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**Reframing Israel-Palestine:
Critical Israeli Responses to the Palestinian Call for Just Peace**

Teodora Todorova, BA (Hons), MA

**Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract:

This thesis examines how Israeli critical activist engagement with the Palestinian call for just peace reframes Israel-Palestine. The thesis makes a political-theoretical intervention by arguing that Israeli civil society engagement with the principles underlying just peace requires, if it is to be successful, the utilisation of non-statist conceptualisations of peace politics. The thesis draws upon feminist critical theory and postcolonial critique to theorise peace politics as a practice of solidarity. From this perspective the conflict is analysed through the prism of Nancy Fraser's 'all affected' principle which asserts that all those whose lives and wellbeing are affected by an institution of power, whether that be a state or a transnational corporation, are subjects of justice in relation to that institution, whether they hold the same citizenship as its representatives or not. Thus, by virtue of sharing the same, albeit politically differentiated, geo-political space Israelis and Palestinians residing in Israel within its 1948 borders, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the refugees outside Israel-Palestine, are subjects of justice and potential solidarity. As such, the Palestinians have the right to demand justice not only from the state of Israel but also from its citizens. The activist work, narratives and responses of three critical Israeli case study groups are examined in relation to the call for just peace: Anarchists Against the Wall (AATW), the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), and Zochrot (Remembering). The activist narratives and practices examined testify to the way in which critical Israeli engagement with nonviolent ethical responsibility towards the Palestinian people can result in unprecedented narrative convergence, practical solidarity, and the possibility for non-domination and cohabitation. These critical activist practices reveal just peace as an emergent and ongoing project to reframe and rearticulate the contemporary relations of oppression and domination in Israel-Palestine.

Key words: Israel-Palestine, just peace, critical activism, feminist critical theory, framing

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Introduction

This thesis examines how Israeli engagement with the Palestinian call for just peace is articulated through activist practice, and how these Israeli critical activist practices reframe Israel-Palestine in the process. In particular, the thesis considers the key individual, institutional and collective narratives which motivate and/or deter a critical engagement with just peace. The thesis makes a critical intervention in the field by arguing that Israeli civil society engagement with the principles underlying just peace requires, if it is to be successful, the utilisation of non-statist logics or conceptualisations of peace politics in Israel-Palestine. The thesis further theorises the potential for an emergent peace politics based on a notion of justice situated beyond state-centric approaches to conflict resolution.

Feminist critical theory and postcolonial critique are drawn upon to produce a new theoretical framework which enables the theorisation of peace politics as a practice of solidarity. Postcolonial theory, and in particular, the work of Edward Said, with its notions of overlapping centres and peripheries, intertwined histories, and contrapuntal narratives which give rise to new hybrid forms of being and doing, challenging logics of separation and irreconcilability, serve as a starting point from which to survey the conflicted and contested political and theoretical terrain of Israel-Palestine. At their core, postcolonial critique and feminist critical theory, the latter embodied in the work of Nancy Fraser (2005), Iris Marion Young (1990, 2002), and Judith Butler (2004, 2009, 2012), among others, share a commitment to context, history and positionality which require us to reconceptualise questions of justice, rights and peace in non-institutional, socially embedded ways. In such an instance the failure to observe that peace is a question of justice becomes an ethical choice between complicity with oppressive power or speaking truth to power.

This theoretical approach conceptualises just peace as a process that can only be brought about through the emergence of intercultural solidarity beyond the dominant logic of ethno-national separation. From this perspective the conflict is analysed through the prism of Nancy Fraser's (2005, 2008) 'all affected' principle and Iris Marion Young's (1990, 2002) work on the politics of difference, justice, and democratic inclusion. Nancy Fraser's 'all affected' principle asserts that all those whose lives and wellbeing are affected by an institution of power, whether that be a state or a transnational corporation, are subjects of justice vis-à-vis that institution, whether they hold the same citizenship as its representatives or not. As such, the Palestinians have the right to demand justice not only from the state of Israel but also from its citizens, as well as international institutions complicit in their oppression. Iris Marion Young similarly views solidarity as a relation of justice which arises from a shared structural condition. Thus, by virtue of sharing the same, albeit politically differentiated, geo-political space, Israelis and Palestinians residing in Israel within its 1948 borders, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the refugees outside Israel-Palestine, are subjects of justice and potential solidarity. Moreover, as Juliet Hooker (2009) writes, solidarity is not simply about sympathy or pity:

The struggle for justice of historically disadvantaged and excluded groups (including indigenous people, cultural minorities and the descendants of the enslaved) raises important questions for political theory about what it means to be the fellow citizen of persons perceived as radically "other" and about the kinds of political obligations that extend across difference (ibid: 23).

As such, solidarity is a question of recognition, and the willingness to take action on behalf of your fellow subjects of justice. Solidarity is not altruistic, in that it contains elements of self-interest: the self-interest to live in peace, with the absence of violence. Neither does solidarity depend on mutual identification. Rather, it is contingent on a

shared disadvantage that needs to be addressed collectively. However, acts and attempts of solidarity are often plagued by tacitly ignored and/or actively obscured intersections of unequal power and privilege. The problem with racialised solidarity, referring to differential sympathies with racialised others, remains at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Challenging racialised solidarity necessitates the transformation of ‘the ethical-historical perspective of dominant racial groups. One way to approach this rather daunting task is through changes in the public memory and self-understanding of the political community as a whole’ (Hooker, 2009: 42).

In the present the prevailing statist logic of separation based on the notion of partitioning the land into two pure nation-states, expressed as the concept of “Two States for Two Peoples”, remains the biggest obstacle to reframing the dominant understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From its very inception this logic of separation is a statist logic which can only perceive the rights of people in relation to their citizenship, even as it refuses to acknowledge that it is dealing with people who are not rights-bearing citizens. The logic of separation inherent in the two-state solution implies two equal people making concessions in the name of peace and harmony. Simultaneously it fails to take into account the vastly unequal playing field from which the two sides begin their engagement: one a powerful militarised state, with unspecified and constantly shifting yet internationally recognised sovereign borders, the other a stateless people under military occupation, or dispersed across the Arab region in refugee camps.

Despite the dominant rhetoric of irreconcilable ethnic difference which underpins the logic of world elites and their proposed ethno-national solution for Israel-Palestine, the two collectivities remain entwined in a world characterised by transnational mobility and re-settlement, reflected in growing Diasporas and multicultural states and nations. Therefore, aside from the more obvious critique of the nation-state as an exclusionary and

violence-inducing model of statehood, the two-state solution envisaged and articulated in ethno-national terms poses an obstacle to citizens' social, cultural and political rights.

Given the history of Israel-Palestine and that the two conflicting populations remain enmeshed through political and other designs, a re-partition which reinforces ethno-national statehood would, it is argued here, still fail to address the lack of equal rights for the Palestinian minority within the 1948 borders of Israel, or for that matter the often neglected non-Jewish and non-Palestinian minorities residing in this same space. Jewish Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories similarly pose an interesting dilemma for the notion of ethno-national statehood. However, it is quite clear that the settler colonial policies of successive Israeli governments since 1967 in relation to land annexation and population transfer are ethno-centric. This is demonstrated by the fact that land settled by Jews is considered Jewish and therefore belonging to Israel.

In order to understand how such an internally incoherent logic continues to dictate international policy, while giving justification to continued occupation and the denial of basic political and social rights to the Palestinian people in Israel, the refugee camps, as well as the Gaza Strip, and West Bank, requires a return to the narratives and histories which Edward Said highlights as underpinning any notion of a just peace. It requires the reconceptualisation of the conflict as a manifestation of ongoing living history, a history that does not begin in 1967, the point of departure for analysis underpinned by the logic of separation. Neither does it start in 1948 with the creation of the State of Israel and the displacement of the majority of the indigenous Palestinian population. Rather, this history takes us back to the late nineteenth century and the colonial designs of both the British Empire and Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine. In essence, it requires a confrontation with a violent colonial heritage that continues to blight the inhabitants of Israel-Palestine as well as those who wish to return to the land.

For these reasons the concept of just peace draws on Edward Said's (2006) definition, which situates peace politics as a process of acknowledging and engaging with the Other's narrative and the multiple differing experiences in a shared conflict history. Just peace requires confronting the past in order to look to the future. It requires that if any concessions are to be made then they must be assessed in value and magnitude. It is a call to equality or at least to the acknowledgement that there is a lack of equality in the demand for peace. As such, an engagement with just peace requires the recognition of the coexistence and significance of at least two competing narratives in relation to the territory which encompasses the land of Historic Palestine (pre-1947), the state of Israel (post-1948), and the Occupied Territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank (post-1967). This gives rise to the conceptualisation of the geopolitical and narrative space of Israel-Palestine.

A contrapuntal view of these competing narratives does not call for equal treatment but rather for examining the ways in which the narratives of the coloniser and colonised¹ are implicated and intertwined in contemporary realities. Moreover, it is an understanding of narrative not as a story or a way of seeing and describing the world, but as unevenly enjoyed power to shape and construct the world. Judith Butler's (1999) concept of intelligibility is a useful way to articulate this point. According to Butler, the normative frameworks produced by power result in the privileging of certain subjects as "legitimate", hence more valuable, trustworthy, and respectable, rendering others unintelligible, and hence illegitimate. This notion can be applied contemporarily and historically to a number of normative hierarchies related to gendered and racialised processes of subjectification and subjugation.

¹ I draw on the work of Gregory (2004), Veracini (2010), and Svirsky (2012) to theorise Israel-Palestine as an ongoing situation of settler-colonialism, and hence relations between Palestinians and Israelis as relations between the colonised and colonisers respectively.

As Butler (2004, 2009) elaborates in her latter work, with particular relevance to Israel-Palestine, the state continues to be one of the key sites of violent hierarchical subjectification. Building on Butler's work, we might say that theorising peace from a state-centric logic of separation fails to account for and/or acknowledge state power's complicity in violence against differentiated subjects. This is of particular relevance to the Israeli-Palestinian case in which the power balance is largely skewed in favour of the Israeli state. Therefore, the Israeli state can insist that justice be set aside in order for peace to be achieved with little cost to its sovereign power.² However, in a transnationally interconnected world such a conceptualisation of state sovereignty which privileges institutional power over justice, dignity, and protection for affected subjects and habitats needs to be refused.

The insistence on a non-statist analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its desired resolution does not necessarily arise from anti-state politics or for that matter from a naive desire to wish the state away. In fact, an emphasis on a non-statist framework takes state power as its central unit of analysis; simultaneously insisting on decentering the privilege enjoyed by the state to frame political life. The state here is understood as an institutional 'fiction' produced through the iteration and reiteration of a set of bureaucratic and repressive practices and mechanisms; i.e. the police, military, border control, legislative and judiciary bodies, as well as educational and media institutions. In other words, the fiction that is state sovereignty is little more than a set of bureaucratic actions carried out by privileged subjects tasked with the reproduction of the state and its effects.

² Israel's tendency to insist on the Palestinian refugees' right of return to be removed from negotiations as a precondition to negotiate is one such example. As is the insistence that Israel must be recognised as a "Jewish" state, thus precluding any discussion on the rights of non-Jewish citizens. Similarly, continuing to build settlements in the Occupied Territories while refusing to honour the 1967 border as the future sovereign border of a Palestinian state is another example of Israel's display of intransigent sovereignty.

Since the state is understood as the product of its citizens' actions it does not necessarily have to be an ethno-centric and exclusionary body. The modern state, divorced from ethno-centrism and other exclusionary ideologies, can equally serve as an administrative unit tasked with ensuring the well-being of the environment and population under its jurisdiction. Therefore, the thesis argues that when state sovereignty depends on destruction, exclusion, and violence for its articulation, it is the duty of citizens/subjects to refuse to reiterate this state of affairs, and to insist on a radical democratic reframing of the state and related institutions. This framing demands that the state takes responsibility and accounts for the needs of all those who are affected by its actions, whether they reside within its geopolitical borders or not. Such a framing is equally constructive for understanding geopolitical conflict, as it is for addressing larger planetary problems such as environmental exploitation and degradation.

Such processes of framing and their transformative potential, however, require the utilisation of narratives which write-in and make intelligible those who have been written-out and made unintelligible by dominant state-centred frames. The concept of framing in this thesis draws on the normative political theories of Judith Butler and Nancy Fraser, and to a lesser extent on Marion Young's work on justice and inclusion. The thesis avoids 'false antithesis' (Fraser, 1997) by integrating the insights of Critical Theory and poststructuralist critique by focusing on the points of convergence, rather than divergence, embodied in the above theorists' normative conceptualisations. Largely, in response to Fraser's work, Butler (2009) conceives of 'framing' as the prerogative of the war-making state which divides subjects into grievable and ungrivable, or those whose life is to be preserved and those who are to be destroyed in the name of this preservation. In her most recent work on Israel-Palestine (2012) she argues that the only way to break with such frames is to refuse to rearticulate dominant formulations, for example by refusing to take

part in militarist endeavours. Thus, Butler's understanding of framing emphasises an ethical subjectivity which refuses to reproduce violence and exclusion.

On the other hand, Fraser's (2005) emphasis on framing is concerned with the necessary endeavour to expand the 'who' and 'how' can justice be claimed in a transnational world. Or in other words, how can the concept of justice be reframed beyond state-centric legal boundaries so that it better serves/protects those who are and have been affected by unaccountable multinational corporations which often circumvent (inter)national law. In this sense, Fraser's emphasis is on the reframing of institutions concerned with justice in order to make them better equipped to deal with global problems which transcend national boundaries, such as labour and environmental exploitation by multinational corporations. However, her conceptualisation of justice is not strictly legalistic, as she also considers questions of representation and resource redistribution, and their impact on processes of reframing, the former being closely linked to Butler's concept of intelligibility.

Setting aside the slightly different emphasis on justice and responsibility embodied in Butler and Fraser's conceptualisation of framing, this thesis utilises a reconciliation of their respective formulations to argue that the necessary articulation of a radical democratic order, which is better able to address everyone who is affected by institutional power, can only come about through the actions of citizens/subjects who refuse to articulate dominant war-making, exploitative and exclusionary frames. And moreover, that the task of reframing requires the production and reproduction of new narratives of justice and cohabitation. It is here that Iris Marion Young's work on inclusion and justice reminds us that contemporary political life is enabled and justified by exclusionary narratives which can only be countered and/or reframed by acknowledging and incorporating excluded narratives. She is particularly interested in how the collective and

historical experiences of dispossession and discrimination suffered by African-Americans and the indigenous continue to structure contemporary political life in the United States.

The role of narrative or narrating in this thesis seeks to address precisely this quandary in relation to Israel-Palestine: how to acknowledge the past and its role in the present without it becoming a defining characteristic of the possible future. However, narrative is not utilised here in the same manner as in some versions of Memory and Trauma Studies where the function of narrative is often meant to integrate painful individual experiences in order to bring about the closure of social conflict and result in the production of a cohesive and homogenous cultural, often ethno-national, unit. On the contrary, narrating is here understood as a critical future-oriented ethical-political practice which acknowledges the past, taking stock of its legacies and effects in the present, in order to reconstruct an inclusive and equitable future for all concerned. In this sense, the task of narrative is to act as a critical tool which unsettles dominant exclusionary frames by piecing together different and sometimes contradictory accounts, and showing the limits and exclusions of current perspectives. The structure and selection of the case studies examined in this thesis represents one such work of narrative reframing.

Narrating Israel-Palestine

Narrating history and memory is undoubtedly at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How the history of the conflict is told, who has the right to tell this history, whose memories enter the history books and whose are dismissed as merely myth, impacts not only on how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is narrated but also on how it is understood and how it is to be dealt with culturally and politically. Nurit Peled-Elhanan's (2012) monograph *Palestine in Israeli School Books* highlights the continuing prevalence of representations of Palestinian Arabs in Israeli school books as 'the other' and 'the enemy', with Palestinian versions of history being excluded, delegitimized and silenced.

The war over narrative plays an inextricable role in the self-understanding of the two collectivities which reside in and lay claim to the land of Israel-Palestine.

For this reason, Critical Historiography in Israel-Palestine has played an important role since the 1990s in challenging the taken for granted narratives of the Israeli state and people. A critique of Israel's narratives of statehood and the conflict continues to be necessary not because Palestinian narratives are flawless, but because Israel has until very recently, and one can argue, continues to be the stronger party which holds the most legitimacy over how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to be framed and discussed internally as well as internationally.

Therefore, in order to analyse contemporary civil society attempts to work towards just peace in Israel-Palestine, the historical framework utilised by this thesis draws on the meticulous, thorough and ethically committed work of Israeli Critical Historiography, in particular the work of Ilan Pappé and Gabriel Piterberg. These two outstanding critical Israeli historians have not only documented the conflict but have also thoroughly contested and undermined the longstanding and previously unchallenged Zionist myth of Israel as a state established in 'a land without a people for a people without a land'. Piterberg has also demonstrated the way in which the Zionist narrative of redemption in/through Israel has served to denigrate, invisibilise, and orientalise not only the Palestinian Arabs but also the Arab or Mizrahi Jews.

During discussions on the subject of this thesis, the author has often been accused of reinforcing the underlying dichotomy in the conflict, namely Israeli Jews versus Palestinian Arabs; and for ignoring or sidelining the complexity of the inter-ethnic divisions and hierarchies within, specifically, the Jewish Israeli collective. However, these well-meaning critiques fail to grasp the centrality of ethnocentric politics in Israel-Palestine. As Oren Yiftachel writes: 'The appropriate political-geographical framework

for the analysis of Israel/Palestine since 1967 is thus: one ethnocracy, two ethno-nations, and several Jewish and Palestinian ethno-classes' (2010: 279). He defines an 'ethnocracy' as a state which is neither democratic nor authoritarian:

yet facilitates non-democratic seizure of the country and polity by one ethnic group... Ethnocracies despite exhibiting several democratic features, lack a democratic structure. As such they tend to breach key democratic tenets, such as equal citizenship, the existence of a territorial political community (demos), universal suffrage, and protection against the tyranny of the majority (ibid: 270).

The existence of a hierarchy of ethno-classes both within the Jewish and Palestinian ethno-nations is indeed undeniable, and as Piterberg notes, the tragic fate of Palestinian Arab and Mizrahi Arab identity in the early years of the formation of the Israeli state is rather similar. However, aside from a shared history of symbolic Orientalism the similarity in experience vis-à-vis the Israeli state between the Mizrahi Jews and Palestinians ends there. Despite continuing ethno-class based discrimination against the Mizrahi, as a collective they are considered a full part of the Jewish Israeli nation, and are therefore privileged above Palestinian Arabs, including the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Moreover, as a number of scholars have noted (Grinberg, 2004; Pappé, 2004) the success of rightwing coalition governments in Israel since the early 2000s can, to a large extent, be attributed to the votes of the Mizrahi community.

On the other hand, even if one excludes the disenfranchised population in the 1967 Occupied Territories from consideration, Palestinian Israelis continue to be excluded from the dominant Jewish ethno-nation, as will be shown in the thesis, and are treated as second class citizens in relation to the democratic process and allocation of land and resources. The institutionalised prevalence of ethno-national discrimination has more

recently been likened to apartheid in South Africa, a more detailed discussion of which is featured in chapter two. Indeed, Israeli constitutional documents make a clear distinction in relation to citizens' entitlement to rights on the basis of nationality (*le'um*) which is considered distinct from citizenship (*ezrahut*). It is for this reason, for example, that the Law of Return (1950) makes it possible for every person defined as Jewish, anywhere in the world, to make aliyah, literally meaning 'ascent', to Israel and be granted automatic citizenship upon arrival, while a Palestinian who left their home under conditions of war in 1948 continues to be denied the right to return.

As both Edward Said and Oren Yiftachel have highlighted at different times, the role of diasporic communities in the formation and governance of Israel-Palestine is unprecedented in historical terms. In fact, Yiftachel (2010) goes as far as to call for the immediate cessation of the Law of Return and for a limitation to be imposed on the influence, financial or political, that diasporic groups have on Israel's policy and political actions. Said (2006), at the very least, calls for a reappraisal of the role of Diaspora in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For him this reappraisal relates to the Palestinian right of return and the possibility for restitution of the civil and political rights which have been denied to the Palestinian people since 1948.

Aside from the entrenched and systematic practice of ethno-national segregation in Israel-Palestine, the ethno-class system further serves to stratify the population, foreclosing the possibility for certain kinds of solidarity based on class in the traditional Marxist sense. For example, many observers have commented on the failure of the Mizrahi Jews to forge alliances with Palestinian Arabs on the basis that they share a common Arab heritage and are overrepresented in the poor working class. While the emergence of such an alliance would be indispensable to justice and peace in Israel-Palestine, these observations are somewhat naive, for they fail to acknowledge the

historical tendency for sections of the working class, particularly, though not exclusively in Europe, to be co-opted in nationalist, colonialist, fascist, and anti-immigration movements. In Israel, similarly, the Mizrahim's lower ethno-class status means that they have at times borne the brunt of the conflict on the Israeli side, making them more not less antagonistic towards the Palestinian Other.

In the aftermath of the Nakba, the expulsion of the majority of Palestinians in 1948, most Jewish immigrants from the Arab world who arrived in Israel from the 1950s onwards were settled in the poor peripheries of the Israeli border in houses which formerly belonged to Palestinians (Pappé, 2004). Many Mizrahi communities continue to live in these impoverished border towns which have been at times, throughout Israel's history, subject to rocket attacks from Lebanon and Gaza. Likewise, with army service being the defining characteristic and pinnacle of inclusion and belonging to the Jewish Israeli collective, the Mizrahi community is over-represented among the 10% of Israelis who serve in the Occupied Territories and who undertake the physical task of subjecting a largely civilian Palestinian population to military rule. Moreover, the Israeli Left has traditionally been characterised by middle class Ashkenazi activism. The Ashkenazim continue to be over-represented in Israeli peace and conscientious objector movements, the latter being quite popular in the 1980s, though both are now in marked decline (Grinberg, 2004).

Having problematised the role of class and its relationship to race and/or ethnicity in Israel-Palestine, one might ask: what is the relevance of undertaking this study from a perspective largely informed by Critical Theory? In the recent past, Critical Theory as an interdisciplinary subject has moved away from the centrality of class as its mode of analysis to adopt and refashion a multiplicity of approaches, including poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial theories, represented in the centrality of the work of,

among others, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and more recently Judith Butler. The theoretical framework of this thesis largely draws on the work of Iris Marion Young and Judith Butler.

This theoretical basis formed the springboard for over three years of my own critically engaged participatory research in Israel-Palestine in order to theorise the potential for the emergence of intercultural solidarity between critical Israeli activists and the Palestinian struggle for justice, freedom and equality as embodied in the notion of just peace. As Hunter et al (2013) write: ‘Much of the work in the CT [Critical Theory] tradition is preoccupied with uncovering the ways in which social reality is variously negotiated and resisted ‘from below’ or at ‘the grassroots level’ within established networks of power and authority. AR [Action Research] helps to build a bridge, to fill the gap, between CT and practice’ (ibid: 33).

Furthermore, as Oliver Richmond (2011) argues International Relations approaches to analysing, theorising and otherwise studying processes of conflict resolution, peacemaking and/or social transformation tend to privilege and emphasise the role and voice of state-centric policy making institutions. Therefore, studying critical activism from a Critical Theory informed non-statist perspective can better account for the often neglected, emergent and obscured ‘postcolonial civil society’ which is characterised by an ongoing ‘conversation about the impact of hegemony, colonial praxis, the global economy and the reconstruction of rights, needs and identities’ (ibid: 432).

Nevertheless, these civil society networks need to be approached with caution, for while characterised by a multiplicity of transnational actors, they are not even, and are even less equal. Emphasis on the role and prominence of new media technologies in the facilitation of this postcolonial civil society conversation can obscure not only inequality in terms of access but also the continued prevalence of the privileging of white, educated

voices and perspectives from the Global North; voices which are often empowered by the appropriation of the subjugated knowledges and experiences of oppressed and colonised peoples. Indeed, this very accusation can be levelled at the choice of case studies in this thesis.

Civil Society in Israel-Palestine

Why Israeli civil society? In particular, why are such small, and arguably, marginal Jewish Israeli groups given such prominence in the struggle for justice, freedom and equality in this thesis? No attempt is made in what follows to claim equivalence between the efforts of Israeli and Palestinian civil society in the struggle for just peace. On the contrary, the thesis departs from the premise that there has been very little evidence for any meaningful Israeli civil society engagement with the Palestinian call for justice in the aftermath of the failure of the Oslo Accords and the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada. Since 2000 and the spread of rightwing politics, the Left in Israel is barely in existence.

The concept of the Israeli Left has itself changed dramatically over time. During the pre-state settlement project and later in the early state years, the left was of a nationalistic persuasion, primarily interested in consolidating Jewish workers' interests in spite of and against Palestinian Arab workers in Palestine (Pappé, 2004; Shafir, 2005). In the 1990s, the Israeli Left reinvented itself by incorporating more culturalist concerns, in line with other leftist movements in Europe and North America at the time. More recently, the New Left has been associated with the desire to return to the pre-1967 borders and the notion of a two-state solution. In a 2001 report written in the midst of the Second Intifada, and the imminent election of Ariel Sharon to the post of Israel's Prime Minister, Lindsey Hilsum wrote:

In December [2000], after Yasser Arafat raised again the question of Palestinian refugees forced into exile when Israel was founded in 1948,

a group of left-wing writers and artists, including novelists Amos Oz and Meir Shalev, signed a petition declaring their opposition to the right of return (Hilsum, 2001: 23).

The report goes on to explain how many members of the Peace Now movement, the largest and oldest peace movement in Israel, are increasingly adopting ultra-rightwing rhetoric of a population transfer of the Arab citizens of Israel, rightly leading the report to conclude that this turn to the right signalled ‘the death of the Israeli left’. A decade later it is arguably no longer possible to speak of a large leftwing peace movement in Israel. The widely reported 90% popular support for the military attack on Gaza in December 2008 – January 2009 gives even more credence to such an assertion (Bronner, 2009). Similarly, the demands of the self-proclaimed social justice movement, J14, which made an appearance in the summer months of 2011, mimicking the Occupy Movement in North America and Europe, harked back to the nationalist ethos of Israel’s traditional Left. The Occupation was off the agenda, and demands for cheaper housing in Israel were met with open arms by the leadership of the Settler Movement, who proposed that the answer to social justice in Israel lay in more Jewish housing being built on Occupied Palestinian land in the 1967 territories.

What remains of the Israeli Left today can hardly be called either a cultural or economic Left. Israeli society is deeply stratified both along ethno-classist lines, and even more so with respect to the Palestinians who are seen as radically other. The Left-associated peace movement was never anti-racist as such; after all, the notion of two ethno-states for two peoples relies on a racialist logic. However, the Left seems to have become silent and taken a backseat even on the subject of a two-state solution, with the rightwing demand for a Greater Israel in Israel-Palestine becoming an increasing reality

on the ground in the Occupied Territories, accompanied by continuous rhetoric about transferring the Palestinian Arabs out of Israel.

Further to this, Lahav (2010) argues that the dominant institutionalised patriarchal regime in Israel is the product of the consolidation of exclusive ethno-nationalism and macho militarism. In this context, social primacy is given to ‘the Jewish community’, with each individual’s contribution to and relationship with the community placing them in a stratified hierarchy of citizenship, which formally excludes the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, and further excludes and marginalises Palestinian citizens of the Israeli State (ibid: 244). Lemish (2005) makes the case that women’s anti-war movements are similarly marginalised and excluded from the hegemonic militarised representations of the conflict, because they challenge the dominant social order by connecting patriarchy and political violence and presenting a nonviolent alternative (ibid: 275).

For these and other reasons, it is therefore not surprising that women’s organisations are at the forefront of the critical Israeli Left and, moreover, that critical organisations in general are adopting feminist modes of thinking and activism. Further, the popular turn to the right does not necessarily imply a wholesale annihilation of the Israeli Left. In fact, it has contributed to an increasing number of Israeli individuals and groups beginning to question some of the dominant Zionist representations of the conflict and to be more willing to address the issues that are of vital importance for the Palestinian side, including but not limited to the Palestinian refugees’ right of return.

In order to differentiate between traditional peace and Left Israeli groups which were criticised earlier, the case studies featured in this thesis are characterised by the concept ‘critical’. The ‘critical Left’ in Israel is defined as those individuals and organisations who (a) acknowledge that the Israeli side is the dominant and stronger side in the conflict, leading to (b) a rejection of uncritical militarist and pro-state (in this case

pro-Israel) approaches; and (c) a declaration that any discussion about and potential solutions to the conflict can only progress by addressing and incorporating the story of the Other into one's own narrative. Critical Israeli groups are further differentiated from traditional Left peace groups, who prefer negotiation-style interfaith dialogue groups, by their emphasis on acknowledging Palestinian narratives, focusing on practical solidarity in the joint struggle, and envisaging a radically new and different way of thinking about intercultural cohabitation in Israel-Palestine. Under the banner of critical Left Israeli organisations, I would include the Coalition of Women for Peace³, an umbrella organisation of anti-militarist, feminist women's groups; as well as, amongst others, (ICAHN), Zochrot (Remembering), and Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW), all of which are examined in this thesis.

On the whole, the critical analysis underpinning this thesis begins with a reconceptualisation of the conflict, accompanied by a critical examination of non-state, and even anti-state, voices in relation to doing peace politics, based on emergent forms of solidarity post-2000 among Israelis and Palestinians. This critique departs from state-centred International Relations approaches to studying transnational activism by arguing that critical theories which focus on justice and its implications for conflict resolution can better serve to articulate a more inclusive notion of peace which accounts for the voices of the marginalised, excluded, and oppressed.

The need to reconceptualise an alternative strategy for peace politics in Israel-Palestine stems precisely from the continued privileging of statist logics of separation against the possible non-state and/or alternative solutions emerging from contemporary civil society calls for justice, freedom and equality within Israel-Palestine. The

³ The Coalition of Women for Peace has been particularly active in gathering evidence and publicising the activities of business profiting from the Occupation in order to help BDS cases. The result of their work is the database WhoProfits.org.

importance of civil society contributions to the implementation of peace has been stressed in other instances, and this of course presupposes well-developed civil societies, such as in South Africa and Northern Ireland: 'In divided communities civil society plays a crucial role in mediating the position of political elites. It provides space for creative thinking... It provides an agenda which goes beyond the traditional political divisions, and so enables those traditions to be reconceived' (Bell in Little, 2006: 171).

However, not all civil society actors prioritise a change in the status quo. Duffield's (2001) extensive research on the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) sector demonstrates an established link between the role of financial aid and global governance, with many NGOs opting to co-govern afflicted populations and even actively bolstering governmental regimes rather than working to challenge discrimination, inequality and oppression. This is one of the reasons why in 2002 the Palestinian NGO network (PNGO) called for a boycott of USAID by Palestinian civil society organisations. The combination of a call for Freedom, Justice and Equality and for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) of Israel and all institutions complicit in the Occupation, by Palestinian civil society in 2005, a call supported by critical Israelis from 'Boycott From Within', and an assortment of transnational groups across the world, including trade unions, and students' unions, testifies to the inseparability of narrative from action.

The rights-based narrative of BDS encompasses the inhabitants of Israel-Palestine as well as those who bear some relation of justice to the land, such as the Palestinian refugees who are denied the right to return by Israel. The action aspect of BDS reasserts the significance of civil society and public mobilization for justice, reflecting the disillusionment and disaffection with state-sanctioned approaches to peace politics. As a whole the demands of BDS, perhaps even more so than the tactics, are characterised by an active pursuit of nonviolent strategies for conflict resolution. This type of peace politics

demands a confrontation with the inherent power disparity in the conflict, as well as working towards alternatives which challenge the status quo and seek to achieve a more equitable outcome for all concerned.

For this reason, a further criterion for selecting the chosen critical Israeli groups examined in this thesis is the organisations' relationship to the three principles established by the call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). The principles relate to (i) end to Occupation/Colonisation, (ii) Equal Rights for Palestinians in Israel, and (iii) The Refugees' Right of Return. Whether one views BDS as a movement, or as a campaign or tactic within the wider movement to end the Israeli occupation and colonisation, the key significance of the call for BDS lies in the principles of justice it establishes. Moreover, given that these principles are supported by the broadest section of Palestinian civil society, including refugees and other Diaspora Palestinians, they constitute the most concrete model of a call for just peace as conceptualised by the Palestinian people (BDS Call, 2005).

The identified criteria above resulted in a narrow pool from which the chosen Israeli groups were selected. There are many joint Israeli-Palestinian intercultural or interfaith dialogue groups in existence which Palestinians in particular tend to dismiss as "talk-shops". However, there are also numerous respected joint or Israeli groups such as, to name a few, B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, Combatants for Peace, Machsom Watch, New Profile, The Parents' Circle, and Who Profits. However, very few of these engage simultaneously, at least in principle, with the tenets of the Palestinian right of return, Palestinian-Israeli rights, and the Occupation. In many ways critical Israeli activist groups demonstrate the emergence of unprecedented solidarity between Israeli Jews and Palestinians struggling against the Occupation, not in the name of final partition between the two peoples, but in the name of justice, freedom and equality. The emergence of this

new found solidarity, which is in no way straightforward and unproblematic, stems from a growing awareness that the widely held two-state solution based on the 1967 pre-Occupation borders is no longer a viable solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is important to note that this thesis does not take a particular stance on any state solution to the conflict. Nevertheless, the case study chapters feature discussions of the growing debate between critical Palestinian and Israeli thinkers and groups on the subject of a single and/or binational state in Israel-Palestine, which in turn has resulted in heated debates concerning the right to collective self-determination. These debates are acknowledged and foregrounded because they represent a newly emergent way to think about Israel-Palestine beyond the current impasse. Neither is this thesis's emphasis on BDS as a framework for responding to just peace an expectation that leftwing Israelis should submit wholesale to the demands made by the BDS campaign in order to be considered oppositional to the Israeli establishment.

Rather, the thesis argues that Israeli engagement with the above principles, whether from the Left or Right, is necessary in order to reach a more mutually reciprocal agreement than is currently permissible. As will be demonstrated in the chapters which follow, the Israeli or Zionist Right has been engaging with all of these issues for many more decades than the Israeli Left, albeit this engagement has been characterised by denial, omission, and repression. On the other hand, the Israeli Left has largely remained on the sidelines of the mainstream Zionist consensus, unwilling to venture beyond a consideration of the 1967 Occupation and into the 'unknown' territory of 1948 and the Nakba.

Indeed, the past decade's move, within a small but growing sector of Israeli society, towards dealing with the status of Arab Israelis and the question of the Palestinian refugees has been cautious and measured. Engaging with questions of

occupation, equal citizenship and the right of return has exposed old, and created new, rifts and divisions within Israeli society. Moreover, these questions go to the very heart of what it means to be an Israeli in the 21st century. The Colonial Occupation of the Palestinian Territories, the presence of a large non-Jewish population which is a remnant of the indigenous people that lived in Israel-Palestine prior to 1948, coupled with the millions of Palestinian refugees around Israel's borders, goes to the core of the self-defined Jewish state: a Jewish state which views itself as administering 'disputed territories', while aiming to maintain a demographic Jewish majority within its 1948 borders, and rejects outright the Palestinian right of return. Whether explicitly articulated, or dwelling between the lines, these issues are central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Case Studies

Zochrot (Remembering) is an Israeli organization based in Tel Aviv which was set up in 2002 and gained full NGO status in 2005 in order to raise awareness among the Jewish Israeli public about the Nakba of 1948 and its legacy within Israeli society. Most of the NGO's staff, except for the Director, work part-time and the organisation relies heavily on voluntary and freelance contributions from activists and researchers. The organisation regularly participates in activities co-organised with other critical Israeli NGOs. For example, in the past it has run educational workshops with New Profile. Zochrot's activities range from public commemoration of the Nakba, collecting and documenting Nakba survivor testimonies, and more recently testimonies by former Jewish fighters, to planning the return of the Palestinian refugees.

ICAHD is a non-violent direct-action organisation comprised of Israeli peace and human rights activists who work alongside Palestinian community representatives in the Occupied Territories. The bulk of ICAHD's work is based in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, and although the organisation's name suggests that its main activities are concerned

with opposing house demolitions in the Occupied Territories, the organisation is also involved in monitoring Israeli settlement activity. Since 2010 ICAHD has expanded its portfolio to include the demolitions of Palestinian homes within Israel's 1948 borders. ICAHD's associated groups in Finland, the UK, and USA are further involved in campaigning and lobbying local politicians to encourage their respective governments to apply international pressure on Israel to end the Occupation.

AATW are a group of anti-authoritarian and anarchist direct action activists who came together at the start of the construction of the West Bank Separation Wall, or what they term the 'Apartheid Wall', in 2003. AATW activists attend the weekly protests against the Wall coordinated by local Palestinian Popular Organising Committees, and attended by Palestinian, international solidarity and Israeli activists. Largely comprised of young Israelis, AATW activists are also active in disseminating activist media and in providing on-the-ground solidarity and support. Their non-hierarchical participatory activism contributes to the workings of a transnational community of solidarity and resistance against occupation and colonisation in Israel-Palestine. In many respects, out of all three groups they are most explicitly aligned with the aims and tactics of the transnational movement for just peace which is discussed in greater detail in chapter one.

The aims and objectives of the above groups are broadly similar and yet they are very different from one another in terms of approach. Although they often share activist power, as is the case with most critical Israeli groups, they were not chosen to be compared or contrasted with one another in order to create a hierarchy of activism. Rather, each group has been included in a broadly theoretical chapter as a practical illustration of critical Israeli engagement with a pertinent question within the broader struggle for just peace. Moreover, each case study was selected on the basis of being recommended by critical Palestinian activists as an example of Israeli groups which are already doing critical and

valuable work in Israel-Palestine. It is almost a coincidence that the three case study groups happen to represent different types of activist and discursive interventions into the critical debates taking place in the past decade on the topic of just peace in Israel-Palestine

Zochrot's work is primarily concerned with narrative and bringing the two histories together, a task that has already been identified as the basis for any critical and just dialogue. AATW take an active solidarity stance in the Occupied Territories which is highly valued by Palestinians who have largely given up on the Israeli Left and are increasingly seeking to distance themselves from dialogue initiatives through calls for anti-normalization. ICAHD bridges the two approaches through practical rebuilding and anti-demolition activism in the West Bank, coupled with its founder's critical analysis which seeks to reframe the dominant discourse of the conflict in line with Palestinian narratives of just peace.

