed to the growing polarization, fragmentation, and internal power struggles within Palestinian political life.³⁹³

This period signified a historic change for the Palestinian struggle. It was the first moment since 1964 that a new political party (which was not a member of the PLO and not bound to the Oslo Accords paradigm) would acquire popular support and legitimacy from people on the ground and play an instrumental role in Palestinian political, social, and spiritual life. This would introduce political Islam into the Palestinian struggle in a more substantial institutional form, as would the rise of groups such as Islamic Jihad, though many scholars have articulated that the rise of these forces are distinct from other political Islamic groups in the region as they were largely still ideologically bound to the national struggle.³⁹⁴ Such groups would become highly revered as the most antagonistic Palestinian forces to the Israeli occupation and the only solution following the compromise of the PLO in Oslo and the subsequent loss experienced since then. These groups were prepared to confront the brute force of the colonial power.

Although various other Palestinian forces still had not totally renounced armed resistance in their methods, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

and new militant iterations which emerged out of Fatah (the dominant party of the PLO and PA) such as the Al-Aqsa Brigades, their position as members of the PLO limited their ability to engage militant strategies post-1993. Almost all parts of Palestinian political life would return to and engage militant strategies for several years after 2000, but many ceased militant insurgency by 2005.

By 2000, the Israelis had yet to implement a substantial withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, which was a stipulation of the Oslo I Accords in article XIV and had been reaffirmed by the 1994 Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area (also known as the 1994 Cairo Agreement). In addition, Israeli land confiscation and settlement expansion was not mitigated in the years between 1993 and 2000, and daily violations of Palestinian rights accrued. Brewing frustrations among the Palestinians living under an increasingly robust Israeli occupation came to a boiling point. On September 19, 2000, a suicide bombing in Tel-Aviv ignited what would become known as the Second Palestinian *Intifada* (Uprising). In response, Israeli forces placed the Ramallah *Muqatta'a*, Yasser Arafat's compound, under siege, and spent nearly ten days executing a major bombing and bulldozing campaign of the various buildings around it. Morsi, a Palestinian youth who was an adopted son of Yasser Arafat and who lived with his father in the *Muqatta'a* in Ramallah at the time, recalled that the Israelis repeatedly fired bullets into the building in attempts to assassinate the Palestinian leader. Morsi showed me a scar on his right shoulder, from a wound where he took a bullet during that time, and suggests that this siege and attack on the beloved Palestinian leader is in part what had motivated Palestinian factional and popular support and preparedness to declare an Intifada, breaking the deadlock of Palestinian compliance since 1993.³⁹⁵ On September 28, 2000, following Ariel Sharon's visit to Haram al-Sharif (home to Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem, which the

Palestinians registered as a provocation of the Israelis claiming Jerusalem as their own, the Second Intifada was born.

The Second Intifada took a different form than the first, both structurally and with regards to the military techniques and capacity of both the Israelis and various Palestinian militant groups. While the first Intifada left a wider margin for popular mobilization, the Second Intifada had included higher levels of militant resistance and increased rates of casualties. However, the role of Hamas during the Second Intifada substantially increased their levels of popular support, credibility, and legitimacy in the Palestinian streets. Fadi, a Palestinian youth from Bethlehem, argues that though the years of the second Intifada calcified the strength of Hamas as a new force, Palestinian Christians were centrally a part of the resistance movement as well. He argues that all Palestinians were committed to the idea that, like the first Intifada, everyone had a part to play and that the urgency of the conditions demanded unity. He says:

Let's face it, in reality, this is occupation. Who has the power? They have everything right now. Some people say, we are going to free Palestine now but they don't know how. And they go to the checkpoints and just throw stones at the checkpoints. I don't know if this is the right way to free Palestine or give a positive view about the Palestinians to the world because in the media we look like monsters. But this is the reality.³⁹⁶

Fadi describes himself as one of the youth who at least tried to do his part and throw stones at the Israeli jeeps that would patrol his neighborhood during curfews. He says:

I have funny stories about this. Once me and a group of guys decided to defy the curfew and go throw stones at the jeeps. But we needed to find a way to hide so they don't catch us. So we hid behind a building and when we heard the jeep come we just started throwing. Then all of a sudden we heard a man scream, "Damn your fathers" and then we realized we had thrown the stones at our neighborhood taxi driver by mistake.³⁹⁷

While for Fadi, he was old enough to remember life under curfew in vivid ways, Ramzi, who was about eleven years old during the Second Intifada and living in Nablus, says that his memory of the Second Intifada strengthened as he grew older. He argues that the feeling of constant incursions, curfews, checkpoints, canceled school and so forth became more salient after he and his family migrated from Palestine to Sweden and is re-triggered when he goes back for visits. He says each time he returns to Palestine for a visit, he understands more about the Second Intifada, remembering more of what had happened, memories which he had repressed. And as an older youth, he became more aware of why his parents decided to leave that life under occupation behind.³⁹⁸ Like Ramzi's family, during the Intifada, Palestine would see a major exodus of people who had dual citizenship with other countries. Many families and individual youth also applied for and received permission to leave to other countries as political asylees. Conditions had become so dire, that an end to the occupation and persistent fighting seemed far away.

By April of 2004, prospects for the resuscitation of the peace-process which could realize a Palestinian state became bleaker following the release of a letter from George Bush to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Bush's letter agreed to the proposed Israeli disengagement plan in the Gaza Strip and only fractions of the West Bank, which absolved Israel from the withdrawal of substantial lands within the 1967 Palestinian territories also known as the green line.³⁹⁹ On November 11, 2004, longtime chairperson of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat died. His successor to the PLO Chair would be Mahmoud Abbas (also known as Abu Mazen), one of the architects of the Oslo Accords and, as of 2003, the Prime

Minister of the Palestinian Authority. On January 9, 2005, Abbas was popularly elected as the President of the Palestinian Authority.

By that time, Israel had already begun building and rapidly expanding a concrete wall which would dive into Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank, separating Palestinians from schools, hospitals, agricultural lands, and other West Bank cities. While Israel called the wall a security barrier, the Palestinians argued it was an apartheid wall and had already appealed to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, which in 2004 deemed that the wall was illegal under international law. Israel continued expanding the wall and its affiliated security outposts, checkpoints, and roadblocks. This project devastated any prospects of a future independent Palestinian self-sustained economy and state. As the wall, settlements, and Jewish-only roads expanded in the West Bank, many youth organizers began to refer to Palestine's cartography as a "slice of Swiss cheese" in which each territory was isolated and highly securitized. The wall made mobility in Palestine impossible. Anwar, a Palestinian youth who lived and worked with a variety of West Bank campaigns including the Stop the Wall Campaign, referred to the wall and its security apparatus as enclaves and ghettos that resembled forms of racial containment of Nazi Germany.⁴⁰⁰

Geographically, Gaza and the West Bank became completely isolated from one another as well, with no pathways between the two territories. It is in this context that Palestine became more analogously compared to apartheid South Africa, and significant international solidarity with Palestine began to accrue. It is also in this context that Palestinian youth began to experience the millennial impact of the Oslo Accords and desperately sought an out to the status quo. Shafiq, a Palestinian youth from Nablus, argued that the exponential land grabs of the Israeli state throughout the Second Intifada, coupled with the soaring number of young men

who were shot and killed, interrogated, brutalized, and tortured in Israeli *Masqobiya* (detention centers) and prisons, all facilitated a disinvestment among youth in Palestine in the Oslo framework and in the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁰¹ The targeted attacks on and imprisonment of Palestinian political leaders played a major role in cultivating an anti-Oslo politics among the younger generation as well. Shafiq argues that “Palestinians had already given up everything and still, our leaders were being taken to Israeli prisons in higher rates than ever before and we were powerless in ensuring their release.”⁴⁰² A rich tapestry of scholarship has demonstrated the critical importance prisoners play in the national imaginary of the Palestinian people and movement historically, including within the Palestinian Second Intifada.⁴⁰³

Basel, a Palestinian youth from Tulkarem in the West Bank, who currently resides in Norway, argues that the Second Intifada re-opened the margins for Palestinian youth (particularly young men) to play a role in the resistance. According to him, it was a unifying moment in which all parties partook in the movement and resistance was the common-sense narrative. Everyone did what they could, even if that meant a young child was just transferring information or throwing a stone. People felt like they had a purpose again, which was quite different than the years immediately after Oslo. But Basel explains that the devastation caused in the Second Intifada was eye-opening: “We were significantly weaker than we were in previous stages of our political history, and I think Oslo was the cause of that. It is like we took a break, while our competitor was in the gym each day for seven years.” He argues that the popular consensus of resistance was short-lived and quickly dissipated.⁴⁰⁴

By 2004, Basel was organizing on two levels. He was a part of Palestinian left political spaces and engaged a range of various solidarity delegations that came to Palestine on exposure trips. Basel argued that in these years, Palestinian youth started feeling gradually suffocated

because mobility across physical space became increasingly limited as the strength of the Israeli occupation intensified. He said, “a trip from one city to the next, which would generally be a pretty safe passage and take about twenty minutes, now turned into a huge voyage; where we would have to wait for hours at checkpoints and risk being humiliated in public, strip searched or beaten, or at worst, be taken into Israeli prisons.”⁴⁰⁵ In these years, Basel and the other youth he organized with still believed there was a relative level of space afforded for youth political engagement in the parties. But that would soon change for many of the youth who stayed in Palestine. Basel, along with large waves of Palestinian youth, would leave Palestine after 2006.

Under pressure from the US and Israel, the Palestinian Authority was pushed to conduct an election for a Parliamentary majority. In January of 2006, in an unexpected turn of events, Hamas won the popular vote of the parliamentary elections of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In what many called the greatest political earthquake to shake the region at the time, the Palestinians would soon be punished for their democratic zeal. They were subjugated because of their agency and audacity to exercise democratic freedoms. Following the elections, the US and many European countries placed Palestine on sanctions and cut funding to the Palestinian Authority. These acts of retaliation only further fueled the division between the Palestinian factions and led to Fatah repression of Hamas in the West Bank, and Hamas purging of Fatah from the Gaza Strip. Each faction had seized authority on various geographies in Palestine, multiplying the already fragile inside/outside division and splintering Palestinian society even further. Since 2006, the split in national unity among Palestinians has at best resulted in the inability to coordinate a unified political program and strategy and at worst resulted in sectarian violence and ideological, geographic (between the Gaza Strip and West Bank), and social fragmentation.

Following the parliamentary elections, I personally witnessed the deterioration of Palestinian senses of collectivity within the West Bank, as I at the time was a student at Birzeit University and a volunteer in an after-school program for young girls at Jalazon Refugee Camp. In the week that followed the election, I sat on my Ramallah patio watching firing in the night between Hamas and Fatah bases, hearing clashes, gunshots, and shouts echo through the streets. In the months that followed the election, I regularly had to break up fights during the after-school program between young girls, some of whose families came from Fatah (the dominant party of the PLO and PA) and some of whose families were supporters of Hamas. I witnessed the war. But like many Palestinian youth, I was surprised to see that Israel was no longer a part of the war.

By June of 2006, I ran into Morsi (the son of Yasser Arafat who had told me the story of his father under siege in the *Muqatta'a* at the Manara circle in Ramallah). He was now dressed in full uniform, no longer a friend I was exchanging stories with at cafes. We stopped to chat, and I told him how depressed I was feeling about the changes happening in Palestine. To witness our own people fighting each other made me feel quite helpless, especially because I was preparing to go back to the United States and didn't know what I could do from there. Morsi looked at me and told me that the tides had changed and that we had a common enemy to defeat before we could even get to Israel; he said that that enemy was Hamas. A few months later, Birzeit University hosted its student government elections. Thousands of students went to campus that evening to hear the results of the elections. In a shocking result for Birzeit University which was historically been a hotbed for leftist and secular nationalist student organizing, Hamas for the first time won the election. And there, like in the camps and streets of Palestine, students from the different factions began throwing stones and sticks at one another,

cursing one another, or parted ways with one group celebrating and the other crying and mourning their loss.

The split in national unity and the internal Palestinian political conundrum impaired the prospects for a unified political leadership that could amplify and leverage collective and centralized resistance against the occupation. Palestinian youth felt that prospects for refugee return to Palestine and liberation from occupation seemed more distant than ever before, and that youth didn't have any real vehicles and institutions with which to act out political aspirations in collective and organized ways. The opposite was in fact true. As the material conditions of occupation worsened, Palestinian youth were expected to shoulder the burden of an impending split in national unity between Fatah and Hamas and the antagonisms on both sides against one another, with no mention or memory of the Israeli occupation. A plethora of conditions and actors were working to depoliticize Palestinian youth and appropriate their labor. Youth were tokenized as part of established political discourse and programs that they were actually not involved in. Said, the founder of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN) argues that this was one of the biggest reasons why the PYN was born. He says that, "youth were not really given any real chance to be involved in politics. They were asked to be there to chant empty slogans, to make posters, and to play a symbolic role...it was like the parties could say, look we have youth therefore we are better than the other parties."⁴⁰⁶

The official political landscape was not the only place where the role of youth was becoming hollowed of its revolutionary mandate as Mjriam Abu Samra describes the role of Palestinian youth as the *organic vanguard* of the national liberation struggle.⁴⁰⁷ In what became regarded as Palestinian "civil society," youth "development" became a buzzword of NGO funding, and therefore critical to the mission of the growing neoliberal Non-Governmental

Industrial Complex in Palestine as well. Youth development and for that matter, civic engagement, was thought of as a beacon of a thriving liberal democracy, and thus became central to the discourse of secular modernity and Western aspirations promulgated by the Palestinian Authority and to its aspirations to realize statehood. As Palestinian youth became exhausted with the political deadlock of the parties and the divisions amongst them, a new word began to signify that NGOs could replace the function of the former parties: *al-badil*, which stood for the alternative. It would appeal to a range of Palestinian youth who saw no meaningful place for themselves within the party structure, but in joining the *badil* networks and initiatives that emerged out of the Palestine NGO industry, young people were afforded space to explore their life experiences, identity, and struggles in less rigid and restrained ways.

However, they were also locked into the limitations that restricted aid money would prescribe and therefore were expected to discuss their personal desires and lives without connecting it to a common political struggle or communal group. Ayat Hamdan and the Bisan Center for Research and Development note that the NGO's "represent the de-politicization and demobilization of political and social activism in the era of post cold war post oslo and the new neoliberal Middle East."⁴⁰⁸ Where Palestinian youth would once would use terms such as "colonization" and "occupation" to describe the conditions of life in Palestine, they were now asked to use terms like "conflict resolution" and "civil society."⁴⁰⁹ Said argues that "al-badil" was presented as a political alternative to youth who were expressing mounting grievances at the time, but in fact it was an alternative which would de-politicize the struggle and senses of collective responsibilities among young people even more than the initial aftermath of the Oslo debacle.⁴¹⁰

Neoliberal Development and Capitalism Under Occupation

The Palestinian leadership may have been hopeful that the Oslo Accords would at least meet the aspirations of self-determination and representational sovereignty as a step toward more productive negotiations in the future over land, economy, and ultimately ending the occupation. The result was not quite as rosy. Oslo failed to limit Israeli control of land, sea, and sky, and in fact resulted in a more vast expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories between 1993 and 1999. The Palestinians' inability to govern their own land and borders made a self-sustaining economy impossible for the new PA, and thus sustained the Israeli occupation by alleviating the occupying power's responsibilities to the OPT, including provision of health services, education services, maintenance of roads, trash, and more. In the end, the Palestinians became responsible for sustaining their own social, political, and economic infrastructure, but had to do so without military, political, economic or territorial power because they were still under occupation.

Oslo was the most ingenious idea on the part of the Israelis because it allowed them to profit from the fruits of military occupation without forcing them to take on any of the fiscal responsibility.⁴¹¹ The Israeli profit from this relationship derived from the fact that Palestinians were forced to contribute to the Israeli economy as consumers, though the Israeli economy provided nothing in return. The PA thus turned to two sources as the primary foundations of a neoliberal capitalist infrastructure for the quasi-state, though freedom had not yet been achieved. The first was the second group of Palestinian returnees, or *a'edeen* who came back to Palestine from the shatat following 1993. This group of returnees was largely comprised of Palestinians from the US, who were originally from West Bank towns, cities, and villages, and were not refugees like the first group of political returnees. This group returned to Palestine for

investment purposes, bringing with them wealth accrued through their lives in the shatat and by 2007 would begin contributing more monies to development projects in Palestine. The second source the PA had turned to was international aid, which became the primary form of money acquired by the PA for both public monies and the building of the NGO sector.⁴¹² This aid was often paid back in the form of political concessions by the Palestinians -- a pillar of neoliberal imperialism which is seen in almost any formerly colonized nation in the globe. Nithya Nagarajan notes that:

...direct aid and budget support has facilitated the reach of the “proto-state” body through its capacity to provide social services and public sector employment, and in so doing, augment the PA’s capacity for political and social control. On the other hand, this focus has legitimized the extension of bureaucratic power, which tends to be a natural by-product of the orthodox development project that identifies multiple entry points for state intervention.⁴¹³

As Rema Hammami states, the NGOs genealogically derive from the original mass base institutions which were founded during the height of PLO national institution building in 1977 following the original Camp David Accords.⁴¹⁴ Though these organizations played a major role in the resistance movement pre-Oslo, their role came to signify elite neoliberal development following Oslo and they became among the largest employers of the OPT followed by the employment of the growing neoliberal beauracracy of the PA.⁴¹⁵ But in the context of *de jure* military occupation, a self-sustaining economy became impossible, and the possibilities of ongoing clashes with the colonial forces remained salient.⁴¹⁶

Taher Labadi argues that the project of operating through a system of capitalism while under occupation coupled with the Palestinians’ forced reliance on international aid limited their power to produce and control flows of capital. As a result, the rapidly developing

neoliberal economy in Palestine became a site of violence, which shaped the growing political co-optation, weakness, and corroboration of the Palestinian leadership.⁴¹⁷ A number of works have demonstrated how the neoliberalization of Palestine post-Oslo has facilitated a debt-based economy, resulting in soaring unemployment rates among youth alongside the rise of economic elites and a national bourgeoisie who became invested in maintaining the expansion of profit and capitalism while under occupation.⁴¹⁸

The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation has produced a documentary called “Donor Opium” which chronicles the relationship between increased foreign aid to Palestinians and dependency and poverty.⁴¹⁹ The filmmakers state that between 1993 and 2004 Palestinians received \$9 billion in foreign aid and a few years later that aid would reach \$15 billion. But no matter the increase of aid money, poverty levels were not improved in the OPT.⁴²⁰ Featured in the documentary, Linda Tabar of Birzeit Universities Center for Development Studies argues, “The main problem is that this aid is here with a very clear political agenda which is to support the Oslo peace process assuming that the period of conflict is over.”⁴²¹ Also featured in the film, development expert Khalil Nakhleh argues that “this aid is not intended to end the occupation.”⁴²² Similarly, Ayat Hamdan, on behalf of the Bisan Center for Research and Development based in Ramallah, has established a comprehensive report which thoroughly illustrates the effect of post Oslo foreign aid discourses and visions on the construction of Palestinian space/place, education, social and political life. The author argues that such transformations made Palestinians “divided and dispersed geographically inside and outside Palestine, compelled to adopt a new basis founded on the one dimensional world economy, provided by the capitalist paradigm.”⁴²³

Many of the Palestinian youth I have spoken to term this phenomena “Fayyadism,” which refers to Salam Fayyad, the former Prime Minister and Finance Minister of the Palestinian

Authority. During Fayyad's service as Finance Minister (2002-2005 and 2007-2012), he would mastermind the rapidly growing debt-based society and the development of a robust capitalist infrastructure in preparation for the new Palestinian state.⁴²⁴ The youth I engaged attribute the development of Fayyad's policies as the primary reason why neo-liberal economic development post-Oslo in Palestine made sustainable living impossible. For example, Palestinian farmers could no longer afford to maintain their harvests because of soaring costs and low flow of capital, and because the occupation literally made it impossible for them to access their farm lands due to expanding Israeli settlements, roadblocks, the apartheid wall, checkpoints, security posts, and electric fences. Continued Israeli land confiscation and attacks on Palestinian agricultural sites, including the uprooting of thousands of Palestinian olive trees, in a literal sense made sustainable living impossible.⁴²⁵ These conditions were coupled with the introduction of bank loans with soaring interest rates, which buried Palestinians under debt.

Debt became an additional form of violence on top of the repression of the Palestinian security forces and the Israeli military occupation.⁴²⁶ Soraya, a Palestinian youth from Hebron, argues that Fayyadism, particularly as it was reformulated and enacted in the West Bank after 2007, played the greatest role in making the material conditions of Palestinians impossible.⁴²⁷ For youth, this simultaneously increased political antagonisms to the PA and depleted their ability to do anything about the PA's policies. Young people were either buried in debt or working excessive numbers of hours for little pay with soaring costs. Meanwhile, Lana, a Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip who currently resides in Norway, pointed out that Gaza had not quite seen the same effects of Fayyadism on the ground.⁴²⁸ Certainly, life in Gaza had become unbearable, with youth unemployment rates that shattered world records, but the neoliberal NGO scene in Gaza was extremely distinct from the scene in the West Bank.

In the post-Oslo context, Palestinians received more aid from international actors including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) than at any other moment in Palestinian history. However, this aid was earmarked for specific programming, including security cooperation with Israel, the US, and their allies in the region, as well as civil society economic and social development work, which is largely isolated from the broader Palestinian political context and national aspirations. As Tariq Dana notes, the IMF's structural adjustment packages operating since the 1970's functioned as a capitalist experiment which resulted in:

rapid deterioration of living standards, rising unemployment and poverty, increasing social divisions, more material inequality and a weakening of the state—all of which has encouraged authoritarianism, which consequently has exacerbated internal crises and fuelled intrastate wars.⁴²⁹

But for the new generation, these conditions, coupled with a hardened presence of the Israeli occupation, presented a critical paradox: how and why are the Palestinians operating as a state, utilizing the discourse of statehood, for example the phrase civil society, and shouldering its responsibility, without maintaining any of the elements of sovereignty of a free nation-state? How did the project of liberation become recuperated to make Palestine a signifier of neoliberal aspirations? In a special issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* dedicated to the question of political economy, the editors note:

Recall the excited chorus heralding the promised peace dividend for Palestinians after the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accords: Western donor aid, Middle East investment, and contributions from the Palestinian shatat would pour into the West Bank and Gaza Strip and transform the territory of a would-be Palestinian state into the Singapore of the Middle East.⁴³⁰

Najeeb, a Palestinian youth from Jordan, argues that throughout our history, like any anti-colonial struggle, we have always had a national bourgeoisie that has placed its own interest above the interest of the cause and the people, but that it wasn't until after Oslo that the interest of the national bourgeoisie would become totally severed from national liberation.⁴³¹

The ways in which Oslo has facilitated the rise of a new Palestinian economic elite, created unsustainable debt-based societies, and introduced capitalist consumer sensibilities to the OPT are all deeply bound with the devastating material conditions for Palestinians under occupation. Sharif, a Palestinian youth from the West Bank who currently resides in Paris, argues that particularly since 2006, the gap between the Palestinian farmers, average people, and the bourgeoisie is felt more astutely. He says:

You can go from a village in Palestine where people cannot even afford bread, or where farmers can no longer access their tomato fields because of the apartheid wall, where people are literally starving and having nothing, and then go to Ramallah. The Palestinian youth there socialize in nightclubs and cafes, as if there were no such thing called the occupation. In some ways they live totally different lives than the rest of the Palestinians. While the rest of us can't find work and have nothing to look forward to in our life, this is what we witness among other Palestinians. And this creates a problem you know, because our society changed and we now value money and wealth over the struggle and value it even if we don't have it. So, it changed the culture of the society and what we value. I once knew a girl who came from an average family, they had enough to live but that was about it. She really wanted the iPhone 4, and was convinced she had to have it, so she took out a loan to buy it. I asked her, why do you need it and she just looked at me like I was the crazy one?⁴³²

Sharif speaks of the depression he has experienced in Palestine, and even in France, where he has lived since 2014. He tells me of what it feels like to watch so much pain and destruction in our homeland and to feel powerless to be able to do anything. But he also speaks of how it is

much more painful to see the people in Palestine give up hope and become seduced by trivial things, driven by capitalist consumer rationalities that splinter senses of comradeship, trust, and solidarity in his own community. He argues that this is one of the greatest sorrows Oslo has produced.

An Outcome to Surrender: The Siege and Wars on Gaza

Following the Oslo Accords, life for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip would become intolerable. Through the early years of the Palestinian Second Intifada, the Palestinians in Gaza were met with devastating repression by Israeli forces. Gaza had long been considered a hot zone for violence – both Palestinian militant insurgency and Israeli colonial violence. This is in part because of Gaza’s own radical political history, its small geographic territory, and its critical physical location at the border with Egypt. Gaza’s exceptionality has been theorized in ample ways. But as Julie Peteet notes, placing Gaza at the periphery or the margins implies that there exists a center. What, then, is that center: a “colonial entity to which it is geographically contiguous or a putative, but fragmented, non-contiguous Palestinian society/state?”⁴³³ If it is the latter, then both suffering and profound resistance in the Gaza Strip has historically – and particularly in the years following the second Intifada – come to calcify and amplify Palestinian national sensibilities and affinities to the cause, homeland, and people. Helga Tawil-Souri and Dina Matar’s edited anthology *Gaza as Metaphor* beautifully illustrates the way Gaza has come to signify the extremities and totality of the broader Palestinian condition.⁴³⁴ While the Gaza Strip was not particularly parsed as a distinct unintelligible geography from the rest of Palestine prior to the 1993 Oslo Accords, the ends of violence and destitution experienced in Gaza, especially after the siege, warrants particular focus.

While the official Israeli siege on Gaza did not begin until 2007, the Gaza Strip had long been distinctly isolated, contained, and policed in the form of martial law military occupation in the years prior. The particularly aggressive restrictions on Palestinian mobility in the Gaza Strip after the Oslo Accords, but before and during the Second Palestinian Intifada, created more intense barriers between the Occupied Territories and Israeli territories and society. This resulted in three major distinctions between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. First, popular sentiment among Palestinians in the Gaza Strip was resistant to the Oslo Accords framework and pessimistic regarding its ability to achieve a lasting solution. These sentiments were informed by deteriorating conditions on the ground in Gaza in relation to a sustainable economy, chronic public health conditions, and physical mobility for Palestinians. Second, a withdrawal of popular support for Oslo and the Palestinian Authority produced grounds for the development, support, and expansion of Hamas. Third, the more Gaza was subjected to the tightening of the Israeli occupation, which would later transform into a full siege, the more sophisticated Palestinian technologies of resistance would become.

During this time, the Al-Qassam Brigades, which are the military armed units of Hamas, began introducing new tactics of resistance that other physical sites and time periods in Palestinian history had never before included. While the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank included an increase of suicide attacks, car bombings, and armed guerilla strategies, Gaza would be one of the first places where Palestinians would begin launching missiles and Qassam rockets into Israel and later rely on kidnapping of Israeli soldiers as central to tactical warfare in a site of heightened isolation. Palestinian airstrikes were and remain significantly incomparable in scale, strength, and sophistication to that of the Israeli arms arsenal and particularly artillery and airstrikes. However, new strategies of Palestinian warfare with the occupying force were

developed in Gaza because of and at the time of the Second Intifada. These strategies became more refined following the 2006 Israeli attack on Lebanon and Gaza, and especially after the 2009 Israeli assault on Gaza.

The tightening of the occupation during the time of the Intifada resulted in Palestinians not being able to control their own territories, borders, and airspace. They thus resorted to the building of underground tunnels for the transport of goods as well as the smuggling of weapons. In 2004, Israel launched Operation Rainbow on southwest Rafah (near the Egyptian border), killing approximately fifty-three Palestinians and substantially destroying infrastructure in the Rafah area. Operation Rainbow was among the first of fourteen major Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip from 2004 until 2017.⁴³⁵ Each Israeli operation was justified utilizing the same language: “terrorism,” “ Hamas airstrikes,” and so forth. While Palestinian militant resistance persisted as each operation was carried out, the striking unevenness of war tactics, technologies, and casualties between the Palestinians and Israelis evidenced more clearly the asymmetrical colonial power relations. Palestinian casualties were drastically larger than Israeli casualties and included scores of civilians, but for Israelis, civilian casualties declined compared to the pre-Oslo years. Whereas the Palestinian losses accumulated in the post-Oslo years and Palestinian political strength declined, the inverse was true for the Israelis. Walid, a Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip, argues that between the years of 1993 and 2006, the growing asymmetry of power between Palestinians and Israelis was the primary evidence for him that a two-state solution could never be possible. He explains, “My family are leftists. I was brought up on revolutionary ideas so I was always against the Oslo Accords on principle... but as a youth living in the Gaza Strip and seeing how horribly our people were suffering, I began to develop a more tactical and pragmatic rejection to the Oslo deal as well.”⁴³⁶

Operation Summer Rains of 2006 was a critical turning point for the Palestinians. After the January 2006 Hamas win in the Palestinian legislative election, the accruing tensions between Hamas and Fatah fueled the intensity of the Israeli occupation of Gaza. By 2006, Israel had withdrawn all of its settlements in the Gaza Strip. In a political maneuver that shocked the Israelis, Hamas kidnapped Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier, in a raid at the border on June 25, 2006. Israel responded with the first major ground offensive in the Gaza Strip, which lasted four months, coincided with the Israeli war on Lebanon, and resulted in the deaths of approximately 416 Palestinians. Operation Autumn Clouds concluded Operation Summer Rains in November of 2006, and a temporary ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was established.

However, the ceasefire was short-lived as Israel imposed a sealed siege on the Gaza Strip's airspace, coastal, and border-land territories. Israel had also waged continuous attacks on the underground tunnels that the Palestinians built as a last resort to attempt mobility and imports in a context of total siege. By 2007, the Palestinian Authority, under the force of the US and Israel, had taken extraordinary measures to purge and repress Hamas activities in the West Bank, deepening the already vulnerable split in national unity between the two parties. The result was further geographic and political isolation of the Gaza Strip, which became entirely under Hamas rule and captured by Israeli siege. Walid argues that for him, this moment was critical because though he was not a supporter of Hamas, particularly in many of its actions in the more recent years within the Gaza Strip (2010-2013), he had felt that in this moment, there was no going back. Palestine and the Palestinians were permanently split and would never find a way to re-establish a unity framework in order to be strong against the Israeli occupying forces. It was for these reasons he found a greater importance in a project like the PYM. For him, it was vital to bring together Palestinian youth of all political orientations, geographies, and ideological

backgrounds, so youth could find a way to work together for the cause, because the existing political establishment could not find a solution.⁴³⁷

Ample scholarship and educational resources have told the story of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip following the 2009 Operation Cast-Lead, the major Israeli offensive on Gaza that killed thousands and destroyed nearly all of Gaza's infrastructure including airports, roads, hospitals, and more.⁴³⁸ Gaza has further crumbled under the Israeli attacks of 2012 and especially of 2014, in which entire villages were laid to rubble and thousands more Palestinians were killed or died from lack of access to medical treatment, sanitary water sources, food, electricity, or other essentials. Today, Gaza is often referred to as the largest open-air prison in the world, with the highest-density population per square foot and no ability for resources to come in or for people to leave. However, for Palestinian youth there are distinctions between the wars of 2009 and 2014 and in how the wars sparked political consciousness and sensibilities of the people.

Janan, a Palestinian youth from Gaza who currently resides in Sydney, Australia, says that the 2009 war made her sorely aware of her powerlessness as a young woman in the Gaza Strip. She says that she was coming to an age of political consciousness at this time, old enough to realize what was happening in her society and the illusion of the false promise of Palestinian statehood, but unable to find any outlets in which she could meaningfully engage in the struggle of her people. She contemplated what ways she could engage the resistance and realized that for her, the question of whether to engage in armed resistance was not one fraught with a moral dilemma, because everything in life was violence while living under a colonial occupation. Rather, it was one that was irrelevant because of the ways Gaza's resistance had been institutionalized and because of Gaza's isolation from Israeli society. She contemplated what she

could do to reconcile these senses of loss and powerlessness and realized that perhaps her role was to document and report the Palestinian experience and narrative on a global scale, because that was something, however small, she could do to support her people and feel useful in some way. Janan became involved with the Palestinian Cultural and Academic Boycott of Israel and began writing op-eds and offering educational resources to youth around the world on how they could support Palestine through boycott efforts.⁴³⁹

In June of 2012, the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate in Egypt, Mohammed Morsi, was elected to the position of President. His presidency was short-lived -- he would be ousted by a coup d'état backed by Saudi Arabia in the summer of 2013. However, during the Muslim Brotherhood's short-lived position of power in Egypt, the Rafah border was opened and the promise of support for Hamas had totally altered Palestinian internal politics and the split in national unity. Suddenly, and contrary to the years of Presidency of Hosni Mubarak and the later years of Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Fatah and the Palestinian Authority found themselves appealing to Hamas to create a unity government and began to more seriously engage the question of the incorporation of Hamas into the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Hamas had finally gained a level of geopolitical power and alliance with Egypt, forcing the Palestinian Authority to consider a reconciliation and collective government more seriously. Of course, those conditions quickly changed in 2013 when Morsi was deposed, which compelled Abbas back to the negotiation table with the Israelis.⁴⁴⁰ Samer, a Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip who currently resides in Athens, Greece, says that this was a small window of opportunity, in which the context of geopolitics would force the Palestinians to find a solution to our problem. But for Samer, he believes the Palestinians squandered this opportunity, and, in the end, the Palestinian Authority came out more powerful; the Palestinians, both in the West Bank and Gaza, continued

to feel the overwhelming impact of Palestinian corruption, collaboration, disunity, and arrogance. For Samer, this made him and many of his Palestinian youth peers begin to think that another Israeli invasion of Gaza was bound to happen because of Palestinian weakness, and that no life in Gaza could exist. It is for this reason he decided to leave Gaza, along with major waves of Palestinians who could find a way to escape the sealed borders.⁴⁴¹

Yazan, another Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip who currently resides in Istanbul, Turkey, was younger than Janan during the 2009 Gaza War, but he vividly remembers the sense that the end of the world was near, and that the Palestinian youth could not do anything about it. But he argues that the 2014 war was quite different. He says there was a preparedness in the atmosphere in Gaza and among the Palestinian resistance, who were much more equipped to fight than they were in 2009.⁴⁴² During and after the war in 2014, the cultural narrative among the Palestinian national community changed drastically. While the magnitude of the Israeli attack was just as severe, if not more so, than the attacks of 2009, Palestinians encouraged resistance at all levels and especially in the Palestinian cultural productions and articulations of survival and resistance, which played a major role in mitigating senses of loss, despair, hopelessness, and powerlessness during the days of the war. Tamer, the former PYM International General Coordinator who resides in Paris, argues that this shift in narrative was in part due to the outcomes of the 2011 Arab Uprisings.⁴⁴³ While infrastructurally, strategically, and tactically, Palestinians had not yet found an out to the Oslo Framework, the understanding that Palestine was directly tied to the Arab regional context and its shifting powers became pervasive. I explore these questions more in Chapter Three. However, it is critical to note that Tamer identifies this period of time as one in which a sense that we must rise up and do whatever we can to resist was generated among Palestinians. He says:

Certainly the resistance in Gaza was doing its part especially through the 2014 war, but also strugglers on the ground now knew there needs to be *sumod* [steadfastness] on all corners. For someone in prison, we need to strike, for someone who only has access to a knife, they need to arm themselves. This period mandated a resurgence of all forms of resistance because the Palestinian youth were desperate for some change. Even if we don't know totally what we are demanding and don't know where we are going it became clear on popular Palestinian levels after 2014, that there is no other ways out other than this.⁴⁴⁴

Popular insurgency at all levels became a critical feature of Palestinian resistance following the developments of the Arab Uprisings in 2011, but especially following the 2014 resistance in Gaza. Since then, Palestinians have risen up on a variety of occasions, responding to a multiplicity of offenses and violences they have endured. In 2018 alone, Palestinian youth have mobilized transnationally in different ways against the US declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the move of the embassy to Jerusalem and as part of the actions for the Great Return March. However, the ability to mobilize and accrue political achievements from these forms of resistance has been limited precisely because of the way the Oslo Framework had entrapped the Palestinian political establishment and severed relations between Palestinians politically, ideologically, and geographically.

No Power at the Negotiation Table

The peace process marked a complete shift in strategy for the Palestinian leadership, which before 1993 had utilized armed resistance as one form of the broader project of resistance against colonization. The Oslo Accords wedged the Palestinians into a position of "non-violence" which ushered in a plethora of legal and political logics of pacification and normalization of asymmetrical power relations between the Palestinians and Israelis. The

Palestinian leadership utilized the success of the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1993) as the political leverage for negotiations, but became deadlocked in diplomatic power following the “peace” treaty. Over twenty-five years later, the Oslo Accords have succeeded in further splintering Palestinian lands and people and neutralizing organized armed resistance, but have not in fact limited the military, economic, or political power and encroachment of the Israeli occupation. The surrender of armed resistance has left the Palestinian leadership weakened in the face of expanding Israeli violations of international law. In turn, the PA has utilized diplomatic channels in the international arena as its primary strategy, though the international community has done little to mitigate continued Israeli warfare, land confiscation, and violation of Palestinian rights.

Ultimately, the Accords led to a series of incommensurate sociopolitical realities in which the Palestinians were made to believe they were on the verge of freedom, but in actuality conditions worsened tremendously. The Oslo Accords, which normalized Palestinian and Israeli power relations as equal through negotiations, have obscured the asymmetrical power relations caused by the colonial nature of Zionism. With the PLO surrender of armed resistance in the Accords and the Palestinian Authority’s security cooperation with Israel and the United States, which has led to the increased policing of organized and spontaneous forms of resistance on the ground in Palestine, the official Palestinian establishment has very little power at the negotiation table. In laymen’s terms, they have lost “resistance” as a necessary wildcard with which to negotiate victories or demands. And while the Israelis have disregarded hundreds of UN resolutions and international laws, the Palestinian Authority has done the same by formally stifling peoples’ resistance against the Israelis. The more the Palestinians sacrificed armed resistance, the more land they lost, the more Palestinian lives they lost, and the more robust the

Israeli military occupation became. This is not an analysis prescribed by a political stance or moral argument; it is merely a fact of Palestinian history.

Though material conditions have only become worse for Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority has surprisingly boasted of their monumental diplomatic victories in the post-Oslo Accords context. For instance, they point to their 2012 acceptance of status as member-observers in the United Nations and the growing international state support for the PA's unilateral declaration of statehood.⁴⁴⁵ These diplomatic victories are in large part due to the explosion of international solidarity with Palestine, pressuring the state of Israel to comply with international law, and are especially resultant from successful campaigns for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), called for by Palestinians in 2005.⁴⁴⁶ I argue the Palestinian establishment has utilized the effects of these successful campaigns as their primary leverage and show of strength in the international arena; meanwhile, they have deepened normalized relations with the Israeli state in almost every way. In the United States alone, student governments at over forty universities have voted to divest from companies profiting from the Israeli occupation. Thousands of cultural workers, academics, and athletes have also pledged to boycott Israel until it complies with international law. Consumer-based boycotts that have pressured companies to withdraw from settlement expansion and even a few local municipal sanctions campaigns have all played a role in strengthening the show of power of the Palestinian establishment on the global stage. However, in the absence of a revitalized transnational Palestinian political entity, and because the wins have not yet been great enough to mitigate, limit, or impact the extent of the Israeli occupation, violations of international law, or annexation of land, I argue the main beneficiary which has gained soft power through these wins has been the Palestinian political establishment.

Sari, a Palestinian youth from Long Beach, California who has participated in various BDS initiatives and is also a member of the PYM, says, “on the one hand, BDS is a critical avenue for Palestinian youth of the Shatat to play a role in supporting our people in the homeland and combatting Zionist power in our own country. But in the absence of an alternative Palestinian political system, the achievements of BDS stand a chance to become co-opted by the existing Palestinian Authority.”⁴⁴⁷ Similarly, Merahm, a founding member of the PYM from Italy who currently resides in Jordan, argues that many Palestinian organizers, especially those who partake in BDS activism and who are critical of the Palestinian establishment are also critical of all forms of centralized, organized politics. Yet she is not. She believes strongly that the Palestinian cause demands an extreme level of organization because of our position as transnational, landless, and stateless subjects, experiencing the whims of Zionist brutality in different places and in different ways. But for her, the Palestinian Authority’s co-optation of grassroots Diasporic youth organizing, however de-centralized and de-politicized it may be, especially in the case of BDS victories, demonstrates their complete weakness and irrelevance. Merham believes that the PA has utilized these wins to stabilize its own position of power in international circuits. For her, this highlights that in many ways, loose, de-centralized networks of solidarity organizers have more power over the Palestinian condition and Palestinian politics than the Palestinian political parties themselves and the PLO since Oslo.⁴⁴⁸

While global efforts to place pressure on Israel through a variety of organizing campaigns are largely facilitated through solidarity organizations, which are sometimes comprised of Palestinian individuals and more rarely include Palestinian collectives, these forms of political power are not the only ones that the Palestinian Authority has utilized to maintain its position of power on the global scale. For instance, the ongoing feud between the Palestinian

dominant parties, Fatah and Hamas, has in many ways been caused by Israel, the US, the sectarian divisions growing in geo-politics, and the role of the international community. But it is also a generative feud for the PA to establish its merits on the global stage. On the one hand, the PA has waged major repression campaigns against Hamas officials and youth in the West Bank and has worked to delegitimize Hamas in geopolitical and global spheres. The PA has thus utilized the language of secular modernity as it was repackaged post-September 11, 2001, in the War on Terror context, to combat Hamas as part of broader geo-political and global power struggles with political Islam and under the language of “counter-terrorism” programming. On the other hand, the fact that Hamas has continuously waged organized armed resistance against Israel in each of the Gaza wars has in many ways become a show of strength for the PA to the international community. Amer, a Palestinian youth from France, explains that the PA has used the Hamas victories in Gaza, following the 2014 war, as a sort of threat to Israel, the US, and the international community.⁴⁴⁹ If Israel does not loosen its grip in the West Bank, and enable the Palestinian Authority to acquire more popular legitimacy among its people by granting it some leveraging power within the negotiations process, then the alternative “partner for peace” could be a more militant Islamist Palestinian force, such as Hamas -- which many believe would be reluctant to follow the same path as Oslo and its negotiations and peace process framework that the Palestinian Authority has sustained all these years. So, while the PA often joins in on the criminalization of Hamas, particularly in its own language and politics of countering extremism, it also relies on Hamas and the devastation of the siege in the Gaza Strip to give it some international credibility and legitimacy in diplomatic channels. There is no more blatant example of this than the news of a reported letter sent from PA intelligence chief Majed Faraj to the Israelis, threatening to sever security coordination with them if Israel considers easing or

lifting the siege on the Gaza Strip.⁴⁵⁰ The letter supposedly responds to a proposal from Qatar and Egypt to help broker an agreement between Hamas and Israel.⁴⁵¹ The news resulted in a campaign organized by Palestinian youth called Lift the Sanctions and has mobilized a transnational coordination among Palestinian youth in all places in the world.⁴⁵²

Palestinians Declare the End to the “Peace Process”

In the end, the Second Intifada presented a temporal breach to the order of things in the Oslo framework in that it revitalized popular and militant organized resistance, in which the Palestinian parties played a critical role. The organized militant resistance of Hamas out of the Gaza Strip post-2006, particularly in 2014, signified an ideological break from the Oslo framework and has come to make the split between Fatah and Hamas as much about the dichotomy of resistance and anti-resistance.⁴⁵³ However, Hamas has significantly moderated their aspirations and visions following the Second Intifada and agreed to ending suicide bombings, gesturing acceptance and support for a two-state solution, and partaking in the formal political establishment in the 2006 elections. These changes have left the question of whether Hamas will follow a similar trajectory to the PLO’s before 1993 constant among Palestinian youth.⁴⁵⁴ What continues to mobilize popular support for Hamas is their ongoing social and charitable activities and their resistance.⁴⁵⁵

The resistance out of Gaza in 2014 met the brute force of colonial violence with the violence of the colonized. However, with the Palestinian Authority maintaining many of the outcomes of Oslo – including its financial development plans, security cooperation with the colonial power, the localization and institutional governance of the PA in the West Bank, the end of the role of the PLO, and the various ways it participates in further splintering Palestinians ideologically and geographically – the Oslo framework has been resuscitated since 2006 and

remains stronger than ever before. While the US, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority still speak of the peace process and a two-state solution as the desired outcome of the Oslo framework, for Palestinians, Oslo has come to signify something quite different.

Oslo has come to suggest Palestinian surrender, capitulation, weakness and corroboration and Palestinian youth both inside Palestine and globally commonly articulate it as such. This realization is not new among Palestinian youth. They have long articulated the devastating outcomes of Oslo and warned that sustaining its framework, structures, and language would amount to further deteriorating conditions in Palestine and for Palestinians outside the homeland. They have engaged and will continue to engage in forms of everyday resistance, acts that challenge the status quo. They have found profound ways to amplify their voices, protect themselves, their families, and their lands from constant attack, and register in the historic record the violence that the Palestinians have been forced to endure. They have practiced all forms of resistance, through art and culture, through political campaigns and non-violent direct-action demonstrations and popular protests, through the throwing of stones, through armed resistance, and through writing, speaking, singing, and performing the Palestinian story across the globe. And still, though they have deployed various forms of resistance, their tireless efforts have not entirely resulted in Palestinian collective cumulative power in the pursuit of liberation. It has certainly kept them alive. It has maintained a strong sense of understanding of the conflict as one that is colonial in nature. It has profoundly forced the world to engage the question of Palestine and the insurmountable suffering of the Palestinians in more intentional ways. But it has not limited the brutality of Zionist violence or the corruption and collaboration of Palestinian and Arab “partners for peace.”

The tumultuous relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the US and Israel has finally come to a head since Donald Trump's December 6, 2017 announcement actualizing the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995,⁴⁵⁶ a bill that formally recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital and will relocate the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Since Trump's inauguration, many have argued that his steps have depleted any prospects for sustaining the peace process among Palestinians and Israelis and that the US declaration on Jerusalem is the final nail in the coffin to the two-state solution and the Oslo Accords.⁴⁵⁷ On January 15, 2018, President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas proclaimed that "Israel killed the Oslo Accords" with its actions.⁴⁵⁸ Abbas had long threatened Israel and the US with the liquidation of the PA, which would foreclose upon Oslo and any prospects for a two-state solution and/or peace process. Yet for Palestinian youth growing up within the Oslo paradigm, Oslo was dead decades ago and very little faith exists in the ability of the Palestinian Authority to realize a truly sovereign state or for the Israelis to respect and allow for the existence of a free Palestinian state. For some of these youth, Oslo was dead before they were even born. They never believed in it. They never had hopes in it. They only suffered because of it. This is particularly true for the younger Palestinian generation who came to their formative years of political consciousness while under siege in the Gaza Strip. Such was the case for Yazan, the Palestinian youth from Gaza I spoke with in Turkey.⁴⁵⁹ Palestinians have declared the death of the peace process time and time again, through acts of resistance in all forms, in all places, and especially in moments of heightened national mobilization responding to egregious Israeli attacks on Palestinian life.

The cataclysmic events that transpired over the last twenty-five years have set off Palestinian critique and rejection of the peace process through popular protest and resistance, social media activism, conferences and organizing campaigns, and at least two dozen attempts

to reformulate the mandate, function, and strategies of the Palestinian political leadership, including endeavors to resuscitate the dead PLO.⁴⁶⁰ Palestinians articulated the failure of the peace process after the 1994 al-Haram al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, in which Palestinians were slaughtered while praying in a site of worship and Palestinian protest in the period that followed ushered in a brutal Israeli killing campaign.⁴⁶¹ It was declared when Ariel Sharon invaded Haram al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Intifada, also known as the Second Palestinian Intifada, commenced in September of 2000. It was certified by pictures of Muhammed Al Durrrah and his father Jamal Al Durrah, who were executed in the Gaza Strip, extrajudicial style, just two days into the Intifada, and it was further articulated each day as the Israeli curfews, killing sprees, home demolitions, and imprisonment of Palestinians continued.⁴⁶² It was expressed in April of 2002, with the arrest of Marwan Barghouti, the Fatah politician who would be iconized as one of the last true leaders of Fatah, whose imprisonment has been compared to Nelson Mandela's, and whose prospective release would bring him to the fore as the new Palestinian President.⁴⁶³ It was declared in April of 2002 when Israel committed a massacre of Palestinians in Jenin Refugee Camp and Palestinian and global outrage mobilized people to street protests, demonstrations, and marches demanding an international investigation in the weeks that followed.⁴⁶⁴ It was re-stated on March 22, 2004 when Sheikh Ahmed Yassine, a founder of Hamas and a prominent Palestinian spiritual and political figure, was assassinated by Israeli helicopter gunfire.⁴⁶⁵ It was re-affirmed yet again on April 17, 2004, when Israeli helicopters assassinated Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, founder and senior officer of Hamas in the Gaza Strip.⁴⁶⁶

It was declared again on July 9, 2004, when the International Court of Justice at the Hague deemed the building of the apartheid wall a violation of international law, yet no punitive measures were taken against Israeli expansion of the wall.⁴⁶⁷ It was declared by Palestinian

masses in January of 2006 when Hamas democratically won the parliamentary elections in Palestine, ironically imposed on the Palestinians by the US and Israel, and the European and US powers subsequently punished the Palestinian people for their democratic zeal by placing sanctions on the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁶⁸ It was declared again in mass protests in March of 2006, when Israeli forces executed “Operation Bringing Home the Goods” by invading the Palestinian Authority prison in Jericho, hours after US and British troops withdrew, and taking Ahmed Sadat, Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, to Israeli prison, along with five other Palestinian prisoners.⁴⁶⁹ It was declared in the summer of 2006, when Israel waged war on Lebanon only to be met with profound resistance from Hezbollah with Palestinian popular support, and the Israelis lost what they foolishly imagined would be an easy victory.⁴⁷⁰

It was declared in 2006, when Israel imposed what would become known as one of the longest and most devastating sieges in modern history on the Gaza Strip, waging genocidal war campaigns in 2009 (Operation Cast Lead), 2012 (Operation Pillar of Defense), and 2014 (Operation Protective Edge).⁴⁷¹ It was declared again in March of 2011 as Palestinian youth revolted against the corruption of the Palestinian establishment, alongside their Arab youth counterparts in the Arab Uprisings context, and called for national unity for the Palestinian factions and for the end of the political negotiations and security coordination with Israel.⁴⁷² The Palestinian youth called loudly and overtly, “*es’qat Oslo*,” or “down with Oslo,”⁴⁷³ and were met with a crushing repression campaign by the PA.⁴⁷⁴ It was declared in June of 2011 when six Palestinian youth from Syria were killed at the border protests, and protests commenced against the Bashar Al-Assad regime and PLO factions for using them as pawns to de-legitimize the Syrian revolution.⁴⁷⁵ It was re-affirmed in the spring of 2012, when 2000 Palestinian prisoners went on

hunger strike and particularly when Khader Adnan, senior member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, achieved what would become known, at the time, as the longest prisoner hunger strike in Palestinian history.⁴⁷⁶ It was declared again in 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017 with mass prisoner hunger strikes exceeding the length of the 2012 strikes. These strikes included figures such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine's (DFLP) Samer Issawi,⁴⁷⁷ and Fatah's Marwan Barghouti.⁴⁷⁸

It was declared once again in July of 2014, when Mohammed Abu Khair was kidnapped and burned alive by Israeli settlers, which sparked mass protests across Palestine and especially in Jerusalem, coinciding with the Israeli attack on Gaza.⁴⁷⁹ It was declared in August of 2012, when Yarmouk Refugee Camp, the political headquarters of the Palestinian Shatat, came under siege by the Syrian regime and was burnt to ashes, caught in the crossfire of the Syrian war and the Palestinian establishment, and UNRWA could not do anything about it.⁴⁸⁰ It has been declared by the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in Syria who have been displaced once again, murdered, or imprisoned. It was declared again in July 2015 when 18-month-old Ali Dawabsheh and his mother and father were burned to death by settlers who smashed the family home windows in the middle of the night and threw in Molotov cocktails, setting the home ablaze.⁴⁸¹ These testimonies of the death of the peace process proceeded into October of 2015, when popular uprisings by Palestinian youth arming themselves with kitchen knives swept across Palestine in a de-centralized and unorganized fashion.⁴⁸² It was declared in April of 2016 when Palestinian youth organizer and intellectual Basil Al-Araj, along with other Palestinian youth, was arrested by the Palestinian Authority and imprisoned and tortured for six months in cooperation with Israeli officials.⁴⁸³ It was re-affirmed when Basil was killed in March of 2017 by Israeli forces after a two-hour gunfight, and a wave of Palestinian youth protest in the Shatat

and in Palestine was met by crushing repression by the Palestinian Authority and the PLO, who for example called the FBI on Palestinian youth protesting outside their New York offices.⁴⁸⁴ It was declared in 2017 when a sixteen-year-old Palestinian girl, Ahed Tamimi from the village of Nabi Saleh, was imprisoned for slapping an Israeli soldier who just hours before had shot her cousin in the face.⁴⁸⁵ It was articulated on the anniversary of Palestinian Land Day, March 31, 2018, when the thousands of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip participated in the Great March of Return, a series of marches to the borders in commemoration of the seventy years of the Palestinian Nakba. On this day, nearly 800 Palestinians were shot by targeted Israeli sniper fire, with sixteen dying and several more injured and killed in the day of actions that followed.⁴⁸⁶

It is articulated each day that the catastrophes enveloping the region have left Palestinian refugee camps under siege, Palestinians starved to death, beaten into submission, massacred, and dispossessed once again. It is known by each refugee whose lack of opportunity as stateless subjects further propels the recruitment of youth as child soldiers into various political factions, or into drug and sex trafficking industries, or leaves them to embark on the perilous death voyages to and through Europe. It is articulated by the Palestinians of 1948 Palestine, whose experiences of repression, censorship, and status as second-class citizens has not improved but has only worsened since 1993. And it is also articulated by Palestinians of the far Shatat, whose minimal calls for Palestinian human rights utilizing non-violent discursive strategies is met with punitive state violence, criminalization, and backlash, racializing Palestinians as enemy aliens and objects of the War on Terror. It is articulated each time a Palestinian youth is denied entry into the homeland by Israeli forces. It is articulated each time Israel annexes more lands, demolishes more homes, expands its settlements, expands the building of the apartheid wall and security checkpoints and fences, imprisons Palestinian

political leaders and youth, and extra-judicially kills Palestinians. It is articulated each time stories of torture inside Israeli prison cells surface. And it is articulated each day Palestinian refugees are denied their right to return.

In between the hundreds of broken UN resolutions and violations of international law, in between the dates of cataclysmic events that prompt wide-scale protest and insurgency among Palestinians, and in between the names of the martyrs I have named here, millions more Palestinians have been imprisoned, slaughtered, left for dead, and/or brutalized within the Oslo paradigm. All Palestinians suffer, in some form or another, the *coup de grâce* that was the Oslo Accords. Each one of them has a story and a web of people who love them who articulate the death of the peace process and the way in which Palestinian life, resilience, and wellbeing have become more precarious since 1993. Many of them tell of the way the Palestinian leadership has facilitated these worsening conditions, or at least is in no position of power to do anything about it, and this is especially true for Palestinian youth who have only ever known the Oslo paradigm as facts of life.