Another notable difference between the three groups is that ICAHD and Zochrot can be broadly defined as left-liberal, Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW), on the other hand, derive their politics from the left-libertarian tradition of thought. However, as one AATW activist put it: "We are more activists against The Wall, rather than anarchists in the strict sense of the word". This comment is best understood as an acknowledgement of the different counter and/or non-state positions from which AATW activists draw. AATW similarly differs from the other two case studies in that it is not an institutionalised NGO, but rather a loose organisation of autonomous activists. Zochrot (Remembering) and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), on the other hand, are both officially recognised NGOs with registered office premises in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem respectively.

Theorising the work of the above critical activist groups has involved a combination of an extensive literature review of activist and scholarly work engaged with just peace politics in Israel-Palestine, combined with a number of intermittent fieldwork trips to Israel-Palestine between 2009 and 2011, which were followed by informal interviews, conversations, and online communications with activists. Despite the use of mixed participatory methods, the primary focus of the thesis has been to analyse the narratives or ‘structures of knowledge and storied ways of knowing’ (Cortazzi, 2007: 384) which underpin the work done by these critical Israeli organisations. The narrative analysis utilised in the study of this groups draws on Judith Butler’s work on discursive framing, as well as on aspects of contemporary organisation studies theory. However, it deviates substantially from organisation studies in that it is not so much concerned with describing organisational structures and processes but with the narratives produced by these groups in relation to the notion of just peace.

Narrative, both in terms of history and memory but also in relation to contemporary processes of sense-making, plays an important part in understanding organising. Langley and Tsoukas (2010) see organisations as processes of interaction; ‘process thinking’ demands sensitivity to ‘context, interactivity, experience, and time; and it acknowledges non-linearity, emergence, and recursivity’ (ibid: 6-7). Drawing on Ricoeur’s hermeneutic approach, Gerardo Patriotta (2003) integrates the concepts of temporality and spatiality to argue that organisations can be viewed and/or read as texts, and the processes of organising as narration:

Like texts, organizations emerge through processes of distancing and dissociation (both temporal and spatial) whereby human action is objectified, historicized, written down in documentary artefacts or inscribed into stable structures of significations. Thanks to distancing

human deeds become “institutions” in the sense that their meaning no longer coincides with the logical intentions of the actors (2003: 154).

It is for this reason that this thesis focuses on the codification/signification which emerges in the production of organisational texts rather than in the individual actions and/or the personal narratives of activists. In many respects, organisation studies, with its history of studying corporate and government practices and structures, lends itself more clearly to examining the narratives of organised groups such as ICAHD and Zochrot. However, when viewing organising as a temporal and spatial process of sense-making which results in the production of textual artefacts, then this approach becomes equally applicable to the organisational practices and dynamics of less structured groups such as AATW.

There are of course other practical as well as theoretical considerations which played a part in the decision to focus on organisational archives as opposed to examining the organisations through the individual narratives of their activists. As Hintz and Milan (2010) argue in their paper ‘Social Science is Police Science: Researching Grass-Roots Activism’, activists often view researchers with suspicion and distrust. Often the type of probing questions we ask differs little from a police interrogation; and moreover, activists can also feel that their largely free and voluntary labour for the cause is being used to further the well-paid career of an academic whose work is likely to be of little use to the activists or their projects.

Moreover, in my case, being an outsider, based abroad, and not known from the start as an activist on Israel-Palestine, meant that access to individual activists was very difficult, long and protracted. When access was finally gained, interviewees were often guarded, relying on well-rehearsed institutional legitimating scripts, and repeatedly requesting that their narratives were not taken as ‘representative’ of the group or its activities. The latter made it near impossible to make general observations about

collective thought and/or direction. However, this in itself is not a particular problem for the present purposes as collective action is the sum of its disparate and independent parts, nor was the reluctance to narrate the main reason for focusing on organisational archives.

Rather, examining the fading, emerging, and enduring narratives of these groups, in relation to their activism but also to the concepts of Israel-Palestine and just peace, more clearly indicates collective shifts in the process of dialogical sense-making and the possibility for the emergence of solidarity with the Palestinian Other. While the analysis in the chapters that follow does not therefore rely primarily on interview data with activists, the informal interviews conducted nevertheless serve to shape, reflect upon, and guide the more theoretical reflections and analysis utilised in the thesis to examine the groups' textual narratives. As such, the thesis narrative is itself organised as a process of dialogical sense-making of the past, present and future in relation to the question of just peace in Israel-Palestine as framed in the narratives and work of these critical Israeli groups.

Moreover, this approach to studying critical activist groups foregrounds the acknowledgement that working with/on activist groups and networks is not simply about studying them and learning about them. It is about being taught and learning from them, and recognising that they are active producers of valuable and legitimate knowledge. The critical Israeli groups featured in the thesis testify to the inherent tendency of activists to theorise, with a small "t", and sometimes even with a capital "T", the context of their struggle, the means and tactics through which the struggle is to be articulated, and ultimately the final goal of the struggle, whether that be an end to a certain repressive state policy and/or a demand for wider social transformation.

These activists not only draw on pre-existing modes of critique, whether those be liberal human rights discourses, psycho-social theory, and/or anarcho-communist

critiques of state power and social domination, they also generate vast amounts of context-specific analysis, critique and description of issues and concepts which have local as well as transnational implications. Thus, a critical and committed engagement with the knowledges and narratives of those engaged in emancipatory struggles can contribute to a reappraisal of our critical intellectual heritage and simultaneously provide us with space to break down dichotomies between academic engagement and activist practice.

Simultaneously, a critical engagement with these activists' theoretical contributions necessitates a degree of academic detachment in order to critique and reappraise the limitations of proposed remedies. Moreover, despite one's political affinity with the given activist perspectives, the activist academic must remain an insider-outsider. Many activist academics often feel 'torn' between the competing calls to be committed and detached at the same time, yet in reality 'objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision... Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1988: 582-583).

Feminist objectivity has allowed me to theorise in a more concrete and socially embedded way. Therefore, in this case, the activist researcher is not so much transgressing theory/praxis divides, embodied in the dichotomies of subjective/objective and/or committed/detached, but she is rather acting upon a commitment to broaden and make the production and sharing of a multiplicity of knowledges more inclusive, representative, and accessible. Thus, more than a transgression of personal and professional boundaries, the fusion of critical theories and political praxis is ultimately an act of resistance against totalizing and/or relativistic ideologies of objectivity, and a reappraisal of the importance of speaking and hearing from many different perspectives, experiences and ways of making sense of the world.

The ultimate aim of this thesis is not only to document the critical practices observed, but for the thesis itself to reframe the way Israel-Palestine is understood, and to act as a future catalyst for a broader political-theoretical conversation which might contribute to further critical action on the ground, as well as in other comparable locations where struggles against injustice are taking place. For this reason a combination of narrative and intertextual analysis has been utilised to examine texts by and about the groups' work. As David Boje (2001) notes:

Narrative analysis combined with antenarrative analysis can be a field that is about telling stories (ibid: 9) ... And since no narrative is an island, but in a dynamic context of plurality of other narratives, the centred position self-deconstructs without any pushing, shoving or editing on our part (ibid: 23).

From this perspective, in the process of enquiry, the critical theorist/activist researcher self-identifies as a fellow 'traveller' on a journey of critical political exploration (Sherman Heyl, 2007: 371); and thereafter, as a story-teller who re-narrates accounts of just peace politics 'in a way that remains faithful to the capacity of citizens to act together' (Minow, 2008: 258). In other words, the task of this theoretical project is to continue 'doing' just peace politics by other means, by narrating, questioning and unsettling existing accounts in order to 'reorient people's minds to confront the future, rather than to accept the past' (ibid: 258).

Chapters

Chapters one and two are conceptual in nature; they outline and examine the key concepts which underpin the thesis, and historicise the contemporary set-up in Israel-Palestine. Chapter One outlines the failings and problems of the official state-centred peace process exemplified by the Oslo Accords and similar endeavours, and proposes

critical civil society activism as an alternative. Moreover, peace is reframed as a question of justice which requires the utilisation of a radical democratic frame in which all affected have a right to claim redress from the culpable state, its representatives and citizens. Chapter Two looks more closely at the contemporary set-up in Israel-Palestine through the prism of Iris Marion Young's 'five faces of oppression' in order to make a case for a relation of justice or 'a duty to do justice' between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as between the state of Israel and the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the chapter foregrounds the necessity for privileged citizens to respond ethically to the call for justice by refusing to reproduce state violence and oppression.

Chapter Three brings the preceding debates together to examine the role of violence and the related principle of ethical nonviolent responsibility via Judith Butler's reading of Levinas and Benjamin. This theoretical framework is applied as a critical discursive reading of a set of documentary film texts dealing with Israeli military service in the Occupied Territories which illustrate the limitations and barriers facing the possibility for ethical nonviolent engagement in Israel-Palestine. The theoretical framework established in chapters one to three proposes acknowledgement of the Other's narrative and taking ethical nonviolent responsibility for the Other as the necessary preconditions for establishing a justice-based community of resistance.

Chapters four to six each take a closer look at some of the key issues surrounding the notion of just peace and how my case study groups have responded to them theoretically and practically. As chapters one to three establish, just peace remains conditional on Israeli acknowledgement and engagement with Palestinian narratives of 1948 and the Nakba. Acknowledging the narratives of the oppressed and dispossessed is one small step towards overcoming racialised solidarity in favour of the emergence of the ethical political solidarity necessary for establishing a just peace.

For this reason the work of Zochrot (Remembering) which deals with Nakba advocacy and commemoration features as a case study in chapter four. While the group does not explicitly define its work as solidarity activism in the same way that AATW or ICAHD define their on-the-ground practical resistance and protest activities in the Occupied Territories. Nevertheless, the work they do with respect to the Palestinian narrative of the Nakba in Israeli society is vitally important in opening up an ethical-political dialogue about a shared founding moment. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection on Zochrot's attempts, in collaboration with the Palestinian NGO Badil, to visualise the Palestinian refugees' return in a post-Zionist and post-colonial moment. This reflection foregrounds some tensions around the subject of the state form Israel-Palestine might take, and what that would mean for the self-determination of the two collectivities.

Chapter Five critically engages with the work of ICAHD and in particular the analysis of its founder, Jeff Halper. Two strands of ICAHD's work are highlighted and examined, namely the contributions made by its on-the-ground resistance and rebuilding activities, as well as its international political advocacy which seeks to reframe Israel's dominant security discourse which serves as a justification for continuing oppression in the Occupied Territories. Alongside this, Jeff Halper's critical analysis and ICAHD's recent statement announcing its support for a binational state in Israel-Palestine has resulted in some spirited debates on the subject of self-determination in a post-decolonisation Israel-Palestine. These debates are critically examined in relation to the 'all affected' principle.

Chapter Six examines the work and narratives of Anarchists Against The Wall in relation to the oft highlighted irreconcilability between anarchism's anti-state ideology and solidarity with the arguably state-centred struggle for Palestinian self-determination in the Occupied Territories. The chapter highlights the manner in which the embodied activism of AATW articulates an alternative, anti-Zionist and non-dominating Israeli

subjectivity in relation to the Palestinian people. The discussion concludes with a reflection on the necessity to reconceptualise self-determination as non-dominating and non-statist; a conceptualisation which would take into account all affected and avoid reproducing minority/majority dichotomisation and hierarchies.

Given that the oppressive situation in Israel-Palestine is unfolding in the present-continuous it is practically impossible to conclude the thesis with a definitive conclusion. As I write these lines, the United States sponsored peace process is being resurrected for an alleged “final time”. Over the next nine months, from Wednesday August 14th 2013, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are set to sit down to discuss final status issues: borders, refugees, settlements. Yet, in the two days leading up to the start of the new round of negotiations the international media has reported Israel’s announcement of the construction of an additional 2000 housing units in East Jerusalem and the Occupied West Bank; and the release of 26 Palestinian prisoners as part of the deal leading up to the negotiations has been accompanied by Israeli military air strikes in the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip remains under blockade, and Israel continues to insist that its primary objective during the negotiations is to be recognised as a “Jewish” state by the Palestinians. The outcome of the negotiations, if they are to take off the ground, cannot be predicted. However, I would dare to argue, with relative confidence, that the arguments and analysis put forward in this thesis will remain relevant in the coming months, if not years, for the call for just peace remains unanswered. At the very least, the case put forward in this thesis should be read as a critical reflection on the civil society endeavour in the past decade to overcome the current impasse.

1. Reframing Peace as a Question of Justice

This chapter asserts peace as a question of justice, and just peace as a process of acknowledging and engaging with the Other's narrative and one's role in the relation of oppression which characterises Israel-Palestine. The chapter highlights the shortcomings of the official Peace Process in Israel-Palestine since 1993 by providing a critical historical-political overview. It argues that the absence of the notion of justice has been at the heart of this state-centred approach and its failure to bring about peace. Transnational civil society politics and activism are examined as an alternative to obstinate and stagnant statist approaches to conflict resolution.

Reframing Justice and Peace

The vast majority of International Relations' (IR) and related disciplines' definitions of 'peace' tend to emphasise the centrality of the state in war and peace (Richmond, 2008). Feminist IR scholarship further draws attention to the manner in which conflict and peace are presented in a dichotomous relationship which, similar to other philosophical oppositions such as man/woman and culture/nature, corresponds to the dichotomy active/passive (Enloe, 1983). As a result, peace is often rendered in terms of a lack or absence, i.e. the absence of war or conflict, which leads to the precedence and/or privileging of war and conflict over peace.

While peace is expressed as the desired state of social being, its attainability is nevertheless viewed with resignation and pessimism because, rooted in Hobbesian thought, war and conflict continue to be perceived as an intricate part of human nature. Thus, although peace is the desirable state of social being, the supposed human inclination towards conflict and aggression means that wars are more likely to be waged and fought. From this perspective, the active pursuit of peace becomes futile since peace

is seen as a mere period of unstable and precarious ‘respite between wars’ (Giraudoux in Hoffman, 2006).

The ‘negative’ conception of peace, i.e. peace as the absence/reduction of violence, provides us with a large scope of possible definitions, but not necessarily with a mechanism for achieving stable and sustainable peace. From a legal and political perspective a ceasefire between two warring factions can be viewed as an ‘act of peace’. Similarly, a conflict may be brought to an end by a decision to partition a disputed territory between two or more states or a peace treaty may be signed between warring nations who agree to carry out ‘population transfers’. However, nowhere can a guarantee be found, either in legal texts or political documents that the measures which bring about negative peace can guard against renewed hostility or even a new conflict. More often than not, ceasefires merely act as lulls in hostility, with violence being on the verge of outbreak at any point.

As Hoffman (2006) points out, durable peace relies on addressing the root causes of a conflict, further adding that state actors need to concern themselves with the feelings created by their decisions, because ‘Peace which feeds resentment is a bad peace’ (ibid: 16). At this point two further definitions of peace must enter our discussion, namely that of ‘positive peace’ and ‘just peace’. Galtung (1996) defines ‘positive peace’ as a nonviolent, creative and life-enhancing conflict transformation (ibid: 3 and 9); within this definition distributive justice and the promotion of equal opportunity would fall under the umbrella of positive peace work.

Defining ‘just peace’ on the other hand is a somewhat problematic task. Given that there are at least three main definitions of ‘peace’, one would undoubtedly come across a number of different and conflicting definitions of ‘justice’ and how it relates to peace. A ‘just peace’ could be defined negatively and in legal terms as an end to a war

and/or a peace which has been agreed in law through the signing of a peace accord and/or treaty. 'Just Peace' could also be viewed in relation to 'Just War', i.e. the absence of terrorism and/or state exceptionalism. Thus, one could make the case that had the State of Israel and Palestinian representatives complied with the 1993 Declaration of Principles during the Oslo peace negotiations, and signed a final status agreement the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would have concluded with a 'just peace'.

However, David Little (2006) makes the case that 'peace' understood merely in terms of the absence of violence is antagonistic to the concept of 'just peace'. Rather, he defines 'just peace' as a form of transitional or restorative justice which acts as a mechanism to address and prevent past violations from reoccurring in the future. He cites the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as an example of 'just peace' in action, and criticises the Oslo Accords' emphasis on separation and partition for acting as a disincentive to incorporate human rights into the peace deal (ibid: 171 – 173). On the other side of the debate, Yossi Beilin (2006), an Israeli negotiator of the Oslo Accords, rejects outright the concept of 'just peace':

The term Just Peace is redundant, but its problem lies not in its redundancy, but in the accompanying concept it introduces onto the stage – “unjust peace”. The existence of a concept such as “unjust peace” creates a wide margin for resistance to peace, claiming that it is unjust, thus causing injustice to those who pay the price for lack of peace (ibid: 130).

Beilin goes on to argue that a resolution to peace already encompasses 'justice' and therefore the only 'unjust peace' is 'a peace signed too late' (ibid: 148). His case against 'just peace' relates directly to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and he lists the numerous 'offences' committed by the Palestinians/Arabs against 'peace', including their

original rejection of the 1947 UN partition of Palestine because of the Palestinian's majority status in the territory; the numerous refusals to accept Israel's right to exist as a 'Jewish State'; and last but not least, the ongoing centrality of the Palestinian 'right of return' as a point of contention and alleged obstacle to a peaceful solution (ibid: 141 – 146).

Taking Beilin's objections to 'just peace' into consideration, Allan and Keller (2006) define 'just peace' as 'a language oriented approach' that takes us beyond a negative definition of peace but is nevertheless superseded by 'positive peace', the latter being concerned with ending social conflict and structural inequality (ibid: 195-6). They outline four conditions for the successful fulfilment of 'just peace': thin recognition, thick recognition, renouncement, and rule. The first step involves accepting the other as a valid and crucial agent for negotiation. The second requires full acknowledgement of the other's identity and a critical understanding of the self, which leads to consensual negotiation boundaries. 'Renouncement' involves concessions and compromises; here they cite the 2003 Geneva Accord in which the Palestinian negotiators 'conceded' the right of return, while the Israelis renounced their claims to the Old City and East Jerusalem, with negotiated right to access. The final component of 'just peace', which is 'rule', relates to the creation and utilization of a common language for negotiation and/or inter-cultural dialogue based on nonviolent communication and respect for the claims of the other (Allen and Keller, 2006:196-208).

On the other hand, Edward Said (2006) cautions against attempts to produce definitions of just peace and warns against reproducing the Oslo Process which for him represents an example of thinking about just peace in the same terms as Just War. Instead, he makes the case that thinking about just peace must begin with thinking about conflict

and/or the reasons behind a conflict. In relation to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict he writes:

what was at issue between Israelis and Palestinians was never a real or Just Peace but the possibility for Palestinians of restitution of property, nationhood, identity ... The logic of separation that has been played out since 1948 reached its doomed failure with the terminated Oslo Accords and the outbreak of the intifada (Said, 2006: 187).

The alternative model for thinking about just peace proposed by Said is ‘a contrapuntal method’ which is an attempt to ‘render some sense both of a longer and wider view-point and also the reality of simultaneous voices’ (ibid: 177):

a compact or entente whose outlines would have to include regarding the other’s history as valid but incomplete as usually presented, and second, admitting that despite the antinomy these histories can only continue to flow together, not apart, within a broader framework based on the notion of equality for all (ibid: 194).

Thus, theorising justice in relation to peace requires a nuanced understanding of the different experiences in a shared conflict history, with just peace representing not the end of the conflict but the beginning of a new dynamic. In the context of Israel-Palestine this demands an acknowledgement of Palestinian narratives of 1948 and the Nakba within Israeli society, the establishment of secular citizenship based on just solidarities and cohabitation, with an emphasis on the ‘Other’ in dialogue, and a critical examination of the role of Diaspora. However, one of the biggest obstacles to Said’s understanding of just peace, as an ongoing process of cooperation and reciprocal exchange between affected parties, stems from the tendency to view peace politics within a Westphalian frame.

The Westphalian frame refers to the establishment of the principle of ‘Westphalian sovereignty’ in international relations, this relates to the 1648 signing of the Peace of Westphalia treaties which signalled the beginning of state-centric peace politics. Within this framework all decisions pertaining to war and peace are viewed as the prerogative of the sovereign state. This matter becomes even more significant within the context of Israel-Palestine given that two sets of competing claims are being made, on the one hand, by a sovereign state, and on the other, by a stateless people subject to a sovereign power which excludes them from its sphere of responsibility. Therefore, employing a state-centred approach in this context gives rise to precisely what Edward Said cautions against, which is the application of the logic of Just War to a vision of just peace.

Just War Theory, which relates to the ethical and philosophical justifications for states going to war (*jus ad bellum*), and to their conduct in war (*jus in bello*), has been criticised for emphasising the rights of powerful states over those of non-state or stateless actors. For a military action to meet the criteria of Just War it has to be based on self-defence or the belief that going to war would prevent evil-doing. As Mathew Phillips (2011) explains, political violence by non-state actors or less powerful states is often designated as ‘terrorism’, and hence illegitimate, and has become a justification for US and Israeli military conduct in the Middle East. Just War theory often extends to justify modern warfare such as targeted killings/assassinations of enemy political leaders, and even to minimising responsibility in the disproportionate use of force which results in civilian deaths and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. On the other hand, Just War theory rarely seems to apply to the right of less powerful states or for that matter stateless people to defend themselves from attack. Phillips summarises this in his critique of one of the strongest academic and political proponents of Just War theory, and a long-standing

defender of Israeli and US military conduct, Michael Walzer, as Just War theory's predisposition to act as:

an endlessly malleable paradigm which can be readily invoked by the most powerful states, though never their enemies or victims... [In the 21st Century] It is also obvious that just war theory is no reasonable alternative to strict adherence to international law.

Anya Topolski (2010) further argues that in the contemporary transnational world Just War theory, with its state-centric insistence on enemies and us/them distinctions, is no longer viable for peace-keeping, and I would add, peace-making efforts. Following on from the above critique, subsequent analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are based on Nancy Fraser's consideration of the utilisation of a non-statist frame of justice, or the 'all affected' principle which she defines as:

all those affected by a given social structure or institution have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it... what turns a collection of people into fellow subjects of justice is not geographical proximity but their co-imbrication in a common structural or institutional framework, which sets the ground rules that govern their social interaction, thereby shaping their respective life possibilities in patterns of advantage and disadvantage (2008: 24).

Fraser's theory of justice has developed in relation to her reflections on the contemporary transnational world whereby multinational corporations have just as much effect on and power over the lives of people as the territorial governments whose sovereignty they are subject to as citizens and residents. Despite this, precisely because of the Westphalian stress on the territorial state, many people, and particularly indigenous peoples in the developing world, struggle to resist and challenge infringements on their

rights and to seek legal or financial redress for corporate misdemeanour. The process of redressing these exclusions relates to ‘frame-setting’, or to the manner in which certain subjects are constituted as bearing rights, while others are excluded from the rights entitled community (Fraser, 2008: 19).

The politics of framing takes two forms. The first is the ‘affirmative’ mode which re-affirms a commitment to state-territoriality as a prerequisite for claims to justice to be made. Independence and civil rights movements are included within the affirmative mode. The second type of frame-setting is constituted by ‘transformative’ politics which involve making claims to justice beyond the state. Fraser cites transnational social movements such as the World Social Forum within this category. In summary, the first type of frame-setting is concerned with the ‘how’ of claiming justice, i.e. fighting for equal rights; while the second mode focuses on the “who” has the right to claim justice, thus seeking to include the excluded within a radical democratic frame of justice (Fraser, 2005: 80-81, 87).

In many respects, the transnational movement for a just peace is concerned with both of these types of frame-setting politics, in terms of rearticulating the Palestinian people as subjects of justice in relation to the state of Israel and to individual Israelis, and in terms of articulating justice as a demand for equal rights in Israel-Palestine. Therefore, the demand for just peace challenges the Westphalian frame which places the war-making state at the centre of peace politics, viewed through the prism of Clausewitz’s oft repeated dictum ‘War is the continuation of politics by other means’: in essence, declaring war the business of politics and reducing peace to a passive afterthought. From this perspective the state and/or sovereign can ‘make peace’ but one rarely speaks about the state or other concerned parties ‘doing peace’. Moreover, this perspective obscures from view the role

of the citizen/subject in enacting just peace politics in relation to other citizens/subjects and the state and/or related institutions of political significance.

Injustice as a Relation of Oppression

To date there have been a number of contemporary scholarly endeavours to highlight the peace efforts of non-state actors. For example, Cynthia Cockburn's ethnographic work (1998; 2007; 2012) highlights the male-centric militarist system of privilege and exclusion which operates at the heart of the war-making state, bringing into view the role of women's inter-communal peace activism. Such scholarly work is vitally important for its articulation and appraisal of the anti-militarist voices and peace work of groups and individuals who rarely feature in international relations literature on conflict resolution. Nevertheless, micro approaches to peace politics, which reduce to background the macro history and workings of power and privilege in a given society can inadvertently obscure the very forces which enable and disable certain groups and individuals' ability to meaningfully engage in peace politics both in relation to the state and other groups and individuals.

Cynthia Enloe's (1983) attempt to highlight the militarisation of women's lives in the USA and US military is a good example of the effective combination of macro and micro approaches to the analysis of the everyday function of a state militarist regime. However, once again differential access to power and privilege remain inadequately theorised in an account which presents a continuum of female exploitation and oppression. For a continuum of oppression is in reverse a continuum of privilege. For example, a soldier's wife may serve a function of female sexual servitude vis-a-vis her husband, however her commonality with a Vietnamese woman coerced through circumstance or otherwise into prostituting her body to the military personnel occupying her war-torn country ends precisely at the point that they both happen to embody

gendered and sexualised bodies. It is very difficult to make the case that a military wife, or for that matter a female soldier, is not in a position of privilege vis-a-vis a woman subject to a highly racialised and sexualised regime of oppression in which she finds herself almost completely powerless in relation to the institutions which govern her life.

The application of Nancy Fraser's (2005) all affected principle to transnational war and conflict, taking the above example as an illustration, would mean that Vietnamese women would have an equal right to make a justice claim vis-a-vis the institutions of the US government and military and/or the transnational companies which supply the military with their weapons of mass destruction. Their entitlement to make a justice claim would not be based on their formal citizenship and/or belonging to the concerned institutions but rather on the basis of the effects of these institutions on the people of Vietnam. Hence, the moment the US decides to begin a military campaign in Vietnam, and at the precise moment that weapons manufactured by arms company X are used to destroy and maim life and property, the US government and military, and company X, enter a relation of in/justice with the people of Vietnam. Therefore, such a relation of in/justice gives the people of Vietnam the right to claim justice vis-a-vis the aforementioned institutions.

Iris Marion Young (1990) affirms the relationality of justice, adding to the definition a consideration of social groups. For her, groups are also entitled to make justice claims not only against the state and other institutions of in/justice but also against other social groups within a given social order. Young gives the example of black Americans' right to appeal to justice against the oppression they have historically experienced in relation to white privilege in US society. Thus, group justice claims are based on social perspective/s which approach political decision-making and public discussion 'with the experience and knowledge of those positioned in a structurally

specific way' (Young, 1997: 366). This perspective affirms difference rather than sameness, placing emphasis on differentiated relationships of power and privilege as opposed to relations of identity (ibid: 352-357). Additionally, Young argues that the concepts of domination and oppression need to be at the heart of theorising in/justice. 'The call to "be just" is always situated in concrete social and political practices' (1990: 5). Thus, conceptualising justice requires the critical theorist to contextualise and historicise their topic in a socially embedded way:

Normative reflection must begin from historically specific circumstances... Without social theory, normative reflection is abstract, empty and unable to guide criticism with a particular interest in emancipation (ibid: 5)... Norms and ideas arise from a yearning that is an expression of freedom: it does not have to be this way, it could be otherwise (ibid: 6).

Young further subdivides 'oppression' into five categories which she argues need to be redefined depending on the social context being analysed. These are: cultural imperialism, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. In the next chapter Iris Marion Young's conceptual criteria for analysing oppression will be applied to the case of Israel-Palestine. This will be done through a contextually historicised account of the conflict and its contemporary legacy on the social, political and economic relations of dis/advantage pertaining to the two national collectivities in question. Such an approach will enable a more robust critical engagement with the possibilities for a practical articulation of Fraser's 'all affected' principle which is deemed to be a key aspect of just peace politics. Before this can be done it is important to examine, in more detail, the shortcomings of official state-centric attempts at peacemaking in Israel-Palestine as embodied in the United State's sponsored 'Peace Process'.

The Peace Process

The centrality of the state in political life has meant that since 1948 the dominance of Israel's state narratives has defined the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the parameters for its resolution. Despite the international political recognition of the Palestinian people in 1988, their collective and individual rights have been continuously reduced to a question of pending statehood. The state-centrism characterising Israel-Palestine continues to fail to bring about conflict resolution, increasingly leaving embattled and polarised communities on both sides of the divide. The tendency to privilege statist perspectives particularly relates to the collapse of the Oslo Peace Accords with their elusive promise to establish an independent Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Many observers designate the outbreak of the Second Intifada⁴, which witnessed a spate of terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and military targets, as the reason for the Accords' termination. However, as Nancy Fraser asserts 'the most basic definition of justice is parity of participation' (2005: 73). Thus, the principle of 'parity of participation' requires us to examine the events that led to the breakdown of the official peace process from a non-statist perspective. However, before we do so it is necessary to examine the failings of the official peace process in order to provide a springboard for the theoretical-political discussion which will feature later in the thesis.

Even before the outbreak of the Intifada most evidence points to the fact that there would be no implementation of UN resolutions 242 (1967) or 338 (1973), both of which call for an end to the Occupation. Moreover, it is also important to point out that despite the fact that many consider The Oslo Accords to be the blueprint for a two state solution, there is no mention of the establishment of a Palestinian State either in the Declaration of Principles or the subsequent Interim Agreement. On the contrary, the Accords are very

⁴ Uprising in Arabic

explicit that the final status issues of borders, security, settlements, and refugees, all relating to statehood and sovereignty, remain outstanding and are yet to be negotiated.

The 1993 Declaration of Principles, also known as Oslo I, established a framework for an interim period of five years which would lead to Israel's full withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and West Bank (Article V.1). The Accords also called for the creation of a Palestinian Council, also known as the Palestinian Authority (PA), which would take over from the Civil Administration, Israel's military government in the Occupied Territories (Article VII.5). The Accords specified that Israel had to provide a schedule for withdrawal within a year of the Declaration of Principles coming into effect in September 1993.

The second Oslo Accord, known as the Interim Agreement 1995, resulted in the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, and the transfer under its control of major towns and cities, including Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, and Tulqarem, alongside a further 450 villages. The PA's jurisdiction, also known as Area A, together with Area B, where the PA has 'joined' responsibility for civilian affairs, but not security, constitutes less than 28% of the West Bank. During the Oslo Interim Period, between 1994 and 1999, Israel doubled the settler population in the West Bank (Foundation for Middle East Peace, 2009; Levinson, 2009), while subjecting the Palestinian population in Area C, which is under full Israeli military control, to discriminatory policies of house demolitions and land expropriation (Abu Zahra, 2007). During the same period the Israeli settler population in the Gaza Strip also increased but not at the same rate as in the West Bank.

By 2000 it became clear that Israel had little intention of meeting the minimum requirements for withdrawal set out in the 1993 Declaration of Principles resulting in the failure of the Camp David negotiations. The ensuing Palestinian uprising provided the

Israeli rightwing with a pretext to begin the construction of the 420 miles (675 km) long West Bank Barrier, effectively annexing East Jerusalem and large parts of arable West Bank land to the Israeli side. In 2005 Israel made the unilateral decision to withdraw its ground troops and settlements from the Gaza Strip, transferring the majority of its settler population to the West Bank. The withdrawal came 10 years later than the Oslo Accords had specified.

Following the democratic election of Hamas in 2006 Israel imposed an economic and military blockade on Gaza, which remains in force at the time of writing. Since 2006 the relationship between Gaza and Israel has been characterised by Israeli Defence Forces' (IDF) targeted assassinations, military invasions and aerial assaults on the territory, and Hamas's sporadic firing of rockets over the border into nearby Southern Israeli civilian centres, punctuated by short-term unilateral ceasefires. The bloodiest of these Israeli attacks was 'Operation Cast Lead' in December 2008 – January 2009.

This military attack left 13 Israelis and over 1,400 residents of Gaza dead, the vast majority of the latter being civilian casualties. The attack further resulted in the injury and disablement of tens of thousands of Gazans, with Gaza's homes and social infrastructure utterly devastated. Israel's ongoing economic blockade of Gaza, coupled with another large-scale bombardment of the Strip in November 2012, has meant that four years after the military attack the planned reconstruction of Gaza has been very difficult to achieve (Amnesty International, 2009). Moreover, the reported March 2010 announcement, coinciding with a US state visit, of the planned construction of 1,600 Jewish settler homes in Occupied East Jerusalem (Black 2010; Sherwood, 2010); and a number of similar announcements since, including a recent statement about government plans for continued settlement expansion made by the incoming Israeli Housing Minister (Fisher-Ilan, 2013), underscores the tenacity of Israeli state exceptionalism.

The publication of the private and confidential Palestinian Authority (PA) records of negotiations with Israel between 1999 and 2010, leaked to the news provider al-Jazeera and published by The Guardian Newspaper in January 2011, which were dubbed ‘The Palestine Papers’, gives further indication of the great power disparity between Israel and the Palestinians. The leaked papers document unprecedented concessions made by the PA’s negotiators, including bold and controversial moves such as renouncing the right of return and relinquishing Palestinian claims on East Jerusalem; the offers being reportedly rejected as “insufficient” by the Israeli negotiators (Black and Milne, 2011a and 2011b). More problematic, perhaps, is the response to the viability and prospect of a two-state solution made by United States’ government representative, Condoleezza Rice: ‘You [the Palestinians] won't have a state... your children's children will not have an agreement’ (quoted in Milne, 2011).

The Palestinian Authority’s announcement in early 2011 that it would seek unilateral recognition of a Palestinian State when the UN Security Council reconvened in September 2011 was similarly met with rejection from both Israel and the United States administration. The decision to declare a state was also met with opposition from some Palestinian and pro-Palestinian critics. A legal opinion published by Guy Goodwin-Gill (2011) maintains that a unilateral declaration of statehood by the PA will depose the PLO⁵ of its status as “the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people”, effectively depriving the millions of Palestinian refugees living in the Diaspora from representation at the UN. Others have further dismissed the viability of the PA’s argument that a sovereign Palestinian state will make the Occupation indisputable and give Palestinian representatives more international leverage to end Israeli military control.

⁵ Palestine Liberation Organisation

Comments from former Israeli officials appear to affirm the above criticisms. Gidi Grinstein, a former Israeli negotiator at Camp David stated that:

A declaration of a Palestinian state in September includes the possibility of a diplomatic breakthrough as well as significant advantages for Israel...The establishment of such a state will help anchor the principle of two states for two peoples, shape the permanent situation with Israel controlling the security assets and the new state's surroundings, and diminish the refugee problem by marginalising UNRWA [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency] and limiting refugee status (Grinstein quoted in Hasan, 2011).

Under combined Israeli and US pressure the 2011 bid for statehood failed. The Palestinian Authority returned with a second bid, albeit for non-member state status, in November 2012. This vote did not require UN Security Council approval and passed successfully in the UN General Assembly. One of the practical opportunities arising from this status is the possibility that the PA can take Israel to the ICJ (International Court of Justice) and the ICC (International Criminal Court) for crimes committed under the Occupation. This hypothetical strategy continues to face a number of obstacles. Firstly, each individual UN body can decide at its discretion whether to admit and/or recognise a non-member state; secondly, the United States, Israel's biggest and strongest political ally, has used financial threats and incentives to stall the statehood process under the guise of trying to restart the peace talks. UNESCO paid the price for admitting Palestine in 2011, with the USA withdrawing funding from the organization (Blomfield, 2011). The USA has similarly used the threat of terminating aid to the PA to dissuade the Palestinian leadership from pursuing a statehood bid at the UN (Swaine, 2011). Most recently, the strategy has been to convince Israel to pay, on time, taxes collected on behalf of the PA, which are usually withheld for months on end as a form of punishment, in exchange for

the PA refraining from making representations at the ICJ and ICC.⁶ The political intractability accompanying the consistent failure of such state-centred approaches to bring about a timely resolution to the conflict demands a non-statist re-articulation of peace as a question of justice and foregrounds a closer examination of alternative forms of peace politics as exemplified in the efforts of Israeli, Palestinian and international civil society actors.

Civil Society: An Answer to War?

Mary Kaldor (2003) proposes Global Civil Society as an answer to war because ‘the concept of civil society has always been linked to the notion of minimizing violence in social relations, to the public use of reason as a way of managing human affairs in place of submission based on fear and insecurity, or ideology and superstition’ (ibid: 3). She terms civil society ‘global’ in acknowledgement of its development, since 1989, into increasingly transnational forms related to the process of globalization; globalization being perceived as contributing to the erosion of territorial state sovereignty.

According to Kaldor, civil society is further defined by ‘bottom up’ or grassroots struggles for emancipatory goals, whether these are women’s rights, environmental protection, or peace, on the basis of ‘governance based on consent where consent is generated through politics’ (ibid: 142). For Kaldor, the new global meaning of civil society is characterised by civil society groups putting pressure on economic and political institutions of authority through advocacy, campaigning and protest, in an effort to institute reform and/or the transformation of policy and practice at a global level. These developments have in turn facilitated global public debates which offer ‘the possibility of the voices of the victims of globalisation to be heard if not the votes’ (ibid: 148). Thus,

⁶ Statement made by the UK Ambassador to Israel, Mathew Gould, during a lecture on ‘Israel, Peace and the Region’, The University of Nottingham, 4.3.2012. Also reported in Ravid, 2013.

Global Civil Society has been increasingly able to contest the primacy of the war-making discourse of the geopolitical state.

However, in the concluding chapter of her book, Kaldor is forced to reconsider her somewhat overtly optimistic view of Global Civil Society as an answer to war. Examining the political developments in the aftermath of the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, Kaldor concludes that we have returned to an era of ‘geopolitics and the language of realism and national interest’ (ibid: 148). Nevertheless, this may no longer be the case a decade later which is characterised by an apparent ‘return of the public’, with pro-democracy mass protests across the Arab World, and public demonstrations against austerity measures in the USA, UK and Europe. The latter protests sought to highlight the role of corporate power and immunity to public scrutiny, while joining the global call for more democratic accountability from national governments. However, in 2013 the disappearance of Occupy movements in the US and Europe in the face of government imposed austerity measures, the outbreak of civil war in Syria, and the 2013 military coup d’etat in Egypt, might suggest that the state is not prepared to give up any ground to the people, at least not without a fight.

These contemporary developments give credence to Sylvia Walby’s (2009) rejection of the notion of a Global Civil Society. Walby argues instead that there are global civil societal ‘waves’ concerned with carrying out different projects for socio-political change and transformation (ibid: 233). These ‘waves’ include, amongst others, First Wave Feminism, Second Wave Feminism, and Environmentalism, but also Fascism, Conservatism, and Neo-liberalism. On the basis of this definition, civil society cannot be considered inherently ‘good’ and ‘progressive’, as civil society waves can also be ‘regressive’ and ‘anti-modern’, as in the case of European Fascism, in particular the 1930s and 1940s project of Nazism. Rather ‘civil society is a key institutional domain for

the transformation of meanings, the creation and hybridization of projects, the practice of individual agency, and the contested production of frames and discourses' (ibid: 218).

Claire Mercer (2002) similarly criticises much of the literature on Civil Society, in particular the Anglophone literature on the role of NGOs in development, for subscribing to 'the normative ideal that civil society and NGOs are inherently 'good things'; microcosms of the (liberal) democratic process, comprised of the grassroots, both separate and autonomous from the state, while acting as a 'bulwark' against it' (ibid: 9). Mercer echoes Walby in her definition of civil society as a sphere of contestation and conflict. However, she is also highly critical of liberal modernisation theories because of their tendencies to render non-Western societies and cultures as pre or anti-modern on the basis of their resistance to the (Western) liberal notion of civil/ized society. Here she is particularly critical of development discourses which tend to divide NGOs and civil society associations into 'good' and 'bad', or 'accommodating' versus 'resistant' to modernisation, i.e. neo-liberal agendas (ibid: 10 – 12). Duffield (2007) further highlights the dubious role of humanitarian NGOs in global governance and their tacit complicity with state and corporate interests in the new wars, in effect challenging Kaldor's assertion that Global Civil Society can be an answer to war:

[Development] seeks to secure the non-insured through the disciplining and regulatory effects of self-reliance. Development aims to embed security within the world of peoples by making it sustainable (ibid: 124)... unending war is not primarily a military concern. It is more an indefinite and globalized counter insurgency campaign that utilises the civilian petty sovereignty of aid agencies to engage with questions of poverty and political instability (Duffield, 2007: 127).

In her defence, Kaldor excludes humanitarian NGOs, which are primarily concerned with service provision, from her definition of civil society (2003: 146). Moreover, she adds that since the 1980s social movements have been transformed into NGOs, using the concept of ‘taming’ to refer to ‘the process whereby the authorities open up access to social movements and even take on some of their demands, and movements become institutionalized and professionalized’ (2003: 145). Similarly, Arundhati Roy (2004) refers to this process as ‘the NGOisation of resistance’ which she argues has resulted in the de-politicisation and pacification of social movements. James Petras (1997: 14) further criticises the process of NGOisation in the context of Latin America for undermining the concept of the ‘public’ and thus weakening the government’s welfare obligations towards its citizens.

I also draw on the work of Gwamaka Kifukwe (2011) who defines Civil Society as ‘an institutional domain’ which coexists with the State and Corporate spheres. While his work is primarily concerned with Development Expertise in Tanzania, his argument is also valuable for defining the role of NGOs and other critical and grassroots organisations working in the fields of human rights, justice and peace. From this perspective, Civil Society remains a site of contestation over frames and discourses, however it is not conceived of as the combination of mass autonomous movements and NGOs. Rather it is the domain of private institutions that are separate from, yet imbricated with, the State and Corporate spheres. Thus, the domain of Civil Society includes religious institutions, political parties, trade unions, and other professional associations, as well as humanitarian and advocacy NGOs, any of which can be defined as active, passive, progressive or regressive depending on one’s perspective.

On the other hand, placing Social Movements within the domain of ‘the Public’ or ‘publics’, for they are many, challenges the intrinsic assumption within certain definitions

of Civil Society which conceive of the Public as passively governed either by consent or coercion. Therefore, viewing Social Movements as a manifestation of mass mobilized public dissent recognises that the Public is itself a domain within which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas can be articulated. I concur with Alberto Melucci's (1996) definition of social movements as 'heterogeneous and fragmented phenomena which contain a multitude of differentiated meanings, forms of action, and modes of organisation, and which often consume a large part of their energies in the effort to bind such differences together' (ibid: 13).

The contemporary extension of the dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' manifestations of civil society appear in many different guises, and often different author's objections to others' definitions of civil society are at cross-purposes. Thus for some, civil society is 'good' or 'counter-hegemonic' when it is manifested as a Transnational Social Movement; while it is 'bad' or 'hegemonic' if it is NGOised (Roy, 2004). For others, in the face of waning mass mobilisation, particularly in the Global North prior to the recent re-emergence of public mass protest, NGOs which embody the values of 'progressive' social movements are considered 'good', even if in a 'tamed' version; while 'passive' NGOs, or NGOs which represent 'regressive' interests should arguably not be considered part of civil society (Kaldor, 2003), or are alternatively defined as 'bad' forms of civil society (Walby, 2009). Yet for others, all manifestations of autonomous non-state organisations are considered part of a modernising and democratising project which is arguably helping to build or strengthen Civil Society (for examples see Mercer, 2002).

As Joseph A. Buttigieg (2005) explains, much of the debate concerned with defining civil society as a force for the radical transformation of the status quo (counter-hegemonic), or as an easily co-opted or already functioning appendage of state and

corporate interests (hegemonic), stems from a misunderstanding of Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' and the subsequent conflation of civil society with oppositional and/or anti-government movements. This misinterpretation lends itself to an oversimplified view of the complex relationship between civil society and the state, or 'the people' and the government. For Gramsci 'the state = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armor of coercion' (Gramsci in Buttigieg, 2005: 38) Therefore, 'civil society in the modern liberal State is the arena wherein the prevailing hegemony is constantly being reinforced, not just contested' (ibid: 38). Moreover, civil society is deeply implicated in and structured by hierarchies of power and privilege. Not everyone has equal capacity and access to resources which will allow them to take effective action in relation to authoritative regimes.

Drawing on Gramsci's thought, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) further theorise hegemony as a social relation dominated by articulatory practices. According to them these articulatory practices rely on antagonistic forces, i.e. elements which cannot be integrated into the dominant logic and require exclusion, an exclusion which is maintained through the demarcation of discursive borders. However, this exclusion is not necessarily a negation, but rather hegemonic forces have the ability to embrace oppositional forces, as long as these forces continue to operate within the same parameters as the hegemony, and here they distinguish between democratic and popular struggle (ibid: 134-137). In practical terms popular struggle refers to discourses which divide a single political space in two opposite camps, for example class struggle, or Palestinian self-determination in the form of ethno-national statehood. Democratic struggle, on the other hand, implies 'a plurality of political space'. In that sense, the rights-based demand for freedom, justice and equality which seeks to transcend existing ethno-national divisions in Israel-Palestine would meet the criterion for democratic struggle.

Having reviewed some of the literature on civil society, the question remains what the most appropriate forms are for the articulation of counter-hegemonic discourses and practices in Israel-Palestine. I would argue that the question of Social Movements versus Civil Society is irrelevant in the contemporary transnational context, for, as Smith et. al. (1997) emphasise, the successes of transnational movements depend on a combination of mobilising structures, access to decision-making institutions, and local, national and international structures of opportunity. Thus, social movements and civil society should not be envisaged as standing in opposition or competition to each other, although that may indeed be the case if they come from different doctrinal or ideological positions. For example, many commentators have expressed reservations about the ‘progressive’ nature of the real estate protests in Tel Aviv which saw the mobilisation of thousands of Israelis in the summer of 2011 in protest against rising rent prices. Much of the scepticism relates to the movement’s refusal to align itself politically, which some feared could result in co-option by the Israeli ultra-rightwing who have proposed more cheap settlement housing to be built in the Occupied Territories as a solution to the Israeli protestors’ calls for social justice (Abu Sarah and Reider, 2011; Halper, 2011).

Equally, social movements function as umbrellas for ideas which can be articulated in different forms within civil society associations, some of which may be in conflict with each other over objectives and strategies. For example, the Transnational Palestinian Solidarity Movement, which often comes under the slogans of ‘Free Palestine’ and/or ‘End The Occupation’, and more recently under the banner of ‘Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions’, has different and competing global, national and local manifestations. Some factions of this social movement call for a two-state solution, while others advocate a single state; some believe their goal can be achieved through nonviolent advocacy and campaigning, and others opt for more militant means; some groups organise in NGO forums, whilst others opt for grassroots mobilisation and protest. In

essence, the Palestinian Solidarity Movement is transnational, heterogeneous, and immeasurable as a whole. A transnational social movement is not legally bound and cannot be held accountable by state power. Its associated practices can be criminalised but it cannot be outlawed in its entirety.

Civil Society on the other hand can only exist within legally identifiable and permissible national and/or transnational frameworks. In contrast to the relative autonomy and anonymity of social movements, civil society can be held legally and politically accountable and is subject to regulation and supervision by the State, and other concerned institutions, i.e. financial donors (Kifukwe, 2011). The above point is illustrated well by the Israeli Parliament's passing of a bill in July 2011 which criminalises Israeli calls for the boycott of Israel or the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories (Lis, 2011). The bill is a political response to the growing transnational campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions or BDS. BDS stands for (i) a consumer Boycott of corporations and organisations which support, finance or operate in the Occupied Territories; (ii) Divestment from corporations or organisations complicit in the Occupation; and (iii) a call for international Sanctions against Israel, including a comprehensive military embargo. The call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions originated in a 2005 statement issued by the largest coalition of Palestinian civil society organisations.

The campaign takes its inspiration from the successes of the anti-apartheid boycotts of South Africa as it deems that Israel is engaged in 'Apartheid practices' as defined by the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, ratified by United Nations General Assembly resolution 3068 (XXVIII). BDS proponents base their claim of Apartheid on Israel's discriminatory practices within the Occupied Territories, as well as empirical evidence of discrimination against Palestinians in Israel (Pappé, forthcoming; White, 2009). For example, they cite

the fact that Israel self-defines as a Jewish State thus symbolically excluding 20% of its citizens who are not Jewish. Moreover, 93% of the land within Israel's 1948 borders is controlled by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Land Authority; land which is solely reserved for Jewish Israelis.

Since its initiation in 2005, BDS campaigns and activities have taken place in over 34 countries and in 95 cities across the world. Many Israelis have also joined the Boycott movement, including the signatories to BOYCOTT from Within. In 2010, the Palestinian Authority joined with an internal call for boycott of settlement goods. A report published by the Reut Institute, a self-proclaimed 'non-partisan Zionist organisation', contended that despite its claim to upholding human rights and international law the BDS campaign sought to delegitimize Israel (Reut Institute, 2010). The proponents of BDS insist that boycott is a legitimate nonviolent tactic and moreover that it is the only viable tactic available given that legal and official efforts at conflict resolution have failed consistently.

More moderate criticisms of the campaign have included fears that boycott would harm Palestinians, particularly those within Israel, and would hurt the efforts of the Israeli peace movement. These criticisms have been addressed through highlighting the fact that the overwhelming majority of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and Israel have chosen BDS as their tactic of nonviolent resistance. Further, the reported 90% Israeli support for Operation Cast Lead indicates that the Israeli peace movement is no longer in existence, or if it is, has little or no influence. Also, many prominent peace movement figures have publicly declared their opposition to the Palestinian right of return, one of the tenets of BDS; while many from the critical Israeli Left have joined the call for boycott from within (Awaad, 2011).

The significance of the above argument has become particularly prominent with the Israeli Parliament's decision to criminalise boycott from within. The 2011 Anti-Boycott Law makes any Israeli individual or organisation who/which support or advocate boycott of Israel or the settlements in the Occupied Territories subject to private legal prosecution. Israeli proponents of BDS face financial penalties not only if an organisation suffers financial loss because of a boycott action, but even if it feels it might suffer financial loss. Leading international human rights organisations have criticised the law for infringing on freedom of expression (Amnesty International, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2011). Internal critics have further pointed out that the law effectively legitimises and annexes the settlements to Israel (Lis, 2011). Israeli human rights organisations including ADALAH: The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) have declared that they will challenge the law in the Supreme Court (Bekker, 2011).

The law has also been criticised by senior members of the Reut Institute who issued a statement arguing that the anti-Boycott law gives more legitimacy to the international movement for boycott and further helps to delegitimise Israel as a democratic state: 'The Boycott Law ... does not properly address the de-legitimization phenomenon, as the law is territorial in its application and yet the de-legitimization campaign is global, primarily operating beyond Israel's borders' (Keidar and Shayshon, 2011, my emphasis). The global versus local distinction highlighted here takes us back to the earlier distinction drawn between civil society and social movements. The case of the Israeli anti-Boycott law illustrates succinctly the tension between the state or government and civil society. In short, civil society does not function as a field separate from and in opposition to the state, but rather its activities are constrained, controlled and even subject to permission by the government of the state within which it functions. Moreover, civil society with its organisational structure is easily identifiable, whereas social movements,

particularly those with a transnational character, are much more difficult to classify and sanction because their protagonists move in and out of different geopolitical and legal contexts and, in the absence of a world government, are therefore freer to mobilise and negotiate a multiplicity of frameworks and resources.

Of course social movements are not unlimited in their scope for action, and are in essence constituted by a multitude of actors who in their physical vulnerability as human beings are subject to existing governance structures. A good example of this is provided by the ‘global’ aspect of the above quote in reference to the ‘Welcome to Palestine’ campaign. On 8th July 2011, a few days prior to the passing of the anti-boycott law, international Palestine solidarity activists from across the world took part in a campaign called “Welcome to Palestine”. Their stated intention was to take part in a ‘fly-in’ by arriving en masse at Ben Gurion Airport and declaring at border control that the purpose of their trip was to visit Palestinian friends in the Occupied Territories.

Visiting the Occupied Territories is not officially illegal and, since Israel is in full control of the Territories’ borders, entering through Ben Gurion en route to the Occupied Territories is not illegal. Nevertheless, many of these activists claimed that their experiences of visiting Palestinian friends were characterised by harassment and threats of deportation by the Israeli authorities if they declared the true intentions of their visit (Bahour, 2011). Therefore, they felt that in order to gain access to the Occupied Territories they were compelled to say that they are visiting Israeli tourist sites. Thus, the ‘Welcome to Palestine’ fly-in intended to raise international awareness of the irregularity taking place.

Days before the direct action, the media reported that the Israeli government claimed that the activists intended to cause havoc at the airport, and the authorities were braced to take decisive action to prevent the fly-in (VOA News, 2011); an allegation

denied by ‘Welcome to Palestine’ campaign organisers (Rishmawi, 2011). The Israeli authorities requested cooperation from international governments to prevent activists from boarding flights to Tel Aviv. The French and British governments, largely using anti-terrorist legislation, prevented many “known” activists from boarding Ben Gurion bound flights, despite the fact that the activists had clearly stated that they would not be taking part in protest but plan to declare the true, perfectly legal, purpose of their visit at border control (Levidow, 2011). Many of the activists who succeeded in arriving at Ben Gurion were arrested, denied entry and deported at a later date (Press Association, 2011).

In short, social movement actors, despite their transnational nature, are themselves entangled in complex webs of geopolitics and are subject to the very international governance regimes they seek to challenge and hold to account. Transnational activists are not only subject to cross border regulatory regimes but at times their decision to engage in zones of conflict can expose them to physical harm and even death. This has, on a number of occasions, been the case for ISM (International Solidarity Movement) volunteers, who armed with nothing more than their US or EU passports step in to act as human shields in defence of Palestinian lives and property in the Occupied Territories. The premise underlying their philosophy is that through their nonviolent physical presence as internationals from some of the most prominent nations they imbue their surroundings and associated persons with the human rights they possess, thus serving to avert violations of international law and human rights.

Nevertheless, the two most prominent cases of the killings of ISM activists, US citizen Rachel Corrie in 2003 (Sherwood, 2010), and UK citizen Tom Hurndall in 2004 (Arrindell, 2004) by the IDF in Gaza, demonstrate that there is a tension between the human rights entitlements of people who hold ‘Western’ citizenship and their inhabiting of a space, even temporarily, where human rights do not exist and sovereign power can

act with relative impunity. However, the subsequent developments of these cases reveal that different geo-political and corporate interests intersect to enable and/or disable citizens' claims to justice. In the case of Tom Hurndall, his parents eventually received justice for his killing, and the Israeli Bedouin soldier responsible for his shooting was sentenced to eight years in prison (Butcher, 2005).

Rachel Corrie's family have not been able to bring her killers to justice. Her case is further complicated by the fact that she died under the blade of a D9 bulldozer, a machine supplied by the US Company Caterpillar which provides the Israeli regime with the bulldozers used for house demolitions in the Occupied Territories. In 2011 the Corrie family began a legal process of suing Caterpillar, alongside the state of Israel, for 'aiding and abetting war crimes and other serious human rights violations' (Centre for Constitutional Rights, 2009).

Aside from being personal sacrifices and tragedies, cases of activists being wounded or killed in the field, such as Rachel Corrie, Tom Hurndall, or the 2010 killing by the IDF of nine Turkish humanitarian activists on board the aid ship Mavi Marmara, can become catalysts for transnational political mobilisation. Tarrow (2011) refers to this as 'contentious politics' which are characterised by one-off events of a tragic and/or contested nature which become symbols for transnational political action by civil society actors who might have had little or no previous link to the original case. In many respects the aftermath of the flotilla murders resulted in greater transnational support for BDS, foreshadowing the Israeli anti-boycott law (Barghouti, 2010).

In recent years there have been a number of attempts to examine the role of transnational civil society activism in relation to Israel-Palestine, including the appraisal of the international BDS campaign by Omar Barghouti (2011), and the publication of the findings of the activist-led Russell Tribunal on Palestine: Corporate Complicity in Israel's

Occupation (2011). Anti-occupation or Palestine solidarity activism has also become increasingly visible within media discourses, with widespread convergence of international attempts to 'break' the Israeli imposed siege on the Gaza Strip, also known as the flotillas. The renewed focus and political promise of these forms of politics demands further theorisation in order to explore their potential, as well as to foreground the value of these movements in conceptualising alternative forms of peace politics.

Aside from Marcelo Svirky's (2011) monograph on Arab-Jewish Activism in Israel-Palestine there has been little examination of how contemporary Israeli civil society activism fits into the wider transnational movement for freedom and justice in Israel-Palestine. The Israeli contingent of this movement, which is based on the notions of justice, freedom and equality, has to be distinguished from previous civil societal formations such as interfaith dialogue groups. Such dialogue groups have been excluded from this study for their tendency to reinforce notions of intractable religious or ethnic differences, and for their insistence on equating Palestinian and Israeli experiences. In *When Peace is Not Enough* (2013), Atalia Omer further highlights the manner in which the refusal of the mainstream liberal Israeli peace camp to engage with the question of justice has resulted in the retrenchment of inward-looking ethno-nationalism among traditional peace activists.

While this thesis falls broadly within the same political category as the aforementioned literature on Israeli-Palestinian and international activism for justice in Israel-Palestine, it also differs in significant ways. Firstly, the emphasis falls less on action or transformation through action (Barghouti, 2011; Svirsky, 2012), although the transformative potential of action and activism is considered an integral part of the process towards just peace politics. Rather, what I am interested in here is how the related concepts of justice, freedom and equality are understood, narrated and articulated within

critical Israeli activism. And, moreover, what are the necessary narratives and modes of articulation which justify and encourage critical activism for just peace? This relates to a critical examination of the discursive processes which have resulted in certain sections of Israeli society picking up the banner of justice, freedom and equality, and how this engagement is being articulated in activist narratives and practices.

In essence, this thesis examines the narrative structures, or the sense-making processes, which have led to an increasing number of Israelis supporting initiatives such as BDS, or notions such as the decolonisation of Israel-Palestine, and the Palestinian right of return. The thesis also demonstrates that despite active engagement with the above notions and initiatives, at the narrative level, remnants of 'old thinking' continue to operate. This old thinking is characterised by the desire to maintain two separate ethno-national identities and a reluctance to decolonise the self by challenging and rearticulating predetermined ethno-national categories and identifications.

These often evident contradictions are the reason why the contributions of international activists and activism are increasingly entering debates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while the role of the Israeli peace camp has come under growing scrutiny.⁷ Many commentators have gone as far as to dismiss leftwing Israelis as too embedded within the Zionist consensus to effectively participate in oppositional politics (Freedman and Tilley, 2007; Winstanley 2011). Although I argue that there is no longer a viable local Israeli peace movement in existence, this thesis insists that critical Israeli activism remains indispensable to the struggle for justice, freedom and equality in Israel-Palestine. As such, critical Israeli activists must not be seen as the remnants of a bygone Israeli peace movement but as the Israeli civil society section of an emergent transnational movement for a just peace in Israel-Palestine.

⁷ See Svirsky, 2012; and Omer, 2013.

Sidney Tarrow (2005) theorises transnational movements as a byproduct of the process of Internationalism, which he distinguishes from economic globalisation, and defines as ‘a dense triangular structure of relations among states, nonstate actors, and international institutions and the opportunities this produces for actors to engage in collective action at different levels of this system’ (ibid: 25). The notion of Internationalism highlights the fact that the majority of contemporary transnational activism is not necessarily concerned with supporting or opposing global capitalism, as embodied in the notion of globalisation, but is rather rooted in domestic political concerns in relation to democratic justice.

Tarrow further defines transnational activists as ‘people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contact and conflict’ (ibid: 29). Examples of transnational movements based on Internationalist concerns include diaspora and migrant movements, but also peace, anti-war, and human rights movements. The Palestinian Solidarity Movement with its current emphasis on BDS would be another example of Internationalism; whereby a dense network of transnational actors utilise financial dis/incentives in order to redefine the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its resolution. As was discussed earlier and will be discussed in more detail in chapter five, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has had a transnational character since its inception, least of all given that the legitimacy of the state of Israel is the product of a United Nations resolution.

A closer examination of the Israeli contingent of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement simultaneously affirms Tarrow’s hypothesis and underscores the complexity of transnational social movements. In the case of the three groups under study in this thesis only ICAHD engages fully with the Internationalist system of opportunity outlined by Tarrow. Given their anti-state politics, Anarchists Against the Wall explicitly avoid engagement with state and international institutions, focusing on practical solidarity at

home and transnational public mobilization through boycott advocacy abroad. However, as chapter six demonstrates efforts to avoid engagement with the state within the predominant statist framework which shapes contemporary life is highly problematic and riven with contradictions.

Ironically, Zochrot which focuses on Israeli public memory and the question of the Palestinian refugees' return has had to engage most intimately with the concerns of the transnational Palestinian Diaspora. However, this engagement has not as yet resulted in any forms of international institutional advocacy or lobbying being undertaken by the organisation. Each of these cases demonstrates the complexity of transnational activism which crosses national borders but remains rooted in the desire to reframe local political life. For this reason, the context of Israel-Palestine also poses a significant dilemma for theorising transnational activism as it blurs the lines between the local, national and international.

For example, does the transnationality of the above groups lie in their being Israeli activists who mobilise Internationalist structures to redress injustice in Israel-Palestine by lobbying the UN, EU, and/or calling for allies based in Britain, France, and other European and/or North American countries to boycott Israel? Or are they already transnational activists because they are Israelis in Israel-Palestine in a relation of oppression with the dispossessed and disenfranchised Palestinians? In other words, is the solidarity activism of AATW and ICAHD in the Occupied Territories local or transnational? It is certainly not international activism, for they are not crossing state boundaries, but it is not national and/or domestic activism either considering that the physical proximity of Israel within its 1948 borders and the Occupied Territories can be starkly contrasted with the vastly different governing regimes operating in each territory. Yet, it is precisely these activists' relationship to the state of Israel which distinguishes Israeli activists from international activists.

The above considerations highlight the fact that transnational movements are not homogenous and unified collectivities, nor are its constituent parts equally positioned in relation to the claims being pursued. Moreover, scholarly literature on transnational social movements suggests that transnational movements which focus on the political transformation of a given state appear to be more successful at mobilising long-term support and resources than those who focus on abstract values. The success of the South African anti-apartheid movement, which the BDS campaign is trying to emulate, can be contrasted with the failure of the anti-Iraq war movement which dissipated once the invasion had taken place because it failed to elaborate on concrete demands for political change (Tarrow, 2005).

The latter case also underscores the fact that the most successful transnational movements are those who are led and/or directed by the primary claims makers, or those affected by a given institution of power, with other transnational allies taking a position of solidarity. This is once again complicated in the case of Israel-Palestine where Israelis are also arguably affected by the conflict and the actions of the state of Israel. However, as the next chapter will demonstrate unequal positioning in relation to privilege and power calls forth for Israeli responsibility for and solidarity with the Palestinians. Thus, the next chapters will argue that as privileged citizens Israelis have a responsibility to address the claims of the Palestinian people by working to make Israel-Palestine a more inclusive and responsible place.

In essence, transnational activism remains rooted in domestic state politics while relying on transnational interconnection and structures of opportunity in order to bring about concrete local changes. This does not have to be seen in negative terms, for despite living in an internationalist and economically globalised world, life for the majority of humanity remains rooted in a single geo-political space. The significance of the state continues to lie in the fact that it remains the primary institution which governs day-to-

day existence; an institution which does not necessarily have to be exclusionary and oppressive, despite its history. Being a product of past and present transnational interconnections, inter-state wars and alliances, alongside the effects of migration and Diaspora, the state as an institution is much more amenable to transnational demands for change and transformation. This in itself suggests that state sovereignty is not all-powerful and unyielding, and that in fact citizens play a powerful role in the articulation of the state and its political practices. This foregrounds the role of citizens in the rearticulation of governing political structures, an argument which will be examined more closely in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the failings of the state-centric Oslo peace process and its emphasis on Israeli state sovereignty at the expense of Palestinian self-determination. It has argued that the prevailing Westphalian framework which emphasises state sovereignty over and above collective and individual rights is inadequate for dealing with questions such as peace in Israel-Palestine. Moreover, utilising Nancy Fraser's 'all affected' principle and Iris Marion Young's articulation of the importance of groups in political life, peace is understood as a relation of justice, and hence lack of peace is conceptualised as a relation of injustice and oppression. Taking the problem posed by state-centric politics, critical transnational activism is proposed and considered as viable and desirable alternative for the articulation of just peace politics. Given the relation of oppression characterising Israel-Palestine, the onus is placed on Jewish Israeli civil society to redress the imbalance of power. The articulation of the existence of a relation of oppression in turn requires a reconceptualisation of the historical and contemporary narrative of Israel-Palestine.

2. Reframing Israel-Palestine

This chapter argues that in order to fully understand the interrelated concepts of justice and peace which were examined in the previous chapter, Israel-Palestine needs to be understood as one political unit which is characterised by ethnocratic governance (Yiftachel, 2010). Such an understanding would then require a reconceptualisation of the conflict as a situation of apartheid and oppression. Iris Marion Young's five concepts of oppressive relations are utilised to examine more closely the contemporary realities of Israel-Palestine. Given the overwhelming presence of symbolic and physical violence in Israel-Palestine, the practicalities of enacting a just peace necessitate a rearticulation of the ethical-political call for nonviolent resistance to oppression as a relation of responsibility for the Other.

Israel-Palestine

What is meant by the concept of Israel-Palestine? Israel-Palestine refers to the acknowledgement that the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea is inhabited by two peoples with competing claims to national self-determination. Moreover, it is an acknowledgement of the history and ongoing legacy of a long-standing territorial dispute with a long record of inter-communal violence. As a concept Israel-Palestine seeks to incorporate the narratives of a largely immigrant settler society⁸ versus those of the displaced and dispossessed indigenous population. Two national collectivities that not only tell different stories about the same land and geo-political history, but who speak two different national languages: Arabic and Hebrew. Despite the fact that their

⁸ Jewish presence in Palestine predates Zionist immigration post-1882. In 1850 the Jewish population of Ottoman Palestine was estimated at 4% (Scholch, 1985:503). British Mandate surveys place the Jewish population of Palestine at 11% in 1922, and 31% in 1945, the population increase reflecting immigration trends (Institute of Palestine Studies, 1991).

lives and histories have been intertwined for over a hundred years, the two sides rarely speak or attempt to learn the other's language. However, we do not simply speak of 'conflicting narratives' in an abstract sense; we speak about narratives relating to a real geo-political, social and economic conflict. We are speaking, or at least should be, about the rights and wrongs of Israeli occupation and Palestinian aspirations for national recognition and self-determination. Moreover, we speak of cultural and political power and dominance. And we ask two further questions: Who has the permission to narrate the conflict in an authoritative way (Said, 1984)? And what are the necessary conditions which enable a new narrative to produce a conversation in common:

Israelis and Palestinians are now so intertwined through history, geography and political actuality that it seems to me absolute folly to try and plan the future of one without the other. The problem with the America-sponsored Oslo process was that it was premised on a notion of partition and separation, whereas everywhere one looks in the territory of historical Palestine, Jews and Palestinians live together (Said, 2000: 191-192).

As Edward Said suggests, Israel-Palestine increasingly refuses to be disentangled and partitioned from its other. Israel-Palestine is a tangible geopolitical space and yet a land that is continuously re-imagined in and through politics, poetry, prose and film. Israel-Palestine is a land without borders, and the land with the most borders. It is also a land in which borders bleed into one another and refuse to be delineated and become fixed. Israel-Palestine is a geopolitical description and a cultural metaphor that is both internal and external to the border. Israel-Palestine is a myth and a reality. It is a contested space which includes that which it wishes to exclude. It is a land where its inhabitants live in fear of the border which threatens to banish and cast them out beyond the beloved homeland.

Israel-Palestine constitutes a conflicted understanding of the Self and Other, whereby the pure Self can only exist by excluding the feared Other. Thus, in the minds of its 11 million inhabitants, Palestine does not exist in Israel and Israel does not exist in Palestine. Yet, while the contested geopolitical and cultural presence of the rival Other is often omitted from the Jewish and Palestinian protagonists' conflicting narratives, the Other's contested co-existence in the cultural and geopolitical imaginary of the Self remains indisputable.

For decades the dominant Zionist position on Palestine was characterized by the twin maxims: 'a land without people, for a people without a land' and Golda Meir's infamous statement that 'There was no such thing as Palestinians'. This denial has been partially enabled by Israel's emphasis on the Palestinians' 'Arabness' often phrased in terms of 'the Arabs already have many countries (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, etc), why do they want Israel?' Hence, since the Palestinians are Arabs, they do not and need not exist as a political entity, and therefore, cannot and should not make political and territorial claims on the State of Israel. Israel's longstanding denial of Palestinian existence can also be attributed to their statelessness. The Palestinians did not exist because a Palestinian state did not exist; thus in the eyes of the Israeli regime they had no legitimate claims for national self-determination.

As Rashid Khalidi (1997) explains it was not until the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987 that the indisputable presence and significance of the Palestinian people became undeniable for the Israeli leadership. The Oslo Accords signalled the first sign of Israeli recognition of the Palestinian people. Yet, after forty-four years of military occupation and illegal Jewish settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip the status of the Palestinians in relation to the Israeli regime remains problematic. As Amnon Rubinstein

put it in a Knesset meeting, in the OPTs ‘there are Israeli citizens with full rights, and there are non-Israeli, non-citizens with non-rights’ (quoted in Eldar and Zertal, 2007: xx).

Conversely, for the Palestinians, Jewish presence in Palestine, and Zionist aspirations in particular, have been undeniable since the onset of mass Jewish immigration in the 1930s and 1940s. On the other hand, recognition of the existence of Israel has been the hardest task. The Palestinians, who had consistently rejected partition plans for Palestine from the 1930s onwards on the basis of their majority status in Palestine, found themselves dispossessed and stateless in the aftermath of the Nakba and the creation of Israel in 1948, with the overwhelming majority of Palestinians expelled outside Palestine’s historic borders.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) established in 1964 by Palestinian refugees espoused ‘the elimination of the Zionist entity [Israel]’ and the Diaspora’s return to historic Palestine as its primary goal. By 1969 the PLO, reconciled with an established and settled Jewish population in Israel/Palestine, declared its objective ‘the establishment of a secular-democratic state in historic Palestine’ which would guarantee the rights of Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike. From the 1970s onwards the PLO increasingly shifted towards a two-state paradigm, earning international recognition as ‘the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people’ in 1974; culminating in the 1988 Declaration of Independence which accepted a two-state solution based on the June 1967 borders of Israel, the Gaza Strip, and West Bank (Khalidi, 2006: 154-5).

Given the apparent mutual acceptance of the two-state solution, at least in rhetoric, why is it necessary to discuss the concept of Israel-Palestine? Since the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000 it has been widely accepted that the Oslo Accords and US sponsored ‘peace process’ had come to a halt or even an end. The ascendancy and primacy of the settlement project within Israeli politics and society has normalised the

ultra-Zionist aspiration for ‘Greater Israel’ (territory encompassing all of historic Palestine). Expanding Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories, the denial of the rights of non-citizen Palestinians, and increasing threats against Palestinian Israelis that they will be denationalized or “transferred” if they do not demonstrate sufficient loyalty to Israel as a ‘Jewish state’ (Ravid, 2010), has resulted in the charge of Israeli Apartheid (White, 2009), and growing calls for a secular one-state solution (Abunimah, 2006).

Any attempt to make sense of and illustrate the paradox of Israel-Palestine requires the careful examination of complementary and simultaneously conflicting geo-political maps and narratives. Maps need borders and borders need maps. The nation-state relies on its borders being marked on internationally recognised maps. Sovereign territories require to be bound by colours which differentiate them from other sovereign territories. Few of us consider ourselves defined by colour-coded blocks on maps, yet we refer to the geo-political map almost unconsciously as we respond to the routine question: ‘Where are you from?’, mostly answering with relative ease: ‘I’m from there’ and if you happen not to come from the USA or Western Europe, you may have to add: ‘My country borders on there and there’. But of course the above notion requires you to be able to recognise your place of origin on an internationally recognised geo-political map and moreover, the ability to recognise that map as a truthful representation of the spatial and cultural origins from which you derive your identity.

For over 60 years the Palestinian people have been a stateless nation and Palestine has been absent from the maps of the world. Since 29th November 1947, when the international community voted for UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II), proposing the partition of Palestine into a Jewish State (52%) and an Arab State (48%), the land of Palestine became a golden map worn on a chain around the necks of dispossessed Palestinian women (Sa’di, 2008). The political negation of the indigenous population of

Palestine as a national community was completed in the aftermath of the 1948 War when on 14th May 1948 the Jewish State of Israel declared itself sovereign and independent on 78% of the former land of Palestine, with the remaining 22% of the Palestinian populated territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank coming under Egyptian and Jordanian administration respectively until 1967.

For the Palestinian people, Jewish settlement in Palestine, culminating in their displacement and the establishment of Israel as a 'Jewish State', has been experienced and continues to be perceived as a manifestation of European colonial dispossession. In Zionist self-representations, on the other hand, the project of Jewish immigration to and settlement in Palestine is portrayed as an emancipatory nationalist endeavour for the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine that would guarantee Jewish sovereignty and security. While both of these versions of the role of Zionism conflict, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive definitions of the same ideological phenomenon. In many respects, Zionism's self-representation is indeed correct; the writings of Theodore Herzl which inspired the Zionist project and led to the formation of The World Zionist Congress in 1882 came on the back of a wave of European anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century characterised by persecution and pogroms against European Jewry.

For the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, many of whom had personal experiences of migrating from one European state to another in search of a better host-country and protection from persecution, the idea of migrating to Palestine and fulfilling the messianic promise of return would not have been a novel or out-of-the-ordinary suggestion. Thus, the wheel of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict was set in motion in the nineteenth century when the first Jewish immigrants began to arrive and settle on the land purchased in Ottoman-controlled Palestine by the newly established

Jewish Agency. Nevertheless, while the story told about the Zionist pioneers is not entirely fictional, the claim that Palestine was ‘a land without people for a people without a land’ was and is an outright fabrication.

The recent historical challenge to this founding myth has led some Israeli and international scholars of the region to agree with the Palestinians about the description of Zionism as a form of European colonialism. Yet others have argued that Zionism cannot be described as ‘colonialism’ due to the settlers’ transnational composition and their lack of a single metropole from which Zionism sprung. For example, the British colonial Metropole was the United Kingdom; however, this was not the case for Jewish immigrants to Palestine who derived from different European locations and had little interest in empire in the traditional sense, their migration being largely the result of displacement.

Proponents of this view, that is those who do not side with the traditional Zionist interpretation nor with the colonial paradigm, tend to compare Zionism to the ideologies of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Eastern European ethno-nationalism, i.e. the notion that an ethno-religious collectivity constitutes a ‘nation’, and a nation is entitled to a nation-state, and that that state should encompass all the territories in which members of the said national collectivity reside. To illustrate this, Jeff Halper (2008) gives the example of Serb (Yugoslav) nationalism which sparked the First World War with the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand, and the contemporary idea of ‘Greater Serbia’ prevalent among Serb nationalists in the 1990s.

Gabriel Piterberg disagrees with the above definition of Zionism, arguing instead that the Zionist project was from its inception a ‘settler colonial’ endeavour driven by three foundational principles. The foremost of these principles was/is ‘the negation of exile’ or ‘the denial of memory: Jewish-‘exilic’ memory on the one hand, and Palestinian

memory on the other' (1996: 129). The second tenet was/is the messianic promise of 'the return' to the land of Israel and the deliverance of the Jewish people, which is linked to the third and more secular principle of 'the return to history' with its premise being that 'the natural and irreducible form of human collectivity is the nation' (Piterberg, 2001: 32). Piterberg equates the Zionist ideology and Israeli settlement in Palestine with European Protestant settler colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In defence of the settler-colonial thesis Piterberg adds:

From the moment Zionism's goal became the resettlement of European Jews in a land controlled by a colonial European power, in order to create a sovereign political entity, it could no longer be understood as 'just' a central or east European nationalism; it was also, inevitably, a white-settler colonialism (2010: 116).