In fact, for many Palestinians, the failure of the peace process began before Oslo was ever signed. Critical voices within and outside of the Palestinian political establishment had long warned of the disastrous outcome of the negotiations and peace process when asymmetrical power between the colonizer and colonized subject distorts the nature of the conflict. Through interpersonal conversations and relationships, in organizing meetings and conferences, in newsletters and pamphlets, in scores of articles and books, and in the words that are captured on video of Palestinian confrontations with the Israeli occupying forces or with the Palestinian police force: each of these forums facilitates and illustrates in great detail Palestinian

declarations and iterations not only of the death of the peace process, but of how the peace process produces Palestinian death, time and time again.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the conditions that produced the 1993 Oslo Accords signing and the conditions that Oslo has produced for Palestinian youth since then. In some ways, writing this chapter felt like a betrayal to the Palestinian youth I have engaged over the years because my words cannot come close to illuminating the experiential and emotional depth of knowledge they have shared with me. The overview I provide cannot do justice to the scores of complex ways the Oslo framework has caused serious loss for Palestinian youth and the magnitude of depression, hopelessness, senses of abandonment, and anger that weigh on their hearts and minds. Like the compartmentalized geographies and constituencies Oslo produced, I often find that the rule of the academy demands a captioning, a cutting off, a sacrifice of the doubled-up set of political and intellectual ambitions that brought me here in the first place.

Nevertheless, it is my hope that this chapter might offer a glimpse into the intra-communal social and political life of Palestinian youth for members of the academy, allies of the Palestinian struggle, and inquiring young people curious as to how other youth are shouldering oppression and acting out resistance. My aim is to offer a bit of a comprehensive view of the ways that the peace process has conjured up a seriously violent injury on Palestinian collectivity, which in turn resulted in increased and more brutal forms of subjugation for Palestinian individuals. In many ways, this chapter was motivated by and represents a response to the terms in both scholarship on Israel/Palestine⁴⁸⁷ and within Palestine solidarity circuits. I wanted to offer a bit of experiential knowledge on how and why many young people have come to

cringe at hearing certain words like “conflict, peace, negotiations, two-state solution” and so forth. All those words have come to mean to Palestine and Palestinians is increased pain, loss, and fracturing of our own communal and whole selves. “If we flinch instinctively at the word ‘peace,’ it is not because we truly are the bloodthirsty sub humans of Zionist caricature. It is because few weapons have been able to wound the Palestinian struggle or even the very idea of Palestine itself so critically as the word “peace.””⁴⁸⁸ What I suggest is that for meaningful scholarship on Palestine today, a breach of the rule of academic conventions, a break in the standards of case study as subject, and an outlawing of the notion of unbiased research is demanded. Within those three rules, all that can be said on Palestine and the Palestinians has already been said. To dive more deeply into the Palestinian realm, from the ground up, positionality is key and the incorporation of the multiplicity of Palestinian constituents—which Oslo has rendered distinct yet unintelligible objects of abstract history and aberrated geography—is vital to producing research distinct from all that has already been said about us.

In the section immediately preceding the conclusion of this chapter, I offered a chronicle of various moments since the Oslo Accords that have become registered as part of the national imagination, and that came to mobilize various forms of Palestinian, and especially Palestinian youth, critique, protest, and resistance. In writing it, an arsenal of images came to my mind. Images of violence I have personally been embattled in, have witnessed incurred on other Palestinian youth, and have registered from the broadcasters of Palestinian ails, news, and social media. Images of organizing meetings, memories of arguments with my Palestinian youth peers on how to best mobilize around specific events of history, and memories of words uttered by friends in their lowest moments. As I furiously typed the catastrophic incidents of history, an ocean of emotions overtook me, and perhaps made the writing rushed, redundant, or empty of

the emotional depth each moment contained. But it is precisely the laundry list of incidents, the scores of numbers of dead Palestinians, all the means that we have tried to find an out and the multiplicity of challenges Palestinian youth endure in the process of overcoming the Oslo catastrophe that has generated a sort of impatience present in this chapter. It is an impatience which I hope, rather than being viewed as a deviation from standards of academic integrity, can be interpolated as the political urgency from which I write this dissertation.

If there is any final takeaway I would hope this chapter concludes with, it is that Oslo prescribed the first death of the Palestinian living. As Omar Zahzah states, all Palestinians die at least twice.⁴⁸⁹ For Palestinian youth, occupation and dispossession have persisted just as much, if not in more visceral force, as those which former generations of Palestinians have endured. However, for Palestinian youth growing through the Oslo paradigm, the ability to access space for collective political resistance was limited. It was limited institutionally within the Palestinian political scene, both in Palestine and in the shatat, and it was limited physically on the ground in Palestine, which fell under encroaching Israeli siege and more robust martial law military occupation. Palestinian youth still resisted, found ways to resist, in all places and on all levels. And Palestinians became so desperate that any act of survival or contest, any act of protest or rejection or refusal, became a celebratory moment of Palestinian agency, that which Saiidiya Haartman has warned us of the repercussions of celebrating agency as a romance of resistance.⁴⁹⁰ Still, in many ways, as the Palestinian nation has crumbled in the years following Oslo, Palestinian nationalism has in fact heightened, which I will return to in the chapter three. Celebration of Palestinian life, agency, and resistance is on the one hand critical in combatting a project of indigenous erasure in the context of settler colonialism. However, in the process of both Palestinians themselves and Palestine solidarity activists celebrating Palestinian resilience,

resistance, and survival, an analysis of the practical means to end Palestinian subjugation has been obscured.

James Scott's notion of everyday resistance profoundly altered the ways in which political action was viewed in narrow and provincial means.⁴⁹¹ His work, along with an abundance of works that pay tribute to de-centralized, non-hierarchical, ground-up forms of quotidian indigenous resistance, has allowed for new ways of understanding Palestinian survivance.⁴⁹² Scott argues that, in a context of class struggle, there is a "first resort" means in which peasants might enact resistance which neither appears to be collective action nor always generates notice or detection. He says that these forms of everyday resistance, which cannot be as easily traced, surveilled, and catalogued because they do not leave behind the records that social movements, revolutionaries, and dissident sects do, can generate profound possibility.

Scott states:

in one sphere lies the quiet, piecemeal process by which peasant squatters or poachers have often encroached on plantation and state forest lands; in the other a public invasion of property that openly challenges property relations. Each action aims at a redistribution of control over property; the former aims at tacit, de facto gains while the latter aims at formal, de jure recognition of those gains.⁴⁹³

In many ways, Scott's analysis of the generative elements of such forms of resistance resembles Asef Bayat's definition of what he calls 'social nonmovements' which I believe comes to define the events of the region 2011 onwards. Bayat notes, that social nonmovements,

embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations. The term movement implies that social nonmovements enjoy

significant, consequential elements of social movements; yet they constitute distinct entities.⁴⁹⁴

But what happens in a context of settler colonialism in which racial military occupation and siege, combined with the collaboration of a colonized comprador class; encapsulates and dominates all space? What happens when the colonized literally do not have access to take over public property, slowly, expeditiously, noticeably or discretely? What happens when the very being of colonized subjects warrants surveillance; so that they can barely breathe without being monitored, apprehended, and subjugated for it? How can revolting subjects actions come to constitute a shared practice if they live scattered across the borders of many nation states and of the occupations checkpoints, roadblocks and walls?

Certainly, individual acts of everyday resistance—the silent and the pronounced—are an outcome of Zionist subjugation, an emotional response in some ways, and an act of individual political refusal. They are expected but they are also generative in many ways. I believe that they host with them the possibility of maintaining clarity of the struggle, senses of self-worth, agency and power and can collectively come to comprise a certain level of pressure on the oppressive order. In many ways, they are simply acts of survival; the refusal to surrender life in the face of encroaching land usurping and ethnic cleansing policies. They also produce senses of comradeship and collective common sense ideals and narratives among those subjugated by such oppression. But in the absence of a physical site, a land mass, where these individual acts can congregate into collective form to pressure the oppressive force to rescind, and in the absence of organizational vehicles where these acts can mobilize into the accruing of political strategy, they remain individual acts.

In 2015, scores of young Palestinians armed themselves with kitchen knives as a last resort, unlike the first resort Scott speaks of, and defended themselves against fully-armed settlers encroaching on Jerusalem and West Bank villages in a flare-up of youth insurgency against settler encroachment on Palestinian lands. While popular mobilizations commenced across the world to support what was called *Intifadet al Sakakeen*, or the Knife Uprisings, an analysis from one of my own Palestinian youth peers took me by surprise. Shukri, a Palestinian youth from Jordan, tells me that he is feeling increasingly depressed by the state of resistance in Palestine. He argues that historically, when Palestinians in the parties were preparing for an operation, that their members very well knew of the chances of their own martyrdom, but that they were willing to take the risk, and possibly die, because they knew the party had a strategy in mind in which the loss of their own life could contribute to the collective power accrued for Palestinians. Shukri argues that today, Palestinian youth are carrying knives because they have nothing left, because they are hurt and angry and see no escape from their condition since Oslo. They are carrying knives, and they may end up killing a settler. But what does that mean? Blood lost. The settler will die; the Palestinian youth who killed him or her may die as well. But the Palestinians will not achieve any incremental achievements which could end their occupation.⁴⁹⁵ Mohammed, a Palestinian youth from the West Bank currently residing in Turkey, shares Shukri's sentiments and argues that he is concerned that the romanticization of martyrdom for the sake of martyrdom, without the ingredients of solid guerrilla warfare trainings, arms or strategies, will only further demoralize and hurt Palestinian youth.⁴⁹⁶

The Oslo conundrum depleted Palestinian political power through the dissolution of a liberation vision, the disintegration of the Palestinian nation, the pummeling of its organizational infrastructure, and the explosion of its political strategy. But Israeli occupation

and dispossession have not stopped. In the next chapter, I examine the ways in which Palestinian youth engaged these questions and brainstormed possible alternatives to the Oslo paradigm. I highlight the ways in which these youth organizers, who participated in the formation and function of the PYM between the years of 2006 and 2016, envisioned a resuscitation of a transnational organized vehicle which could remedy the geographic and ideological fragmentation Oslo created.

Chapter Three

Palestinian Youth Movement:

Collectivizing Process, Engaging Contradiction and Cultivating Possibility

David Ben Gurion, architect and founding father of the Zionist state, notoriously stated of those he sought to efface: “The old will die and the young will forget.” Indeed, this assumption was key in Zionist ambitions for colonization and [the] erasure of the Palestinian people. But the memory of Palestine and the activism of Palestinian youth for the liberation of their people and their homeland is still alive and well today. The events of May 15, 2011 on the sixty-third commemoration of the Nakba—during which massive numbers of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan marched to the borders of Palestine—show irrefutable proof of the myopia of Ben Gurion’s assumption. As eleven youth were martyred by Israeli sniper fire as they charged toward the borders of their homeland, the Marches of Return demonstrated that today’s generation of Palestinian youth are clinging more fervently than ever to the Palestinian struggle and to the enactment of their right of return.⁴⁹⁷

Zaynah Hindi, *Nakba 2013 Palestinian Youth Movement Booklet*

In November of 2006 Palestinian youth from across various locations in Palestine, the Arab region and the European continent convened for what was to become the first formal gathering of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN), now known as the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM).⁴⁹⁸ The organizers utilized three identifying characteristics in their call for applications to describe eligibility for who could attend. First, participants must be *Palestinian*. Second, participants must be a *youth* between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five. Third, they must be *active*, in some form or another, in Palestinian social, cultural, and/or political life either inside Palestine or wherever they reside. What began as categories meant to define participant attendance would later become critical political dimensions which would be deeply explored, challenged, defined, conceptualized and theorized in the convenings ahead. What does it mean to be an *active Palestinian youth*? What does each of these words mean on its own terms and how can they come to mean something else when placed in conversation with one another?

How did these words offer a mobilizing catalyst to found, construct, and guide the political activities of the PYN/M?

As Chapter two demonstrates, by 2006 these three categories, as simple as they may be, signified multidimensional forms of oppression. The framework I have proposed for this dissertation has suggested that active-Palestinian-youth were living in the time and space where a foreclosure of political genealogies, the third last sky resultant from the 1993 Oslo Accords, had de-sutured Palestinians from history, the PLO's transnational frame, and national vehicles once central to sustaining them as one cause and one people. In the aftermath of Oslo, multiple forms of fragmentation, coercion, corruption, and betrayal came to impair any prospects for collective building, accountability, and resistance in organized ways which could engage the Palestinian people both inside and outside the homeland. Palestinian anti-colonial resistance—which was the primary enactment of self-defense, self-determination, and survival in the face of an ethnic cleansing project as tenacious as the Zionist enterprise—was instead transformed into violence turned inward within the intra-communal Palestinian terrain. This violence – coupled with the violence of the colonial force – fueled division, dysfunction, and a breakdown of communal, systemic forms of accountability among Palestinians themselves. It transformed Palestinian political and cultural life, hardened senses of hopelessness and despair, and fortified the Palestinian ontology of Nakba.

Disempowered and grieving the loss of history, capabilities, and skills necessary for change, security, life, and land, the conditions brought on through Oslo made dreaming of any alternative world seemingly less possible for the new generation. At the very least, dreams and aspirations became individualized and were conceived of as impossible fantasies rather than

visions necessary to fuel shared responsibility and work and the belief that it was possible to actualize these dreams. But the three descriptive features of the PYN 2006 application carried with them meanings and implications robust enough for a critical departure point. This moment came to stimulate a process that was vital in shaping the soon-to-be new movement and a shared, collective, revolutionary imagination which both Josefina Saldana Portillo and Robin Kelley have argued is critical to any prospects for radical transformation.⁴⁹⁹

A shared revolutionary imagination was built through and alongside the formation of the PYN and came to inspire PYN's political analysis, activities, vision, and strategy. This process began with the youth organizers ruminating on how to conceptualize what it means to be an active-Palestinian-youth. Were these three topics taken up as identities, criteria for belonging, or a political phenomenon? What would it mean if they could collectively construct a different meaning to being an active-Palestinian-youth; a meaning which signified power, courage, and hope rather than the tremendous forms of pain, repression, despair, and loss it had come to mean through the Oslo paradigm? Those considerations highly resembled those of the first generation of Palestinian students and youth who organized through the 1950s and 1960s. Soon, PYN would engage the three topics in their full and vitiating meanings, as had the first generation in the construction of their own student/youth clubs, associations, and unions. One thing would become the central takeaway from this process. They would learn that before they even conceived of the idea to produce a Palestinian youth gathering which could tackle these questions more completely, the social and political conditions for Palestinian youth demanded the necessity to define these terms in ways relevant to the experiences of young people and to their individual dreams and aspirations at the time. The organizers' emphasis that PYN would be a space *only for active Palestinian youth* was motivated by three currents which the post-Oslo

last sky had produced for active-Palestinian-youth: 1) overcoming collective senses of despair, hopelessness, and ambivalence to politics and reinvigorating the notion of being active; 2) feeling the necessity for a forum which brought together Palestinian youth of various geographies and political orientations to overcome the paralysis that fragmentation was contributing to; 3) transforming the role of youth within Palestinian political life and re-inscribing it based on the role youth assumed in the original Palestinian youth movements of the 1950s-60s.

First, the word active became a critical signifier of a particular politic by 2006. At a time when grassroots political institutions had been decapitated by the last sky, when enclosures of land, sea, and sky were intensifying for the Palestinians following the second Intifada, and when foreclosure of narrative and the right to voice were intensifying in the post-September 11, 2001 War on Terror context which linked Palestinian resistance more fervently with the discursive and juridical regime of terrorism; conditions mandated insurgency at all levels. But the political apathy pervasive in Palestinian society was mounting. Certainly, the deadlock of strategies for the parties played a role in this, in addition to the split in national unity between Fatah and Hamas and the expansion of the Non-Governmental Industrial Complex and other iterations of neo-liberalism which chapter two addresses more thoroughly. The brutal consequences of Zionist subjugation and violence witnessed through the second Intifada added to the political despair of these youths. This is the reason why the notion of being active was not just a demographic descriptive feature. Instead, it was a way to make the concept of “active” the norm again, which would in turn reverse the paralysis Oslo prescribed.

Second, by bringing together Palestinian youth from all geographies under the banner of being Palestinian, youth in *ghurba* (refuge), *shatat* (exile), and from 1948 historic Palestine, along with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, PYN was re-constituting all Palestinians as part of the Palestinian nation. Youth from outside Palestine were re-claiming their rights and responsibilities in the struggle, thereby asserting their belonging to Palestine and re-defining who constituted the Palestinian nation by re-producing a more comprehensive frame of inclusion. Thus, in the process of building a more complete nation by traversing the militarized borders of nation-states, PYN from its inception was framed by a transnational politic in which the nation-state was not the given structure, unit of analysis, or limit to imagination and revolutionary thought. In and of itself, this expansive defining feature of Palestinians would reconcile the fragmentation Oslo had produced as well as the legal and political merits of its parceling out of Palestinian lands and rights.

For Palestinians of the *shatat*, this re-constituting of the Palestinian nation became a critical realization as they found themselves without institutional Palestinian vehicles to exercise their own political agency in the national struggle. By partaking in a range of solidarity organizations and networks, they became sorely aware that humanitarian aid and consciousness raising is not the same as an anti- and de-colonial national liberation movement, though it certainly contributes to and may be part of broader liberation work. Their insistence on cultivating a Palestinian sphere was not rooted in an ethno-centrism or politics of cultural authenticity. It was rather informed by the realization that much of the activism they were partaking in offered Band-Aids to wounds rather than addressing the cause of the wounds at the source: colonial dispossession, occupation, and the absence of a Palestinian liberation project. In this sense, the Palestinian dimension of the call was highly driven and informed by the *spatial*

configuration of the Palestinian transnational nation and by a commitment to revitalizing an anti/de-colonial frame rather than a human rights activism approach. It was about reversing the violences incurred on the Palestinians through their dispersal and about finding a way to make a Palestinian space, even if slightly abstract and even though it could not be centered in a free homeland. But the abstractness of the Palestinian space PYN was aiming to fortify was not exhaustive. There was something to be done out of such space, however temporal, however fleeting and unstable, for liberation. As Ruth Gilmore notes “The violence of abstraction produces all kinds of fetishes... if justice is embodied, it is then therefore always spatial, which is to say, part of a process of making a place.”⁵⁰⁰

Lastly, for youth inside and outside Palestine, the category of youth had come to be so deeply restricted by the Oslo last sky. Where youth had long been the protagonists of the Palestinian liberation struggle – they were the founders of all the major Palestinian parties, unions, liberation strategies, and methods of resistance – the youth of the Oslo generation did not play the same role because of the intersectional forms of violence, oppression, and policing they had come to endure and because no temporal or spatial intervals offered a clearing in which youth could fill a void. Those past voids were filled, but with an official establishment which was no longer in the business of national liberation or of engaging and mobilizing the grassroots for such a project. Youth inside of the political parties felt that their positions were trivial. That they were used as tokens, as poster-makers, as deliverers of speeches which they took no part in cultivating, and that they were not exercising power which could lead to transformative change. But at the same time, material conditions on the ground necessitated transformative change. While the youth of the shatat certainly experienced various forms of ageism and disenfranchisement as a result of Oslo, it was the youth inside of Palestine and the

refugee youth in the Arab countries whose material conditions made them re-conceptualize what the new generation could and must do to mitigate the disaster consistently befalling Palestine and the Palestinians. It is they who offered the first iterations of youth, as a political call to do something which in turn established a critical foundation for youth to be developed as a political optic in the years ahead for the network and later, the movement.

This chapter traces the internal political development of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYN) between the years of 2006 and 2016. I begin by offering a historical background of the original Palestinian student/youth movements of the 1950s-1960s because in the post-1993 Oslo Accords context, the PYN/M becomes what I argue is the only political movement experience that most recalls those original movements. Utilizing activist-ethnographic methods as a PYN/M founder, member, former international general coordinator and former PYM-USA national advisor, I examine five critical phases of PYN/M's establishment and interweave excerpts from ten PYM position papers and the Until Return and Liberation Framework (URL) adopted in June and July of 2012.

This chapter examines the major *constitutional phases* of PYN/M's conceptualization, foundation, and collective political processes in order to reflect on how it could and could not cross certain milestones and on the major learned lessons the movement acquired along the way. I demonstrate the major concerns that the organization encountered and the ways they engaged these topics in a *collective methodological process* which embraced the *engagement of contradiction* rather than attempting to evade or overcome it. I discuss these periods not as developmental time intervals but rather constitutional *phases or merahel*. These phases were not informed by a particular ideological development theory—those with which Palestinian youth organizing became oversaturated through the post-1993 period of neoliberalism—nor by

teleologies of progress based on linear scales of time.⁵⁰¹ Rather, they were shaped by learned lessons acquired through PYN/M's transnational convenings, commitment to resistance theorization, and creation of and conviction in collective processes to cultivate the former. In this sense, the movement strategies, political philosophies, structure, and analytical frameworks were cultivated in collective albeit slow ways and were in flux to account for the rapidly transforming conditions in Palestine and in the world more broadly.⁵⁰²

Phase one (2005-2006) outlines how the idea to organize a Palestinian youth gathering came to fruition. I trace the outreach methods, resources, and organizing techniques utilized to establish the first Palestinian Youth Network (PYN) gathering in Barcelona, Spain in 2006 and the second convening in Paris, France in 2007. *Phase two* (2007-2008) chronicles the founding process of the PYN and specifically focuses on the way youth were developing methods for diagnosing Palestinian youth ails, conditions, and struggles and were exploring what distinct and common features different clusters of Palestinian youth shared with one another. *Phase three* (2008-2010) follows the network's official founding conference in Madrid, Spain. This period is characterized by the establishment of a diagnosis of transnational Palestinian youth conditions, desires, aspirations, challenges, struggles, and visions as they would surface in the dialogue, tensions, and interactions between these youth in several transnational gatherings. I argue that for PYN, this phase was crucial to understanding the injury of the Oslo Accords on the Palestinian collective body. Thus, the primary goal and accomplishment for PYN in this phase was re-kindling bonds of the nation as the Palestinian people had become increasingly scattered and dispossessed since 1993.

Phase four (2011-2014) addresses the shift of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN) to the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM). In this section, I examine the ways in which PYM had come to theorize Palestinian conditions and politics and to develop visions as an organization rather than as a loose network of youth activists, and I explore the methods in which PYM intentionally sought to engage contradiction. I outline how this phase, which is accompanied by the drastic changes of the 2011 Arab Uprisings in the region, both opened opportunities for the PYM while simultaneously posing challenges. How the Arab Uprisings moment came to be a defining one in Palestinian history is of critical importance, which the PYM experience illustrates and which I seek to explore more in future research. *Phase five* (2014-2018) chronicles the PYM phase following the third international general assembly in Amman, Jordan in August of 2014. I examine both the political and strategic changes the PYM had adopted and how they unfortunately were never quite able to be fully realized.

Trinh T Minh Ha says, “despite our desperate, eternal attempt to separate, contain, and mend, categories always leak.”⁵⁰³ As the PYN/M experience has demonstrated, being an active-Palestinian-youth was not a descriptive feature of a given community but rather a mobilizing catalyst for a process to theorize collective conditions, express aspirations for liberation, and invent modalities and strategies to achieve it. Incorporated as part of a methodological practice that necessarily relies on an optic which can account for the complexity of colonial conditions, that can enable a traversing across militarized ideological, identity, and literal borders that separate persons from their homelands, histories, and people,⁵⁰⁴ and that can account for difference as an asset rather than a deficit to movement building;⁵⁰⁵ the three terms of being an active-Palestinian-youth take on new meaning.

I aim to examine how these terms—terms often used to signify a sector of so called “civil society” and/or descriptive elements of a given community—are in fact deeply enmeshed and co-constitutive of one another. How their meanings shift across time and place and how a variety of categories can come together to calcify, give meaning to, and invent new intellectual and political frameworks are demonstrated in the PYN/M movement building experience and exemplified in the intellectual exercise I practice through writing about the PYN/M process in this chapter. In understanding that categories always leak, in this chapter, I examine how Palestinian youth engaged processes of assigning meaning and vocabulary to their shared experiences, aspirations, and organizing practices together. The PYN/M became a vehicle which emerged from and further cultivated such collective process. The PYN/M thus can emblematically offer insights—which necessarily push back against narrow and compartmentalized viewpoints—on the Palestinian struggle, and conceptions of what constitutes youth movements and transnational formations in the contemporary, post-Oslo, post-cold war and neo-liberal global order which we inhabit today.

Offering a historical synthesis of the constitutional phases of the network/movement, I aim to shed light on the process that led PYN/M to adopt a theoretical framework comprised of ten position papers in 2012. In a moment when political discourse and theory has become hollowed out of the conditions of possibility which co-constitute its production, my aim in this chapter is to tell of the context and process in which a shared vision and politics came into form in order to provide a more nuanced narrative on the relationship between process, theory, and practice which the PYM engaged.⁵⁰⁶ To do so, I chronicle some of the major events, stories, contexts, and issues that birthed the need and desire for PYM to establish these doctrines and how they were supposed to inform PYM practice and pragmatic methods but how those plans

were disrupted by the unforeseen changes brought on through the Arab Uprisings. In short, I argue that while the Palestinian ontology mandates a process by which theory and practice can dialectically develop and inform one another, it also possesses the ability to disrupt the relationship for the two. While the PYN/M spent years developing theorization informed by its practice, by the time it had come to cultivate a set of political analyses and theoretical framework meant to inform practical work, the events of the region had made the implementation of such frameworks impossible.

My ethnographic archive has been built from over ten years of engagement in the PYN/M. Ethnographic notes have been gathered by attending conferences, planning meetings, and public forums, and organizing transnational youth movement campaigns and initiatives. My Palestinian youth organizing, specifically my role in PYN/M and as an activist-ethnographer has taken me to many cities in the US as well as to international programs in Brazil, Canada, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain, Turkey, and Greece.⁵⁰⁷ With permission from the PYM, I have also been able to access internal archival material including meeting minutes and reports including the political position papers and Until Return and Liberation framework.⁵⁰⁸ Retrospective reflections are also based on interviews with PYM founders and members, and with various Palestinian youth I have met through the PYM between 2015-2018

Historical Background: Palestinian Student/Youth Movements of the 50's and 60's

The earliest iterations of Palestinian student engagement dates back to 1911 in Cairo, Egypt when a young Amin Al Husayni was a student.⁵⁰⁹ In Palestine, no such institutionalized student organization existed though there were an array of associations which cultivated youth

engagement in both social and political activities.⁵¹⁰ In 1936, these associations would convene the first Palestine student conference in Jaffa even though Palestine did not yet have prominent University facilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁵¹¹ It is certainly not by coincidence that the first form of intentional organized student activity would commence the very year of the largest Arab general strike in Palestine.⁵¹² At the time (1936-1939) Palestine was still under British Mandate and Palestinians became sorely aware of British and Zionist collusion, including conspiring attempts to fulfill Zionist colonial aspirations of permanently settling, at the expense of the Palestinians, in Palestine. In that context, the 1936 student conference convened to discuss the dangers of the Zionist project and sought to organize mounting student pressure to interrupt its realization. However, Palestinian students were not alone in commencing the first formal convenings to initiate a role for themselves in political struggle. The 1930s was a watershed moment in which student movements across the world would calcify in the form of politically motivated unions which both played a critical role on campuses but especially in the public sphere on global levels.⁵¹³

By 1948 the forced displacement endured by Palestinians because of the Nakba strongly impacted Palestinian geographic and social cohesiveness and made it hard for Palestinian associations and groups, including students' initiatives within historic Palestine, to sustain their political efforts. Enduring the shock of the events of 47-49, dispossessed and scattered throughout the Arab region, Palestinians had to start reorganizing politically in *ghurba* (refugee) and *shatat* (exile). Particularly, Palestinian students played a key role in anchoring their own associations and institutions to re-organize the Palestinian nation despite the absence of a state or landmass and certainly because of the precarity of their peoples' conditions as refugees who

had lost everything including land, life, resources, and life-lines. These students established new associations in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq in the years following al-Nakba. Portions of their early organizing were tied to their social wellness, including assisting other students in securing housing, food, and educational scholarships. But this form of social service, from its inception, was informed by the necessities conditions had prescribed and had become a critical feature in establishing a political base as well.⁵¹⁴

These early iterations of the Palestinian youth/student activities demonstrate two important matters about the context to which they were responding. The first is that Palestinian student activism was necessarily political from its premise, aiming at readdressing the disruption brought about by the Nakba. These students were not merely attempting to represent and adhere to student needs and demands. Rather, they were relying on their positionality as students to leverage whatever power they could to establish a political framework, institutional structure, and representational paradigm that could maintain the Palestinian nation amidst all that was shattered because of the Nakba. They were the first sector of the society to offer a name, order, structure, practice, and identity to Palestinian communities in exile. In so doing the student union played an important political role regionally and internationally in the absence of a national body able to voice Palestinian political demands. Second, comprised of stateless refugees scattered throughout the Arab region, these Palestinian student initiatives were strongly influenced by the political transformations and developments of broader geo-politics.

But while Palestinian students of this era partook and were in part affected by regional and global currents and struggles for power, they would simultaneously come to provide the first fundamental space in which “new political ideologies and frameworks for *Palestinian*

national liberation would be elaborated.”⁵¹⁵ For example, The importance of the concept of Palestinian *identity in exile* and *self-reliance* were two critical concepts that anchored Yasser Arafat’s and Salah Khalaf’s (most known as Abu Iyad) 1952 Palestine Student Union (PSU) electoral victory as President and Vice President in Cairo.⁵¹⁶ The experiences of Palestinian students in Cairo and in Beirut in the aftermath of the Nakba are particularly enlightening as it is from these student efforts that ideas fomented regarding Palestinian self-determination, and it is from these student organizing spaces that the main Palestinian parties – those that would later lead the Palestinian movement and national trajectory for decades – were established.

In Beirut, Palestinian and Arab students at the American University (AUB) mobilized through the historical student society, the *Jamiat al Urwa al Wathqa*, contributing to the establishment of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), the mother movement of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).⁵¹⁷ A pivotal figure in this moment of student mobilization at AUB was George Habash, a Palestinian from Lyd and future leader of the PFLP. Anchoring his leadership within the ANM was Habash’s 1951 Urwa electoral victory. Leading the student society, Habash fomented the belief amongst his comrades that aspirations amongst Palestinians and Arabs could only be achieved by mobilization of the popular masses and that such popular mobilization could only be facilitated through the formation of an organization of mass struggle.⁵¹⁸ These ideas circulated among the students involved and subsequently in the Palestinian refugee camps as these students interfaced with the broader class of Palestinian refugees as organic intellectuals.

Throughout the 50s, Habash and his comrades radicalized the political analysis among students as well as the Palestinian society separated from University life and ejected into the

contours of refugee-camp life. The students led political demonstrations and protests in universities, but they also organized social activities and cultural events in order to reach a broader audience and spread their vision among the everyday people. During these activities a new understanding of the Palestinian struggle would be presented in which everyday people came to articulate the liberation of Palestine using a broader political framework based on anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and pan-Arab principles.⁵¹⁹ As the liberation of Palestine and the return of refugees were considered crucial preconditions for the defeat of neo-colonialism and imperialism in the region, the Palestinians politicized in this framework came to view Palestinian liberation as essentially tied to the liberation of the Arab world.⁵²⁰ The importance here is that the Palestinian national liberation political consciousness was simultaneously developed among these Palestinian students alongside their global Third World and anti-capitalist political consciousness and commitments.

The late 40s and early 50s were characterized by similarly relevant student efforts in Egypt. The political activism of Palestinian students in Cairo is particularly relevant not only because it developed into the first Palestinian popular union organized transnationally (the General Union of Palestine Students) but also because it laid the basis for the emergence of a key Palestinian movement: Fatah (Palestinian Liberation Movement). Laurie Brand has pointed out that the first attempt at forming a student union was realized in 1944 with the construction of the Palestine Student Union (PSU) in Cairo, Egypt.⁵²¹ She has offered one of the most complete accounts of the history of the Palestine Student Union (PSU) founded in 1944, its transition to the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in 1959, and the function and role of the GUPS from 1959 onward. She demonstrates that the structural and philosophical

trajectories of these early student activities were highly influenced by the political currents and power balances in the region and within transnational Arab political parties, including but not limited to the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan), pan-Arab Nasserism, and Ba'ath forces.⁵²² The central role of Arab transnational political parties and their influence on Palestinian student organizing did not however prevent Palestinian students from elaborating their own political platform. These students articulated a new political analysis that “while still acknowledging the Arab dimension of the Palestinian struggle and appealing to the pan-Arab feeling of the masses, promoted self-reliance and the assertion of Palestinian identity”.⁵²³ Just as the efforts of their colleagues in Beirut demonstrated, PSU activities were not simply intended to provide support for Palestinian students in Egypt, but rather were important because they instantiated a political experience. Their mobilization aimed at overcoming the lack of political representation brought about by the Nakba. Through intense diplomatic actions at the domestic, regional, and international level Palestinian students wanted to “put Palestine back on the map”.⁵²⁴

The PSU’s ability to establish contacts and cooperation with other student unions in the Arab region as well as its engagement with international student bodies was a major element of Palestinian student strategies and remained central to the vision of the Palestinian national movement in the following decades. Specifically, Palestinian students played a crucial role in the establishment of a General Union of Arab Students (GUAS), thus putting Palestine again at the core of the regional political process. GUAS was founded in 1959 – the same year GUPS was established. The GUPS founding conference was held in Cairo with the fundamental contribution of the Cairo PSU and the participation of student unions from Alexandria, Asyut, and Damascus.⁵²⁵ The structure of GUPS as a general union aimed at expanding coordination and

organizational efforts for Palestinians working in different locals, and their political vision was based on the simple principles of anti-colonialism and liberation from the river to the sea.⁵²⁶

The formation of GUPS marked a new era for Palestinian student activity, which would be broader in scale, impact, and function within political developments of the region, including among nation-state high politics levels. Its importance was found in four features. First, as Ido Zerkovitz has illustrated, their position as students gave these young Palestinian refugees access to revolutionary literature, ideas, philosophies, and strategies which anchored many of the ideologies, theories, strategies, and pragmatic action plans they dreamt up.⁵²⁷ In this sense, the original student formations enacted a theoretical practice similar to those within other anti-colonial liberation struggles in which the relationship between intellectualism and (armed) struggle was vital—for the members of GUPS would come to play both roles.⁵²⁸ The relationship between theory and practice was illustrated in two GUPS newsletters, the first called *al-Ittihad* (The Union) and the second, *Jabal al-Zaytun* (Mount of Olives). The magazines, which were publicly distributed, facilitated increased support and legitimacy for GUPS by the masses and revolutionized popular consciousness among everyday Palestinian refugees.

Second, GUPS was committed to serving the interest of their constituency, students who had basic service needs. For example, the students assisted each other access affordable housing and mobilized with one another to sustain and cultivate scholarships for Palestinian students. Third, GUPS inaugurated the era of more profound international alliance with Third World struggles, especially African nations, and the socialist camp. For example, by 1965, GUPS with the backing of Gamal Abdel Nasser and executive council which had an ANM majority at the time, would organize one of the most successful convenings bringing together not only

students but critical political and intellectual figures from 58 countries.⁵²⁹ Through this convening, the function of GUPS had exceeded the limitations of a student-sphere as they had become the forerunners of an internationalist alliance and were in conversation with key political forces. Fourth, GUPS pushed against political elites within the Palestinian establishment—including those who founded the PLO and operated as its leadership until 1967—who were too agile to confront Arab regimes and who limited political insurgency of the masses by playing a purely symbolic gatekeeping role rather than a role as figures of the resistance.

In 1959, GUPS began attempting to initiate global chapters and strengthening international solidarity relations and political coordination in various Third World, Leftist, and internationalist circuits in more profound ways. Mjriam Abu Samra's research on the history of GUPS offers a critical analysis of the way these students were persuaded by and simultaneously influencing politics of the global arena, particularly in relation to other Third World anti-colonial national struggles and anti-imperialist/anti-capitalist movements, as the Palestinian students engaged in international forums facilitated by the Eastern camp including that of the International Union of Students (IUS).⁵³⁰ This exposure to other movements, struggles, and causes allowed for a circulation of Maoist, Leninist, Marxist, and anti-colonial theories and philosophies among the student leaders. While the pre-GUPS period demonstrated an overwhelming influence of Ikhwanee ideals (Muslim Brotherhood), the post-GUPS period engaged in an array of ideological and political trajectories.

GUPS perhaps achieved one of its most monumental milestones at their second conference in Cairo in 1962, in which they endorsed a resolution calling for an independent

Palestinian liberation “entity” which two years later was realized in the construction of the PLO.⁵³¹ This is an important development that helps understand the political relevance of the Union and its contribution to the national movement. Indeed, GUPS was aware of the political void Palestinians needed to overcome in order to make their voice heard, and the rebuilding of a national institution was a central goal. Yet GUPS had a clear vision of what a national entity should look like. The students were convinced that the Palestinian struggle could and must be led by a revolutionary movement which would necessarily rely on a popular organization able to voice the needs and demands of the masses. This belief shaped GUPS’ attitude towards the PLO when it was established by the Arab League.

When the PLO was established in 1964, a GUPS representative attended the conference supporting the effort to guarantee Palestinians political representation. Yet, students did not lend the organization unconditional support and often criticized its elitist nature and its strong dependency on Arab states. Students argued that the PLO was composed by traditional elites that were not able to understand and lead the revolutionary struggle of the Palestinian people and that the PLO was not a mass movement but a puppet in the hands of Arab states. However, if GUPS remained skeptical towards the PLO in the immediate aftermath of its establishment, it changed its attitude in the late 1960s. In the late 60s, the popular organizations and grassroots movements (specifically the Palestinian political parties), which emerged underground throughout the 50s and were rooted in student activism, took control of the PLO.⁵³²

In 1967, following the failure of the Arab armies in the Six Days War, the PLO lost the little legitimacy it had as it was linked to the same states that were not able to defeat Israel. At the same time, with the Battle of Karameh in 1968, Palestinian popular factions and particularly

Fatah showed themselves to be stronger and more successful than Arab armies through their militant insurgency strategies as they were fomenting in the form of guerilla warfare among refugee fighters in Jordan. This allowed them to reclaim their role as representative of the Palestinian people and their struggle and in fact to take over power within the PLO. Between 1967 and 1969, these factions participated in the PLO, assumed positions within it, and reorganized it. In the second Palestinian National Council convening in 1968, the PLO would maintain their vision (adopted in 1964) to liberate *all* historic Palestine relying on the use of armed struggle, but they would add additional text to the PLO Charter which argued that the central actors of this movement would be the Fedayeen (guerilla fighters).

By 1969 Yasser Arafat would assume the position of the Chairman of PLO, a position he would hold until his death in 2004.⁵³³ That same year, GUPS hosted their fifth conference with Fatah winning the favorable majority of electoral seats in the executive committee. The importance of the takeover in the PLO is that it accompanied a mended relationship between GUPS and the PLO as well. Fatah would remain the dominant faction within both for decades to come, and GUPS would come to operate as the official student union of the PLO, the largest and most influential of all the developing bureaus, unions, and cabinets. Its purpose to support and amplify the Palestinian national character of the struggle and the necessity of armed resistance would be informed by the new trajectories of the PLO through the Jordan years (late 60s-early 70s) and through their exodus to Lebanon.

The political transformation of the late 60s therefore inaugurated a new phase where student activism was institutionally tied to the national movement. This was demonstrated in the 1969 amendments to the GUPS constitution which had sought to better reflect the political

connection of student mobilization to the national liberation movement. Palestinian transnational student activism was by this time now located inside the PLO structure and was intrinsically linked to the political development of the organization. Abu Samra argues that this new phase of Palestinian political history anchored a distinct role which transformed GUPS into:

an internal arena of mobilisation, from within which the various Palestinian movements would recruit, and in which cadres would often receive their earliest political education. The strong connection and direct relations with the Palestinian parties and factions that constituted the national movement allowed GUPS to develop into an international solidarity-generating structure that could build political relations in the absence of PLO embassies or missions.⁵³⁴

This political work enabled the PLO's vibrant cooperation with other radical movements and parties transnationally. Students became, so to speak, the interlocutors between the national struggle and Third World Liberation movements, figures, strategies, theories, and visions.

By the 1970s, the project of pan-Arabism would fall because of a range of geo-political and global re-configurations of power, including the impending division between the Syrian Baath party and Egypt which contributed to the dismantling of aspirations for the United Arab Republic (UAR) which was especially calcified by the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser. It was at this time that the PLO embarked on a Palestinian nationalization initiative in which world diplomacy would play a pivotal role. But the PLO would rely on GUPS (its largest grassroots union of the diaspora, which came to mobilize over 100,000 Palestinian students worldwide in the liberation struggle) to catapult this project. While GUPS chapters had been activated early on within the European countries allied with the Eastern Bloc, especially in countries like Germany which had one of the most influential shatat chapters, it was not until the late 1970s that GUPS chapters would open in the far shatat.

In the United States for instance, most Palestinian students, both independents and those affiliated with Palestinian and/or Arab parties, exercised their political agency through the Organization of Arab Students (OAS) up until 1979. The OAS was an umbrella organization which had brought together Arab students from an array of ideological and political backgrounds and affinities, but the group had early on been financed, supported, and uplifted by Egypt's Abdel Nasser. By 1979, a major split took place within the OAS regarding the impending Iraq/Iran war. Palestinian students supported the Iranian revolution and the ousting of the Shah's despotic regime for its collusion with imperialist forces and its dictatorial oppression of the masses. But Ba'athist elements of the OAS were against the revolution for it would realize a Shi'ite majority political authority in Iran which Saddam Hussein was adamantly against. In turn, the Palestinian students pulled out of the OAS and founded the GUPS. The move was devastating for many of the Arab student comrades who remained in the OAS. Temporarily, the students attempted to formulate a union called the Arab Democratic Student Union (ADSA) which could maintain Arab student activism, but the organization was short-lived and overshadowed by the pull GUPS generated.

As history demonstrates, Palestinian students have played among the most vibrant roles within the national liberation struggle and especially in the construction of its vision, institutions, and strategic trajectory. As Laurie Brand states, "the establishment of the . . . [PLO] in 1964 should be viewed, not as the beginning of the first chapter of the reemergence of the Palestinian national movement, but as its conclusion, the natural extension of Palestinian efforts in the 1950s and early 1960s, finally adopted and bolstered by Arab regimes, to establish a

national entity” (p 4).⁵³⁵ The GUPS played a foundational role in maintaining a revolutionary compass, both intellectually and politically, within the national liberation movement between 1964-1993. To elucidate just how vital their role historically has been, I agree with Mjriam Abu Samras’s notion that Palestinian students played the role of an *anti-colonial organic vanguard* in the Lenin-Maoist sense.⁵³⁶ This phrase both signifies the watershed achievements Palestinian students have historically achieved within the Palestinian national terrain as well as how it was part and parcel of broader geo-political and internationalist liberation visions, ideologies and political struggle. Abu Samra contends that these students played doubled-up roles simultaneously in service of: 1) developing the infrastructure for domestic (national) social mobilization; and 2) fomenting internationalist alliance in Third World spaces. She calls this *nationalist internationalism*. One distinction however, for the Palestinians, is that the first role they assumed to establish the national social mobilization took form on transnational levels among Palestinian constituencies scattered across many nation states, therefore defying the borders of the domestic/national scope of their work.

For Abu Samra the term *vanguardism* does not only rely on understanding students at the forefront of political struggle, but rather the students’ contribution to the construction and re-making of national politics as well. She utilizes *anti-colonial* to signify both the act of constructing and partaking in national liberation struggle while simultaneously initiating such efforts alongside the establishment of global relationships of solidarity with other national liberation struggles operating within the internationalist ethos of the 1960s and under the banner of Third Worldism. Lastly, Abu Samra borrows from Gramsci’s notion of the “organic intellectual” to illustrate how an *organic vanguard* emerges from the Palestinians’ particular

class dimension as well. For Abu Samra, the Palestinian class dimension is one that in many ways resembles that of other anti-colonial movements of the time as well as political movements aligned with the Soviet Camp, but that an additional layer exists for the Palestinians which is the stateless-refugee and transnational dimension. The Palestinian students that she identifies as the organic vanguard were in fact refugees themselves, displaced by the 1948 Nakba and living in the chronic conditions of camp life in surrounding Arab nations with very little economic, cultural, and political capital. In this sense, their position as “organic intellectuals” was both informed by the precariousness of poverty but also of displacement, refugee-hood, exile, and placelessness.

The transnational character of the Palestinian struggle and the Palestinians’ position as landless in the context of settler-colonial invasion and displacement required a conceptualization of vanguard infrastructure while in *shatat* which could not rely on an autonomous land mass, that which Mao argued was a critical feature of revolutionary war and guerilla insurrection. The intersection of these dimensions lent itself to the students’ proclivity for *tanzeem* (organization). Abu Samra states:

...it is this “organicità” (organicity) with its [the Palestinian student movements’] broader constituency [refugees] that allows the student movement to act as a “constructor, organiser, and permanent persuader” so to “give it [its broader class] homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.”⁵³⁷

As everyday refugees with little money, with no protections of citizenship, and who had just endured the Nakba, these students developed their politics through real-life experiences. Their formation of vanguard structures and strategies was informed by both their own experiential

context and a promiscuous engagement with the ideological strands of other anti-colonial/anti-capitalist formations and struggles.

As the Palestinian students interfaced with the study of a range of political theory and ideologies and as they encountered many of the same dilemmas and contradictions other national liberation movements had endured and were enduring at the time, there are some critical distinctions of the Palestinian struggle which must be noted. The most important was that while class struggle was critical to the Palestinian movement, in the 1960s among its leftist elements, including the Arab National Movement (ANM) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) for example, the settler-colonial dimension which characterized the Palestinian experience was not always accounted for in other Marxist-Leninist movements, and even in other anti-colonial liberation movements. Maoist ideals would come to deeply influence the Palestinian students (especially those which emerged out of FATAH and DFLP affinities) in defining their struggle, strategies for resistance, and conceptions of revolutionary struggle, as I have discussed. But what then begs further interrogation are the reasons and ways the Palestinian students connected their position as displaced refugees, the class from which they emerge in the Gramscian sense, with that of agrarian peasantry that drove the land reforms central to Maoist philosophical and political trajectory.

Certainly, Palestinian students engaged age-old debates pertaining to Maoist and Marxist-Leninist philosophies and movements on how proletariat-based industrialized revolution shortsightedly failed to account for the peasants' agrarian discontent against exorbitant rents acquired by landlords.⁵³⁸ As the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's)

actualization of Maoist theory sought to solicit the peasantry as its revolutionary base, it simultaneously, to borrow the infamous saying “broke open the peasant's soul and released a flood of mass passion.”⁵³⁹ In this sense, the Palestinian students resonated with the precarity of landlessness that Maoism spoke to and came to rely on the figure of the peasant as interchangeable with the displaced refugee, for both existed outside the urbanized proletariat of Marxist design. This reliance was generative in many ways, too many to pay proper homage to here, but also detrimental. It perhaps made the politics of comparison an additional impediment to the Palestinians’ ability to define and clarify their own conditions and to tend to the nuances of both the overlaps and distinctions with other liberation visions, ideologies, and movements.⁵⁴⁰ Nevertheless, their engagement in these questions and ideas was a critical departure point for the original Palestinian student movement.

Oslo Effects on the Palestinian Student/Youth Movements

GUPS experienced an irreversible crisis following the exodus of the PLO from Lebanon. By that time, GUPS had become so embedded into the PLO that it was necessarily impacted by the PLO crisis in 1982 and would lose a great part of its revolutionary mandate as the largest student union. The transnational dimension of GUPS was also impacted by this crisis. Though at the time, students in Palestine, specifically the West Bank and Gaza Strip, began playing a major role in the 1980s through the first Palestinian intifada, at the transnational level GUPS was not able to be the expression of all its constituency as it used to be.⁵⁴¹

In 1982, when the PLO was forced to leave Beirut, its structures, political bodies, and institutions underwent a process of bureaucratization that negatively impacted the popular organizations and unions, especially those in *al-shatat*, which lost their role and ability to

mobilize and voice the masses.⁵⁴² This is particularly true for the unions within the region as the PLO was in a quite precarious position geo-politically. However, the far shatat unions witnessed some of the most vibrant years of the organization at the onslaught of and through the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987. But by 1989, GUPS activities on transnational levels had seen almost a complete halt in response to the declaration of an independent Palestinian state and the new trajectory of the PLO, which sought to formalize a reconciliation with the Israelis. The 1993 Oslo Accords formalized the PLO shift from a revolutionary movement into a quasi-state apparatus willing to establish a mini-state on only a small fraction of historic Palestine.⁵⁴³ This shift ratified the fragmentation of Palestinian society and the paralysis of Palestinian popular activism. This political conundrum prevented the Palestinian youth in *al-shatat* from playing an organic vanguard role and even from maintaining the function of being solidarity-generators in international spaces with a Palestinian political entity, strategy, and program.⁵⁴⁴

The political transformations of the 1980s and 90s also impacted Palestinian student activism inside Palestine. By the 1980s Islamism was on the rise and was potently introduced to the national struggle in Palestine with the ascension of Hamas (the Palestinian national derivative of the Muslim Brotherhood) in Palestinian social and political life. Hamas emerged in tune with broader geo-political changes following the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the introduction of a more fervent iteration of political Islam in the region. However, Raja Abdulhaq notes that, “in the late 1970s, before the official creation of Hamas, Islamists in Gaza and the West Bank mobilized students on university campuses and formed the Islamic Palestine Bloc.”⁵⁴⁵ Similarly, the origins of the Islamic student movement also emerged in Kuwait in the 1980s with Palestinian Islamic Students League.⁵⁴⁶

In the aftermath of Oslo, through the contemporary moment, Palestinian student/youth organizing was splintered into the following five categories: 1) new Palestine-focused student groups emerging globally which came to revitalize a vibrant student movement but did not constitute or aim to establish a national trajectory for the Palestinians;⁵⁴⁷ 2) Palestine student activism that emerged in an array of various Arab and Islamic community and student institutions, however again, their work often is not geared toward establishing a Palestinian national politic, institution, and direction; 3) Palestinian youths who joined the Palestinian parties, though as chapter two illustrates, the agility of the parties post-Oslo but particularly after the second Intifada did not allow for youth to assume a critical role; 4) Palestinian youth of the *shatat*⁵⁴⁸ who joined solidarity activist networks and organizations as well as humanitarian assistance initiatives, neither of which cultivated a political role for Palestinian youth of the *shatat* in liberation struggle; and 5) Palestinian youth, both within Palestine and in the *shatat*, who came to work within the NGO sector. As chapter two demonstrates, the post 1993 neo-liberalization of Palestine enabled the co-optation of youth resistance and cultivated a pacified position for youth within logics of neo-liberal development which the NGOs constructed.

Amidst the post-Oslo splintering of Palestinian youth and student organizing, several GUPS chapters remained open globally. However, their role and function drastically changed as many of the last remaining chapters came under the unscrupulous supervision and authority of Palestinian embassies. No institution of the likes of GUPS existed in the years following Oslo. That is, until a new body which most resembled the student/youth movements of the 50s and 60s emerged in 2006. It would be named the Palestinian Youth Network.

Constitutional *Merahel*: On Process and Milestones

A brief synopsis of these merahel establishes a more solid foundation to understanding the ways Palestinian youth are challenging the foreclosure of political genealogies across time, which constitutes the third last sky the new generation has come to experience since 1993. If the Palestinian ontology of Nakba hinges on existential crisis, calcified by the three last skies that I discussed in the introduction—enclosure of land, sea, and sky; annihilation of Palestinian narratives in the historic record and universe of discourses; and foreclosure of genealogies of struggle—then the documentation of PYN/M’s constitutional merahel *is in itself* an act of resistance. This is because my goals here are to ensure that forthcoming merahel of Palestinian youth organizing and theorization can find resources that might more intentionally link them to the *longue durée* of history. Much has been produced by and for collective-transnational Palestinian theorizations of power and politics before 1993; however, the same can’t be said for the post-Oslo period. Thus, I aim to offer a humble contribution, important not for its scale or scope but rather for its novelty and intent to re-constitute a Palestinian genealogy of power and resistance.

Phase 1: Conceptualizing and Preparing for a Transnational Youth Gathering

In 2005, Baladna, a Palestinian youth group in 1948 Palestine, reached out to Said, a Palestinian youth activist from the West Bank who was at that time working in the International Civil Service (ICS), a global Non-Governmental Organization, in Spain. The youth of Baladna and Said had come to know one another through an array of various campaigns, activities, and initiatives produced through NGO networks. Baladna had proposed an initiative that sought to bring together Palestinian youth from various locations and contexts in order to produce a mock court of judgement on the Oslo Accords and its damaging outcomes. Said, fond of the idea and

believing that the current political developments in Palestine necessitated a gathering of this nature, was receptive. However, he thought that a one-time gathering which would assess and critique events of the past, would foreclose any possibilities for change that the current political stakes necessitated. He offered the youth of Baladna a counter-proposal. He says, "I thought, instead of us coming to the table and saying this and that about Oslo, instead of critiquing the past, maybe we should come together and see what we share in common, if we want to work together and if so, how can we create a strategy for Palestinian youth to make change for the future."⁵⁴⁹

Coordination efforts commenced for an upcoming Palestinian youth convening. Utilizing an array of outreach strategies was necessary to overcome the fractures of Palestinian social and political life since Oslo. The third last sky brought on through Oslo had foreclosed upon political genealogies of the national liberation movement from the 1964-1993 period and had almost immediately liquidated the infrastructure to maintain the bonds of the Palestinian people with one another across a multiplicity of occupied/enclosed and scattered terrains. These fractures made it difficult to even know how to contact other active Palestinian youth in the absence of a transnational vehicle to engage Palestinian grassroots communities in the liberation movement.

In Europe, the youth utilized a snow-ball method to contact young active Palestinians in different places. They made phone calls to relatives and activists they knew in certain countries and asked for the names and contacts of other active Palestinian youth in those localities. This method of utilizing existing activist networks to get in contact with Palestinian youth was vital in light of the absence of either a more complete database or a more established channel of communication and exchange for Palestinian youth. Further, Europe offered a degree of

freedom of mobility for youth who had acquired some form of European residency or citizenship. Said states:

At the time I was living in Barcelona, I remember I went to a convening for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions in Italy and there I met some activists and asked them for the names of active Palestinian youth. That is how I found out about Merahm and Shafiq who were both active in the Wael Zuaiter association and so I contacted them to engage them in these coordination efforts.⁵⁵⁰

Similarly, Said had attended the social forum in Greece and met members of the Palestinian community there who put him in touch with the active youth in the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) who would also come to play a critical role in the early development of PYN.

While relying on loose activist and NGO networks was a critical way to outreach to active Palestinians in Europe, it also served a purpose in the Arab countries. Said argues:

We came to know many young people through these NGO networks, especially organizations who received foundation money from European institutions and we had worked together on a variety of projects in the past including children's summer camps and more. This for example is the way I met the active youth from Jafra in Yarmouk Refugee Camp who would come to play a major role in the founding of PYM and in connecting us with other active youth associations and groups in Syria and other Arab countries.⁵⁵¹

Though the reliance on previously established organizations worked for some groups as a tactic, for active Palestinians this method would only pull a very specific social and political demographic. If the purpose of the gathering was to bring together a myriad of social and political identities, then the NGO networks and global solidarity networks could not be the only sites of recruitment. For these reasons, Said argues that in Palestine and the Arab countries, "we also had to take a bit of a traditional approach and contact the youth of the political parties."⁵⁵² Contacting the official youth branches of the political parties was critical not just for the

purposes of diversity, but also to shape the foundation of the PYN as an inherently political one and for it to be registered as such within Palestinian networks inside the homeland and globally. It was of vital importance to ward off any assumptions that the organization was part and parcel of the explosion of neo-liberal youth initiatives growing out of NGO development frameworks post-Oslo. Furthermore, engaging youth across the official political terrain was important to establish a certain level of credibility without being perceived as a political threat to the establishment.⁵⁵³ Therefore, recruitment for PYN necessarily sought to offer the construction of a space where youth of various political orientations—at times competing ones—were welcomed to engage the process.

Before the first convening, there were three lessons that the movement had already learned in the coordination process and that I elaborate on below. To briefly outline these three lessons, the first was that it was critical to rely on shared common-sense discourses to mobilize a sense of collectivity despite intra-communal differences. The second was the realization that preparing a convening geared toward airing grievances and complaint alone could hinder opportunities and responsibilities of working toward another constitutional phase. Third was that the same forces, phenomena, and organizations that were compounding the struggles Palestinian youth were experiencing—as I have explained in chapter two—were also the only ones available to navigate and build from.

Counter-Hegemonic Common Sense

To return to the first lesson, Palestinian youth across different locations, who had never met one another, had a profound investment in the concept of a gathering to address their mutual conditions, challenges, and desires to work with one another. This shared sentiment was

established as a new *counter-hegemonic common sense* that was informed by deteriorating material conditions pervasive in Palestinian communities. It was a common-sense of the people. If mobilized, it could counteract the hegemonic frames that were suffocating youth and that were upheld both by establishment politics and by the colonial regime, which had become intimately bound with one another as a result of the Oslo framework. In this period, the phrase “uniting Palestinian youth inside and out” became a critical slogan in recruitment efforts. Nearly all the youth that the original coordinators had contacted were enthused by the idea of the gathering, invested in its necessity, and curious as to what could emerge out of it. They knew that they would need to overcome the geographic and ideological fragmentation affecting them and the entire new generation to strengthen prospects for Palestinian freedom.

Circumventing a Critique of Complaint

The intentional, deliberate decision to coalesce around such a consensus and to explore the productive and generative possibilities of such politically dismal times, meant that PYN set a precedent and a mandate: that something must be done to resuscitate a politic and frame of the Palestinian struggle that once existed before 1993. PYN became the first initiative of its kind to begin facilitating these dialogues on transnational spheres; since 2006, two dozen such initiatives have been attempted by other groups.⁵⁵⁴ However, it was precisely the framing of the gathering which encouraged active collective participation among a diverse array of youth and which left margins open for growth. By 2006, several initiatives that worked to critique the Oslo Accords and to denounce, delegitimize, and challenge the power of the political establishment had already been attempted. Yet, very few initiatives that sought to investigate the dire conditions of Palestinian social and political life considered what could be done by the new

generation on a *transnational* level. It was exactly this philosophy entrenched in the very constitution of PYN that allowed for it to become a space in which youth could re-evaluate the ways in which “critique” had become hollowed of political mandate, responsibility, and agency – what I have identified as the second lesson learned in the coordination process.

The PYN spaces from their inception developed critical theory and action that had not been overdetermined by radical rhetoric or pathologizing discourses. In some ways, the commitment to and philosophy of needing to “do something” became a political ideal which critiqued the usage of hollow and exhaustive critique. Craig Calhoun argues that:

Critique is not the same thing as just objecting to the way things are; intellectual criticism is not mere complaint. Rather, as a crucial part of social science, critique is an effort to understand how things could be different and why existing frame-works of knowledge do not recognize all the actual possibilities. Critical theory is not just criticism of other theories, it is an orientation to the world that combines the effort to understand why it is as it is (the more conventional domain of science) and how it could be otherwise (the more conventional domain of action).⁵⁵⁵

In ruminating on Calhoun’s argument and in looking back to the decision of PYN to prohibit an engagement of critique for the sake of critique alone, it becomes clear that this decision enabled the organization to develop a collective process which sought to produce theory relevant for Palestinian youth conditions and which could enable a more impactful and necessary political practice and role for these youth.

Navigating Constrained Space: The NGOs and the Political parties

The third most important lesson acquired through this period was that while the political establishment and the NGOs were two sites that were cause for much of the youth’s grievances with the Oslo framework,⁵⁵⁶ they were also vital lifelines to Palestinian histories,

communities, resources, and recruitment efforts. Nidal, a coordinator for the first convening from Yarmouk Camp in Syria argues that:

from day one we were critical of these international activist and NGO spaces, but the truth is we relied on them for many things including recruitment but also resources, particularly logistical support for our gatherings. The critiques we had of these spaces never went away and actually protected us from becoming too enmeshed in the NGO scene. It was really important for us to establish an autonomous political space that was not constrained by neo-liberal ideas pervasive in NGOs. So while this was something we also knew about and believed in, we still navigated those spaces but cautiously and eventually when we were established, strong enough and needed to make a more clear decision about this, we did.⁵⁵⁷

The idea of a gathering for youth that was organized by youth and which was still in its formative phase elided much of the suspicion, pessimism, and fear that youth had by that time come to experience in relation to both NGO-related initiatives and Palestinian establishment politics. PYN learned from the initial planning period that existing in, navigating, and acquiring support from imperfect institutions require some form of exchange. But the PYN also came to learn that it could be done while still maintaining enough of a margin for organic engagement and for autonomy in developing the group's vision and direction.

Despite their differing geographic, social, cultural, political, and ideological backgrounds, the youth that convened shared a common sentiment that a gathering that was not confined by the liminalities of both sites was key to generating the possibility for something else we all knew was sorely lacking. The question was how to produce possibility and establish a new formation dedicated to a genuine organic process for Palestinian youth to diagnose their conditions and needs and to develop mutual visions and strategies, while simultaneously navigating the

expectations of either the NGOs or the political parties.⁵⁵⁸ But worse, how could a brand new formation establish any sort of base or initial convening by evading all forms of institutional life?

Basel, a PYM founder from Norway, argues that we were actually too afraid of the influence of the NGOs and the parties and that had we engaged them more intentionally in the years following phase one—albeit in a politically strategic calculus—we could have had stronger bases, resources, and power which would have given PYM stronger chances at growth.⁵⁵⁹ Nidal, however, insists that our trepidation regarding these two spheres protected PYM and gave it motion for forward-moving autonomy, which we would realize in 2011 but which would also be accompanied by harsh repercussions.⁵⁶⁰

Phase 2 (2006-2008): The Founding Process

Barcelona, 2006: Getting Together to Build Something

In September of 2006, thirty-five Palestinian youth from across Palestine, Arab countries, and the European continent gathered in Barcelona, Spain for the first convening of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN).⁵⁶¹ The first half of the Barcelona convening was dedicated to lectures and presentations by an array of critical Palestinian figures about the history of the Palestinian struggle, the role of students and youth in the liberation struggle historically, and the current challenges affecting Palestinians both inside Palestine and in ghurba (refugehood) and shatat (exile). While the first part of the gathering was celebrated as one-of-a-kind and as a truly unique and valuable experience for these youth to reconcile their disconnection both from the political struggle historically and with Palestinian communities dispossessed across different locations, the second part of the gathering would reflect the difficulties of Palestinian youth collective organizing. In this second part of the meeting, the program was left open-ended in

order to design the agenda democratically based on the topics of utmost concern to these youth and on how we could make the best use of our time together. For a group of Palestinian youth that had become accustomed to going to conferences with set schedules, taking what they could get from them, exchanging some information, resources, and contacts and going home, this unorganized format proved difficult/challenging. Said said:

We basically said okay guys? Do you want to work together? The answer was yes. So we said do you want to build something together? And the overwhelming majority said yes. But we didn't really know how to do it? Even when trying to slate an agenda, everyone was giving their own opinion based on the matters that effected their specific demographic, their specific context without considering other demographics in the room. But what was worse was that with all the rich discussion we were having during breaks and in the sessions during question and answer, many of the youths defaulted to what we had become trained to do...everyone started speaking about how oppressed Palestinians are, how horrible Oslo was and becoming so critical of all these different players and forces.⁵⁶²

Though there certainly was unity on identifying forms of oppression, there was no unity on ideas, visions, and strategies for challenging that oppression. The leaders saw this as a major setback and detriment to the kind of social and political harmony they envisioned was necessary. The growing segmentation of differing Palestinian social and political identities and loyalties was in large part a result of the broader conditions in Palestinian society. In January of 2006, just nine months before this convening, Hamas had won the parliamentary elections in Palestine, launching the split in national unity between the Palestinian parties and exasperating fragmentation. Because the program coordinators had never planned a convening of the sort, and because they had not known what to expect during the first half of the program, they could not account for how to design a program which could facilitate a shift in orientation and work through the multiplicity of fractures and enclosures Palestinians had come to endure. As a

result, the conversation at the tail end of the Barcelona convening did not achieve the ambitions many of the coordinators were hoping for.

The coordinators agreed that the Barcelona convening was not sufficient enough of an experience to launch an official formation. Too much time had lapsed within the program to establish a cohesive vision and direction strong enough to launch the group into the next phase. They decided to plan for another convening which would expand in scale to include a larger number of participants of more geographic, political, and social diversity. This convening would also include more time in the program for Palestinian youth and for discussing ideas about how to work together and build something together, as Palestinian youth transnationally.

France, 2007: Re-Kindling the Bonds of the Nation

The Barcelona convening would be followed up with another convening in November, 2007 in Paris, France, organized in coordination with members of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) France-chapter. By that time, the rivalry between the Palestinian parties had grown and it was coupled with a new Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip. Palestinians across the world were experiencing the forceful impact of these changes, and the new common sense was that something must be done. Members of GUPS France had considered a convening which would bring together Palestinian students from across the world as well. In 2007, members of the PYN communicated with GUPS, and the two groups agreed to host a joint convening under the name of PYN. This convening would bring together both students and non-students and would disentangle the complexity of hosting a convening under the name of an organization which was founded as the official student union of the PLO. Instead, the GUPS and PYN

partnership broadened outreach to include active Palestinian youth from the NGOs, parties, various associations and grassroots collectives, and various GUPS chapters across the world.

Between 2006 and 2007, PYN organizers had sought to produce a convening to increase the diversity of ideas, skills, and assets necessary to form the new project but also so that the organizers could more comprehensively understand the conditions and aspirations of Palestinian youth and their differences and commonalities with one another. They had also argued that a second convening would both allow for and require grander media coverage and political outreach so that the PYN could establish a certain level of visibility and credibility within Palestine and among Palestinian communities transnationally. The France convening did just that, bringing together over one hundred Palestinian youth from twenty-eight countries in the Arab region, North and South America, Australia, and Europe.⁵⁶³ The eleven-day gathering galvanized major news media coverage and positioned the PYN as an up-and-coming Palestinian political project which highly resembled the original Palestinian youth movements of the 1950s.⁵⁶⁴ Almost all of the founders of the PYN argue that the France convening was among the most memorable and instrumental for the movement's future. There, we learned of the importance of affect in mending the multiple forms of subjugation and alienation youth were enduring, and we also came to take more seriously that possibility for something else beyond what was available to us, could exist.

Affect and Alienation

It might be said that the France conference is where PYN developed and facilitated an affective ethos which centered friendship, care, and affinity as central to its movement culture.⁵⁶⁵ The conference was hosted in a remote location outside of Paris with very poor facilities, bad food, and unsanitary conditions, and as a result of not being used to one another's

viruses, more than half of the participants became extraordinarily ill over the duration of the program. Tensions mounted regarding the poor logistical arrangements, the design of the long and tedious program, political disjunctions and arguments among the participants, and social and cultural differences. Many youths did not speak Arabic, and some did not speak Arabic or English. Participants were deeply suspect of the intentions of the gathering, and gossip circulated during the break times which accused the PYN of being backed by a range of different forces. Certainly, participants could feel that the organizers were eager to establish a formation and this added to suspicions.

But for these one hundred youths, the level of personal and social bonds with one another, and even with the leaders that they were also suspicious of, made the conference worthwhile. There, an exchange of worlds took place in vibrant ways. Through constant collective singing and debka (folkdance), through gathering in the evenings to listen to participants recite poetry, tell stories, and play musical instruments, the social dimension became among the most important of the France convening. The variety of ways Palestinian youth experienced Zionist subjugation came to light. Where the youth from Jenin would describe the horrors of the Jenin massacre just a few years earlier, youth from the US would talk about the censorship of Palestinian narratives in student activism. Yasser, a Palestinian youth from Venezuela, stood in one of the sessions and passionately, deep from within him, spoke in Spanish about Zionism and Palestinian resistance. Most participants couldn't understand what Yasser was actually saying, but could feel his spirit and shared his rage. They clapped and cheered for him in the time between when he completed his declaration and when translators could explain what he had said.

Different forms of subjugation surfaced, and though uneven in severity, they came together in the France convening to formulate a more complete account of the Palestinian experience. The youth in the France convening demonstrated a profound interest in opening to a range of various Palestinian experiences and forms of organizing and activism, while simultaneously demonstrating an unwavering commitment not to collapse differences of power and privilege among them. These differences were acknowledged, engaged, and explored not as deficits but as assets to our learning process, that which Tara Yosso has once called pedagogies which can value cultural wealth.⁵⁶⁶ What was critical here was creating a *temporal* and *spatial* breach of the Oslo Accords, even for these eleven days in a far remote place on the outskirts of a European metropolitan city.

Disjunction and fragmentation were among the most damaging effects of Oslo, particularly because no frame or institutional vehicle allowed for a comprehensive understanding of and response to multidimensional forms of Palestinian oppression. But the France convening offered both the time and space to examine those various forms and scales of Palestinian oppression and to draw a frame around it which was motivated by an affective ethos of belonging, care, and love for *your* people and of working together to remedy collective injuries. This affective ethos did not view difference as a problem or uneven scales of oppression as a detriment or cause for competition. At a very simple individual level, it mended the acute senses of alienation *all of these* youth had come to experience, in some form or other, in their day-to-day lives. Together, the youth expressed a profound interest in, desire for, and commitment to strengthening a transnational vehicle to re-connect the new generation of the Palestinian nation to work together for the cause.

In the evenings, a coordination team of twenty-eight country representatives met to debrief and evaluate the progress made throughout the day of bringing these youth toward a more complete consensus of what was to come out of the conference. Differences were more acutely present in this space where many of the leaders differed with one another on organizational style, vision, and ideas for strategy. Tensions came to a boiling point toward the tail end of the program when the committee was tasked with writing a final statement to be read at a public reception that would include the press. Competing views regarding the decision to rely on a very traditional nationalist language for the conference final statement, including restating the national principles as adopted by the PLO in 1964, signified one such tension. Many youth felt that the old nationalist language did not reflect the creativity and new insights into political organizing that was deeply explored and engaged in France and certainly did not demonstrate much of the conditions of the new generation after Oslo and our grievances with the PLO, the PA, and the Palestinian parties. But other youth insisted that these national principles were critical to establish the PYN as a political formation and not as a neo-liberal social club. The tensions over what constituted the political and over notions of *the old* and *the new* would be an experience noted and developed upon in PYN/M's growth.

After nine days of workshops, lectures and discussions which addressed an array of topics and Palestinian community presentations from each country the youth represented, the coordinating committee stayed for the last two days to prepare a follow-up plan. The reflections of this group established a collective sense that the low points of the conference – its logistical hurdles, the tenuous political atmosphere, and the personal feuds that emerged as a result of poor organizational communication and program structure and clarity – were all minimal compared to the incredible potential and importance such a convening could have on the

Palestinian political atmosphere. The coordinating committee used these reflections to establish the goals for the next period. They envisioned the creation of a conference Follow Up Committee who might first take reflections from, both the tier of all the conference members and the smaller tier of the country coordinators, and from there establish a clear analysis that could be disseminated to the public. They also imagined that the Follow Up Committee might draft a potential structure to transition the PYN conference network experience into the founding of a new organized and centralized Palestinian youth transnational organizing network. A follow up committee of nine members was elected. The committee was tasked with taking both the experience of the Barcelona and France convenings and the lessons acquired through a variety of focus group meetings and speaking tours, and draft by-laws for the new organization. The committee was also tasked with preparing for an official founding conference of the PYN to more clearly demonstrate transparency to the general public and to dispel rumors of PYN's funding sources, political affiliations, goals, and intentions.

On the final day of all PYN/M convenings PYN/M, the scene looks quite similar. Exchanging of contacts, hugs and kisses goodbye, final words of how fortunate, delighted, and lucky they are all to have met one another. But very few convenings remind the leaders of the tears shed at the end of the convening in France. The future of the organization was uncertain. But there was a commonly held belief by many of the participants that something monumental could emerge. For all of us, this experience was like none other, and it transformed something very personal deep inside us. Our own visions and feelings of anger, pain, desire, and hope were no longer sensibilities we foolishly believed we experience alone. The France convening demonstrated that despite our weaknesses and the challenges facing us, we were still a people who together shared a mutual desire for the liberation of our people. It helped us re-ignite this

fire within us, re-ignite the intimacy of what it means to belong to Palestine and the Palestinian people, and it helped awaken with us the importance of our generation assuming our rights and responsibilities to the Palestinian nation. Experiencing, however fragile and however temporary, a sense of belonging was a central ingredient to those realizations and to this milestone in constitutional merhala two.

What If? On the Cultivation of *Possibility*

During these years, the PYN Follow up Committee had been confronted with an array of challenges and learning experiences, some of which will be more deeply engaged in this chapter. However, as a phase, I argue that the period between 2006 to 2008 was most critical for re-kindling bonds of the nation by disrupting the geographic, social, cultural, political, economic, and ideological fragmentation following the Oslo Accords. If the Oslo Accords brought on the last sky—a foreclosure of political genealogies of struggle and a fracture of the transnational vehicle to facilitate and mobilize the national struggle—the PYN period for 2006-2008 was precisely the inverse.

This phase did not reconcile fragmentation or tear down the borders (physical and ideological) which were producing internal quarrels and violences, but it allowed us to explore the possibility of a border-less world. And it is precisely the hundreds of youth who participated in the PYN process between 2006 and 2008 who produced two foundational purposes for the organization. The first was an actual network which could exchange ideas, information, resources, contacts, and where productive power-mapping and skill- and asset-assessments could take place, which enhanced our activism on many levels and which PYN/M would rely on for building. But more importantly, through active participation of all these youth, together we

would produce a new question for Palestine and the Palestinians which necessarily allowed for an out to the defeat that Oslo made us accept as a given. That question was, “*What if?*”

In re-dressing the events of history that brought us as a new generation to this time and space, the temporal-spatial arrangement we were fomenting within the PYN allowed for both a collective realization of the necessity for transformative change and the agency to define ways we could tap into history to generate alternatives in our present moment. Lisa Lowe argues that, “it is possible to conceive the past, not as fixed or settled, not as inaugurating the temporality into which our present falls, but as a configuration of multiple contingent possibilities, all present, yet none inevitable.”⁵⁶⁷ We learned about the conditions hurting Palestinian youth in the present moment, and the many ways history had asked of us to shoulder damage which caused profound senses of hopelessness and political paralysis. But in realizing that damage was shared—that so many youth also endured the same senses of impossibility—we collectively were able to convert that damage into what David Lloyd has called *living on*. We came to cultivate aspirations, visions, skills, and assets and a commitment to sacrifice to achieve something more, something else; though as Lowe argues, something else was possible but not inevitable.⁵⁶⁸ In our exchange with one another, the frictions, tensions, and contradictions that emerged produced the *what if* question—what if we try this strategy instead? What if we approach our work differently? Those questions came to fruition because we were finally granting ourselves the time and space to identify our problems throughout history and in the contemporary moment. We were exploring what cause was at the root of our troubles and how a redress of history was necessary to explore how things could have been and still can be otherwise.⁵⁶⁹

Phase 3: Engaging Contradiction and Developing Group Ideals

The third constitutional merahel, would be launched with the official founding conference of the organization in November of 2008. Twenty-eight founders from various countries and various ideological and political backgrounds came together for a two-day founding general assembly. The three days that followed would gather over 150 active Palestinian youth from across thirty-three countries who would partake in a series of lectures, workshops, and small group discussions, discussing the stakes of the Palestinian struggle and the challenges for the new generation and exchanging ideas on how they might come to work together within the new network. However, on a greater scale than all earlier convenings, the Madrid conference demonstrated a multiplicity of challenges affecting transnational Palestinian youth organizing and the social and political realities of various constituents. While the organization's leadership had focused their efforts on arriving to the founding conference prepared to tackle many of the challenges they had become attuned to from the prior convenings, they were not quite prepared to facilitate a process strong enough for the new currents they would witness in Madrid.

This section hones in on some of the challenges posited to the PYN in the Madrid convening, many of which have been outlined or gestured to as the outcomes of the Oslo Accords in Chapter two. Specifically, I offer a glimpse as to how the struggles of various Palestinian social and political groups would interface with one another in a broader frame, time, and space of transnational Palestinian youth. I then briefly examine how those topics were engaged in the organizing practice of the PYN through the development of the 2009 and 2010 summer programs.

Madrid 2008: Remnants of Oppression, Severance of Belonging

In the 2008 convening in Madrid, we adopted a set of by-laws which would define the PYN's purpose, goals, composition, strategies, and structure.⁵⁷⁰ We also adopted a two-year strategic action plan.⁵⁷¹ The new structure of the PYN established an International Executive Board (IEB) comprised of nine members who were to be democratically elected at the international general assembly (comprised of all members) and National Coordinating Committees (NCC) for all places where PYN branches were to be built in accordance with the newly adopted project plan. Founders adopted the following descriptive language to define the new organization:

PYN is an independent, nonpartisan alliance, founded by a group of young Palestinians scattered throughout the world as a result of the occupation of our homeland. Our belonging to Palestine, passion to preserve our Palestinian identity, and desire to contribute to the liberation of our land and people has driven us to build this network aimed at amplifying the voices of Palestinian youth and enhancing their role in building a better future for ourselves and our children.⁵⁷²

The vision adopted by the PYN in 2008 aimed to:

...revive a legacy of Palestinian grassroots activism among all Palestinian youth around the world, promoting youth's active participation in our struggle and the struggles of all oppressed and indigenous peoples. To uphold Palestinian collective consciousness and appreciation for our Palestinian national identity, and to assume responsibility towards achieving the political, social, economic, human, civic and environmental rights of the Palestinian people foremost among them the refugee right to return.⁵⁷³

The general assembly was followed by a transnational conference for the over 150 youth in attendance.⁵⁷⁴ The leaders of the network spoke at the opening session and presented financial, project, and activity reports for the years of 2006 to 2008, as well as some visions of

the sort of work PYN would engage in the next two years. The reports had largely been generated by the Follow Up Committee elected at the 2007 France convening, who were working against the grain of many of the challenges incurred in the years prior. Namely, as curiosity brewed within Palestine and among Palestinian communities transnationally about the PYN, it was accompanied with an arsenal of rumors which aimed to de-legitimize the project. This was not particular to the PYN but it was also not exempt from it. Hearsay accused PYN of being a front or youth wing for Fatah, for PFLP, for Hamas, for Islamic Jihad and even of being a Zionist conspiracy formation. Other rumors argued that the group was positioning itself as an anti-PLO and anti-PA political alternative. Murmurs that the PYN was a project funded by the European Union and aimed at normalizing Palestinian youth relations with Israelis also worked to discredit the initiative.⁵⁷⁵

By 2008 these various forms of discursive de-legitimization tactics had become pervasive within Palestinian political cultures. The power and reach of these de-legitimizing tactics were fed by the expanding division and fragmentation of Palestinian constituencies, ideologies, and forces, and facilitated by new technologies of social media. I argue that three main issues gave credence to this phenomenon intensified by wars of legitimacy. The first was a result of intentional smear campaigns launched by other forces who viewed rising Palestinian formations to be a threat to their own power, control, and legitimacy. The second issue was the growing cultural current of trepidation, fear, and suspicion of the domain of politics Palestinians had come to inherit as a result of the conditions produced through Oslo and the 2006 split in national unity. Everyday Palestinians who had not received the kick-backs and benefits of Oslo, and who had come to feel hopeless that any force could be an alternative, had come to be weary of any and all kinds of political formations, projects, and movements and this perhaps is

increasingly true today. Third, these forms of discursive de-legitimization were fueled by the fears generated in Palestinian society as a consequence of the painstaking forms of surveillance and suspicion Palestinian youth had come to experience in visceral ways historically, but especially in a post-September 11, 2001 global War on Terror context. Yet gossip and rumors pervasive within both Palestinian social and political life were not only directed at institutional forms of Palestinian organizations or the various entities which partake in the domain of the political.

This culture of pessimism, trepidation and paranoia also made PYN leaders suspect to gossip and scrutiny, which would warrant an interrogation of their personal lives including employment status, intimate relationships, familial matters, and performances of piety, gender, and sexuality. Exposing imperfections, mistakes, or social practices which were highly stigmatized in our society through online smear campaigns became a weapon of de-legitimization and came to replicate the complex ways surveillance of private affairs had long been a source of intelligence gathering, informant solicitation, and de-legitimization by Zionist forces.⁵⁷⁶ These methods of interpersonal surveillance which lent themselves to exposure campaigns tarnished the image of the broader group. It suggested that the group was not serious about its political practice and that it was socially, culturally, and politically distant from, and sometimes even deviant from, a monolithic understanding of Palestinian/Arab/Muslim cultural values. For instance, following the France convening, a youth from Holland who was upset with the direction of the PYN and who had personal differences with the PYN leadership, made a defamatory website which trash-talked the PYN, proposed an alternative formation to try to solicit the youths he had met in France, and featured private photos of PYN leaders to accompany the smear campaign.

PYN leaders often shared similar perspectives of how these forms of de-legitimization replicated various forms of oppression which the group wanted to confront and challenge head on. However, the delicacy of matters of authenticity and representation in Palestinian communities did not allow the leadership to disavow these exposure campaigns; unfortunately, our personal lives were now in the public eye, and that that came with a certain amount of responsibility. The PYN leaders became critical of one another for making decisions which tarnished the organization's reputation, and which enabled many of these de-legitimization campaigns, adding new strains to the dynamics of trust and support within the group.

Navigating the complex web of events and rumors which had worked to discredit the PYN from the start was a huge feat that many of the young leaders were not prepared for. It caused two major organizational challenges. The first was the ability to establish trust, transparency, and accountability within the group. The second was that these issues made the PYN leadership work in a way that was always tending to crisis and putting out fires, and left little space for collective, forward-moving construction of vision. It made the challenges appear to be quickly expanding and the strengths to be far from reach and necessitating some form of slow, gradual, stable time to achieve them. But it is precisely these conditions that had reflected the current social and political currents within broader Palestinian society and which had taught the members of PYN how to strategically and carefully navigate this paradox.

Rather than avoiding these problems, engaging them in process became key to shaping the organization's methods. It is also what had caused a shift within the culture of the leadership space to become more aware, careful, and serious in our day-to-day lives, as we would realize that the social and political were deeply entangled dimensions, which was both generative and also challenging. By addressing that contradiction, it gave permission to the PYN

leaders to engage with one another about our own private personal and social lives, and they came to trust one another only by having access and rights to hold one another accountable. These shifts in fact heightened our passion and commitment to the work we were doing and not the opposite. Where many works critical of national liberation movements have spoken of the ways that certain identities, practices, and bodies were marginalized within the movement space, the fact that PYN was in the process of re-constructing what and who constituted the nation allowed for both senses of belonging and accountability to be practiced in tandem. This shaped the seriousness and transparency which the leadership prepared to demonstrate in the opening session of the Madrid conference and quelled many but not all of the rumors, though new ones had emerged following the 2008 convening.

While the opening of the Madrid conference offered an out to the contradictions of perilous suspicion the PYN had come to experience in the years prior, it also opened the floodgates to new dilemmas, realizations, and challenges the group would come to engage in the years ahead. In various ways, the Madrid convening demonstrated how severed ties between Palestinian communities had become and the damaging trends it had produced. The leaders, overwhelmed with the logistical stress of a convening so large and short (three days), were also enveloped in political and social challenges they had not accounted or prepared for.

Two major lessons were learned by enduring these challenges. The first was that the convening had amassed far-reaching traction, attention, credibility, and curiosity as a result of it being the first transnational convening of that size since the 1993 Oslo Accords. This resulted in a plentitude of Palestinian formations attempting to dictate the politics of the conference, enroll specific youth from their constituency, and insert their own goals and agendas. Therefore many of the speakers and participants who attended would attempt to utilize the space to advance

their own projects and specific established visions and strategies. The time and space became a *lacuna*, an unfilled interval, in which a struggle for power would play out on multiple levels. In some cases, those projects were connected to broader Palestinian party, international NGO, or solidarity interests, ideologies, methods, and goals. It went so far that representatives from one country were six youth from a specific Palestinian party and were accompanied to the conference by an elder in the party. In other cases, these interests were tied to individual rises to power, what PYN would later come to address as a “superstar syndrome” pervasive within Palestinian politics which privileged fame, power, and visibility of individuals rather than collective processes and grassroots political power.

The second major lesson was that beyond the initial, superficial emotional bond of being generically “Palestinians,” very little bound Palestinian youth to one another in the absence of a frame, shared vocabulary, strategy, and institution which could account for all Palestinians and the range of oppressions they endure. Certainly, Palestinian youth shared much in common and individual friendships were made and blossomed in the years ahead. But their visions of and articulations of the Palestinian struggle were not always harmoniously in sync with one another and sometimes were actually quite antithetical to one another. Each constituency— and by constituency, I mean the various social clusters across lines of geographic, religious, political, ideological, social, and cultural backgrounds—arrived to the Madrid conference with specific forms of how they viewed Palestine, Palestinians, and visions of liberation. But it was in some ways brought to Madrid as a fixed understanding, and each constituency was persistent in trying to sway, solicit, and persuade others to join them in their own philosophy. This reflected just how damaging the Oslo Accords were for any form of Palestinian collectivity, because while there may have been common sense narratives of the general ways Palestinians had come to be

oppressed, there was not a consensus among one another on who the Palestinians were and what characterized a Palestinian collective.

Group discussions reflected somewhat of a competition for claims to the severity of oppression, as Palestinians were now existing in a moment where there even existed a scarcity of capacity to acknowledge differential and uneven forms of oppression. Claims to severity of oppression became in many ways tied to claims of cultural authenticity of Palestinianness, alongside a range of distinct other constructions of what constituted a so-called authentic Palestinian identity. Questions of authenticity were critical because they became attached to the right to be Palestinian, to have power in the space, to be heard and taken seriously, and to be in the leadership.

The Madrid convening forced the PYN leaders to consider whether or not there was truly something that could bind Palestinian youth from across these multiplicities of social, political, ideological, economic, and cultural backgrounds who came to the space with diverging perceptions and articulations of what Palestine was for them. Was there such a thing as a Palestinian identity, or at least a frame or vision that could unify Palestinian youth? Madrid showed a microcosmic reflection of the Palestinian condition and the challenges affecting Palestinian collective strength, strategy, and mobilization. It showed the contradictions between a so-called monolithic Palestinian national identity, a Palestinian national movement, and the multiplicity of Palestinian identities and perceptions of the nation which existed within its constituency.

While the France convening included a smaller number of participants who stayed in one place far away from city life for eleven days and facilitated a strong experience of exchange for these youth, the social bonds in Madrid were not quite the same. Logistics played an

important role in the social and political shaping of the dynamics of the exchange. At a hotel in the heart of the city, with so many people who had not properly been introduced to one another and with only three days to spend with one another during a jam-packed program, the conference accommodations and program did not facilitate a social dynamic which could be enjoyed by everyone. Instead, participants made connections with other similar, legible, and relatable Palestinian youth, which certainly was a rewarding experience for the participants. But in some ways, it exacerbated the already fragile social, cultural, and political divisions Palestinians had already long been enduring. Precisely because youth sought to establish personal relations with other youth who experienced and viewed Palestine in similar ways, the ability to engage contradiction with the pluralistic array of Palestinian youth who envisioned Palestine and the struggle differently could not be had.

Those bonds took place on multiple levels but ended up also becoming barriers to social cohesion among the heterogeneity of Palestinian youth present on a larger more collective level. And as relationships and exchanges developed in small clusters, the lecture and discussion spaces were no longer about actually engaging in dialogue, contradiction, reflection, and collective brainstorming. Rather, teams surfaced within the more collective discussion spaces, pitted against one another as each would advance a specific vision they had already individually believed in and coalesced with others who shared such beliefs. Margins for synthesis, for the creation of new ideas, and for an engagement with contradiction became limited because the factionalism and fragmentation pervasive in Palestinian social and political life had overrun other possibilities. While this presents a somewhat dismal perspective of the events that transpired in the Madrid conference, it was actually in fact one of the most pivotal and monumental learning lessons for the PYN and would establish the foundation of its political

growth for the years of 2008-2010. This was the case precisely because it allowed for Palestinian youth to view the issues within Palestinian society in full, complete, and messy ways without trying to elide, sideline, ignore, or reduce them to non-matters. The PYN leadership, learned not only how dire conditions were for Palestinians and not just how distinctly Palestinian youth envisioned Palestine and Palestinian liberation from one another, but we also learned the range of issues that divided Palestinian communities.

In the evenings, many youths went out with one another, some to bars and cafes, some to parks and restaurants, and some stayed back in hotel rooms. But the social gatherings told a lot about the various forms of fragmentation which existed. For instance, it highlighted the difference between leftist youth social practices and more devout religious participants. Pious youth socialized with one another and in many ways came to identify the social practices of leftist youth as antithetical to national liberation work, shameful to the struggle's legacy, and also a visceral factor in producing security vulnerabilities.⁵⁷⁷ Leftist youth came to link spiritual practices of Islam in particular and pious views of social practices in general, as antithetical to struggles of both individual social and collective political liberation. At some times these perspectives were presented in thoughtful non-denunciatory ways and at others they managed to reproduce both social and political forms of Islamophobia within Palestinian communities. On the other side, conservative perspectives among pious youth viewed ideals of social freedoms among leftist youth as antithetical to national liberation, as for them it signified an enmeshment in Western sensibilities.

Cultural and religious practices in Madrid also came to highlight the hardened inside/outside binary and uneven economic relations among these youth. Many of the youth who partook in social spheres in which alcohol was present for example, came from the shatat

and many were also from more elite classes from metropolitan places in the Arab region including Ramallah, Beirut, and Amman. Many of the more pious participants came from poorer families in villages or refugee camps in the Arab region and from specific political Islam orientations from the far shatat. Each social clustering viewed their practices as more authentically Palestinian; for pious youth, Palestine was viewed as embedded in its religious dimension, and for other youth, Palestine was a global leftist cause and struggle.

Class as it intersects with national identities and the cultural capital with which it is affiliated also played a major role in the heightened fractures of the Madrid conference. While some youth had the monetary means to go out in Madrid to restaurants and cafes and to sightsee, the youth who did not have the means would be left behind in the hotel, sorely aware of the power difference. Further, several of the youth who had come from the occupied territories or the Arab countries, who had never had a chance to travel before, skipped sessions of the conference to see different places in Spain. This caused tensions with many of the youth leaders who thought people were taking advantage of the convening for the sake of personal social experiences. The struggle here is that many of these youth annoyed with those who would leave the program, were not exactly young people who were limited in mobility, travel, and visa restrictions the way these youth who were coming from Palestine and the Arab countries were. Is one's deviation from attending the program a signifier of their loyalty to the struggle? Here, a range of considerations regarding the place for desire come into play, for it was relatively easier for youth who enjoy certain freedoms in their daily lives to suppress desire in the name of the struggle. But at the same time, how can we come to actually collectively build with one another in serious ways if desire of the individual affects their presence, their commitment, and their emotional and psychic capacity for organizing?

But economic and cultural capital, and deciphering between desire and commitment were not the only things fraught with debate regarding authenticity. One example is that a range of tensions and debates emerged inside of the conference program regarding the language that was to be spoken. In the opening session, a Palestinian woman from Syria said that everyone should be speaking Arabic as it is our mother tongue and a critical component of the Palestinian identity. Questions of language continuously surfaced in nearly all PYN convenings and were loaded with a range of cultural and literal questions of proximity to and belonging to the homeland.

These debates of cultural authenticity would cause arguments and frictions within the conference program in a multitude of ways. For example, from the very start of the program, debates broke out among the youth on which national anthem we were to play. Mawtini (My Homeland) is revered by historic Palestinian leftist formations as it signifies more historical pan-Arab sensibilities toward the Palestinian struggle and had long been considered the Palestinian anthem up until 1996. Meanwhile Fid'ae (guerrilla fighter) is the official national anthem officially adopted in 1996 to replace Mawtini, and Biladi (My Country) is the Palestinian national anthem which often is interchanged with Fid'ee. Each signify different phases of Palestinian political history and distinct ideological trajectories. Thus, while the national anthem was to be a unifying symbol of the Palestinian nation, it came to aggravate sectarian arguments regarding legitimacy that other national iconic symbols also coalesce. Yet, shedding the impulse for a return to a national reverence would have been damaging to the PYN because it would have signified a de-politicization of the body and would have characterized it alongside the explosion of initiatives, formations, and institutions concerned with the so-called humanitarian and civic, rather than anti-colonial and de-colonial principles. As Randall Williams explains, there exists an:

Oppositional relation between two major postwar political forms, human rights and decolonization. Setting these critical practices in relation to one another has the two-fold effect of bringing into relief the ways in which the contemporary human rights regime obscures the dialectic between (imperial) violence and (international) law and of demonstrating what kinds of understanding become possible and necessary when force and law are conceived as operating in a symbiotic fashion.⁵⁷⁸

These various social, economic, cultural, and religious practices would surface as tensions as they would become measures of one's own rights to claim Palestinianness, belong to Palestine, and partake in the struggle. They became markers among these youth of who was fit and unfit, worthy and unworthy, to be heard and to be included because each constituency saw the authenticity of a Palestinian identity as hinging on a form of unity and uniformity.⁵⁷⁹

Youth from various parties came to compete with one another for seats in elections, and at one point, a proposal for instating a faction- and sector-based quota system for elections was actually considered. Youth from the Occupied Territories made linkages between the authenticity of one's own Palestinianness with their experience of living under occupation while youth from the shatat (Europe, the Americas, and Australia) argued that Palestinianness was as much about alienation from land, culture, history, and estrangement from having any say in the Palestinian cause. Youth from 1948 Palestine argued that historically the national movement had always excluded them, treated them as suspect to corroboration with the Zionist project, and had not accounted for their constituency in vision and strategies; they called for a redress of the "national" in language we were using. Many refugee youth from the Arab countries sympathized with each of those positions: with the form of estrangement and alienation of the youth of the far shatat, with the hardships of material conditions of the youth under occupation, and with the neglect and abandonment of the youth from 1948. However, for them, maintaining

the framework of the “national” was vital to give them political and moral rights to the Palestinian cause, to the refugee right of return, and to playing a vibrant political role.

By 2008, the split in national unity between the dominant parties had gotten much more severe over the course of two years, and the siege and humanitarian crisis in Gaza was intensifying. The same weekend of the Madrid conference, the weekend of the monumental victory of the Barack Obama presidential campaign, Israel had launched a bombing campaign on Gaza tunnels. As Palestinian people were increasingly split and concerned about what was to come, the convening in Madrid demonstrated how the numerous competitions for voice, space, recognition, power of representation, inclusion, and claims to authenticity were not directed toward the colonial project but rather inwards toward one another. New initiatives across the world were simultaneously working to formulate new Palestinian institutions in the Shatat which was reflecting the pillage of power of the PLO.⁵⁸⁰

I do not share this information to imply that there was something inherently wrong with the Palestinian youth in the conference. Rather, I share it to demonstrate that the organization’s leaders at the time had not accounted for such matters and therefore did not construct a conference program which allowed for a facilitation or engagement of these topics or accounted for who the stakeholders at the table would be. For one, Madrid 2008 is perhaps the only convening of all of PYN’s gatherings in which struggles for visa attainment did not exclude a particular demographic. In Barcelona in 2006, the network had not yet expanded its reach to youth constituencies in Australia and the Americas. In France the year prior, noticeably absent were participants from Lebanon and Syria, who were not granted visas. In Syria, the year following the Madrid convening, noticeable absent were youth from 1948 Palestine. And in all the years ahead, as the siege in Gaza would intensify, PYN’s distance from its own members in

Gaza would grow as they were not able to partake in any of the convenings and very few Palestinian youth in the shatat were allowed entry to the West Bank. By 2015, most of the PYN leaders of the shatat with citizenship in a global North country had all been denied entry into the West Bank as well. Therefore, Madrid 2008 remains a vital memory for PYN/M because it was one of the rare moments where an interface of Palestinian communities who live across militarized borders, sieges, and occupations would interface with one another. Hopes were that we would have achieved greatness when we had such a chance. What emerged from the conference was the learned lesson that a specific engagement of questions of Palestinian identity was necessary, as it is informed by these various social, ideological, and geographic borders that divide us.

In the years between 2006 and the conclusion of the Madrid conference in 2008, the leaders of the network had organized campaigns, delegations, speaking tours, focus groups, actions, and events. These undertakings came to engage an additional approximately 300 Palestinian youth across the world in coordination processes separate from coordinating committee meetings and the transnational convenings which had by that time already brought together nearly 235 Palestinian youth. These conferences, activities, and convenings were critical to establishing channels of communication that had not existed in the same way within the contemporary terrain of Palestinian politics. They were also critical to offer the youth leaders a diagnostic experience in which they could come to understand overlaps and distinctions in Palestinian youth needs, aspirations, experiences, desires, skills, visions, and challenges. In these convenings they could come to diagnose and articulate all of the odds stacked up against the Palestinians in relation to Israeli colonialism, its alliances, and the weakness of the Palestinian political situation. But what's more, these youth would learn of an

abundance of additional political and social challenges which would complicate a reconciliation of the fragmentation Palestinians were enduring, and further complicate the development of a politic which could respond to the current conditions and a vehicle which could be built to do so on grassroots-transnational levels.

Copenhagen, 2009: Urgency of Necessity and Un-preparedness of Reality

At the 2008 general assembly, nine members were elected to the International Executive Board (IEB) from Palestine, Syria, Italy, Spain, Norway, France, the United States, Venezuela, and Chile, four of whom continued on as formed members of the Follow Up Committee from 2007-2008. The new IEB gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark in February of 2009 for their first board meeting. The meeting was in coordination with the launch of the Palung Association which was a PYN member organization and sought to achieve the social and political empowerment of Palestinian youth in Denmark. The IEB had arrived to the Denmark meeting uncertain of how to proceed following the monumental senses of exhaustion and confusion from the 2008 Madrid convening. There were several critical political discussions which would be tabled from the Madrid evaluation debrief and itemized on the agenda of the Denmark meeting. These agenda items were meant to more thoroughly address the many learned lessons and contradictions the Madrid convening had revealed regarding Palestinian youth and broader conditions of Palestinian politics. Specifically, the topics which embattled these leaders in endless debate, arguments, and dialogues were those that they each had differing visions on. Foremost among them, was the question of PYN's understanding of Palestinian representation, Palestinian identity, and the role and function of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

By February of 2009, the Gaza Strip had just undergone the most excruciating of Israeli assaults which had shocked the world and had both deepened the split between the Palestinian parties and mobilized heightened solidarity with the Palestinian cause and Palestinian popular critique of the PA for its weakness and continued cooperation with Israeli forces. As the conditions in Palestine were deteriorating so rapidly, the PYN leadership had become sorely aware of the valiance necessary for political movement work. At the same time, following the Madrid convening, PYN felt itself to be far from ready to provide vision, space, and strategy to Palestine's youth. This prompted the urgency to find a way to work through contradiction, but at the same time made challenges butterfly quickly. In reflecting on all the things they had seen, witnessed, observed, and learned in Madrid, and in studying the political changes among Palestinians and global solidarity movements as a result of the 2009 attack on Gaza, the IEB engaged in days-long debate, discussions, and arguments. The meetings started in the morning and sometimes went through the middle of the night. But the experience of this IEB meeting was critical in launching a more intentional political process not only among the leadership but among the PYN member constituency. This would be called *engaging contradiction through collective process*.

As Charles Hale notes, "by naming and confronting the contradictions from the outset, we deflect the common objection that activist scholars seek reductive, politically instrumental truths at the expense of social complexity."⁵⁸¹ For PYN, the naming and confronting of contradiction was critical in order to account for the social complexity within our condition. But I would be dishonest if I argued that we approached our work guided and motivated by that principle. We didn't really understand what an engagement of contradiction in collective ways could produce other than a sort of mediation between various collective constituencies to

overcome fragmentation. Rather, the concept was the only thing left to be done when we had realized the gravity of disjunction and internalized oppression in our community following the Madrid convening and the absence of any formation which was working through such social complexity to produce possibility for liberation strategy and frames, resources, and popular consent which would enable and activate it. We especially had lost faith in the existing Palestinian establishment to facilitate such possibility after the 2009 attack on the Gaza Strip and the PA's continued negotiations and security cooperation with Israel. In this sense, engagement of contradiction through collective processes was both our process to overcome the damage brought on through Oslo, informed by the urgency of Palestinian loss of land and life, and the only thing we could do distinct from other Palestinian formations and projects at the time. In the process of engaging these contradictions, we became quite attuned to the way seemingly benevolent common-senses and discourses were in fact part and parcel of maintaining the conditions of the Palestinian ontology of Nakba.

What was critical for this meeting was that it was the first serious methodological engagement which established that rather than eliding or resolving contradiction, PYN would engage it in dialogue and develop programming dedicated to this purpose. The goal here was not a hurried establishment of political discourse to be the most radical or most in tune with what many of the leaders had already been practicing in their own organizing lives. Rather, it was about engaging youth on grassroots levels to provide a sort of political synthesis. It would be thoroughly understood by, consented to, and agreed upon by Palestinian youth from different political, ideological, social, and geographic contexts. If they were to partake in the shaping of the construction of the vision, analysis, methods, theorizations, discourses, and strategies, then they would be more accountable as a grassroots base, able and equipped to

move in tandem with the rest of the body, and able to defend Palestinian youth rights and responsibilities in the national movement against all the attacks from a multiplicity of directions. Further, if the base was central in establishing the purpose and trajectory of the project, then mechanisms for holding individuals and leaders accountable to the collective process could happen.

The Copenhagen meeting instituted a three-tiered process to work toward a process of engaging contradiction. No political positions, statements, and discourses were to be made in the name of the organization unless three things had been established. The first was identifying all contradictions which damaged the ability of the group to function in cohesive ways and express a joint politic. The group agreed that following the identification of these contradictions, we must thoroughly be engaged in an intentional program. It was up to the leadership of the PYN to develop the mechanism to establish such a program, not to resolve the contradictions or ignore them on their own accord. In this way, the leadership was tasked with facilitating process for the grassroots rather than developing and dictating politics from above. The second was that in the process of engaging contradiction, intensive study, reflection, and collective debate and discussion through various meetings and convenings which brought together enough diversity of perspectives and skills was necessary so that it was not narrowly informed. These processes would mean that PYN positions or statements would establish a politic for the organization which the leadership could default to in all future instances, in decision making of programs, collaborations, and activities, and in writing statements and public propaganda. The third was that PYN would not adopt or release formal positions on any one subject or topic unless its practices, strategies, and activities would enable it as an organization to stand behind its decision. In other words, PYN would not write or adopt statements for the purposes of discourse

alone or legitimacy alone but rather for guiding the trajectory of activities and strategies of the group. This was productive in that it maintained the development of the organization in a serious way rather than getting pulled to participate in the business of releasing statements just for the purpose of having voice, visibility, and recognition. But it was also a decision which inhibited PYN in many instances from making critical decisions, fitting into the fashion of the growing global Palestine solidarity field and establishing its presence in the broader political and social terrain of Palestinian politics.

Syria, 2009: What Is the Palestinian Identity?

Both political and social contradictions which emerged from the differing ways youth in Madrid came to define and claim authority over “Palestinian identity” would be tackled in the summer of 2009 in PYN’s first-ever summer camp held in Damascus, Syria. For three weeks, sixty-five Palestinian youth from thirteen countries would engage in rigorous study of Palestinian history, watch films, meet and hear lectures from a diversity of iconic figures of the Palestinian revolution throughout history, and engage in serious discussions regarding what constituted a Palestinian identity, nation, nationalism, and community.

The Syria summer camp was a vital turning point for the PYN in two major ways. It was the first major transnational activity the PYN would host in an Arab country. This was critical to dispel rumors which aimed to portray the PYN as a group disconnected from the political, cultural, and social context of the Arab region, and it allowed the PYN to grow closer in many ways to Palestinian and Arab establishment political terrains and grassroots bases. The major political figures who joined the PYN as speakers for the summer camp both enabled the PYN to present itself and be perceived as a rising political formation while also dispelling many anxieties

about PYN growing among the Palestinian parties. This is because by that time, the organization had become more comfortable explaining that it was still in a formative phase, and that it was unwilling to be tied to or under the wing of any Palestinian party, but that it was not an anti-political project. Instead, PYN emphasized that the importance of the project was to allow for Palestinian youth to realize their political rights and responsibilities to the national liberation struggle and to play a critical role in revitalizing it. This philosophy was perceived well by the Palestinian political establishment, which by 2009 had become sorely aware of the new generation's mounting grievances against the political domain. Particularly, Palestinian political figures who lived in Syria shared many of the PYN's grievances with establishment politics within the homeland and deeply believed in the revitalization of a transnational political project, body, and strategy, as their main constituents were overwhelmingly refugees still awaiting and desiring their return to Palestine.

The second way this program was vital for PYN/M was that it truly was the starting point from which we engaged a years-long development of PYN philosophies on Palestine, Palestinians, representation, and identity. Here the PYN would find ways to develop a vocabulary which did not rely on singularizing and totalizing a Palestinian identity under the rubric of nationalism but rather acknowledged and celebrated Palestinian political pluralism and social heterogeneity. It was in this camp where the youth would more deeply perceive of differences as potential assets to the liberation struggle and explore ideas for framing our collective identity as one which would enable and activate these assets. In the Syria camp, an exploration of the history of the Palestinian people and struggle was a vital learning experience for many of these youths who had never quite had the opportunity to dedicate three weeks of their lives to a critical examinations of Palestine and the Palestinians.

The first week was dedicated to this study of history and to understanding the ways the Palestinian national movement played a critical role in shaping and defining political and social characteristics of different generations of Palestinians. In this sense, the Syria camp offered the first thread of history to these youth; in later convenings we would expand on this and come to explore how history had shaped the moment that we were living in.

The second week was dedicated to unpacking and identifying the various ways Palestinian identity was imagined, articulated, conveyed, experienced, and practiced in different geographic, ideological, social, spiritual, and political circuits at the time. The program offered both time and space to examine and explore these various topics and therefore they were not exactly seen as antithetical to one another and did not bring up the same acute tensions that emerged in Madrid in 2008. The structure of the Syria camp allowed for many youth to explore ideas of how to bring two seemingly non-linked notions of identity together to inform one another: the national collective singular one and the constituent or individual-based one. Most important was the way the youth tried to explore a way to create some sense of collective definition without erasing, marginalizing, or triggering any one specific demographic or community within the broader Palestinian community.

The third week focused on establishing a more flexible and robust account of “Palestinian Identity” to include a multiplicity of social, cultural, religious, political, and ideological practices and beliefs which were all bound by a shared colonial condition. The language of colonial conditions first appeared in PYN’s theorizations of a shared experience among Palestinian youth in the discussions of the Follow Up Committee at their July 2008 Madrid meeting. It would formally appear on the 2008 to 2010 IEB report to the general

assembly and would offer a major platform from which PYN's theorization on anti-colonialism, Palestine and the Palestinians, the Arab Dimension, and Solidarity would be informed.

Basque Country, Spain, 2010: PYN Summer School

In February of 2010, the PYN International Executive Board would meet for their third in-person meeting in Athens, Greece. There, they had acknowledged how critical the summer camps and conferences were for both establishing legitimacy and credibility in the Palestinian political terrain, and for diagnosing the needs, desires, and conditions of Palestinian youth and exploring shared politics among them. Most importantly, these convenings offered important channels for youth to meet and exchange ideas and work with one another on various campaigns and projects. For PYN, the convenings were also critical to recruit youth as members and to prompt momentum and enthusiasm for more serious working commitments. But by 2010, the IEB was uncertain as to where to go next. The convenings were very expensive, and very time- and capacity-consuming, and had not exactly resulted in any sustained working relationships between the youth who had participated in them. Instead, the work of developing campaigns, programs, and processes was being shouldered only by the IEB and even then several members of the IEB had become inactive. Five members of the IEB had sustained the majority of this work thus far, and we were running out of ideas on how to develop PYN into the next phase.

After important discussions in the Athens convening, the IEB had decided that it was time to try to really develop a conversation with a broader group of PYN members that was as deep as those persistently taking place within the IEB space, in order to expand the core of leaders of the group. This decision was made for two reasons: first, the IEB believed that a

broader more diverse group was necessary in order to engage contradiction in the process of developing collectively constructed PYN ideals, positions, directions, and frameworks; second, this decision allowed PYN to focus less on breadth in the convenings and to focus instead on more meaningful and serious building of the organization. Therefore, the idea to host a PYN summer school emphasized the question of how to build a sustained transnational youth movement.

By summer of 2010, the IEB had prepared a four-week intensive summer program which would be held in the Basque country. This summer program brought together the highest active level of PYN membership and prospective members representing 13 countries. At the time, the PYN had been planning for a second program to take place in Greece, which would be a summer camp similar to that of the Syria camp hosted one year prior. The purpose of the Basque program was to deepen a PYN core member engagement in the building of the vision, strategies, direction, and infrastructure of the group based on the learned lessons and engagement of process the years prior. The summer camp was intended to offer a learning, networking, and exploration process for youth similar to what the Syria camp had offered on less intensive levels.

But by the Athens meeting, the PYN IEB had decided not to rely on international NGOs and foundations for as much monetary support. Instead, the group focused on appealing to Palestinian individuals, communities, and organizations for support. The group was not able to raise enough funds to host both programs and thus canceled the 2010 Greece Summer Camp, focusing instead on the Spain summer school. The application process rigorously sought youth who could bring unique skills, experience, vision, and opinions to the program. This time, the IEB was not exactly concerned with a grand public display in order to navigate Palestinian politics or

discourses about the PYN and was therefore more intentional about its selection process. The focus was on bringing together youth genuinely interested in committing to the building of the new formation and on expanding the core leadership base.⁵⁸² The IEB designed a syllabus which included readings sent to the participants a few months prior to the program on political theory, history, and revolutionary struggle. The program included lectures by Palestinian scholars, political figures, and strugglers which addressed topics such as ideologies of the various parties, histories of the national struggle, Palestine in Third World and global anti-colonial contexts, gender and nationalism, the historical role of youth in struggle, and histories of Zionism, colonialism, apartheid, and settler-colonialism in Palestine and different places in the world.

At the IEB meeting the night before the start of the program, the five members of the IEB present at the school had met to discuss the program breakdown, facilitation roles, goals for each day, and logistical matters. The second half of the IEB meeting was dedicated to each of the five leaders explaining their personal visions and goals for the program. By the end of that discussion, the IEB had reached a collective agreement that the practical, responsible thing to do if the summer school does not offer new leadership, new visions for accountability, structure, direction, and building, would be to end the project. However, that conclusion was rendered unnecessary as the Basque convening became the most critical philosophical program in PYN/M's history.

Participants engaged in a program which began at 9AM and continued until 10PM. Critical conversations which could not be completed during the day were reserved until the evening time, and in some cases the youth stayed up overnight to complete the discussions. These discussions varied from debates on the strategies of the parties to the ideological opportunities and limitations within various Arab, Islamic, Palestinian, Third World, Indigenous,

and anti-Capitalist formations and forces, among others. The youth discussed what distinguishes our generations from previous generations and engaged in serious and rigorous interrogation of the Palestinian condition. What was critical about the Basque convening was that the program presented the accomplished realizations which they had come to adopt based on the years prior. With a critical perspective on matters of identity and representation, PYN by that time was deeply concerned with structural forms of oppression and collective conditions. The Basque program was not dedicated to an individual explorative experience on matters of identity, authenticity, and representation. The program was also not overdetermined by discussions of Palestinian fragmentation, power struggles for legitimacy, or ways to amplify existing campaigns, programs, and discourses. Many of those concerns had come to be reconciled in the way that PYN defined the Palestinian experience as one that was heterogeneous but bound by its national frame because of a shared colonial condition. They were also reconciled by having clear objectives for the purpose of the school: to develop a PYN political leadership core to widen the core of the IEB, and to help launch PYN strategically, programmatically, and politically into the next phase. But most importantly, after several years of diagnostic convenings, building a network, name, and visibility alongside an understanding of what was needed, it was now time to synthesize such conditions and develop what would become the first official political tenets of the PYN body.