This view is supported by Ilan Pappé (2008a) who compares and contrasts the early stages of Jewish settlement with 'diluted' Protestant German colonial ventures in Asia and Africa during the eighteenth century. However, he goes further by wedding the two definitions above, arguing that despite its similarity to other religious-inspired settler colonial movements; Zionism is also different because it represents a unique blend of ethno-nationalism and European settler colonialism. In addition, Pappé asserts that the Zionist project is/was based on three driving ambitions:

to find a safe haven for Jews after centuries of persecution...[and] the desire to reinvent Judaism as a national movement... However, as soon as these two impulses were territorially realized in Palestine, the national and humanist project became a colonialist one. Inside Palestine a third impulse was added, the wish to create a pure Jewish space in whatever part of Palestine was coveted as the future Jewish State (ibid: 159).

The question of colonialism is particularly pertinent in the case of Palestine given that the so called Holy Land has been at the heart of colonial and imperial struggles for domination for hundreds of years. Zionist settlement in Palestine began during the reign of the fledgling Ottoman Empire, but it was the British Empire which made the dream of establishing a Jewish national homeland in Palestine a real possibility. In the aftermath of the First World War the League of Nations placed Palestine under British Mandate and in 1917 Lord Balfour declared:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

At this juncture it is important to note that many accounts of the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict often neglect the significance of the role of British imperialism in the Middle East. James Renton's (2007) illuminating article on 'The Invention of the Middle East, 1917-1918' reveals how Britain played a key role in setting the stage for regional conflict by playing a double game in the effort to extend its colonial influence. Primarily drawing on documents from the British imperial administration's pre-war propaganda campaigns in the Middle East, Renton demonstrates that in a bid to weaken the rival Ottoman Empire, Britain sponsored, financially and militarily, Arab nationalist aspirations in the region. In Palestine, however, Britain's strategy of supporting Arab nationalism conflicted with its support for Jewish settler-colonisation. The Mandate authorities actively supported Zionist aspirations for statehood in Palestine while suppressing the equivalent sentiments among the Palestinians. Renton further gives the

example of the 1936-1939 Arab Uprising as not simply representing acts of popular opposition to growing Jewish immigration to Palestine, but moreover as articulations of a nationalist inspired revolt against British colonial double standards, which is one of the reasons why the revolts were brutally repressed.

Of course, British colonialism was not the sole European imperialism to play a part in the making of the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The rise to power of the Nazi regime in Europe, the outbreak of the Second World War, followed by the aftermath of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, revealing the extent of the devastation that was wrought by the Shoah, all played their part in the events that led to today. Post-war Europe was in disarray, with millions dead, displaced and destitute, and Europe's Jewry almost entirely decimated. While it is incorrect to attribute the creation of the state of Israel to the European Holocaust, because, as was demonstrated earlier, the Zionist project predates the event by nearly 50 years, nevertheless, the immediate legacy of World War II did result in garnering international support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. These factors, coupled with large-scale legal and illegal Jewish migration to Palestine, a weakened British Empire, and growing Zionist demands for the Mandate's withdrawal, on occasion articulated through the terrorist activities of the Irgun, contributed to the United Nations' 1947 decision to partition Palestine into an Arab and Jewish State, which in turn resulted in the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war.

In the aftermath of the 1948 war the Palestinians became stateless. A Palestinian state was not established on any part of the territory that constituted pre-1948 Palestine, and the 750,000-900,000 Palestinians who were expelled beyond Israel's borders took, what they believed to be, temporary shelter in makeshift camps in the neighbouring Arab states of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. These refugees and their descendants remain in these camps. The small minority of around 200,000 Palestinians who managed to stay within

the newly established State of Israel were given citizenship under the civic identity of 'Israeli Arabs' and were subject to martial law until 1966.

The end of martial law for Palestinians within Israel roughly coincided with the June 1967 or Six Day War during which Israel fought a pre-emptive battle and won a swift military victory over its neighbouring Arab states, successfully conquering the remaining territories that constituted pre-1948 Palestine. One of the first acts of Israeli Occupation took part in the midst of war, the centuries old Moroccan Quarter in the Old City of East Jerusalem was demolished on 10th June, leaving hundreds of Palestinians homeless and resulting in the death of an elderly woman who was buried alive beneath the rubble of her home. The first act of Israeli military occupation continues to characterize the Israeli policy of demolishing Palestinian homes. An estimated 26,000 homes or more have been demolished in the West Bank and East Jerusalem alone (UNOG, 2011). By 2006 50,000 homes in the Gaza Strip had been fully or partially demolished (Ghanim, 2008: 76). During Operation Cast Lead, which lasted only a few weeks in December 2008 – January 2009, 3,000 Palestinian homes were destroyed fully and 20,000 partially; countless other buildings, including schools, hospitals and police stations suffered a similar fate (Amnesty International, 2009: 55).

An Exceptional Apartheid

From the onset of occupation in 1967, Military Order No. 5 declared the West Bank a closed military zone resulting in a set-up whereby 'instead of internal mobility being the rule with restrictions being the exception, restrictions are the rule, and mobility – through permits – is the exception' (Abu Zahra, 2008: 306). The permit system, alongside colour-coded IDs and vehicle registration plates, hundreds of internal checkpoints, and sporadic road closures restrict Palestinian movement on a daily basis (ibid: 306 – 309). Since 2005 family unifications between Palestinians from Israel and the

Occupied Territories, or the OPT and East Jerusalem have been prohibited, and reunions between residents of Gaza and West Bank are also practically impossible. In practice this means that a bride from Nablus cannot join her husband in Nazareth because she is not allowed into Israel, and if he moves to live with her he would lose his residency entitlements as an Israeli citizen. The situation is even more problematic for Jerusalemites who would have their blue ID revoked if they move to reside in the West Bank, and would therefore be barred from re-entering Jerusalem (ibid: 317).

This policy has in effect crippled the Palestinian economy and has also severed the geographical continuity of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem, and is further tearing apart Palestinian families and communities. Many Palestinians faced with insurmountable violations of their right to family life and daily restrictions on their freedom of movement have chosen to leave Palestine altogether. Observers have termed the results of Israel's closure policies 'voluntary expulsion':

territory can be acquired by depopulating areas and using population registries, identity cards, and permit systems to zone population movement. In other words, the manipulation of forms of (non) citizenship, to displace and dispossess some people, thereby gains territory for others (Abu-Zahra, 2008: 303).

The Palestinian experience of disenfranchisement and dispossession can be contrasted with the privileged experience of Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories whose very presence is in direct contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention⁹. While Palestinians have no citizenship rights, and are subject to arbitrary and brutal military

⁹ Article 49 stipulates: 'Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive... The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies'

regulations, the Israeli settlers in the Occupied Territories fall under the direct jurisdiction of Israeli civilian law and receive exclusive protection by the Israeli army. The Civil Administration, the quasi-governmental body responsible for administering Palestinians in the OPT, grants building permits to fewer than 5% of Palestinian applicants. The same institution demolishes the homes of Palestinians it has refused to grant permits to, and confiscates their privately owned land for Israeli settlement expansion under the guise of military necessity (Abu Zahra, 2008: 314; Eldar and Zertal, 2007: 305):

Given that Jewish colonists – but not Palestinians – in the West Bank are treated as Israelis, heavily subsidized, and given access to a complex system of colonist-only roads and land blocks, the term “geographical separation” [used under South African Apartheid] seems also rather euphemistic in this case (Abu Zahra, 2008: 314).

Why do Jewish Israelis and Palestinians have such a markedly different experience although they reside within the same geo-political boundaries? What governance regime structures the dichotomy of privilege and oppression? The dominant thesis purports that the difference is that the Israeli state within its internationally recognized 1948 borders is a democracy, while the territories occupied in 1967 continue to be governed in a state of exception, this being a reference to Giorgio Agamben’s (2005) socio-legal concept which refers to a physical space, such as a camp or detention centre, created by a sovereign state in which the rule of law does not operate and apply, and where the sovereign is free to subject those placed in a state of exception to violence, and even to kill them with impunity. The state of exception hypothesis has been applied to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank especially since the beginning of the policy of ‘closure’ in the 1990s (Gregory, 2004, Zreik, 2008).

However, what the state of exception thesis fails to account for is why Israeli settlers in the OPT are governed by ‘democratic’ Israeli law while this same democratic regime is not extended to the occupied Palestinians who have lived under Israel’s military rule for the past 45 years. Neither does it explain why the Palestinian citizens of Israel are similarly disadvantaged vis-à-vis their fellow Jewish citizens. Proponents of Israel’s democracy often contrast the experience of Arab Israelis (or Palestinians with Israeli citizenship) with occupied, non-citizen Palestinians. The former allegedly enjoy all the trappings of modern citizenship including the right to vote in and stand for elections, while the latter’s citizenship rights will one day be delivered in a yet-to-be established state of Palestine somewhere in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

However, as the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé (2011) has documented at great length, the story of Palestinian Israelis is somewhat more complicated than established representations would have it. In many respects, the Palestinian citizens of Israel were the first Palestinians to experience Israeli military occupation. The internal military regime, which lasted until 1966, closely resembles the tactics and strategies deployed in the present day Occupied Territories: from military closure zones, arbitrary arrests, roadblocks, random ID spot-checks, curfews, and house demolitions, to permanent expulsions right up until 1955, this being the fate of the Palestinian Bedouin community of the Naqab/Negev in particular.

Land confiscation and appropriation by the state authorities in the early days of the Israeli regime have also contributed to and continue to shape present day geo-spatial arrangements within Israel’s 1948 borders. Private Palestinian land expropriated by the state was transferred to the quasi-governmental institution of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), an institution which has since 1953 acted as the legal custodian of land on behalf of the Jewish people ‘for perpetuity’ (Pappé, 2006: 220-224). Alongside the Israeli Land

Authority, the JNF controls 93% of land within Israel which is solely reserved for Jewish use. An estimated 3% of land in Israel serves the housing and municipal needs, such as schools and playgrounds, of Palestinians in Israel who constitute 20% of the overall population (Pappé, 2011):

The emerging picture is as follows: the borders of the state are almost meaningless in that being a Palestinian citizen inside Israel does not mean that you are part of the collective [national] project, while being a Jew living outside the state does not mean that you are not part of this project, since according to the ethos of the state (and the Law of Return), every Jew can become a citizen at any point in time. All this renders the difference between the actual and potential (Jewish) citizen marginal and blurs the concept of borders (Zreik, 2008: 140, original emphasis).

The racialised hierarchy which characterizes Israel's governance regime in the 1948 and 1967 territories has resulted in the charge of 'apartheid', the case for which has been clearly articulated and thoroughly substantiated by Uri Davis (1990 [1987], 2003) and Ben White (2009), and more recently in the findings and conclusions of the third session of The Russell Tribunal on Palestine, held in South Africa in 2011. Affirming the Israeli apartheid hypothesis, Ilan Pappé (2008b and 2011) rejects the 'state of exception' hypothesis, arguing that a state of exception paradigm only functions if one is examining Israel's 'democracy' from the privileged perspective of Jewish Israelis. If on the other hand the situation is examined in terms of Israel's relationship with its Palestinian citizens and the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories then what is revealed is 'a state of oppression'. Within the state of oppression two parallel regimes of governance operate simultaneously: the democratic regime applied to Jewish Israelis is characterized by the rule of law and representative parliamentary democracy; the Palestinians, on the other

hand, fall under the dominion of the autocratic, unaccountable and covert operations of the secret services and military. Pappé (2008b) illustrates the effects of the state of oppression with the example that the majority of Jewish Israelis are not concerned by the fact that Israel has existed in a constitutional state of emergency since its first day. This is because the state of emergency and all that it entails has never been and, they trust, will never be applied to them. The emergency only applies to the oppressed Palestinians (ibid: 150-153).

The Five Faces of Oppression

This section proceeds with an application of Iris Marion Young's framework for justice in relation to group difference to the analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a situation of oppression. Young's emphasis on group differentiation allows us to retain some sense of the socio-political significance of the two national collectivities in Israel-Palestine while simultaneously accounting for differences within and between these groups. In that respect, broadly speaking we are discussing Israeli Jews vis-a-vis Palestinians. However, the experience of these two national collectivities can be further subdivided. For example, the Palestinian people are constituted by Israeli Palestinians, i.e. those who hold Israeli citizenship, the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the geographically dispersed Palestinian refugee Diaspora. Similarly, Israeli Jews can be subdivided into the politically dominant European Ashkenazi, the Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews of Arabic and Mediterranean origin, and to this mix the more recent wave of migration from the former USSR can also be added, as well as any potential citizens from the Jewish Diaspora.

Given that Israeli society is characterized in the main by transnational Jewish migration and settlement these groups should be treated as broad categories which are in themselves political and ideological in nature. However, as will transpire in the discussion

which follows, Israel's Zionist national project has largely succeeded and continues to succeed in integrating and imbuing successive waves of Jewish immigrants to Israel-Palestine with national loyalty. Thus, while there is socio-political differentiation and hierarchy within Jewish Israeli society, on the whole the Jewish collectivity in all its diversity is nevertheless in a social, political and economic position of power and privilege vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

As Young asserts, justice cannot be thought of without the related concepts of difference and oppression. Thus, identifying group privilege necessitates an analysis of oppression and exclusion as experienced by differentially related groups. Young begins her account of the five facets of oppression via the concept of 'exploitation' which she defines as characterized by capitalist labour relations in which a dominant class is privileged through the accumulation of wealth derived from the devaluation of others' labour. She adds the layers of patriarchy and racism to explain how labour relations of privilege and exploitation can also be driven by gendered and racialized hierarchies. The second facet is 'marginalization', referring to the exclusion of certain groups, in particular mentally and physically disabled people, from access to the labour market. She argues that this deals a double injustice because although labour relations are exploitative, nevertheless the shared experience of exploitation can lead to some degree of individual autonomy and group solidarity, whereas the marginalized are relegated to social invisibility which can have damaging effects not only on people's social and economic opportunities but also on their self-esteem.

The previous concepts are further related to the third concept of 'powerlessness' which defines people's ability to exercise autonomy or authority in respect of their working life. Young gives the example of the relative autonomy of professionals versus those who perform low or unskilled labour. The fourth face of oppression is 'cultural

imperialism' which is about the systematic privileging of a dominant group's culture and history, and the silencing and othering of other groups' experiences. The fifth aspect of oppression is 'violence', which includes structural violence by state institutions but also individual violence against certain groups and individuals belonging to groups who have been rendered as killable, rapeable, and abusable, coupled with relative impunity for the perpetrator of racialized, sexist, homophobic or xenophobic violence.

In the case of Israel-Palestine applying the cultural imperialism phenomenon is relatively straightforward. As was demonstrated in the preceding historical section on Israel-Palestine, the Zionist version of the conflict and the history of 1948, 1967 and subsequently has been the dominant version in the conflict and has been largely accepted and enacted by other powerful international institutions which wield great degree of authority and power over the fate of Palestinian self-determination. As Edward Said writes 'Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority' (2010: 176). This colonizing narrative has gone as far as to render the Palestinians nonexistent and continues to legitimize symbolic and real violence against Palestinian bodies and property. Moreover, the imperial tactics of the Israeli state extend beyond its geo-political borders, which it has refused to designate beyond vague strategic references to armistice, green, blue, and red lines which it claims to be defending but in reality violates on a regular basis. This is particularly relevant to Israel's relationship with the Palestinian refugee Diaspora to whom it denies the right of return yet reserves the right to police their mobilisation and organisation despite the absence of legally recognised jurisdiction, as has been argued is the case for Israel's longstanding military involvement in Lebanon (Chomsky, 1999; Hever, 2010).

Gabriel Piterberg (1996) and others also argue that Jewish Israeli society is characterized by a double Orientalist discourse. On the one hand, the denial of Arab Palestinian identity and the privileging of Zionist Jewish identity; and on the other hand, the denigration of the history and memory of Mizrahi and Sephardi Israelis, commonly referred to as the Oriental Jews who migrated to Israel from Arab and Muslim countries in the 1950s. This has resulted in what Piterberg calls the ‘Ashkenazi hegemony’, or in other words the privileging of white European Jewish heritage within the state’s narratives. The driving force behind this ‘domestic Orientalism’ has been the prevalence of modernisation theories which have constituted the Muslim and/or Oriental other as backward, underdeveloped, and in need of civilizing. The socio-political marginalization experienced by second and third generation Mizrahi Israelis adds to the complexity of the conflict. It is particularly interesting to note that only about 10% of Israeli conscripts, with conscription compulsory for both men and women aged 18 and over, actively serve in the Occupied Territories during their military service. The majority of IDF soldiers who serve in the OPT tend to be Mizrahi or the more recently arrived Russian Jews.¹⁰

A discussion of ‘exploitation’ and ‘marginalization’ cannot be discussed separately in the context of Israel-Palestine because they are so closely intertwined in the ongoing regime of exclusion and oppression. From the beginning of Israel’s Occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank in 1967 until the signing of the Oslo Accords the Israeli economy was heavily reliant on Palestinian labour. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories travelled every day to work in the low waged employment sectors in Israel. The Oslo period created and consolidated Palestinian economic dependence on Israel and witnessed the beginning of the policy of ‘closure’: partially, then permanently blocking Palestinian entry from the OPT to Israel, a situation

¹⁰ Presentation by Breaking the Silence, East Jerusalem 2011.

exasperated by the fragmentation of the West Bank into administrative zones A, B, and C, and the construction of the Separation Wall since 2002 (Hever, 2010):

Workers couldn't work, traders couldn't sell their goods, farmers couldn't reach their fields. In 1993 per capita GNP in the occupied territories plummeted close to 30 percent; by the following year, poverty among Palestinians was up 33 percent (Klein, 2007: 433).

Naomi Klein further argues that the wholesale exclusion of thousands of Palestinian labourers was possible due to two major political factors, the first being the unprecedented immigration of a million Jews and others from Russia and the former Soviet countries from 1993 onwards. The new arrivals served a triple purpose in enabling the policy of 'closure' by taking over the low-paid jobs previously done by Palestinians, coupled with the arrival of impressively large numbers of nuclear scientist émigrés who joined Israel's growing arms and homeland security sectors; and finally, the contextual ignorance of many of these new immigrants who now make up a substantial proportion of the Jewish settler population in the West Bank because of the relatively cheap lifestyle on offer, in contrast to living in Israel proper (ibid: 430 - 433). The second aspect to closure, which in essence sealed the deal, for a want of a better phrase, has been the War-on-Terror waged by Western states post 11th September 2001. Israel's experience in fighting a long-term conflict and defusing the Second Intifada placed it in a prime position to turn its experience to profit, making it a world leader in homeland security and the fourth largest arms dealer, bigger than the UK in 2006 (ibid: 428 - 436). Nevertheless, war profiteering, which Naomi Klein terms 'disaster capitalism', has not benefited all Israelis equally. Since 2000 the gap between the rich and poor has been steadily growing with 25% of Israelis living below the poverty line, and child poverty standing at 36% in 2007 (ibid: 436). However, this picture is complicated by the fact that Palestinian Israelis who number 20% of Israel's citizens, despite their minority status in the polity, are

disproportionately represented in the poverty statistics. Half of those living in poverty in Israel are Palestinians, and two-thirds of Israeli children living in poverty are Palestinian (Pappé, 2011: 6).

This has led to a growing experience of ‘powerlessness’ which can be viewed as a continuation of the concepts of ‘exploitation’ and ‘marginalization’. While, occupied Palestinians are barred from entering Israel, by 2009 the number of illegal Jewish settlers in the West Bank and annexed East Jerusalem stood at over 500,000 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009). The 200 settlements in the West Bank boast 1,400 businesses, 17 large industrial zones, and generous tax incentives.¹¹ 30,000 Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories are employed in these Industrial Zones. Israeli labour laws which include minimum wage requirements and advanced health and safety regulations do not apply to Palestinian workers; neither does Palestinian labour law. Palestinian Trade Unions have no access to the Industrial Zones, and collective organisation is almost impossible because the workers rely on hard to obtain security clearance permits. Furthermore, the Israeli army has been used to suppress protests over conditions. Despite the illegal and oppressive status of the settlements, and the exploitative conditions faced by Palestinian workers in the Industrial Zones, occupied Palestinians have almost no choice whether to work there or not. Israel’s policy of ‘closure’ has resulted in high unemployment in the West Bank and conditions are markedly worse in blockaded Gaza. In contrast, the settlements are highly subsidized by the Israeli state and can afford to pay higher wages than can be found within the rest of the West Bank, but still considerably lower than the minimum wage in Israel (whoprofits.org). In short, the Palestinian workforce in the occupied territories is flexible, cheap, expendable, easily exploited and powerless.

¹¹ Personal notes from the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, International Session on Corporate Complicity in Israel’s Occupation (20.11.2010).

Klein (2007) concludes that the process of closure has turned the Palestinian people into 'surplus humanity'. In contrast, the Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank and annexed East Jerusalem, whose presence in the OPT is considered illegal under International Law, enjoy a lifestyle of luxury and prosperity not just in relation to the oppressed Palestinians but also in comparison to the average Israeli who has become poorer over the past decade. The Israeli economist Shir Hever (2010) argues that the incentives necessary to sustain the settlements, including lucrative tax breaks, generous government subsidies and a flourishing welfare state which has been dismantled in Israel proper, coupled with huge security and infrastructural spending, have had a heavy financial toll on the Israeli economy, the impoverishment of which is only masked by the continuous functioning of Israel's war economy.

The final state of oppression identified by Young, namely 'violence', is the most prominent feature of collective relations in Israel-Palestine. Whether one is speaking of the history of the conflict or its contemporary manifestations, violence as war and/or terror is continuously evoked in narratives and discussions about Israel-Palestine. In her account of violence, Young includes not only state violence against oppressed groups but also individual violence against oppressed individuals. Here she gives the example of racist and sexist violence both of which are often met with 'victim blaming' and social and legal impunity for the perpetrator. In essence, even when the state itself does not undertake the task to persecute oppressed groups, its message is that abusing, raping, and killing members of oppressed groups is not as bad as doing so against privileged/protected members of society. In short, oppressed lives are not as worthy as the lives of others.

In the case of Israel-Palestine the power disparity between the two national collectivities manifests itself in symbolic as well as physical ways which are closely

linked to the concept of cultural imperialism. Palestinian violent, as well as nonviolent, resistance to the occupation is often caricatured as ‘terrorism’ within dominant media and political discourses, while Israel’s state violence is justified as ‘defensive’ (Said, 1984; 1988). These discourses tend to disregard the fact that the struggle between the Palestinians and the Occupation is a struggle between a stateless and occupied people and a militarized occupying state. The disparity is reflected in the rarely reported statistical inequality between Palestinian and Israeli fatalities caused by violence in the conflict.¹²

Furthermore, while Palestinian violence against Israelis tends to be perpetrated by individuals and small militant groups, Israeli state violence is organised and manifests itself in all aspects of daily life including the denial of formal citizenship to occupied Palestinians, house demolitions, land expropriations, imprisonment without charge, torture in prisons; and individual, albeit state sanctioned, attacks by soldiers and settlers against Palestinian personhood and property.¹³ The disregard and/or misrepresentation of Palestinian resistance as always violent will be discussed in Chapter Three which examines strategies for nonviolent resistance to the Occupation. Before delving into the topic of nonviolence in the next chapter, it is necessary to examine the concept of violence in relation to power; this will be done with reference to the state of exception.

One of the most prominent critiques of the state of exception is that it is based on two flawed assumptions. As Pappé (2011) suggests, the state of exception paradigm favours the view of the privileged leaving the oppressed devoid of any agency in relation to sovereign violence. The second flawed assumption is that sovereign power is always bound to produce violence and may itself be constituted by violence. Hannah Arendt’s (1970) illuminating writing on violence reveals a rather more nuanced picture of the

¹² see B’Tselem: Fatalities

¹³ B’Tselem: Statistics

function of sovereign power and violence. She makes the case for conceptual clarity in relation to five concepts which she argues tend to be used interchangeably in political and philosophical writing on the subject of violence. The five concepts are power, strength, force, authority, and finally, violence. Arendt defines 'power' as the collective empowerment of an individual or group to act in the name of the collectivity. For example, in a representative democracy the majority of citizens empower a given party to be their elected government and to rule over them for a certain period of time.

'Strength', on the other hand, refers to an individual attribute or characteristic; and 'force', Arendt argues, should be reserved as a synonym for 'energy', even when used in the political sense, as in the force of a social movement. 'Authority' in Arendt's definition reflects 'strength' in the sense that it is defined as a characteristic pertaining to 'unquestioning recognition by those who are asked to obey; neither coercion nor persuasion are needed' (ibid: 45). 'Violence' on the other hand is instrumental. Arendt argues that 'power' relies on consent rather than coercion, and violence appears in moments when consent is withdrawn. For example, while state violence may coerce dissenters into submission, it cannot necessarily reinstate its power and/or their consent. Here, she gives the example of totalitarian states in which terror becomes the dominant mode of government 'when violence, having destroyed all power, does not abdicate but, on the contrary, remains in full control. It has often been noticed that the effectiveness of terror depends almost entirely on the degree of social atomization' (ibid: 55).

Arendt's reference to state terror is of course a reference to Nazi Germany. However, her discussion on violence relates to other case studies which fall on a continuum between power and violence, including the USA's war in Vietnam, totalitarianism in the USSR, and revolutionary violence. It is interesting to note that while Agamben draws heavily on Arendt for his articulation of the state of exception, he does

not place the same emphasis on the collective. Unlike Arendt's conception of state power which relies on collective consent, including Nazi Germany for its anti-Semitic policies, Agamben's sovereign and its victim, the homo sacer, are abstract and atomised. Agamben's inescapable sovereign can be partly attributed to his reliance on Foucaultian thought which traps the subject in an endless cycle of discursive formation and reformulation. That is not to say that Arendt's approach is not problematic. For example, she makes little distinction between state and revolutionary violence, and even while she acknowledges the latter as a response to oppression, she nevertheless insists on a statist framework in a post-revolutionary moment. However, what is important for this discussion is that Arendt articulates power and violence in terms of an ongoing struggle between the people and the state which leaves room for active resistance to oppression rather than capitulating to abstract notions of an all-powerful and inescapable sovereignty.

Wendy Brown (2010) further critiques the above tendency of political theorists' to conceptualise state sovereignty in theological terms. She demonstrates how, from Hobbes's Leviathan to Agamben's sovereign, secular sovereignty has not only co-opted, but reinstated itself as God Almighty: omnipresent, omnipotent, and supreme (ibid: 58-61). Moreover, in a world characterised by transnational flows of goods, ideas and people which challenge and reshape national state boundaries, the state has become more not less aggressively theological in its invocation of divine power. Whether by defining itself as a religious state, as in the Islamic Republic of Iran, or by invoking a religious ethos, as in the Christian inspired USA, Brown argues that the associated fortressing against real and imagined threats to state sovereignty reveals a crisis of sovereign power. Thus, while sovereignty wishes to portray itself as unmovable and unshakable it is in fact extremely vulnerable to social and economic forces beyond its territorial control (ibid: 61-66).

Brown argues that the contradiction between the state's projected image of strength versus its reality of permeability and vulnerability is most evident in the contemporary phenomenon of state walling. In the case of Israel-Palestine, the West Bank Barrier/Fence/Wall is a structure allegedly designed to guard Israeli citizens against Palestinian terrorism. Leaving aside the route of the Wall which snakes into Palestinian territory and incorporates large blocks of the illegal settlements into Israel proper, the Wall itself serves multiple contradictory purposes. On the one hand, the Israeli state claims to seek to keep Palestinian terrorism out of Israel by physically preventing hostile 'penetration' and projecting concrete determination to protect its citizens. On the other hand, the fear of terrorism appears not to prevent continuing Jewish settlement beyond the Green Line. This is a most glaring contradiction in places such as Hebron, in which Jewish settler presence is physically at the heart of a predominantly conservative Muslim Palestinian city, a presence which requires substantial military reinforcement provided by the state.

Here we are presented with an irreconcilable paradox whereby the state insists on walling itself against danger and undesirable aspects of coexistence, and simultaneously the state insists upon endangering its citizens in the name of aspirations to greater sovereignty. From the perspective of the privileged citizen, i.e. those who confer power onto the state and expect protection from danger in return, the desire for walling is not just about shoring up the border against external threat. It is a psychological act of expelling the perpetration of violence against others. This desire articulates itself as the wish to see ourselves as 'good', 'innocent' and 'pure', while projecting characteristics of danger and violence onto the excluded Other.

This conceptualisation can be clearly observed in the case of Israel-Palestine in relation to the Wall and its claim to protect from wanton Palestinian terrorism. The story

of the Wall tends to narrate the conflict from the Second Intifada, characterising Palestinian actions as a rejection of peace and the desire to harm innocent Israelis for no other reason than that the Palestinians are terrorists. As Edward Said (1984, 1988) has pointed out on numerous occasions, the portrayal of Palestinians as violent extremists is not new. Nevertheless, what is new about the Second Intifada is that it coincided with 11th September 2001 and the ensuing war-on-terror and as such the counter-narrative to Palestinian resistance could be repackaged as part of the fight against a global Islamic threat (Klein, 2007).

However, as was discussed in the previous chapter and in the preceding sections, the self-projection of Israelis as innocent, and the Israeli state as vulnerable to terrorism, is a glaring example of Israel's desire to disavow its own ongoing responsibility for and actual perpetration of violence against the Palestinians. The Wall conceals the forty-six year old military occupation even as it reinforces it. It seeks to keep Palestinians out of Israel while constantly increasing the number of Jewish settlers on the other side of the Wall, making them potentially vulnerable to the very violence the state claims it wishes to protect its citizens from. In short, even as the Wall claims to protect from the blowback of the Occupation, it is itself a tool of the Occupation, the very construction of which demands the perpetration of violence, whether through expropriating land and destroying the homes of Palestinians who happen to live on the proposed route of the Wall, or by violently suppressing popular protest, as in the villages of Bil'in, Budrus, Nabih Saleh, Ni'lin, and others.

Judith Butler (2004) describes the reaction of the state and privileged citizens to terror as 'the desire to ban grief'. Grieving is a process of allowing oneself to be undone by the loss of the other; it is a moment of introspection and vulnerability which reaffirms one's being in relation to others, including those who can do us harm, and who we can

harm in return. The refusal to grieve, on the other hand, is the desire to deny our psychic and bodily vulnerability to injury and death, giving rise to a collective state of heightened anxiety, rage and hyper vigilance articulated by an aggressive claim to the right to ‘self-defence’. It is a claim which constitutes certain lives as ‘highly protected, and the abrogation of their claims to sanctity will be sufficient to mobilize the forces of war. Other lives will not find such fast and furious support and will not even qualify as “grievable”’ (ibid: 32). This ‘hierarchy of grief’ is precisely what constitutes the contemporary set-up in Israel-Palestine where a threat to Israeli life immediately results in the disavowal/negation of Palestinian life and livelihood. The most extreme recent example was Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09 where the military attack on blockaded Gaza, allegedly launched by Israel in response to the firing of rockets into Southern Israel, resulted in the death of 1,400 Palestinians, mainly civilians, and thirteen Israelis, ten of whom were soldiers in action.

Disproportionality in modern warfare, i.e. the amount of force which is not only possible but also permissible, reveals the unequal valuation of certain lives. The unequal valuation of Palestinian life can also be gauged during episodes which are not characterised by large scale violence. For example, the release of five hundred Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails in the autumn of 2011 in exchange for the return of the captured IDF soldier, Gilat Shalit, has been interpreted to imply that one Israeli soldier is worth 500 Palestinians (Guardian Blog, 2011). From the perspective of the oppressed, state violence is experienced as thanatopower, a concept Ghanim (2008) juxtaposes to biopower which is concerned with preserving life, ‘the management of colonized occupied spaces and subjugated populations’ whereby the lives of colonised subjects are ‘exposed to the continual threat of death that becomes the permanent shadow accompanying them’ (Ghanim, ibid: 67). Butler (2004) writes that the danger of this arrangement is that death and wishing to be dead may become a desirable means to

escape one's oppressed reality. Perversely, for many Palestinians, martyrdom, which does not relate exclusively to becoming a suicide bomber but more generally to dying in the name of the cause, becomes 'a way of gaining political meaning, as a way of compensating for a meaningless life. This is a deadly trap not only because of its fatal human results, but also because it turns the political into a state that can be gained only at the moment of its elimination' (Ghanim, 2008: 79).

Edward Said (1988: 50) further argues that the violence carried out by non-state groups seeks to imitate state sovereignty and its claim to the legitimate use of violence/terror for political purposes. As such, organized violence, whether carried out by the state or non-state groups, tends to rely on the same statist logic of doing politics. Karatzogianni and Robinson (2010:220) highlight that the statist logic is further evident in the state's preference for dealing with militant organisations, whose hierarchical structures remind it of itself, rather than with more non-hierarchical and pluralistic civil society formations. This in turn traps the domain of politics in an endless cycle of violence and retribution.

In an attempt to think through the best means to break the cycle of violence, Judith Butler (2004) asks 'What makes life grievable?' and highlights the fact that bodily vulnerability is at the core of our shared existence. However, she also argues that 'vulnerability is always articulated differently, that it cannot be properly thought of outside of a differentiated field of power and, specifically, the differentiated operation of norms of recognition' (ibid: 44). Thus, the recognition that another being is vulnerable does not automatically result in empathy and the desire to protect, it could equally result in the desire to harm and kill. This is where grievability is so significant: what are the conditions under which we can recognise the loss of life, even the life of those who have harmed us, as grievable?

This question gives rise to the articulation of a new theory of collective responsibility which demands not only that we think about the Other but that we think and act with the Other in a coalition that ‘will have to accept the array of sometimes incommensurable epistemological and political beliefs and modes and means of agency that brings us into activism’ (ibid: 48). What follows is an attempt to articulate the narrative practicalities of building and working in such a coalition. How does one go about building such a coalition? Is the recognition of our shared vulnerability a pre-condition to the establishment of a coalition based on ethical nonviolent responsibility for the Other?

Violence and Responsibility

As previously discussed, for Hannah Arendt (1970), state power is based on the consent of the majority of citizens. Moreover, violence plays an instrumental role in the politics of the state, and state violence is not a manifestation of state power but rather a sign that the state is losing its power and legitimacy in relation to its citizens. Nevertheless, violence, though not necessarily violence against the majority of the citizen body, as in the case of a Totalitarian state, remains an integral part of the state’s relationship to its polity and those who reside within it. In his renowned lecture *‘Politics as Vocation’* Max Weber describes the state as ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory’ (Owen and Strong, 2004 [1919]: 33). This still remains the case, in that the modern state is the legitimate bearer of the right to wage war against other states, as well as having the right to punish, imprison, and even take the life of citizens and others who are considered to have transgressed any given law within the sovereign territory.

Glenn Bowman (2001) takes the discussion further in relation to the nation-state and ethno-nationalism to argue that violence is constitutive, or foundational, of

national/state identity. Although his writing concerns primarily the pre-state emergence of ethno-national calls for a state, his argument can nevertheless be applied to Israel's relationship with the Palestinians, and the tension surrounding the state's self-image as a 'Jewish state' versus those who antagonise and/or challenge its right to be as such.

Bowman writes:

an entity's perception of what Laclau and Mouffe call 'antagonism' – a presence which is believed radically to threaten the persistence of that quiddity [Jewishness] which marks the being of an entity [Israel] – may precisely provide the spur that drives an entity to mark out the boundaries of its identity and to 'defend' them with a violence – a violence often manifested aggressively (pre-emptively) (ibid: 42).

In fact, this is very fitting for the situation in Israel-Palestine where Israel's relationship to its own borders continues to be performative rather than territorially bound. This refers to the lack of geographical fixity in Israel's sovereign boundaries; boundaries which rely on invoking and enacting metaphysical pre-state formations and Biblical claims to ownership of the land (Zertal, 2005, 2007). Similarly, Judith Butler (2009) emphasises the simultaneously productive and reproductive nature of constitutive violence. Not in the sense that the state is constituted in and through violence, but more in the sense that state power produces and reproduces certain subject formations in order to sustain and perpetuate its power over those subjects. Thus, in the case of Israel-Palestine, the state evokes certain subjects – Jewish – as its rightful citizens, and inscribes them with the duty to defend and protect the polity's purity against antagonism. Simultaneously, the state defines and casts out antagonistic others, non-Jews/Palestinians, as enemies of the nation-state, the protection of whose lives is not only not necessary, but in fact undesirable, for sustaining the Jewish State.

However, subjectification itself does not render subjects powerless to state power and its workings. Rather, in an Arendtian fashion, Butler addresses privileged subjects with a call to bear responsibility for the oppressed and dispossessed, arguing that ‘when acting reproduces the subject at the expense of another, not to act, is after all... a way of registering and demanding equality effectively. It is even a mode of resistance, especially when it refuses and breaks the frames by which war is wrought time and again’ (Butler, 2009: 184). This is an ethical-political call/demand for the articulation of conscientious refusal among Jewish Israelis, a movement, albeit a waning one, which has played an important historical-political role in Israel-Palestine, and will be examined more closely in the next chapter which theorises the psycho-discursive practicalities of articulating nonviolent resistance to oppression among critical Israelis. However, before we can do so it is important to think through more concretely the significance and contributions of the concept of responsibility at the micro level in enabling more just and peaceful relations in Israel-Palestine.

Judith Butler’s work is once again indispensable to this task, particularly given that in recent years she has focused on Jewish ethical and political thought in relation to Israel-Palestine. For Butler (2009) nonviolence is not a peaceful task. On the contrary, nonviolence and violence constitute an ongoing struggle with the self and one’s ability to do violence. Moreover, violence and nonviolence are intricately linked to our relationship with the Other and the immovable responsibility for their wellbeing. In Butler’s (2012) critical secular-philosophical reading of Levinas and Benjamin, responsibility emerges as the key concept in relation to the biblical commandment ‘Thou shall not kill’. The significance of the commandment lies in the fact that it is an injunction and not a law, that is, it is not subject to punishment, and as such it can be refused or ignored by the one who hears the call ‘not to kill’. In essence, the commandment is based on freedom of choice – the choice to hurt or not to hurt the other – which stands in contrast to state or legal law

which is based on the threat of violence as punishment, or the further demand for violence to be performed by subjects, as in military service.

However, the ability to ignore the injunction is not the same as the right to deny its pronouncement, and therefore the subject remains compelled to take responsibility for the decision to ignore the commandment. Thus, in the spirit of ‘Levinas contra Levinas’ (Butler, 2012) nonviolence remains a violent but bloodless struggle with oneself over the ability to kill or not to kill. Whatever our choices, we are always responsible for our actions and for the Other. The refusal to acknowledge that the self is always relational to others leaves only the option to destroy or be destroyed. Therefore, violence and nonviolence are always relational. Nevertheless, in spite of this reading, Levinas’s ethnocentric Judaism poses a quandary for Butler’s recuperation of his philosophy of nonviolence, a quandary which she implies a solution for at the end of the text. I hope to articulate this solution in more practical terms in the next chapter.

The quandary refers to the lack of prohibition in Judaism against killing in self-defence. In fact, killing in self-defence is not only permissible but actually an injunction to preserve the self/people. As was touched upon in the discussion on Just War theory, Israel often uses the defence of self-defence in its longstanding engagement with the Palestinians, essentially absolving its responsibility for the Other who, according to this doctrine, has by virtue of being dangerous and threatening made itself irresponsible and hence killable and ungrievable. This creates a serious paradox. How does one speak/act non-violently on behalf of an other that is allegedly trying to kill you? Butler (2012) suggests that the answer is to tell the truth about the other. That is to reconceptualise the self as the oppressor and to acknowledge one’s role in the other’s anger and search for revenge.

This brings us to Butler's reading of Walter Benjamin on divine or revolutionary violence as the duty to oppose state violence. Butler describes Benjamin's argument to choose 'not to kill' by non/violently opposing the violence of the state and its violence-preserving and violence-inducing laws as a form of anarchism. The non/violent relates to refusal which for Benjamin is not always interpreted as 'not violent' by the violence it opposes; he gives the example of the general strike which involves nothing more than refusing to work and yet in so doing damages or does symbolic and, in cases of sabotage, real violence, to the system which would be reproduced by one's labour, and is hence viewed as a violent assault on/by the system. As will be argued in the next chapter, the refusal to engage in military service has been viewed in similar terms.

In this sense, Benjamin provides us with a Jewish-anarchist form of refusal – an anarchistic moment that does not necessarily seek to institute a new political order but rather strives to free the subject from the violence of the law. Moreover, action in relation to the law is what distinguishes ethics from politics. Thus, Butler's reading of Benjamin results in the conclusion that '(1) responsibility has to be understood as a solitary, if anarchistic, form of wrestling with an ethical demand, (2) that coerced or forced obedience murders the soul and undermines the capacity of the person to come to terms with the ethical demand placed upon her, (3) and that the framework of legal accountability can neither address nor rectify the full conditions of human suffering' (Butler, 2012: 87). As such, radical ethical-political responsibility implies taking action against oppression in order to bring about a more just order.

However, Benjamin's thesis on non/violent resistance to state law has been criticised by Arendt for not being clear about whether all or only certain laws should be opposed non/violently, the former representing a particular problem for her. For Arendt a just order can only be constituted by the federalist legal and political model brought about

by a plurality of people working together for its enactment. While the state-centrism of this line of thought is somewhat problematic, it nevertheless reaffirms the case which was outlined at the beginning of this chapter for making the border the centre of analysis for cohabitation and consequently for political action and responsibility. This line of argumentation will be expanded in the next chapter which examines the question of refusal and the possibilities for the emergence of nonviolent ethical responsibility as articulated through existing civil society strategies for peace in Israel-Palestine.

Conclusion

This chapter narrated the historical-political events and actions which demand that Israel-Palestine be viewed as a geopolitical space structured by oppressive apartheid practices. This manner of reconceptualising Israel-Palestine requires a re-examination of responsibility as the ethical-political demand for nonviolent resistance through the refusal to enact state-sanctioned violence against the oppressed Other. The question of responsibility drew on the work of Judith Butler and her secular-philosophical re-reading of Levinas in relation to the injunction ‘Thou shall not kill’ in which she rejects ethno-centrist religious-political thinking. Such thinking which is also prevalent in Just War theories tends to render the Other ‘a dangerous and threatening enemy’ and hence absolves the self of the responsibility for the Other’s feelings of rage and desire for revenge by claiming self-defence. Instead, in this case, responsibility demands a rearticulation of the self as responsible for the Other’s oppression, and actively choosing to end this relation of oppression. This demand for non-violently ending oppression will be examined more closely in the next chapter in relation to critical non-statist Israeli activism.

3. Reframing Responsibility as Ethical Nonviolence

Proceeding from the previous chapter's concluding discussion on state violence, this chapter examines the question of individual refusal to reproduce state militarist violence as a form of nonviolent ethical engagement with the Other. In particular, this chapter examines the obstacles posed by normative discourses on Israeli primacy and the role of the military, and the possibility of refusing conscription in militarist oppression by articulating a critical Israeli subject in relation to the oppressed Palestinians. This is done with reference to the discourses of a number of Israeli NGOs including *Breaking the Silence* and *New Profile*, as well as via the analysis of three documentary films featuring testimonies of former IDF soldiers including *To See if I'm Smiling*, *Concrete*, and *Breaking the Silence's Guided Tour in Hebron*. The question of Palestinian terrorism and/or political violence is also addressed in relation to the experience of oppression and domination and the question of justice, highlighting the significance of narrative acknowledgement in the process of enacting nonviolent ethical engagement. Yulie Cohen's autobiographical documentary *My Israel* is given as an illustrative example of a critical ethical engagement with the Other's narrative and the responsibility for redress that this calls for.

Meen Erhabi? (Who's The Terrorist?)¹⁴

The case of an oppressive apartheid raised in the previous chapter does not feature in the vast majority of political and media representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is often characterised as a violent inter-religious and not a political struggle. In many people's minds Israel-Palestine evokes images of defensive Israeli military aerial assaults in response to aggressive Palestinian terrorism (Dor, 2005; Hass,

¹⁴ Title of a rap track by DAM, a popular Palestinian Israeli Hip Hop group.

2002; Philo and Berry, 2004 and 2011). Moreover, in the past 20 years representations of terrorism, dislocated from any mitigating circumstances, has become synonymous with the Palestinian struggle, while state-sponsored counter-terrorism strategies have come to legitimise state violence (Said, 1988; Hass, 2002). Media and political focus on the violent, extra-ordinary and spectacular nature of suicide-bomber terrorism, coupled with the conflation of acts of political terror with the religion of Islam and/or ideology of Islamism post 11th September 2001, has further led to the disregarding and obscuring of everyday popular resistance to the Occupation.

The prevalence of Palestinian suicide-bombings since the 1990s has been largely attributed to Muslims' adherence to the Islamic concept of Jihad, commonly translated as 'holy war' but which in fact refers to believers' struggle against injustice which does not necessarily imply waging military battle (Abu Nimer, 2003). Aside from the fact that not all Palestinians are Muslim, Abu Nimer further emphasises the centrality of peace-building in Islam, with many of its core values, including the pursuit of justice, emphasis on social empowerment, dignity and equality, being fully compatible with secular humanist approaches to building just peace. Robert Pape (2005), who has carried out a quantitative historical comparison of the backgrounds and political motivations of a number of different anti-establishment movements which have utilised political violence in the past two centuries, similarly dismisses the religious nature of terrorism. He further highlights the fact that the overwhelming majority of suicide attacks have historically been carried out by secular Marxists and not Muslims.

The anthropologist Scot Atran (2010), who has done extensive ethnographic work with young Muslim 'would-be-suicide-bombers' across the world, writes that religion plays a very negligible part in people's decision to become suicide bombers. Both community and camaraderie trump religion and even national ideology as influencing

factors. He further emphasises that Palestinian terrorism, in particular, is political and not psychologically or ideologically motivated. The main motivation cited by ‘would-be-suicide-bombers’ is personal experience and/or witnessing house demolitions, political arrests of family members, and/or other injustices and oppression faced by the immediate community. Moreover, following his interviews with key Hamas leaders, the Palestinian organisation most commonly associated with Islamism and violent resistance to the Israeli Occupation, Atran argues that suicide bombings are considered to be the least desirable form of resistance and are only used as a last resort, with more traditional forms of combat being preferred by the leadership.

Moreover, prior to the 1980s, Palestinian Islamists opposed any form of resistance to the Occupation and would even target and attack members of the resistance movement (Abu Nimer, 2003: 166). Contemporarily, adherents to Islamism represent about 10-20% of the Palestinian population and as such a preoccupation with their ideology and activities can serve to distort the larger Palestinian struggle. Nevertheless, as Scot Atran demonstrates, even so called Islamist hard-liners such as Hamas’s leadership are willing to consider concessions and conciliation if the other side would acknowledge the importance of their most sacred values. Notably, political, and not religious, values are cited by the Hamas leadership as central to achieving concord, namely the right of return and Israeli acknowledgement of the Palestinian Nakba.

Returning to Abu Nimer’s point about the minority status of Palestinians who take a hard-line, militarist stance towards the conflict’s resolution, it is important to consider a further number of questions in relation to violence and nonviolence in Israel-Palestine. Even if we categorically reject all forms of terrorism, defined as politically motivated violence against a civilian population, is it right and realistic to demand that the oppressed unconditionally commit to nonviolence? As Roberts and Garton Ash (2009) identify in

their edited volume on civil resistance, a closer examination of historical cases in which the success of nonviolent strategies has been emphasised, such as Indian decolonisation and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa, among others, still demonstrate high levels of interdependence between armed and unarmed modes of struggle in the final realisation of the goal of liberation. Judith Brown (2009) adds that even in Ghandi's case unflinching mass nonviolent action proved to be possible only in small scale local campaigns and much harder to maintain on a national level, especially in a country where millions of people's opinions, desires and aspirations for freedom were concerned.

Further, the demand to renounce all violence and pledge unconditional nonviolence, often made by well-meaning outsiders, puts the Palestinian people in an untenable quandary whereby a single violent act eclipses all other nonviolent actions in the struggle for justice. Given that the right to resist occupation, including by force, is enshrined in International Law: UN Resolution 3070 'reaffirms legitimacy of people's struggle for liberation from colonial subjugation by all means, including armed struggle', denying this right to the Palestinian people effectively excludes them from the international community. This demand also has the perverse tendency to reinforce support for violence because a single suicide-bomb or rockets fired from Gaza into Southern Israel, even if they never reach their targets, feature in the international news for days on end, while the weekly nonviolent marches at which the residents of entire villages across the West Bank turn up to protest against the Separation Wall and the confiscation of their land receives no mention. Yet, most Palestinians continue to engage in such protests despite the lack of acknowledgement or interest from the global media which prefer sensational acts of violence to the daily steadfastness of popular resistance.

Moreover, emphasis on Palestinian violence obscures the fact that this violence is a symptom of occupation and oppression, and that, moreover, the violence of the Second

Intifada was largely the consequence of the brutal repression of the First Intifada and the failures of the Oslo Process. The story of the First Intifada can be read like a manual of nonviolent resistance: mass civil disobedience, non-cooperation with the Occupation forces; withholding taxes and services; boycotting Israeli goods and businesses; championing Palestinian self-sufficiency; breaking curfews; and holding teach-ins against military prohibitions (Qumsiyeh, 2010). Yet, Palestinian nonviolent non-cooperation was met with military brutality, repression, mass arrests, and broken bones, illuminating the brutality and inhumanity of the occupation. The First Intifada succeeded in putting the Palestinian people and the question of Palestine back on the political agenda. However, it failed to secure liberation, and the Oslo Process which came in its aftermath merely served to quell the rage, and solidified and entrenched the Occupation's stranglehold.

Although armed struggle and/or resistance by Palestinians tends to play a major role in popular and political imaginations alike, the vast majority of Palestinians tend to engage in nonviolent resistance and as such an emphasis on armed resistance can serve to detract from more creative and life-affirming forms of protest and insurrection. It is therefore important to highlight that not all forms of resistance in which Palestinians engaged during the Second Intifada were violent. The Second Intifada witnessed the use of many of the same tactics as those used during the First Intifada, albeit with Israel's policy of closure, heavily restricted movement between Gaza and the West Bank, and the annexation of East Jerusalem, the effectiveness of coordinated mass civil disobedience was drastically reduced. The beginning of the construction of the West Bank Separation Wall in 2002 gave birth to the popular committees of the Stop The Wall campaign which continue to hold weekly non-violent demonstrations against land confiscations and the construction of the Separation Wall, and whose work continues to this day (Carter Hallward, 2011; Norman, 2010; Qumsiyeh, 2010).

The Second Intifada also witnessed the unprecedented involvement of international solidarity activists and the formation of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), an organisation set up by Palestinians in 2001 to encourage internationals to bear witness to the Palestinian struggle in the face of huge military force, and to advocate for Palestinian rights abroad (Clark, 2009; Dudouet; 2009; Schwietzer, 2009). The two young activists, Rachael Corrie in 2003 and Tom Hurndall in 2004, who lost their lives in Gaza while trying to defend Palestinian lives and property, whose cases were briefly discussed in chapter one, were both members of ISM.

Alongside growing transnational nonviolent mobilisation, the Second Intifada has resulted in the unification of the Palestinian citizen struggle for equal rights within Israel with that of the occupied Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In particular, Larkin and Dumper (2012) highlight the increasing role of the Islamic movement in Israel, spearheaded by Skeikh Raed Salah, in relation to defending Islamic holy sites in the Haram-al-Sharif in East Jerusalem, a task that has become impossible for the occupied Palestinians who lack jurisdiction over the annexed city. The campaign to defend the holy Islamic sites, with Al-Aqsa mosque acting as the symbol for the movement, has garnered widespread international support due to its emphasis not on nationalism but on the cultural and religious significance of Jerusalem and Palestine's heritage.

Palestinian Israelis have also been at the forefront of articulating a secular vision for a democratic bi-national state in Israel-Palestine outlined in 'The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel' (2006) and the 'Haifa Declaration' (2007). The authors of both documents take the unprecedented action of aligning themselves culturally and politically with occupied Palestinians, as well as demanding equal rights for Palestinian citizens of Israel by challenging Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state. The year 2005 also saw the launch of the transnational campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions

(BDS) of Israel. The BDS campaign, which stops short of calling for a one-state solution in Israel-Palestine, nevertheless has three clear objectives which relate to a clear Palestinian conception of freedom, justice, and equality as (i) an end to occupation and colonisation, (ii) equal rights for the Palestinian citizens of Israel, and (iii) the implementation of the right of return of the Palestinian refugees.

In short, despite its violent aspects, the Second Intifada has contributed to the formation of new and unprecedented cross-border and transnational alliances, and has also encouraged small but significant numbers of critical Jewish Israelis to begin to acknowledge and work with Palestinian narratives of the conflict. Critical Israeli voices who insist on justice and responsibility are small in number and largely marginalized from the Israeli mainstream. Nevertheless, their growing convergence with Palestinian conceptualisations of justice, freedom and equality as solutions to the conflict is contributing to the emergence of a broader transnational coalition for a just peace. Moreover this conceptual convergence between certain Israelis and Palestinians signals a break with the mainstream militarist consensus in Israel and represents a move towards building a new collectivity of resistance.

At the core of articulating an egalitarian solution to the predicament of Israel-Palestine is a commitment to the principles of justice, equality, and freedom from oppression. This commitment demands mobilisations across real and perceived borders of separation. The solidarity actions of Jewish Israelis, however few in numbers they may be, serve to rupture the perceived dichotomy between Israelis and Palestinians, signalling a breakdown of previously unquestionable pro-militarism and the unified Zionist discourse of past Israeli peace movements. The refusal to 'shoot now and cry later', something the established peace movement Peace Now was often accused of, or to separate the obvious continuities between Israeli colonialism and militarism and the

Occupation ruptures the internal-Israeli consensus which is based on a logic of ethno-national unity and separation from the Other.

Reframing Nonviolence

In this chapter a case will be made for a positive activist definition of nonviolence as a set of strategies and tactics for resistance against oppression, and active solidarity with those fighting political domination. Nonviolence, it will be argued, is not simply an act of individual refusal to engage in violence, but an active, critical and conscious engagement with violence and responsibility for the Other. Therefore, a commitment to nonviolence stems from the basic acknowledgement of the current social order which is dominated by the privileging of violence and war, and which those who have been called upon and have answered the call for justice find themselves in opposition to. Moreover, nonviolence relates precisely to the notion, underlying this thesis, that things could be otherwise.

In *Nonviolence: The history of a dangerous idea* Mark Kurlansky (2006) writes that popular understanding of the concept of nonviolence tends to be defined negatively. Chapter One demonstrated how negative definitions of peace as the absence of war tend to predominate in mainstream discourses on conflict resolution. However, perhaps even more problematic is the fact that nonviolence lacks even a basic differentiating term to describe its qualities, thus rendering it as merely not violence. The absence of a positive/active naming of the concept of nonviolence stems from, but also reproduces a conceptual hierarchy of active/passive, and dominant/subordinate, which is further reflected in the tendency to view and/or equate nonviolence with the doctrine of pacifism and, even more problematically, with passivity.

However, a very basic review of the literature dealing with nonviolence demonstrates the availability and usage of a number of related and substitutable

terms/phrases, including but not limited to ‘civil resistance’ (Roberts and Garton Ash, 2009), ‘nonviolent resistance’ (Sharp, 1973 and 1985), ‘unarmed resistance’ (Clark, 2009), and ‘popular resistance’ (Qumsiyeh, 2010). The above definitions share the clear assertion that nonviolence is not passive, neither is it merely a moral appeal to the better nature of an oppressive political opponent. Roberts and Garton Ash define nonviolence as ‘civil resistance’ or:

a type of political action that [includes] pressure and coercion – by increasing the costs to the adversary of pursuing particular policies, weakening the adversary’s capacity to pursue a particular policy, or even undermining completely the adversary’s source of legitimacy and power, whether domestic or international (2009: 2-3).

The tactics of the BDS campaign clearly fall within the above definition. Gene Sharp (1973) further highlights the methods of (i) non-cooperation and (ii) the withdrawal of citizens’ consent from political institutions which are oppressive and discriminatory. Others also stress the ‘unarmed’ and ‘popular’ nature of nonviolent insurrection and protest. While definitions of nonviolence tend to emphasise its strategic and tactical nature, the above terms are not only descriptive of nonviolent strategy and action but are also constitutive of the realities they seek to describe. While the method of nonviolence is promoted for its tendency to build bridges and restore cooperative relations in conflict situations, it is important to make the case that nonviolence must not be placed as an unconditional demand but must be taken up as a strategic choice by those who are fighting for freedom from oppression.

This is particularly the case in Israel-Palestine where the well-meaning demand for nonviolent inter-communal activism often places the onus on the Palestinians renouncing violence, with the highly problematic tacit assumption that they are usually violent, while Israelis are rarely asked to take responsibility for the violence of the state

they belong to and the violence of which they often actively reproduce as citizen-soldiers. Thus, in an attempt to reframe the dominant logic around nonviolent cooperation this chapter places the onus of nonviolence and responsibility for the Other on the Israeli refusal to reproduce violent state narratives and actions against the Palestinians.

The preceding chapter concluded with Judith Butler's call for refusal as an act of breaking with and refusing to rearticulate violent practices of domination and subjectivation. The below section on militarism contextualises historically and contemporarily the changing nature of the socio-political discourse on selective refusal in Israel-Palestine, highlighting the difficulty and/or unwillingness of Israeli subjects to refuse to re-enact the violence of the state and its violence-producing and inducing relations with the Palestinians. The discussion considers the way in which violence against the Other remains not only an integral but a constitutive part of Israeliness itself and hence serves as a barrier to the possibility of refusal and ethical responsibility. Israeliness here refers to the discursive construction of what is viewed, lived and experienced as an Israeli identity, particularly Jewish Israeli subjectivity.

At this point it is necessary to clarify what is meant by identity and subjectivity as used in this thesis. Identity here refers to the active, lived and embodied process and experience of identification by the subject with a given community and/or collectivity (Brubaker, 2004). Drawing on poststructuralist theory, particularly the work of Judith Butler (1997; 2008), subjectivity is used to draw attention to the necessary and impending deconstruction of identitarian categories and to call forth the possibilities for more egalitarian and less violent subject reformulation. The utility of the concept of identity is not rejected for it is understood as a discursive category which has real and sometimes violent social and political implications and functions for those whom it names and/or excludes.

Conversely, a semantic rejection of identity in favour of subjectivity can lead to obscuring the very critique an emphasis on subjectivity seeks to make of the functions of identity. One of the biggest contributions of poststructuralist theory in the past two to three decades has been to unsettle dominant philosophical conceptualisations of a stable and essential identity, a challenge which has been largely met within the social sciences and humanities with the discursive reformulation and recuperation of identity as a site of intersectionality, multiplicity and malleability, a formulation which stands in contrast to the notion of subjectivities being formed in violence, exclusion and subjugation. This testifies to the deep seated psycho-social investments most individuals, including academics, continue to have in the concept of identity.

During a presentation at a conference dedicated to rethinking minorities and majorities in the Middle East and North Africa in early May 2013, I was asked if subjectivity is not in fact another way of saying 'false consciousness'. My response to this is affirmatively negative. False consciousness implies ignorance of a grand narrative imposed from above. Subjectivity, on the other hand, does not exclude and negate awareness of an unjust and oppressive situation in which the subject continues to re-enact the very subjectivity which calls for a rearticulation of the dominant order, an articulation which fails to fully break with dominant and subjugating discourses. Subjectivity implies an (im)possibility or at the very least a struggle with discursive practices which categorise us in binary and subjugating subject positions or identities.

Thus, even subjects with radical egalitarian desires can fall back on binary and predetermined differentiated categories of race, ethnicity, and nationality, as will be illustrated in the case study section of the thesis. That is not to say that subjectivities cannot be rearticulated otherwise in and through action but that constructing an alternative or oppositional discourse does not always represent a radical break with the

past. As such resistance to subjectivation always remains in conversation with what it speaks against or what it seeks to speak otherwise to. At this stage another criticism of this conceptual framework must be addressed, namely the alleged lack of agency in poststructuralist definitions of subjectivity and resistance.

Judith Butler's (1997) work on the psychic life of power is very useful as a starting point as she retains the concept of the corporeal individual while rejecting notions of the rational subject, thus establishing the concept of subjectivity as a relation of subjection and repression. Drawing on Foucaultian discursivity and Freudian psychoanalysis, subjectivity is to be understood as a relational concept, (i) as the individual's relation to/with power and (ii) as a relation to/with the Other(s) on whom the individual is dependent for recognition and hence existence. As such the individual is a product of power and reproduces itself in power. Moreover, coupled with the psychic need to be recognised as a living being, the subject is vulnerable to exploitation by others who also operate in and through the subjection of power. It is this vulnerability to (mis)recognition that enables, for example, the state to call upon its citizens as soldiers who must be willing to kill on behalf of the social body.

In short, the interplay between the discursive and psychic is what results in the production of categorisations which manifest themselves and are experienced as embodied identities in the world, i.e. as Israelis, or soldiers. Simultaneously, this process results in the subject's psychic investment in these same self-categories, or in identification with, even when these categories might be oppressive and exploitative. For while discursive formations function on the basis of the creation and maintenance of hierarchical and exclusionary subjectivities, nevertheless the corporeal individual can experience these sites of subjectivised selfhood as violence and humiliation, but also as familiarity and solidarity.

Moreover, Butler (1997) outlines a very explicit model of agency within the theory of subjectification. She argues that although power is everywhere, and thus everything and everyone exists in power, power requires articulation and rearticulation as it subjectifies. It is in the process of rearticulation, which is never identical in its reproduction, that a possibility to transgress or articulate power otherwise emerges – this is the space of agency. The moment of articulation is the precise point at which the discourse can be rearticulated in an alternative way. As such agency remains a relation in and with power, and not merely its antithesis or effect.

The call for ‘refusal’ therefore is understood within the above theoretical framework in which the subject who has the ability to refuse is conceived of as a site of reiteration of the power which produces it and at the same time ‘the subject emerges both as the effect of a prior power and as a condition of possibility for a radically conditioned form of agency’ (ibid: 14-15). Thus, while Butler and poststructuralist thought in general have been criticised for conceiving of a subject trapped in articulating and rearticulating subjugating power, agency remains an integral part of the possibility for ethical action because it:

exceeds the power by which it is enabled... agency is the assumption of a purpose unintended by power, one that could not have been derived logically or historically, that operates in a relation of contingency and reversal to the power that makes it possible, to which it nevertheless belongs (ibid: 15).

With this framework in mind the next section will proceed to examine the historical and contemporary civil society debates and discourses on ‘refusal’ in Israel-Palestine which testify to the difficulty and (im)possibility of rearticulating a non or even

anti-militarist Israeli subject who is willing to ethically engage with the subjugated narratives of the Palestinians.

From Militarism to Refusal

The previous chapter examined relations of oppression and domination between Israelis and Palestinians, with relations in the Occupied Territories being revealed as the most unequal and oppressive. The discussion on apartheid highlighted the unequal rights and privileges of Israeli settlers vis-à-vis occupied Palestinians, however, the role of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), Israel's army and the institution in charge of the administration and policing of the Occupied Territories, has so far been discussed only superficially. Continuous reference to 'the Occupation', 'the State', 'the Administration', and so on, can serve to abstract and obscure the working of power, namely the fact that regimes of governance do not operate as unfathomable phantoms but are in fact fully reliant on a complex set of relations and actions carried out by human beings.

In essence, there would be no Occupation without an occupying army. There would be no army without soldiers willing to serve in it. And there would be no soldiers if there were no people willing to be conscripted. This simple premise stands at the heart of the concept of nonviolence: the notion that every action has a consequence and by choosing alternative actions or refusing to act in a given way it is possible to prevent harmful outcomes, or at the very least to refuse to be complicit in and responsible for injustice.

One of the key agents of injustice in Israel-Palestine is the military and its role in the conflict. The IDF is one of Israel's most prized institutions. The cultural and political significance and primacy of the IDF has led many commentators to remark that Israel is 'an army with a state, not a state with an army'. Military conscription is compulsory for both men and women between the ages of 18 and 21, with the exception of Palestinian

Israelis and sections of the ultra-Orthodox Jews. Following three years of conscripted service most Israelis continue to serve as IDF reservists into their early 50s.

Political success in Israeli society is directly related to military prestige, with senior political roles in the civilian government being primarily occupied by former IDF Generals and other high-ranking servicemen. Moreover, with combat roles being particularly privileged, the political sphere tends to be middle class, Ashkenazi and male dominated (Lahav, 2010; Levy, et al 2010). As Levy et al (2010) point out Ashkenazi soldiers have traditionally been the backbone of the IDF and its elite combat units, bearing the brunt and the prestige of fighting for Israel. However, they argue that with the growing cost of the Occupation and the many wars Israel has had to fight over the years, many young Ashkenazis are increasingly unwilling to pay the cost of serving in the army, particularly in combat roles which put their life and wellbeing at risk.

The above, coupled with growing individualisation in the neoliberal era, has resulted in many young people and their families “bargaining” and negotiating with recruiting officers for the type and nature of the work they would perform during their military service. Yet, despite the growing unwillingness among young Israelis to sacrifice themselves for the nation, serving in combat units remains a highly privileged role within Israeli society, and is increasingly being sold by the army as invaluable occupational training guaranteeing civilian career success (Levy et al, 2010).

Similarly, for many young people from minority and marginalised groups in Israel, such as the Mizrahi or Arab Jews, and the Russians, Druze and Bedouin Arabs, military service is a means to improve their life chances and gain social influence and cultural capital. Moreover, as serving in an occupying army becomes increasingly undesirable and growing numbers of young middle class Ashkenazi Israelis seek exemption from military service, the IDF finds itself progressively more dependent on

Mizrahi Jews, other traditionally marginalised groups, and new migrants to maintain the Occupation (Levy, 2010; Mayer, 2008, *Breaking the Silence*, 2011). This has been the case since Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon which shattered the myth of Israel's defencelessness and resulted in the birth of Israel's biggest peace movement to date, Peace Now, and the establishment of Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit), an organisation of IDF reserve soldiers advocating selective refusal.

The relationship between conscientious objection and the State goes to the very heart of the debate on power, consent and the ability to act against injustice and oppression. It also goes to the heart of the legitimacy of ethical refusal, the right to challenge militarised masculinity, and citizens' right to reformulate the frameworks within which state power operates. The State has never taken very kindly to its citizens' and conscripts' refusal to follow orders, fight and kill without questioning the authority which gives these orders. Historically, common responses by the State to conscientious objection have included criminalisation, imprisonment and even the death penalty.

In the small cases where it has been acknowledged, the right to object is often limited to a restricted class of people. During the First and Second World Wars conscientious objectors in Europe were jailed and forced to perform hard labour, often in militaristic conditions, including being made to wear military uniforms. Moreover, refusal based on secular ethics rather than religious morality continues to be viewed as illegitimate in most places around the world. Although most contemporary societies would accept the individual's right to refuse during compulsory conscription, refusal in professional armies continues to be considered universally unthinkable.

In *Public War, Private Conscience*, Andrew Fiala (2010), argues for the right to refuse to be extended to professional soldiers in countries where compulsory conscription is no longer in operation. He argues that soldiers who have chosen to work in the army

must not be treated as if they have surrendered their right to citizenship and therefore the right to object to morally objectionable policies or state actions. Peretz Kidron (2004) the editor of *Refusnik!* defines this type of objection as ‘selective refusal’ which ‘places soldiers on par with the generals and politicians in judging overall policy’ (ibid: 55). Both of these positions, which differ in that one refers to a professional and the other to a conscript army, share an underlying presumption that selective refusal best serves ‘democratic’ countries. Both allude to the role of selective refusal in bolstering and maintaining the moral and ethical character to which democracies allegedly subscribe but on many occasions diverge from, for example, the USA-led occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, or the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Both of these approaches, while providing an innovative and intelligent way out for non-pacifist conscientious objectors, nevertheless maintain the significance, particularly in the Israeli case, of military service and the role of the army in social responsibility. This is particularly evident in the following passage relating to selective refusal:

While those [Israelis] who refuse outright to enlist leave themselves open to charges of shirking or evasion of ‘national defence’, the refuseniks were seasoned soldiers; in time their ranks extended to include many who had hitherto rendered distinguished service in frontline combat units (Kidron, 2004: 56-7, my emphasis).

As Cynthia Cockburn (2012) asserts, despite the attempt to summarize social attitudes to conscientious objection, Kidron nevertheless ends up emphasising the cowardice (shirkers who are dodging their duty) of those who refuse to enlist versus the bravery and outstanding nature of soldiers (seasoned, distinguished fighters) who opt out of selective orders. Andreas Speck (2007), a long-serving member of War Resisters International, argues that conceptualisations of the military are closely linked with the

everyday heteronormative and patriarchal constructions of masculinity, not only in militarised societies at war but even in ‘peaceful’ societies.

The soldier serves as a model on which contemporary masculinity is based: testosterone fuelled aggression channelled in destructive skill; knowing one’s place in a hierarchy of strong, heroic men who stand superior to “cowards” and “pussies” (gays and women); and the willingness to surrender oneself to the orders of superiors in the name of masculine camaraderie. The militarist emphasis on heroism and bravado which is carried over into civilian life and thinking is strikingly exemplified above by Kidron’s conceptualisation of soldiers’ refusal in which he places himself in solidarity with ‘seasoned fighters’ against ‘shirkers’, even though his act of refusal should place him in closer ethical proximity to anti-militarist conscientious objectors. Selective refusal, which is itself disappearing from view, as opposed to conscientious objection to war-making, continues to be one of the cornerstones of Israeli opposition to the military’s role in Israel-Palestine.

Moreover, from the perspective of the State, conscientious objectors are always presented as unreasonable and even dangerous, and the logic of militarism tends to co-opt the language of peace, with invocations of national defence and security, and proclamations of the global good serving to justify aggressive war strategies. The ideal citizen is constructed as a man ready to fight, kill and die in defence of his nation. National historiography and commemorative practices prefer to emphasise heroic participation in ‘just’ wars as opposed to wars of aggression. For example, Britain chooses to imagine the fight against Nazi Germany as its defining moment of military glory, preferring to ignore its role in four centuries of colonialism, slavery, the extermination of indigenous peoples, and the brutal suppression of independence movements across the globe. The USA continues to style itself as a global liberator, once

from the threat of Soviet Communism, and more recently from the threat of Islamic extremism, and select Middle Eastern dictatorships. Similarly, the Israeli state has a long history of representing its aggressive settler colonial military endeavours as defensive wars: tiny David fighting for his survival against giant Goliath.

In short, war, and the state's decision to go to war, has since the late twentieth century been narrated in terms of altruistic benevolence as opposed to instrumental geostrategic and economic state interests. Such a narrative underpins not only national, but specifically patriarchal conceptualisations of the role of the military, and de facto soldiers, mostly imagined as male defenders, protectors and liberators. This masculinist conceptualisation pervades the popular and political imagination despite the growing number of female recruits in armies across the world, and is no less in operation in a context such as Israel, where compulsory conscription equally applies to Jewish women.

Speck (2012) argues that there can be an equally problematic tendency for anti-militarist and war objectors' struggles to appropriate militarist discourses of bravado and heroism. Rather, he argues, the significance and success of anti-militarist action should be measured not by its difficulty but by its ability to empower ordinary people by making them aware that refusal is not as difficult as it appears and can be done by anyone. In this respect, Kidron's juxtapositioning of the brave soldiers who refuse selectively versus the shirkers who refuse completely is precisely such an example of re-appropriating militarist heroism with the consequential re-affirmation of militarist supremacy in social values.

The above formulation is not unique, and is in fact the rule and not the exception in terms of attitudes to refusal in Israeli society where contentious objection is seen as illegitimate and refusal is punishable by repeated imprisonment. Moreover, the dominant discourse surrounding the legitimacy of refusal is also reproduced within civil society, including among relatively critical groups and individuals. The debates surrounding

military service and the il/legitimacy of refusal can be illustrated with reference to three discursive models of war critique, conscientious objection, and anti-militarism in Israeli civil society. These three models are exemplified by the work of three NGOs/movements in Israel-Palestine, as well as by the texts produced or used by these groups, and are also directly related to questions of justice and responsibility in the conflict.

The first organisation under consideration is Breaking The Silence, an Israeli NGO primarily concerned with bringing to the Jewish public the testimonies of Israeli soldiers who have served in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and may have witnessed and/or committed acts of brutality against Palestinians under their jurisdiction. Breaking The Silence cannot be considered a war objector or anti-militarist organisation as such. It is entirely staffed by current or reserve soldiers who have no official collective stance on refusal, and from their presentations and actions one can deduce that they do not advocate and/or approve of refusal.

For the most part they view themselves as ‘loyal and patriotic soldiers’ who have been harmed by the oppressive regime of occupation they are forced to enforce on a largely civilian Palestinian population. They are also very critical of the role of the army in policing the settlements, particularly in Hebron, where Jewish settlement is at the heart of the city. In short, they wish to raise awareness and highlight the ‘moral price’ paid by young Israelis who have to uphold the Occupation, and they wish to remind/ make Israeli society aware of what is being done ‘in their name’. In many respects the discourse of Breaking the Silence can be viewed as a manifestation of the oft-levelled criticism against pro-militarist Israelis as those who “shoot now, and cry later” (Kidron, 2004: 57).

In fact, much of the soldiers’ testimonies collected by Breaking The Silence are characterised by individual soldiers confessing to wrongdoing and in the process absolving themselves of guilt and responsibility, often citing that they were merely

‘carrying out orders’ and doing it in the name of the larger Israeli body politic (Testimonies 2008, 2009). Discourses concerning moral and/or ethical responsibility for the Palestinians as individuals entitled to human rights and dignity are almost entirely absent from the soldiers’ accounts. Moreover, particularly in relation to military operations which involve guarding settlements or settlers such as in Hebron, the soldiers often portray themselves as the victims of national policy and intransigent and dogmatic settlers, while the Palestinians are rendered as hapless subjects to whom things get done with impunity and total lack of remorse. For their part, the organisation would argue that their non-judgemental approach encourages more Israeli soldiers to speak out and does not shut them out of the dominant internal Israeli conversation regarding ‘The Territories’.

Yet, the discourses that are uncritically produced and reproduced in relation to individual and collective responsibility in relation to the Palestinians in these Israeli accounts have real implications for the ethical address of the call for just peace. In a short documentary film entitled *Guided Tour in Hebron* (2008), produced by *Breaking the Silence* and featuring testimonies from former soldiers and border police, a number of the featured explain that whatever happens in Hebron ‘the Palestinians always pay’. If the soldiers are bored they terrorise the local Palestinian residents. If the Jewish settlers go on a violent rampage attacking the property of Palestinians and beating them up, the army arrests the terrorised Palestinians. What is striking about the featured accounts is that the Palestinians are rendered like animals in the zoo, voiceless, pitiable, sentient beings that are nevertheless devoid of any agency or the right to demand justice and redress from their abusers.

While considering whether to pay a visit to the family whose home he invaded and trashed while serving in Hebron, a former soldier states: ‘I have nothing to say to

them. What can I say?... I'm sorry?'; at the same time the film finishes with his address to the Israeli public arguing that it is their 'duty' to hear him out and to 'take responsibility' for what he did 'in their name', a statement which reasserts the priority and significance of the Jewish Israeli collective at the expense of the homini sacri in Hebron, the hapless Palestinians who need or deserve no apology from the soldiers who are deeply traumatised by the abhorrent actions they have perpetrated against them.

This is not to downplay the fact that soldiers are very often deeply traumatised by their experiences and actions in war and combat, but rather to draw attention to the way in which Palestinians remain 'unintelligible' as subjects of justice in the accounts of those who have taken or even continue to take active part in the perpetuation of violent oppression and domination. This lack of intelligibility constitutes the biggest barrier to an ethical engagement with responsibility for the Other. Soldiers' accounts of service in the Occupied Territories unanimously portray the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Agamben's camp in which sovereign power acts unchecked against depoliticised human beings: 'it's different [there], different rules, different country... It's the backyard of the state of Israel' (Guided Tour in Hebron); 'We are in the Wild West. We can do whatever we want' (female former Operations Sergeant, *To See If I'm Smiling*).