The support of the Basque community in the facilitation of the program was more than a logistical gesture. PYN learned much from our Basque allies including ways collective forms of accountability could come to define an entire village and not just an organization. This experience deepened our understanding of land struggle, revolutionary solidarities, and anti-colonialism globally as tenets of our own philosophical trajectory. Much of this experience and

the work that came out of the school in committees would eventually lead to the development of more national chapters on the ground in various countries. In the end, it was from the 2010 summer school that a real process of base building in different countries would be realized, leading to a more regular and real membership base outside of the core leadership. This new group of approximately forty PYN core leaders, would continue exploring topics and matters of concern, and prepare for what would become the new merahel in PYN history.

At its peak (November 2008-March 2011), PYN came to engage and mobilize over 750 Palestinian youth who resided in thirty-three different countries. The way they came together in various convenings to diagnosis conditions of the Palestinian people, the particular challenges youth were enduring in political organizing work and explore opportunities for working together to overturn facts of history, was vital for the first two and a half merahel. Youth from these various communities would also host focus group discussions, mini-conferences, and events in their own locals in which Palestinian youth could explore and discuss the project with the representatives who had attended the international convenings. During this time, PYN also hosted a series of delegations, including an aid caravan to Gaza and international speaking tours. PYN members on the ground began formulating local groups and organizing demonstrations, vigils, cultural and educational events, and community dialogues in the name of PYN as well. In many ways, this period was one in which trial-and-error grounded theory approaches to understanding the challenges and dilemmas to revitalizing a collective Palestinian struggle were more deeply explored.

The third merhala channeled this grounded theory exploration process into the creation of methodological processes of engaging contradiction and developing collective ideals and definitions of both Palestinian youth conditions and aspirations as well as the organization's

ideals and political framework. These processes continued to be developed throughout phase three and were intended to operate not only on transnational levels but also within national chapters working more concretely on the ground. In other words, whereas in the first two phases tensions primarily occurred between individuals horizontally, in the third phase, schisms emerged between on-the-ground chapters and the International body. Although each scale engaged in dialogues, mechanisms for facilitating dialogues between the two scales became difficult. The dialogue between the engagements of contradiction processes taking place on two different scales in many ways created contradictions that threatened to unravel the group. However, what saved PYM in this period was precisely its methodological process, which drew out the dialogue and tried to establish a theorization to guide new forms of practice.

Following the founding conference and general assembly, from November 2008-April 2011 the PYN would produce two major transnational convenings of Palestinian youth. The first was a summer camp with sixty Palestinian youth from thirteen countries in Damascus, Syria. This convening was determined by the struggles experienced in Madrid. Its theme was a rigorous exploration of “the Palestinian identity.” In 2010, following the various ways the PYN came to understand questions of identity, authenticity, belonging, and collectivity after the Syria camp, they produced a summer school with thirty-five participants from eleven countries in the Basque Country of Spain. It is the summer school of the Basque Country that established the original *serious* theorizations by engaging contradictions identified in the years prior. From this summer school, the PYN would continue to theorize these topics until arriving to the second International General Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey in April of 2011.

By the time of the second assembly, PYN transitioned to the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), and questions of identity and representation became increasingly arbitrary to

the movement's political philosophy and methodological practice. In their place emerged collectively constructed definitions and theorizations of colonial conditions, shared visions, and the insistence on generating a collective political methodological process in the pursuit of transnational movement formation and strategy. These concepts would become calcified in 2012 when PYM adopted ten political position papers. However, these ideals were also persistently re-defined as events of the region would transpire, specifically Israel's assault on Gaza in 2009 and the 2011 Arab Uprisings. These events, in particular, posited new challenges to the concise, clean, and unilateral descriptions of the terms PYN/M had been engaging and, in some cases,, mandated a redress and re-conceptualization that could be commensurate with the realities Palestinian youth were witnessing.

Phase Four: Shifting from a Network to a Movement

In April 2011, the PYN arrived at the second international general assembly in Istanbul, Turkey with representatives from thirteen national branches and a handful of independent participants who represented countries which had yet to form official branches. In the second general assembly, they would make the collective decision to change the name of the organization to the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and change the structure, methods, goals, and strategies of the organization to accommodate the shift. One of the critical decisions made in this convening was to develop an official PYM theoretical framework comprised of political positions on topics for which the members felt the lack of a clear, public vision was limiting sustained and focused practice. Those topics included PYM understandings and positions on: a.) the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority; b.) the Arab dimension; c.) resistance; and d.) solidarity.

These four topics in particular had become the major issues that had enmeshed PYM in internal debate for years. For the chapter from the West Bank, the PYM's lack of a public position on the Palestinian establishment made it difficult for them to offer any kind of political clarity of their vision on the ground among Palestinian youth as well as among organizations. How could they determine who they do/do not work with, where they do/do not appeal for financial resources, and how could they navigate a political terrain in Palestine which was oversaturated with political sectarian sensibilities in which the first question anyone asks seeks to draw a factional affiliation with some formal political party or institution?

The Arab dimension was a topic that the Jordan branch called on the PYM to deepen and establish its orientation to. By April of 2011, the Arab Uprisings were four months underway. Alongside the Arab Uprisings, the revolutions which had swept across Tunisia and Egypt and the persistent uprisings still present in Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria had mandated PYM to understand the stakes, opportunities, and strategies the Arab countries would play in relation to Palestine. PYN had issued a public statement supporting the Arab revolutions early on and had been connecting deeply with youth organizers in Tunisia and Egypt to discuss what risks and opportunities the developments in the region would bring on.

For many within the PYN, especially those of us who resided outside the Arab region, the proposal brought forward by the Jordan chapter was a worrisome trajectory for the overall health of the organization. We were worried that in getting caught up in the changes of the region and by making such drastic changes to our structure, visions, and practices, we would lose the salience of what it means to be a Palestinian movement and that the events of the region were so unpredictable we wouldn't be able to recover from a major defeat. The Istanbul assembly was the first time these tensions would surface though they in fact expanded

tremendously in the years ahead. In some ways they offered incredible opportunity to us and in other ways they impaired our ability to protect ourselves from the currents taking over the region. But the events in the region mandated an engagement with these matters. A rise of a new wave of youth movement protests in Palestine which began as the March 15th movement and later called themselves the *Hirak al-shababi* (also translated into English as Palestine Youth Movement), also confirmed for us that we could not wait out the events in the region until things were more clear.⁵⁸³ The development of an Arab dimension paper would theorize how we viewed the events of the region, the opportunities and risks, our support for our Arab youth counterparts fighting capitalist exploitation, imperialist reactionary regimes, and dictatorships and how all of this was connected to Palestine.

In this regard, both the Syria and Lebanon chapter strongly endorsed an exploration and adoption of a position on the Arab dimension. The Sweden and France branch also endorsed the call as their local contexts consisted of large Arab diasporas for whom Palestine was central. However, the call for the development of an official PYM position paper was accompanied by a proposal to expand the PYM membership base to Arab youth as well, not just Palestinian youth. While the majority of membership was supportive of exploring and adopting an Arab dimension position, the PYM membership was split on the question of expanding to non-Palestinian members, and this became a subject of intensified division, debate, and attention in the years ahead.

Various members also called on PYM to adopt a position paper on resistance. By 2011, a range of forms of resistance were co-opted by NGO industries, criminalized, and/or negated. This co-optation was due to the way the expanding War on Terror regime post-9/11, but especially at the beginning of the Arab Uprisings, had developed sensitivities within the

Palestinian political terrain on legitimate and non-legitimate forms of resistance. In confronting a range of ways neo-liberal modes of social media, NGO, and rights-based activism partook in the delegitimization of other forms of resistance and often rendered it terrorism, youth on the ground in various places became increasingly curious and concerned with PYM's perspective and philosophy of how it understood resistance.

Lastly, many chapters insisted that the PYM needed a position paper on solidarity in order to guide local program, activity, and strategy development for chapters, particularly for those in the far shatat. This was especially important for the US and European chapters where Palestine organizing was inundated with a range of various types of solidarity groups and PYM did not exactly have a clear philosophy and framework of who to work with, how, and how to conceptualize solidarity more broadly. Through the development of this position paper, PYM found ways to develop its critique of existing solidarity frameworks and to offer perspective on ethical two-way joint struggle modes of solidarity with various geographies, causes, communities, and peoples in the world. In many ways, the presentation of those alternative forms of solidarity reinvigorated not a new, but a very old anti-colonial mode of internationalist alliance the Palestinians had long practiced, while simultaneously pushing against the ethno-centric nationalism of an all-Palestinian formation.

Structural Changes: No longer a Loose Activist Network

In the 2011 general assembly, the shift between the network and the movement also included a shift to the transnational structure of the PYM leadership. An International Executive Board (IEB) was to remain, but was to be housed within a 15-person International Central Council (ICC), which would become the political bureau of the PYM. The National Coordinating Committees would transform to National Executive Boards (NEB) and also include positions for

National Delegates who would come to be the liaisons with the International body. The NEBs would operate on a country basis, but in larger countries that included more than one chapter such as cases like the US, Local Executive Boards (LEBs) would be established for local chapters as well. The new leadership structure was created in order to redistribute decision making powers, leadership positions, and labor from the small infrastructure of the international body alone to give more power and weight to national chapters. It was meant to facilitate a more intensive process between local bases and the transnational collective. The goal of PYM by this point, having established a strong enough understanding of the needs of the new generation and of the Palestinian colonial condition and political deadlock, was to establish a structure and process which could facilitate a flow of experience from the ground into a place where it could interface in the transnational sphere. There, in that interface, contradictions could be engaged through a collective method in the pursuit of developing visions, frameworks, and positions which could guide PYM activities in all places and on all levels, though local chapters could find ways to cater the transnational frameworks to their particular context and needs in their local community. In other words, the post-2011 phase for PYM sought to give more power to practice on the ground rather than focusing all time, energy, and resources within the abstract transnational sphere. The chapters thus became the new basis of the PYM transnational rather than the inverse.

In the summer of 2011, the PYM ICC along with twenty more PYM members from various chapters gathered in the South of France for a two-and-a-half-week summer program. There, they deepened the conversations which had led to major structural, political, and trajectory shifts for the PYM in the general assembly. Again incorporating lectures, readings, group workshops, debates, and political disagreements, the France program became the

grounds to engage and develop the topics selected at the general assembly and to transform them into position papers. Following the France conference, the ICC created small committees to study the history of each of the four topics and to develop a first draft of a position paper for each. After several months of working with one another, the committees brought drafts of the position papers to Amman, Jordan in February of 2012 for dialogue within the broader ICC.

One of the greatest changes of the second International General Assembly was that for the first time, the PYM had eliminated organizational membership from its membership constituency. As the group had come to more seriously consider the process of base building on the ground, they found that maintaining organizational members would present a conflict of interest to the group's collective vision moving forward. Mostly because organizations, especially those youth groups tied to the Palestinian political parties, came with certain levels of constraints and restrictions in the PYM space which inhibited them from being able to generate an autonomous political philosophy and direction in process with the group and to be able to then carry such a framework into their own local activities on the ground. However, the cutting of organizational members upset many members of the PYM, though they were not quite active members, and thus they withdrew their membership almost immediately.

At the same time, a handful of important founding members who were active and vital in the founding process—who also happened to be our key members with the closest experience, ties to, and relationships with the Palestinian party organizational experience—believed that the switch from the network to the movement happened too soon, before PYM was prepared and before it could operate as a true movement. Feeling that the decision was made in ways which did not engage the membership with enough conversation, they also left the PYM. They argued that the PYM came to define itself as a movement even though it was still

engaging ideas and organizing activities, and that movements (in the traditional sense) had very clear ideologies, an established organizational identity, and strategies to achieve it. In the 2012 Amman IEB meeting, Leena, the Vice General Coordinator of the IEB from Jordan, charted a map on a white board of our membership engagement history. What we realized was that between April of 2011 and February 2012, a serious intensive cleaning up of non-active members went into effect and the membership base dropped from 554 members to 84.

While the numbers were striking, PYM came to realize that the process had necessarily relied on recruiting 554 hypothetical non-active to semi-active members, but that transitioning into 84 active members was in fact an achievement in many ways. Our base was smaller, but on the same page, committed—theoretically—to the same process and project. But it is exactly in this context when PYM’s resources began to dwindle, access to political space became more difficult, and when we would experience significantly more challenges and enclosures from the Palestinian establishment. For example, the West Bank chapter, which had been doing a range of various educational, art, and empowerment activities and programs and participating in various coalitions and campaigns, was now prohibited from doing so. The excuse was that in calling ourselves a “movement” we now would need to register as a licensed political party, which PYM was not, and that without such registration with the ministry of interior, activities in Palestine would be prohibited.

Amman, 2012 Engaging Contradictions: A Palestinian or Arab Movement?

By the 2012 ICC meeting in Amman, so much had already changed in the region caused by the monumental shifts of the Arab Uprisings. In Palestine, the March 15th Movement, later called the Palestine Youth Movement, had risen alongside their Arab counterparts, calling for an

end to the split in national unity, an end to PA capitulation to and security cooperation with Israel and the US, and a rejection of the Oslo peace and negotiations framework for politics.⁵⁸⁴ Some of these youths overlapped with PYM the organization or had come to know and work with members of PYM in various capacities. But the movements were short lived as the PA would quell the protests with increased policing measures and because the drastic changes in the Arab region would eclipse Palestine as center-stage, an occurrence which Palestinians had long been accustomed to in Arab politics. The PYM was quite critical of the protests on the ground. We believed that the protests, which primarily called for ending the split in national unity, had elided the revolutionary demands that had guided all Intifadas of past Palestinian generations, and also that it was not commensurate with the revolutionary zeal we had witnessed through the Arab region where protestors were attempting to oust regimes. But we did engage the protests, at times protesting along side them, at other times trying to coordinate with those on the ground in Palestine.

These changes had activated our members at all levels, which both offered immense opportunity and a plentitude of push and pull factors that overwhelmed, distracted, and exhausted the PYM leadership from being able to thoughtfully and intentionally engage process. Actions on the ground in multiple countries where PYM participated necessitated a PYM discourse on the events of the region. But conflicting differences of how to articulate the phenomena heightened the troubles between members of the PYM ICC with one another, between members in local chapters with one another and between the chapters with the ICC and with one another.

In Jordan, our members were knee deep in the thick of the *Jordanian Hirak*, the grassroots movement against the monarchy, though they had endured serious internal strife

within the group. Half of the group had wanted to remain working within the “Palestinian” sphere, offering educational programs and social programs in Palestinian camps. The other half wanted to focus on the political mobilization of the Hirak on the streets in Jordan. The split, ironically, was both a classed and gendered division. While many of the women in the PYM-Jordan chapter came from middle-upper class elite backgrounds, it was they who wanted to maintain the Palestinian national frame of the group and ride out the possible earthshaking political changes which were befalling Jordan. Many of the men, however, came from more working-class backgrounds and came to see the “Palestinian” domain as a signifier for a nationalist elite politic. They believed that work on the ground through the Jordanian frame, speaking to the needs and issues of the everyday Jordanians, was both a more ethical and revolutionary politics which also enabled a longer-term regional power change which could more effectively change tides for Palestinians and Palestine as well. These schisms within the Jordan chapter would become heightened in the February 2012 ICC meeting in Amman, as the proposal to expand the PYM membership base to Arab membership would resurface.

The Jordan chapter argued that in order to connect the work on the ground to the transnational efforts, PYM could not present itself as a Palestinian-only membership. They argued first, that by overcoming the strife of clashing Jordanian and Palestinian nationalisms, which was very particular to the Palestinian political history in Jordan and the PLO’s attempted overthrow of the Jordanian monarchy in the late 1960s, these youth would do more for the Palestinian cause *as Jordanians, working in a Jordanian arena, alongside Jordanian masses*, than they would by asserting their Palestinianness. They also argued that Palestinian national frames had come to be affiliated with abstract politics, elite classes, and capital, whereas average everyday Jordanians were finally making their grievances—largely tied to poverty—a political

mobilizing catalyst. The moment was ripe to pressure the Jordanian regime, and an opening was made to address its corroboration with the West and Israel through a movement which primarily was mobilized against the regime because of its persistent class warfare. But the debates regarding the Arab dimension were complex because they hosted a range of entangled conversations regarding Palestinian and Jordanian national frames: 1) the distinctions between a settler-colonial, dispossessed struggle (Palestinians) vs. an anti-imperialist struggle (other Arabs); 2) the ways Palestinian communities and causes signified monetary and cultural capital as these communities were part of the Jordanian bourgeoisie; and 3) the tensions regarding whether or not PYM was prepared to shoulder the complexity of the Arab dimension, which we supported in theory but which would require us to make quick decisions, possibly irreversible ones, spilling out of our own transnational-national frame, amidst so much uncertainty.

While in theory, the majority of the PYM viewed the popular movements on the ground in the Arab countries as something deeply important for Palestinian liberation, there was also a genuine form of investment in these revolutions as many of our members had lived in these countries and societies their whole lives. This was the case for many of our members from Syria who were witnessing the beginning of the revolutions, enthused that popular mobilization was sweeping the country, but being told by an array of Palestinian political forces to stay neutral or stay out of these movements. On the one hand, our members felt an ethical pull at them as members of Syrian society who wanted to stand with their people; on the other hand, they knew well the particularity of their vulnerability as Palestinians. In June of 2011, the Syrian regime endorsed the Global March of Return actions which took place at the borders alongside scores of Palestinians in Lebanon who also protested. As regime forces encouraged Palestinians to go to the border, Israeli sniper fire killed several of them and wounded many more. As

Palestinians returned to their camps, growing frustrations with the regime accrued. They felt that the regime used them, their bodies, and the Palestinian cause to earn legitimacy among the masses as an anti-imperialist vanguard amidst mounting pressure accruing through the Syrian revolution. From that moment, more and more Palestinians joined the Syrian revolution, or at least supported internally displaced Syrian refugees as a result of regime bombardments and destruction. Some of our own members were some of them. Thus, the sense that Palestinians were part of the social, cultural, and political fabric of their host countries made them realize that the revolutions were more than about transnational solidarity but rather were directly about them and their lives as well.

But the fear of expanding the membership to Arab youth was that we were not prepared to shift from the Palestinian national frame or to give up on deepening our understanding of the particular Palestinian experience. In retrospect, I think these anxieties in many ways were both personal power struggles between competing figures and competing chapters within the PYM and ideological struggles. The ideological tensions were many, often overlapping, and often shifting as quickly as events on the ground were changing. They ranged from differences of how members saw capitalism, imperialism, secular-nationalism, and Islamism to differences in affinities and proximities to different political forces now more deeply involved in sectarian strife.

Porto Alegre, Brazil 2012 and Tunis, 2012: Linking Theory to Practice

As the tensions within the PYM heightened confusion regarding direction and what was to be done, the ICC focused on the engagement of contradiction in the development of the four political papers voted to be developed by the membership at the 2011 Assembly. As previously discussed, the topics were the PLO and the PA, resistance, the Arab Dimension, and solidarity.

From long and tedious processes engaging differences on these topics, a collective consensus on them was finally reached in Amman in 2012 so long as an additional six documents were to be produced to augment what was written in these original four. Those topics were Palestine and the Palestinians (an offshoot of the Arab Dimension paper), anti-colonialism (an offshoot of the solidarity paper), the rights-based approach (an offshoot of the solidarity paper), liberation (an offshoot of the resistance paper), youth (an offshoot to the PLO/PA paper) and movement (a way of clarifying the ways PYM conceptualized its differences between the network phase and the post-2011 context). We also agreed to further develop a framework for project activities titled the Until Return and Liberation Framework which would more concretely translate many of the ideas in the 10 position papers into tips for practice. Between February and July of 2012, the ICC would develop these analytics and positions, formally adopt them, and disseminate them to members and chapters in order to help guide program and project work on the ground. In some ways, these documents became incredibly instrumental to unite a PYM praxis across the world and to ensure that the action on the ground was not hollow of a political vision, analysis, and direction.

For instance, in November of 2012, PYM-USA would partake in leading a Joint-Struggle Delegation to the World Social Forum-Free Palestine in Porto Allegre, Brazil. The anti-colonialism, international solidarity, and rights-based approach position papers helped guide the PYM discourses, strategic alliance building with third world and indigenous allies, and framework for how to re-situate Palestine into its historic anti-colonial global mandate. But also, the PYM position papers on Palestine and the Palestinians, land, liberation, and anti-colonialism enabled PYM to be the only transnational Palestinian collective worldwide to declare an official contest to the PA unilateral declaration of statehood in November of 2012.

As the Palestinian parties within the PLO and various NGO's had all become muzzled by establishment hegemonic discourse, PYM viewed the statehood declaration as a way to stabilize the two-state solution, which had renounced Palestinian land and peoples' liberation, and sustain the PA's power amidst rising political contest from Palestinian youth.⁵⁸⁵ For the PYM it was a torturous move from the PA, who could crush dissent motivated by the protests sweeping the region, choosing to stabilize the status quo rather than risk being ousted as their counterparts in Tunisia and Egypt had been. At the Brazil World Social Forum, the PYM delegation took to the stage in the closing assembly to read a statement against the statehood bid, for it would calcify the Oslo paradigm and thus legitimize colonially erected borders. PYM was joined on stage by over two dozen Palestinian youth who arrived to Brazil with organizations who were censored from expressing any rejection or critique of the statehood bid. Portions of the statement read emerged from a collectively constructed declaration PYM had worked on and mass distributed. The opening passage read:

We, in the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), stand steadfastly against the proposal for Palestinian statehood recognition based on 1967 borders that is to be presented to the United Nations this September by the Palestinian official leadership. We believe and affirm that the statehood declaration only seeks the completion of the normalization process, which began with faulty peace agreements. The initiative does not recognize nor address that our people continue to live within a settler colonial regime premised on the ethnic cleansing of our land and subordination and exploitation of our people.⁵⁸⁶

Similarly, and perhaps more importantly, the PYM position paper on the Arab dimension was both informed, deepened, and prompted by the December 2012 Arab Youth For Dignity and Liberation (AYDL) Conference which PYM hosted in Tunisia. Sponsored by the Tunisian President's office Moncef Marzouki, the PYM-led AYDL conference was the most politically

significant marker of PYM history. The AYDL conference was spearheaded in partnership by the PYM Jordan and France Branches—two chapters deeply invested in developing the PYM Arab dimension theorization and practice— and place the groups here. The conference brought together twenty-five PYM members with twenty-five additional Palestinian youth and approximately sixty Arab youth from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The conference aimed to examine the relationship between the Arab dimension and Palestine and worked to re-ignite the relationship between inseparable freedoms in both scales. The only event of its kind through the revolutions which was entirely organized by youth with no international NGO funds, the convening worked to expand PYM’s undertaking of the Arab dimension and to strengthen prospects for new working trajectories on broader Arab regional levels. With some of the most critical Palestinian and Arab revolutionary figures present at the convening as either speakers or observers, the AYDL convening also attracted wide-scale Arab media coverage.⁵⁸⁷

The conference was broken into parts. The first was the main conference component which featured lectures and group discussions seeking to more succinctly name and connect the challenges, opportunities, and tenets to the inseparability of Palestinian and Arab liberation. The second part was a final gathering comprised of approximately 1000 people from the press, various political organizations across the region and especially in Tunis, in which the youth organizers were set to publicly launch their coalition and explain the next activities they would take to develop it further. =. In many ways, the structure and goals of this conference highly resembled the founding PYN conference in 2008 in Madrid. But the main crisis of the Arab region, the question of Syria, caused a devastating split among various conference attendees. Worse, it produced a sense of paralysis for what the AYDL convening could amount to following

its close. The final event was disrupted by protestors on both sides (with the regime and against the regime) who clashed. But they were not people who were few in numbers who could be carried out. The division was widespread, and the interruption of the final event pillaged the morale of the group.

At the end of the AYDL conference, the ICC met in Tunisia in what would become one of the most difficult meetings of PYM history. Ideological differences overlapped with interpersonal ones, as well as organizational strategy and process differences. Certainly, arguments and tensions over political Islam vs. leftism grew during the Arab Uprisings and was one new layer atop of other polarizing issues we had long been embattled in. All of this was compounded with an inefficient process to facilitate the new huge contradictions we were enduring internally coupled with both the necessity and desire to find a way to do something through the shifts of power in the Arab Uprisings. Most of all, our inability to collectively engage a process, develop a process, or know how to talk about what was to be done in and about Syria fueled these tensions. Specifically, in the inability to establish a clear, focused position on Syria, though the events in Syria were seemingly becoming some of the most important in recent regional history, the PYM sense of hopelessness and confusion increased.

After Tunis: Unsure What Must Be Done and How to Do It

Following the Tunis convening, most ICC members went home and focused on the work within their own chapters. The gap between us grew, and as result, the gap between the ICC and the chapters also grew. By that time, many of the PYM-Syria chapter members had either left the country or become involved in offering refugee support services in Yarmouk Camp to Syrians displaced by the war. But the Tunis convening took place shortly after a major Syrian regime

attack on Yarmouk camp resulted in the exodus of thousands of Yarmouk's Palestinians. By the third week of January, one of our key leaders, friends, and central players in the PYM, Khaled Bakrawi, was kidnapped outside of his home in Yarmouk Camp. We later confirmed that he was taken by Syrian regime forces. Khaled's disappearance took a great toll on our members, particularly those who were his family and close friends. But we also knew that it had come to signify our own contradictions when it came to Syria, and it left a haunting sense of despair that impaired mobilization.

During that time, many of us had developed a deeper sense of pain, anger, and rejection of the Syrian regime but felt small, weak, and powerless to offer critique or position without having any significant work on the ground to inform it, carry it, and represent it. The pillage of morale within the group following the Tunis convening and the ICC meeting held there also hindered our abilities to try. Those contradictions played out regularly between 2012 and 2014. The ICC had written a statement on the Arab Uprisings revering the phenomena at the start of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. We then had released a statement about Yarmouk which caused significant friction within the PYM. This statement highlighted the Palestinian national frame, which was critical to maintain, but also contradicted our philosophy on the Arab people, cause, and dimension being central to the Palestinian struggle, not allies to it. A statement on Yarmouk, even if critical of the regime, was perceived by many in our membership base as a contradiction to our Arab dimension position. In trying to reconcile these contradictions, the ICC engaged a series of dialogues via-email and skype and consulted with our chapters regarding the topic. A draft of a statement commenced but by the end, it became clear that members of the group did not feel comfortable releasing a statement on Syria so long as it was purely a political discourse maneuver rather than something that was informed by our strategies or could help

guide future ones. An iteration of that statement went out in my own name, rather than the name of the organization, in 2014, but PYM would never come to engage this matter in a deep process. It was simply much greater than what we were capable of, or perhaps than we were willing to at least try to consider.⁵⁸⁸

Following the Tunis convening, the events of the region would quickly quell the senses of hope, possibility, and urgency the Arab Uprisings ignited in many of us; the loss of momentum certainly made members less committed and accountable and broke down communication methods between us. In the summer of 2013, the Sweden chapter attempted to assist the crisis being endured in the PYM by agreeing to host a summer camp where these conversations could be had. But they had planned the camp on their own, with little engagement by the transnational body and by other chapters, and very few of the ICC members attended making it difficult for that convening to change the course of PYM's stagnation. It was certainly an important networking opportunity, intellectual exercise, and educational experience for PYM members transnationally, similar to the earlier convenings of PYN, but it did not exactly resolve the crisis of paralysis that chapters were experiencing on the ground or the political contradictions which we were struggling to engage in the transnational sphere.

That same year, the PYM-USA, Sweden, and West Bank chapters attempted to engage the PYM on discussions regarding a new initiative: a project to conduct a global Palestinian census in order to lead to elections for the absent and immobile Palestinian National Council (PNC) of the PLO. But the PYM felt that a project that tried to reconcile our problems as a people from the angle of representational politics—even if it would revitalize the PLO and possibly discredit the accruing power of the PA—would not lead to any real long-lasting change. We took a position against working on the PNC campaign because we believed that true change and the

development of organic representation had to come from the grassroots, who could organize visions and strategies for a revitalized liberation project. Therefore, it was clear that PYM would not be engaging in this work but not clear what we would be doing.

A few members within the ICC tried to resolve these troubles by creating new methodological proposals for engaging process, creating new re-formations of the IEB-ICC relationship, and trying to envision ways we could each play different roles within the group. This was even true for the period between July of 2012, when the ICC adopted the position papers, and December of 2012, when the AYDL convening took place. But sustaining process and momentum became quite difficult at this time. After some time, a few of the ICC members tried to actualize one of the goals of the Tunis convening: holding a regional and international speaking tour to present the Palestine/Arab dimension frame built through the AYDL convening to local communities and to build a coalition of Arab youth organizers who would develop a working experience in organizing it together. But the region had become exhausted of discussing politics as the transformations were dramatic and affecting day-to-day life. The tour thus focused on Europe, but with little participation it did not do much to reinvigorate momentum within the PYM.

Multiple fractures and lines of division were drawn. Schisms developed between ideologies, between the local and the transnational, service and politics, and many more dichotomies and contradictions we seemed unable to find a process to engage in a meaningful way. One of these was the difference between ICC members with chapters versus those who were not working on the ground in chapters. During this time, national chapters came to play a larger role in PYM, and much of the power we were attempting to develop was intended to come from the ground, from below. But the pull of the chapters was seen as something uneven

by members committed to the transnational sphere who had come from places without chapters. The paradox lies here: since its inception, PYM had always identified itself as a transnational body. But it was in fact a national project coordinated across multiple geographies that worked to re-constitute, revitalize, and activate the Palestinian nation.

When the Arab Uprisings came, the tension between the transnational sphere and the local chapters was in some ways a division between a Palestinian national frame in transnational geographies, and a transnational frame in local geographies. In other words, the Arab Uprisings was the moment where PYM truly engaged in transnational work, in the way that work is commonly understood as solidarities between different nations. The Arab Uprisings demonstrated the importance of real life material conditions of poverty, state-repression, and imperialism beyond the Israeli context, and a denial of social and political freedoms which mobilized the masses. As young people who were committed to revolutionary ideals, we were wary of being registered as either elite theorists disconnected from the ground or as Palestinian-ethno-centrists who could only make sense of the conditions in the region through liminal Palestinian national frames. Our position papers which had developed revolutionary ideals prohibited us from being complicit with those two tendencies dominant in Palestinian politics.

Many of us wanted to act quickly, with the masses, to join the protests, and to abandon these hypothetical, theoretical, transnational meetings and discussions which we came to see as elite theorizing far away from the ground. We became very sensitive about feeling disconnected from the revolutions on the ground and the oppression our people were enduring. And in some ways, this is what made us give more power and weight to the most influential and vital local chapters to anchor the forthcoming movement trajectory rather than the interface in the transnational sphere which had long done so. We felt that the local work was the *real work*

as it was connected to more every-day people and because our philosophy believed in the purpose of drawing context, power, and strategy from grassroots bases. In the end, our own political theorizations coupled with the transformations happening in the region forced somewhat of a captioning of the Palestinian national frame in its transnational context, and we came to shoulder more than what we were capable of. How do a people engage in truly transnational liberation work and solidarity, if they are neither bound nor sustained through their own national frame, and if they do not live in the same local landmass?

In their book *Scattered Hegemonies*, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan use “transnational” to problematize a purely locational politics of global-local or center-periphery...⁵⁸⁹ They state that, “Transnational linkages influence every level of social existence.”⁵⁹⁰ Certainly, the grievances we had with nationalism and the contradictions we engaged regarding it were relevant and necessary, and we too saw how these transnational linkages informed all parts of our social existence as Palestinians. But as Palestinians, dispossessed and scattered across hundreds of militarized borders, sieges, and checkpoints, and enclosed upon by a multiplicity of systems working to de-suture our relationships to our land, history, and our people, how do we create and maintain power—as a people and cause-- without a national frame? By this time, PYM had become highly aware of the ways Palestine was and is global cause. Our own position paper on Palestine and Palestinians outlined three dimensions: Palestine as land, Palestinians as a peoplehood experiencing a shared colonial condition, and Palestine as a universal cause. But we had also become attune to the way the framework of Palestine as universal cause could assist us in anti-colonial insurgency but not resolve the work that needed to be done for de-colonization. How then, can we maintain direction for our rage and resistance that is guided by de-colonial liberation values inclusive of

all our constituents if we throw out the national frame and its accomplices, the transnational institutional vehicle which keeps together the dispossessed Palestinian people? In the end, PYM was never truly able to engage this contradiction. By the 2014 International General Assembly in Amman, the overwhelming consensus among us all was that the chapters were the anchors of the organization and that building real, local bases and strategies which could fight systemic oppression in the places we were, would be the primary goal for the post-2014 phase.

Upon return from Amman, the chapters attempted to re-configure their strategies but slowly recognized they could not realize any of their ambitions. The despair caused by changes in the region was a huge cause for this. The lack of clarity provided on the transnational level for the practical methods of work on the ground also contributed. Merahm, a PYN/M founder and ICC member argues that:

For me this was actually one of the main reasons why we were not able to survive. We all agreed that the core of the movement should come from the ground and therefore from local branches. And we insisted that this was the way to go. But we never fully realized that what had enabled us to grow and build on the ground so far was the transnational character of the movement. We spent half of our life (as PYM) working on reconnecting all these diversities and providing a framework for this “new” understanding and our vision of a mass-based movement paradoxically emerged from this long process in which transnationalism as a strategy was fundamental. But we were not able to acknowledge the centrality of the transnational strategy/framework also for the local work. This is why, I think, at the local level we eventually also failed basically everywhere. We missed the transnational dimension that had so far characterized our identity. We missed a structure and a reference that would provide some kind of direction also at the local level. This is also reflected indeed in the inability to develop a transnational vision on Arab revolutions that could help all branches to work and in fact we got paralyzed at all levels instead.⁵⁹¹

The loss of momentum and the phasing out of older leaders in the international board was also cause for the lack of clarity of direction and momentum to see through a fortified relationship between the transnational and the local. Political apathy hit hard. The unwillingness to tend to slow, gradual and administrative functions in order to develop an infrastructural spine to the movement also disintegrated the ability to continue developing tools for the movement's sustenance. Much of this is piece-meal in all forms of liberation organizing, and it was true for the several merahel of PYM prior as well. The distinction was that this time, both process on the transnational level and commitment of members to developing a collective process for the engagement of contradiction was crushed. No summer schools, camps, or meetings were necessary because the transnational was waiting for the local and the local virtually disappeared over night. In the US, this was also almost true. But in November of 2014, a few PYM members would step into an interim leadership role to try to resuscitate whatever was left of the organization, and in 2015, PYM-USA would host its first national summer school and general assembly.

Paradoxically, as conditions for political mobilization were destroyed for PYM in the Arab region, Palestine, and in Europe, an explosion of Palestine organizing was made possible in the US. I believe the cause for this is first that it demonstrates the way global power and freedoms are intimately bound with one another as co-constituted relations of coloniality. But second, if the PYM's new philosophy was to work on local struggles for justice and find ways to link it to the Palestinian struggle, the project succeeded in the US because the Palestinian youth of the new generation were the most culturally and politically detached from Palestine and the Palestinians. Where the Palestinian national frame was once an analytic we were attempting to shed the impulses of, in the US, it was/is virtually absent. In its place is a Palestine solidarity

frame, discourses of a Palestinian cultural “identity,” and a people of color/social justice analytic. Working with the new generation of Palestinian youth, some ten years younger than me, and in the absence of a transnational framework and vehicle, I felt that the starting point from where we began in the summer school of 2015 was much more anemic than the PYN starting point in 2006. But it is the work that must be done, and it demonstrates what I have called the Palestinian ontology of Nakba and the persistent struggle of starting over again, even weaker than what we were before.

Phase Five: Freedom Struggles and Base Building on the Ground

As phase four demonstrates, the drastic changes in the Arab region following the Arab Uprisings in many ways enclosed upon the transnational theoretical framework meant to inform local practice and strategic plans PYM had prepared for. In August of 2014, the PYM would meet for its third international general assembly in Amman, Jordan. Almost an entire year late for its scheduled general assembly, the PYM members arrived at Amman exhausted, experiencing heightened levels of political despair and a grave depletion of vision. We had deferred the general assembly almost an entire year in the attempts to that we could prepare a stronger vision and strategy to vote on upon our arrival so that we could properly guide a trajectory for the next period. Certainly, ideas were present, but they were not collectively processed, nor were they practiced in multiple locations on the ground in order to demonstrate feasibility and necessity, and they did not generate the kind of clear collective consensus previous general assembly agenda items had.

One thing that most members agreed to was that PYM was no longer in a place that could rely on a transnational frame without the establishment of real, sustainable, strong bases in multiple chapters. While the chapter and base building was a primary goal that came out of

the 2011 general assembly, the attempts to build such a thing were difficult because the transnational framework was a highly generalizing theoretical framework which did not outline practical methods for the work to be done on the ground. But the local vs. international schisms which played out in PYM in the years between 2011-2014 were not only about theory vs. practice. They were also deeply political ones. The rapid transformations on the ground in the Arab countries had created a compulsory sense within the PYM of several issues with PYM's internal dynamics.

First, we were not doing enough to affect real life material conditions, including service to the people in urgent crisis. Second, we were not capable of exercising our transnational frame in actual real-time methods of political protest, building community power on the ground, establishing methods for base-expansion, and preserving institutional history. The PYM came to describe this as our political ceiling being built too high, leaving us without the tools and methods for implementing anything to work toward achieving it. Third was the tensions within the group about matters of class and imperialism and the frictions with the Palestinian national frame that the PYM had long built, relied on, and organized through. Grievances soared within the membership base that the PYM had become Palestinian-centric and that the Palestinian national frame could no longer suffice amidst the changes of the Arab region. Others viewed the PYM as too all over the place, so to speak. They argued that we needed to focus on Palestine and the Palestinians because of the precarity of our conditions and that we could not shoulder every struggle in the world. The PYM political positions, in theory, called on us to truly practice joint-struggle politics with both the Arab region and all other Third World and Indigenous Struggles. And we did, so much that we lost the time and energy to focus on the Palestinian sphere of our movement.

PYM as a transnational organization would slowly stop activities through 2015 and become almost entirely inactive by 2016. But the transnational afterlife of PYM, its methodological frames, its experience, and the political sensibilities informed by its theorization would appear in less-coordinated spheres all over the world. This is especially true as the PYM network and movement experience would re-appear to guide the transnational mobilizations of Palestinian youth in both the 2015 Uprising and in 2018 in conjunction with the Great Return March, the Lift the Sanctions Campaign, and the Stop the Ongoing Nakba and Defend Al-Khan Al Ahmar popular mobilizations. PYM members, especially founders, remained in conversation with one another regarding both revitalization attempts and/or efforts to join in or begin new projects with one another, and we have come to enter and become central leaders of a variety of new transnational Palestinian political institutions. Various individuals and organizations connected through PYM have continued to find ways to work with one another on various campaigns and initiatives including conferences, art and music exhibitions, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns, and popular education campaigns.

The Al-Nakab Center—a project of PYM-Lebanon Chapter in partnership with the Maan Youth Group—has kept its doors opened and continues to offer educational continuity programs to Palestinian and Syrian refugee youth displaced by the war in Syria and to Palestinian refugee youth from Burj Al-Barajneh Camp. The conversation about a transnational political mobilization frame, method, and vehicle—as it was launched and exemplified by PYM—remains a pervasive component of Palestinian youth conversations across various places in the world, which the epilogue demonstrates further. And certainly, many of PYM’s discursive interventions have now become discourses popularly known, believed in, and practiced in Palestinian youth circuits across the globe and even among solidarity organizations. This

includes PYM discourses on matters of Palestinian colonial conditions, representation, and legitimacy; the limits to rights-based frameworks; the importance of anti/de-colonial methods and visions; the critical function of youth in the struggle historically and today; and the necessity for a radical break with the existing Palestinian political establishment. Further, PYM's understanding of the critical importance of the Arab dimension to the Palestinian struggle, and specifically the necessity for a more critical and historicized account of the Syrian regime has initiated conversations in various spheres. However, the most vibrant ways the afterlife of the transnational PYM exists is within its last remaining chapter, PYM-USA.

PYM-USA would continue expanding upon the transnational legacy of the broader movement in its own summer camps and activities with its adoption of the popular university educational project, taken on in conversation with Palestinian youth organizers from 1948 Palestine and the West Bank. In 2018, PYM-USA also came to play a leading role for the broader Palestinian shatat in organizing transnational campaigns in coordination with Palestinians on the ground in Palestine. Some of these coalitions included the March-May Transnational Mobilization for the Great Return March actions in the Gaza Strip and the summer 2018 campaigns to Stop the ongoing Nakba of Al-Khan Al-Ahmar and the Lift the Sanctions Campaign, which calls upon the Palestinian Authority to end its complicity in the siege on Gaza.

PYM-USA has continued to attempt to revitalize transnational Palestinian frames, groups, mobilizations, and connections through its various programs adopted at the July 2017 General Assembly. In particular, its refugee support projects attempt to link refugee support services as they are offered by the Khaled Bakrawi Center in San Diego with other transnational refugee support programs which the PYM-USA has been engaged in since the fall of 2016.⁵⁹² In addition, PYM-USA's preparation for the 2019 South Africa Palestinian Youth Transnational

Convening has allowed for regular communication, building, and exchange with Palestinian youth activists and organizations in various locations engaged in building this initiative.⁵⁹³

PYM-USA's multiple chapters and national projects have continued to couple both the transnational framework and political philosophies of PYM with local struggles against American Indian land erasure,⁵⁹⁴ against counter-terrorism secret spying and surveillance,⁵⁹⁵ against racist state violence by specifically contesting the US prison and police industrial complex,⁵⁹⁶ against anti-immigrant and anti-refugee discourses and systems,⁵⁹⁷ and against the militarization of borders.⁵⁹⁸ Contesting the US's role in imperialist war mongering and capitalist exploitation across the world including from the Philippines⁵⁹⁹ to the Arab region⁶⁰⁰ has been another critical tenet to PYM-USA's programs and projects. Engaging in these forms of political practice while finding ways to strengthen community power, wellness, youth political education, organizational training, and organizational infrastructural development has been key to PYM-USA's work over the last three years. Through programs like the summer schools,⁶⁰¹ and from sponsoring the Ghassan Kanafani creative writing scholarship and anthology⁶⁰² to establishing the one and only Khaled Bakrawi Center in El-Cajon,⁶⁰³ PYM-USA's programming is also working to educate, empower, engage, and strengthen the commitment of Palestinian and Arab youth to their own causes, communities, histories, and homelands. These various arenas of practice are fueling a desire within PYM-USA to re-constitute a theoretical framework informed by its current practice, one that is relevant for more focused work and that is commensurate with and informed by the PYN/M historical and transnational experience. This is all in service to keeping open the opportunity to revitalize a transnational configuration of the PYM, or something of its likes, so that the new generation need not start from scratch and can learn from the challenges and mistakes of various historical phases and contexts. However, this work is critically

challenging, particularly as PYM-USA is comprised of a membership where nearly 99% of its constituents joined the organization after 2015 and have never before partaken in transnational PYN/M spaces and/or other Palestinian transnational, and often times even local, organizing.

Conclusion:

In chronicling these five constitutional phases of PYN/M history, my hopes were to demonstrate two important things. The first is that the PYM project was the first and remains the only project of its kind that attempted to salvage remnants of the original Palestinian youth movements of the 1950s and 1960s. PYM aspired to be a movement of that kind, while accounting for the changes of the world and while reflecting and making clear decisions on what it would attempt to replicate from those movements and how it wanted to be different. The second point I wanted to demonstrate is how PYM engaged in a methodological process that was informed by practice and which could inform theory. Where the first generation relied on their practice in their own locals, PYM as an organization relied on the practice of implementing these transnational convenings. Through them, they would extract ideas, seemingly disparate practices, in pursuit of developing a theoretical frame which could more completely account for practice across different geographies and across multiple other social, political, cultural, and religious categories.

But as phase four demonstrates, in the moment where those ideals, visions, and theories were coming together to produce a first iteration of a strong theoretical framework for the organization, plans were disrupted by the dramatic changes of the Arab region. In future work, I would like to ruminate more on the PYM's political positions and theorizations. But here, it is useful to note that this moment in our organizational process demonstrates what I have argued constitutes a Palestinian ontology of Nakba. On the one hand, this ontology mandates

more intentional work to formulate coherence between theory and practice as our position as landless, dispossessed, and occupied needs some form to maintain a complete Palestinian frame. It mandates attention to construct an order, a plan, a structure, where none exists. On the other, it is precisely this ontology of Nakba that will interrupt plans, disrupt the relationship between theory and practice, and destroy any structure, order, and form meant to maintain educational channels of institutional history. What then can be done if it is precisely what we need which continues to be effaced, devastated, and destroyed by the unforeseeable?

As I discussed these reflections with Merahm, a longtime PYM founder and member, she argued that perhaps I was being too generous to the PYM for attributing the phase four losses only to this. She argues that there resides two more fundamental points which we must account for, and which are both critical in constructing the ontology of Nakba, which I have described in the Introduction and chapter one. In the end, we learned that we were up against impossible odds from the very beginning, but that still doesn't stop us from trying. Merahm argues that as much as we tried to learn, study, and grow, we simply did not know how to develop a proper relationship between theory and practice in the Palestinian case. The first generation who engaged in such work, who had monumental experience in it, had learned it as the generation who had experienced firsthand the trauma and shock of the Nakba. But they did not teach their learned lessons to us. Here is where the notion of the grief of insecurity, which I have examined in chapter one, resurfaced. While the youth just a decade or so younger than the PYM founders argued that we did not teach them, we also launch the same complaint to the first generation of youth strugglers. Why didn't they "teach" us?

I suspect this is in part because following Oslo, many of them did not find relevance to those forms of education, to those narratives of history, and to those strategies of existing,

struggling and resisting in the Palestinian context. They were sold a promise of a state, of the end to their misery, and of the irrelevance of a grassroots construction of a relationship between theory and practice. The institutional memory passed on to the post-Oslo generation was geared toward building a state, however frail, limited, and irrelevant. It is the state which will construct a hegemonic theory and implement its practice, and nothing is left for the grassroots to do in such a context. Certainly, those resistance histories also dredged up significant pain and loss for the elder generation. Loss and pain of vision, failure of method, and excruciating forms of betrayal by many forces, many times, may all have contributed to why they did not teach us. But further, post-Oslo, and especially after the second Intifada, as chapter two demonstrates, very little organizational space existed for such relaying of knowledge, experience, and expertise.

Second, even if elder generations had found methodological and institutional methods of “teaching” us, specifically teaching us of their experience in cultivating and enacting the relationship between theory and practice, we were operating in an entirely different geo-political and global arena. For them, operating in the cold-war contexts, they could navigate power dynamics and alliances with both movements and states in very clear anti-imperialist, anti-colonial ways. They could assert a position of defiance, even among those who appear to be serving their interests. Merahm argues:

Even the PFLP at the time criticized Nasser after the 67 war for wanting to accept a two for two resolution. Today, we don't have anything like that. We are ready to stand with Sisi. We are even ready to stand silent when Bashar is destroying Syria. Because it's a completely different geo-political environment.⁶⁰⁴

In the end, the challenges endured in the PYN/M experience—and I note that it is only one experience of hundreds of Palestinian formation/organization building—the grief of insecurity,

coupled with disrupted plans and processes which sought to mend the gap between theory and practice, along with the limitations of the broader geo-political configurations of power, and a butterflying of catastrophes, all contributed to the disintegration of the transnational project. Perhaps the project was always impossible. But now that I have attempted to name what made it impossible, perhaps we can continue to cultivate possibility beyond what PYN/M enjoyed, in continuing the making of a new sky.

As the afterlife of PYM, the organization, continues, possibility is left open for a new generation of Palestinian youth to couple the brilliance of spontaneous mass-based popular resistance – that which I have called everyday peoples’ resistance in former chapters and which the post Arab Uprisings period has seen at all levels –with deeper structural and political visionary processes. These two spheres are more intimately in dialogue in the epilogue of this dissertation. If these two modalities were to be worked through and embedded in one another, a new phase of Palestinian political history, the new sky, might be achieved.

Epilogue: Before the New Sky

On December 3, 2015 I left the United States to conduct four months of ethnographic research on Palestinian youth movements in the West Bank. However, my plans changed when, after hours of interrogation and waiting in uncertainty at the Allenby Border Crossing with Jordan, I was denied entry into Palestine by Israeli authorities on December 6, 2015. No reason was given to me other than it being a matter of "national security." Barred from conducting research in Palestine, I instead embarked on a four-month research journey which took me to Jordan, Lebanon, Greece, Turkey, France, Sweden, and Denmark. During this trip, I conducted interviews with over forty Palestinian youth, some of whom I was meeting for the first time, but most of whom I had come to know and work with through the PYM. I also volunteered at various youth organizations and attended events and meeting forums. In many ways, this period constituted an extended process of coming to terms with what it would mean to write about Palestinian youth movements without being able to be in Palestine. I was also grieving the loss of much of the momentum and prospective opportunity I long believed PYM was capable of assuming and trying to make sense of why it had practically vanished overnight. I connected with old friends, many founders of the PYM, and together we reflected on what our challenges were and why we had not been strong enough to overcome them.

I was also trying to understand if we as youth leaders of the PYM had missed a major signal, opportunity, or lesson along the way. Though the political theorizations and methodological process were in fact why I believed PYM could achieve so much, I thought that there had to have been a structural or philosophical flaw that limited our ability to transmit that experience to incoming generations. Why had it happened once again: an organization's founders phasing out without the new generation being prepared enough to take over?

Furthermore, I had come to believe that perhaps there was a major flaw in PYM's structures, methods, and philosophies which did not truly allow for it to be in dialogue with practices of base building and community work on the ground. For a long while, PYM's theorization – though it was informed by real-life material conditions, designed through a collective process of engaging contradiction, and fueled by lessons learned from organizing – still could not practically inform work on the ground on broad social and political levels, at least not at the scales we had desired and which the conditions had necessitated.

After spending the first three weeks in Amman, I spent a month in Beirut. There I met with Palestinian refugee youth who were both from the camps in Lebanon and newly displaced from the camps in Syria. I volunteered to support various humanitarian refugee relief efforts and youth empowerment programs and reflected with these youth on what was needed in order to shift our conditions and revitalize a working relationship between us Palestinian youth in our different locations. We spent several hours reflecting on PYM's mistakes, on where things went wrong, on how and why it was we had lost momentum, direction, and leadership. We debated different opinions for the causes of such things. But the urgency I sensed in the voices of each of these youth convinced me that it was not that the project didn't succeed because it was not desirable enough, important enough, or instrumental for the lives of young Palestinians. In fact, the opposite was true. It was in Lebanon that I realized just how necessary PYM or a project like the PYM was for Palestinian youth. It was there that I realized just how severely the war in Syria was transforming the new Palestinian generation and Palestinian communities across Lebanon and Europe, and how these transformations both demanded and depended on a political alternative to the status quo based on transnational grassroots methods and informed by everyday people.

The war in Syria had crystallized Palestinian-Syrian youth's sense of loss of any expectations of and hopes for the official Palestinian institutions including the parties, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and a range of NGOs. It further made them disillusioned with rhetorics of anti-imperialism, revolution, and Arab nationalism; three concepts they had long revered but which they had come to see as hollow weapons of discourse to uplift and protect the legitimacy and subsequent violence of the Bashar Al-Assad dictatorship. How could they come to sing songs of Arab nationalism, read and speak of anti-imperialism, when those came to signify the destruction of the only homes they ever knew, their exodus, and the death they had witnessed? That felt like a betrayal to the revolutionary principles and ideals they had been brought up on as one of the most politically educated⁶⁰⁵ youth groups of the shatat.⁶⁰⁶ Nidal Bitari, himself a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk Refugee camp notes,

The war in Syria is a terrible and horrific tragedy for all Syrians, but it is as much a tragedy, though in a different way, for the Palestinians who lived among them. For Syria's Palestinians, the destruction of their camps is not just the destruction of their homes and environment, but the destruction of an entire social structure, webs of relationships, economic and cultural systems, the loss of their positions and roles, and a grave assault on their customs and political values. We were raised with the idea of the right to return. We had dreams of liberating Palestine and of rebuilding the PLO, but at the same time, our life was with Syrians, in Syria. Consciously or not, we felt part of this country, and we never felt a contradiction between feeling part of Syria and being Palestinian. Now, there is a sense of being orphaned.⁶⁰⁷

These youth, both from Lebanon and Syria, did not seem to think that these forces had any life left in them. They did not believe there was any way for the establishment to revitalize

their historic role, to meet the needs of the people, or to develop and reestablish a political program and national strategy. Certainly this was not true for all Palestinian youth everywhere, but it was for the majority of youth I interfaced with.⁶⁰⁸

The devastation of the Palestinian camps in Syria was testament to the mounting senses of alienation from the Palestinian political domain. The official establishment was unable to do anything about the catastrophe that had befallen the camps, leaving the refugees caught in an embattled war. And because of their condition as stateless subjects, they came to experience the most visceral consequences of the war. Many became second, third, and for some of them, fourth time displaced peoples. The political establishment could not protect them or the camps from the regime's massacres, sieges, or from the imprisonment, torture, and targeted assassinations of thousands of Palestinians. They could not even deliver food to besieged areas, offer safe passage routes for the refugees to leave places engulfed in war, or play a role in negotiations of ceasefires between opposition and regime groups in Palestinian areas.⁶⁰⁹ They could not mitigate the recruitment of child soldiers to a range of different forces, they could not shield Palestinians, and they could not offer them any forms of protections.

Many of the Palestinian refugee youth from Lebanon witnessed the devastation of the war in Syria and shared with me that they believed the conditions would be as bad if not worse if war in Lebanon were to be reignite. The possibility for war to flare up in Lebanon is not a hypothetical fear. It is rooted in the trauma of the twenty-year-long civil war and the sectarian political infrastructure of Lebanon which creates a constant sense of sectarian strife and non-stability. By 2016, the role of Lebanese forces in the Syrian war – namely Hezbollah, in alliance with the Syrian regime and Iran – made Lebanon increasingly vulnerable to the war spilling into its borders. Additionally, dozens of opposition forces, backed by Gulf States from Qatar to Saudi

Arabia, had also shaped the war in Syria as a broader ideological war that could move into various geographic terrains. The war in Syria had become a geo-political and global power struggle that in many ways eclipsed the people's wants, needs, role, and resistance in the beginning of the revolution.

By 2016, various armed militia forces training for battle in Lebanon had come to surround many Palestinian camps. The state had intensified its security measures as several camps became highly surveilled. Monitored and vulnerable to increased state violence and enclosures, people could only get in and out of the camp through checkpoints. Palestinian parties were arming themselves more intensely in the attempts to develop security coordination teams in the camps which they argued would help prevent what happened in the camps in Syria from happening in Lebanon. The Palestinian Authority established "counter-terrorism" military trainings in Lebanon as well. But the broader ideological and political splits among the Palestinian parties were by this time deeply entangled in more robust and dangerous geo-political sectarianism and global re-configurations of power. Harrowed of their national liberation historical mandate in many ways, the Palestinian parties' tensions with one another came to signify sectarian tensions pervasive in other geographies in the region.

At this time, there was an increase of the flow of arms into Lebanon, a place already inundated with a reservoir of ammunitions from various historical war economies. The tensions and sometimes actual fighting between parties in the camps had not diminished but in fact exacerbated. Except now, it was much easier for Palestinians to pull guns out on one another. With deteriorating economic conditions, war-drug and human-trafficking industries boomed.⁶¹⁰ With the recruitment of children as soldiers in various militias, poor humanitarian and educational services, overcrowding of the camps as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees to

Lebanon, and increasing cuts to UNRWA health programs⁶¹¹ in the camps in Lebanon, an exodus of Palestinian youth from Lebanon accompanied Palestinian-Syrian refugee voyages to Europe. These emigrant youth disguised themselves as Palestinian-Syrians. Those who stayed in Lebanon became fraught with despair, uncertainty, anxiety of what was to come, and doubt that anyone could shield the Palestinians from endless crisis. Many Palestinian youth spaces, organizations, and associations also shared those sensibilities, and PYM was certainly among them.