Yet, the state of exception cannot function without a justifying discourse, and in Israel's case it is an entrenched security discourse which uses any potential threat to Jewish life as a justification for pre-emptive vengeance. If the Palestinians are not entirely absent or rendered as silent pitiable beings in these soldiers' accounts, then they are portrayed as decontextualised and dehistoricised violent and blood-thirsty 'terrorists'. There appears to be little if any consideration or possibility that Palestinian violence might draw on over four decades of violent occupation and dispossession, and that violence against soldiers might be based on the understandable perception that that they

are agents of occupation and oppression; or that in fact violent opposition to an illegal occupation can be viewed as justified and legitimate resistance. Aside from the strong emphasis on a security and counter-terrorism discourse, the soldiers' accounts analysed tend to place emphasis on the moral degeneration and traumatic impact of military service in 'The Territories' on the occupation soldiers, rather than on the moral illegitimacy and injustice perpetrated against the occupied Palestinians.

Those who subscribe to selective refusal, such as the long-standing organisation Yesh Gvul, similarly emphasise the illegality and ensuing moral degeneration from Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank. They subscribe to the notion that the role of a national army is primarily to defend the nation from external attack, which is the reason for the emergence of the Israeli 'refusenik' movement in 1982 following Israel's invasion of Lebanon. From this perspective Lebanon is viewed as one of the first offensive wars fought by Israel, although a clear examination of 1948 and 1967 places such an evaluation into question.

Alongside the older and more established mode of selective refusal, Kidron's book, *Refusenik!*, includes the more recent development of the emergence of a second generation of objectors, namely the Schministim, or the senior high school students who signed an open declaration in 2002 that they would refuse to enlist in the 'Occupation Army'. What is new and striking about this generation of objectors is that they are not Kidron's seasoned fighters, on the contrary they are young people who have not yet been called up to enlist and who have and would refuse when the time comes. Moreover, they increasingly draw analogies between 1967 and 1948 as motivating factors for their refusal, refusing to differentiate between the two regimes of governance. As 19 year old Alon Gurman writes in 2012: 'My refusal to serve in the Israeli military, in addition to being a refusal to take part in occupation and apartheid, is an act of solidarity with our

Palestinian friends living under Israeli regime, and those who bravely choose to struggle against it'.¹⁵

Thus, the Schministim draw attention to the complicity of administrative and non-combatant actions within the 1948 borders of Israel in enabling the Occupation, including, but not limited to, the incarceration of Palestinian political prisoners from the Occupied Territories in Israeli prisons¹⁶; as well as the development and production of weapons and military systems in Israeli academic institutions used in the Occupied Territories. Furthermore, while in the past refusal has been a primarily male issue, these young people represent a growing trend of young women refusing to enlist in the military, challenging militarist and patriarchal conceptualisations of soldiering.

The Schministim more closely resemble the position of New Profile, an anti-militarist feminist NGO which works to “civil-ize” Israeli society, rather than the more established selective refusal movement. New Profile works towards the legitimating of conscientious objection and the establishment of a more nonviolent society, highlighting the continuum between violence in the military and gendered violence in civilian society (Cockburn, 2012). They also provide support to the growing number of Israeli youth who prefer to opt out of military service on medical rather than political grounds. In this respect, contemporary trends tend to point towards the decline of refusal, particularly selective refusal, and the growing numbers of those reporting as ‘unfit for service’. This has partly been attributed to young Israelis’ growing unwillingness to bear the burden of serving in the army and to maintain an occupation which they do not feel has anything to do with them (Levy, et al, 2010; Mayer, 2008). However, this trend is accompanied by the absence of a peace movement, and near to no vocal opposition to the Occupation. This

¹⁵ see <http://december18th.org/category/Testimonials/>

¹⁶ see B’Tselem Statistics, 2012

can in large part be attributed to the aforementioned salience of the security and counter-terrorism discourse which shrouds Israel's activities in the Occupied Territories.

Moreover, as Nurit Peled-Elhanan's findings in *Palestine in Israeli School Books* (2012) demonstrate, the necessary indoctrination which ensures willingness to serve in the military is already well underway in school, making refusal almost unthinkable for the average 18 year old who is conscripted shortly after high school graduation. Her findings in many ways reflect the above analysis of soldiers' testimonies. Peled-Elhanan found that Israeli school books are characterised by a 'racist discourse' about the Palestinians which emphasises the Jewish state and the importance of a Jewish majority. Visual or other representations of the Palestinians are almost nonexistent, and when they are featured they are portrayed as primitive farmers or masked terrorists.

Similarly, Palestinians are referred to as 'non-Jews' for whom there is no demographic data, or as 'foreigners'; while massacres committed by Israeli troops against Palestinians are justified and legitimated as having 'positive' outcomes for the national good. Moreover, according to Peled-Elhanan's analysis geography books rarely show a map of Israel's real borders, referring to 'The Land' rather than 'the state' of Israel, and failing to render Palestinian villages and cities within the 1948 borders, while fully depicting the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. Books which do not subscribe to propagating such messages are not approved by the Ministry of Education and are either re-written or destroyed. In essence, the education system reinforces old standing Zionist myths about Israel-Palestine being 'a land without people for a people without land', while reducing the Palestinians to 'non-people', 'non-Jews', or 'violent and dangerous Arabs'. It is with this educational indoctrination that Israelis are conscripted into the army and sent to police and oppress the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

The dual lack of defined borders and lack of intelligible people continues to resonate in soldiers' accounts and continues to produce and reproduce violence against the absented and silenced Palestinians. Moreover, what is striking is the constant silent presence of the Nakba and its continuity in Jewish Israeli and Palestinian relations. In Nurit Kedar's documentary *Concrete* (2011) in which she features the testimonies of unnamed soldiers who took part in Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in 2008-9 a soldier speaks of being given orders to 'cleanse' Gaza and turn it into a 'sandbox'; and another laments that he doubts that there could be so many Hamas operatives present in the houses his unit was ordered to demolish; while yet another soldier consistently describes the atmosphere of the ground invasion as 'Independence Day'. Time and again the soldiers mention empty streets, never seeing any people, or perhaps not seeing as people those they were killing. One of the soldiers shares that every time he thought of death he thought of his own funeral, but he never thought of the others (the Palestinians).

Nevertheless, unlike the two previously mentioned documentaries featuring soldiers' testimonies, *Concrete* shows that some of the soldiers are able to draw analogies between the Palestinians and themselves as people with rights and feelings. One soldier asks: 'If so many tanks came to a city in Israel how would people react?... It's unimaginable'; another feels disgusted by the irony that he and another 'leftist' reservist took a long time to discuss if they could hang a clock on the wall of a house they had invaded because they did not want to put a nail through and damage the wood, and then an IDF bulldozer came and destroyed a four-story building across the street with all the cars, possessions, and possibly people inside it. A third soldier says he fell in love with the Palestinian way of life, the way every house has a plot of land and is growing 'beautiful' fruit and vegetables and has chickens.

It is important not to exaggerate the potential for understanding between Israeli Jews and Palestinians alluded to in the above accounts. In fact the above testimonies fit neatly into the ‘shoot now and cry later’ genre, and moreover we do not know if any of these men will continue to serve as reservists and would be more than willing to re-enlist in another attack on Gaza. Despite the soldiers’ doubts and regrets the security discourse which surrounds the justification for Israel’s military actions continues to have a strong presence throughout the film, testifying to its intransigence, and continuing to provide a buffer against responsibility. Yet, it is also important not to downplay the very real fear felt by Israelis in relation to the threat of terrorism and the feelings of self-righteous rage and desire for vengeance it induces. With this in mind the next section proceeds to critically interrogate the possibilities for building a coalition of ethical resistance and responsibility between critical Israelis and Palestinians.

Reframing Resistance

Mobilizing alliances do not necessarily form between established and recognizable subjects, and neither do they depend on the brokering of identitarian claims. Instead, they may well be instigated by criticisms of arbitrary violence, the circumscription of the public sphere, the differential of power enacted through prevalent notions of “culture”, and the instrumentalization of rights claims for resisting coercion and enfranchisement. Whether we expand our existing frameworks or allow them to be interrupted by new vocabularies will determine, in part, how well we consult both the past and the future for our present-day critical practices (Butler, 2009: 162, my emphasis).

The above quote articulates what has been glimpsed in terms of historical and existing Israeli-Palestinian activism and/or selective refusal in Israel-Palestine which has stemmed largely from criticisms of arbitrary state or individual violence, and on the

Palestinian side the instrumentalisation of rights claims. As Butler asserts, none of these actions have required 'recognisable subjects' in the case of selective refusal, or the brokering of identitarian claims. In many respects identitarian claims in particular have been at the centre of both of the above forms of engagement with nonviolent activism, underpinned by an entrenched logic of separation which reasserts separateness and irreconcilable difference between Israelis and Palestinians.

Butler's (2009) critique of contemporary war discourses and their subjectifying practices in *Precarious Life* highlights the way in which powerful states' biopolitical preoccupation with the care for certain types of privileged bodies: White, Western, American, Jewish, Israeli, justifies the destruction and disavowal of other bodies which have become unintelligible and ungrievable: Brown, Muslim, Arab, Eastern, Palestinian. However, an uncritical preoccupation with the ways in which privileged subjects are subjected to the subjugating practices of militarised states, as in the case of Israelis, can equally serve to obscure the continued privilege and complicity of privileged subjects in the violent domination and negation of subjugated subjectivities.

In that sense, the Israeli refusal movement, particularly in its selective rather than conscientious objection modes, can be viewed as an uncritical rearticulation of a privileged subject who wishes to be innocent of any violence that is perpetrated against the Other. This is evident in continuous invocations of the desire to return to an idealised 1948 Israel that is not responsible for occupying or oppressing any Palestinians. However, this way of articulating the refusal to comply with state-militarist violence fails to engage with the repressed narratives of the Palestinians and the way in which both Palestinians and Israelis in their current guise have emerged as subjects through a shared founding moment of violence.

In that sense, the 1948 border is revealed as a violent, subjectifying and subjugating border, a withdrawal to which is not a return to innocence but a return to ignorance and the refusal to engage with the Palestinian narrative of dispossession and their call for justice and recognition. Thus, what this thesis aims to articulate is the necessary ethical disidentification that would bring about an ethical subjectivity which engages with the call for justice beyond identitarian categorisations. This disidentification would entail a necessary deconstruction of the self and existing subjectifying narratives through the conscious recognition that the Other and the other's narratives are an integral part of this process.

It is for this reason that this thesis insists on a critical engagement with the privilege of Israeli subjectivity not by tracing its emergence in Palestine via a long detour through inhospitable Europe, but very specifically through its relation to the absented Other, the Palestinians. Contemporary counter-subjectifying discourses are examined through narratives which do or don't, try, refuse or fail to engage with the Palestinian narrative and the call for justice and responsibility that it accompanies/underscores. The three case studies featured in chapters four through to six are examples of the different ways in which critical Jewish Israelis are beginning to deal not only with the immorality of the 1967 Occupation but also with more founding moments of the conflict, such as the Nakba and the rights of the Palestinian refugees.

Moreover, this thesis puts forward the argument, particularly in the next few chapters, that more than representing remnants of the old pro-militarist, Zionist peace movement, the new generation of critical Jewish Israeli activists symbolise the emergence of a new post and/or even anti-Zionist, transnational form of doing peace politics in Israel-Palestine. More than a peace movement it is an emergent solidarity movement which acknowledges the lack of equality between the two sides and emphasises ethical

responsibility for the other. Like any emergent movement it is riddled with contradictions and faces many obstacles and even wholesale failure. Nevertheless, it is a novel opportunity to rearticulate a vision of cohabitation not based on domination and/or separation.

Israeli recognition of the validity of subjugated Palestinian narratives is here understood as the point of departure for ethical engagement. However, one might ask what is the importance of narrative in relation to already existing modes of critical and radical solidarity action and its emphasis on pre-figurative politics? I do not wish to substitute action for words as such, although I reject any hierarchies between physical protests and narrative challenges to dominant formations which reproduce violence and subjugation. Rather, I argue that radical action is difficult if not impossible without the existence of certain kinds of narratives which make this action possible/justifiable. Action itself requires some form of intelligibility which requires and is further legitimated by a justifying narrative. At the same time narratives are not free and unbounded from pre-existing and dominant discourses. Narratives, including subjugated and oppositional ones, operate within and draw from different discursive fields some of which may be competing and/or oppositional. Simultaneously, narrative can reveal the limits of discursive formulations and allow for a rearticulation or an articulation otherwise of subject positions and their relationalities.

Thus, what the remaining chapters seek to interrogate are the discursive boundaries which continue to structure activist thought and action in Israel-Palestine. In turn, this critical analysis highlights how previous limits were overcome and demonstrates the way in which existing limits continue to constrain other possibilities for a fuller and more critical engagement with the Palestinian call for just peace. This task is carried out through the application of Butlerian inspired discourse analysis which interrogates the

historical and contemporary emergences of counter-hegemonic thought among the case study groups featured in chapters four to six. These chapters are also concerned with the manner in which certain uninterrogated or taboo psychic attachments to existing subjectivities and their privileging continue to pose a barrier to the possibilities to think and act otherwise.

While each case study provides us with different types of activist intervention, at their core all three groups are struggling with similar, if not identical, questions of identity and the limit of action that they imply. The primary question is this: how is Israeliness to be (re)articulated in order to effectively respond to the demand for just peace? I have chosen to examine these groups' institutional narratives pertaining to the above questions primarily through documents and texts from and inspired by the organisations, including films made about the groups or featuring group members. This choice has been made for a number of reasons, which include (i) the nature of documents and texts which makes them static and hence easier to analyse in the sense that one can return to them again and again, and they can also be studied in relation to the historical moment in which they were produced allowing us to capture discursive and narrative changes over time; (ii) texts always go through some form of editing testifying to the considered and structured nature of the rendered articulations; (iii) while scripted texts allow for a more concrete examination they are not set in stone and as such slippages and contradictions continue to persist highlighting the unconscious operation of dominant discourses; (iv) narratives written on behalf of a group, despite disclaimers to the contrary, are never simply expressions of 'personal opinion' and as such carry collective responsibility and can point towards wider emergent subjectivities and discursivities.

Yulie Cohen's autobiographical documentary *My Israel* (2008), in which she explores questions of forgiveness and responsibility is a useful text to illustrate the above

mode of analysis in relation to the necessary processes of questioning and reframing established narratives in order to ethically engage with the narrative of the Other. The film begins with Cohen's search for forgiveness and her campaign for the release of the Palestinian man who had committed a terrorist attack against the Israeli airline crew she worked for in 1978. Her decision to forgive is partly spearheaded by her brief experiences in the West Bank in 2000 while working for an international NGO as a photographer and filmmaker. Witnessing and recording five days of poverty, house demolitions and harassment by border police, Cohen is convinced to start correspondence with Fahed Amir in order to try and understand the reasons behind his actions 23 years earlier.

Coming from a long-established, well-known and respected Israeli family and having served as an officer and captain in the Air Force during her time in the military, as well as up to that point being a respected mainstream filmmaker, Cohen's decision to forgive and petition for the release of the man who injured her and killed one of her colleague's 23 years earlier is discussed publically on Israeli TV with the TV presenter displaying dismay, while another panel member expresses concern for her mental health. Following this TV appearance Cohen received hundreds of angry phone calls, accusations of treason, and other forms of abuse from fellow citizens, except for one man who lost his daughter in a suicide attack who thanks her for reminding him that 'we are not only monsters'.

The first part of the film focuses on Cohen's conversations with a bereaved Israeli mother who lost her daughter in a suicide attack and who seems particularly unwilling and unable to understand, let alone forgive Palestinian violence. Her pain and loss is so extreme that she is stuck in grief and righteous rage, accusing Cohen of 'encouraging terrorism' and proclaiming that her daughter was killed because 'She was Jewish and loved life'. There is only one moment in which she shows concern for the Palestinians: 'I

feel sorry for the Palestinian people... the poverty' but then she quickly retracts into stating 'if we wanted we can hurt them much more'. This is what Butler (2009) refers to as the inability to grieve, being constantly stuck in a state of rage and melancholia.

However, it is important not to create a hierarchy between forgiveness and the refusal to forgive when considering questions of personal and collective responsibility. Indeed, forgiveness is not itself an engagement with the Other. Forgiving can also be a form of closure, while anger can bind the self to the Other in a violent and vengeful relation. As such, what is of significance here is not so much the rights and wrongs of forgiveness or its refusal, but rather the nature of the relationship one chooses to engage in with the Other. In the bereaved mother's case it is a relation of anger, pain, unforgivable loss, and the desire for vengeance; while in Cohen's case the personal choice to forgive is linked to the desire to take responsibility for the Other by trying to understand his history and motivations. In that sense it could be argued that responsibility and acknowledgement do not necessitate forgiveness, but can nevertheless lead to forgiveness.

Nevertheless, taking responsibility for another's violence and rage does not mean that an individual must forgive an act of violence against themselves. Rather taking ethical responsibility for the Other acts as a refusal to reproduce a cycle of recrimination and vengeance which leads to more recrimination and vengeance:

the kind of narrative required of an account we give of ourselves is one that accepts the presumption that the self has a causal relation to the suffering of the other... Not all narrative takes this form, clearly, but the narrative that responds to allegation must, from the outset, accept the possibility that the self has causal agency, even if, in a given instance,

the self may not have been the cause of the suffering in question (Butler, 2008: 23).

Here, Butler reiterates the importance of an ethical frame which places and understands the self as always relational to an other that is making or stating claims to redress of an injustice that has been suffered. In this instance even if one is not personally the cause of the other's suffering one is nevertheless compelled to respond and take responsibility by virtue of having been addressed by the other. This is particularly significant for the above case of personal loss and suffering amidst a conflict where the lines between personal and collective responsibility are blurred and can become sites of violence. For example, when speaking about responsibility in this case we are not speaking of being 'guilty' of the pain caused to oneself. Indeed, such a frame is a mirror image of Israel's logic towards the Palestinians, particularly in relation to Gaza since 2006, where a single rocket fired by Hamas or another organisation immediately justifies mass violence against any resident of Gaza by virtue of belonging to the same collectivity as those firing the rockets. It is precisely such violence producing and reproducing frameworks that need to be challenged and broken with in order to end the cycle of vengeance and recrimination.

At the same time, as was already discussed in relation to refusal, collective violence is nothing more than the collection of individual violent actions which serve to reproduce discourses of otherisation and reinforce disregard for the other's life and right to live in dignity. As such, the onus to take responsibility is an address to each and everyone as an individual, and the accumulation of individual responses is what results in the emergence of collective responsibility and the possibility for some form of reconciliation and/or ethical cohabitation.

Cohen's decision to forgive her attacker is personal but she is nevertheless aware that this incident is bigger than the personal and testifies to a collective experience of suffering, indignity, and struggle against injustice on the one side; and privilege, domination, and self-righteous rage on the other, from which personal acts of terror and other forms of violence derive their justification and legitimation. She is unable to free Fahed from the English prison in which he will spend the rest of his life, but her interaction with him spurs her on to re-examine more closely her national mythology and to engage more critically with the Palestinian narrative in order to better understand the framework which breeds violence:

The account of oneself is always given to another, whether conjured or exiting, and this other establishes the scene of address as a more primary ethical relation than the reflexive effort to give an account of oneself. I consider as well that the terms by which we give an account are social in character. Even the terms by which we make ourselves intelligible, to ourselves and others, are not of our making, thus establishing social norms as a domain of unfreedom and substitutability on the basis of which our "singular" stories are told (Butler, 2008, 29).

As was already discussed in relation to the ability to refuse, our relationality to normative discourses does not determine us or the stories which we tell about ourselves and our actions, but rather it structures the parameters of intelligibility. What is meant by this is that our actions towards and interactions with others are always structured in the first instance by a normative framework which enables us to see ourselves as belonging to and in solidarity with a given group or collectivity, while making another collectivity unintelligible, unrecognisable and even ungrievable. Thus, like the bereaved mother above, even when one can see the poverty and the suffering of the Other, and even feel pity for the Other's situation, one is nevertheless not quite able to see how the other might

be angry and vengeful because they have already been hurt by ‘us’, and hence how the onus to break the cycle of vengeance might in fact fall on us, individually or collectively, despite our personal hurt and anger.

As Nurit Peled-Elhanan’s (2012) aforementioned research on Palestine in Israeli school books demonstrates, the stories we tell about the other and the failure to tell, or even the insistence to refuse to tell, the other’s story can lead to blindness to one’s role in the other’s suffering and the consequent hatred or anger they might feel towards you. Moreover, the exclusion of the other from one’s story can further serve to legitimate and justify any violence one wishes or has to perpetrate against this absented and silenced other. Here it is important to note that Peled-Elhanan also lost a daughter in a suicide-bomb attack, but like Yulie Cohen she has also chosen ethical engagement with the other. Cohen similarly makes a personal journey from engaging with her personal attacker to learning about the shared painful and violent history of Israel-Palestine.

At the start of *My Israel* Cohen describes herself as a ‘patriotic citizen’ who aspired to join the army and succeeded in ascending the ranks of the air force. It was only in the aftermath of the invasion of Lebanon and upon leaving Israel that she came to realise that things were not quite as she had been brought up to believe: ‘I left the army and Israel. It was only from far away that I could see clearly’. It was in the United States where she first saw the images of the 1982 Shabra and Shatilla massacre perpetrated by Lebanese Phalangist militias against the Palestinian refugees in the camps, a massacre that was enabled and overseen by the IDF; images which were never shown on Israeli television.

She describes Zionism as ‘our secular religion’ which taught her that Jewish Israelis are ‘one people, one nation, one big family’. The two biggest days in Israel’s calendar are Memorial Day, the ‘saddest day’ of the year, which commemorates soldiers

fallen in battle, immediately followed by Independence Day, the ‘happiest day’ of the year, celebrating the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. It was only in 2003-4 that Cohen became aware that on that same day her fellow Palestinian citizens do not celebrate but commemorate a day of mourning, the Nakba, or the catastrophe that resulted in the dispossession and mass displacement of the Palestinian people from what was to become Israel.

‘Perhaps I was in denial. Perhaps I didn’t want to know’: with these words Cohen sets out to find out more about her personal connection to the Nakba. As the children of established settler-immigrants, both of Cohen’s parents were 18 years old when the first Arab-Jewish war started, and they both served in the pre-state forces which were to become the IDF after Israel’s establishment. Cohen’s interview with her father and mother are some of the first recorded testimonies of former soldiers who fought in the 1948 war and who took part in the Palestinian expulsions. Her father testifies to being involved in actions which led to the expulsion of the Palestinians: ‘Entire villages were wiped off the face of the Earth. The mission was to empty the villages – everyone, men, women, children’. In response to Cohen’s question about the morality of these actions her mother says: ‘Do not judge our actions by today’s standards’, once again giving the tried and tested justification of Israelis’ fear of the Arabs and the necessity of self-defence. ‘I wanted to die’ are the words with which Cohen concludes her response to this unbearable knowledge:

To call into question a regime of truth where that regime governs subjectivation, is to call into question the truth of oneself and, indeed, to question one’s ability to tell the truth about oneself, to give an account of oneself (Butler, 2008: 30).

Cohen's response to the existential challenge faced as a result of her confrontation with the Nakba is not so much one of denial as the desire to escape. She goes to meditate in the mountains in order to centre herself. However, she does not refuse responsibility for the unbearable knowledge she has uncovered but returns to engage with her fellow Palestinian citizens, attending a Land Day demonstration in 2004 and becoming aware of yet another aspect of Israeli society: 'One state with Jews and Arabs where no one learns the other's language'. She had been taught English and French in school but never Arabic, despite more than 20% of Israel's citizen population being indigenous Palestinians, and Israel being in charge of another four million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for over 46 years. Colonial, and in particular settler colonial, populations rarely learn the indigenous language for such an action would to some degree imply an acknowledgement of the existence, legitimacy and rights of the indigenous population to the land.

Indeed, lack of shared language, not simply in terms of 'the same language' but also as a lack of a shared narrative frame, coupled with the refusal and denial of a common history continue to be two of the biggest obstacles to an ethical engagement between the Israeli colonisers and the colonised Palestinians. As Butler writes 'sometimes calling into question the regime of truth by which my own truth is established is motivated precisely by the desire to recognise another or be recognised by another' (2008: 31). In the next chapter we will see the way in which the Israeli NGO Zochrot (Remembering) is undertaking precisely such steps to call into question the truth of the Israeli regime in relation to the Nakba, and the work the activists do and have done with the Israeli public in order to call for recognition, responsibility and redress of the injustice done to the Palestinian refugees.

‘The non-violent ethical response returns to the other an acknowledgement and a promise of a world shared’ (Jenkins, 2008: 42). In other words, the example set by Yulie Cohen’s ethical engagement with her Palestinian attacker and the wider narratives of the Palestinian collectivity in *My Israel* represents one way in which critical Israelis can act to break with violence reproducing subjectivities and to instead engage in a manner that positively reaffirms the formative nature of the relationship between the Israeli Self and Palestinian Other.

However, it is important to note that in the case of an ongoing occupation and apartheid telling a different story, even one which incorporates the other’s story in one’s account, is not the final goal of bringing about a just peace. It is merely the necessary first step towards acknowledgement and responsibility which calls for the redress of injustice. It is for this reason that while this chapter has emphasised the significance of counter narratives, the second part of the thesis, starting with the next chapter, focuses on activism and the way in which critical Israeli activists ethically reframe not only their individual positionalities in relation to the Palestinians, but also how they seek to reframe the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the possibilities for its just resolution.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the role of refusal in breaking with violence inducing and reproducing discourses and subjectivities. An ethical engagement with the Other’s narrative emerged as a key starting point for recognition, responsibility and the redress of one’s role in the Other’s experiences of injustice. A number of documentaries containing former Israeli soldiers’ testimonies were analysed as discursive examples of the failure or difficulty to critically engage with the Other’s narrative and take responsibility for the call for justice. Yulie Cohen’s documentary *My Israel* in which she confronts her past trauma in order to better understand the motivations of her Palestinian attacker, resulting in a

critical confrontation with the Palestinian Nakba and her personal and collective relationship to Palestinian dispossession and suffering, is given as an example of the necessary ethical engagement with and taking responsibility for the other in order to break with the ongoing cycle of vengeance and recrimination.

4. Bearing Witness to Al Nakba in a Time of Denial¹⁷

This chapter examines questions of narrative, memory and responsibility in relation to the events of the Palestinian Nakba and the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. In particular, it focuses on the work of the Israeli NGO Zochrot which aims to raise awareness about the Nakba in Israeli society in order to bring about public acknowledgement and responsibility for a formative event in both collectivities' shared history. Furthermore, this chapter examines the way in which an engagement with the Other's narrative reframes acknowledgement as a task of recognition and calls forth justice in the form of redress in order for reconciliation to take place. This reframing of responsibility as a question of justice results in the necessity to reframe the Self which is called upon to respond to the Other, a reframing which necessitates a break with violence-reproducing categorisations of selfhood. Moreover, this reframing refers to the necessity to rearticulate Jewish Israeli identity as non and/or anti-Zionist in order to respond to the justice claims of the Palestinian people.

Bearing Witness versus Denial

For decades the Israeli state narrative has dominated the story and history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This narrative tells the story of Israel and its people as an endless chronicle of conflicts, a list of battles won and lost. It is "the story" of what happened to the Jewish people and what makes Israel "the nation" it is. This version of history has generally not been concerned with the others, the "non-Jews" who lived beside and among the Jewish people, namely the Palestinians. That is not to say that

¹⁷ A version of this chapter appears published in *Narrating Conflict in the Middle East: Discourse, Image, and Communications Practices in Lebanon and Palestine* (2013), Matar, Dina and Harb, Zahera eds., London: I.B. Taurus.

history was oblivious to their presence, it did note them in passing, but without a clear reference to who they were. Traditional Israeli history books will inform you that in 1948 Israel fought and won its War of Independence, and that the Jewish nation established a state in ‘a land without people for a people without land’. However, in recent years Israeli state narratives have been subject to serious challenges and revisions.

Israel’s so-called ‘new historians’ have challenged linear and exclusionary historical accounts of pre-1948 Palestine as an uninhabited land, settled by the exiled Jewish people who established a state despite unrelenting opposition from its neighbours, and made the barren desert bloom. Benny Morris (1987; 2004) and Ilan Pappé’s (2004; 2006) work in relation to the events surrounding the State’s establishment have resulted in angry debates and social polarization within Jewish Israeli society. In their differing ways, Morris and Pappé have helped to dislodge the Zionist myth that Israel prior to Jewish settlement was “a land without people for a people without land”. According to their revisionist accounts, the Palestinian people did exist and lived in Palestine prior to their displacement in the war of Israel’s founding, and that the new Israeli state played an active role in the displacement of the indigenous inhabitants and the beginning of the Palestinian refugee problem. These new historical accounts are part of growing attempts in the present to re-articulate the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the people of Israel-Palestine.

This chapter examines the proliferation in the past decade of Israeli and Palestinian collective, individual and historical narratives concerned with the events which took place in post-Mandate Palestine and/or the newly established State of Israel between 1947-9. It begins with the story of the public resurgence of the suppressed narrative of the Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe) after decades of silence marked by a pronounced lack of officially-sanctioned narratives. The chapter continues with the story

of how the Palestinian people have individually and collectively held onto memories of their dispossession and how these memories have more recently been utilized politically in order to articulate the Palestinian refugees' right of return. This account is fused with a theoretical analysis of the work of the Israeli NGO Zochrot (Remembering) which seeks to reintegrate the narrative of the Nakba in the Jewish Israeli collective consciousness by making pre-1948 Palestine and its people visible in the Israeli socio-cultural and political landscape. The chapter notes that the work of critical historians such as Ilan Pappé, alongside progressive civil society institutions such as Zochrot, are creating a much-needed "safe space" within Israeli society where acknowledgement and witnessing can begin to take place without fear of persecution or retribution.

In *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999) Agamben defines the witness as, on the one hand, a third party observer who is called upon to testify in a court of law, and on the other, the witness (victim) 'who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it.' (ibid: 17). In relation to the latter, Agamben argues that an ethics of witnessing is incompatible with a legal conceptualisation of the witness because a separation of ethics and law becomes impossible given that, according to him, the necessary related concept of responsibility is already contaminated by law (ibid: 20). Bearing witness thus becomes 'a confrontation with the infinity of responsibility' (ibid: 21), thereby constituting witnessing as an impossibility (ibid: 34).

However, Catherine Mills (2003) rightly criticizes Agamben's legalistic account of witnessing for leaving out the role of the one to whom the testimony is being addressed, thereby ignoring the question of historical responsibility and its relationship to remembering and/or bearing witness (ibid: par. 21). She argues that by privileging the Latin origin of 'responsibility' in the root word 'spondeo' (to sponsor or guarantee), Agamben wilfully neglects its origin in the verb 'responso' (to reply or respond to

another). Paul Ricoeur identifies this problem as the ‘duty to remember’ which relates to our deep concern for the past and to our future orientation (Ricoeur, 1999: 9). The ethical responsibility ‘to respond’ to the testimony (account) of another is embodied in the duty to keep alive ‘the memory of suffering over and against the general tendency of history to celebrate the victors’ (ibid: 10). Here Paul Ricoeur emphasizes the role of the critical historian which is to reinforce the ‘truth-claim’ of memory against falsifiability and to revise or refute dominant history:

In admitting what was originally excluded from the archive the historian initiates a critique of power. He gives expression to the voices of those who have been abused, the victims of intentional exclusion. The historian opposes the manipulation of narratives by telling the story differently and by providing a space for the confrontation between opposing testimonies (ibid: 16, my emphasis).

In short, the responsibility to bear witness requires the conscious utilization of narratives which tell the dominant version of historical events ‘otherwise’, or in other words ‘the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self’ (Ricoeur, 2004: 89). Conversely, the alternative response to the memories of the abused and/or oppressed is ‘denial’ or the ‘need to be innocent of a troubling recognition’ (Cohen, 2001: 25). ‘Denial is always partial; some information is always registered... [the paradox of] knowing and not knowing’ (ibid: 22).

From Silence to Bearing Witness

In *Remembering Al-Nakba in a Time of Amnesia* (2008), to which the title of this chapter alludes, Ahmad Sa’di attributes the prolonged Palestinian ‘silence’ about the Nakba, which he stresses is not the same as ‘amnesia’ or wilful forgetting (see Ricoeur, 1999), to the Palestinian collective experience of post-traumatic shock as a result of the

unprecedented scale of dispossession and displacement of between 750,000 and 900,000¹⁸ civilian Palestinians in 1947-49. This collective silence has been characterised by the absence of publicly received testimony regarding the forced mass exodus and was further exasperated by the Palestinian refugees' expectation that the disastrous events which assailed them would be a temporary arrangement. The passage of time, the international failure to implement the refugees' rights, and the arrival of the second major displacement and dispossession of the Palestinian people following Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day Arab-Israeli War and the ensuing military occupation of the Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, suggest the prospect of return is futile.

The Palestinian silence in relation to the Nakba relates in part to the political and ideological dominance of the Israeli state narrative that has perpetuated the longstanding and, until very recently, formally unchallenged characterization of 1948 as a "triumphant" war of independence during which the "Arab" population of Palestine took "voluntary flight" (see Peled-Elhanan, 2010; Pappé, 2006). These two conflicting narratives of the same event, one triumphant and one catastrophic, have been vastly unequal in terms of global public legitimacy, the former being the accepted and dominant version of 1948, while the latter has been historically absent from international debates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the plight of the Palestinian refugees. The subject of the Nakba remains a contentious issue within institutional discourses on the conflict because those who lay claim to having been its victims are a powerless and stateless people, while the overwhelming responsibility lies with one of the world's most influential nation-states.

Since the UN decision to partition Palestine in 1947¹⁹ and the resulting Nakba the vast majority of Palestinians have been relegated to statelessness and exile. One and a half

¹⁸ UNRWA Statistics (1950-2008) 'Number of Registered Refugees', http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/rr_countryandarea.pdf/, accessed on 3/4/2010

¹⁹ UN GAR 181

million Palestinians continue to reside in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Gaza Strip and West Bank²⁰. The 3.5 million residents of the Occupied Territories have been subject to Israel's military rule since the 1967 occupation, and the remaining 1.5 million²¹ Palestinians are second class citizens in a Jewish State which refers to them as the "Arab minority" and considers them a "demographic threat" (Alon and Benn, 2003). The Palestinians, in their millions, have for many decades spoken about the tragedy which assailed them in 1948, albeit their stories and testimonies have until recently been largely ignored within dominant institutional discourses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The hegemonic narrative of the State of Israel has not only acted to omit Israeli perpetration of the Nakba but has been coupled with the active denial of the very existence of the Palestinian people as a national collectivity. This political strategy dates back to early Zionist representations of pre-Jewish settlement Palestine as 'a land without people for a people without land', a claim most explicitly articulated by the Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, who infamously declared in a newspaper interview: 'There were no such thing as Palestinians', proceeding to publicly deny the catastrophic events of 1947-49 by adding: 'It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine... and we came and threw them out and took their country... They didn't exist'²². Such acts of public denial of the existence of the Palestinian people have been possible because, as Edward Said (1984) writes:

Facts do not at all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain and circulate them. Such a narrative has to have a beginning and an end: in the Palestinian case, a homeland for the resolution of its exile since 1948. But as Hayden

²⁰ UNRWA Statistics (2010), <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=253>

²¹ Central Bureau of Statistics (2009/10) 'Population by Population Group [in Israel]', http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/yarhon/bl_e.htm

²² The Washington Post, Herald Times 16.6.1969 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers)

White has noted in a seminal article, “narrative in general, from the folk tale to the novel, from annals to the fully realized ‘history’, has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more generally authority (ibid: 34).

The combination of the silence of an expelled, grief-stricken and distressed population, on the one hand, and the void in the memory and landscape of the perpetrating collectivity, on the other, is somewhat understandable in the context of what took place in Palestine in 1947-49. However, as Sa’di (2008) laments and Pappé (2006) condemns, it is far harder to understand the response of the international community at the time and even more recently. The passage of time appears to have entrenched not only the denial of the perpetrators, but also the amnesia of the international bystanders. Despite the existence of numerous UN resolutions, among them UN Resolution 194 (1949) which calls for the implementation of the Palestinian refugees’ right of return to their former homes, and the later UN Resolution 242 (1967) which calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, there has been a mesmerizing absence in academic literature on the subject of the story of the Palestinian dispossession.

The international academic neglect of what happened to the Palestinian people in 1948 is particularly prominent in the fields of collective memory and post-conflict studies. Perhaps understandably, scholars in the field of collective memory who deal with issues of victimhood and perpetration are reluctant to apply theory, which has been largely developed in the wake of the Jewish Shoah²³, to an event perpetrated by a section of the Jewish collectivity against another Semitic people in the period immediately succeeding the European Holocaust. Another perfectly plausible explanation is presented

²³ ‘Catastrophe’ in Hebrew, the concept relates to the systematic murder of 6 million European Jews by the Nazi regime during the 1940s.

by the argument that the Shoah is a unique and unprecedented event of mass devastation in the history of human existence and is therefore not comparable to other smaller (and arguably less significant) events of collective suffering (for the claim of the Shoah's 'uniqueness' see Wiesel, 1985: v. iii., 162, 1; also, to a lesser extent, Kearney, 2002: 69).

However, a case could be made that the above argument is almost irrelevant given that no comparison between the Shoah and Nakba is required considering that while each historic event is unique in its specificity, there are enough other cases of national dispossession and inter-communal violence with which moral analogies, if not strict comparisons, can be drawn. To name a few analogous cases, South African Apartheid, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and the troubles in Northern Ireland are to a greater or lesser extent comparable cases given that they constitute contemporary points of departure for theorising ethical responsibility for the suffering of others. Furthermore, in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonisation* (2009), Michael Rothberg makes a compelling case against 'the framework that understands collective memory as competitive memory – a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources' (3). Rothberg proposes that memory is:

multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative (ibid: 3)... Not strictly separable from either history or representation, memory captures simultaneously the individual, embodied, and lived side and the collective, social and constructed side of our relation to the past (ibid: 4)... A model of multidirectional memory allows for the perception of the power differentials that tend to cluster around memory competition within a larger spiral of memory discourse in which even hostile invocations of memory can provide vehicles for further, countervailing commemorative acts (2009:11-12).

Yet, despite the pre-existence of credible Palestinian scholarship documenting the history and geography of pre-1948 Palestine, such as the influential works of Walid Khalidi (1959, 1992), the narrative of the Nakba began to gain widespread legitimacy within Western and Israeli academic and political discourse only with the arrival of Israel's revisionist historians. The newly declassified Israeli Defence Forces' archives from the 1948 war, featured in Morris's book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (1987), and the revised edition in 2004, revealed that the over 800,000 Palestinians who 'left' Palestine during the period were in fact subjected to an organised campaign of ethnic cleansing, including forced expulsions, a number of recorded massacres, and numerous cases of rape carried out by the pre-state Jewish forces against the civilian Palestinian population.