As Chapter three has indicated, the Arab Uprisings and especially the war in Syria allowed for PYM to re-consider the relationship between Zionism, settler-colonialism, Western and Eastern European imperialism, refugee-hood, and autocratic regional regimes. We became more attuned and committed to the idea that Palestine was a central part of the Arab regional struggle and vice versa. We became more committed to the idea that it was not necessary to settle for the violence of dictatorship in exchange for freedom from imperialism. We became hungrier for freedom, more adamant in our belief that true freedom needed a radical break from the existing regional and world order, and less expectant that any possibility could emerge out of the existing political establishment. But even though PYM would theorize through the Arab Uprisings, our practice was limited for many of the reasons I have outlined in Chapter three.

In Lebanon, however, I came to realize that practice was not limited for many Palestinian refugee youth who were doing all they could to survive the intensity of catastrophe. Their practice did not always present itself as a political practice. For instance, the PYM chapter in Lebanon had come to focus primarily on educational and social services for Palestinian and Syrian children who were re-settling in Burj al Barajneh Camp from Syria. They wanted to offer

these services and engage grassroots communities on a volunteer (non-paid) basis to do this work in order to care for the people, strengthen the communities, and limit the vulnerabilities they were experiencing. They found this to be a critical way of strengthening community bases as part of and in service to the liberation struggle, just as many third world movements had historically centered service to the people as a critical function of the struggle.⁶¹² But in time, with the absence of this project and many like it being directly tied to an infrastructure, frame, and method in the pursuit of political struggle, many of these youth were not even sure how their work was still political. It was for these reasons that in Lebanon, while many youth were doing what was needed to sustain life and hope, and to do it in grassroots ways without always relying on the big NGOs or parties to do so, they still insisted on the importance of merging a project and frameworks like that of PYM with the social and political practice they had come to learn through the catastrophes they had lived through and witnessed. Yet theorizations of political practice and practices of survival had become so severed across lines of privilege, wealth, and class, that the two appeared to be operating in silos far off from one another.

While many of the youth from Syria who arrived to Lebanon soon after the war began expressed an ambivalence to the political domain, a loss of interest and faith in it, it was not always a begrudging sentiment. It had come to be a fact of reality. But it was still preferred over the international NGOs, which not only had depoliticized and co-opted the struggle, but could not even serve their basic function of aid and relief work when catastrophe hit. Ali, a Palestinian youth from Yarmouk camp who works with the Jafra Foundation for Relief and Youth Development and whom I met in Lebanon, had arrived just six months earlier and had stayed in the camp longer than all the others I met in Lebanon. He says, "These guys didn't see what I see, I was there when ISIS took over, I saw the blood."⁶¹³ About a year and a half later, I had come to

meet Ramez, another Palestinian youth from Yarmouk who was now a refugee in Greece but who hadn't actually left the camp until 2016. Ramez, like Ali, insists that the other youth do not know and did not see what they have. He says:

Loubna, there is nothing I haven't seen. I saw everything, everything. I was there when ISIS slaughtered people for wearing the wrong kind of clothes. I was there when nothing, literally nothing was left in the camp, and we came to eat cats and dogs to survive. And no one was around. I was trained as a teacher and I felt worthless. So I came to the idea to pull chalkboard, you know those ones with wheels, from one of the old schools and I took the kids out on to the street and I started teaching them basic things to feel like some life was left in us.⁶¹⁴

Like Ali, Ramez's narrative of Yarmouk is quite different than the other youth who had left earlier. They both think of themselves as people who found ways to do things to survive and insist that though it was painful, it was doable. This doability is in part what motivates the sense of betrayal both Ramez and Ali felt from the establishment, from the NGOs, and also from their peers who had left the camp.

Back in 2016, Ali conveyed that he was angry with the youth he works with for forcing him to leave the camp and come to Lebanon where he felt increased senses of alienation, loneliness, worthlessness, and betrayal of the people left behind. He argued that many of his own friends who had left the camp and who had ultimately forced him out had betrayed their own role as revolutionaries and their own commitments to their people and cause. He expressed a deep resolve to go back to the camp and work to protect the innocent. If that would mean that he would die, then so be it.

He told me the story of how in December of 2012 when the mass exodus of Yarmouk that resulted in 40,000 people fleeing happened, he walked with his family along with the

masses and left them at the entrance of the camp. His father, worried for Ali's life, came back to be with his son, and Ali's mother and sisters went to Algeria. After the exodus, Ali worked with the youth who had left the camp to create a campaign for all *ahel al-Yarmouk* (Yarmouk's family) who did not have other places to go. The campaign sought to return these families to the camp, as the intensity of regime shelling had declined, and to prohibit a permanent exodus like what had been experienced in 1948. When the return happened, thousands of Palestinians marched back into Yarmouk singing songs of Palestinian freedom and of return to Palestine. Yarmouk became a symbolic home of return for the Palestinians enduring a new Nakba. Ali argues that those Palestinians who returned were the everyday Palestinians who were neither wealthy nor tied to politics; this was the community that didn't have monetary and/or cultural capital which would allow them to flee to a safer place. He says that the people who returned were the families sleeping in the streets and in mosques, and that Yarmouk was the only home they had.⁶¹⁵

A few weeks after the return, the camp was shelled by the Syrian regime and the siege intensified. A while after that, Ali's father was martyred. As Yarmouk's residents slowly started getting killed off or fleeing, Ali insisted on staying. He said that the families had to leave for the sake of their children, but they couldn't take their elderly with them, and the elderly refused to leave as well. From the establishment of elderly care services, to solid waste management to clean up Yarmouk's streets from demolished buildings, to learning how to create community gardens to feed the residents of the camp in the context of famine, Ali reveres those days. He says he never felt fear. Eventually, when various opposition forces militarily occupied different parts of the camp, those particular services weren't enough. In the end, Ali had to learn the art of political negotiation as well as self-defense. But he expresses anger at the fact that people tell

the Yarmouk story in a different way, that they “tell it as if they were there and they weren’t.” He says that all the people who do “real politics” were the first people to leave the camp, because they could, because they had visas, or money, or contacts.⁶¹⁶ It was the poor people who stayed in the camp until their last dying breath and the old people who never wanted to relive a permanent exodus like 1948. In this context Ali, expresses a severe rejection of establishment politics and even of NGO-ized service work, because he argued that it wasn’t really there for the people.

While Ali expressed a genuine anti-institutional sentiment on all levels, other Palestinians from Syria underscore the value of navigating the resources available in institutions like the NGOs, even though they understand them to be a part of the problem. Noor, for instance, a leader in a refugee relief NGO which operates in besieged areas in Syria, argued that the war in Syria gave youth two options. The first was to get out and maintain some form of dignity and principles in theory. The second was that if we were to do something to serve the people, a certain level of bending would be necessary and we would need to make deals with unlikely players, even undesirable forces, groups, and organizations guilty of the pain both the Palestinians and Syrians were enduring in Syria. He argued that it would come with a cost to political principles as well because the constraints made it so that we participate in corrupt and despotic systems or evade them and that if work on the ground was actually to be made possible that it would require difficult decisions.⁶¹⁷ On one of the evenings in Lebanon, I sat in on a meeting between Noor, who was leading efforts of relief work in Palestinian camps and gatherings besieged by the regime, and Natasha, who was both a friend to Noor and also the representative of an international foundation. The transaction was not only telling of the

limitations Palestinian youth experience through NGO frames and institutions, but also of the ways they attempt to navigate these enclosed sites to leverage them for resources.

Natasha: "This year, our organization is only interested in offering grants to projects that promote sustainability."

Noor: "Sustainability!" He laughed and continued, "What sustainability, this is war!"

Natasha: "Okay, but we are looking for projects that have long term impact not just short-term relief. Do you have an idea of what project you will apply with?"

Noor: "Food Basket Campaign in the Besieged Areas."

Natasha: "No, that won't work."

Noor: "Okay, fine, sanitary baskets!"

Natasha: "Okay I think you're not understanding me...."⁶¹⁸

We laughed at the disconnections and at the ludicrous ways NGO funding restrictions are so out of touch with what grassroots organizers and service workers are experiencing in sites of total catastrophe. Natasha, though a representative of a European grant-making organization, is attuned to how the NGOs sometimes hinder more than they assist. In my experience, I find these critiques to be quite common among all low-level NGO staff who have direct contact with grassroots organizers. But still, this awareness cannot do much to challenge the restrictions in place that NGO funding dictates. All three of us paused after a hearty laugh. I interrupted and said "Okay, maybe I can help. Let's find a way to frame what you really need as a project of sustainability." I then asked, "What do you really need?" Noor looked up at the ceiling and looked back at both of us and said, "We need....body bags. Yes, yes we need body bags. No organization will fund it but we really need them and honestly they are expensive."⁶¹⁹ I was at a loss for words. I responded "okay..." but could not seem conjure up a way to frame the necessity of body bags for the Palestinian dead as a project that could fit into international NGO rubrics of "sustainability."

While my time in Lebanon demonstrated both the ambivalence and grievances Palestinian youth felt toward establishment politics and the international NGO scene, it also had demonstrated for me that by 2016 the broader social and political conditions for Palestinian youth had created new common sense narratives and what Gramsci called “spontaneous philosophy.”⁶²⁰ As I continued my journey through Europe and back to Jordan, I increasingly realized there were major differences between the social and political landscapes of the youth who founded the PYM in 2006 and those of the new generation in 2016. Two things had come to mark those differences. First, the new generation had even less ground, resources, and genealogies to draw from and build upon than the group of young people who had been in their early- and mid-twenties in the year 2006. Tamer, the former international general coordinator of PYM, reaffirmed this for me in a phone interview in 2018. He said:

Isn't it strange, when we were first starting to build the network, we thought we were starting from scratch. But in reality, we weren't and we only knew this, now when we look at the state of Palestinian grassroots institutions, networks, transmission of knowledge and institutional history. We know we were not starting from scratch because we see how much more scattered we are now and we see the new generation having virtually no starting point.⁶²¹

Merahm, a PYM founder from Italy who currently resides in Jordan had made the same argument about the younger generation when I spoke with her in 2016 in Amman and when I met with her again during the PYM-USA summer school in Houston Texas in 2017. She said:

I don't know what we can do, but I know we need to do something. I look at the generation ten or so years younger than us and I feel so far from them but I feel we must give them something to work with. This is why I think the PYM-USA, even though it's only one chapter, is really important...because it is the only group that can transmit the former generation's framework, methods, contact and resources to the new

generation of youth. We didn't succeed with our ambitions but maybe the new generation will, but they can't if they need to start with more troubles and less power than even we had in 2006.⁶²²

Second, though access to genealogies of struggle has become more difficult as Palestinian youth today have undergone major catastrophes over the last ten years, the deterioration of material conditions has actually established a more unified and harmonious articulation of oppression among youth in various geographic, political, and social spheres. This, I believe, was the greatest impact of the Arab Uprisings for Palestine and Palestinian youth, though the conditions of possibility for it are entrenched in blood, life lost, hopelessness, pain, and anger. In Europe, I came to find that youth shared quite a similar vocabulary about the exhaustion of Palestinian history, the way the new generation has been violated by the so-called national project, and in articulating the establishment and systems of aid as the gatekeepers to our oppression.

Material conditions so miserable across the board have prompted a unifying articulation of oppression among this generation and desire for a way out of these conditions. In many ways these conditions are breeding grounds to overcome the fragmentation which was once the greatest challenge for the youth who founded the PYM in 2006. It can tether the new generation to one another across different spheres, but only on the grounds of activating inter-generational division and antagonism to the political establishment. However, I am not certain this outcome would be totally ethical, strategic, or useful, as it obscures the foundation role of Zionist colonial hegemony in our struggles and their resultant complications by overly centering the complicity of the Palestinian establishment or the elder generations in general.

The paradox lies in the fact that these common-sense narratives and spontaneous philosophies were developed from the new catastrophes that would come to deepen the Palestinian ontology of Nakba and not from the political organizing or practice of any one group that aimed to resuscitate a political project, vehicle, or strategy to mitigate the loss and violence it produces. On the one hand, this is productive in that it could allow for a resuscitation of the national liberation framework for our struggle and disintegrate ideological, constituent, geographic, or factional loyalties above commitments to the cause. But at the same time, it is dangerous because it has garnered increased anti-organization sentiments among many young people.

In 2016, I attended a Palestinian youth meeting in Chicago which brought together forty Palestinian youth from across the United States to discuss the stakes of activism in the US and the role of young Palestinians in the US Arab community and solidarity landscape. In the convening, it was clear that various historical tendencies present in the elder generations including sectarian division were not paralyzing youth in the US. The youth were brilliantly open and insistent on understanding, embracing, and valuing the heterogeneity of Palestinian identities and communities and on fostering an open and inclusive space. But at the same time, much of the conversation focused on individual relationships to Palestinians and Palestine, to grievances with solidarity-inundated spaces and Zionist repression, and to coming to find ways to understand Palestinian identity. I found myself to be exhausted in this space. Much older than many of these youths, I had already undergone ten years of youth movement organizing and had engaged in many of those conversations regarding identity and belonging long ago. Though I recognized it was a critical part of the process for PYM's constitutional merahel, as I

have demonstrated in Chapter three, in the absence of any discussion on organization, it was not clear that for me it could become anything more than an important individual experience.

The youth were reluctant to build any type of formation, or even to partner with or enjoin existing Palestinian formations. Rather, they expressed grievances and tensions with centralized organization and preferred loose network-based work like campaigns. They privileged activism over organization, except that they were also trying to tie some formal frame of being Palestinian to such activism. This worried me tremendously because in many ways it became a project of centering “identity” without attaching it to a particular vision, strategy, and structure. It was almost as if this project was inheriting the nationalistic elements of the historical liberation struggle but hollowing out of it the liberation project. Jamil, a Palestinian youth from Jordan, expressed to me in March of 2016, that this was his main concern for the new Palestinian generation – that in the process of generating popular critique of high-level bourgeois establishment politics, young people were also developing an anti-organizational sentiment all together.⁶²³ For Jamil, organization was more important in the history of the Palestinian struggle than the function of idyllic vision. In my discussion with him, he expressed that for these reasons he valued the role of a leader within the PFLP like Abu Ali Mustafa – who was the organizational master-mind of the organization and believed in the development of strategy in accordance with the merhala and cultural, political, and economic context of the party – and not necessarily organization over-determined by fixed doctrines and ideologies.⁶²⁴

In 2010, I sat with a speaker at the PYM Basque Country Summer School, who would later become a mentor and advisor to the PYM. I asked him what his first impressions of the group were based on the one day he had spent with us, observing our discussions, debates, and work together. He was set to speak the next day but had a quite reserved personality and it was

hard to gauge his thought process. He responded, “I believe, that if we had my time [the time of the first Palestinian Intifada], with our organizational systems, with your generation and the critical discussions happening at this school among these leaders, we could have liberated Palestine by now.”⁶²⁵ His comments will always haunt me. They reflected the sentiment both Merahm and I share: the Palestinians are always a tad bit too late, slightly unprepared, uncertain of what curve balls will be thrown at them in their political strategy and unable to rely on any form of permanence and stability in their attempts. I have articulated this thoroughly in Chapter one where I discuss the difficulty of learning to write through rather than about Palestine when Palestine is constantly enclosed upon and Palestinians have come to endure a repetition of attack, crisis, and ruptures constituting the ontology of Nakba.

But this advisor’s words kept creeping into my mind during my 2016 trip. As I saw Palestinian youth in different places I became more convinced that all that was needed was the time and space for a little strategy. We had urgency. Commitment. Desire. Awareness of the main problems. The common sense narratives that could facilitate a triumph against the fragmentation we had long endured. What was missing was any process, project, or vehicle to engage such conditions and develop a vision, direction and strategy that people could believe in. What was standing in the way was a complete rejection, suspicion, and fear of any form of *tanzeem* (organization).

In the 2011 PYM summer school in Trélissac, France, a conversation about commitment had emerged. Dana, a Palestinian youth from Sweden, argued that our community was experiencing political apathy and that we were not as committed as the former generations of strugglers who sacrificed life and limb for the people and the cause.⁶²⁶ These proclamations of one’s own Palestinianness tied to their audacity and courage and willingness for sacrifice have

long been part of Palestinian social and political discourses, utilized both to inspire and encourage commitment as well as to de-legitimize individuals, groups, and forces unwilling to offer such commitment. Mahmoud, a Palestinian youth from France, stood up in front of the group and argued with Dana, who most people were agreeing with by nodding their heads. He said, "I am not willing to die for Palestine. I am not. If you ask me about this, I will tell you I am willing to die if I knew there was a struggle, a strategy and a program which could make my death meaningful to preserve and protect Palestinian life. But I am not convinced that this exists any longer, and I am not willing to lose my life for nothing."⁶²⁷

But the difference in 2016 was that many of these youth were losing their homes, loved ones, histories, and futures on grand collective scales. They became in many ways crushed by the death they had witnessed and this in fact inspired them to desire life. I wondered: if we were able to couple the desire, the profound need for an alternative, and the unifying common sense narratives now present within the Palestinian youth spheres with the infrastructure that the PYM had built - its capacity and visibility in the earlier years, its theoretical, collective clarity and strategy - would we be able to do something new? The thought seemed so far away. PYM by that time only really existed in the United States. Certainly there were many founders, members, and leaders in other places in the world who cared deeply about the project, who were willing to lend tips and strategies and help guide a newer generation in leading the organizing efforts, but their connections to one another, to their own organizing bases in the places they lived, and to the new generation were quite frail. All this led me to struggle with ideas of commitment.

If I had long argued that some sort of vehicle, vision, and program was necessary to mobilize the conditions of the grassroots, who would build such vision and program if not the

grassroots? But how could the grassroots build this program in more substantial, complete, and powerful ways? Building such a project would rely on experience, on will, on a profound commitment to the project where they would risk the fatalistic repercussions that accompany Palestinian liberation practice, and on some general forms of freedom, mobility, potential resources and security to navigate the enclosures of time, space, epistemologies, genealogies, and institutions. What Palestinian, anywhere in the world, has a combination of all these things? What Palestinian party, organization or institution could bring these ingredients together for the purposes of liberation for all the Palestinian people and land? I was at a loss. I couldn't think of where this work would come from.

During the 2016 research trip, I had arrived to Athens, Greece as the third stop on my journey. After several days of meeting with youth from the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS), the PYM, and Shabab Al-Awda (Youth of the Return) organization, I was set to depart to Berlin for my next stop. But the night before my morning flight, something tugged at my heart. I had heard from a friend that the conditions for refugees in the Greek islands were quite miserable and that there was an immense shortage of Arabic-speaking translators and volunteers. The next day I got on an airplane, but not to Berlin - to the city of Mytellini in Lesbos. There I connected with Nadia, a Palestinian friend from the US, and together we volunteered in Moria Refugee Camp for a few weeks. In those weeks, I got lost in that world and didn't quite understand how refugee support work in Greece was in any way related to my project on Palestinian youth movements, or to my political organizing either within the PYM or within my local community in the US.

In retrospect, I came to realize that what resonated with me was precisely the urgency of crisis for many of these refugees who had arrived in Greece. Both refugeehood and the sense

of urgency of crisis were two epitomizing signifiers of the Palestinian experience across generation and place. Offering services and support to refugee families at that time took me down a path of profound connection and commitment to these refugee communities in Greece. Upon returning to the US, I proposed a program to the PYM-USA to develop a project which would send Palestinian youth to Greece to offer refugee support programs. In the process, we could build frameworks on the ways to understand refugeehood as a political optic vibrant with possibility because it does not rely on the state as a given assumption. The project would allow PYM to develop a transnational connection between the new generation of Palestinian youth in the US and transnational Palestinian and Arab communities, an experience they had never had following the dissolution of PYM international programs after 2014. It was also meant to deepen PYM's own engagement in understanding Palestine as connected to broader Arab regional struggles, as Palestinians would interface with the narratives of Syrian refugees, and to reconcile the seeming contradictions of being both anti-Zionist and anti-US imperialist while also being against neoliberal autocratic dictatorships which present themselves as the anti-imperialist vanguard. The project was also intended to help PYM think through the relationship between service to the people and political theorization, and to help understand how rights, law, and international aid industries have become facilitators of prolonged violence in many ways. Lastly, it was intended to help understand Palestine as part of broader global struggles beyond the US context, and to deepen the PYM understanding of Palestine within its regional context beyond the Arab countries to include solidarities with Afghans, Kurds, and many more communities enduring the wrath of colonial violence, war, and dispossession.

That program and framework grew in many ways. PYM established a partnership with a US-based human rights lawyer who was offering pro-bono services to refugee survivors of

torture, most of whom had arrived in Greece from Syria. Then, PYM partook in co-launching the SWANACConnect program, which sought to engage broader South West Asian and North African youth in the US in forms of trauma-informed, culturally-relevant, politically-grounded services and support.⁶²⁸ And lastly, PYM supported and worked with three critical delegations to Greece: the Iraqi Transnational Collective (ITC), the War Resisters League (WRL), and a classroom delegation for Professor Zareena Grewall from Yale University. As the program grew, many questions about PYM's direction and ethical engagement in this work also emerged as the process did not galvanize the sort of sustained leadership we had hoped it would. For me personally, this work led me back to Greece in August and September 2017 and in December 2017.

During my time in Greece in 2016 and 2017, I learned a lot about the racial/national caste system of international refugee law, Greek and European Asylum law, and the international aid industry. But while there, I also learned about how the experience of refugees in Greece signifies an intersection of multiple systemic forms of oppression in Greece that in many ways signifies the break between the Global North and the Global South; it is also a lucid example of how the expansion of the militarization of borders, of racist state violence, of war and exile, of xenophobia, capitalism in crisis, and of people's aspirations for freedom all come together. This research was important in that it offered me opportunities to consider what kinds of modalities for political practice we may envision for the future in the new fold of global power. Its importance is too grand to do justice in this dissertation, which is why I have committed to it as my next project. But in the process of experiencing the impact of what Greece and the survival practices of refugees have taught me, I organically was led back to Palestine. Without knowing it, without attempting to search for it, by trusting my instincts to go

and work where I felt it was important, this project in some ways did lead me back to my commitments, both academic and political, to Palestinian youth movements.

By August of 2017, when I had returned to Greece, a group of Palestinian and Syrian youth had come together to open a branch of the Jafra Foundation in Athens. Many of these youth were from Yarmouk camp, refugees themselves who had survived the perilous death voyages to and through Europe. I came to know them closely, as some of their testimony in Chapter one demonstrates. The way they articulated the particularities and commonalities of the Palestinian refugee experience with that of other refugees is what made me consider that perhaps I have not given enough credit to the ways the Palestinian ontology of Nakba can be a method for global refugee survival and solidarity and can perhaps participate in the cultivation of what Fred Moten has called an anti-national internationalism. In witnessing what came to these youth as second nature, of how their impulses, ways of making sense of power and disposability, ways of navigating resources and space was conditioned by a sense of needing to rely on themselves to survive, I came to see new ways of doing politics that I had not quite been concerned with before.

In the heart of Athens Exarchia Square, Mouin, a Palestinian refugee youth from Ein El-Hilwa Refugee Camp in Lebanon, sits to tell me of the sobering reality offering refugee support services in Greek camps has taught him. He says, "Being here, in these camps, I see the children pick up these English words from the Western volunteers. I hear them say 'hello, my friend,' goodbye, go, yes, 'no problem' and for the first time, I can actually picture where my grandparents, survivors of Al-Nakba picked up their few English words. It feels like 1948 all over again. We always imagined 1948 as a dystopic past. But it is here and now, and I am witnessing its sobering reality."⁶²⁹ My next project will be dedicated to shedding light on how the ontology

of Nakba produces an optic and method which has become critical for formulating new survival strategies, navigation methods, political contests, and theorizations of power in the process of grassroots political base building through service to the people. Greece has for me, shed light on how this ontology of Nakba is producing a method for the intersections of service and politics precisely because it enables an interface with Palestinian refugees and various communities who have come to realize that the state has become a signifier of violence, disposability, and oppression rather than an arbiter of order, law, and rights. For Palestinians who have long been stateless, the necessity to imagine the unthinkable, to do the impossible, and to find a way even when no way exists, necessarily means that the state can be exceeded by the imagination of something else.

In the 2010 PYM Basque Country Summer School, Rami, a Palestinian youth from Algeria, argued that if we were to achieve anything as PYM, we would need to bring together a strong analysis of the reality of our condition, a deep knowing of Palestine and the Palestinians, an intensive study of our history, a revolutionary understanding of our struggle, and a really great sense of humor and vibrant imagination. I responded to him and argued that for many of us who live outside Palestine, that the ability to know our land and people in intimate ways was impossible. He said it wasn't. He then drew a map on a napkin of his original village and told me about its landscapes, its people, even down to the details of the roads, pharmacies, and stores which once existed before 1948. I was a bit confused as to how Rami, who is like me and grew up his whole life outside of Palestine, had come to know Palestine so intimately. He argued that for him, knowing these details was in part from how his family brought him up, in part due to his politicization within the Palestinian left, and that it also was a demonstration of his own

commitment to Palestine and to maintaining the belief that anything could be possible, including his return. He did not want to be unprepared for when that day would come.⁶³⁰

Like Ali and Ramez, who testified that only with the miserable conditions of catastrophe in Yarmouk did they realize that anything was doable, the current generation, like the first generation of Palestinian strugglers of the 1950's, have now learned that anything—both incredible and miserable—is possible and that anything can and must be done. In this sense, the Palestinian ontology of Nakba has generated a profound imagination amongst Palestinians. It has harnessed creative and vibrant methods of how to survive, live, and continue on when all has been destroyed, when exhaustion mounts and when alienation is pervasive. But the more Palestinians endure, the stronger the boundlessness of possibility is becoming for this generation.

On June 1st, 2018, Razan al-Najjar, a twenty-one year old medic in the Gaza Strip was shot dead in the chest by Israeli sniper fire while tending to the many wounded Palestinian youth. In an interview just a month earlier, Razan insisted that the work she does to care for the people was not for money, not for a salary, and that she did not want to be compensated for it. She argued that it was about love and care for the country and for the people. As the 119th martyr since the protests began on March 30, 2018, Razan overnight became an international icon for her bravery, her insistence on women in Palestinian society being able to do great and important things, and her vigilance that something must be done. She said that we want to send a message to the world, which is that even without weapons, they can do anything.⁶³¹

For the new generation, who signify the survival of the Palestinian people despite the passing of three last skies, they are constant in their perseverance and in their commitment to practices of protracted struggle. They are what makes the misery that accompanies the

Palestinian ontology of Nakba also embedded in possibility for destroying the systemic enclosures they endure. It is they who will cultivate the conditions for the new sky as they bring together the past and the present, the various coordinates that the Palestinians have become intimately familiar with, and the imagination of a truly universal freedom. Precisely because, as they have learned to survive, resist, struggle, grieve, mourn, live, and bury their dead in a context of statelessness, they attest to how entire nations could exist in between and beyond the encapsulated time and space of the modern nation state. They present possibility which demands work, accountability, strategy, sacrifice, and vision – not a hypothetical possibility or one that can come without their involvement. It is my hope that Palestinian youth will continue to harvest the seeds of the new sky by engaging in such work. Until then, we will continue engaging in protracted struggle until Palestine is free.

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Endnotes: Preface

ⁱ Avery Gordon defines haunting as that which “...was the language and the experiential modality by which I tried to reach an understanding of the meeting of organized force and meaning because haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with (such as with transatlantic slavery, for instance) or when their oppressive nature is continuously denied (such as with free labor or national security). Haunting is not the same as being exploited, traumatized, or oppressed, although it usually involves these experiences or is produced by them. What’s distinctive about haunting as I used the term (and this is not its only way, of course) is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely.” Avery F. Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” *Borderlands* 10, no. 2 (2011): 2, accessed June 1, 2018, <http://averygordon.net/files/GordonHauntingFuturity.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ AMED is defined as follows: “Housed in the historic College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University alongside the studies of Indigenous communities and other communities of color, the AMED Studies program is framed within a justice centered perspective that is grounded in the need for accountability and service to multiple publics, including those within and outside of the academic community. AMED generates and advances a counter narrative that views Arab and Muslim communities as communities of color within the US, in the Americas, and transnationally across other diasporas. AMEDs intellectual focus and framing will complement and build on the Comparative Ethnic Studies approach that is central to the Race and Resistance Studies Program in the College of Ethnic Studies. AMED Studies provides an intellectual home to scholarship and analysis on pertinent issues affecting Arab and Muslim communities. Through engagement with the larger community, with activists and scholars engaged in critical and decolonizing work in the field, through its efforts toward documentation, analysis, and skilled pedagogy, AMED Studies represents a cutting-edge initiative and an urgent scholarly enterprise for students at SF State.” See: “Welcome to Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies,” accessed June 1, 2018, <https://amed.sfsu.edu/home>.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Palestinian Youth Network (PYN) first convening was in Barcelona in 2006. In 2008, the PYN was officially founded at the November 2008, Madrid conference and first general assembly. In 2011, at the second international general assembly, the PYN shifted to become the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM).

^{iv} The Arab Cultural and Community Center (ACCC) was founded in San Francisco in 1973. By 2000 the ACCC had become the largest and oldest community center of its kind in all of Northern California. Between 2000 and 2013, the ACCC became a vital service-based institution in addition to operating as a cultural center. Its programs included social services and domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment and stalking prevention and intervention services, children and youth empowerment programs, English as a Second Language (ESL) and health education classes for low income immigrant women, an annual Arab cultural festival, an annual Arab woman’s conference, racial equity advocacy and civic engagement programs, and cultural competency training programs for local Bay Area schools, service providers and partners. Much changed following my departure from the ACCC in 2013 and the resultant exodus of the remaining staff members by 2015. By that time, most of the programs also did not survive the leadership changes in the organization and the unfortunate shifts in vision and commitments. For more on the history of the ACCC prior to the major shifts in trajectories see: Nadine Naber, *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics and Activism* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

^v Rabab Abdulhadi, "Contesting the Foreign/Domestic Divide: Arab Revolutions and American Studies in *Shifting Borders: America and the Middle East/North Africa* (presentation, Fourth International Conference, Baltimore, MD, November 2011), http://www.academia.edu/19821592/_Contesting_the_Foreign_Domestic_Divide_Arab_Revolutions_and_American_Studies_.

^{vi} During my time in the department of Ethnic Studies at UCR, my relationships with the other graduate students were a constant source of sustenance and inspiration. The graduate students formed a community that became more than collegial solidarity or friendship. We organized together within the graduate collective, within our local union UAW 2865, and kept putting up fights for better working conditions and lighter Teaching Assistant work-loads. We organized for the kinds of classes we wanted to see in our department, attempted to push the department to establish new hire-lines and to provide resources for graduate student conference and research travel, and wanted to continue to sustain and foster the critical ethnic studies vision that had been cultivated by many faculties. We organized colloquiums and teach-ins on critical teaching pedagogy, on supporting first generation and students of color in the classroom. We workshopped each other's fellowship and job application materials. Beyond the organizing, we had each other's backs. We turned up when crisis hit. We studied, cried, laughed, partied, and grieved together. We had hard times, even between one another, but turned out to say goodbye or to solve conflict. And we kept a certain degree of love for one another through it all, and after it all. I am deeply grateful for this community of people and want to extend my greatest appreciation and support to some of the most amazing humans I have come to know: Marlen Rios-Hernandez, Brian Stephens, Aaron Alvarado, Jayes Sebastian, Ren-yo Hwang, Justin Phan, Frank Perez, Beth Kopacz, Iris Blake, MT Vallarta, Cynthia Martinez, Tomoyo Joshi, Jessica Fremland, Lawrence Lan, Alex Villalpando, Charles Sepulveda, Kehaulani Vaughn, Lizette "Lucha" Arevalo, Angelica "Pickles" Camacho, Jalondra Davis, and Luis Trujillo.

^{vii} The Department of Ethnic Studies has experienced a fair share of difficulty in the last several years, internally and in relationship to other moving parts of the University. The many challenges that the department has experienced are, at face value, read as inter-personal conflict. But in my opinion, they are deeply ideological schisms and symbiotic of the challenges the field is facing in the Obama Multi-Cultural White Supremacist Era and the post-Obama resurgence of Nativist/ultra-nationalist White Supremacy. The field's difficulty in re-vitalizing/re-organizing its relevance in light of the historic and contemporary attacks (both covert and overt), cuts to funding, and repression and censorship by University administrations and overly domesticated institutionalization is in part what I think makes these schisms so pronounced. During this time (2013-2018), many of the graduate students in the program struggled a lot in a department which appeared to be imploding at the seams. In the end, we lost many faculty members, most of whom were our advisors and committee members, who had left to other departments and Universities. Many stayed in touch, offered as much support as they could, and some really did a lot to support us.

^{viii} For example see: Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi, "The Deep Bonds of Palestinian–Puerto Rican Solidarity Were on Display at This Year's NYC Puerto Rican Day Parade," *Mondoweiss*, June 15, 2017, <http://mondoweiss.net/2017/06/palestinian-solidarity-display/>. See also: Loubna Qutami, "US Palestine

Solidarity: Reviving Original Patterns of Political Engagement," *Al-Shabaka*, January 4, 2018, <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/us-palestine-solidarity-reviving-original-patterns-political-engagement/>.

^{ix} There are several Southwest Asian and North African (SWANA) graduate students who are also some of my closest friends and to whom I am deeply indebted for offering constant support, friendship, and solidarity during the difficult times of being in the academy. On the many occasions we gathered, we did not console each other by simply talking about the struggles of graduate student teaching loads and senses of insecurity. Certainly, that was a part of the conversation, but it was not the crux of it. We discussed the peculiar ways we experience alienation when we refer to, gesture to, or invoke SWANA communities, geographies, and struggles in ways more familiar to us within academic institutions. We discussed the difficulty of how our struggles have become overly commodified as a field/site/place of study and how little some of this scholarship does for our people and struggles. We discussed how much of what is written on our communities conveys little of the nuance of our pain and troubles, or our hopes and aspirations. We shared our senses of alienation from academia, from the frameworks available to us, and we shared our insecurities in being able to offer the necessary foundations and interventions. We discussed feelings of being completely illegible to the departments, fields, and universities we study in. We offered community, friendship, and support to one another by interrogating and diagnosing these experiences as central parts of the current political contexts of our struggles and of the racialization of our communities in the current moment. I am forever grateful to this family of graduate students from different universities who have shared some of the same struggles I have including Dina Omar, Eman Ghanayem, Jennifer Mogannam, Omar Zahzah, Yasmeen Zahzah, Sophia Arman, Alborz Ghandahari, Banah Ghabdian, Maytha Al-Hassan, Lila Sharif, Mira Nabulsi, Jacqueline Husary, Mjriam Abu Samra, Leena Odeh, Nadia Barhoum, Saliem Shehadeh, and Rama Kased.

^x Edward W. Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

^{xi} During my time at UCR, it took me approximately eight months and six revised proposals to receive approval for my IRB human subjects research proposal. I struggled understanding why my proposal was treated so distinctly because I had received guidance from a Professor who regularly submits proposals and receives approval within a few weeks. Her research specifically engages youth and undocumented students which made me wonder why my project was being interrogated in the ways it was. At the time, I received counsel from Nadine Naber, who really talked me through the ethics, practical considerations, and methods for conducting human subject research. I am greatly appreciative for Nadine's guidance and support.

^{xii} Alejandra Molina, "Political Vitriol Blamed for Anti-Muslim Vandalism at UC Riverside [incl. Sherine Hafez, Jeffrey Sacks]," *The Middle East Forum*, April 11, 2016, <https://www.meforum.org/campus-watch/articles/2016/political-vitriol-blamed-for-anti-muslim-vandalism>.

^{xiii} There are too many times to name that I relied on Dylan's support and counsel to get me through a difficult moment. One particularly comes to mind as pertinent. In April of 2017, I had just learned that none of the fellowships I had applied for had come through. My summer job had fallen through the cracks, and I had not been making significant headway on my dissertation project. I was also feeling heightened senses of alienation within my own departmental community who I felt were not resonating with the struggles I was attempting to convey regarding the repression I and my community were experiencing on campus. I was exhausted, confused, and quite frankly burnt out. Dylan helped me transform that moment into a way to theorize my struggles as part and parcel of the broader difficulties of the Orientalism that make the Palestine I was speaking of illegible to the field, to funders, and to the

community of intellectuals on campus. I am forever indebted to him for helping me realize my struggles were not personal at all but rather deeply historical and political, and critical to name and identify.

^{xiv} Irene Calis, "Beyond the Apartheid Analogy: Time to Reframe Our Palestinian Struggle," *Al-Shabaka*, January 13, 2015, <https://al-shabaka.org/commentaries/beyond-the-apartheid-analogy-time-to-reframe-our-palestinian-struggle/>.

^{xv} Eman Ghanayem (Palestinian graduate student in the department of English at the University of Illinois, Champaign) in discussion with the author, May 2016.

^{xvi} Here, I don't mean to advocate for a sort of hollow or ethno-centric identity politics as if any Palestinian has something more profound or important to say simply for being Palestinian. I simply am noting that for many Palestinians, being Palestinian comes with so much that when choosing to engage Palestine academically and intellectually we have to consider: for example, for those of us in exile, our own entry into our homeland hinges on it. The protection of our families and own bodies crossing borders and being responsible in scholarship so that we are not making our communities more vulnerable, these are all things that run scrolls in our mind each time we take a speaking event, a publishing opportunity or teach a lesson plan. It is quite strange to see such an opening for engagement in Palestine without astute attention paid to difference in freedoms and power between non-Palestinians and Palestinians.

^{xvii} Nada Elia, "No More Mr. Nice Guy: White Male Israeli Activists Exploiting Palestine Solidarity," *Middle East Eye*, February 17, 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/palestinian-activists-need-no-more-mr-nice-guy-motto-333917252>.

^{xviii} For more on the ways various scholar-activists and student-activists have experienced excruciating forms of repression as a result of their advocacy for Palestinian rights see: Jewish Voice for Peace, "Stifling Dissent," *Jewish Voice for Peace*, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/stifling-dissent/>. Also see: Palestine Legal, "The Palestine Exception," *Palestine Legal*, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://palestinelegal.org/the-palestine-exception/>. Also see: International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, "The Business of Backlash: The Attack on the Palestinian Movement and Other Movements for Social Justice," *IJAN*, accessed June 1, 2018, <http://www.ijan.org/resources/business-of-backlash/>.

^{xix} For more on the ways academic allies have been attacked through lawsuits based on their solidarity efforts with Palestine see: TheTower.org Staff, "Judge Approves Expansion of Anti-BDS Lawsuit Against American Studies Association," *The Tower*, March 21, 2018, <http://www.thetower.org/6076-judge-approves-expansion-of-anti-bds-lawsuit-against-american-studies-association/>.

^{xx} Though I offer a small critique of relying only and wholly on the politics of analogy in the paragraphs above, I still turn to analogy at times to make my own claims legible. To read more on the ways gender was regarded as second to national liberation see for example: Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Maylei Blackwell, *Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Barbara Smith, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press: 2000); and Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, eds. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), 94–101.

^{xxi} I have many thoughts and questions on the ways scholarship on Palestine is in high demand if it contingently hinges on a feminist focus, analysis, or frame. I have too many questions and thoughts to properly address here and hope to do so in forthcoming work. However, there are three works that have been critical in helping me consider gender and Palestine without always necessarily relying on the feminist frameworks critical ethnic studies has introduced to me. Those works are Saba Mahmoud, *Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005) and Sara Ababneh, "Islamic Political Activism as a Means of Women's Empowerment? The Case of the Female Islamic Action Front Activists," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9, no. 1 (2009): 1-24, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9469.2009.01026.x>. See also: Rabab Abdulhadi, "The Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement: Emergence, Dynamics, and Challenges," *Sociologists for Women in Society* 12, no. 6 (1998): 649-673, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124398012006004>.

^{xxii} For more on mental health effects of graduate school see: Colleen Flaherty, "Mental Health Crisis for Grad Students," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 6, 2018, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/06/new-study-says-graduate-students-mental-health-crisis>.

^{xxiii} Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular'" in *Popular Culture: A Reader*, eds. Raiford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2005), 69.

^{xxiv} There are so many Palestinian youth who have influenced my work, inspired me and given me so much love and support through this process. They read portions of the writing and gave feedback, they explored ideas with me, and they encouraged me when I felt insecure about what I wanted to say. I want to thank especially Nayef Smadi, Taher Labadi, Saif Abu-Keshek, and Mustafa Jayyousi. I especially want to thank Mjriam Abu Samra who has been so constant with her critical feedback, love and support and for all that she does for our people and for all the times she mustered up the fight to encourage us to continue trying despite many moments of political despair.

^{xxv} Katharya Um, *From the Land of Shadows: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Cambodian Diaspora* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2015), 191.

^{xxvi} Mustapha Khayati, "Captive Words: Preface to a Situationist Dictionary," *The Anarchist Library*, accessed January 5, 2018, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/mustapha-khayati-captive-words-preface-to-a-situationist-dictionary>.

^{xxvii} I note here that this has become a condition shared by graduate students across many public universities in the current moment and is especially true for students in the humanities and social sciences as these colleges are enduring harsh financial cuts. However, I also note that the case of UCR, and specifically the department of ethnic studies, is unique. During my time in graduate school, each graduate student taught approximately ninety students per quarter.

^{xxviii} Fred Moten (Professor of English, University of California, Riverside) in discussion with the author, March 2017.

^{xxix} Lila Sharif (Professor of Asian American Studies, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign) in discussion with the author, April 2017.

^{xxx} Lila Sharif defines *vanishment* as “—processes of disappearing, replacing, making invisible, and depoliticizing indigenous attachments to land.” Lila Sharif, “Savory Politics: Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine,” *UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2014): 3, accessed April 2017, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/485943qz>.

^{xxx}ⁱ For an example of how Palestine scholarship and academic activism around Palestine in its most robust, mainstream iteration really is about pressuring (and, however implicitly, legitimizing) Israel as a state to be better to Palestinians see: Jon Soske and Sean Jacobs, eds. *Apartheid Israel: The Politics of an Analogy* (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2015). A cynical reading might be how the use of international law, even if understood tactically, with no complementary initiatives operating in tandem, is tantamount to asking a colonizer to colonize a little more gently, a little more palatably, and emphasizing Israel/the Israeli over Palestinian *humanity*. The exclusive hegemony of “international law” frameworks in Palestine activism, even while they can serve some important utility in and of themselves, runs the risk of replicating our colonial invisibilization in leaving the alleviation of our suffering to the conscience of global powers and international actors.

^{xxx}ⁱⁱ Lila Sharif, “Savory Politics: Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine” (PhD dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2014), 6-7.

^{xxx}ⁱⁱⁱ Sharif, 7.

^{xxx}^{iv} David Lloyd (Professor of English, University of California, Riverside) in discussion with the author, May 2018.

^{xxx}^v *Ibid.*

^{xxx}^{vi} *Ibid.*

^{xxx}^{vii} Leigh Patel, *Decolonizing Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 7.

^{xxx}^{viii} Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 11.

^{xxx}^{ix} *Ibid.*

^xⁱ *Ibid.*, xix.

Endnotes: Introduction

¹ Mahmoud Darwish, “Under Siege – Poem by Mahmoud Darwish,” *PoemHunter.com*, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/under-siege/>.

²For more on the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, see: Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), Nur Masalha, *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2012) and Walid Khalidi, *All That*

Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948 (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006).

³Arjan El Fassed and Laurie King, "UN Refugee Report: Most Protracted and Largest of All Refugee Problems in the World Remains Unresolved," *The Electronic Intifada*, April 26, 2006, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/un-refugee-report-most-protracted-and-largest-all-refugee-problems-world-remains-unresolved>.

⁴ *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, eds. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Constantin Zureiq, *Ma'na al-Nakba (The Meaning of Disaster)* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1948).

⁷ For more on works that detail the 1948 Nakba in great detail see for example: Arif al-Arif, *Nakbat Filastin Wa Al-Firdaws Al-Mafqud: 1947–1955 (The Palestinian Nakba and the Lost Paradise: 1947–1955)* (Institute of Palestine Studies, 2013). See also, Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2006).; See also: Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Sun*, trans. Humphrey Davies (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Archipelago Books, 2006). See also: 1948: Andy Trimlett and Ahlam Muhtaseb, *Creation and Catastrophe* (2017), documentary. See also: Walid Khalidi, *Palestine Reborn* (I B Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1993). See also: Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).

⁸ Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network has offered a critical account of the profound political significance of the 2018 Great March of Return for the broader Palestinian condition, cause, and experience. They argue: "They [the Great March of Return Protestors] have forced the discourse to move beyond the occupation of the Palestinian territory in 1967 to the Palestinians' dispossession and expulsion from their homeland to make way for the state of Israel in 1948" For more see: Ayah Abubasheer et al., "Focus On: Gaza," *Al Shabaka*, May 2018, https://al-shabaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gaza_PolicyFocus_English_May2018.pdf?utm_source=Al-Shabaka+announcements&utm_campaign=8050574506-AbuZarifa_Commentary_Nov2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9ca5175dc-8050574506-416228417.

⁹ It is a torturous feeling to list the Palestinian dead as if they were nameless and faceless casualties; numbers incapable of sensitizing the world to Palestinian suffering. To unhinge ourselves from the way that Palestinian death has become a normalized and a necessary requirement to maintain the status quo, and to honor the families of the Great Return March martyrs, I offer the names of these martyrs. Almost all of them are youth under the age of thirty-five. They are youth, who certainly dreamed for a different kind of future than their life and land being stolen from them. It is my hope that this dissertation can honor not only their memories, but the dreams and imaginations of a free Palestine that I am certain they carried in their hearts, and that they were unfortunately never able to realize. Though an incomplete list, it is my hope that we might come to more seriously grieve Palestinian death in respectful ways as scholars based in the US, mourn and pay respects to the families and communities left to bury their dead, and utilize their faces, names and memories to imagine a different kind of world where the constancy of

violence incurred on Palestinians does not define the limits of dreaming of another world. May they rest in peace. Younis, southern Gaza; Jihad Zoheir Abu Jamous, 30, Khan Younis; Mohammad Kamal Najjar, 25, Jabalia/Tal Za'atar, northern Gaza; Ibrahim Salah Abu Sha'ar, 25, Rafah; Amin Mansour Abu Mo'amar, 22, Rafah, southern Gaza; Naji Abdullah Abu Hjeir, 25, al-Boreij, central Gaza; Mosa'ab Zohair Salloul, 23, Nusseirat refugee camp, central Gaza; Abdul-Qader Merdi al-Hawajri, 42, Nusseirat refugee camp, central Gaza; Mahmoud Sa'adi Rohmi, 33, Sheja'eyya, Gaza City; Mohammad Naim Abu Amro, 27, Sheja'eyya, Gaza City; Ahmad Ibrahim Ashour Odah, 19, northern Gaza; Jihad Ahmad Freina, 35, Al-Nafaq, Gaza City; Abdul-Fattah Bahjat Abdul-Nabi, 18, Beit Lahia, northern Gaza; Bader Faeq as-Sabagh, 22, Beit Lahia, northern Gaza; Sari Waleed Abu Odah, 27, Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza; Hamdan Ismael Abu 'Amsa, 23, Beit Hanoun; Faris Mahmoud Mohammed Al-Raqb, 26, Khan Younis; Ahmed Omar 'Arafah, 25, Deir al-Balah; Shadi Hamdan Al-Kashef, 34, Rafah; Mujahed Nabil Al-Khoderi, 23, Gaza City; Mohammed Said Moussa Hajj Saleh, 33, Rafah; Tha'er Raba'ah, 30, Jabalia; Alaa Yahya al-Zamali, 14, Rafah; Sidqi Faraj Abu Outewi, 45, Nusseirat refugee camp, central Gaza; Ibrahim Al-Ourr, 20, Nusseirat refugee camp, central Gaza; Hussein Mohammed Adnan Madi, 14, Gaza City; Osama Khamis Qdeih, 38, East of Khan Younis; Majdi Ramadan Shbat, 38, Beit Hanoun; Yasser Murtaja, 30, Gaza City; Hamza Abdul'al, 20, Al-Zwaydah; Marwan Odah Qdeih, 45, Khuz'a town, east of Khan Younis; Islam Herzallah, 28; Abdullah Al-Shahry; Mohammed Hajeelah; Ahmad Nabil Abu Aqel, 25, from Jabalia in northern Gaza Laila Anwar Al-Ghandoor, 8-months-old Ezz el-din Musa Mohamed Alsamaak, 14; Wisaal Fadl Ezzat Alsheikh Khalil, 15; Ahmed Adel Musa Alshaer, 16; Saeed Mohamed Abu Alkheir, 16; Ibrahim Ahmed Alzarqa, 18; Eman Ali Sadiq Alsheikh, 19; Zayid Mohamed Hasan Omar, 19; Motassem Fawzy Abu Louley, 20; Anas Hamdan Salim Qadeeh, 21; Mohamed Abd Alsalam Harz, 21; Yehia Ismail Rajab Aldaqoor, 22; Mustafa Mohamed Samir Mahmoud Almasry, 22; Ezz Eldeen Nahid Aloyutey, 23; Mahmoud Mustafa Ahmed Assaf, 23; Ahmed Fayez Harb Shahadah, 23; Ahmed Awad Allah, 24; Khalil Ismail Khalil Mansor, 25; Mohamed Ashraf Abu Sitta, 26; Bilal Ahmed Abu Diqah, 26; Ahmed Majed Qaasim Ata Allah, 27; Mahmoud Rabah Abu Maamar, 28; Musab Yousef Abu Leilah, 28; Ahmed Fawzy Altetr, 28; Mohamed Abdelrahman Meqdad, 28; Obaidah Salim Farhan, 30; Jihad Mufid Al-Farra, 30; Fadi Hassan Abu Salmi, 30; Motaz Bassam Kamil Al-Nunu, 31; Mohammed Riyad Abdulrahman Alamudi, 31; Jihad Mohammed Othman Mousa, 31; Shahir Mahmoud Mohammed Almadhoon, 32; Mousa Jabr Abdulsalam Abu Hasnayn, 35; Mohammed Mahmoud Abdulmoti Abd'al, 39; Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim Hamdan, 27; Ismail Khalil Ramadhan Aldaahuk, 30; Ahmed Mahmoud Mohammed Alrantisi, 27; Alaa Alnoor Ahmed Alkhatib, 28; Mahmoud Yahya Abdawahab Hussain, 24; Ahmed Abdullah Aladini, 30; Saadi Said Fahmi Abu Salah, 16; Ahmed Zahir Hamid Alshawa, 24; Mohammed Hani Hosni Alnajjar, 33; Fadl Mohamed Ata Habshy, 34; Mokhtar Kaamil Salim Abu Khamash, 23; Mahmoud Wael Mahmoud Jundeyah, 21; Abdulrahman Sami Abu Mattar, 18; Ahmed Salim Alyaan Aljarf, 26; Mahmoud Sulayman Ibrahim Aql, 32; Mohamed Hasan Mustafa Alabadilah, 25; Kamil Jihad Kamil Mihna, 19; Mahmoud Saber Hamad Abu Taeemah, 23; Ali Mohamed Ahmed Khafajah, 21; Abdelsalam Yousef Abdelwahab, 39; Mohamed Samir Duwedat, 27; Talal Adel Ibrahim Mattar, 16; Omar Jomaa Abu Ful, 30. For more on the lives lost during the Great Return march actions see: Maureen Clare Murphy, "Israel Slaughters Palestinians Marching to Return," *The Electronic Intifada*, May 15, 2018, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/maureen-clare-murphy/israel-slaughters-palestinians-marching-return>; See also: TRT World editors, "Here Are the Names of 60 Palestinians Who Were Killed in Gaza on May 14," *TRT World*, May 15, 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/here-are-the-names-of-60-palestinians-who-were-killed-in-gaza-on-may-14-17461>. See also: "Israel-Palestine Timeline: The Human Cost of the Conflict," *IsraelPalestineTimeline*, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://israelpalestinetimeline.org/2018deaths/>.

¹⁰ Hürriyet Daily News Editors, "Global Outrage Against Israel over Gaza Killings," *Hürriyet Daily News*, May 15, 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/global-outrage-against-israel-over-gaza-killings-131815>. Shannon Ebrahim, "World Anger over Gaza Massacre," *Independent Media*, May 16, 2018,

<https://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/news/world-anger-over-gaza-massacre-15004784>. Bethan McKernan, "Nakba Day: Israel Faces International Condemnation over Two-Day 'Massacre' at Gaza Border," *Independent*, May 15, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/nakba-day-gaza-protests-palestinians-israel-killed-violence-latest-a8352081.html>.

¹¹ Foreign Relations, "Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995" (104th Congress, Public Law 104-45, November 8, 1995), 398-401.

¹² Hamid Dabashi, "Palestine After the May 14 Massacre," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, May 22, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/palestine-14-massacre-180521110715978.html>. Ian Lee, Tamara Qiblawi and Abeer Salman, "Dozens of Palestinians Killed in Gaza Clashes as US Embassy Opens," *CNN*, May 15, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/14/middleeast/gaza-protests-intl/index.html>.

¹³ Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Israeli Troops Fire Shots, Tear Gas at Gaza Protesters, 1,100 Palestinians Hurt," *Reuters*, May 4, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-protests/israeli-troops-fire-shots-tear-gas-at-gaza-protesters-1100-palestinians-hurt-idUSKBN1150XA>. Daniel Hilton, "Drones over Gaza: How Israel Tested Its Latest Technology on Protesters," *Middle East Eye*, May 16, 2018, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-drones-pose-new-threat-palestinian-protesters-1730935753>.

¹⁴ Norman Finkelstein states, "Under international law a movement struggling for self-determination or struggling to free itself of alienation occupation is not prohibited from using armed force to achieve its objective. That is to say, the Palestinians have the right under international law to use armed force in order end an alienation occupation and to achieve self-determination. The law is unequivocal there is no dispute whatsoever among specialist in the field that an occupying power or a power denying the right to self-determination of a people does not have the right to use any force. Israel has no right to use any force. They don't have the right to use proportionate force. They don't have the right to use discriminate force. They have no right to use any force. And so, in my opinion, human rights organizations have been very misleading in condemning Israel for using "disproportionate and indiscriminate force." In addition, those determinations disproportionate and indiscriminate are wholly irrelevant to the situation in Gaza. Israel is not using disproportionate force. It is not using indiscriminate force. It is using very discriminate force. It is targeting civilians. It is targeting unarmed civilians. That's not indiscriminate or disproportionate force, those are crimes against humanity." Aaron Maté, *TheRealNews*, *Finkelstein: Where's the Solidarity for Gaza? (2/3)*, YouTube video, 14:55, May 14, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrJyiMpuA2M>.

¹⁵ Dabashi, "Palestine After the May 14 Massacre."

¹⁶ See for example Noura Erakat and Dia' Azzeh, Arab Studies Institute, *Gaza in Context*, YouTube video, 20:24, July 19, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmRPkFAN2EU>. See also: *Gaza as Metaphor*, eds. Dina Matar and Helga Tawil-Souri (Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁷ "Living Conditions in Gaza 'More and More Wretched' over past Decade, UN Finds," *UN News*, July 11, 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/07/561302-living-conditions-gaza-more-and-more-wretched-over-past-decade-un-finds>.

¹⁸ Shaun King Infographic, "Why Are Palestinians Protesting in Gaza?," May 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/shaunking/photos/a.799605230078397.1073741828.799539910084929/1809315212440722/?type=3&theater>.