Staggeringly, Morris's subsequent reflections on the very revelations he helped to bring to public knowledge have been strikingly amoral. According to Morris, his opinion reflecting the contemporary Israeli consensus: 'In certain conditions, expulsion is not a war crime. I don't think that the expulsions of 1948 were war crimes. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs... There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing' (interview with Shavit, *Ha'aretz*, 9.1.2004). For Ilan Pappé, on the contrary, the dispossession of the Palestinians in 1948 by Israel represents a crime against humanity which has 'been erased almost totally from the global public memory':

This, the most formative event in the modern history of the land of Palestine, has since been systematically denied, and is still today not recognised as an historical fact, let alone acknowledged as a crime that needs to be confronted politically as well as morally (Pappé, 2006: xiii).

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2006) represented one of the first scholarly attempts to bear witness to the Nakba outside of the Palestinian collectivity. To bear

witness is to act as a bridge between remembrance and forgetting, between memory and oblivion, between the living and those whose lives have been rendered meaningless. Bearing witness is about speaking truth to power, making manifest buried lies and concealed crimes and making an ethical and political demand for justice. Moreover, as Paul Ricoeur (2004) asserts, the role of a critical historian is not only to revise and update the history of a given community, in this case the Israeli collectivity, but to correct, criticise and even refute taken-for-granted historical narratives (ibid: 500). Since Pappé is a Jewish Israeli his ethical stance represented an almost unprecedented and exemplary undertaking. For his moral courage and outspoken demand for justice on behalf of the Palestinian victims he paid a high price in the aftermath of the publication of his book which resulted in his being subjected to slander, death threats and, ultimately, his self-imposed exile.

Pappé (2006) defined the event of 1947-49 as an organised campaign of ethnic cleansing by the pre-state Jewish armed forces against the indigenous civilian population of Palestine. Further, he documented the ways in which the concealment of the Nakba was achieved and continues to be maintained by the careful ideological and political orchestration and machinations of the Zionist leadership and institutions of the State of Israel. Among the acts of what Pappé terms Nakba memoricide (ibid: 225), which began in the immediacy of the ensuing state-building and power consolidating project in the aftermath of 1948, he lists the wholesale destruction, dynamiting, bulldozing, and erasing of 500 depopulated Palestinian villages in order to prevent the return of their expelled inhabitants. Other acts of memoricide include the declaration of depopulated and confiscated Palestinian lands as Israeli State property, giving newly expropriated localities 'ancient' Hebrew names, and handing the land over to the Israeli Land Authority for the establishment of Jewish settlements. Palestinian land was also turned

over to The Jewish National Fund (JNF) for ‘archaeological’ and ‘reforestation’ programmes (ibid: 232):

The archaeological zeal to reproduce the map of ‘Ancient’ Israel was in essence none other than a systematic, scholarly, political and military attempt to de-Arabise the terrain – its names and geography, but above all its history (p. 226)... the erasure of the history of one people in order to write the history of another people’s over it (Pappé, 2006: 231).

Bearing Witness in a time of Denial

The success of Israel’s concerted effort to erase the memory of Palestinian life before 1948 is precisely what the narrative of the Nakba seeks to combat. The politicization and public mobilization of the narrative of the Nakba began in earnest during the 1990s, as an increasing number of Palestinian scholars noted the pronounced absence of officially chronicled Nakba survivor testimonies. Similar to scholars in Europe and North America during the 1990s who were driven to make records of and preserve Holocaust survivor testimonies for dissemination to future generations, Palestinian academics feared that with the passage of time the generation which lived through the Nakba would be lost forever before the possibility of documenting and making public their memories. The most recent of these key contributions is Dina Matar’s *What It Means to Be Palestinian* (2011), a monograph which recounts the Palestinian struggle for peoplehood through the voices and stories of Palestinians living in exile and under Occupation.

In many respects, contemporary narration of the Nakba represent a political strategy which seeks to counter the hegemonic Zionist narrative of 1948 and to combat perpetrator-induced amnesia vis-à-vis Palestinian claims for justice and recognition. In the wake of the failure of the Oslo Peace Accords, the Nakba re-emerged in the

Palestinian national consciousness as a reminder of the failure of Palestinian national aspirations, resulting in a reckoning with the ‘unpastness’ of the past, which continues to dictate Palestinian daily existence in the form of Israel’s sovereignty and occupation versus Palestinian statelessness and absenteeism (Sa’di, 2008). The ensuing proliferation of testimonies, memorial books and commemorative events in relation to the Nakba has been a collective effort to create a socially recognised narrative of the past which serves to inform the politics of the present. In many respects, the re-emergence of the narrative of the Nakba as ‘a point of historical and political orientation towards the future’ (Allan, 2007: 253) represents an attempt to narrate the past in order to articulate the injustice, powerlessness and social exclusion experienced in the present.

The lack of officially sanctioned narratives and icons of commemoration due to the stateless status of the Palestinian collectivity has constituted the Nakba as a ‘portable’ site of memory and a temporal point of departure for the Palestinian people: ‘Palestine as a birthplace, homeland, source of identity, a geographical location, a history, a place of emotional attachment and fascination, a field of imagination, and place wherein Palestinians want to end their days has dominated the lives of Palestinians on an individual and collective level’ (Sa’di, 2008: 387). This longing for rootedness and return is deftly narrated by Lila Abu-Lughod in her chapter in *Nakba: Palestine, 1948 and the Claims of Memory* (Abu-Lughod and Sa’di, 2007) in which she chronicles her late father’s decision to return to Palestine in the wake of the Oslo Accords. She relates how from his residence in Ramallah in the Occupied West Bank he conducted regular historical ‘tours’ to his childhood home in Jaffa, from where his family was forced to flee in 1948 (ibid: 77-104).

Abu-Lughod writes that upon her father’s first return visit to Jaffa, after over forty years of exile, he reported feelings of profound disorientation and unfamiliarity in the

alien environment of the now Israeli Tel Aviv suburb of Jaffa. He was nevertheless able to find his bearings and relocate himself in the city of his youth by asking local Palestinian children about the location of King Faysal Street, and to his relief they took him there immediately, even though there was no longer a sign bearing the name of that street (ibid: 84). The children's intimate knowledge of a long expunged history and supplanted geography and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod's ability to re-locate physical remnants of pre-Nakba sites, such as Hasan Bek Mosque, his now re-named and Israeli-occupied school, and the now-neglected cemetery where his father's and grandfather's remains rest (ibid: 83-91), testify to the living memory of the pre-Nakba years passed on from generation to generation through family stories.

For the Palestinian generations born after the Nakba, who derive their identities from the experience of Palestinian dispossession and statelessness, the stories and maps of the lost Palestinian villages and cities are not lived but inherited memories. These second and third generation Palestinian refugees were not born and raised in villages their parents and grandparents had to leave, nor have they had the opportunity to visit them, and even if they were permitted to return they would discover that their ancestral homes no longer exist, as they have either been reduced to ruins, or are now covered by Israeli cities and settlements. Marianne Hirsch defines the above mode of formative recollection as postmemory:

distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by deep personal connection... Postmemory characterises the experiences of those who grew up dominated by narratives that precede their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events... Postmemory – often obsessive and relentless – need not be absent or evacuated: it is as full and as empty, certainly as constructed, as memory itself (1997: 22).

Mapping the erased and suppressed geography of former Palestinian inhabited localities is an integral part of the Palestinian endeavour to retrieve and retain the material significance of their loss: their homes, mosques, villages and lands. Rochelle Davies's (2007) account of the memorial books compiled by Palestinian refugees in the camps of Lebanon, Syria, The West Bank and Gaza illustrates precisely the integral role played by the refugees' preoccupation with preserving the memories of the physical localities from which these communities were expelled or forced to flee in 1948 and have since been prevented from returning to. The compulsion and intricate detail with which these maps are drawn and communally preserved, detailing not only significant landmarks and geological habitat but also the ownership of homes and lands, is intimately tied to the Palestinian longing for and desire to return to the familiarity and ownership of their former homes. The village, with its connotation of intimate connection to the land, remains a key site of identification and a source of belonging for the refugees who continue to organise camp life and dwelling on the basis of their localities of origin in pre-1948 Palestine.

Nevertheless, the Nakba is not simply an act of recall, as the experience of being uprooted from one's habitat is a tragic reality even for the subsequent generations of those Palestinians who remained within the borders of the state of Israel and for whom dispossession continues in the present. These Palestinians who Israel refers to as the 'Arab minority', who managed to remain and received Israeli citizenship in the aftermath of 1948, although they are no longer subject to the military rule imposed on them until 1966, they continue to reside in a legal and existential limbo. They are citizens of a country which treats them as 'present absentees'²⁴: second-rate citizens whose lands

²⁴ **Land & Housing Rights:** The Absentee Property Law declares that anyone who left the country in 1948 is an absentee, and that his/her property comes under the control of the State. This Law was used only against Arabs [Palestinians], and even in reference to people who remained in the country but who were

continue to be confiscated by the state, and who are denied the right of return to their former homes and localities which, unlike the refugees beyond Israel's 1948 borders, they can visit, touch and smell, but they cannot reclaim (Abu-Lughod and Sa'di, 2007; Pappé, 2006). Yet, like the children who took Ibrahim Abu-Lughod to King Faysal Street, despite nearly 50 years of absence from Jaffa's landscape, these Palestinians keep the memory of pre-Nakba Palestine alive. Palestinian Israelis organise annual processions to the localities of former Palestinian villages to commemorate the Nakba; these Marches of Return often coincide with Israel's Independence Day²⁵ celebrations and constitute an act of resistance in the face of denial, and more recently, attempts at outright legalised repression.

The latter development has been characterised by the actions of the ultranationalist rightwing party of the Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is Our Home), which has proposed extensive legislation to 'ban' the Nakba (*Ha'aretz*, 14.5.2009). The first legal proposal submitted in May 2009 was only narrowly defeated in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) amidst international outrage and condemnation from Palestinian Israeli minority rights groups and their progressive Jewish supporters who opposed the divisive and discriminatory nature of the law (*Ha'aretz*, 31.5.2009). The proposal involved a ban on any public display of 'mourning' on Israel's

compelled to leave their land. These individuals are called "present absentees." The Defence (Emergency) Regulation 125 authorizes the military commander to declare land to be a "closed area." Once he so declares, no person is allowed to enter or to leave the area. By this regulation, the population of tens of Arab villages became uprooted. There is no uprooted Jewish population in the State. The National Planning & Building Law prohibits the provision of basic services such as water and electricity to tens of unrecognized Arab villages in the State. Although these villages existed before the State's establishment, the main purpose of the law is to force the people to leave their villages and move to government-planned areas. There are no unrecognized Jewish villages in Israel' (Adalah, Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Report to UN CERD 1998: 2, <http://www.adalah.org/eng/intladvocacy/cerd-major-finding-march98.pdf>)

²⁵ Al Nakba is annually commemorated on 14th May according to the Gregorian calendar, while Israel's Independence Day celebrations are annually held on 5th Lyar according to the Hebrew calendar. The two dates do not always coincide, as was the case in 2010 when 5th Lyar corresponded to 19th April.

Day of Independence and the imprisonment for up to 3 years of anyone who would refuse to obey the law (*Ha'aretz*, 1.1.2009). A revised proposal which banned references to the Nakba from Israeli school textbooks and ordered the removal of existing references succeeded in becoming law in July 2009 (*Ha'aretz*, 22.7.2009). The most recent onslaught on Nakba commemoration became law on 23rd March 2011; the 'Nakba Law' makes it illegal for institutions which 'undermine the foundations of the state and contradict its values' to receive any public funding (Khoury and Lis, 2011).

Peled-Elhanan (2010) illustrates the textbook anti-Nakba law in action. She writes in relation to the Israeli government's reaction to a school textbook by Domka et al. (2009) which was recalled immediately after publication because it rendered:

the Palestinian version regarding the ethnic cleansing in 1948 alongside the Israeli one, as a "version" and not "propaganda", using both Israeli and Palestinian sources (such as Walid Khalidi's books). The change requested by the ministry of education was first of all to remove the Palestinian sources from the Palestinian version and to substitute it with Palestinian texts that are "more faithful to reality" or with Israeli sources... In order to have the book republished, the publishers replaced the Palestinian sources with Israeli ones in the part called The Palestinian Version and gave it a lesser weight, without changing the structure (Peled-Elhanan, *ibid*: 398).

Despite the fierce attempts by the rightwing Israeli establishment to silence the voices of the Palestinian people, the unrelenting force of the narrative of the Nakba is increasingly penetrating the consciousness of growing numbers of progressive Jewish Israelis who are confronting the Zionist myths²⁶ of their upbringing. Among these

²⁶ Similar to Smith I use the concept 'myth' not to connote a 'false' or 'fabricated' account of history but rather 'a widely held view of the past which has helped to shape and explain the present' (Smith, 2000:2).

individuals are the founders and members of the Israeli NGO Zochrot (Remembering) who work to raise awareness about the Nakba within Israeli society:

The Nakba is an unspoken taboo in Israeli discourse, its memory expunged from the official history of the country and from its physical landscape. Yet the Nakba is also the central trauma of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its legacy continues to unfold today – in the institutionalization of inequality and violence, in the erasure of the past, and in the deteriorating plight of the Palestinian refugees. We hope that by talking about the Nakba in Hebrew, the language spoken by the Jewish majority in Israel, we can engage the public in learning about and taking responsibility for the Nakba and its enduring consequences (Zochrot Annual Report 2008).

Zochrot's commemorative and educational work in relation to the Nakba exemplify what Karen E. Till (2008) theorizes as a socially engaged and ethically responsible 'place-based practice', a mode of operation based on the conceptualisation of social memory as embodied experience, 'places are embodied contexts of experience, but also porous and mobile, connected to other places, times and peoples' (ibid: 109). This notion is embodied in Zochrot's commemorative activities which include public tours to the locations of the Palestinian villages destroyed during 1947-49. These tours are accompanied by the publication of booklets dedicated to these erased localities. The booklets contain history about and maps of the village, as well as testimonies from the village's refugees, and on occasion include written reflections by the Israeli Jews who live or have lived in the towns and settlements erected on the lands of the former Palestinian villages.

Zochrot's commemorative activities echo the village memorial books compiled by Palestinian refugees in the camps as the organisation routinely engages in the re-mapping

of Palestine onto the amnesiac Israeli landscape. The NGO's tours often culminate with the erection of street signs bearing the pre-1948 names of the destroyed Palestinian villages in Arabic and Hebrew: 'These signs are usually removed shortly after... Removal of the signs testifies to their importance; the act of their removal relates both to the Nakba and to its significance in space and history' (Zochrot Annual Report 2008).

The organization also engages in advocacy activities which seek to democratise the public landscape of Israel. These activities include actively opposing building plans which will erase the remains, without marking the existence, of depopulated Palestinian villages, such as Zochrot's successful Supreme Court lawsuit against the JNF which calls for the erection of public signs identifying the Palestinian villages on which JNF sites are now located²⁷. At the time of the original request Zochrot's demand was widely publicized in the liberal media with numerous articles appearing in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* (12.6.2005; 26.7.2005; 13.6.2007, 3.2.2008)²⁸.

Attempts to preserve the physical traces of the former Palestinian presence are often met with evasion and vandalism, a case in point being JNF's refusal and delay in repairing and replacing the damaged signs in Canada Park which testify to the destroyed Palestinian villages (Zochrot Annual Report 2009). Nevertheless, the battle for and against Nakba remembrance continues to be waged publicly, legally and politically, making it increasingly difficult for the opponents of the narrative to refute its potency and moral entitlement. The sentiment of resignation and 'damage limitation' in relation to Nakba commemoration is illuminated in a comment made by a JNF administrator in a newspaper interview following Zochrot's successful High Court petition concerning Canada Park:

²⁷ Zochrot (2006) 'High Court Petition [Canada Park]; Military Commander's Response to Canada Park Petition'; and 'JNF's Response to Canada Park Petition'.

²⁸ translations from the Hebrew are available on *Zochrot's* website: see bibliography.

The signs don't say that we expelled them, nor that they're in refugee camps... I suggest not raising this issue in the media, because it's very sensitive. And it would be better not to raise the issue at all. So far there is only one park where it's mentioned. In fact, many of the JNF parks are on land where Arab villages were once located, and the forests were planted as camouflage. But we're afraid it will spread throughout the country; it's apparently something that can't be stopped (Michal Kortoza interview in *Eretz Israel Shelanu*; translated quote in *Zochrot Annual Report 2008*).

Commemorative practices such as the public display of signs bearing witness to the former presence and current absence of the Palestinian people, two unspeakable facts, are deeply unsettling to the Jewish Israeli collectivity which refuses to acknowledge the past so as to avoid confronting responsibility in the present. Such commemorative acts are deeply disturbing because they 'prompt us to think about forms of descendance, genealogies of proprietorship and histories of citizenship, and remind us that we need to reconceptualise received ideas of identity, belonging and the civic' (Jonker in Till, 2008: 109). Thus, in spite of the hostile and unreceptive environment and the concerted efforts to silence the remembrance, and even utterance, of the Nakba, Zochrot's work is opening up a valuable space for Jewish Israelis to be able to begin to confront the founding myths of Zionism, and perhaps be able to begin, at a later stage, to take ethical responsibility without the unbearable and potentially disabling burden of guilt and the fear of persecution.

Nakba remembrance carves out a space which enables the painful past of Palestine-Israel to be confronted with a view to acknowledging and assimilating the Nakba as a shared historical experience, an act which has the potential to enable the possibility of the two collectivities to begin to envisage a future based on coexistence and

reconciliation. The public commemorative events in which Zochrot engage act as a bridge between the two conflicting narratives and are opportunities for active inter-cultural dialogue between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. These acts serve to democratize and reconstitute social memory not only through education and commemoration but also by posing important and challenging political questions in the form of Zochrot's 2008 public conference on the Israeli recognition of the Palestinian refugees' right of return. The conference was ironically held at the Zionists of America House in Tel Aviv, and the location of this historically unprecedented event can be read as a sign of the Nakba narrative's power of subversion and disruption of the Zionist account and simultaneously as a testament to the flexibility and strength of the Zionist hegemony.

Such inherent contradictions in the geo-political space within which Zochrot functions serve to illustrate the validity of some of the criticisms levelled at the organisation by Lentin (2008) who argues that much of Zochrot's work remains at the level of the symbolic, and further, activities such as mapping the land as it existed before 1948 epitomise a re-colonisation of Palestine (ibid: 217). For her this constitutes an appropriation of Palestinian memory which perpetuates Palestinian victimhood and Israeli authority (ibid: 215). While there is validity in her criticisms, Lentin leaves little room for self-reflexivity and improvement among Zochrot activists. Two of her challenges to the organization have been met or attempted at the time of writing. One of the challenges represented by her is the need for Jewish Israelis to develop political strategies for advocating the Palestinian return – a question which was first put at the organization's 2008 conference mentioned above and which forms part of a larger ongoing project on the practicalities of return in conjunction with the Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights: BADIL.

The second challenge, which Lentin admits is much more difficult, is to document the testimonies of Jewish perpetrators of the Nakba. Given the current climate of denial, this task is much more problematic and any progress is likely to be painstakingly slow. Nevertheless, since 2010 there are a number of testimonies on Zochrot's website from former Jewish Israeli combatants who fought in 1948 who have reluctantly come forward to speak about carrying out and/or witnessing expulsions of the Palestinians. These include the testimony of Amnon Noiman (Zochrot, 17.6.2010) which is featured in a documentary about contemporary Israeli responses to 1948 (Lia Tarachansky, *By the Roadside*, 2013). This testimony also featured in the 2012 'Towards a Common Archive' exhibition hosted by Zochrot and curated by the critical Israeli film maker Eyal Sivan and the historian Professor Ilan Pappé. The exhibition featured the testimonies of over 150 Zionist fighters who had participated in the 1948 war.

Therefore, despite their limitations, Israeli proponents of Nakba acknowledgement are carving out a vital space for dialogue within Israeli society which is increasingly enfolding in denial. This denial is most explicitly evident in the concerted political efforts to silence the Nakba narrative and intimidate its advocates. To commemorate the Nakba in 2010, an event corresponding with Israel's Independence Day celebrations was held by Zochrot activists. On the day they put up protest posters across Tel Aviv which read: *"The Nakba, since 1948, Made in Israel."* and at the bottom: *"The Nakba law aims to scare those who commemorate the Nakba on Israel's Independence Day. Israel's Independence Day is The Nakba day too. You try to shut my mouth but I won't forget that today is also Nakba day"*.²⁹

Such activities constitute not only commemorative acts, but further articulate a political solidarity against those who wish to silence those who have chosen to bear

²⁹ Translations from the Hebrew supplied in personal correspondence by Eitan Bronstein, May 2010.

witness to the Nakba. Such acts are politically as well as symbolically significant given that Nakba commemorative activities in Israel have been criminalised by the 2011 anti-Nakba law. The significance of the activities of organisations such as Zochrot (Remembering) lies precisely in the act of bearing witness and the refusal to forget about the Nakba in a time of perpetrator-induced denial. Zochrot's Independence/Nakba Day activities are a reminder that denial and repression are not the same as forgetting, and moreover, there is positive potential in the stand-off between those who seek to reconcile with the tragedy of the past and embrace a future of coexistence and those who choose denial and conflict. As a result a conversation is beginning to take place in Israeli society and this conversation is being held in a common language, and even those who refuse to listen cannot deny that they are hearing.

Since the 1990s, the history of 1948 has been simultaneously read and re-read as a historical account from the events of the past to the present, and in reverse, illuminating a silenced history and memory from the perspective of the now. Despite its catastrophic nature, the Nakba is also a narrative of hope, its narration having been made possible by the long awaited recognition in the Oslo Accords of 1993 that the Palestinian people are a national collectivity with rights to self-determination. The explosion of Nakba testimonies and commemorations since the 1990s has been the direct result of the space to re-narrate the Palestinian nation opened up by the Oslo Accords with their promise of statehood. Narrating the Nakba became even more urgent when this promise, coupled with the refusal to address the refugee's right of return, began to appear as a distant and untenable prospect.

In response to these failures, the Palestinian collectivity and Diaspora intellectuals, alongside a number of critical Israeli academics and civil society groups such as Zochrot, amongst others, have undertaken a project which seeks to challenge and

re-articulate the polarising positions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Differential access to power has meant that who gets to tell the story of the Nakba with the biggest impact has not always been related to direct experience and its lived consequences, but the privilege of being able to speak and be received with authority, which at present tends to lie with Israelis. Nevertheless, the conversation that is taking place between progressive Israeli Jews and Palestinians is vitally important as it is producing new narratives for coexistence which are vital for ‘constructing a sense of the self in the face of traditions that have crumbled and human hopes that risk being forgotten... only through the variety of relationships constructed by many people seeing from different perspectives can truth be known and community be created’ (Minow, 2008: 258).

From Recognition to Redress

Projects such as the ‘Towards a Common Archive’ exhibition (2013) and the Cape Town vision document (2012) on the Palestinian refugee return co-authored by BADIL and Zochrot activists are prime examples of critical attempts to bridge the two histories of 1948 and to work towards the redress of the survivors of the Nakba. When I first became aware of Zochrot’s work in 2009-10 the only testimonies from 1948 available on Zochrot’s website were two short documentary films recorded and edited by Raneen Jeries, a Palestinian Israeli activist. One of the films features testimonies of five Palestinian women who lived through and survived the Nakba, and the second features two Palestinian survivors of the ethnic cleansing of the neighbourhood of Manshiyyah in 1947, both of whom are internally displaced Palestinian citizens of Israel. While Lentin (2008) criticises Zochrot’s possession of these testimonies as a form of recolonisation of

Palestinian memory by the Jewish Israeli colonisers, Raneen saw her work somewhat differently.³⁰

As a Palestinian woman living in Israel the opportunity to record the testimonies of Palestinian survivors is both an opportunity to re-write, or rather to write in, a part of her history that had been written out by the Zionist state she grew up in, and also as she explained to me: ‘To speak about the Nakba in Hebrew you need Palestinian stories... [the] Nakba is a Jewish [Israeli] story as well’. Similar to Peled-Elhanan (2012), Raneen also stressed that for an Israeli organisation aimed at the Jewish public in Israel, to archive the stories of Palestinian survivors is also vitally important in order to counteract the silencing and absence of the Palestinian narrative from the Israeli curriculum, an absence which serves to continually justify hatred and violence against the Palestinian people, whether under the Occupation or elsewhere.

The recording of Israeli perpetrator testimonies relating to 1948 had begun at the time of the interview. However, the process of recording these testimonies was rather slow in gathering momentum as most Israelis who fought in 1948 were reluctant to come forward and speak about what they saw or did. Moreover, while there are now 150 recorded testimonies of Jewish fighters who took part in the expulsions of Palestinians in 1948, collected as part of the 2012 ‘Common Archive’ exhibition, these testimonies are overwhelmingly characterised by evasion and partial recollection; for example, sometimes it is not clear whether the former fighters are recollecting atrocities they witnessed or perpetrated (see Zochrot website for examples); similarly, there is little indication of remorse or regret for the actions, and even less desire to redress the Palestinian refugees’ demand for return. In fact, many of the testimonies are reminiscent of Benny Morris’s infamous ‘You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs’ remark.

³⁰ Interview conducted over Skype, 17.12.2010.

Nevertheless, the collection of perpetrator testimonies from 1948 is absolutely vital in order to combat the officially sanctioned amnesia and denial in relation to the Nakba which characterises Israeli society at present. Moreover, in the absence of Palestinian narratives about 1948 from the Israeli curriculum, which we saw in the previous chapter serves to justify and sanction continued militarist violence against Palestinian lives and property in the Occupied Territories, and to a lesser degree within Israel, Zochrot's online archive can serve as an alternative source of historical information containing survivor testimonies³¹ which challenge the Zionist narrative of 1948 as a triumphant war of independence against the threat of annihilation. Simultaneously, the corroboration of Palestinian survivor testimonies through the juxtapositioning of Jewish Israeli perpetrator testimonies serves to reinforce the present necessity to recognise, take responsibility for and redress the rights of the Palestinian survivors and descendants of the Nakba. The necessity for recognition, responsibility and justice is even more pertinent in light of the issues examined in the previous chapter which highlighted the re-living, re-enacting, and re-articulation of the trauma and violence of the Nakba in each and every subsequent violent militarist encounter under occupation.

At the same time, in light of the ongoing relation of violence and oppression characterising Israel-Palestine, acknowledgement in the form of recognising and accepting the truth claims of the Palestinian narrative of the Nakba does not in itself represent an adequate response to the Palestinian call for justice. As the 'Common Archive' curator Eyal Sivan explains in an Al Jazeera interview, acknowledgment without recognition of the moral, ethical and political implications of the injustice/s perpetrated against the Palestinians during the Nakba, and subsequently, fits neatly in to

³¹ In 2012 Zochrot's website had over 84,000 visits, primarily from Israel (Morocutti, 2013).

the ‘shoot and cry’ narrative (Silver, 2011). What is at stake in relation to having information about formative past events is not so much the accumulation and possession of knowledge but rather what to do with the knowing:

the mutually performative effects that narratives and subjects have in the presence of each other sometimes produce effects that resemble what we used to call authorial intention. In this context, the interest of assuming the performativity of narrative as subject-forming moments or places and also as effects of the subject’s attempt to give an account of themselves is to reframe the debate about the use, abuse or abusive (re)construction of national pasts (Rosello, 2010: 25).

In other words, the task at hand is not so much about acknowledgment but rather it is about the responsibility entailed by the recognition of the Other’s right to redress. The responsibility entailed calls forth not only a reframing and/or a retelling of an expunged history as a shared history, but also a reframing of the subject positions of the key actors in Israel-Palestine. Responsibility calls for a reframing of victims and perpetrators, or the colonised and colonisers, in a manner that helps to break with the violent and violence-reproducing past, while at the same time honouring the role of the past in the present relation of misrecognition and irresponsibility. In essence, the task at hand is to articulate a future-oriented vision of Israel-Palestine and of the Jews/Israelis and Palestinians living in Israel-Palestine, as well as of those who wish to return.

Thus, the ‘Common Archive’ can be viewed as a future-oriented project that not only serves as a testament and acknowledgement of what was done in 1948 in the present, but can also act as a catalyst to a truth and reconciliation process in the future. Indeed, much of Zochrot’s recent work has been inspired by the work of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) in South Africa, with a joint study visit by BADIL and

Zochrot activists in 2012 which led to the publication of the 'The Cape Town Document' which lays out a joint vision for the Palestinian refugees' return, and has since been the subject of presentation and discussion at the Right of Return Conference, held at Boston University, USA in April 2013.

What is interesting however is the manner in which Zochrot and BADIL have focused their joint efforts on redress rather than truth, clearly bearing in mind the criticisms of the TRC process. One of the biggest criticisms levelled at the TRC has been its individuation of the crimes committed during the Apartheid regime which allegedly detracted from the need for collective reparation (Mamdani, 2002). The misplaced focus on truth for amnesty at the expense of atonement and the redress of the collective experience of injustice has in turn been criticised for leaving the socio-economic framework of apartheid in place in post-Apartheid South Africa, with continuing white minority control of land and resources, and the growing deprivation and dispossession of the black majority (Valji, 2003).

It is for this reason that the Cape Town return vision document focuses not only on Israeli acknowledgement and corroboration of the Nakba, but more significantly on the recognition of the right of return, taking responsibility for its implementation or lack thereof, and consequently the question of redress, or in other words the practicality of implementing the return. Significantly, the authors of the vision paper assume a post-Zionist future in which the return will take place. There is no indication or discussion of how this post-Zionist future is to be arrived at, or what the role of the activists might be in bringing about this post-Zionist moment. While the paper is unique and unprecedented in scope and nature, it is the first time Israeli Jews and Palestinians have got together to actively think and plan the Palestinian refugee return, the document nevertheless remains

contradictory in many places, partly due to disagreement on key issues but perhaps also to do with lack of expertise in certain areas such as economics and public administration.

For example, the authors admit that there are major unresolved disagreements over a two or one state solution, an issue which is likely to have a major impact on the return and its nature and scope. Similarly, there is great disagreement over the question of property restitution and rights. For example, are the current Jewish occupiers of properties that belonged to Palestinians who were expelled or left in 1948 to be evicted from these properties, or are the original Palestinian owners to be compensated instead; and in either case do the Jewish residents have any rights to property and/or compensation if they had purchased in good faith and/or lived there for a prolonged period of time?

The document also provides numerous 'track' options for individual and collective return, and attempts to resolve some underlying inequalities in Palestinian society. For example, it argues that financial and practical provisions for return should also be made for those refugees and their descendants who left behind land and property and for those who did not have land and/or property but are nevertheless entitled to compensation and financial redress. These proposals however leave a rather confusing and not entirely compatible mixture of individual, collective and state responses to housing and public administration and responsibility in the eventuality of the return. Likewise, while the conversion of the United States' military aid budget to Israel is envisaged as a probable financial source for the implementation of the return, the significance and role, with the exception of UNRWA, of the International Community and the governments hosting the refugee Diaspora, is ignored.

Sidelining the role of the refugees' host states is particularly problematic for a number of reasons, not least of all because the right of return to Israel-Palestine could be responded to with the denial of the residency and citizenship rights, and in extreme

circumstances the expulsion, of Palestinian individuals and/or communities who might wish to reclaim the right of return symbolically while remaining and settling in the country in which they were born or in a third state of their choice. Also, excluding the wider region from the frame of return is equally problematic in light of ongoing secondary and tertiary displacement of the Palestinian refugees from Syria, and the possibility of the conflict there spreading to Lebanon. It is also surprising that the authors of the document fail to acknowledge that the return as envisioned represents the biggest case of social engineering on an unprecedented scale, with the exception of the creation of the Zionist state of Israel and colonial Algeria, and for this reason the return might involve and require regional and international cooperation.

Nevertheless, despite the above criticisms, the aforementioned discrepancies and contradictions in the return vision document testify to the inclusion and inclusivity of a variety of voices and points of view in the process of thinking about the return. Likewise, the document represents a collaborative work-in-progress rather than a manifesto, and calls forth further consideration and debate. The vision document also represents a radical reframing of the return as the co-responsibility between the Israeli coloniser and colonised Palestinians, and further demonstrates how Zochrot as an organisation has grown and developed since its inception. This can be gauged in particular by contrasting the 2012 Cape Town Document co-authored by BADIL and Zochrot with the 2010 paper on the practicalities of return, published in the second tri-lingual issue of the *Sedek Journal*.

The 2010 paper entitled ‘Thinking practically about the return of the Palestinian refugees’ is co-authored by two of Zochrot’s founders, Norma Musih and Eitan Bronstein. In this paper the framework underlying the thinking about the practicalities of the return is decidedly Jewish Israeli centric, if not Zionist. The underlying assumption is

that the decision-making process lies in the hands of Israelis: the Israeli public has to accept the return, it has to be assured of its safety and right to self-determination, and it will accommodate the absorption of the refugees into the existing body politic via a gradual process of return. While the 2010 paper similarly assumes a post-Zionist moment in which the return will take place, once again the arrival at the post-Zionist moment is unclear, and moreover, it appears that while the state will be de-Zionised, there is reluctance on the part of the Jewish Israeli authors to see the Jewish Israeli collectivity rearticulated otherwise. What I mean by this is that there is an absence of an attempt to think beyond the dominant and prevailing logic of separation and segregation between Israelis and Palestinians. For example, the post-return state is envisaged by the authors as a state comprised of numerous nation states, each responsible for its own governance and cultural management.

In contrast the 2012 document encourages bilingualism, and calls for Arabic and Hebrew to be instituted as the official languages of the state which would have to be learnt by both collectivities, with emphasis on Jewish Israelis learning Arabic as part of the decolonisation process. The notion of Israelis as colonisers is also decidedly absent from the 2010 paper on the return, with a focus on righting the wrongs of 1948 without the acknowledgement that the Zionist project is an ongoing settler-colonial project both in the 1948 and 1967 territories. The Occupation is also curiously absent from the frame employed to examine the return. For example, the refugees in Lebanon are mentioned as deserving to be prioritised because their conditions are the worst. This is rather curious given that the authors are writing four years after the blockade of Gaza and in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 attack, which is briefly mentioned in the paper in relation to future truth and reconciliation processes, circumstances which arguably make eighty percent of Gaza's residents, who are refugees from 1948, the refugees with the worst circumstances. This is not an attempt to create a hierarchy of refugees, which is highly

problematic to begin with, but rather to highlight the manner in which the leaving out of the Occupation from a framework which alludes to the possibility of a shared state by Israelis and Palestinians can still reinforce the logic of separation which frames the ongoing apartheid and occupation.

Moreover, avoiding the subject of the Occupation is a means of avoiding responsibility in the present, or at least avoiding talking about the necessary actions for bringing about the post-Zionist state envisaged in the return documents: ‘When I [we] remember, rewrite, retell the past, the new past turns my present into a narrative environment that becomes a type of norm, a constraining and enabling frame that defines what I [we] will need to oppose, celebrate, defy’ (Rosello, 2010: 18). Thus, as was already discussed, responsibility entails more than simple acknowledgement; it entails actions that would bring about some form of justice. Therefore one could ask: is it enough to speak about the Nakba in Hebrew and to envisage the Palestinian return while continuing to serve in the IDF, remaining silent about, and maintaining the ongoing colonial Occupation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank?³² In many respects Zochrot remains trapped within the Zionist consensus it is trying to break free from. This however does not have to be disabling, even if it is constraining at present. However, it does require an urgent and serious working through: ‘Working through the past is both a practice and something between a politics and an ethics, something that could be called an agenda’ (Rosello, 2010: 17).³³ A renewed agenda which calls for practical solidarity in

³² In 2005 a group of Zochrot activists resigned over one of Zochrot’s founder’s refusal to continue serving as an IDF air force reservist; the question of serving in the military continues to be a hotly contested issue within the organisation. (Amit Perelson, Skype Interview, 2012)

³³ Currently the organisation is considering its responsibility to begin advocacy work in relation to the right of return alongside its educational activities on the Nakba, although the direction Zochrot will take on the subject is not clear at present (conference presentation by Zochrot Director Liat Rosenberg, 2013).

the present would be better placed to create the necessary steps to redress the injustices of the past with view to creating a fairer and more egalitarian future.

There are many possibilities for what this agenda might look like. One possibility is a renewed focus not only on the acknowledgement of the Nakba, but more importantly, the recognition of the right of return within Israeli society. For while Zochrot activists accept the right of return as a given in both the 2010 paper and the 2012 vision document, nevertheless, it is not clear what the best means are to convince the Jewish Israeli public to move away from denial and the refusal to recognise the Palestinian right to redress. Indeed, one possible answer is that as the colonisers “Israeli Jews do not matter as far as making decisions about the Palestinian right, or the return, and that they will simply have to live with the consequences of implementing the justice of the Palestinian return”. Nevertheless, in light of a region in conflict, an otherwise engaged International Community, and an intransigent Israeli body politic, the Israeli public is emerging ever more as a group which needs to be addressed as a key player, the role of which needs to be examined in relation to but separate from the current Zionist governance regime, and organisations such as Zochrot can help to articulate an alternative vision of cohabitation.

Reframing Israeli Jewishness

One of the most interesting and significant questions raised by Zochrot’s reframing is what to do with the colonisers in the event of decolonisation. This in particular is embodied in the tension between the role to be played by Jewish and Israeli in the identity of the post-Zionist settler collectivity. Most Palestinians and many critical Jewish Israelis prefer to place emphasis on the Jewish as a redeemable ethno-religious category, while the Israeli is considered to be imbued with the characteristics of Zionism and colonialism, and moreover might imply acceptance of the Zionist settler colonial project of the state of Israel. However, I would like to argue that both of these

assumptions are deeply flawed and moreover serve to reinforce Zionism's own logic of settler colonial supremacy. Above all, Israel is not an Israeli state, it is a Jewish state which happens to be called Israel. In fact, the project of Zionism is a project which desires Jewish self-determination and supremacy within Israel-Palestine. Thus, treating the 'Jewish' part of Jewish Israeli as the neutral term merely obscures the role played by the Zionist conceptualisation of 'Jewishness' in its settler colonial endeavour.