¹⁹ Ayah Abubasheer and Esther Rappaport, "Under Siege: Remembering Leningrad, Surviving Gaza," *Al-Shabaka*, December 10, 2014, <https://al-shabaka.org/roundtables/under-siege-remembering-leningrad-surviving-gaza/>.

²⁰ Illan Pappé, *The Biggest Prison on Earth* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2017).

²¹ Ayah Abubasheer et al., "Focus On: Gaza," *Al-Shabaka*, May 2018, https://al-shabaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gaza_PolicyFocus_English_May2018.pdf?utm_source=Al-Shabaka+announcements&utm_campaign=8050574506-AbuZarifa_Commentary_Nov2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a9ca5175dc-8050574506-416228417.

²² I utilize the phrase humanitarian crisis as it has become a mobilizing catalyst that makes legible Palestinian ails within the international law, human rights, and humanitarian law framework. However, as the introduction elucidates through what I call the Palestinian ontology of Nakba, the Palestinian condition is not best-described within this humanitarian crisis rubric. As I mentioned briefly, the siege, attack, and violence incurred in Gaza and among other Palestinian communities is not just on Palestinian people and geographies but on all forms of Palestinian *life* itself. In this respect, the political tensions within discourses of what is happening in Gaza as a humanitarian crisis, geographic aberration, or temporal condition obscure our ability to make linkages between various fragments of Palestinian histories, geographies, and stories which would tell a more complete account of how all forms of Palestinian life and land have been and continue to be persistently surveilled, enclosed upon, and attacked.

²³ Al Jazeera editors, "Yasser Murtaja, and His Dreams of Travelling," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, April 7, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/yasser-murtaja-dreams-travelling-180407125419357.html>.

²⁴ *The War Around Us*, directed by Abdallah Omeish (2012; USA: 3rd Eye Filmworks, 2014), DVD.

²⁵ Tom Embury-Dennis, "Hundreds Attend Funeral of Palestinian Journalist Killed in Gaza Covering Protests Along Israeli Border," *Independent*, April 8, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-israel-protests-latest-yasser-murtaja-dead-killings-defence-force-violence-hamas-a8294606.html>.

²⁶ Here I speak specifically to various US celebrities and politicians who have long been silent or neutral who came out in critique or condemnation of the Israeli authorities for the attack on unarmed Palestinian civilians during the Great Return March. For example, the Bernie Sanders campaign presented a position distinct from all other Presidential candidates in US history. During the campaign, Sanders was an open advocate of supporting Palestinian human rights and attempting to broker fair and honest negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis in which the US could recognize that Israel was not always right. However, following his electoral defeat, Sanders gave an interview with AJ+ host Dena Takruri in which he defended his endorsement of a congressional letter that argued that he did not believe in singling out Israel and did not endorse the movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). Following the

Great Return March, Sanders came out publicly to critique the actions of the Israeli government. See: Bernie Sanders and Dina Takruri, AJ+, *Bernie Sanders Talks Democrats, President Trump, Palestine And Syria*, YouTube video, 10:02, May 7, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piWbS2bAvTY>. See also: Tim Hains, "Bernie Sanders On Gaza Clashes: I Do Not Accept Israeli Government's Explanation, Palestinians Engaged In 'Nonviolent Protest'," *RealClear Politics*, April 1, 2018, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2018/04/01/bernie_sanders_on_gaza_clashes_i_do_not_accept_israeli_governments_explanation_palestinians_engaged_in_nonviolence.html.

²⁷ I am indebted to my advisor Dylan Rodriguez for helping me understand the Palestinian desire for freedom of mobility to be an insurgency against immobilization, not just against displacement, siege, and captivity. This analysis is one that deeply resembles and is in tune with anti-carceral freedom desires, dreams, and struggles across various geographic and historical coordinates of racial colonial violence, captivity, and abstraction. Dylan has helped me think through Yaser's desire to "travel" as one of flight not exactly linked to the luxurious innocence and monetary and cultural wealth affiliated with the concept of travel. In thinking of Yaser's desire to leave Gaza as one of flight, what has resonated with me under Dylan's guidance is the very idea that the Palestinian condition of enclosure, captivity and siege fuels a collective desire to achieve freedom as an abolitionist desire. That abolitionist desire can be deeply informed by the history of anti-carceral and prison abolitionist movements and conscious that the logic of imprisonment does not necessarily rely on the overt generative elements of forced labor. Rodriguez builds upon the work of George Jackson and Angela Davis to examine prison logics as "mass containment, the effective elimination of large numbers of (poor, black) people from the realm of civil society." In this same decree, considering the siege and captivity of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip as a mechanism to dispose of the Palestinians from any notion of "civil society," to eject their existence from an economic productive labor force, while simultaneously using their lives and lands as a productive methodologically developing racial technologies of warfare and containment, the Palestinian desire for freedom parallels greatly with abolitionist visions. Yaser's desire for travel thus becomes a signifier of freedom from Israeli imprisonment rather than a desire to leave Palestine. Angela Y. Davis and Dylan Rodriguez, "The Challenge of Prison Abolition: A Conversation," *Social Justice* 27, no. 3 (2000): 213, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29767244>.

²⁸ Salma Khadra Jayyusi, "The Durable Cords of Memory" in *Being Palestinian: Personal Reflections on Palestinian Identity in the Diaspora*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 206.

²⁹ Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us – Mahmoud Darwish," *Indus Asia Online Journal*, June 13, 2010, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://iaoj.wordpress.com/2010/06/13/the-earth-is-closing-on-us-by-mahmoud-darwish/>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ This comment is about multiple incidents that have occurred in the last seven years since the start of the Arab uprisings and catastrophe that has befallen Syria as well as the ongoing siege and wars on the Gaza Strip. Boats filled with hundreds of Palestinian and Syrian refugees escaping the catastrophes and embarking on the death voyages to and through Europe have been left to drown without European assistance because the passengers are undocumented refugees without visas. By 2015 UN has estimated that 3,500 have died attempting the passage. I do recognize that the scores of people from across the Asian and African continent which have embarked on perilous death voyages since 2008 has constituted what is often referred to as the "global refugee crisis" and that the drowning of these people in open waters is not a specific attribute to the Palestinian and Syrian refugee experience alone. This will be further explored in my forthcoming research. For information regarding the case of Syrian refugees

drowning see: Colin Yeo, "Is Letting Syrian Refugees Drown in the Med to Deter Others Now UK Policy?," *The Guardian*, March 12, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/12/letting-syrian-refugees-drown-in-med-uk-policy>. For information on Palestinians drowning in these open waters see: "Escaping Gaza: Hundreds of Palestinians Drown," *Al Monitor*, September 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/tragedy-sea-boat-smugglers-gaza-despair-young-people.html#>.

³² The Daily Star editors, "Israeli Forces Shoot Dead Palestinian Fisherman off the Gaza Coast," *The Daily Star*, March 08, 2015, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Mar-07/289981-israeli-forces-shoot-dead-palestinian-fisherman-off-gaza-coast-medics.ashx>.

³³ Robert Booth, "Israeli Attack on Gaza Flotilla Sparks International Outrage," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/31/israeli-attacks-gaza-flotilla-activists>.

³⁴ This sentence is in reference to a poem written by Rafeef Ziadeh about the 2009 Israeli assault on Gaza. In the poem, she asks, "Where should we go after they have occupied the last sky?" In an email correspondence with Rafeef, I asked her if this particular sentence was written in reference to Mahmoud Darwish's poem "The Earth is Closing on Us." She responded by saying it is indeed in reference to Darwish's writing: "This passage is particularly personal for me because it was written after Palestinians were forced to leave Beirut (my family's city of exile). I used it in reference to the siege of Gaza (because Beirut also went through a siege) to make the point that Palestinian dispossession at the hands of Israel's settler colonial project has been constant, it changes in degree of brutality and more modern military technology, but its ultimate logic has been constant—to the point that we feel we have no escape, even the last skies have been occupied." To listen to Ziadeh recite the poem see: Rafeef Ziadeh, Sternchen productions, *Rafeef Ziadah - 'We Teach Life, Sir'*, London, 12.11.11, YouTube video, 4:38, November 13, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKucPh9xHtM>. Rafeef Ziadeh, email message to author, May 7, 2015.

³⁵ Talal Alyan, "The Death of Palestine: Two Years of Siege in Yarmouk," *The Huffington Post*, December 16, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/talal-alyan/yarmouk-refugee-camp-syria_b_6326054.html.

³⁶ Roni Schocken, "Chilling Effect of the Nakba Law on Israel's Human Rights," *Haaretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*, May 17, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/chilling-effect-of-the-nakba-law-on-israel-s-human-rights-1.430942>.

³⁷ I utilize the term *shatat*, which is often considered the Arabic word for diaspora but translates to the dispersed or the scattered, to refer to Palestinians living in exile. I have turned to the work of Karma Nabulsi to explain why the Palestinian experience does not constitute a Diaspora like any other. She says, "The closest translation to it [al-shatat] is 'diaspora.' Diaspora, however, is inadequate and, worse, eludes the nature of the Palestinian dispersal since 1947. Neither the use of the term diaspora, nor that of 'refugees' is sufficient to capture the totality of the current Palestinian dispersal, and the different legal statuses recognized under international law. There are several million refugees in both occupied Palestine and exile (as well as internally displaced inside the Green Line). Until such a time as there is a solution to the conflict, the outside Palestinians do not yet constitute a diaspora. In defining it thus, one could undermine the various existing legal, political and civic statuses of the several million Palestinians who live outside historic Palestine." Karma Nabulsi, "Justice as the Way Forward," in *Where Now for Palestine? The Demise of the Two-State Solution*, ed. Jamil Hilal (London and New York: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 251.

³⁸ *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, eds. Amaney Jamal and Nadine Naber (Syracuse University Press, 2007). See also: Sunaina Marr Maira, *The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, and Solidarity in the War on Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 2016). See also: Louis A. Cainkar, *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2009).

³⁹ Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2009). Helen Hatab Samhan, "Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab-American Experience" in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 209-226.

⁴⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2005).

⁴¹ Ascendency to whiteness in US race politics means partaking and enjoying the benefits of empire, which has committed and continues to enact genocide against American Indian peoples to settle their lands, eliminate any trace of them, and naturalize *our* "American" presence. It means complying with and enjoying the benefits of the cumulative profit achieved at the expense of racial chattel slavery and the afterlife of slavery. It means partaking in anti-black racist state violence, carcerality, and social death. It means enjoying the privilege of empire's ravaging of Third World countries, of war and exile, and of extracted resources and exploited labor. Not all racial bodies are given this chance for freedoms and protections at the expense of their homelands and peoples. But the chance, a form of racial power in and of itself, is also a form of alienation in many ways. It is a form of cultural genocide and estrangement. We are afforded such advantage, in exchange for upholding US Empire and its endorsement of Zionist dispossession and occupation, because we cannot be against Israel but belong to "America." The post-9/11 War on Terror project has rudely awakened Arab and Muslim communities in the United States to this fact. But its principal logic is found in the foundation of the United States itself and its tenacious support for Israel and Zionism. For more on the way ascendency is made possible vis-à-vis these conditions see: David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Road, 1992). See also: Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). See also: Frank B. Wilderson III, *Red White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 2010).

⁴² Winona LaDuke argues, "...euro-americans [sic] in the United States can't talk about Gaza, because we can't talk about Israel. Because we can't talk about the fact that the world is not suffering from a [sic] Israeli/Palestinian conflict, but that the world is suffering from the fact that Europe has never been able to deal with it's [sic] 'Jewish Question' without some sort of intense barbarity and horror from the Inquisition to the Holocaust. And that Europe, in particular 'Great' Britain, the masters of divide an [sic] conquer 'solved' the problem by supporting the radical, terrorist, extremist Zionists and their mad plan to resettle the 'homeland.' We can't talk about Israel because we can't talk about Wounded Knee. Because we can't talk about Sand Creek or Carlisle 'Boarding School.' Because we can't talk about forced sterilization or small pox blankets or Kit Carson and his scorched earth policy in the Southwest. Because we have Andrew Jackson on our twenty-dollar bill. Because we are one huge settlement on stolen land. We can't talk about Israel because we are Israel." Adam Horowitz, "Winona LaDuke: 'We Can't Talk About Israel Because We Are Israel'," *Mondoweiss*, November 21, 2012, <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/11/winona-laduke-we-cant-talk-about-israel-because-we-are-israel/>.

⁴³ A rich tapestry of texts on transnational movements demonstrate that political movements and solidarity can exceed barriers and limitations of nation-state territories and borders. In so doing, some of these works also come to provincialize the very limitations of the state and open political and intellectual possibility beyond the states contours and beyond geographic, ethnic, racial, gendered, classed and national specificity. More complete and intersectional forms of solidarity are thus calcified. Theories on transnational feminism have been useful for me in understanding the necessity and possibility of a different kind of world, alliance and solidarity that transnational movements produce. My project however utilizes the term transnational, but I specifically am only focusing on Palestinian communities. In many ways the ethnographic account I am attempting to construct is a transnational-national one, precisely because as landless/stateless peoples the Palestinian youth I engage, live within and beyond dozens of nation-states. On the one hand, their dispersed/stateless condition enables their political praxis and radical imagination to exceed the boundaries of nation-states. On the other, it forces them to navigate the liminalities of states without legal status and in many cases, rights-bearing citizenship of their own. The PYM came to rely on the language of transnationalism to characterize their philosophical and demographic criteria which can be further explored in chapter three. For more on transnational solidarity produces possibilities for political and intellectual boundlessness see for example: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ When the PYM was formed in 2006, it defined youth as a demographic sector within Palestinian society. Between 2006-2011, PYM defined youth as people between the ages of 18-35. However, through their own theoretical and political growth, the movement came to understand youth as a political optic, departure point and orientation which chapter three expands on further. In this research the people I have engaged are young people between the ages of 18-35 (except for a few interviews that took place with people over the age of 18 who were youth at a moment in Palestinian history). However, I utilize the term youth as a political intervention to the post 1993 statehood building discourse which necessarily relies on teleology's of progress and modernity. For the PYM, aspiring for a neo-liberal state was never the political goals, visions and discourse it relied on. Rather, PYM came to appreciate turns to the past and drawing linkages between *then and now*, in defining how/why the new generation of Palestinian youth has arrived to the spatial and temporal junctures we inhabit. It did not envision youth as a demographic sector distinct from all Palestinian society nor did it rely on discourses of modernity, progress, and democratization; three tenets often utilized to define youth movements as seeking a break from the old. Therefore, I believe the young people I engage offer a political lens on behalf of revolutionary Palestine and Palestinians rather than they do represent a specific demographic. The political conditions for the new generation which can/has constructed youth as an optic for revolutionary registries of the Palestinian condition is traced in Chapter two. The way young people within the PYM theorized youth as a political angle is found in chapter three. For more on how teleology's of empire/progress have played a critical function in historical forms of enslavement, colonization, and oppression see: Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke University Press, 2015). See also: María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003). See also: colonial narratives/cultural dialogues by Jyotsna G Singh

⁴⁵ Sunaina Marr Maira, *Jil Oslo: Palestinian Hip Hop, Youth Culture, and the Youth Movement* (Tadween Publishing, 2013).

⁴⁶ Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us – Mahmoud Darwish."

⁴⁷ Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia As Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

⁴⁸ A significant part of Chapter one is dedicated to thinking through what Lila Sharif has called writing alongside Palestine. Inspired by Sharif's attention to the complexity of producing research on Palestine as Palestinian exilic subjects, I discuss my own experience in writing as part of and analogously with various elements of Palestinian survival, organizing, and existence. I call these reflections the process of learning to writing through Palestine. One way I distinguish writing *alongside* versus *through* means that I necessarily am attempting to apprehend Palestine as a site (literal and symbolic) that is constantly creatively, speculatively, and spiritually inhabited as part of a radical political-intellectual praxis. Palestine is not only a literal geography, though its geographic and historical importance is not something I aim to erase. But Palestine is also something that must shape narrativity, the act of dreaming, creating, and imagining when conditions and liminalities tell us otherwise. I am grateful to my dissertation committee advisor, Dylan Rodriguez, for helping me understand Palestine both the figurative and literal, the imaginary and the actual, and a site that inhabits extremities of both despair and hope. I also am grateful to my committee member Fred Moten for helping me think of how the experience of being denied entry from Palestine in December of 2015 was a critical experience that I must allow to inform my own method, writing, and analytical framework of how I define Palestine. I also want to thank my committee member Jodi Kim for helping me more critically interrogate the distinctions of writing about Palestine (as object of analysis) vs. writing through it as a methodological process. For more on Lila Sharif's notion of writing alongside Palestine see: Lila Sharif, "Savory Politics: Land, Memory, and the Ecological Occupation of Palestine" (doctoral dissertation, UC San Diego, 2014).

⁴⁹ Anaheed Al-Hardan, *Palestinians in Syria: Nakba Memories of Shattered Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

⁵⁰ *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles Hale, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

⁵¹ Elena Zambelli, Ruba Salih, and Lynn Welchman, "The Palestine Youth Movement (PYM): Transnational Politics, Inter/national Frameworks and Intersectional Alliances," (working paper, Research Gate, 2017), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321732057_The_Palestinian_Youth_Movement_PYM_Transnational_politics_international_frameworks_and_intersectional_alliances.

⁵² For more on SJP see Nora Barrows-Friedman, *In Our Power: U.S. Students Organize for Justice in Palestine* (Just World Books, 2014).

⁵³ Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 26.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ For more on the ways freedom dreams and revolutionary imagination can calcify political vision, strengthen strategy and solidarity, that necessarily relies on a radical break from teleology's of empire: see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002) and Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination*.

⁵⁶ Harvey defines time-space compressions as 1) landscapes destroyed in place of a new, renaming a critical component to that process, 2) generating experiences out of which new conceptions are made, 3) quest for visible and tangible markers of identity, 4) “the social search for identity and roots in place has reentered geography as a leitmotif” and 5) dissolves and fragments everything. See: David Harvey, “Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, no.3 (1990): 431.

⁵⁷ Massad utilizes Harvey’s understanding of time-space compressions by analyzing, for example, how in the process of Israel renaming destroyed villages, the “geographic transformation of Palestine was, in fact, an attempt to complete the epistemological transformation of how it was to be apprehended by European Jews, not only spatially and temporally, but corporally.” Joseph Massad, “The “Post-Colonial” Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/Israel,” in *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁸ Several works specifically focused on the role of Palestinian youth during the 2011 Arab Uprisings and particularly on what would become known as the March 15th Movement and later called the Palestine youth movement (not the same as PYM the organization.) However, many of these works focused on analogous comparisons between the youth protests in Palestine and the Arab region, taking for granted the precariousness of Palestinian statelessness and the differential relationship Palestinian youth have to the “state” than Arab youth. Whether these works are informed either by the language of the movements themselves, language which at times focused on democratic participation and representation, or by their over-reliance on social movement theories, frameworks, and limits, I believe they hindered a more nuanced and critical reading of what could have been and what still could emerge out of youth movements in the current time. For more on the liminalities of the call to end the split in national unity, see for example As’ad Ghanem, “The Palestinians – Lessons from the Arab Spring,” *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 6, no. 3 (2013): 422-437, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2013.813111> and Ibrahim Shikaki, “Palestinian Youth Movement: Cherries not Strawberries!!,” *The Palestine Chronicle*, March 13, 2011, <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/palestinian-youth-movement-cherries-not-strawberries/>.

⁵⁹ Bayat notes that social nonmovements “embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations. The term movement implies that social nonmovements enjoy significant, consequential elements of social movements; yet they constitute distinct entities.” Bayat, *Life as Politics*, 14.

⁶⁰ In the US, I specifically am referring to the Occupy Movement which emerged following the 2011 Arab Uprisings. However, I also would argue that various mass scale political protest we have seen in the last several years, since 2011 in the US, including the movement for Black Lives, the struggle of the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota people in Standing Rock, growing movements against the Muslim Ban and separation of migrant families; all have taken form in a similar way to what Bayat has called social nonmovements. The lack of centralized structures, ideologies, and forums for collective vision construction for me play a critical role in making the movements characterized by a range of collective actions by non-collective actors as Bayat notes.

⁶¹ *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change*, ed. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 4.

⁶² Amilcar L. Cabral, "The Weapon of Theory," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 3, no.5 (2009), accessed June 20, 2018, <http://www.jpanafrican.org/edocs/e-DocWeapon3.5.pdf>.

⁶³ I note that the question of the relationship between theory and practice is not only attributed to Paolo Freire's 1970 ground-breaking text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. For instance, Kant is often credited for stating that "theory without practice is empty; practice without theory is blind," whereas Marx would rather suggest that "practice without theory is blind, theory without practice is sterile." For more on Kant and Marx's understanding of the relationship between the two see: Keith Morrison and Greetje Van Der Werf, "Editorial," *Educational Research and Evaluation* 18, no. 5 (2012), 399: 399-401, accessed July 4, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.695513>. For more on Freire's analysis see: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000).

⁶⁴ An intensive list of incidents in which Palestinians have popularly mobilized actions in response to moments of heightened Israeli violence post-Oslo appears in chapter two; intensive theorization of Palestinian conditions appears in chapter three. The first signifies action; the second, theorization.

⁶⁵ I reflect more on the historical trajectory of the PLO in chapter two and on the historical experience of the General Union of Palestine Students as a place that interwove theory and practice in chapter three.

⁶⁶ I borrow the phrase *genealogies of struggle* from Alfonso Gonzales who defined the 2006 Mega Marches in Los Angeles as a moment in which migrant organizers necessarily built atop of genealogies of struggle. Gonzales defines genealogies of struggle as that which can "set the ideological groundwork and organizational infrastructure" of contemporary movements. He also says it can "serve as a school for the formation of organic intellectuals or Latino migrant organizers who were educated in political strategy and tactics and understood the nature of the conjuncture at hand." Further he recognizes the importance of genealogies of struggle in that it enables organic intellectuals to draw from "their own experiences and informal education," that which Tara Yosso has called cultural wealth. Gonzales however offers an important note on the distinctions between the original Gramscian perspective of the need for a party to form/enable organic intellectuals emerging from their own subaltern class and the political movements of the 21st century which largely function in the absence of a party structure. Gonzales says, "I realize that Gramsci spoke about the need for a party structure to form organic intellectuals during the specific moment that he was writing in Italy in the 1920s and 1930s. In our twenty-first-century case study, however, there was not a formal or significant party structure yet capable of forming organic intellectuals. Thus, I am taking the liberty to write about the formation of organic intellectuals as something that could happen inside a party structure to be sure but also in a more horizontal constellation of social movements spanning a period, as in the case of the Latino genealogies of struggle that led to the formation of the Latino social bloc." Gonzales note made me profoundly consider whether Palestinian youth, in the absence of a land mass, state, and institutional history, can access in rigorous and generative ways, genealogies of struggle in the absence of a party structure. The truth is, in my view, those Palestinian youth who have accessed and partook in genealogies of struggle are those who emerged within the Palestinian political parties, however frail, segmented and limited they may be in service of liberation in the aftermath of Oslo. This is precisely why I argue that the Oslo Accords brought on a foreclosure of genealogies of struggle tucking away the revolutionary ideals and sensibilities that had long anchored the movement and replacing them with neo-liberal and ahistorical ones. Alfonso Gonzales, "The 2006 Mega-Marches in Greater Los Angeles: A Counterhegemonic Moment and the Limits of Mass Mobilization," in *Reform Without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013).

⁶⁷ For more on understanding how the spectrum between despair and hope played a generative role among youth organizers through the Arab Uprisings, see Sherine Seikaly's address at a conference on Israel, Palestine and the Assault on Academic Freedom here: GVFJ, *Palestine, Israel, and the Assault on Academic Freedom: Academic Freedom in Question*, YouTube video, 1:12:07, November 3, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCadtH_dUts. For more in understanding how both hope and despair construct and shape landscapes of refugee camps for Palestinians see: Julie Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

⁶⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 36.

⁶⁹ Sylvia Wynter has argued that a critical effect of Columbus's 1492 voyage was that it made possible "the conceptualization that there were laws of nature that should hold in the same way for all areas in the earth." As Columbus's expedition would tell, a reordering of the law of nature would be born in which the former law of Christendom [Europe], which regarded the earth as divided by habitable and uninhabitable terrains, would become a notion dismembered by the discovery of the Americas. The "discovery of the new world" contradicted beliefs commonly held in divine law in relation to science, law, religion, and time. In confronting these new truths, Christendom necessitated a reordering that offered a clearing of moral, legal, and technical dilemmas in the way of revving up their own colonial aspirations and expanding territorial control and power. In place of divine interpretations of the earth's division emerged a frame that would birth the notion of the *universal*. The erasure of the dichotomy between distinct and unintelligible lands allowed for a notion of the universal that could incorporate these so-called zones and subjects, albeit on specific terms and for specific purposes of conquest. In the end, the frame of the universal facilitated a process by which, as Wynter puts it, the "'glorious achievement' with respect to expansion of human freedoms" was directly bound up with and made possible through "genocide/ethnocide" within the frame of universal topographies. For more see: Sylvia Wynter, "1492: A New World View" in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, eds. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

While Hugo Grotius is often considered the forerunner of international law, Antony Anghie suggests that in fact we are indebted to Francisco de Vitoria, a 16th century jurist and theologian, who would reconceptualize the previously established set of doctrines, inventing new ones, and establishing a framework on which all later iterations of international law would be predicated. Anghie, Jayes Sebastian, and Robert A. Williams all suggest that looking to Vitoria as the principal forerunner would allow us to disavow the commonly held assumption that international law was not established to mediate the limits of catastrophes of conquest, colonialism, and imperialism. Rather, Vitoria's commitment to a reconceptualization of the doctrines was precisely intended to offer a juridical justification for colonialism. Anghie argues that by looking at the encounter specifically between the Spaniards and the Indians, Vitoria would come to shape this legal framework that would govern the construction of a new world order. Rather than attempting to establish a rubric for and order to relations between two sovereign entities, Vitoria would establish a legal apparatus for what he envisioned as relations between societies of distinct cultural orders with different worldviews and, specifically, differences on matter of property and governance to bring them into the realm of a European universal. Anghie argues that first Vitoria would need to dismember the previous understanding of international law as tied to the institutional power of the Pope and thus in the process would establish the pathway for what would become known as *secular international law*. Vitoria himself defines this as the transition between divine law and *jus gentium*, or the natural law guided by *reason under the law of nations*. Second, Anghie engages the way Vitoria's new

construction of a universal natural law examines a shared framework, which binds both groups at distinct ends of the colonial encounter, both Spaniards and Indians.

In this context, the new shared framework was not a meeting point but rather a legal apparatus rooted in European cultural, political, and epistemological canons, derivative of the institutional history of the divine law, and later projected as a system of shared values and secular mediation by monarchs, rather than the Pope. Vitoria renders the cultural distinctions between Spaniards and Indians—those differences, which made Vitoria and Christendom question whether the Indian was in fact human, sovereign, and capable of being property owners as nonbelievers—to questions of jurisdiction. In the end, Anghie argues that Vitoria facilitated the development of “natural law administered by sovereigns rather than divine law administered by the Pope [which] becomes the source of international law governing Spanish–Indian relations.”

This framework thus produced the right of Spaniards to travel to and through Indian lands, provided that they do not harm Indians. The framework promoted itself as a fair and balanced shared paradigm, in which both parties were equal and could enjoy the benefits of the newfound free sea and trade with one another. However, the reality, as Anghie has outlined, was neither a truly universal shared freedom nor the formation of benevolent doctrines, which were ignored or dismissed. If Spaniards were legally allowed to travel to and sojourn through Indian lands, as Anghie points out, then any act of Indian resistance to Spaniard presence would be perceived, and legally classified as a declaration of war. In this context, the brutality of Spanish conquest could be legally justified as an act of self-defense, a language that is not uncommon to hear in the contemporary context of US war-making, which propels itself as defending the freedoms of democracy as well as in the language of the Israeli state. J Sebastian argues that not only did Vitoria’s doctrines establish the framework for what became known as *secular international law*, which is still in place today and anchored by its institutional form, the United Nations, but also that this framework played a critical role in ushering the political, intellectual, and cultural shifts through the middle ages into the advent of enlightenment and produced secular modernity of the contemporary nation-state. For more on how international law framework was constructed vis-à-vis and in order to legalize acts of conquest, settlement and exploitation of colonial powers see: Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* 37 (Cambridge University Press, 2007). Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁷⁰ For more on the comparative conquest and displacement unfold in comparative colonial enterprises in the US/Israeli settler-colonial context, and to examine the ways comparative narrative practices of resistance to erasure have taken place among Palestinian, First Nation and Indigenous peoples of North America see for example: Steven Salaita, *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

⁷¹ Anghie, *Imperialism*.

⁷² For more on military and economic forms of atmospheric enclosure, particularly through the technological developments of drones, and to examine histories of how law gave an order to the process of control of the atmosphere, see: Ian G.R. Shaw, “The Great War of Enclosure: Securing the Skies,” *Antipode* 49, no. 4 (2017): 883-906.

⁷³ Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europium*, (Telos Press Publishing, 2003).

⁷⁴ The War Resisters International state that “In 1967, following the Six-Day War that France condemned, France stopped arming Israel. In 1973, in the “Yom Kippur” War, Israel ran out of both weapons and foreign currency. This led Israel to a decision to start exporting arms as a way of securing both needs. At this point, Europe, the US and the communist bloc were already controlling the arms industry. What could Israel bring to the table? What would be its expertise? The answer was weapons not for fighting an army, but for oppressing and fighting civil uprisings, and controlling the civilian population: a field in which Israel had no lack of experience.” For more on the development of the Israeli arms industry from 1920’s through the 2014 war in Gaza including the war-economy generated from aircraft and drones trade see: “A Perspective on Israel’s Arms Trade,” *War Resisters’ International*, June 8, 2016, <https://www.wri-irg.org/en/story/2016/perspective-israels-arms-trade>.

⁷⁵ Randall Williams, *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvi.

⁷⁶ Though Williams’s work examines questions about the interconnected dimensions of imperialist violence, capitalism, hegemony, and protections from violence that are assumed to be enshrined in human rights, he also deconstructs the entanglement of human rights and progressive politics. He challenges many optimists, particularly those from the intellectual left, who believe that human rights can properly contest globalized force and a “monstrous” world of disparity generated by capitalism. Through this, he illuminates how human rights discourse and juridical structures obscure, hinder, co-opt, and can stifle collective movements by functioning as an “ominous trend toward the extension of neoliberal, global, capitalist hegemony” and not necessarily as the oppositional framework to it. Williams argues that the formation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was utilized to keep at bay the actualities of struggle, those that relied on practices of freedom as opposed to juridical definitions of rights. In addition, the UDHR was largely constructed to categorically and legally produce and maintain grieving subjects.

The torturous irony here is that the UDHR would be established the very year that Zionist settler colonial dispossession, occupation, and catastrophe would befall the Palestinians. In this sense, the historical teleology’s in the construction of law had both mitigated enclosures of land and sea vis-à-vis colonization and also established a rubric for human rights, which could never truly be enjoyed by stateless racial subjects of colonial genocide, dispossession, and enslavement. Ample scholars have demonstrated, the UN Genocide Convention, also established in 1948, is a prime example of how notions of universal rights have come to be empty signifiers as its pragmatic implementation since, both preventatively and to try for crimes of genocide, have had little teeth.⁷⁶ Their legal constructions are tied to specific events of history, to the intent of protecting particular geographies and demographics, and thus have become limited in being applicable as a litigator of violence on the global stage. Ibid.

⁷⁷ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Partition Plan – Resolution 181, November 29, 1947.

⁷⁸ David Lloyd, “Settler Colonialism and the State of Exception: The Example of Palestine/Israel,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 59-80, accessed June 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648826>.

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- ⁷⁹ Edward W. Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestine Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 3.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (Routledge, 1987).
- ⁸³ Nur Masalha, "A Critique of Benny Morris," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, No. 1 (1991): 91.
- ⁸⁴ Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).
- ⁸⁵ To undo the way disciplinary methods are informed by and inform colonial power see: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd., Dunedin: University of Otago Press: 1999).
- ⁸⁶ See for example: Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld Publications, 2006). See also: Kathleen Christison, *The Wound of Dispossession: Telling the Palestinian Story* (Sunlit Hills Press, 2001). See also: Edward W. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994* (New York: A Division of Random House, Inc., 1994). See also: Amira Hass, *Drinking the Sea at Gaza: Days and Nights in a Land Under Siege*, eds. Elana Wesley and Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1996).
- ⁸⁷ Elias Sanbar, "Out of Place, Out of Time," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (2001): 87-94. Salman Abu Sitta, *Mapping My Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (Cairo and New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2016).
- ⁸⁸ Rona Sela, "The Genealogy of Colonial Plunder and Erasure—Israel's Control over Palestinian Archives," *Journal of Social Semiotics* 28, no. 2 (2017): 201-229.
- ⁸⁹ Ariella Azoulay, *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947–1950* (Pluto Press, 2011), 7.
- ⁹⁰ See Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., ed. Marcus Bullock et al. (Cambridge and Mass., 1996–2003), 1:236–52. See also: Ariella Azoulay, "Potential History: Thinking Through Violence," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 3 (2013), accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/670045>.
- ⁹¹ Azoulay, *From Palestine to Israel*.
- ⁹² Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," PDF, <https://folk.uib.no/hlils/TBLR-B/Benjamin-History.pdf>.
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- ⁹⁴ Joseph A. Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 315.

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⁹⁷ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

⁹⁸ Azoulay, *From Palestine to Israel*.

⁹⁹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409, accessed June 30, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

See also: Lorenzo Veracini, *Israel and Settler Society* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism."

¹⁰³ In 1965, Fayez Sayegh argued that the project of Zionism was specifically geared toward elimination. But he also insists that this process constructed a racial caste system based on racial supremacy. He says, "If racial discrimination against the 'inferior natives' was the motto of race-supremacist European settler-re-cirrtes in Asia and Africa, the motto of the race-supremacist Zionist settler-regime in Palestine was racial elimination. Discriminatory treatment has been reserved by the Zionists for those remnants of the Palestinian Arab people who have stubbornly stayed behind in their homeland in spite of all efforts to dispossess and evict them, and in defiance of the Zionist dictum of racial exclusiveness. It is against these remnants of the rightful inhabitants of Palestine that Zionist settlers have revealed the behavioral patterns of racial supremacy, and practiced the precepts of racial discrimination, already made famous by other racist European colonists elsewhere in Asia and Africa." Following the 1967 institutional of martial law military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the overt character of Zionist-European-Jewish racial supremacy would be more overtly expressed in systems of racial carcerality which worked in tandem with elimination logics and policies. For more see: Fayez A. Sayegh, "Zionist Colonialism in Palestine," 27.

¹⁰⁴ For more on how Israel has become a leader in international crowd control and surveillance technology as well as the Israeli role in global arms trade see: International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, "Israel's Worldwide Role in Repression," *Ebony*, 2012, PDF, <http://www.ebony.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/israels-worldwide-role-in-repression-footnotes-finalized.pdf>.

¹⁰⁵ Achille Mbembé, "Necropolitics," transl. Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 27.

¹⁰⁶ Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003) and Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016).

¹⁰⁷ Sherine Razack, "A Hole in the Wall; A Rose at a Checkpoint: The Spatiality of Colonial Encounters in Occupied Palestine," *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 1, no. 1 (2010): 90-108. See also: Sharif, "Savory Politics."

¹⁰⁸ Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.

¹⁰⁹ The three figures that construct what I note as the trope of the last sky in some ways articulate an urgency of the contemporary moment and a deferral of accepting the arrival of a new sky. See for example: Said, *After the Last Sky*. Darwish, "The Earth is Closing on Us – Mahmoud Darwish." See also: Rafeef Ziadeh, Sternchen productions, *Rafeef Ziadah - 'We Teach Life, Sir', London, 12.11.11*, YouTube Video, 4:38, November 13, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKucPh9xHtM>. For more on the way leaders of the various resistance parties spoke of the dangers ahead, exemplified anxieties of the trajectory of the movement and attempted to suspend the arrival of the final or last phase (sky), that which they foresaw as defeat, see Khaled Al-Hassan et al., *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Palestine Research Centre, 1973).

¹¹⁰ Founded in 1964, the PLO managed to develop a national infrastructure by which all Palestinians could partake in the liberation project despite where they had ended up. Its highest authority was the Palestine National Council (PNC) comprised of Palestinians from a variety of geographies and political ideologies and parties, including independents. Beneath the PNC would lie five main cabinets, which included a) the Executive Committee, which would serve as the primary administrative body of the organizational operations; b) the Palestine Research Center (PRC) mandated with conducting census, strategic planning, and research on revolutionary philosophies and strategies for liberation and which also would come to play a critical role in spreading awareness of the Palestinian struggle across the globe; c) the Palestine Planning Center (PPC); d) the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA); and e) the Unified Information Council. Beneath these cabinets existed eight offices that largely facilitated the grassroots engagement of the Palestinian nation. These offices included a) Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs, b) Department of Informational and National Guidance, c) Palestine National Fund (PNF), d) Department of the Occupied Homeland, e) Department of Military Affairs, f) Department of Administrative Affairs, g) Department of Political Affairs, and h) Department of Popular Organizations. The Department of Political Affairs was home to all PLO offices, and the Department of Popular Organizations was home to all grassroots unions including 1) students, 2) workers, 3) peasants, 4) teachers, 5) women, 6) writers and journalists, 7) medicine, 8) engineers, 9) artists, and 10) lawyers. For more on the structure and functions of the PLO see: Rashid Hamid, "What is the PLO?" in *Palestinians: Selected Essays*, ed. H. I. Hussaini (Palestine Information Office, 1980), 19.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹¹⁶ By the second Palestinian Intifada, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad had come to be two vital players in Palestinian political, cultural, social, and spiritual life and anchors of Palestinian resistance to Israeli

occupation and dispossession. In 2006, Hamas won the parliamentary elections in Palestine and a hardened split in national unity has developed since then. I examine these effects on Palestinian political and social life more closely in chapter two. However, it is important to note that though these forces play an important role in Palestinian political and social life, their absence from the PLO has in some ways taken away from the PLO's credibility and capacity to represent all Palestinians or restore a new national program. Various attempts to include Hamas in the PLO has occurred for two decades but especially since 2006 but has never become realized. For more on the relationship between Hamas and both the PLO and Fatah see for example: Dag Tuastad, "Hamas-Plo Relations Before and After the Arab Spring," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 3 (2013), accessed July 30, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12035>.

¹¹⁷ Tareq Dana, "The Structural Transformation of Palestinian Civil Society: Key Paradigm Shifts," *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 2 (2015): 191-210, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2015.1017968>.

¹¹⁸ Jake Alimahomed-Wilson and Spencer Louis Parker, "The Logistics of Occupation: Israel's Colonial Suppression of Palestine's Goods Movement Infrastructure," *Journal of Labor and Society* 20, no. 4 (2017): 5.

¹¹⁹ Samih K. Farsoun and Naseer Aruri, *Palestine and the Palestinians: A Social and Political History* (Westview Press, 2006).

¹²⁰ Noor (Refugee Relief NGO Director from Syria currently residing in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, December 2015.

¹²¹ Quds News Network, *Fight for Freedom*, Facebook video, 3:41, April 12, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/QudsNen/videos/1639579239495985/UzpfSTgxNDA0NTQ5NjoxMDE2MDc1MDUxNTYyNTQ5Nw/>.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ In November 2015, the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) along with various other individual Palestinian youth and Palestinian youth associations and organizations came together to form the Transnational Mobilization of Palestinian Youth. The group formed a framework, Facebook page, email list, and call to action to Palestinians across the world, along with all those who stood in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. The action called on the global community to host a series of protests to support the Palestinian uprisings against Israeli land theft and especially against the escalation of settler-vigilante violence against Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank, which had intensified by September 2015. Following a few months of protest, the momentum for such wide-scale actions dissipated, and the group did not resume discussions. See: "Transnational Great Return March الكبرى العوده لميسرة العالمي الحراك," *Facebook*, accessed July 5, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/palyouthmobilization/>.

¹²⁴ The group would come to plan a series of protests in the various places where these youth reside, alongside Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Hussein (PYM member and coordinator of the Transnational Mobilization for the Great Return March) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Raf Sanchez, "Palestinian Refugee Camp in Syria Turns 'Unimaginably Brutal' as Assad Regime Drives ISIL out of Yarmouk," *The Telegraph*, April 26, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/04/26/palestinian-refugee-camp-syria-turns-unimaginably-brutal-assad/>.

¹²⁸ Tom Rollins, "Burying the Dead in Syria's Yarmouk Camp," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, November 4, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/burying-dead-syria-yarmouk-camp-171022121649788.html>.

¹²⁹ Al Arabiya News Staff writer, "Hunger as a Weapon of War: Yarmouk Syrians 'Eat Cats and Dogs'," *Al Arabiya News*, March 10, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2014/03/10/Hunger-as-a-weapon-of-war-Yarmouk-Syrians-eat-cats-and-dogs-.html>.

¹³⁰ Youth from different countries and a variety of different political and ideological leanings all contributed to the conversation, including youth from the Gaza Strip.

¹³¹ *Voice of Yarmouk Camp, Impact: This Is the Case of the Residents of Yarmouk Camp Displaced to the Deir Balut Camp in Afrin Suffering and New Relgation and Return to the Tents on the 70th Anniversary of the Nakba - #Nakba70* مؤثر هذا: حال أهالي مخيم أهراموك إلى المهجرين اليرموك مخيم أهالي حال هذا: مؤثر #Nakba70 - للنكبة السبعين الذكرى في الخيام 70نكبة - للذكبة السبعين الذكرى في الخيام, Facebook video, 4:13, May 7, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/1424295574479143/videos/2045414539033907/UzpfSTgxNDA0NTQ5NjoxMDE2MDg2MTg3MzczNTQ5Nw/>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Anaheed Al Hardan has written an exquisite account of the history of Palestinians in Syria and the way *universe-discourses* of *Nakba* have historically been a contingent signifier. Considering the events in Syria after 2011, she argues that it should be of no surprise that the meaning of *Nakba* has also changed. She contends "The near universal insistence by the post-Palestine generations that this current catastrophe far exceeds the one of 1948 is rooted in the fear, perhaps even reality, that unlike 1948, this devastation may be final, given the relentlessness of the Syrian war." For more see: Anaheed Al-Hardan, *Palestinians in Syria: Nakba Memories of Shattered Communities* (Columbia University Press, 2016), 188.

¹³⁵ Bayan Nuwayhed Al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982* (Pluto Press, 2004).

¹³⁶ Nisreen El-Shamayleh, "The Agony of Iraq's Palestinians," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, June 21, 2009, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2009/06/2009618161946158577.html>.

¹³⁷ Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 1998), 2.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Michael Slackman, "Some Palestinian Jordanians Lose Citizenship," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/world/middleeast/14jordan.html>.

¹⁴⁰ For more on the Azmi Bishara exile case see: Ali Abunimah, "What the Persecution of Azmi Bishara Means for Palestine," *The Electronic Intifada*, April 16, 2007, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/what-persecution-azmi-bishara-means-palestine/6862>. For a more robust interrogation of the precarity of exile in broader scales see for example: Yezid Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," *Third World Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1987): 28-66, accessed July 30, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436598708419961>.

¹⁴¹ See for example: Ali Younes, "How Mossad Carries out Assassinations," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, April 22, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/04/mossad-carries-assassinations-180422152144736.html>. While it has not been proven to be a Mossad operation, the recent assassination of Omar Nayef illuminates another way in which assassinations of Palestinian political figures is constant. See for example: "Breaking: Omar Nayef Zayed Assassinated Inside Palestinian Embassy in Bulgaria," *Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network*, February 26, 2016, <http://samidoun.net/2016/02/breaking-omar-nayef-zayed-assassinated-inside-palestinian-embassy-in-bulgaria/>. See also: Sarah Irving, "Murdered for Being Palestinian; Wael Zuaiter Remembered 40 Years On," *The Electronic Intifada*, October 2, 2011, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/murdered-being-palestinian-wael-zuaiter-remembered-40-years/10418>.

¹⁴² Jane Howard, "Wael Zuaiter: Unknown Review – Compelling Story of an Assassination," *The Guardian*, May 1, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/australia-culture-blog/2014/may/01/wael-zuaiter-unknown-review-compelling-story-of-an-assassination>.

¹⁴³ Ray Hanania, "US: The Mystery Murder of Palestinian Alex Odeh," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, October 11, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/10/mystery-murder-palestinian-alex-odeh-151011093000801.html>.

¹⁴⁴ For more on the Sami Al-Arian case see: Murtaza Hussain and Glenn Greenwald, "Exclusive Interview: Sami Al-Arian, Professor Who Defeated Controversial Terrorism Charges, Is Deported from U.S.," *The Intercept*, February 5, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/02/05/sami-al-arian-charged-terrorism-never-convicted-deported-today-u-s/>. For more on the Rasmia Odeh case see: Rasmia Defense Committee, "The Case of Rasmia Odeh: A Palestinian Hero," *Justice for Rasmia*, last updated June 17, 2016, accessed June 30, 2018, <http://justice4rasmia.org/about/>. For more on the deportation of Rasmia Odeh see: Teresa Crawford, "Palestinian Activist Deported to Jordan from Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, September 19, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-palestinian-activist-deported-chicago-20170919-story.html>. For more on the Holy Land Foundation case see: Office of Public Affairs, "Federal Judge Hands Down Sentences in Holy Land Foundation Case" (The United States Department of Justice, Press Release, May 27, 2009). For more on the way Palestinians were subject to detention, interrogation, criminalization and potential deportation after 9/11 see for example: Konrad Aderer, Boston Palestine Film Festival, *Enemy Alien*, documentary, 1:21:00, 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Rabab Abdulhadi, "Where is Home? Fragmented Lives, Border Crossing, and the Politics of Exile," *Radical History Review* 86 (2003): 89.

¹⁴⁷ See for example: Rosemary Sayigh, *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London and New York: Zed Books Ltd., 1979).; See also: Lena Jayyousi, "Iterability, Cumulativity, and Presence: The Relations Figures of Palestinian Memory," Diana K. Allen, "The Politics of Witness: Remembering and

Forgetting 1948 in Shatila Camp,” and Samera Esmeir, “Memories of Conquest: Witnessing Death in Tantura” in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, eds. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, (Columbia University Press, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (Columbia University Press, 2007), 3–5.

¹⁴⁹ Samera Esmeir, “Memories of Conquest: Witnessing Death in Tantura” in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, eds. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod, (Columbia University Press, 2007), 229.

¹⁵⁰ Ido Zelkowitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine: Books, Guns and Politics* (Routledge, 2014), 14.

¹⁵¹ Naseer H. Aruri and Samih K. Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians: A Social and Political History* (Westview Press, 2006).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Zureiq states, “Hundreds of thousands of the people of this disaster-stricken country have not only been driven from their homes and left roaming with nowhere to go, but their ideas and views and the ideas of their fellow countrymen, in their various places, have also been driven out and left to roam.” *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in History, Politics and Society*, eds. Nadim N. Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury (Mada al-Carmel, 2011), 19.

¹⁵⁴ Al Shabaka, “From Our Facebook Balconies, the Dark Heart of Yarmouk,” *Ma’an News Agency*, June 21, 2014, <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=702766>.

¹⁵⁵ Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁵⁶ One of the most polarizing debates among Arab organizers both in the region and globally is the case of Syria. Many official Palestinian and Arab leftist thinkers, organizers and institutions have stood with the Bashar Al-Assad regime for an array of political reasons. But for these youth, many who believe in liberation visions and philosophies, they did not want to dismiss the atrocities happening against the Palestinians of Yarmouk just because it was the Syrian regime who was firing and not Israeli forces. For the Palestinians from Syria in the group, this was very personal for them but also a display of their broader understandings of freedom, liberation and struggle they have learned in, of and through the Syrian peoples struggle for freedom. In this sense, the agreement to address Yarmouk in the coordination efforts was not only about maintaining bonds between Palestinian communities, but also about the broader relationship between the Palestinian struggle and the Arab peoples struggles for freedom. For more on the question of the contradictions of many within left movements and their position in support of the Syrian regime, see: Jennifer Mogannam, “Syria’s Anti-Imperialist Mask: Unveiling Contradictions of the Left Through Anti-Capitalist Thought,” *Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 24, no. 2 (2018): 222-237, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1327138>.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ See for example “Palestinians of Syria: Complain About UNRWA, the PLO and the Palestinian Authority’s Failure Towards Them,” *Action Group for Palestinians of Syria*, January 25, 2018, <http://www.actionpal.org.uk/en/post/6520>.

¹⁵⁹ I am indebted to Professor Seif Dana, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside who has played a critical role in teaching me and many of my peers within the PYM of the critical importance of needing to redress dominant narratives of history to understand how our generation has arrived to this particular spatial and temporal juncture we inhabit. Seif Dana (Professor of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Parkside) in discussion with the author, July 2010.

¹⁶⁰ Nidal (PYM member from Syria currently in Northern California) in discussion with the author, June 2015.

Endnotes: Chapter 1

¹⁶¹ While my approach is generally personal and reflexive, it is important to note that I use Palestinian ontology of Nakba now to explain how terms in question which Omar Zahzah and I have attempted to name in order to capture the complexities and contradictions of Palestinian subjectivity. We originally considered an “ontology of siege and exile” but found that it was insufficient for our purposes. For more on the series of reflections Omar Zahzah and I have collaborated on to consider meaning-making as Palestinian insurgency see: Loubna Qutami and Omar Zahzah, “The War of Words: Meaning-Making as Palestinian Political Insurgency,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2019), in the authors’ possession.

¹⁶² This also echoes Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s discussion of how sites/spaces of oppression/exclusion can dialectically engender a kind of enabling, negative capability that serves as its own vehicle of possibility. See Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Wivenhoe; New York; Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013).

¹⁶³ Mourid Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* (New York and Toronto: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 132.

¹⁶⁴ Thank you to the guidance of Dylan Rodriguez for helping me think through the multiplicity of ways that Palestinians *tell* parts of their realities, aspirations and stories. Poetry, imagination creativity, love, profanity, humor, movement, and more all constitute part of a Palestinian poetic; a necessary praxis for pushing against the coherence and totality of Zionist narratives and a critical part of sustaining any senses of worth, power and wellness amidst persistent pain and catastrophe.

¹⁶⁵ For more on the episodic and fragmentary quality of subaltern histories and narrative, see: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, eds. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: The Electric Book Company Ltd, 1999), 206-207.

¹⁶⁶ Mahmoud Darwish and Jeffrey Sacks, *Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?* (Brooklyn, NY and St. Paul, Minnesota: Archipelago Books). Mahmoud Darwish, “The Owl’s Night” in *Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems*, eds. Munir Akash and Carolyn Forché (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2013), 63–64.

¹⁶⁷ For more see Mona Christophersen et al., “Palestinian Youth and the Arab Spring” (NOREF Report, 2012), accessed June 30, 2018, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/140730/562d62ccb49d92227b6865a8b2d11e1a.pdf> and Nadia Naser-Najjab, “Palestinian Youth and the Arab Spring. Learning to Think Critically: A Case Study,” *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2012): 279-291.

¹⁶⁸ Mourid Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah* (New York and Toronto: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 44.

¹⁶⁹ Jafra Foundation is “a non-partisan, secular, international nonprofit organization...[that] was founded...by the grassroots community efforts of Palestinian refugees” For more see: “About Us,” Jafra Foundation for Relief and Youth Development, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://jafrafoundation.org/about-us/>.

¹⁷⁰ For more on the European Union-Turkey Deal see: Preben Aamann, “EU–Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016,” (Council of the EU, Press Release, 2016), <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>.

¹⁷¹ Dian Million, “There Is a River in Me,” in *Theorizing Native Studies*, eds. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014), 41.

¹⁷² Judith Butler, *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁷³ Muath (Active Palestinian youth with Jafra Foundation from Yarmouk Camp displaced by the war to Greece) in discussion with the author, August 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Mjriam Abu Samra (Dissertation Department of Politics and International Relations), “The Palestinian Transnational Student Movement 1948-1982: A Study on Popular Organization” (PhD dissertation, University of Oxford), in author’s possession.

¹⁷⁵ In many ways, Muath helped expand what I had learned from the original works of Black Feminist Thinkers on inter-locking systems of oppression to account for social constructions of power beyond race, class and gender. He helped me apply those methods of intersectional thinking to broader, contemporary transnational systemic forces and institutions of oppression. For more on some of the canonical texts of Black Feminist intersectional thought see: “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” in *Home Girls, A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Inc., 1983), accessed June 30, 2018, https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf. Also see: Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-1299. Also see Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination” in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 221–238.

¹⁷⁶ “Refugitude, a term advanced by Khatharya Um in her work on Cambodian diaspora (Um, 2015), connotes the state, conditions, and consciousness of being a refugee. It places refugee experiences and meaning making at the analytic center without dismissing the role of external forces and conditions in producing refugee dislocations. In so doing, it provides a conceptual and theoretical intervention to prevailing discourse in which the determination of refugeehood is made the sole purview of the state and

collaborating agencies that establish not only the criteria for the label, but also how long a refugee group can avail themselves of that label; how refugees see themselves and their conditions has no bearing on that determination. The conditions and consciousness of being a refugee, however, often outlast the expiration of the politico-legal status; that very expiration itself is a denial of the persisting challenges facing the refugee individual, families, and communities. Whereas the term 'refugee' has been made synonymous with needs, refugitude rescues it from reductionist pejorative connotations with equal attention to hope and futurity. It replaces reductionism with attention to complexity of refugee lives, and binaries with juxtapositions and interstices as dynamic sites of negotiation and creation." For more see: Katharya Um, "Critical Vocabularies," *The Critical Refugee Studies Collective*, accessed May 3, 2018, <http://criticalrefugeestudies.com/critical-vocabularies>.

¹⁷⁷ Ibrahim (Active Palestinian youth with Jafra Foundation from Yarmouk camp, displaced by the war in Syria to Holland) in discussion with the author, September 2017.

¹⁷⁸ Hatem (Palestinian youth from Syria displaced by the war to Athens) in discussion with the author, September 2017.

¹⁷⁹ Ghazi Hassoun, "Reconciling Araby and America," in *Being Palestinian: Personal Reflections on Palestinian Identity in the Diaspora*, ed. Yassir Suleiman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2016), 186.

¹⁸⁰ Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 20, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202>.

¹⁸¹ Tamer (Former PYM International General Coordinator and Palestinian youth living in France) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

¹⁸² Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 10.

¹⁸³ Ghassan Kanafani and James Carleton, *PFLP Ghassan Kanafani, Richard Carleton Interview Complete*, YouTube video, 6:56, August 14, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3h_drCmG2iM.

¹⁸⁴ Ahmad Diab, "From Our Facebook Balconies, the Dark Heart of Yarmouk," *Ma'an News Agency*, June 6, 2014, accessed May 2018, <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=702766>.

¹⁸⁵ Mohammed (Founder of Fael: The Active Palestinian Forum from the West Bank currently living in Turkey) in conversation with the author, March 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Some of these initiatives include the 2008 and 2010 United States Palestinian Communities Network (USPCN) conferences in Chicago, Illinois; The 2009 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Delegate office conference for Palestinians of the US in Washington DC; The 2012 Oxford Research Group Palestinian Strategy Group Workshop in Cairo, Egypt; The 2013 Palestinians of the Shatat Conference in Vancouver, Canada; and several more.

¹⁸⁷ The following are media pieces which have covered some of these various initiatives and convenings: "Abbas to Inaugurate Palestinian Youth Parliament," *Ma'an News Agency*, December 14, 2009, <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=246828>. Also: Awab Al-Masri, "Palestinian Authority for the Defense of Constants" *الثوابت عن للدفاع فلسطينية هيئة*, *Al Jazeera Media Network*, February 25, 2010,

“constitutes the domain of the political” beyond the state form? That is, in thinking through Palestine and the PYM, can we think through a logic of anti-accumulation, or a different kind of accumulation, against the accumulation of racial capitalism and the violence of the nation-state form. Precisely in being denied the right of accumulation, Palestinian *Nakba* ontology presents an opportunity for a different praxis of what constitutes the domain of the political, a different kind of accumulation beyond the logics of accumulation of state and capital.” Jodi Kim (Professor of Media and Cultural Studies, University of California, Riverside) in discussion with the author, June 2018.

¹⁹⁰ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Hauntings and the Sociological Imagination*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

¹⁹¹ Avery Gordon, “Some Thoughts on Haunting and Futurity,” *Borderlands* 10, no. 2 (2011): 3, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://averygordon.net/files/GordonHauntingFuturity.pdf>.

¹⁹² I was intellectually astonished when I discovered the work of Kuan-Hsing Chen who argued that the project of decolonization was interrupted in East Asian geographies following World War II. In part that process was disrupted because of the inability to conceptualize both de-imperialization and an undoing of cold-war legacies throughout the region. How these political processes limited scholarship on East Asia from an array of various fields is a critical feat Chen’s work tackles, and he calls on an intellectual process of study that can de-cold war, de-colonize and de-imperialize in tandem. How these political processes are then necessarily intellectual projects of political transformation as much as they are about method for intellectual inquiry is brilliantly captured in his argument. It made me consider what specifies a particular Palestinian method but, even more so, it made me consider how Palestine—the nation and its fragments distinct from the tenets of Western nationalism to borrow from Partha Chaterjee—can operate *as* method for both political and intellectual possibility. For more see Partha Chaterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton University Press, 1993) and Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹⁹³ Mohammed (Founder of Fael: The Active Palestinian Forum from the West Bank currently living in Turkey) in conversation with the author, March 2015.

¹⁹⁴ For more discussions on the limitations and inefficiencies of UNRWA, not based on its functions but on its existential role, see Esmat Elhalaby, “Paradoxes of UNRWA,” *Dissent Magazine*, March 2, 2018, https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/paradoxes-unrwa-palestine-refugees-israel-usa-trump-cuts-2.

¹⁹⁵ In 2009, as an MA student at San Francisco State University (SFSU), I took a research methods course which attempted to train my cohort and me on how to conduct ethnographic research. The main text that shaped my understanding, pragmatically, of how to conduct ethnographic fieldnotes, was a book called *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. I took invaluable notes that helped me pragmatically understand techniques of what the authors called “inscribing experience and observing realities.” I found ethnography to be a refreshing change from the qualitative interview methods I had learned as an undergraduate in Sociology. I began to describe my research methods as primarily ethnographic, which I still do. But in going back to the text, one majorly important piece which had not registered with me as much then was that the authors were writing/teaching ethnographic fieldnotes on the pretense that the researcher has little familiarity with the community, people, setting and place they are learning to observe. This is one major distinction between my ethnographic work and other ethnographic works I have come to familiarly know and appreciate. I did not enter into this community as an academic, but rather entered into academia as a member of this community. For more see: Robert M. Emerson, Rachel

I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹⁹⁶ Mohammed (Founder of Fael: The Active Palestinian Forum, West Bank; currently living in Turkey) in conversation with the author, March 2015.

¹⁹⁷ Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (University of Toronto Press, 2005).

¹⁹⁸ Rabab Abdulhadi, "Activism and Exile: Palestinianness and the Politics of Solidarity: Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America" in *Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America*, eds. Melissa Checker and Maggie Fisherman (Columbia University Press, 2004), 233.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

²⁰⁰ For more on how refusal functions as a political act see: Audra Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship," *Junctures* 9, no. 1 (2007): 67.

²⁰¹ D. Soyini Madison, *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* (Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2012), 5.

²⁰² Helena Lindholm Schulz and Juliane Hammer, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 11.

²⁰³ I am indebted to Kehaulani Vaughn and Charles Sepulveda for first introducing me to the differences between mere survival and indigenous notions and practices of survivance. I will always value our long discussions about the shared and distinct practices of resistance, survival, and revival from Hawaii to the California to Palestine. I have come to be more concerned with what exists beyond surviving, though in the context of indigenous genocide and catastrophe, I do understand that mustering up the courage, will and commitment to survive is quite a lot to shoulder in and of itself. But I consider survivance to be primarily a methodological process of knowledge production which both Kehaulani and Charles have helped me develop.

²⁰⁴ Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 15.

²⁰⁵ Leanne R. Simpson, "Anticolonial Strategies for the Recovery and Maintenance of Indigenous Knowledge," *American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 3/4 (2004): 373-384, accessed July 30, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4138923>.

²⁰⁶ David Lloyd, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800–2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 216.

²⁰⁷ Majdi Fathi, *Facebook video*, 0:40, August 10, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/majdi.fathi.5/videos/pcb.10155438571675684/10155438546575684/?type=3&theater>.

²⁰⁸ Bilal Shalash, The Popular University, 06.05.2018 | *The Seventh Lecture: The Course of Sources of Palestinian Armed Resistance History (1914 - 2018) Bilal Shalash 06.05.2018* | مساق السابعة الموحدة | الفصل الفلسطيني الموقامة تاريخ مصادر (1914-2018) | شلالش بلال | Soundcloud audio recording, 1:26:04, May 12, 2018, <https://soundcloud.com/decolonizenow/06052018-1914-2018a>.

²⁰⁹ Patrick Wolfe explained for us that anthropology as discursive practice and its relation to settler colonialism can only be truly read by unearthing the methods through which claims and authority over indigenous discourse have been formed and function. Wolfe's notion of "invasion being a structure and not an event" becomes critical in this regard. Wolfe argues that invasion is not about a specific and given location and time; it does not happen and then go away and does not have temporal impacts of contact. Invasion is not uninformed and un-ideological. Rather, it is constantly in flux, in reproduction and shifting itself to new paradigms to make itself less incommensurate with changing (con)texts. But in this regard, "texts," the very discursive practice constructing the logics of invasion and native elimination (physically, culturally, spiritually, ecologically, and so on), is a critical site proliferating the entangled relationship between ethnography and settler colonialism as the discipline of anthropology would condition such relation. For more on how disciplinary standards in anthropology contributed to settler-colonialism see: Patrick Wolfe, *Writing Past Colonialism: Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Wellington House, 1999). For more on invasion as a structure and not an event see: Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

²¹⁰ Sobhi (Palestinian youth from Texas and member of the PYM-USA National Executive Board) in discussion with the author, January 2018.

²¹¹ For example, in 1973 George Habash, on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), argued that it was critical to conduct a "radical and scientific" criticism of the past in order to offer an assessment for the progress of the revolution moving forward. In his analysis he outlines mistakes of the resistance movement during the Jordan years and says the following: "The second major mistake conducted by the resistance was to omit the definition, in scientific and a revolutionary manner, of its position regarding the Jordanian people. Once it became dependent on the Jordanian arena, this should have been done. But the resistance did not carry out this fundamental theoretical analysis, continuing to work on the principle of revolution of the Palestinian people against Israel and Zionism without regard for the other forces in Jordan. The movement presented itself as a Palestinian revolution pure and simple; it avoided interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries, even in Jordan where its presence was essential to the continuity of the movement itself." Khaled Al-Hassan et al., *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Palestine Research Centre, 1973).

²¹² Amilcar L Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1979), Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Ta Kung Pao, 1971), and Robin D.G. Kelley, "Introduction," in *A History of Pan-African Revolt*, C.L.R. James (PM Press, 2012), 1-33

²¹³ Haytham Al-Ayoubi et al., "Palestine and Vietnam: A Discussion," *Shu'un Filastiniya*, June 18, 1973, trans. *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016, 4, <http://learnpalestine.politics.ox.ac.uk/uploads/sources/588d74159583a.pdf>.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²¹⁵ Abdulhadi, Rabab. "Activism and Exile: Palestinianness and the Politics of Solidarity: Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America." In *Cultural Activism, Power, and Public Life in America*, edited by Melissa Checker and Maggie Fisherman, 234. Columbia University Press, 2004.

²¹⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: University of Otago Press, 1999). Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). Nick Mitchell, "Disciplinary Matters: Black Studies and the Politics of Institutionalization" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2011). Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2008). Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York; London; New Delhi; Sydney: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

²¹⁷ Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983).

²¹⁸ Edward W. Said, "On the University / عن الجامعة," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 25 (2005): 36.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Edward W. Said, pinkOf, *Edward Said—Reflections on Exile and Other Essays: CSPAN-2*, YouTube video, 57:09, April 1, 2001, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EvoZ7vgu0A>.

²²¹ Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 15.

²²² "What is BDS?," *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Movement*, accessed October 4, 2017, <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds> and Nora Barrows-Friedman, *In Our Power: U.S. Students Organize for Justice in Palestine* (Just World Books, 2014).

²²³ Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar conducted an interview with a Professor who discusses the shifting terrain between the 1970's until now when it comes to scholarly research on Palestine. She had argued that new margins were open in University life for scholarship on Palestine and that it now comes with a certain "cachet" and is even "radical chic." For more on the changing tides of academic engagement with and solidarity with Palestine see: Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, *Anthropology's Politics: Disciplining the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 62.

²²⁴ "Stifling Dissent: How Israel's Defenders Use False Charges of Anti-Semitism to Limit the Debate Over Israel on Campus." *Jewish Voice for Peace*, 2015. Accessed July 1, 2018. https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/JVP_Stifling_Dissent_Executive_Summary.pdf.

²²⁵ "The Business of Backlash: The Attack on the Palestinian Movement and Other Movements for Social Justice," *International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network*, March 2015, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://www.ijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IJAN-Business-of-Backlash-full-report-web.pdf>.

²²⁶ “The Palestine Exception to Free Speech,” *Palestine Legal and Center for Constitutional Rights*, September 2015, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/548748b1e4b083fc03ebf70e/t/560b0bcee4b016db196d664b/1443564494090/Palestine+Exception+Report+Final.pdf>.

²²⁷ Omar Zahzah, “Re-thinking Islamophobia, Reframing Resistance,” *Al-Talib*, February 7, 2017, <https://al-talib.org/rethinking-islamophobia-reframing-resistance/>.

²²⁸ Edward W. Said, “The Morning After,” *London Review of Books* 15, no. 20 (1993): 3–5. See also: Toufic Haddad, *Palestine Ltd.: Neoliberalism and Nationalism in the Occupied Territory* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016).

²²⁹ The General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) was founded in 1959 in Cairo and emerged out of the Palestine Student Union (PSU), which was also founded in Cairo in 1944. In its prime, GUPS is said to have had approximately 100 chapters worldwide and mobilized over 100,000 Palestinian students. GUPS in the USA began in 1979 as a result of splits within the Organization of Arab Students (OAS) caused by the impending Iraq-Iran war. According to archival documents in the GUPS SFSU office, in 1983, GUPS-USA had nearly 5,000 members across dozens of US cities. Soon after the 1993 Oslo Accords when the role and function of the PLO shifted, Palestinian diasporic unions halted all operations and closed their doors almost immediately. Only one US chapter of the GUPS remained open in SFSU. Though GUPS does not have any formal ties to the PLO or the Palestinian parties, its legacy at SFSU differentiates it from Palestine student movements successors, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) founded in 1993 and National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP) founded in 2010. Mjriam Abu Samra (Ph.D. Candidate, department of politics and international relations, University of Oxford), in discussion with the author, August 2014.

²³⁰ Ligeia Polidora, “S.F. State issues comprehensive plan to address inter-group campus tensions,” *San Francisco State University Office of Public Affairs Press Release* no. 133, June 21, 2002, accessed October 4, 2017, <https://www.sfsu.edu/~news/prsrelea/fy01/133.htm>.

²³¹ The Arab Student Coalition (ASC) was a short-lived student alliance of Arab and Palestinian student groups from across UCs, CSUs, and community colleges in California. The formation was founded in the spring of 2003 at its founding conference at SFSU and commenced for two subsequent conferences at UC Irvine in 2004 and 2006.

²³² Cecilie Surasky, “Mural Celebrating Edward Said and Palestinian Culture a Threat to Jews?,” *MuzzleWatch*, February 26, 2007, <http://muzzlewatch.com/2007/02/26/mural-celebrating-edward-said-and-palestinian-culture-a-theat-to-jews/>.

²³³ Mira Nabulsi, “Hanthala as a Visual Ideograph of the Palestinian Struggle: How Young Palestinians View a Caricature Character as a Symbol of Collective Commitment” (MA research seminar paper, San Francisco State University, 2013).

²³⁴ Nora Barrows-Friedman, “Event Honoring Edward Said Prompts Zionist Smear Campaign Against San Francisco State Students,” *Electronic Intifada*, November 26, 2017, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/nora-barrows-friedman/event-honoring-edward-said-prompts-zionist-smear-campaign-against-san>.

²³⁵ “Resisting the New McCarthyism: Rabab Abdulhadi Discusses AMCHA’s Smear Campaign, Palestinian Resistance, and the U.S. Solidarity Movement,” *Solidarity: A Socialist, Feminist, Anti-Racist Organization*, July 21, 2014, <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/4220>.

²³⁶ “The Business of Backlash: The Attack on the Palestinian Movement and Other Movements for Social Justice,” *International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network*, March 2015, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://www.ijan.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/IJAN-Business-of-Backlash-full-report-web.pdf>.

²³⁷ Charlotte Silver, “Racist Group Launches National Offensive on US Campuses,” *Electronic Intifada*, October 25, 2016, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/charlotte-silver/racist-group-launches-national-offensive-us-campuses>.

²³⁸ Hilmi Yazar, “Canary Mission and Modern Day McCarthyism,” *Chicago Monitor*, June 25, 2015, <http://chicagomonitor.com/2015/06/canary-mission-and-modern-day-mccarthyism/>.

²³⁹ “Campus Watch: Monitoring Middle East Studies on Campus,” *Campus Watch*, accessed October 5, 2017, <http://www.campus-watch.org/>.

²⁴⁰ Steven Salaita, “Why I was Fired,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 5, 2015, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-I-Was-Fired/233640>.

²⁴¹ “USACBI Statement on the Cancellation of the Edward Said Professor Search at CSU Fresno and Ongoing Repression of Critical Scholarship,” *US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel*, accessed October 5, 2017, <http://www.usacbi.org/2017/06/usacbi-statement-on-the-cancellation-of-the-edward-said-professor-search-at-csu-fresno-and-ongoing-repression-of-critical-scholarship/>.

²⁴² Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

²⁴³ See for example Benjamin Netanyahu’s 2001 address to the UN: Binyamin Netanyahu, “We Have Received a Wake-up Call from Hell,” Statement to the U.S. Government Reform Committee, *American Rhetoric: Online Speech Bank*, September 20, 2001, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/netanyahu.htm>.

²⁴⁴ Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

²⁴⁵ Nicholas Mitchell, “Disciplinary Matters: Black Studies and the Politics of Institutionalization” (PhD diss., UC Santa Cruz, 2011), 12.

²⁴⁶ Jonathan Adams, “The Dreadful Genius of the Obama Moment,” *RaceWire: The Colorlines Blog*, accessed July 1, 2018, http://216.92.121.75/racewire/archives/2008/11/the_dreadful_genius_of_the_obama.html.

²⁴⁷ Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things : The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 15.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁴⁹ Randall Williams, *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Taher Al-Labadi, "From Dispossession to Economic Integration: Political Economy of Colonialism in Palestine," (PhD diss, Université Paris Dauphine) 2015.

²⁵² Mira Nabulsi, "Oslo-Intelligentsia: Between 'State-Building' and the Loss of the National Project" (presentation, Critical Ethnic Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada, April 30–May 3, 2015).

²⁵³ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique," *Signs* 38, no. 4 (2013): 968.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Moten, Fred and Stefano Harney. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Wivenhoe; New York; Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013.

²⁵⁶ Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 30.

²⁵⁷ Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

²⁵⁸ Steven Salaita, *Uncivil Rights: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 42.

²⁵⁹ Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (2004): 31.

²⁶⁰ See Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London; England: Harvard University Press, 2013). Sunaina Marr Maira, *The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, and Solidarity in the War on Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 2016) and Thea Renda Abu El-Haj, *Unsettled Belonging: Educating Palestinian American Youth After 9/11* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

²⁶¹ Sunaina Marr Maira, *The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, and Solidarity in the War on Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

²⁶² Thea Renda Abu El-Haj, *Unsettled Belonging: Educating Palestinian American Youth after 9/11* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

²⁶³ Nadine Naber, "The Rules of Forced Engagement: Race, Gender and the Culture of Fear among Arab Immigrants in San Francisco Post 9/11," *Cultural Dynamics* 18, no.3 (2006): 258.

²⁶⁴ For a sustained engagement with this obscuration, see Sunaina Maira and Magid Shihade's article, "Meeting Asian/Arab American Studies: Thinking Race, Empire, and Zionism in the U.S.," in which they explore how the centrality of Palestine and the question of Zionism becomes obscured in contemporary studies on Orientalism, particularly within Asian American studies. Sunaina Marr Maira and Magid Shihade, "Meeting Asian/Arab American Studies: Thinking Race, Empire, and Zionism in the U.S.," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2006): 117–140.

²⁶⁵ Pamela E. Pennock, *The Rise of the Arab American Left: Activists, Allies, and Their Fight Against Imperialism and Racism, 1960s–1980s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

²⁶⁶ For more on the history of the LA 8: Judith Gabriel, "The Los Angeles Deportation Cases," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no. 1 (1987): 114–128.

²⁶⁷ Pamela E. Pennock, *The Rise of the Arab American Left*.

²⁶⁸ Zareena Grewal, *Islam Is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority* (NYU Press, 2013). See also: Khaled A. Beydoun, "Muslim Bans and the (Re)Making of Political Islamophobia," *HeinOnline*, accessed July 10, 2018, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/unilllr2017&div=58&id=&page=%20https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=POYWCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=zareena+grewal+and+nseers&ots=j64agxjgsV&sig=39zHeOSYDDzeH0-U4jryXOvT7WM#v=snippet&q=nseers&f=false>. See also: Anny Bakalian and Medhi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2009). See also: Tram Ngyuen, *We are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities After 9/11* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005).

²⁶⁹ Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

²⁷⁰ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

²⁷¹ Sunaina Marr Maira, *The 9/11 Generation: Youth, Rights, and Solidarity in the War on Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 2016) and Thea Renda Abu El-Haj, *Unsettled Belonging: Educating Palestinian American Youth After 9/11* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015).

²⁷² Mariam Abu-Ali et al., "Solidarity with Guantanamo Bay & Palestine: An Open Letter Calling on the Boycott of the White House Iftar," *Falling Walls Initiative*, accessed July 10, 2018, <https://fallingwallsinitiative.wordpress.com/2014/07/14/solidarity-with-guantanamo-bay-palestine-an-open-letter-calling-on-the-boycott-of-the-white-house-iftar/>.

²⁷³ Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2004) and Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Olive Branch Press, 2009).

²⁷⁴ For more on the way construction and disseminations of moral panics have stirred and acquired consent for increased policing, see for example: Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978, 2013).

²⁷⁵ Setsu Shigematsu, *Visions of Abolition: From Critical Resistance to a New Way of Life* (2011; PM Press), documentary. See also: Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2007).

²⁷⁶ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

²⁷⁷ Kristen Ess Schur, "The Irvine 11: Islamophobia Is Alive and Well," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, September 24, 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/09/201192493240548858.html>.

²⁷⁸ Tori Porell, "Students Forced to Sign "Civility" Statements for Walk-Out Protest," *Electronic Intifada*, August 21, 2013, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/students-forced-sign-civility-statements-walk-out-protest/12705>.

²⁷⁹ Dylan Rodríguez, "(Non)Scenes of Captivity: The Common Sense of Punishment and Death," *Radical History Review* 2006, no. 96 (2006): 9-32, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2006-002>.

²⁸⁰ Sarah Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2012), 13.

²⁸¹ Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 13.

²⁸² In an article I wrote for *Social Text* in 2014, I describe a Palestine analytic as: "A move beyond thinking of Palestine as an isolated issue, ethnic or geographic-based cause. Rather, the Palestine analytic works through the process of considering the particularities of Zionism as part of the genealogy of settler colonialism and injustice transnationally. It looks at Palestine as paradigmatic of broader structures of (settler) colonialism, apartheid, racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, dispossession, surveillance, biopolitics, necro-politics, repression, policing, arms trade, and other forms of power and violence that socialize all people transnationally in a divided world of human and non-human, conqueror and conquered, enlightened and un-enlightened and other dichotomies of power and powerlessness in the 21st century. However, the Palestine analytic also highlights the contradictions of the neoliberal and humanist structures of neocolonialism by considering the decolonial methods of survival, resilience, resistance, and steadfastness displayed by multiple generations of Palestinians (both inside and outside of Palestine) in the face of 66 years of displacement and occupation. The analytic unearths current world structures of hegemony and colonialism that aim to mask colonial conditions as inherent and natural conflicts, human rights and/or humanitarian crises, civil wars, and geographic aberrations. In highlighting a traditional (settler) colonial and apartheid model contested by its liberation and decolonial-based resistance, the Palestine analytic can inspire all indigenous and social movement workers of the world to consider that the mandates and opportunities that the moment of decolonization offers has not quite passed us. To an extent, the Palestine analytic can be understood as one lens in informing new ways of (re)building a transnational, trans-indigenous, Third Worldist and or internationalist decolonial process and project among peoples and movements across the world by situating the current moment as still fully capable and destined to be a broader transnational decolonial moment. In this respect, the Palestine analytic offers an opening for engagement, point of departure, and opportunity to revitalize justice-centered and decolonial approaches in the age of "post-racial, and post-colonial politics," multiculturalism, human rights, neoliberalism, and developmentalism. The Palestine analytic returns us to the core of decolonial resistance by engendering the pitfalls of previous frameworks, logics, and

movements that have brought about faulty “solutions” to other struggles of the world. It provides an opportunity to resituate all struggles, despite their immense challenges in the age of rampant globalized capitalism, as part of the transnational context for decolonial opportunity.” See more at: Loubna Qutami, “Rethinking the Single Story: BDS, Transnational Cross Movement Building and the Palestine Analytic,” *Social Text Collective*, June 17, 2014, https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/rethinking-the-single-story-bds-transnational-cross-movement-building-and-the-palestine-analytic/#sthash.AyRkw3Fj.dpuf.

²⁸³ See for example: J. Sebastian, “Already Something More: Heteropatriarchy and the Limitations of Rights, Inclusion, And the Universal” *AbolitionJournal*, June 1, 2018, <https://abolitionjournal.org/already-something-more/>.

²⁸⁴ GVfJ, *Palestine, Israel, and the Assault on Academic Freedom: Academic Freedom in Question*, YouTube video, 1:12:07, November 3, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCadtH_dUts. For more on this topic see: Lara Deeb and Jessica Winegar, *Anthropology's Politics: Disciplining the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

²⁸⁵ Rajini Srikanth, “The Axis of Power and Academic Freedom,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 19, no. 1 (February 2016): 109.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ Ariella Azoulay, *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947-1950* (Pluto Press, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and New York: University of Otago Press, 1999).

²⁸⁹ Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014).

²⁹⁰ Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

²⁹¹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

²⁹² “Teaching Palestine: Pedagogical Praxis and the Indivisibility of Justice,” *Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies (AMED)*, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://amed.sfsu.edu/content/teaching-palestine-pedagogical-praxis-and-indivisibility-justice>.

²⁹³ See for example efforts to discredit the opening of Columbia Universities Center for Palestine Studies in 2010: Armin Rosen and Jordan Hirsch, “Political Education,” *The New Republic*, December 15, 2010, <https://newrepublic.com/article/79833/palestine-studies-columbia-university>.

²⁹⁴ Aijaz Ahmad, “Orientalism and After: Ambivalence and Cosmopolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, no. 30, PE98-PE116, accessed August 1, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4398691>.

²⁹⁵ Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) and Edward W. Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

²⁹⁶ "Academic Freedom and Tenure: The University of California at Los Angeles," *AAUP Bulletin* 57, no. 3 (1971): 382-420.

²⁹⁷ Rabab Abdulhadi, "Tread Lightly: Teaching Gender and Sexuality in Times of War," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 4 (2005): 157.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ "Professor Rabab Abdulhadi Moves To Dismiss Frivolous "Lawfare" Suit That Targets Campus Advocacy for Palestinian Rights," *Palestine Legal*, August 21, 2017, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://palestinelegal.org/news/rabab-abdulhadi-moves-to-dismiss-frivolous-lawfare-suit>.

³⁰⁰ It is also important here to note that intellectual work can function as an extension of movement work, and to also caution against a slippage between critiques of the university as a site and space of multiple violences and exclusions and the outright rejection of any kind of intellectual work altogether as something that is somehow less "real," less "connected" to the struggles "on the ground." Such stances not only reinforce the very hierarchies they claim to dismantle by ultimately arbitrating who is and isn't capable of intellectual research and engagement; they also ignore the very "real" violence that the university is invested (in multiple senses of the term) in perpetuating. It also elides how movement leaders have often been organic intellectuals who necessarily cultivated counter-hegemonic intellectual praxis as a way of combatting the collaborationist sensibilities of the individualist bourgeois-elite, ever ready to sacrifice the best interests of our people for their own personal gain. And finally, it ignores that it is often our people in struggle who themselves teach many of us engaged in intellectual pursuits and challenge us to fight the epistemological illegibility of their experiences instituted by colonial intellectual gatekeeping.

³⁰¹ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study" (Wivenhoe; New York; Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2013), 26.

Endnotes: Chapter 2

³⁰² The works of Nizar Qabbani have long been critical to my own cultural, emotional, and political connections with the Arab region, people, and struggles for freedom. The torturous irony of my access to this poem in English is that I would find it in Fouad Ajami's *Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey*. While Ajami has long been considered a counter-revolutionary Arab intellectual, I found myself surprisingly fascinated in reading the *Dream Palace*. His prose and his mysterious method of writing without conclusive sentences, paragraphs, and endings kept me hooked, and the book became a page-turner. One thing captured me, seduced me even, to consider for a moment allowing Ajami the benefit of the doubt. That is, that his book argues that among Arab intellectuals, there came a time in history when they could not produce meaningful and practical political possibilities for the Arab region, nor could they capture the reality of the Arab people and countries. No longer were the days of the Arab National Movement and anti-colonial sensibilities vibrant with possibility, yet Arab intellectuals could not quite make sense and illustrate the reality of life. His argument had hooked me precisely because one of my

own grievances with Arab left intellectual circuits and political discourse in the post-2011 Arab Uprisings context is the hindrance to meaningful analysis caused by a romanticism and nostalgia of a previous era and a refusal to consider facts of life. However, by the end of reading Ajami's chapter "The Orphaned Peace," in which he translates and critiques Qabbani's text as out of touch with the liminal possibilities of the PLO, I had snapped out of my lucid intellectual fantasy and re-grounded myself in an orientation to Ajami and his work which I had long had. I concluded with the following thought: even if Ajami may have been right that Arab intellectuals existed in a Dream Palace, that their work couldn't produce reality nor capture it, is fantasy not productive for generating political possibility? Qabbani had long been that Arab thinker for me and for many other young Arab women who could only imagine the monumental impact that a re-formulated anti-patriarchal, anti-colonial, liberated region could produce. We took those fantasies to our organizing and we were met with sobering realities of the complexity of conditions. This was the truth for members of the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and I. But the fantasies were what brought us to the table and what kept us going, and what allowed for us to endure the experience of recognizing the realities. And Palestine, the oppression, the corruption, the horror, demanded us to continue trying to do something, think of something, and develop something. Ajami's work leads to a dead end, as critical organizers and scholars have long argued. That end is the surrender to oppressive forces, the acceptance of the language of Western Orientalists as the reason for our own misery, and capitulation out of fear of no other possibilities existing. Again, it is a torturous irony that I would select a translation of Qabbani's poem "al-Muharwilun," or "The Hurried Ones," from Ajami's *Dream Palace*, but I must pay homage where credit is due. Fouad Ajami, *Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 256-258.

³⁰³ For more on the relationship between settler-colonialism, militarism and gendered violence see for example: Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Militarization and Violence Against Women in Conflict Zones in the Middle East: A Palestinian Case-Study* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Nada Elia, "Gay Rights with a Side of Apartheid," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 2 (2012): 49-68, accessed July 7, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648841> and Scott Lauria Morgensen, "Theorising Gender, Sexuality and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 2 (2012): 2-22, accessed July 7, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648839>.

³⁰⁴ Ghada Karmi, *Married to Another Man: Israel's Dilemma in Palestine* (London; Ann Arbor; Michigan: Pluto Press, 2007), v.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 6

³⁰⁶ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 54.

³⁰⁷ Edward W. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994* (New York: A Division of Random House Inc., 1994) and Antonio Cassese, "The Israel-PLO Agreement and Self-Determination," *European Journal of International Law* 4, no. 4 (1993): 564-571.

³⁰⁸ I am indebted to my friend, colleague, and sister in the struggle Jennifer Mogannam for theorizing violence as method for survival, coming to full personhood, and confronting the brute force of colonial violence with an even greater violence in the Palestinian case. Mogannam's work draws on Frantz Fanon's theorization of the critical use violence holds for the colonized as a mechanism by which colonized subjects can become human under colonial modes of domination which negate their humanity. She also draws on Lewis Gordon's work to trace the way any action that the colonized might use to assert their

humanity, whether armed or unarmed, is registered as an act of violence by systems of colonial domination. In this context, colonial forces will always legitimize and legalize their use of force as the natural order of things and frame any form of resistance as an act of terror or violence. Mogannam evaluates how resistance, in all forms, came to be registered as the use of violence among members of the liberation movement in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) during their alliance in the civil war in Lebanon. Jennifer Mogannam, "Violence as Method: Palestinian-Lebanese Praxis in the Joint Revolution" (presentation, Conference for Arab Doctoral Students Based in the West, Doha, Qatar, March 24-26, 2018).

³⁰⁹ For more on how indigenous scholars theorize survivance as a method of fully thriving beyond just the bare minimum of survival when life is on the line see for example: Gerald Vizenor, *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 7 and Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

³¹⁰ Loubna Qutami and Omar Zahzah, "The War of Words: Meaning-Making as Palestinian Political Insurgency," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2019), in the authors possession.

³¹¹ Ward Churchill and Michael Ryan, *Pacifism as Pathology: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America* (Oakland: PM Press, 2017).

³¹² My use of the language of Palestine as a laboratory refers to three different but interrelated understandings of how Palestinians are produced, consumed, and subjugated within a particular military occupation industry: 1) the affective/ethereal notion that Palestinians are the ultimate subjects of enduring colonial annihilation and trauma; 2) that Palestinians are subjects Israel intentionally warps and deprives of biopolitical sovereignty, technological advancement, and so forth, and upon whom weapons, arms, surveillance, crowd control technologies, and imprisonment tactics are being tested so that they may be sold into a global industry of arms production, training, and trade; 3) that Palestinians's non-productive labor serves as a form of accumulation and profit for the racial-colonial containment apparatus. While a range of scholars make note of Israeli non-reliance on Palestinian labor, I believe these optics of labor do not account for the multiplicity of ways that being the subjects of a racial-colonial containment apparatus establishes the rubric for a peculiar form of labor; a non-productive, non-generative labor from which colonial forces continue to accumulate and profit upon. A lesson in studies of the Prison Industrial Complex and anti-Blackness has helped me think through these concepts and a return to Achille Mbembe's *Necro-Politics* has also helped me understand the very project of racial-colonial containment as a generative one for the colonial forces. See for example: Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) and Jeff Halper, *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification* (London: Pluto Press, 2015) and Samir Qouta and Eyad El Sarraj, "Prevalence of PTSD Among Palestinian Children in Gaza Strip," *Arabpsynet Journal*, no. 2 (2004), accessed May 25, 2018, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.500.5879&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

³¹³ William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

³¹⁴ See for example: Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2000); and Nizar Qabbani, "The Hasteners," *Nizarqabani.com*, June 13, 2013, <http://www.nizarqabani.com/1/the-hasteners/>; and Ghada Karmi, "After Oslo: A Single State in

Israel/Palestine?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 11, no.2 (2007): 212-226, accessed May 26, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557579808400200>; and Ali Abunimah, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse* (New York: Metropolitan, 2006); and Eds. Noura Erakat and Mouin Rabbani, *Aborted State? The UN Initiative and New Palestinian Junctures* (Washington, D.C.: Tadween Publishing, 2013); and Ed. Jamil Hilal, *Where Now for Palestine?: The Demise of the Two State Solution* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007) and Eds. Petter Bauck and Mohammed Omer, *The Oslo Accords: A Critical Assessment* (Cairo; New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2013).

³¹⁵ Nizar Qabbani, "The Hasteners," *Nizarqabani.com*, June 13, 2013, <http://www.nizarqabani.com/1/the-hasteners>.

³¹⁶ In her book *Jil Oslo*, Sunaina Maira offers an examination of the various ways Palestinian youth are challenging the limits of national politics in the Oslo era. Her analysis of contemporary sites of youth expression and protest magnifies the increasingly neoliberal and globalized world and how it takes form in occupied Palestine. She has navigated many sites through which Jil Oslo (the Oslo Generation) locates possibilities for action, agency, and political dissent to ultimately challenge the Oslo paradigm for politics, characterized by social, political, and class transformations. In doing so, three main themes emerge through this research. First, that youth are searching for an alternate politics in the post-Oslo political moment. These alternatives address the split in national unity between Palestine's dominant political parties Fateh and Hamas, contest the ongoing colonization of Palestine and erasure of Palestinians, detail the repressive structures of surveillance, policing, and economic inequity, and account for the fragmentation (ideological and geographic) that the Oslo paradigm has created. The second theme addresses the tensions between new mediums such as hip hop and national culture and cultural authenticity. This exploration challenges the dogmatic and polarized debates on national struggle by allowing youth articulations of less static and rigid notions of what is "properly" political to be expanded to a broader conceptualization of de-colonialism through both popular culture production and consumption as being a vehicle for re-thinking politics. Furthermore, it creates opportunity for renegotiations of how an intersectional approach that accounts for nation, gender, sexuality, and class can be facilitated through such mediums and thus re-shape public sphere discourse on what is "improper" and authentic. The third theme that emerges is the ways through which youth politicization has been cultivated in light of the Arab revolutions and particularly looking at the March 15th youth movement, the series of political actions that emerged in different cities across Palestine in the Spring of 2011. Sunaina Maira, *Jil Oslo: Palestinian Hip Hop, Youth Culture, and the Youth Movement* (Tadween Publishing, 2013).

³¹⁷ Noura Erakat, "Palestinian Youth: New Movement, New Borders," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, May 4, 2011, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/05/201153101231834961.html>.

³¹⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Mjriam Abu Samra, "The Road to Oslo and Its Reverse #Palestine," *Allegra Lab*, October 29, 2015, <http://allegralaboratory.net/the-road-to-oslo-and-its-reverse-palestine/>.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Based on losses in 1967 and 1973, as well as Black September in 1971 and the beginnings of the proxy war in Lebanon, by 1974 the institutional support of the PLO was fragmented at best. Thus, the

organization was forced to assess its possibilities and reframe itself to the people outside of the scope of failed pan-Arab/anti-Zionist aspirations. In 1974, the PLO launched a ten-point plan that Mjriam Abu Samra defines as their first attempt at “pragmatism.” Abu Samra contends that this plan, while still supposedly committed to the right of return and full autonomy, would in fact become the foundation upon which the PLO began to center pragmatism over their founding ideals and would allow their continued ascension into using increasingly liberal, bureaucratic, and ideologically antithetical mechanisms to maintain slivers of what remained of their original base. Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ghassan Khatib argues that the first intifada proved there is a potential for Israel’s military control to not be enough to contain resistance and collective actualization of a Palestinian identity. Thus, negotiations came at a crucial point where internally the Palestinian resistance was on the precipice of liberal pragmatism and externally the world was ready to streamline and hollow out Palestine. The First Intifada served as a reminder of the power of the people and in turn scared Israel and the West into forging diplomatic relationships with and stabilizing the body of Palestinian resistance. Ghassan Khatib, *Palestinian Politics and the Middle East Peace Process: Consensus and Competition in the Palestinian Negotiating Team* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

³²⁶ Mushtaq Khan discusses the ways in which Oslo was a politically preemptive move for the Palestinian people as it redirected efforts away from securing liberation, autonomy, and safety and instead forced them into an illusory ascension into statehood that required the corresponding neoliberal bureaucratic fragmentation of the people without any degree of safety, social services, or bargaining power to ensure the enactment of human rights, autonomy, and so forth. Mushtaq H. Khan, “Learning the Lessons of Oslo: State-building and Freedoms in Palestine,” in *Decolonizing Palestinian Political Economy: De-development and Beyond*, eds. Mandy Turner and Omar Shweiki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³²⁷ For more on the Palestinians’ historic internationalist ethos and watershed moments of the struggle as part of Third World anti/de-colonial insurgency see for example: Paul Chamberlin, “The Struggle Against Oppression Everywhere: The Global Politics of Palestinian Liberation,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1 (2011), accessed July 10, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263201003590300>; and Yezid Sayigh, “Struggle Within, Struggle Without: The Transformation of PLO Politics Since 1982,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 65, no. 2 (1989): 247-271, accessed July 15, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2622071>.

³²⁸ The great Arab defeat of 1967 is the moment in which Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and other Arab armies on more indirect levels, attempted to enact a blitz attack on Israel. However, through Arab-Zionist collusion, Israel was able to circumvent the blitz and initiate its own offensive on the Arab armies. Through US military support, the Zionist military directly occupied the Sinai Desert of Egypt and the Golan Heights of Syria, in addition to more of Palestine all through this single military operation. It is a significant turning point in the history of the Palestinian struggle because it: 1) highlighted the ways in which Zionism was an active threat to not simply Palestinian autonomy, but Arab regional autonomy; 2) established Zionist military hegemony in the region; 3) highlighted the discord amongst Arab nations in how to either resist or work with the Zionists. See for example: Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).

³²⁹ In an attempt to censure the U.S. for providing arms to Israel in the 1973 war, Saudi Arabia enacted an oil embargo. The scarcity this embargo produced in turn caused the price of oil to skyrocket and is currently dubbed today as “the oil crisis.” The worldwide crisis this embargo caused was undeniable and, in turn, the U.S. approached Saudi Arabia in an attempt to formalize economic relations, resulting in a further breaking of Arab allegiance to the Palestinian cause; soon after, Egypt would be approached by Israel to normalize relations as well. Similarly, the formal direct ties made between the Saudi Arabian Kingdom with the United States at this time – though formal political diplomatic ties were not made with Israel – would de-suture the political and oil-trade relations with the Soviet Union, and in the aftermath of the passing of President Tito of Yugoslavia in 1980, it would place Saudi Arabia into the Western-Capitalist fold of the impending Cold-War indefinitely.

³³⁰ In 1973, Gamal Abdel Nasser’s successor, Anwar Al Sadat, was politically struggling to establish himself as leader after the informal Voice (Nasser) of the Arab People had passed. To garner the trust of the people, Sadat teamed with Hafez Al-Assad of Syria, and together they launched a surprise attack on Israel. Though short, the military campaign was unexpected and consequently startled Israel to the point of resignation. Uncertain of the potential threat pan-Arabism and anti-imperialist intervention could hold, Israel strategically came to Egypt to normalize relations in the hopes of finally squashing the threat of pan-Arab success. Sadat, who at the time was facing popular protest for his already liberal/western-sympathetic tendencies, was quick to sign Egypt into a peace treaty under the premise of the return of the Sinai Desert, something he thought would regain the trust of the people. Thus, though initially a successful military campaign, the October 6 War in fact came to be the final pan-Arab attempt at resisting Western and Zionist encroachment. See for example: Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).

³³¹ As previously referenced, after the 1973 war, Egypt was at a crossroads. As the leading nation of pan-Arab efforts whose capital and diplomatic assets had proved essential the survival of pan-Arab and pro-Palestinian political aspirations, the switch from Gamal Abdel Nasser to Anwar Al Sadat was a vulnerable moment for not just this one country but for Arab and Palestinian autonomous movements as a whole. Sadat’s efforts in the 1973 war are often viewed as having held the potential for a reinvigoration of pan-Arab political thought had he continued on with military actions, policies, and movement building. However, his willingness to engage Israel and sign Egypt into a peace treaty so soon after the conflict revealed his true intentions for the 1973 war: regaining land and assets for Egypt and securing Egypt a safe role on the side of Israeli-Western imperial pursuits. The Camp David Accords are the official political accords produced by Egypt, Israel, and the US on topics including “Middle East Peace” and the normalization of Egyptian/Israeli relations. Of particular note is the agreement to establish a Palestinian autonomous governing body and to secure an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict despite the fact that no Palestinian representative bodies were consulted nor invited to the convening. Instead, this task was delegated to Egypt and Jordan, the two countries most clearly on their path toward Zionist normalization at this point. See for example the original 1978 Camp David Accords Framework. For more see: “Framework for Peace in the Middle East and Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel (Camp David Accords),” (United Nations Document Retrieval, Egypt and Israel, 1978).

³³² See for example Laurie A. Brand, “Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration,” *Middle East Journal* 42, no.4 (1988): 621-637, accessed July 13, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4327836>; and Abbas Shiblak, “Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 3 (1996): 36-45, accessed July 13, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2538257>.

³³³ Middle-East Monitor editors, "Palestinians and the Assad Regime: For History and Generations to Know," *Middle East Monitor*, July 8, 2014, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140708-palestinians-and-the-assad-regime-for-history-and-generations-to-know/>.

³³⁴ Ghassan Kanafani and James Carleton, *PFLP Ghassan Kanafani, Richard Carleton Interview Complete*, YouTube video, 6:56, August 14, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3h_drCmG2iM.

³³⁵ See for example Cheryl A. Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure of the PLO: An Analysis of the PLO in Lebanon Until June 1982," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, no. 3 (1983): 54-78, accessed July 10, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2536151>; and Laurie A Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) and

³³⁶ In 1973 George Habash, on behalf of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), argued that it was critical to conduct a "radical and scientific" criticism of the past in order to offer an assessment for the progress of the revolution moving forward. In his analysis he outlines mistakes of the resistance movement during the Jordan years and says the following: "The second major mistake conducted by the resistance was to omit the definition, in scientific and a revolutionary manner, of its position regarding the Jordanian people. Once it became dependent on the Jordanian arena, this should have been done. But the resistance did not carry out this fundamental theoretical analysis, continuing to work on the principle of revolution of the Palestinian people against Israel and Zionism without regard for the other forces in Jordan. The movement presented itself as a Palestinian revolution pure and simple; it avoided interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries, even in Jordan where its presence was essential to the continuity of the movement itself." Clovis Maksoud et al., *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Palestine Research Centre, 1973), 71.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Ed. Jamil Hilal, *Where Now for Palestine?: The Demise of the Two State Solution* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007), 4.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5

³⁴¹ Al Jazeera editors, "Arafat's Costly Gulf War Choice," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, August 22, 2009, <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/plohistoryofrevolution/2009/2009/08/200981294137853350.html>.

³⁴² Judith Miller and David Samuels, "No Way Home: The Tragedy of the Palestinian Diaspora," *Independent*, October 22, 2009, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/no-way-home-the-tragedy-of-the-palestinian-diaspora-1806790.html>.

³⁴³ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," *Office of the Historian*, accessed July 17, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>.

³⁴⁴ Linda Tabar and Omar Jabary Salamanca, "After Oslo: Settler Colonialism, Neoliberal Development and Liberation," in *Critical Readings of Development Under Colonialism: Towards a Political Economy for*

Liberation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Regional Office Palestine, 2015).

³⁴⁵ Ibid. 12

³⁴⁶ Tariq Dana, "The Palestinian Resistance and Its Enemies," *Jacobin*, accessed July 15, 2018, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/07/the-palestinian-resistance-and-its-enemies/>.

³⁴⁷ Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, "The Second Uprising: End or New Beginning?," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 2 (2001): 18.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Article X of the Oslo Accords calls for the continuous deployment of Israeli Defense Forces throughout the West Bank and otherwise. In conjunction with the endless wave of IDF deployments to surveil Palestinian populations, it also provides the foundation for the creation of the Palestinian Police Forces to supposedly police intra-Palestinian communities. However, most importantly, Article X and Article XIII prescribe tactical collusion between the IDF and the Palestinian Police as necessary. In turn, as clarified by the Oslo articles, the Israeli military are the supreme overseers, surveillance, and policing forces of Palestinian civil society that are able to enact Palestinian Police as a buffer to quell tensions surrounding Palestinian autonomy. For more see: "Annex: Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," (United Nations Document Retrieval, Washington, D.C., 1995).

³⁵⁰ UN Resolution 194 is framed as the refugee resolution because while it broadly discusses Palestinian-Israeli relations, it directly addresses issues related to refugeehood. In particular, 194 formalizes the right of return for Palestinian refugees and also calls for the socioeconomic support of refugees in their resettlement processes. However, through intensive resistance to the bill, Israel was able to negotiate for intentionally ambiguous wording regarding when and how, enabling them to continue suspending their supposed obligation to provide support. "194 (III). Palestine – Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator," (General Assembly, United Nations, 1948).

³⁵¹ Leith (Palestinian youth from Syria recently displaced to Sweden) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

³⁵² Othman (Palestinian youth from Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria currently residing in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁵³ Zaid (Palestinian youth from Burj al Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁵⁴ Hanan (active youth with the Jafra Foundation from Syria currently residing in Beirut, Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁵⁵ Bayan (Palestinian youth from Syria recently displaced to Holland) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁵⁶ Atef (Palestinian youth from Syria recently displaced to Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁵⁷ Nidal (PYM member from Syria recently displaced to the USA) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibrahim (Palestinian youth from Syria recently displaced to Athens, Greece) in discussion with the author, September 2017.

³⁶⁰ Ayman (former PYM member from Rushdiah refugee camp in Lebanon and director of a youth art center in Burj al Barajneh camp) in discussion with the author, December 2015.

³⁶¹ Nael (former member of the Palestinian Cultural Club (PCC) in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁶² Cheryl A. Rubenberg, "The Civilian Infrastructure of the Palestine Liberation Organization: An Analysis of the PLO in Lebanon Until June 1982," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, no. 3 (1983): 54-78.

³⁶³ Ahmed (active Palestinian youth with Al-Naqab Center in Burj al Barajneh camp in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

³⁶⁴ Raed (founder of Social Communication Center-Ajial in Lebanon currently residing in Denmark) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

³⁶⁵ Tamara Tamimi, "The Negotiation of Identity Among Palestinian-American Returnee Youth," in *Cairo Papers in Social Science* 29, no. 1, ed. Sari Hanafi (2006): 105.

³⁶⁶ I refer to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as the Palestinian Authority (PA) because many Palestinian youth argue that they are undeserving of the name "national" which in Arabic translates to "Watani" or "Wataniya" and is used in positive terms, not totally to indicate a national identity but rather to signify someone who is a patriot and lover of their homeland. Accruing critiques of the PNA has resulted in a common dropping of the N when they are referenced. Today, many Palestinian youth call the PNA "al-Sulta" which translates to "the authority" and have thus even dropped the term Palestinian from their title.

³⁶⁷ See for Example: Edward W. Said, "Edward Said a Tribute to Abu Omar," *Abu Omar Hanna*, accessed July 17, 2018, <http://www.abu-omar-hanna.info/spip/spip.php?article103> and Ghada Karmi, *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2015); and Edward W. Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (New York and Canada: Vintage, 2003).

³⁶⁸ Riham (former PYM member from the West Bank) in discussion with the author, July 2010.

³⁶⁹ Hani (active youth in the communist party in the West Bank during the first Intifada, currently residing in London) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

³⁷⁰ Joseph A Massad, *The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

³⁷¹ Nidal (PYM member from Syria recently displaced to the USA) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

³⁷² I utilize the term 1948 Palestine to reference the Palestinian lands that were annexed in the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, or Catastrophe, and came to define the newly-founded Israeli state. I utilize the term 1948 Palestinians to reference those Palestinians who remained on their lands either as indigenous peoples or internally displaced peoples, and eventually became classified as the Arab minority, citizens of Israel. I utilize this terminology for three reasons. First, this is how the youth I have engaged from those territories, who carry Israeli citizenship, identify themselves. Second, it is critical to contest the merits of the Israeli state as both a settler-colonial enterprise built on stolen land which has denied the Palestinian refugee right of return to their historic towns and villages in accordance with United Nations resolution 194 and which has never defined its own territories and borders. Third, it is a critical way to maintain this Palestinian community as included as part of the broader Palestinian community wherever we reside.

³⁷³ James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

³⁷⁴ Yara Hawari, "Palestine Land Day: A Day to Resist and Remember," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, March 30, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/palestine-land-day-day-resist-remember-180330054113738.html>

³⁷⁵ Kareem (active Palestinian youth in 1948 Palestine) in discussion with the author, July 2015.

³⁷⁶ Ayah (active Palestinian youth from 1948 Palestine) in discussion with the author, August 2017.

³⁷⁷ See for example: Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2004); and George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); and Alex Alvarez, *Native America and the Question of Genocide* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth-UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

³⁷⁸ Hussein (PYM member from Jerusalem currently residing in Southern California) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

³⁷⁹ The General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) was founded in 1959 in Cairo and emerged out of the Palestine Student Union (PSU), which was also founded in Cairo in 1944 and reformed in 1952. In its prime, GUPS is said to have had approximately 100 chapters worldwide and mobilized over 100,000 Palestinian students. GUPS in the USA began after 1979 during the era of Palestinian nationalization and in light of serious differences among the students who were active in the Organization of Arab Students (OAS) over the question of the 1979 Iranian revolution and the impending Iraq-Iran war. Soon after the 1993 Oslo Accords when the role and function of the PLO shifted, Palestinian shatat unions halted all operations and closed their doors almost immediately. Only one US chapter of GUPS remained open: the San Francisco State University (SFSU) chapter. Though GUPS does not have any formal ties to the PLO or the Palestinian political parties, its legacy at SFSU differentiates it from the Palestine student movement's successors, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), founded in 1993, and National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP), founded in 2010. Members of GUPS at SFSU were the first group of Palestinian youth in the United States to re-connect with members of GUPS chapters in other places in the world (Including chapters in Chile, Cuba, Algeria, Austria, France and more) in and through the formation of the Palestinian Youth Network (PYN). I offer a brief historical overview of the formation of GUPS in chapter three but for

more information see the forthcoming dissertation research of Mjriam Abu Samra who has written an extensive account of the GUPS based on 80 in depth interviews with GUPS founders and alumnae. Also see: Ido Zerkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine: Books, Guns and Politics*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2015); and Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 2 (1991): 254-257.

³⁸⁰ Jihan (former GUPS member and former PYM-USA General Coordinator from San Francisco, CA) in discussion with the author, June 2011.

³⁸¹ See for example the organizations that constitute the twenty-six member organizations of the National Network of Arab American communities. "Members," NNAAC, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://www.nnaac.org/members>.

³⁸² Mariam (former PYM-USA General Coordinator from Oakland, CA) in discussion with the author, May 2013.

³⁸³ Lila Abu-Lughod, "Return to Half-Ruins: Memory, Post-memory, and Living History in Palestine," in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*, eds. Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 77-106.

³⁸⁴ See for example *Al-Awda: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition*, accessed July 17, 2018, <http://al-awda.org/>. and *US Palestinian Community Network*, accessed July 17, 2018, <http://uspcn.org/>.

³⁸⁵ Karma Nabulsi, "Justice as the Way Forward," in *Where Now for Palestine?: The Demise of the Two State Solution*, ed. Jamil Hilal (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007), 247.

³⁸⁶ European Palestinian organizations demonstrate a more pronounced formal and informal affinity to the Palestinian political parties. This is not to say other Western Palestinian associations and organizations are not tied to the party structure but just that there is a more overt expression of formal ties to homeland party politics in Europe than in places like the United States, Australia, Canada, and so forth. This is in part due to geographic and cultural proximity to Palestine and newer Palestinian youth migration flows to Europe rather than older Palestinian communities in the Americas and far shatat. This is also in part due to increased criminalization of Palestinian communities in the far shatat including in the US in War on Terror context and persistent state attacks on Palestinian political activism in the US which commenced in the Nixon Era and intensified in the post-9/11 George W. Bush period, and Obama and Trump moments. For more information on social and political history of Palestinians in Europe see: Tareq Arar, "Palestinians Exiled in Europe," *Al Majdal* no. 29 (Spring 2006): 41.

³⁸⁷ For more on the social and political history of Palestinians of Latin America see Cecilia Baeza, "Palestinians in Latin America," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 43, no. 2 (2014): 59-72, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://jps.ucpress.edu/content/43/2/59>.

³⁸⁸ Naima (active member of the General Union of Palestine Students-Greece Chapter) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

³⁸⁹ Samia (former PYM International Executive Board member from Venezuela) in discussion with the author, July 2009.

³⁹⁰ Yasmine (former PYM International Executive Board member from Chile) in discussion with the author, November 2008.

³⁹¹ Amani (active Palestinian youth union organizer in Brazil) in discussion with the author, November 2012.

³⁹² Hilal, 7

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Morsi (youth involved in the Palestinian political establishment) in discussion with the author, February 2006.

³⁹⁶ Fadi (active Palestinian youth from Bethlehem currently residing in Sweden) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ramzi (PYM-Sweden branch member from Nablus, Palestine who moved to Sweden as a pre-teen) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

³⁹⁹ Samih Farsoun and Naseer Aruri, *Palestine and the Palestinians : A Social and Political history* (2nd ed.) (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2006); and Ed. Jamil Hilal, *Where Now for Palestine?: The Demise of the Two State Solution* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007); and George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon, "Ariel Sharon and George W. Bush's Letters in Full," *Haaretz*, June 6, 2009, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5061206>.

⁴⁰⁰ Anwar (active Palestinian youth with the Stop the Wall Campaign) in discussion with the author, April 2006.

⁴⁰¹ Shafiq (former PYM International Central Council member from Nablus, Palestine) in discussion with the author, February 2012.

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⁴⁰³ Ismail Nashif, *Palestinian Political Prisoners* (Routledge Studies, 2014).

⁴⁰⁴ Basel (former PYM International Executive Board Member from Tulkarem, Palestine currently residing in Norway) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

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⁴⁰⁶ Said (former PYM General Coordinator from the West Bank currently residing in Spain) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

⁴⁰⁷ An overview of the history of the student movement is found in chapter three including Abu Samra's analysis of the organic vanguard.

⁴⁰⁸ Ayat Hamdan, *Foreign Aid and the Molding of the Palestinian Space* (Ramallah: Bisan Center for Research and Development, 2011), 23.

⁴⁰⁹ To learn more about the infrastructural changes in Palestine and to Palestinian social and political life caused by the Oslo Accords neoliberal development policies see for example: Tariq Dana, "The Structural Transformation of Palestinian Civil Society: Key Paradigm Shifts," *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 2 (2015): 191-210, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2015.1017968> and Tariq Dana, "Palestinian Civil Society: What Went Wrong?," *Al-Shabaka*, April 2013, https://al-shabaka.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Dana_PolicyBrief_En_Apr_2013.pdf.

⁴¹⁰ Said (former PYM General Coordinator from the West Bank currently residing in Spain) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

⁴¹¹ Leila Farsakh, "The Palestinian Economy and the Oslo 'Peace Process' by Leila Farsakh," *Trans Arab Research Institute*, accessed May 18, 2018, http://tari.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=11.

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⁴⁷⁰ Al Jazeera editors, “Timeline: Lebanon Conflict,” *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, August 20, 2006, <https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2006/08/200849141752287545.html>.

⁴⁷¹ Al Jazeera editors, “A Guide to the Gaza Strip,” *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, June 26, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/guide-gaza-strip-170614124611554.html>.

⁴⁷² For more on the March 15th Palestinian Youth Movement see: Sunaina Maira, “Generation Oslo Rises Up: The Palestinian Youth Movement and Transnational Solidarity,” *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* (presentation, BRISMES Annual Conference, London, UK, June 1, 2018).

⁴⁷³ An array of Palestinian youth I have spoken to who were active in the March 15th, 2011 movement argue that while the protests were not ideologically coherent and while there were many ideological and political ideals present within the movement, there was a general consensus among the youth that the Oslo Framework was the main problem they were contesting. They argue that they shouted in the streets for an end to the Oslo period, deal and negotiations and security cooperation between the PA and Israel in addition to calling for an end to the split in national unity between the Palestinian factions.

⁴⁷⁴ For more on PA repression of the youth movement as well as journalist and other Palestinian parties, see for example: Bill Van Esveld et al., “No News is Good News: Abuses Against Journalists by Palestinian Security Forces,” *Human Rights Watch*, April 6, 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/04/06/no-news-good-news/abuses-against-journalists-palestinian-security-forces>. Mersiha Gadzo, “What Happened to Palestine’s Youth-Led Struggle?,” *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, February 11, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/happened-palestine-youth-led-struggle-180211154056240.html>.

⁴⁷⁵ BBC editors, “Israeli Forces Open Fire at Palestinian Protesters,” *BBC News*, May 16, 2011, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13373006>.

⁴⁷⁶ Allison Deger, “Mass Palestinian Prisoner Hunger Strike Reminiscent of the First Intifada,” *Mondoweiss*, May 1, 2012, <https://mondoweiss.net/2012/05/mass-palestinian-prisoner-hunger-strike-reminiscent-of-the-first-intifada/>.

⁴⁷⁷ Amjad Iraqi, “How the Hunger Strike Could Bring Palestinian Prisoners Back to the Fore,” *972 Magazine*, April 20, 2017, <https://972mag.com/how-the-hunger-strike-could-bring-palestinian-prisoners-back-to-the-fore/126751/>.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Peter Beaumont, "Palestinian Protests Spread after Boy's Funeral," *The Guardian*, July 5, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/05/palestinian-protests-spread-after-funeral-mohammed-abu-khdeir>.

⁴⁸⁰ Nidal Bitari, "Yarmuk Refugee Camp and the Syrian Uprising: A View from Within," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XLIII, No. 1 (2013): 61, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://www.palestine-studies.org/jps/fulltext/162936>.

⁴⁸¹ Rania Zabaneh, "The Death of Ali Dawabsheh," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, August 3, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/middleeast/2015/08/ali-dawabsheh-killed-150801200937139.html>.

⁴⁸² Linah Alsaafin, "Palestine 2015 Attacks Triggered New Path of Resistance," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, October 4, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/10/years-palestine-2015-resistance-continues-171001142310665.html>.

⁴⁸³ MEE Staff, "Palestinians Protest at Killing of Prominent Youth Activist Basil Al-Araj," *Middle East Eye*, March 7, 2017, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/basil-al-araj-protest-pa-israel-operation-ramallah-1979022498>.

⁴⁸⁴ Matthew DeMaio, "The Assassination of Basel Al-Araj: How the Palestinian Authority Stamps Out Opposition." *Palestine Square*, March 16, 2017. <https://palestinesquare.com/2017/03/16/the-assassination-of-basel-al-araj-how-the-palestinian-authority-stamps-out-opposition/>.

⁴⁸⁵ Jaclynn Ashly, "Palestinian Ahd Tamimi Arrested by Israeli Forces," *Al Jazeera News Media Network*, December 19, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/palestinian-ahed-tamimi-arrested-israeli-forces-171219174834758.html>.

⁴⁸⁶ Nada Elia, "Gaza's Great Return March Massacre: A Turning Point?," *Middle East Eye*, May 29, 2018, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/was-nakba-day-massacre-turning-point-palestinian-struggle-1483873269>.

⁴⁸⁷ I note that the very phrase "Israel/Palestine" signifies the violence of naturalizing the constitutive violence of history which necessarily founds the Israeli state vis-à-vis Palestinian ethnic cleansing, massacres, occupation and refugeehood. Drawing from Walter Benjamin, Ariella Azoulay and Joseph Massad, I speak in great detail of this co-constituted history in the Introduction of this dissertation. See for example; Ariella Azoulay, *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947-1950* (Pluto Press, 2011), Joseph Massad, "The 'Post-Colonial' Colony: Time, Space, and Bodies in Palestine/Israel," in *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁴⁸⁸ I am truly indebted to Omar Zahzah, a colleague, friend and co-organizer in the PYM, for engaging me in a series of ruminations of how we must come to interrogate the lexicon that is often used to talk of the struggle of the Palestinian people and to be more careful so that our word usage does not signify and reenact the structural violences Palestinians incur in their day-to-day lives. We have written these reflections in a forthcoming piece: Loubna Qutami and Omar Zahzah, "The War of Words: Meaning-Making as Palestinian Political Insurgency," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2019), in the authors' possession.

⁴⁸⁹ Qutami and Zahzah, "The War of Words."

⁴⁹⁰ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴⁹¹ James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Resistance," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 4 (1989): 33-61, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1765> and James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁴⁹² I am grateful for the work of Steven Salaita who has helped more clearly make the linkages between American Indian conceptualizations of survivance and how it also operates as a tenet for solidarity with Palestine. Steven Salaita, "American Indian Studies and Palestine Solidarity: The Importance of Impetuous Definitions," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 6, no. 1 (2017): 1-28, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/28900/21543>. For more on Salaita's analysis of how American Indian and Indigenous studies can be accounted for more among scholars and activists engaging Palestine see Steven Salaita, *Inter/Nationalism: Decolonizing Native America and Palestine* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016). For more on how 'survivance' as it has been coined and theorized within American Indian Studies informs Palestinian practices see Irene Calis, "Beyond the Apartheid Analogy: Time to Reframe Our Palestinian Struggle," *IMEU: Institute for Middle East Understanding*, January 23, 2015, <https://imeu.org/article/beyond-the-apartheid-analogy-time-to-reframe-our-palestinian-struggle>.

⁴⁹³ James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Resistance," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 4 (1989): 34, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1765>.

⁴⁹⁴ Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 14.

⁴⁹⁵ Shukri (former PYM International Central Council Member from Jordan) in discussion with the author, November 2015.

⁴⁹⁶ Mohammed (founder of Fael: The Active Palestinian Forum from Palestine and currently residing in Turkey) in discussion with the author, September 2017.

Endnotes: Chapter Three

⁴⁹⁷ Zaynah Hindi, "The Palestinian Youth Movement Commemorates 65 Years of Nakba," *Middle East Digest*, May 2013, http://www.middleeastdigest.com/pages/index/11731/nakba-2013_the-palestinian-youth-movement-commemor.

⁴⁹⁸ Throughout this chapter, I refer to the organization as *PYN* while speaking about events, activities, and developments which took place between the years of 2006-2011. I refer to the organization as *PYM* when referencing events, political position papers, development, activities and contexts of 2012 onward. I utilize *PYN/M* when speaking of the total experience of both the network and movement. Throughout the chapter, I use the phrase *they* to reference the Palestinian youth involved in the 2006-2007 period, before I joined the PYN. I use *we* and *ours* in the period of November 2007-onward. The only moments when I

use the phrase *they* are when I refer to a specific group within the body which I was not part of. This includes but is not limited to national chapters, committees, and central councils.

⁴⁹⁹ For more on understanding the critical importance of dreams and imaginations in cultivating possibility for radical movement work see Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002) and María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas and the Age of Development* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰⁰ Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography," *The Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 16.

⁵⁰¹ While we often referred to the various areas and phases of growth of PYN/M as phases of development, we were also very aware of how the word and implications of the world development played a damaging role for our community as part of post-Oslo neoliberalism. For that reason, I opt to utilize the words constitutional phases because in retrospect I believe that PYN/M had seen all of the phases as critically constitutive of PYN/M's existence, growth and identity as an organization. Also, I utilize the phrase constitutional phases because PYN/M's theorization did not exactly happen in chronological order. For example, certain contradictions and experiences which took place early on in PYN's experience sometimes would not be re-visited and made clear, for the purpose of theorization until much later. There was a moving of sorts, between phases, to make sure some order could be offered to the constitutive features of the construction of the organization. Lastly, I utilize the phrase constitutional phases to avoid the assumptions that linear scales of time are enmeshed in notions of progress, betterment and modernity. This is very important for PYN/M held a high reverence for historical phases, figures, ideals and strategies of Palestinian history which existed pre-Oslo and therefore they did not entirely subscribe to ideas that conditions would be "better in time."

⁵⁰² In my opinion, this process is precisely what distinguished PYN/M's experience from a range of political parties which historically establish a political ideology/philosophy and strategy built within a small tier of thinkers and leaders before engaging their bases. In some ways, PYN/M's political ideals and sensibilities signified an engagement with historic leftist revolutionary ideologies and parties but PYN/M strategies of engaging in more popular ways, without relying on cadre structures and cultures within leftist movement work, resembled the secular nationalist histories of the Palestinian political trajectory. The lack of a clear political ideology in some ways left margins open for an engagement of intellectual and political thought sorely needed for Palestinians to overcome our fragmentation. But at times, it left open too many contradictions within the PYN/M and points of weakness.

⁵⁰³ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 94.

⁵⁰⁴ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003).

⁵⁰⁵ In thinking of the PYN/M experience as a knowledge making project, I have become more attune, interested and inspired by scholarship which engages questions of critical race theory and decolonization through education. In particular, Tara Yosso's work has inspired me to understand the importance of pedagogical frameworks which can account for real lived experiences as assets to learning rather than as a deficit to it. Tara J. Yosso, "Whose Culture Has Capital? a Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 1 (2005): 69-91, accessed August 1, 2018,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>. Questions of cultural difference being assets can also be found in Stuart Hall's work on Cultural Identity and Diaspora, though I contend that *diaspora* is not an accurate frame for the Palestinian condition as Karma Nabulsi has defined the reasons why. Along with Nabulsi, I opt to utilize the phrase *shatat* to speak to the dispersal of Palestinian conditions. For more see Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" and Karma Nabulsi, "Justice as the Way Forward," in *Where Now for Palestine?: The Demise of the Two State Solution*, ed. Jamil Hilal (London and New York: Zed Books, 2007), 247.

⁵⁰⁶ The writing of this chapter has been complex for an array of reasons. On the one hand, writing the PYN/M internal development history as a chronological review would not do justice to just how monumental the experience was in contributing to the development of PYN/M's identity, character, vision, strategies, structure, constituency, goals, and practices. There are simply not enough pages to illustrate the finite details that necessarily contributed to the making of the PYN/M political process and its theorization. On the other hand, I deeply want to refrain from presenting the PYN/M political position papers, theoretical and political analysis, and statements as theory, as a complete and final position. The truth is that the PYN/M position papers were deepened, expanded, challenged, and re-theorized almost immediately after their adoption in 2012. They were constantly in flux and shifting. It would be a disservice to the movement to analyze the documents without conveying the process which they necessarily emerged from. Each word in these papers signifies countless arguments, processes, stories, contradictions, and struggles which contributed to its making and which also occurred as a result of the limitations of the papers post-2012. I do not want to and simply cannot theorize upon the PYN/M theory in the absence of shedding light on the internal process and practice which informed it. But to offer a reading of PYN/M's political theorization here in a rushed and hasty fashion will also not do it justice. In future work, I want to reflect on the relationship between diagnosis, engagement of contradiction, collective process, construction of positions and analysis, and practice which the PYN/M attempted to navigate. But this is quite difficult to write in a coherent organized manner in which the rules of convention do not allow for such fluidity. I have asked myself what comes first, a chronology of history or a presentation of PYN/M politics. In the future my hopes are to attempt to present both, simultaneously, which breaches the rule of linear development, but which allows the reader to remain focused on the PYN/M internal method as the important catalyst for movement building, not a hollow political discourse, analysis, or external statement. For me, this is one of the most critical interventions of this work as many global left movements in the context of post-Cold-War neo-liberalism have become anti-intellectual loose network activist initiatives or overly-theoretical and discursive, and/or ultra-dogmatic in radical ideals learned from text rather than from conditions and practice. The either/or examples pervasive today is why I believe very strongly in the PYN/M approach which did not see itself as exempt from day to day service and mobilization but which highly valued and relied on theoretical engagement.

⁵⁰⁷ **2006:** Palestine, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Bosnia. **2007:** Palestine and France. **2008:** Chicago, Madrid, Amman. **2009:** Syria, Lebanon, Washington DC, New York. **2010:** Chicago, Basque country and Madrid Spain, Athens Greece, Washington DC. **2011:** Detroit, London, Istanbul, Paris. **2012:** Philadelphia, Porto Alegre Brazil, Amman Jordan, Cairo Egypt, Tunisia. **2013:** Vancouver, Canada. **2014:** Jordan. **2015:** Turkey and Jordan. **2016:** Chicago, Lebanon, Jordan, Greece, Turkey, Sweden, France, Denmark. **2017:** Houston, New York, Greece and Turkey.

⁵⁰⁸ Permission to write about the PYN/M and interview members of the PYN/M has been given to the author with a consent form signed by the former international general coordinator of the PYN/M in December of 2015. This letter has been submitted to the University of California, Riverside's Office of Research

Integrity along with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application which has been approved and remains active until August of 2018.

⁵⁰⁹ Laurie A. Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State* (Columbia University Press, 1988), 64.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² For more on the critical importance of the 1936 Arab general Strikes, see: Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003).

⁵¹³ Ido Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance in Palestine: Books, Guns and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁵¹⁴ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*.

⁵¹⁵ Mjriam Abu Samra (Dissertation Department of Politics and International Relations), “The Palestinian Transnational Student Movement 1948-1982: A Study on Popular Organization” (PhD dissertation, University of Oxford), in author’s possession.

⁵¹⁶ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*.

⁵¹⁷ Walid Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: George Habash and his Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism* (London: Charles Knight, 1975).

⁵¹⁸ For the comparative analysis of Palestinian student activism in Cairo and Beirut see Mjriam Abu Samra “Palestinian Transnational Student Movements: From the Nakba to the Arab Revolutions” (presentation, Arab Council for Social Sciences Inaugural Conference, Beirut, Lebanon, March 19-20, 2013).

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ For Palestinian student activism in Egypt in the post-Nakba period see Laurie A. Brand, “Nasir's Egypt and the Reemergence of the Palestinian National Movement,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no. 2 (1988): 29-45.

⁵²² It is important to note that Brand’s work looks more closely at the Palestinian student experience in Egypt, which would eventually construct the philosophical, institutional, and political departure point for Fatah. Fatah would eventually become the largest and most influential political party within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The Cairo experience, which incubated and practiced ideals of Palestinian identity and self-reliance, would establish central tenets in the facilitation of Fatah, and later the PLO’s, vision, strategy, and goals. Below see a synthesis of the way Brand describes how these developments took place within the student movement and the student aspirations and dilemmas of that generation.

In 1944, the Palestine Student Union (PSU) would form in Cairo and establish a new foundation for activating students which would especially be aspired for by young Palestinian refugees following the 1947-1948 Nakba. By that time, many of the Palestinian students who were studying in Egypt had lost financial resources from their homeland and were left possibly permanently dispossessed. In 1951, the Arab League Council decided to eliminate the financial subsidies offered to Palestinian students who were already living in perilous conditions and struggling. These students demonstrated against the decision inaugurating political protest as part of its practice. However, Egypt had not yet seen its revolution and under the King Farouk monarchy, the Palestinian students were limited in the sorts of political activities they could conduct. This however changed in 1952 when the July Revolution would oust the Farouk Monarchy in Egypt and mark the beginning of the British withdrawal from Egypt which would be realized in 1956 alongside the assumption of Gamal Abdel Nasser as the new Egyptian president.

While the role of the PSU through the 1940s offered some critical vehicles to Palestinian students, especially following the Nakba, to connect and develop a role for themselves in political protest, the opportunities for Palestinian student activity would be realized more profoundly through the 1950s. In 1952, Palestinian student activism was fundamentally transformed with the election of Yasser Arafat (who would later come to be the founder of Fatah and Chairman of the PLO) as the PSU president and with Salah Khalaf as his Vice President. The two were elected as independents who ran on a platform which sought to establish Palestinian self-reliance and to cultivate the Palestinian identity while in exile. These philosophies would become a lynchpin for the development of the Palestinian political party, Fatah, and a major philosophical and strategic principle guiding the Palestinian national struggle in the decades to come. Arafat and Khalaf were accompanied by an elected executive committee comprised of several communists, one Ba'athist, and one member of the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood). The diversification of political leanings in many ways made GUPS a popular representation of the new political tendencies within exilic Palestinian communities. The 1952 PSU election would transform Palestinian student activity which by that time had still been largely dominated by an Ikhwan influence.

Arafat would remain the PSU president until his graduation in 1956, at which time Khalaf succeeded him. By this time, the Palestinian students had been dealing with multiple attempts by the Arab League Council to cut financial support to them and had persistently been protesting this while enduring the blowback including arrests and imprisonment of students. But by 1956, much had changed for the PSU. First, they were dealing with a new Egyptian regime much friendlier to the Palestinian struggle than the Monarchy in Egypt opening up opportunities for the students to be in direct conversation with a nation-state political representative. Second, the PSU had already begun attending convenings for the International Union of Students (IUS) backed by the Eastern Bloc. Their participation in the ISU was considered an important achievement in terms of international recognition of Palestine by the non-aligned and global left block. At this time, Palestinian students started discussing the possibility of organizing transnationally and providing the Palestinian people with a joint-student body able to represent their different geographies; these discussions emerged in the IUS convening in Beijing, China, in 1958. It is precisely through the PSU participation in internationalist spaces and the knowledge and strategies they explored there which later advanced the formation of chapters of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in 1959 in different transnational coordinates. Among these places, the Germany chapter was among the most critical for the European shatat.

By 1959, the core leaders of the 1952 reformed PSU, including Arafat, Khalaf, and Farouk Qadumi, graduated from University and left Egypt, mostly to the Gulf countries to seek employment. One year

prior, in 1958, Iraq would experience the July revolution in which Abd al Kareem Qasim of the Free Officers Movement would overthrow the monarchy and ascend to power. Qasim, who was supported by the Iraqi Communist Party, established a series of popular organizations across sectorial lines including the development of student unions. The Palestinians in Iraq were inspired to do the same, which gave rise to the idea of a general union that would unify Palestinian student activities and ambitions across geographic coordinates. At the same time, the PSU in Egypt reached out to the Palestinian students in Iraq, requesting that they formally organize as well. The Palestinian student demographic in Iraq included both Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) forces as well as Ba'athist elements. Upon establishing their own structure and vision in Iraq, they approached the Palestinian students in Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt with a proposal to establish a joint federation. But soon after the federation was proposed, Palestinian students were expelled from Iraq by Qasim who sensed that the students exhibited Nasserist sensibilities amidst growing hostilities with Abdel Nasser's Pan-Arab Socialism project. Meanwhile, the PSU in Cairo was at that time comprised of many pro-Nasser Ba'athist forces enjoying Abdel Nasser's favor, and thus launched a similar proposal to establish a general union with headquarters in Cairo. In 1959, the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) was formed, enjoying the support of Abdel-Nasser and developing an infrastructure and process for the establishment of multi-city and multi-country chapters. Laurie A. Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State* (Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 66-72.

⁵²³ Abu Samra, "Palestinian Transnational Student Movements."

⁵²⁴ Ibid

⁵²⁵ The regional events of those years, in particular the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) between Egypt and Syria, facilitated the exchanges and contacts among Palestinian students in the region.

⁵²⁶ Mjriam Abu Samra, "Palestinian Youth Activism: Analysing the Past and Building the Future" (presentation, The Future of the Palestinian National Project Conference, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, November 14-15, 2015).

⁵²⁷ Zelkovitz, *Students and Resistance*.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*.

⁵³⁰ Abu Samra, "The Palestinian Transnational Student Movement."

⁵³¹ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, 74.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ See for example: Leila S. Kadi, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Peaceful Proposals, 1948-1972 (Palestine Essays)* (Palestine Research Center, 1973) and Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁵³⁴ Mjriam Abu Samra, "Palestinian Transnational Student Movements: Vanguard or Solidarity?" (presentation, Panel of "Historical Approaches to Palestine Studies: Student Movement, Political Alliances and Dirty War," WOCMES, Ankara, Turkey, August 18-22, 2014).

⁵³⁵ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, 4.

⁵³⁶ Abu Samra, "The Palestinian Transnational Student Movement."

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 5. Also see: Antonio Gramsci, Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (NY: International Publishers, 2014), 66.

⁵³⁸ C.M. Chang, "Mao's Stratagem of Land Reform," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1951, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/1951-07-01/maos-stratagem-land-reform>.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ For more on advantages and pitfalls of comparative assessments see: Haytham Al-Ayoubi et al., "Palestine and Vietnam: A Discussion," *Shu'un Filastiniya*, June 18, 1973, trans. *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016, <http://learnpalestine.politics.ox.ac.uk/uploads/sources/588d74159583a.pdf>.

⁵⁴¹ Jamil Hilal, "The Challenge Ahead," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23, no. 1 (1993): 46-60.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Alain Gresh, "The Palestinian Dream On," trans. Wendy Kristianasen, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1988, 149, <https://mondediplo.com/1998/09/12gresh>.

⁵⁴⁴ Abu Samra Mjriam Abu Samra "Palestinian transnational student movements: vanguard or solidarity?" paper presented at Panel "Historical Approaches to Palestine Studies: Student Movement, Political Alliances and Dirty War" WOCMES Ankara, Turkey. 18-22 August 2014

⁵⁴⁵ Raja Abdulhaq, "Distorting Hamas's Origins: A Response to Mehdi Hasan," *Raja Abdulhaq: Decolonizing Minds Through Islamic Perspective*, February 22, 2018, <http://www.raja48.com/2018/02/distorting-hamass-origins-a-response-to-mehdi-hasan/>.

⁵⁴⁶ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, pg 141

⁵⁴⁷ These groups are not reserved only for Palestinians and are largely human rights activist student groups. Examples of these formations include Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) in the US. For more on SJP see Nora Barrows-Friedman, *In Our Power: U.S. Students Organize for Justice in Palestine* (Just World Books, 2014).

⁵⁴⁹ Said (PYM founder and former International General Coordinator) in discussion with the author, March 2018.

⁵⁵⁰ Merahm and Shafiq would not only become two vital players in the preparation for the Barcelona convening but also for the foundation and development of the PYM in the coming years ahead. Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Said (PYM founder and former International General Coordinator) in discussion with the author, March 2018.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ If the parties were able to partake in the gathering, the PYN would not be perceived as a new up and coming formation threatening the establishment's legitimacy and power, at least at first. Rather it could be considered a mechanism by which even parties within the establishment could strengthen youth engagement and participation in their own programs and could also be a vehicle by which they might expand their own youth recruitment efforts and acquire increased popular legitimacy by grassroots bases.

⁵⁵⁴ See for example: The following are media pieces which have covered some of these various initiatives and convenings: "Abbas to Inaugurate Palestinian Youth Parliament," *Ma'an News Agency*, December 14, 2009, <http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=246828>. Also: Awab Al-Masri, "Palestinian Authority for the Defense of Constants," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, February 25, 2010,

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2010/2/25/%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA#1>.

Azmi Bishara, "Arab Consultative Meeting on Palestine," *فلسطينيون ابشأن العربى التمشاورى اجتماع* (meeting, National Commission for the Protection of the Palestinian People's Rights, Beirut, Lebanon, September 23-24, 2010). Also: Al Jazeera editors, "The First International Conference for Palestinians in Istanbul Was Launched," *فلسطينيون يى مؤتمرو اول انطلاق* (conference, Istanbul, Turkey, February 25, 2010), *Al Jazeera Media Network*, last modified February 25, 2010,

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2017/2/25/%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%86%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84>. Also: "The Most Important Sessions and Side-Events at the 16th European Palestinians Conference in Milan," *The Palestinian Return Centre*, last modified April 29, 2018, <https://prc.org.uk/en/post/3846/the-most-important-sessions-and-side-events-at-the-16th-european-palestinians-conference-in-milan>. Also: "Palestine Network Founding Conference" (conference, Palestine Network, Bethlehem, Palestine, February 23–27, 2010). Also: "Future Palestine Initiative" (conference, NEWPal, Ramallah, Palestine, June 19, 2013). Also "Visualizing Palestine," *Visualizing Palestine*, accessed May 14, 2018. <https://visualizingpalestine.org/>. Also: "Full Text: National Call for Registration in PNC Elections," *Ma'an News Agency*, last modified June 18, 2012.

<https://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=496333>. Also: "Fakhoora.org, Take Action: Defend Education," *Fakhoora.org*, accessed May 16, 2018. <https://fakhoora.org/>. Also: "The First Palestinian Youth Conference," *فلسطينيون يى الشبواب مؤتمرو* (conference, Palestinian Youth Drawing Future Map, Cairo, Egypt, February 2017). Also: "Palestinian Expatriate Affairs Department," *The Palestine Liberation Organization*, accessed May 14, 2018. <http://www.pead.ps/>.

⁵⁵⁵ Craig Calhoun, "Foreword" in *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles Hale (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2008), xxiv-xxv.

⁵⁵⁶ As I have outlined in chapter two, the Oslo Accords framework resulted in (negative) changes in Palestinian social and political life, thus prompting trepidations among youth of both the political parties and the NGOs. For many young people I have spoken with, the NGOs had come to signify a neo-liberal de-politicization of the Palestinian struggle. The parties, at that time, came to signify a deadlock for change as they became enmeshed in and paralyzed by the Oslo framework.

⁵⁵⁷ Nidal (PYM founder and former International Executive Board member from Syria) in discussion with the author, March 2018.

⁵⁵⁸ For example, many groups expected PYM to list their support in which case PYM would have been interpolated as a wing of or branch of an existing formation and which would have limited PYM's chance to overcome the political or ideological fragmentation effecting Palestinians. Worse, NGO's often expected or asked of PYM to focus on social matters and elide political concerns which was in a pattern pervasive in Palestine and which PYM was attempting to escape the restrictions of. Between 2007 to 2009 there were many attempts from both members within the network and from outside it, to cultivate PYN as a diasporic network of Palestinian activists which could cultivate stronger efforts for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaigns. On the one hand PYN had already endorsed BDS, adopted it as a strategy within its by-laws and many PYN members, especially in Europe and the US, partook and in some cases were forerunning BDS campaigns. On the other hand, the PYN believed adamantly that BDS was only a strategy, not the definition of the organization or *the* (in singular, monolithic terms) movement. We insisted that while BDS is intended to increase global solidarity with Palestine and accumulate global pressure on the Israeli state, that Palestinians also needed to re-fortify our own role in our struggle and an out to the national crises we were enduring.

⁵⁵⁹ Basel (PYM founder and former International Executive Board member from Palestine, currently residing in Norway) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

⁵⁶⁰ In the end, the third great lesson the PYM had learned from the initial planning period was that existing in, navigating, acquiring support from imperfect institutions which require some form of exchange, could be done while maintaining enough margin for organic engagement and autonomy in developing the vision and direction of the group. PYN/M's engagement with questions of NGO's and the political parties would become more deeply experienced and reflected in the position papers on the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Authority (PA), the rights-based approach, solidarity and anti-colonialism. PYN/M's trepidation of the NGO's was sustained and developed by a robust analysis and sharp critique of neo-liberalism more broadly. It's grievances with the political parties in some ways was also informed by a critique of neo-liberalism as it was calcified with the Oslo Accords and shifted the role and function of the parties from being grassroots resistance formations to institutional factions unable to recultivate their historic role.

⁵⁶¹ Some of the most participatory and important founding member organizations who planned and partook in the PYN Barcelona convening included Ajyal-Lebanon, Jafra-Syria, and the Wael Zuaitar Association from Italy.

⁵⁶² Said (PYM founder and former International General Coordinator) in discussion with the author, March 2018.

⁵⁶³ For Media Coverage see Al Jazeera TV, nemcert, *Al-Jazeera TV Palestinian Youth Network France-2007*, YouTube video, 5:30, May 14, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EVBrHMGUKE>.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ To learn more about how an affective ethos played a critical role in PYM's formation and culture, See for example: Elena Zambelli, Ruba Salih, and Lynn Welchman, "The Palestine Youth Movement (PYM): Transnational Politics, Inter/national Frameworks and Intersectional Alliances," (working paper, Research Gate, 2017),

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321732057_The_Palestinian_Youth_Movement_PYM_Transnational_politics_international_frameworks_and_intersectional_alliances.

⁵⁶⁶ Tara J. Yosso, "Whose Culture Has Capital? a Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 1 (2005): 69-91, accessed August 1, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>.

⁵⁶⁷ Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 175.

⁵⁶⁸ David Lloyd, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity 1800–2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁵⁶⁹ Lowe says "conditional temporality of the "what could have been," symbolizes aptly the space of a different kind of thinking, a space of productive attention to the scent of loss, a thinking with twofold attention that seeks to encompass at once the positive objects and methods of history and social science, and also the matters absent, entangled, and unavailable by its methods. : Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke University Press, 2015) 41.

⁵⁷⁰ Below is text which conveys how the PYN defined itself, its composition, mission and objectives, goals, and activities in 2008.

General Information: "This is an international movement of Palestinian youth. we are still in the foundation process. The structure is: local general assemblies electing local board. the local board all together forms the international general assembly. the international general assembly elects 9 people to be the international executive board. the local coordinators in each country form the international coordination committee. we don't have an employed staff. for last year our budget was 150.000 euro. the source of funding was mainly the spanish agency for international cooperation and development, Alcorcon Municipality and donations. We have organized a summer camp in Syria last year with the participation of 15 countries. for this year we are planning a summer school and another summer camp. and we are planning to have an international conference during the spring of 2011. in the activities we organized during the last 4 years of the foundation process, we have worked with SCI Catalunya, General Union of Palestinian Students in France, Wael Zuaiteer Association in Italy, Jafra Association in Syria, Social Communication Center (Ajial) from Lebanon, Hewar Childhood Center, Bisan for research and investigation, Baladna cultural center from west bank, Palestinians without frontiers in Gaza and Arab Group for the Protection of Nature in Jordan.

Mission and Objectives:

The Palestinian Youth Network ("PYN") is an independent, nonpartisan alliance, founded by a group of young Palestinians scattered throughout the world as a result of the occupation of our homeland. Our

belonging to Palestine, passion to preserve our Palestinian identity, and desire to contribute to the liberation of our land and people has driven us to build this network aimed at amplifying the voices of Palestinian youth and enhancing their role in building a better future for ourselves and our children.

Vision:

To revive a legacy of Palestinian grassroots activism among all Palestinian youth around the world, promoting the youth's active participation in our struggle and in the struggles of all oppressed and indigenous peoples. To uphold Palestinian collective consciousness and appreciation for our Palestinian national identity, and to assume responsibility towards achieving the political, social, economic, human, civic and environmental rights of the Palestinian people foremost among them the Palestinian refugee right of return.

Objectives

- A. To locate and connect Palestinian youth around the world to each other, and to create the means of communication between these youth through a support network that works to strengthen the efforts of local and regional youth organizations;
 - B. To strengthen the bonds between Palestinian youth around the world and their Palestinian national identity;
 - C. To promote the unity of the Palestinian people regardless of their places of residence, factional affiliation, political ideology, or religious beliefs;
 - D. To develop the leadership skills and capabilities of young Palestinians, and foster their spirit of initiative at all levels;
 - E. To support Palestinian youth in improving their political, social, cultural and economic status in the various places in which they reside, while raising the consciousness of Palestinian youth of their responsibilities towards the Palestinian people and their homeland;
 - F. To empower Palestinian youth everywhere to play a leading and effective role in realization of their inherent rights;
 - G. To inform and raise the awareness of the international community about Palestinian culture, history and struggle.
- Methodology
- H. Organizing local and international forums and conferences to raise consciousness and awareness about the Palestinian struggle for freedom;
 - I. Organizing specialized Palestinian youth workshops aimed at developing leadership skills and capabilities;
 - J. Creating a Palestinian Youth Voluntary Program in order to promote civic engagement and community service;
 - K. Supporting and initiating solidarity campaigns aimed at supporting the Palestinian freedom struggle;
 - L. Distributing regular publications relating to Palestine, its history, culture and people;
 - M. Distributing regular publications relating to the activities of the PYN;
 - N. Creating and maintaining a database of demographic information about Palestinian communities around the world;
 - O. Utilizing a rights-based approach to political advocacy;
 - P. Developing other mechanisms as necessary to achieve the above-mentioned goals.

Main Projects / Activities:

From the beginning of the PYN initiative three years ago, the following has been completed:

- 1) 1st PYN Conference Barcelona, Spain 2006 (40 participants)
- 2) 2nd PYN Conference Ven Dome, France, November 2007 (90 participants)
- 3) 3rd PYN Conference Madrid, Spain, November 2008 (140 participants)
 - a. Approval of three years in the making PYN Vision and by-laws by founding members
 - b. Development and approval of a two year strategic action plan
 - i. Summer camp- cultural exchange July-August 2009
 - ii. Collaboration with the Palestine International Institute summer camp summer 2009
 - iii. Speaking Tours of International Executive Board
 - iv. Development of National Chapters of PYN and increase membership
 - v. Summer school: summer 2010
 - c. Election of the first ever official international executive board
- 4) Delivery of Medical relief to Gaza in collaboration with Paz Ahora and ISM Spain in February of 2008
- 5) Several demonstrations, events, and campaigns PYN has co-sponsored worldwide including the academic boycott of Israel in the UK
- 6) 2 Follow Up Committee meetings: 1st Amman Jordan January of 2008, 2nd Madrid Spain July 2008
- 7) 1 International Executive Board meeting: Copenhagen Denmark February 2009
- 8) Several Media interviews and several press statements released on current world events”
“The Inception of the Palestinian Youth Network,” *AnnaLindhFoundation.org*, PDF, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/sites/annalindh.org/files/members/booklet20english.pdf>.

⁵⁷¹ The two-year strategic action plan outlined the following work areas: a. to develop and implement a summer camp which can expand the PYN membership base and deepen the political dialogue among transnational Palestinian youth on our challenges, and mutual aspirations. B. to develop and implement a summer school which could delve more deeply into a rigorous political and intellectual study of theory, history, and the current conditions affecting Palestinian youth and to develop the first iteration of PYN politics, and strategically plan the program implementations for the years ahead. This school was also intended to develop a wider transnational leadership base which would re-distribute power, responsibility and labor from the active core group which constituted between 5-8 people. C. To implement speaking tours across the world to recruit more Palestinian youth in order to build local chapters, spread PYN vision, and explore the challenges and conditions of Palestinian youth in different areas. Speaking tours were conducted in multiple cities in the USA in November of 2009, Germany in November 2009, Palestine in December 2009 and Norway in December 2009. Cite as international white paper/position paper. International Executive Board (IEB) Report 2008-2010: Conducted and Distributed in January 2011. Palestinian Youth Network (PYN).

⁵⁷² “The Inception of the Palestinian Youth Network,” 7.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ For media coverage on the 2008 conference see for example: Al Jazeera TV, Saif AbuKeshek, *Palestinian Youth Network-Third Conference-Madrid*. Aljazeera, YouTube video, 6:09, November 19, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t8DvtiR5Ng>. For performances during the closing ceremony of the conference see Dina Omar, *endirectovideo, Dina Omar – Poesía*, YouTube video, 6:11, December 18, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRj_0e38g4c&t=190s.

⁵⁷⁵ The skepticism many Palestinian youth had of Non-governmental organizations, the way they had played a major role in de-politicizing Palestinian youth, in facilitating dialogue and normalization initiatives with Israel and in transforming Palestinian society made young Palestinians sensitive to the way youth movement spaces were surveilled, contained and co-opted by these contractual agreements with NGO's. Particularly, the European-Union had often funded normalization initiatives in Palestine. While the PYN did receive NGO foundation and European municipal funding in the years between 2006-2009, this opened the margins for many rumors which aimed to discredit PYN's legitimacy. It is in part the reason PYN decided in 2010, that they would no longer apply for those pools of money and would rather rely on grassroots fundraising efforts raised by individuals and Palestinian businesses. This gave PYN more political autonomy over its programming and theorization but also made galvanizing resources very difficult by 2011.

⁵⁷⁶ Any Palestinian living under the occupation can tell of the complex ways Israeli intelligence forces use investigations of one's own private affairs as bait for blackmail and extortion. This has been a technique used for decades by Israeli forces to disrupt cultural and communal harmony within Palestinian society by blackmailing Palestinians to becoming informants. Atop of the already crucial matters that are stigmatized within Palestinian society, there resides another layer which the haunting ways social/cultural practices is become weaponized against Palestinian political aspirations. A veteran of unit 8200, the Central Collection Unit of the Intelligence Corps in the Israeli Defense Force, came out publicly with a testimony to the ways Palestinian private lives, spaces, affairs and relationships are surveilled and utilized as weapons of war. He states: "Whether said individual is of a certain sexual orientation, cheating on his wife, or in need of treatment in Israel or the West Bank – he is a target for blackmail.... Something I had a really hard time with was that all kinds of personal data was stored in the unit, such that could be used to extort/blackmail the person and turn them into a collaborator. At the base we were told that if we find out some "juicy" detail about them, that it's important to document it. Examples of this were a difficult financial situation, sexual preferences, a person's chronic illness or that of a relative, and necessary medical treatment." For more see: "Any Palestinian Is Exposed to Monitoring by the Israeli Big Brother'," *The Guardian*, September 12, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/12/israeli-intelligence-unit-testimonies>.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Randall Williams, *The Divided World: Human Rights and Its Violence* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) Xvi.

⁵⁷⁹ If social, religious, economic and cultural values and practices were so distinct from one another, they could not come together to form a type of unity because they often presented values, perspectives on Palestine and the Palestinians which were antithetical to one another. While the PYM, by that point had become attune to the various forms of political and geographic fragmentation, these forms of social segmentation added an entirely new dimension though they were expressed during break times, in logistical arrangements, in the evening social gatherings, and facilitated an overall sense of small group clusters which would be present in the conference program space, they were not exactly more overt and legible than the geographic and political fragmentation.

⁵⁸⁰ See for example: Noura Erakat and Monadel Herzallah, "Popular Conference: Preserving Collective Identity," *The Electronic Intifada*, April 21, 2008, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/popular-conference-preserving-collective-identity/7473>.

⁵⁸¹ *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles Hale, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 2.

⁵⁸² Merahm states, "This time it was more about evaluating their effective commitment and understanding of the struggle rather than their "potential" interest and work in their local communities. For Paris and Madrid we selected people mainly on a geographical bases with the intention to establish solid contacts with people who could work and be part of the network in their countries. These people were suggested to us by other people who would tell us that they are involved in Palestinian activism and that was enough for us. This time we actually had a selection with direct questions on their interest, commitment and knowledge of the struggle. We had some similar questions also for the Syrian application form [the 2009 summer camp in Syria] but for the basque school [in 2010] it was more detailed." Merahm (PYN/M founder and ICC member from Italy currently residing in Jordan) in discussion with the author, May 2018.

⁵⁸³ To see a list of the demands of the March 15th movement see for example: OccupiedPalestine, "The Demands of the #Mar15 Movement Youth of Palestine," *Occupied Palestine*, March 19, 2011, <https://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2011/03/19/the-demands-of-the-mar15-movement-youth-of-palestine/>. To learn more about the movement see for example: Nour Odeh, *Foreign Policy*, March 23, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/03/23/palestines-youth-revolt-2/> and Sunaina Marr Maira, Jil Oslo, and Nadia Naser-Najjab, "Palestinian Youth and the Arab Spring. Learning to Think Critically: A Case Study," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2012): 279-291 and Mira Nabulsi, "'Hungry for Freedom': Palestine Youth Activism in the Era of Social Media" in *Wired Citizenship: Youth Learning and Activism in the Middle East*, ed. Linda Herrera (New York: Routledge, 2014), 105-120.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ The same was true for the PYM members from the West Bank, USA and France who went to Tunisia in March of 2013 for the global World Social Forum. The PYM delegation hosted a series of discussions with members of the WSF-Free Palestine Brazil delegation discussing the political dynamics which they should expect to navigate and to focus on a collective discourse to share while building with other Palestinian, Arab and Third World allies. The delegation relied on the PYM position papers on the Arab dimension and solidarity to do so.

⁵⁸⁶ To read the full statement see The Palestinian Youth Movement, "Declaration of Statehood," *Dialogue-Review.com*, September 2011, PDF, http://www.dialogue-review.com/en/documents/other/201109_PYM_State_declaration_statement.pdf. To see an interview about the statement with the author, see "A Declaration from the PYM," *Dialogue-Review.com*, accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.dialogue-review.com/en/affiche_page.php?page=interview_PYM.php5&titre=Interview%20with%20Loubna%20Quatmani%20General%20Coordinator%20of%20the%20PYM.

⁵⁸⁷ To view statements at the AYDL final convening presented by PYM member representatives from Lebanon, France and Algeria see: AYCLD, *Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity P1*, YouTube video, 2:40, December 30, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzvVuoTTbE&t=22s>. Also see AYCLD, *Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity P2*, YouTube video, 12:08, December 30, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T11NO8y8rk&t=19s>. For media coverage on the convening including interviews with PYM founders and members see AYCLD, *Arab Youth Conference for Liberation and Dignity – Mayadeen*, YouTube video, 2:25, January 1, 2013,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbGP5vKLxKo&t=21s> and AYCLD, *Palestinian Youth Movement in Tunis - Aljazeera Mubasher*, YouTube video, 47:44, December 31, 2012,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqY6008TQlg&list=PLAxoEUwfQo-TEzb7ckdBXkU5j9B36kAAI>.

⁵⁸⁸ See for example: Loubna Qatami, "No Revolution is Perfect," *Pulse Media*, March 8, 2014, <https://pulsemedia.org/2014/03/08/no-revolution-is-perfect/>.

⁵⁸⁹ *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 13.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Merahm, (PYN/M founder and ICC member from Italy currently residing in Jordan) in discussion with the author, May 2018.

⁵⁹² The PYM Greece Refugee Support Program follows a framework built on the following principles: 1) The Refugee Dimension, 2) The Transnational Dimension, 3) The Arab/Swana Region dimension, 4) Rights Based Approach, international law and the Non-profit industrial complex. To learn more about the program and the PYM political framework for volunteers see: "SWANAconnect Dignity, Survival & Community for Refugees: Volunteer Service Project in Greece," *Palestinian Youth Movement*, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://www.pymusa.com/greece-project/>.

⁵⁹³ The Transnational Palestinian Youth Convening in South Africa was a project PYM-USA adopted at its second general assembly in Houston, Texas in July of 2017. The goal is to gather Palestinian youth to do an in-depth historical study of the apartheid analogy and to more seriously develop an analysis of its limitations and opportunities. It is also meant to deepen the bonds of Palestinian-Third World and Palestinian-Black struggle and strengthen a political framework for the two.

⁵⁹⁴ PYM-USA has taken part in an array of activities, programs, and delegations that has allowed us to deepen our American Indian solidarity praxis. In 2013 PYM co-led the Black Mesa Indigenous Support Delegation. In 2015, PYM engaged in extensive dialogue with American Indian communities from various nations in Cahuilla Territory (Riverside, CA), and in 2016, PYM led a Palestinian delegation to Standing Rock. All these activities as well as a range of various actions and educational dialogues in our day to day program activities in various local chapter has helped PYM theorize indigenous resistance, land sovereignty, settler-colonialism and solidarity with Native Nations of Turtle Island in more profound ways. In the 2017 general assembly, PYM-USA agreed to lead an American Indian delegation to Palestine in 2019 and is planning for that the delegation now. For more on PYM-USA engagement with indigenous communities see: Liza Minno, "Support Native Youth Spring Break on Black Mesa & Organization-Based Gathering on Black Mesa," *Black Mesa Indigenous Support*, March 21, 2013, <https://supportblackmesa.org/2013/03/support-native-youth-spring-break-on-black-mesa-organization-based-gathering-on-black-mesa/> and "PYM – USA Stands with Standing Rock. No to the Dakota Access Pipeline," *Palestinian Youth Movement*, September 7, 2016, <http://www.pymusa.com/pym-usa-stands-with-standing-rock/>.

⁵⁹⁵ PYM Los Angeles, Orange County, and Inland Empire chapter has been a part of the Stop Countering Violent Extremism Initiative since 2017. PYM partakes in the advancement of civil liberties of Arab and Muslim communities as it connects to prison and police abolition as well. See for example: "Los Angeles Mayor's Office Declines CVE Funds," *Advancing Justice: Los Angeles*, accessed August 1, 2018,

<https://advancingjustice-la.org/media-and-publications/press-releases/los-angeles-mayors-office-declines-cve-funds#.W3iRLr9nbcc>.

⁵⁹⁶ See for example “Arabs4BlackPower Statement | االسود_قوة_م_ع_عرب# بيان | Déclaration des Arabes pour le Black Power | Declaración de Árabes por el Poder Negro,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, September 2, 2016, <http://www.pymusa.com/arabs4blackpower/>.

⁵⁹⁷ See for example: “Statement on US Immigration Ban,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.pymusa.com/statement-on-us-immigration-ban/>.

⁵⁹⁸ See for example: “Historic Break Down Borders 5K in San Diego Brings Community Together in Protest of Local and Transnational Violences,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, April 30, 2016, <http://www.pymusa.com/new-blog-2/2016/4/30/historic-break-down-borders-5k-in-san-diego-brings-community-together-in-protest-of-local-and-transnational-violences>. For a theorization of anti-border collaborative work with indigenous and borderland communities, see Leslie Quintanilla and Jennifer Mogannam, “Borders Are Obsolete: Relations beyond the “Borderlands” of Palestine and US–Mexico,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2015): 1039-1046, accessed August 18, 2018, <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

⁵⁹⁹ One of the strongest PYM-USA alliances is with Filipino Leftist forces including Bayan, Anak Bayan and an umbrella anti-imperialist formation, which PYM is a founding member of, the International League of Peoples’ Struggles (ILPS). PYM also participated in international exposure delegations to the Philippines to learn about how to strengthen anti-imperialist, indigenous and democratic forms of reciprocal solidarity. For more see Loubna Qutami, “Rethinking the Single Story: BDS, Transnational Cross Movement Building and the Palestine Analytic,” *Social Text Journal*, June 17, 2014, https://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/rethinking-the-single-story-bds-transnational-cross-movement-building-and-the-palestine-analytic/.

⁶⁰⁰ PYM-USA relied on the international PYM for a broader framework on linking the Palestinian struggle to the regional struggle. It then participated in local actions within the USA to support the uprisings in the Arab world. See for example PYM’s statement on the Arab revolutions: “Statement on the 2011 Arab Revolts and Prospects for the Palestinian Youth Movement,” *AROC: Arabic Resource & Organizing Center*, <http://araborganizing.org/statement-on-the-2011-arab-revolts-and-prospects-for-the-palestinian-youth-movement/>.

⁶⁰¹ To learn more about the PYM-USA summer schools see for example: “2017 PYM Summer School Applications Open,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, <http://www.pymusa.com/pym-summer-school/>.

⁶⁰² See for example: “Ghassan Kanafani Scholarship,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, <http://www.pymusa.com/gk-scholarship-entry/>.

⁶⁰³ See for example “PYM San Diego Celebrates Launch of Khaled Bakrawi Center in El Cajon,” *Palestinian Youth Movement*, January 15, 2018, <http://www.pymusa.com/launch-of-khaled-bakrawi-center-in-el-cajon/>.

⁶⁰⁴ Merahm, (PYN/M founder and ICC member from Italy currently residing in Jordan) in discussion with the author, May 2018.

Endnotes: Epilogue

⁶⁰⁵ Laurie Brand has written an exquisite account that details the distinctions of the Palestinian shatat in Syria from other refugee communities. In it she traces how both the Palestinians in Syria were integrated into the fabric of Syrian social and economic life though they were also granted permission to maintain separate Palestinian institutions which would maintain the Palestinian national identity. Laurie Brand, "Palestinians in Syria: The Politics of Integration," *Middle East Journal* 42, no. 4 (1988): 621-637, accessed July 1, 2018, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4327836>.

⁶⁰⁶ The historical integration policies of Palestinians into Syrian social and economic life influenced the Palestinian constituencies which chose to stand with the regime during the revolution (because the regime was better to Palestinians than other Arab countries). But also, this same point is why Palestinians of Syria felt the moral impulse to support their Syrian brothers and sisters in the revolution; because they were great stakeholders as part of the Syrian cultural, social and economic life and felt great comradeship with the peoples' needs and demands. However, it is critical to note that the general freedoms Palestinian refugees of Syria experienced compared to refugees in the other Arab countries, did not mean that camp life was not difficult or that they did not suffer as a result of their refugee status. Sa'eb, a Palestinian refugee youth from Syria who has recently been displaced to Sweden as a result of the war, argues "There was a relative image of safety surrounding Yarmouk [before the war] that is very much informed by the general condition of Palestinians in Syria vis-a-vis the Palestinians of other Arab countries. So there is no doubt about that. So yes there was this image of relative safety. It was providing a luxury that we as Palestinians never thought of, compared to other Palestinians. But this does not mean it was not a difficult place, we were always constantly leading a struggle of survival- not in the materialistic sense, [for example] to find food, but to move freely." Sa'eb (Palestinian youth from Syria displaced as a result of the war to Sweden) in discussion with the author, February 2016.

⁶⁰⁷ Nidal Bitari, "Yarmouk Refugee Camp and the Syrian Uprising: A View from Within," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. XLIII, No. 1 (Autumn 2013): p. 61, accessed July 15, 2018, <http://www.palestine-studies.org/jps/fulltext/162936>.

⁶⁰⁸ In 2015, Al Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network produced a roundtable which explored whether or not the Palestinian political parties had any role to play in light of the transformations that had swept the region and the revolts of Palestinian youths of the time. A variety of scholars contribute their insights to the relationship between the youth revolts and the political establishment with some scholars presenting a pessimistic view that anything meaningful change could emerge from within the parties or the broader establishment. What I found particularly important in these series of reflections to demonstrate that many youths still believe that political change may emerge from the existing system. Jaber Suleiman argues that while youth are directing their anger toward the PA for instance, no options exist but for coordination. Nijmeh Ali argues that an alternative system has not presented itself and calls for a shift within the existing establishment. Belal Shobaki more overtly identifies the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Islamic Jihad as two political parties that still have the potential to realize new modalities of politics in light of the status quo. These three pieces which constituted the broader roundtable demonstrate the ways in which not all Palestinian youth everywhere have withdrawn any form of consent, support and faith of the existing political establishment, its infrastructure and its prospective capabilities. See: Alaa Tartir et al., "Palestinian Youth Revolt: Any Role for Political Parties?," *Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network*, November 23, 2015, <https://al-shabaka.org/roundtables/palestinian-youth-revolt-any-role-for-political-parties/>.

⁶⁰⁹ In an interview with Al-Quds News Network in January of 2014, Um Thaer, a woman from Yarmouk Refugee Camp comments on the access and distribution of aid to the people of Yarmouk while under siege. She says, "with respect to the aid, the aid that has arrived did not even cross the threshold of the siege. It never arrived. And secondly, for people who really want to send aid, would they really send just 1,500 cartons for over 40,000 families. Who are those 1,500 cartons to go to? And anyways it never even got into the camp! And another thing, we had already said, we don't want aid! We will forgive you of aid! We don't want peoples charity! We are a people of dignity. We don't want anyone to pity us. Lift the siege and open the blockades! If you care to do something, open the blockades so we could go in and out and eat and drink on our own. Don't send us a carton of food that won't last more than three days for the whole family. Who is that help supposed to be for? That's one thing. Another thing, When the camp first fell under siege the other thing, When he was alive, the martyr Khaled Bakrawi, whom we commemorate, whose memory weighs on our mind... He was a founder and a servant to the organization Jafra. When the siege first began, two trucks of aid was able to come into the camp while it was under siege! On his own blood, with sacrifice he served the camp. And he was martyred for the people of the camp. These are the people we will memorialize and offer honor, not the cowards. Not those aid workers coming in and out since August with nothing done." Um Thaer continues to explain how the Palestinians are persistently scapegoated in every war and battle through the region, how the Palestinian Authority President has taken no responsibility to act to protect the Palestinians of Yarmouk, to urge or sway international actors including Russia and Iran to end their complicity in the siege of Yarmouk, and how the Palestinians have too much pride and dignity to continue suffering and being subjugated in the ways they have been. She calls what has happened to the Palestinians in Syria a massacre, and that the Palestinians will continue to keep their heads high, to demand the refugee right of return and that Jerusalem belongs to the Palestinians. She argues that enough is enough and that if international aid workers or the PLO gave an ounce of care to the Palestinian refugees that they would have found a way to bring in aid into the besieged areas but that the Palestinian refugees are persistently and intentionally neglected and abused in this way. Huthaifa Almaqdsi, المخرجيم ثاير ام اليرموك مخيم داخل المحاصرات صوت, YouTube Video, 4:24, January 14, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWb8EA0poPc&>.

⁶¹⁰ Raed (Founder of the Social Communication Center (SCC)-Ajial in Lebanon) in discussion with the author, March 2016.

⁶¹¹ Martin Armstrong, "Palestinians Protest Against UNRWA Cuts in Lebanon," *AlJazeera*, February 26, 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/02/palestinians-protest-unrwa-cuts-lebanon-160223151011960.html>.

⁶¹² The Black Panther Party (BPP) breakfast program illustrates a good example of how service to the people played an instrumental role in the base building, political programming and social transformation changes achieved by radical liberation movement. Nik Heynen argues that the BPP breakfast program played a critical role in social reproduction of inner-cities. See for example: Nik Heynen, "Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party's Radical Antihunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 99, no. 2 (2009): 406-422, accessed July 2, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045600802683767>.

⁶¹³ Ali (active youth with the Jafra Foundation) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

⁶¹⁴ Ramez (active youth with the Jafra Foundation) in discussion with the author, September 2017.

⁶¹⁵ Ali (active youth with the Jafra Foundation) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ This is a major source of argument for many Palestinian youth. Many youth I have engaged do not buy the excuse that making unethical decisions, alliances, and compromises with systemic forces of oppression is in the service of peoples' wellness and freedom. Rather, they would argue that in the process of using these tactics while simultaneously utilizing a language like Palestinian freedom, there is an obfuscation of revolutionary principles for the younger generation and a facilitation of systems in which corruption, nepotism, personal profit, etc. goes unchecked. Some of the youth I have engaged adamantly oppose such tactics, even if they facilitate pragmatic strategies. Others believe they don't have the right to judge if they are not personally involved. Others strongly believe that pragmatic tactics which can result in these kinds of compromises are necessary in order to remain working on the ground in difficult contexts.

⁶¹⁸ Natasha and Noor (International foundation program officer and refugee relief NGO director) in discussion with the author, January 2016.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985): 567-593, accessed July 2, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860957>.

⁶²¹ Tamer (former PYM International General Coordinator from France) in discussion with the author, April 2018.

⁶²² Merahm (former PYM International Central Council member from Italy) in discussion with the author, July 2017.

⁶²³ Jamil (former PYM member from Jordan) in discussion with the author, December 2015.

⁶²⁴ Khaled Barakat, "Abu Ali Mustafa: The Lessons of the Revolutionary Worker," *Al-Adab* September 17, 2017, <http://abualimustafa.org/2017/09/on-the-anniversary-of-the-assassination-of-abu-ali-mustafa-the-lessons-of-the-revolutionary-worker/>.

⁶²⁵ Saeed (Palestinian professor of Sociology) in discussion with the author, July 2010.

⁶²⁶ Dana (group discussion, Palestinian Youth Movement, Trélissac, France, 2011).

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ For more information on the goals and framework which guided the PYM refugee support program in Greece including the SWANACconnect program see the project framework as it was uploaded onto the PYM-USA Website in August of 2016.

"SWANACconnect Dignity, Survival & Community for Refugees: Volunteer Service Project in Greece," *Palestinian Youth Movement*, accessed July 1, 2018, <http://www.pymusa.com/greece-project/>.

⁶²⁹ Mouin (Palestinian youth refugee relief aid worker from Lebanon currently residing in Athens, Greece) in discussion with the author, December 2017.

⁶³⁰ Rami (former PYM International Central Council Member from Algeria) in discussion with the author, July 2010.

⁶³¹ Yousur Al-Hlou, Neil Collier and Iyad Abuheweila, *The Palestinian Medic Killed by Israeli Soldiers*, Video, 2:00, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/10000005932394/palestinian-medic-killed-at-gaza-protest.html>.