One could argue, as Judith Butler (2012) does, and is discussed at length in the next chapter, that for this very reason Jewishness needs to be reclaimed from its Zionist conceptualisation. However, anyone interested in unpacking and challenging the Zionist policy of dispossession needs to examine the role of Jewishness in this colonial project in a critical and conscious manner, acknowledging the function of the concept in the Zionist project, without dismissing or denying the fact that Jewishness means many different things around the world and is experienced in many different ways by different people who have defined themselves as Jewish historically or contemporarily.

Furthermore, an emphasis on Jewishness, which also then results in debates around Jewish rights to self-determination in Israel-Palestine, implies that Jews everywhere in the world have the right to settle and claim collective rights in Israel-Palestine by virtue of being Jewish. The above notion of collective Jewish self-determination in Israel-Palestine is the premise of Zionism and the practice of the state of Israel as it stands under the Law of Return. However, what needs to be considered is whether in a decolonised and post-Zionist Israel-Palestine, in the twenty-first century, after decades of post-colonial debates, a notion of transnational collective Jewish rights in Israel-Palestine can still be justified. Furthermore, conceptualising rights in terms of ethno-religious and sectarian groupings is itself highly problematic and threatens to recreate a new version of segregation, perhaps akin to the set-up characterising

contemporary Lebanon, a set-up which contains the constant threat of inter-communal violence, something that a future decolonised Israel-Palestine would need to avoid. This then brings me to make a case that a rearticulation of 'Israeli' as a Hebrew speaking national collective can potentially enable a more just and egalitarian mode of configuration post-Zionist apartheid. Rosello explains that:

The goal is to invent or perhaps to recognize and celebrate, where it exists, a new type of 'breaking free'. It does not have to be a breaking free 'from' the past but a recognition that living with the ever-present past is unavoidable, that, therefore, the present is this so-called past of violence and guilt, but also that a welcoming of that heritage does not mean that we must reproduce it. And this is not a three stage dialectic process but a constant articulation between these positions (Rosello, 2010: 19).

What the above quote articulates is a warning of the danger of rearticulating embattled identities and therefore the need to accept and recognise the role of the past in the present and the future without reproducing the violence that has brought us together. In the case of Israel-Palestine this begins with an acceptance that Jewish Israelis are indeed colonisers, that their presence in Israel-Palestine has only been possible because of the violent colonisation and dispossession of the Palestinian people; but it is also an acceptance that they are there, that as people they have the right to choose to remain and live there in equality, without imposing a settler colonial order on the land and its people. Thus, despite its violent history, and its continuing violence, the concept of Israeliness is also the concept that best encapsulates the Jewish, Hebrew speaking people who have lived in Palestine for the past sixty five to a hundred years. Moreover, Israelis are not simply Jews. Although they are a part of the transnational Jewish community, they have their very own specific and unique history. The Zionist project of Israel is unprecedented

in Jewish history, certainly in recent Jewish history, and one needs to be sceptical of accepting theological texts written thousands of years ago as historical facts. Thus, Jewish Israeli history is unique in relation to Jewish diasporic experience, and that needs to be acknowledged as part of thinking about the future of the role of Jewish Israelis in Israel-Palestine post-Zionist colonisation.

In that sense, the category 'Jewish Israeli' would function in much the same way as Afrikaner identity functions in post-Apartheid South Africa. Zochrot's 2010 paper, bearing in mind the aforementioned criticisms, alludes to the significance of retaining a Jewish Israeli identity post-Zionism, an identity that would be characterised by the continuity of the Hebrew language and culture. Thus, although at present 'Israeli' carries the connotation of violence and dispossession by association of belonging to the Israeli settler colonial state: in a post-apartheid situation it has the potential to become a cultural and not a political signifier. Thus, over time Israeli Jewishness has the potential to be rearticulated as a civic identity. Therefore, allowing for Jewishness to be reclaimed as an ethno-religious and/or cultural self-identification rather than the racialised category it signifies in the current settler colonial state of Israel. It also helps to avert the rather problematic attempt by some to reduce Jewishness to religion and religious practice, an attempt which denies the significance of the multiple ways in which Jewish self-identification has developed in the past two centuries.

The above comments are not meant as a prescription for a future identitarian category, rather it is an attempt to problematise some of the debates circulating in relation to what form Israeli Jewishness might take in a post-Zionist Israel-Palestine. Moreover, the above debate has direct bearing on differing visions of an alternative solution to the conflict in the form of a shared state, and what the role and place of Jewish Israelis in it might be. Furthermore, such debates are gaining momentum among critical Israeli groups

such as Zochrot, and ICAHD which is examined in the next chapter. Zochrot has not come out explicitly for a one or two state solution, and as highlighted earlier, its collaboration with BADIL is also characterised by disagreements among participants in relation to the nature of Israel-Palestine in the eventuality of decolonisation. Nevertheless, there is an emerging consensus among critical Israeli and Palestinian activists that the one state solution is the inevitable, if not necessarily the desirable, outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Therefore, for organisations such as Zochrot, the question of what the de-Zionization and decolonisation of Israel-Palestine might mean for Jewish Israelis, who face becoming an ethno-national minority in the eventuality of the Palestinian return, is increasingly gaining significance, as exemplified by its prominence in the 2010 paper on the return, and to a lesser extent, the 2012 Cape Town documents. The 2010 paper in particular testifies to the tensions and difficulties underpinning the process of psychic decolonisation among critical Jewish Israelis. This process remains an ongoing, fraught, and simultaneously, growing attempt among critical Israelis to rearticulate Israeli Jewishness as non-Zionist and non-dominating. The next chapter examines the work of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) and will explore further the above debates on decolonisation and self-determination by examining ICAHD's statement in support of a binational state in Israel-Palestine and the accompanying responses by Palestinian counterparts.

Conclusion

This chapter examined critical Israeli responses to the Palestinian narrative of the Nakba and the refugees' right of return with reference to the work of the Israeli NGO Zochrot. The chapter highlighted the difficulty of working towards acknowledgement and recognition of the Palestinian right to return in a climate of denial and suppression of the

memory and history of the Nakba within Israeli society. However, it also highlighted the productive tensions which have emerged in the process of critical Israelis and Palestinians working through the past in order to imagine a more just future. These tensions relate to visions of redress, cohabitation and the possibility to articulate alternative subjectivities which break with the current dichotomy of coloniser/colonised.

5. Decolonising Israel-Palestine

This chapter examines the work and thought of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), particularly as it relates to the political analysis provided by its founder, Jeff Halper. The chapter begins by briefly situating Israel-Palestine as a situation of ongoing settler colonisation. It then proceeds to examine the significance and contributions of ICAHD's transnational advocacy and its practical resistance and rebuilding activities which focus on reframing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a situation of oppression and dispossession; an analysis which demands international redress for the plight of the Palestinian people. The second part of this chapter focuses on ICAHD's recent endorsement of a binational one-state solution and the ensuing debate on binationalism, decolonisation, and the right to collective self-determination in Israel-Palestine.

Israel-Palestine as Settler Colonialism

The title of this chapter is partly inspired by the subtitle of Halper's semi-autobiographical political monograph *An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel* (2008, 2010), and his self-professed regret during ICAHD UK's 2010 annual conference in London that he had not subtitled the book 'Decolonising Israel' as opposed to 'redeeming' it. This linguistic omission or substitution points towards broader debates and changes in consciousness in ICAHD's thought in particular, and to critical Israeli narratives more generally, in relation to Israel-Palestine's settler colonial past and present. Moreover, the invocation of 'redemption' in the title of Halper's autobiography inadvertently draws on a key tenet in the Zionist settlement discourse: redemption which refers to the Jewish return to Palestine and the transcendence of the diasporic exile (Piterberg, 2010). Thus, invoking redemption unwittingly re-affirms the settler colonial

project in Israel-Palestine. For this reason it is important to engage with the tension inherent in the redemption/decolonisation logic common among critical Israeli groups in order to consider a way out of the impasse.

As Lorenzo Veracini (2010: 15) writes: ‘settler colonialism remains currently most invisible where a settler colonial order is most unreconstructed (e.g. Israel and the United States)’. Elkins and Pedersen (2005: 3), similarly, reaffirm the exceptional success of settler colonialism in Israel-Palestine as the only transnational pan-European settlement project to achieve relatively secure nation building in the twentieth century. As mentioned previously, the diasporic character of the Jewish settler population³⁴ sets Jewish settlement in Palestine apart from other instances of settler colonialism. This has allowed some scholars to reject the settler colonial label altogether, including ICAHD’s Jeff Halper (2008 and 2012) who has argued that the diasporic character of Jewish Israelis makes Israel an example of an ethno-nationalist state which more closely resembles Serbian nationalism, with the added characteristic of the settler population being largely made up of displaced and persecuted migrants from Europe who cannot be constituted as colonialists. However, Veracini would also characterise Serb ethno-nationalism, particularly in relation to the practices of ethnic cleansing and population settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s, as another instance of twentieth century settler

³⁴ Proponents of this argument often cite the lack of a single Metropolis from which Jewish Israelis originate, emphasising the transnationality of the settler population. For example, the Ashkenazi Jews originate from all over Europe and North America, with the country of departure not necessarily being the country which they were born in or which their family comes from (this is particularly the case for displacement in the aftermath of the Holocaust). The Mizrahi or Arab Jews were expelled from a number of Middle Eastern and North African countries in the 1950s. The Sephardi community finds its origins in the expulsions which took place from Spain and Portugal in the 15th Century; and in the twentieth century the community has also suffered expulsions and persecution in the European and Middle Eastern countries in which their forefathers had resettled.

colonialism, albeit not as successful; though reports of Republika Srpska demanding secession indicate that a similar trajectory is desired.

In contrast to the rich and complex theorisation available on the phenomena of colonialism and imperialism, scholarship on settler colonialism is an emerging field, often characterised by anthologies which examine the anthropological practices of specific settler colonial societies (Elkins and Pedersen, 2005; Goldstein and Lubin, 2008; Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, 1995). With the exception of the work of Patrick Wolfe (1999; 2006), perhaps one of the most comprehensive contemporary theoretical accounts of settler colonialism is provided by Veracini (2010). Veracini stresses that settler colonialism must be treated as a phenomenon separate and distinct from both colonialism and immigration: in the case of the former, colonisation is defined as a conquered polity dominated by an ‘exogenous agency’ (ibid: 3), whereas migration, while it shares the aspect of displacement with settlement, is different from it in that migrants arrive and are expected to assimilate into a pre-existing and constituted political order. Settlement on the other hand is characterised by conquest, ‘return’, and an ingathering in a place in which the settler collectivity institutes a new sovereign order where they come to be in control of both the usurped/displaced indigenous population, and exogenous others, for example African slaves in the United States or contemporary immigrants (ibid: 3-12).

Previous chapters have emphasised the role of narrative in consolidating early Jewish settlement in Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, which continues to play a strategic role in maintaining the current oppressive regime in Israel and the Occupied Territories in relation to the Palestinians, as well as the denial of the Nakba and the refugees’ right of return. Narrative also plays a very significant role in settler psychology, with disavowal being one of its key characteristics (ibid: 14): the disavowal of any responsibility or complicity in colonialism – in Israel’s case colonialism is

something associated with the British Empire, not Jewish settlers; denial of any founding violence against the indigenous population – ‘they just left’; and emphasis on settler innocence and suffering – ‘seeking refuge from persecution’. Disavowal is further coupled with an emphasis on settler struggle, and outstanding contribution to the land, together with an appropriation of authentic indigeneity – ‘return to the promised land’, ‘making the desert bloom’, and/or ‘a land without a people, for a people without a land’.

The elimination and/or physical or narrative replacement of the indigenous population by the settler collectivity is a common trope in settler colonialism (Wolfe, 1999; Veracini, 2007 and 2010). In fact, one distinguishing aspect between pure colonialism and settler colonialism is precisely the issue of labour versus land. In pure colonialism, the exogenous rulers rely on and expect servitude by indigenous labourers, often having colonised precisely for the purpose of extracting resources and labour for the benefit of the Metropole and its representatives. On the other hand, while not always achievable in reality, settler colonies aspire to independence and self-sufficiency, and seek to become the natives of the land.

As Shafir (2005) highlights, early Jewish settlement in Palestine was initially modelled on other colonial entities such as French Algeria; however during the subsequent settler migration waves a strong emphasis on self-reliance and Jewish-only labour became the dominant demand. The difficulty of maintaining a Jewish-only labour force during pre-state settlement, partly because of the small number of Jewish workers at this stage, but also due to lack of agricultural and other skills among the Yihuv population, in contrast to the plentiful and cheaper labour provided by Palestinian agricultural workers, resulted in mass discontent and union strikes by the settler population (ibid: 44 - 55). In the years after the state was established, and as a result of the large scale ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Arab Palestinian population, the above

settler-only model became the dominant mode of organisation particularly in the early years of state formation, but was more prominently re-established in the 1990s with the policy of closure vis-à-vis the Occupied Territories.

As Naomi Klein (2007) has pointed out, closure has only been possible with the arrival of large numbers of cheap migrant labour from Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe to replace the cheap labour previously supplied by the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the settler colonial sovereign ability to control the population economy comprised of settler colonists, indigenous and exogenous others (Veracini, 2010), means that the presence of exogenous others does not challenge the settler colonial paradigm but can rather be co-opted to bolster settler supremacy in relation to the indigenous population. A similar example, though one with far worse consequences for the indigenous population, is the case of the United States where the indigenous First Nations were eliminated almost in their entirety, to be replaced by claims to settler indigeneity.

Thus, with the elimination of most of the indigenous population of North America the white settler colonists have been able to institute themselves as the original and authentic inhabitants and hence to maintain their right to govern in relation to later arrivals. Moreover, the virtual elimination of the indigenous population has also meant that the settler polity has had, over time, to rely on importing racialised exogenous labour in order to develop the colonial enterprise: in the pre-state period these needs were met with the labour of forcibly imported African slaves, and later impoverished free African Americans, and contemporarily other racialised exogenous workers such as migrant labourers from South America.

One of the biggest obstacles to decolonising settler colonialism continues to be the dominance of the elimination or zero-sum paradigm³⁵, in which any future remodelling of a settler colonial society, often as a result of struggles for recognition by exogenous others, takes place within the established settler colonial order: for example civil rights for African Americans in the United States. Conversely, even in cases where there has not been a physical elimination of the indigenous population, decolonisation has often been characterised by the flight of the pan-European settlers, for example in Algeria, or Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (Veracini, 2007). Nevertheless, there are also other less bleak examples in which settler colonial decolonisation is an ongoing process rather than a clean and brutal break with the past, for example post-Apartheid South Africa, but also the often neglected case of many South American countries where the European settler colonial population has by and large assimilated into the indigenous population, further mixing with exogenous others, and creating a majority mestizo (mixed) population. Thus, while settler colonial decolonisation or discontinuity remains a problematic task, it is nevertheless, not an impossible one. Indeed, the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is partially modelled on the South African anti-Apartheid struggle which despite its limitations continues to be one of the most successful decolonisation struggles related to a recent settler colonial society.

Currently, for many, particularly Israelis and uncritical observers, Israel within its 1948 borders is a done deal as far as settler colonisation is concerned. From Israel's perspective and by its prerogative it is an internationally recognised Jewish state, albeit with flexible and disputed borders. These borders have not been disputed by most Palestinians who have for the past 20 years been working towards a two-state solution based on the widely accepted borders defined by the 1967 armistice 'Green Line'. Only a

³⁵ Veracini (2010) defines this as the settler colonial tendency to eliminate or exterminate the indigenous population in the process of establishing its claim to the land and to govern unchallenged.

minority of Palestinians, or as the state prefers to refer to them, Arabs or non-Jews, whether one is willing to admit the events of the Nakba or not, are resident in Israel as second class citizens, hence affirming the primacy of the Jewish Israeli national majority. The state of Israel, as it stands, is a *fait accompli*: the Zionist settler colonial project has successfully produced a Jewish Israeli nationality and a Jewish state. Its greatest accomplishment is that Israel's *de facto* existence serves to erase and/or obscure its colonial origins, sealing its image as a realised national self-determination project. That the above discourse often fails to acknowledge the unfinished settler colonial project within Israel itself is often neglected even by well meaning critics. The 'Judaization' planning and resettlement policies in force in the Galilee since the 1980s, and the ongoing expulsions of the Bedouin Palestinians in the Negev/Naqab, the latter closely mirroring land expropriation in the West Bank, are usually wilfully ignored and sidelined facts.

Nevertheless, the ongoing colonisation of the West Bank is hard to ignore. The settler colonial settlements in annexed and occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank are illegal under International Law. Judea and Samaria, as the Israeli government officially refers to the territory of the West Bank in its internal communication and military orders, is 'disputed' territory, i.e. the Palestinians claim it is land for their future state, but Israel also claims as her sovereign territory. The half a million Israeli settlers who reside in the East Jerusalem and West Bank settler colonies are linked to Israel proper through a complex and exclusive grid of roads to which Palestinians are denied access. It is possible to drive from Ma'ale Adumim to Tel Aviv and back without ever being given any indication that you have left Israel or entered the occupied West Bank at any point. A Palestinian on the other hand might live in a West Bank village, half of which is on the other side of the Separation Wall where he/she has no legal permission to enter or visit (Weizman, 2007). This obfuscated and perplexing settler colonial apartheid was largely made possible by the geo-political arrangement put into place as a result of

the Oslo Accords, and the emergence of Areas A, B, and C; an arrangement which absolved Israel from responsibility as an Occupying Power towards the Palestinian civilians under its control, and gave the military-run Civil Administration unprecedented internationally sanctioned control of most of the physical land in the West Bank. It is this situation that ICAHD's Jeff Halper aptly describes as 'The Matrix of Control'.

Halper's description of the situation in Israel-Palestine, particularly in the OPTs, as a 'Matrix of Control' is worth quoting at length. He defines the Matrix of Control as:

a maze of laws, military orders, planning procedures, limitations on movement, kafkaesque bureaucracy, settlements and infrastructure – augmented by prolonged and ceaseless low-intensity warfare – that serves to perpetuate the Occupation, to administer it with a minimum of military presence and, ultimately, to conceal it behind massive Israeli “facts on the ground” and a bland façade of “proper administration.” The Matrix resembles the East Asian game of “Go.” Unlike chess, where two opponents try to defeat each other by eliminating one another's pieces, the aim of Go is to win by immobilizing your opponent, by controlling key points on the matrix. This strategy was used effectively in Vietnam, where small forces of Viet Cong were able to pin down and virtually paralyze a half-million American troops possessing overwhelming superior fire-power. Israel's Matrix of Control accomplishes the same with the Palestinians. Maintaining the image of a democratic country only trying to defend its citizens from Arab terror, Israel uses seemingly innocuous and even benevolent policies and procedures to create a matrix of control and repression intended to lower the Occupation's military profile (ICAHD website, 2012).

The above articulation of Israel's Occupation as a 'Matrix of Control' works to highlight the ongoing process of colonisation and dispossession which characterises the situation in the OPTs, in particular the West Bank. The Gaza Strip, since the territorial disengagement and the departure of the Israeli settler population, has largely been reduced to an open air prison: one of the many 'Bantustans' intended by Israel for the 'warehousing' of the Palestinian population. 'Warehousing, when applied to a people such as the Palestinians, refers to a static situation of civil and political virtual imprisonment emptied of all political content and without redress or resolution' (ICAHD, *Demolishing Homes, Demolishing Peace*, 2012: 6). By emphasising the structural policies of dispossession and ethnic cleansing by the Israeli state against the Palestinian people, ICAHD's analysis reframes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict away from Israel's security discourse which portrays Israel as a tiny island of democracy amidst a sea of violent Arab terrorists.

Reframing Israel's Matrix of Control

ICAHD's Mission Statement defines the organisation as a 'human rights and peace organization established in 1997 to end Israel's Occupation over the Palestinians. ICAHD takes as its main focus, as its vehicle for resistance, Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and within Israel proper'. Since 2010 ICAHD holds Special Consultative Status at the UN Economic and Social Council. The organisation has previously received the Olive Branch Award from Jewish Voice for Peace, USA; and Jeff Halper, ICAHD's co-founder and Director, was nominated for the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize (ICAHD, *Mission Statement* 2012). ICAHD's activities can be roughly summarised under four categories: (i) political analysis (reframing the conflict), (ii) practical solidarity (resisting demolitions, and rebuilding), (iii) transnational advocacy (lobbying international governments and inter-governmental

institutions); and (iv) alternative education tours (providing transnational activists with expert knowledge and information).

ICAHD's strong and vocal commitment to opposing the Occupation and standing side-by-side with Palestinians resisting house demolitions is respected and valued by Palestinian counterparts. Despite its name, the organisation's activities are wide-ranging: from activists physically resisting house demolitions by getting in front of bulldozers, to providing legal advice and moral support to Palestinians seeking to apply for building permits, to challenging the Civil Administration's³⁶ negative rulings against Palestinian claimants, to taking the case against house demolitions to international legal institutions. Since 2011 the organisation has expanded its activities to carry out legal research on the state of demolition practices within Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories, particularly focusing on demolitions of Bedouin villages in the Negev/Naqab. ICAHD's findings are regularly presented to international human rights committees in the European Union and United Nations. Moreover, ICAHD has sister organisations in the USA, UK, and Finland, and since 2013 also in Germany, with most members being seasoned Palestine solidarity campaigners, experienced at lobbying political representatives at the local, national and regional levels.

Unlike Zochrot which explicitly seeks to address Israeli society, ICAHD's role tends to be more focussed on grassroots solidarity with the Palestinian people, with an emphasis on international advocacy. Within Israeli society ICAHD's activities in the Occupied Territories and abroad are largely viewed as marginal, traitorous, or obstructive (NGO Monitor, 2008). ICAHD's peace centre Beit Arabiya has been demolished six times by the Israeli army, often with explicit warnings. Nevertheless, even where ICAHD's work is seen as necessary and welcome, as in the West Bank, ICAHD, like

³⁶ Israel's military government in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

many other solidarity organisations, often has to walk the tightrope between solidarity and patronage, humanitarian resistance and depoliticised charity.

Similar to Zochrot, ICAHD's work and perspective has evolved alongside and as a result of constructive criticism levelled at them. This evolution in organisational narrative is most evident in the writing of Jeff Halper which oscillates between analysis and a call for action. When translated into action the obstacles posed by the situation on the ground make the biggest difference to enacting justice in practice. Thus, despite recently coming out for a binational one-state solution in Israel-Palestine, the blockade of Gaza from 2006 has made it practically impossible for ICAHD to resist house demolitions or to rebuild demolished homes there. Solidarity with Gaza has become largely symbolic or humanitarian in nature. For example, Halper took part in the international flotillas which attempted to break the siege by entering Gaza from the Mediterranean Sea and bringing solidarity in the form of books, food, medicines, and toys for children. Similarly, since 2011 ICAHD has started to make explicit links between house demolitions in the West Bank and house demolitions against Palestinian citizens of Israel within Israel's 1948 borders, bringing their thinking and work closer to a discourse of decolonisation. However, lack of funds and the considerable higher cost of operating a construction site in Israel have prevented the organisation from hosting an international rebuilding camp in the same way that they do on an annual basis in the West Bank.

Out of the three case study organisations examined in this thesis, ICAHD's work most closely resembles the characteristics of a Transnational Social Movement (TSM) as defined by Jackie Smith et al (1997). This definition defines TSMs as shaping 'global politics by mobilizing transnational resources in national conflicts, generating constituencies for multilateral policy, and targeting international institutions' (Alger,

1997: 270). Jackie Smith (2008) further argues that multilateral transnational activism serves to democratise national spaces:

By mobilizing in International arenas, activists working at local and national level can bring respectability and urgency to their claims, altering the distribution of moral resources in the conflict. Mobilizing international legal arguments and institutions therefore helps alter the balance of power between neoliberal and democratic globalization networks (ibid: 174).

For this reason, alongside its practical resistance activities in Israel-Palestine ICAHD has increasingly focussed on international advocacy, regularly briefing international politicians, decision makers and lawyers on the situation in the Occupied Territories. 2012 saw the launch of a new information pack including statistics on displacement trends, a legal briefing booklet on Israel's violation of International Law as pertaining to house demolitions and displacement³⁷ specifically designed for international lawyers; as well as a detailed booklet containing political and normative analysis of Israel's displacement policies in the OPTs: 'Demolishing Homes, Demolishing Peace'.

Alongside the aforementioned post-Oslo overlapping but separate territories inhabited by Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank, the Israeli military uses a combination of British Mandate and Ottoman laws to administer the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. An 1858 Ottoman land law, adopted by the British in 1943 is used to expropriate land from public ownership declaring it 'State Land' for public use, which in reality is mainly used to build private housing for Israeli settler colonists. Alongside this, the military uses derivatives of Mandate 'Emergency Regulations', amended under the Jordanian Administration, but not updated since 1967, to declare civilian Palestinian

³⁷ 'No Home, No Homeland: A New Normative Framework for Examining the Practice of Administrative Home Demolitions in East Jerusalem'

inhabited areas as ‘closed military zones’, a pretext for evictions and house demolitions (Weizman, 2007). It is worth noting that the adoption or inheritance of former emergency colonial regulations and laws is a common feature and trope characterising the governing state of exception under colonial or imperial rule (Lloyd, 2012). Conversely, Israeli settler colonists in the West Bank are subject to Israeli civil law with the army lacking any jurisdiction over them; while within Israel proper a separate 1965 building law is used to expropriate Palestinian land for public/state purposes (Amnesty International, 1999).

Alongside military administration, corporate capital plays an equally significant role in many of the injustices suffered in Israel-Palestine. Corporate complicity is heavily intertwined and enmeshed in Israel’s racialised regime of oppression and domination in the Occupied Territories, and to a lesser extent in Israel within the 1948 borders. As such, individual corporations are viewed as vehicles for and enablers of Israel’s state interests and policies, and as institutions which benefit directly and indirectly from the abuse and exploitation of the Palestinian people (Barat and Winstanley, 2011; Barghouti, 2011; Wiles, 2013). Despite differentiated emphasis on the role of state or corporate institutions as purveyors of injustice, the relationship between state and corporate institutions continues to shape the reality of Israel-Palestine.

The policy of closure in the Occupied Territories which has barred and excluded most Palestinians from the Israeli employment market since the 1990s has resulted in an unemployment epidemic and growing impoverishment. At the same time many international and Israeli businesses particularly in the settlement blocks have benefitted and profited from Palestinian workers’ desperation and the absence of a minimum wage and legal employment protection. In essence, profit accumulation has been shaped by racialised practices and, simultaneously, racialised policies have been enabled by a drive for profit accumulation which routinely disregards human rights.

Corporate complicity in Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is particularly prominent in the physical infrastructure of the Occupation, from the over 500 International and Israeli companies involved in the construction, maintenance and surveillance of the Separation Wall, to Group4Securicor's (G4S) provision of prisoner transport and private personnel involved in the incarceration of Palestinian political prisoners, to Caterpillar's bespoke D9 armoured bulldozers used by the Israeli army in house demolitions and other destructive operations in the Occupied Territories (Who Profits, 2012). On the whole, private companies play an essential role in the maintenance and perpetuation of the Occupation with many security services, including check-point management, increasingly subcontracted to private security firms such as G4S. A Caterpillar bulldozer was also infamously involved in the death of US solidarity activist, Rachael Corrie, in 2003, with the company having to face a private lawsuit in the USA (Corrie et al, 2005).

For these reasons corporate complicity in Israel's human rights abuses and violations has increasingly become the subject of calls for boycott and divestment. ICAHD was one of the first Israeli groups to call for a boycott of the Israeli occupation, predating the 2005 Palestinian Civil Society call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions by five months. ICAHD's original boycott statement included (1) an arms embargo on weapons sold to Israel for use in the Occupied Territories; (2) boycott of settlement goods and businesses; (3) trade sanctions against Israel for violating its EU agreement by labelling goods from the West Bank as 'Made in Israel'; (4) divestment from corporations profiting from the Occupation, such as Caterpillar; and (5) holding to account individuals, such as politicians and senior military personnel, responsible for human rights violations by trying them in International courts (ICAHD, 2005). The organisation's revised call for boycott in 2010 bought ICAHD under the framework of the Palestinian BDS call and

expanded to include boycott of Israeli academic, cultural and sports institutions until they condemn the Occupation and disassociate themselves from it.

ICAHD UK also has an annual ‘Lobby Parliament Day’ in October/November when activists descend upon the United Kingdom Parliament to meet with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers and to advocate for their political representatives to put pressure on Israel to stop its demolition practices. ICAHD members were also encouraged, as part of a transnational Palestine Solidarity Movement campaign, to write to their local Members of European Parliament (MEPs) to lobby against the upgrade of trade relations between European member states and Israel under the Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (CAA) framework. The effort was largely unsuccessful as the vote on the trade agreement upgrade passed successfully on 18th September 2012.

However, to some degree, the recently announced European Union Directive, which came into force on 30th July 2013, advising member states that they should not finance, cooperate or give scholarships to institutions and individuals residing beyond the 1967 borders, can be attributed to the above civil society efforts. Political commentators have argued that this directive has been put in place by the EU to counteract growing calls for a boycott against Israel; an action which can be partially attributed to the efforts of critical activist groups such as ICAHD. Thus, despite the directive not extending to cover trade, and as a directive is merely advisory and not legally binding, nevertheless, it alludes to an acknowledgement of the illegitimacy of the settler-colonial enterprise under way in the Occupied Territories, and signals the growing recognition of the significance of the BDS campaign and its transnational successes.

Building Resistance and Solidarity

Alongside its international advocacy activities, ICAHD's most significant work remains their resistance, rebuilding, and alternative education activities in Israel-Palestine. ICAHD runs annual summer rebuilding camps – it has rebuilt 187 homes to date – and it runs 'Extended Study Tours' in the autumn, specifically designed for activists, journalists and politicians, as well as one-off alternative tours for groups and individuals, providing political analysis for what is taking place in East Jerusalem, the Old City, and Jordan Valley. The rebuilding camp and tours are both hosted in Beit Arabiya, ICAHD's peace centre, and they are accompanied by an extensive education and advocacy programme, featuring talks and presentations from Palestinian and Israeli civil society activists, as well as tours to the Jordan Valley and to Palestinian communities in Israel who are under threat of demolition. A closer analysis of participatory observations made during the 2011 ICAHD summer rebuilding camp can help to highlight some of the intricacies and tensions embodied in ICAHD's work. My ethnographic account relies on 'thick description' or the interpretive framework developed by Clifford Geertz (1973).

In July 2011 over thirty international and Israeli activists took part in the annual rebuilding camp held in the West Bank village of Anata. The camp was hosted in the home of the 'flagship' former home of the Shawarmeh family, ICAHD's peace centre. The largest contingents of participating activists were from Britain, Finland and the USA, with the majority being female. The 2011 camp's task was to rebuild the home of the Abu Omar family, also in the village of Anata. Over the course of the rebuilding camp participants developed close relationships with both families; however I have chosen to concentrate on the role of Beit Arabiya largely due to its symbolic status as ICAHD's peace centre.

Beit Arabiya, which is named after Arabiya Shawarmeh, the wife of Salim Shawarmeh, ICAHD's field coordinator and the owner of the house, is dedicated to the

memory of Nuha Sweidan and Rachael Corrie, two women who were killed while resisting house demolitions. Beit Arabiya stands in the village of Anata in Area C which like the majority of the West Bank falls under sole Israeli control as part of the Oslo arrangement. In some ways, Area C can be interpreted as the quintessential space of exception. The Palestinian Authority does not even have nominal jurisdiction over the welfare of the Palestinians living in Area C, unlike in Areas A and B. The Israeli military which is in sole control, represented by the Civil Administration in civilian affairs, is primarily tasked with expropriating land from the Palestinian residents for the building and expansion of illegal Jewish-only colonial settlements (Weizman, 2007).

Although most of Area C has been zoned as ‘agricultural land’ for the purpose of refusing building permits to Palestinians, area C’s land is neither arable, being largely rocky and mountainous, nor does it prevent Israel from expropriating Palestinian land in order to construct illegal Jewish settler colonies.³⁸ Anata is surrounded on three sides by four Israeli settlements established on land previously belonging to the village: Almon, Anon, Kfar Adumim, Nofei Prat, and the military base, Ananot (Palestinian Monitoring Group, 2006). Beit Arabiya, the home of Salim and Arabiya Shawarmeh was demolished and rebuilt four times before being dedicated as ICAHD’s peace centre in 2003 (Chistison and Christison, 2003), after the family decided it could no longer cope with living under constant threat of demolition and moved to live elsewhere.³⁹ After each demolition Beit Arabiya was rebuilt by ICAHD activists. In January 2012 Beit Arabiya and the Abu Omar home I participated in rebuilding were both demolished, alongside the Bedouin encampment overlooking Beit Arabiya. Beit Arabiya was rebuilt for a fifth time during the 2012 summer rebuilding camp and demolished a sixth time a few months later. It was

³⁸ On average only 5% of applications for building permits are granted by the Civil Administration (Weizman, 2007)

³⁹ Personal conversation with Jeff Halper.

rebuilt in early 2013 jointly by ICADH and Sabeel, a Palestinian Christian Liberation Theology organisation.

In his semi-autobiography, Jeff Halper (2008) describes the first time he witnessed a house demolition, the first demolition of Salim and Arabiya Shawarmeh's home in 1998, as the day he realised he was 'an Israeli in Palestine'. Since then the Shawarmeh family and their seven children have been the 'flagship' story of ICAHD, with the couple travelling on speaking tours to the UK and elsewhere to share their experiences of trauma and resistance. As Halper writes 'It is the fine line between protest and resistance that creates the divide, the chasm, between mainstream Zionist and what I call critical Israeli peace groups' (ibid: 17). It is precisely in participating and leading resistance activities in relation to house demolitions and, perhaps even more significantly, the political act of rebuilding demolished homes that sets ICAHD apart from other Israeli peace groups and has forged significant links between the organisation and Palestinian civil and political partners.

Due to the nature of rebuilding, essentially putting a roof over a homeless family, many, including some of the participants who had elected to join the rebuilding camp, have interpreted ICAHD's work as 'humanitarian'. However, the organisation has been keen to stress that rebuilding is a political and not a humanitarian act.⁴⁰ It is primarily political in that the rebuilt houses rarely survive an impending demolition for more than six months. However, despite the likelihood of having to relive another demolition, just as traumatic as the first or subsequent ones, most Palestinian families choose to rebuild. This is often because they have no choice; with an average of seven children most families find it hard to continue living in the overcrowded homes of friends and relatives. Rebuilding also constitutes a simple act of resistance in the face of ongoing Israeli attempts at ethnic

⁴⁰ Jeff Halper opening speech at 2011 rebuilding camp.

cleansing. Every day, dozens of Palestinians proclaim their presence and determination to remain in Palestine by doing something as simple as building a home to live in, despite the constant looming threat of demolitions. It is one of myriad examples of everyday resistance undertaken by ordinary people.

By annually rebuilding a family house, selected by the local Popular Organising Committee⁴¹, ICAHD provides solidarity to the everyday resistance already taking place, simultaneously giving it an international platform. One of the interesting things I noted during my participation in the 2011 camp was how the humanitarian/political tension served to strengthen ICAHD's political task. At the start of the 2011 camp at least a quarter of the participants, largely represented by US citizens, thought of the work they were about to embark on as 'humanitarian'. Many professed to have little understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the politics behind house demolitions, having come to try to learn more through participating in the local environment. In his participant observation of an ICAHD study tour, David Landy (2008) has similarly observed the lack of prior knowledge and awareness, particularly of Palestinian culture and society, among international participants. In particular, he criticises the structure of the tour for reinforcing the ignorance and ethno-supremacy of white, middle class, Westerners through the appropriation of Palestinian experience and suffering.

I agree with his observations to some degree, although what I observed during the camp was the radical transformation of many relatively unknowledgeable, well-meaning humanitarians into critical and astute activists who were ready to return to their home countries and advocate for justice in Palestine.⁴² By the end of the camp many of the

⁴¹ Popular Organising Committees are comprised of leading activists from the different parties and factions in Palestine, and they are most commonly associated with protests against the Segregation Wall.

⁴² Two of the American Quaker activists have since set up Palestine solidarity groups in their respective home towns (personal correspondence).

participants had concrete plans for setting up solidarity groups or giving talks to their existing communities and organizations. However, the problem of appropriating indigenous knowledge to secure one's status as an enlightened Western human rights activist must not be overlooked. The emphasis placed on witnessing and sharing 'our' experience of the rebuilding camp upon our return, with the experience of the Palestinian families who hosted us being relegated to 'illustrative examples' in 'our' factual and reliable story, made me reflect on the privilege of our positioning as international 'witnesses'.

Our passports provided us with relative freedom of movement around Israel-Palestine. For example, our Palestinian counterparts who lacked Jerusalem IDs were not able to join us in Jerusalem or Israel within the 1948 borders. Being a primarily Caucasian group meant that we were rarely stopped and searched at check points. And our very presence acted as a deterrent to the Civil Administration from carrying out demolitions in front of us. To some degree, the very regime of International Law which did not seem to matter in Palestine, but nevertheless applied to us, allowed us to do the rebuilding work we were doing. For, when told that rebuilding Palestinian homes was illegal under Israeli law we could respond that Israeli actions constituted a war crime under International Law⁴³, and as such we were merely upholding International Law in Palestine.

Although, internationality is not bullet proof, perhaps there was a degree of safety in numbers as we were a large group from a number of Western countries, but being American did not stop the bulldozer from crushing Rachael Corrie to death, or the sniper from shooting dead Tom Hurndall. International solidarity activists have also been shot

⁴³ Article 53 of The Fourth Geneva Convention states: 'Any destruction by the Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons... is prohibited'.

and wounded in the past at demonstrations against the Wall, including US citizen Tristan Anderson in March 2009 in Ni'lin village.⁴⁴ However, more than simply experiencing and witnessing the situation in Palestine, the aim of the rebuilding camp was/is to equip the international participants with the necessary embedded knowledge and skills to participate in advocacy activities upon their return to their home countries.

Over time, the experience of rebuilding, visiting other sites of house demolitions, including in Israel within its 1948 borders, being visited by the IDF, and hearing testimonies from Palestinian and Israeli activists resisting demolitions across Israel-Palestine, all the participants, including those who had come with little prior knowledge, left with a much greater understanding of the political situation in Israel-Palestine. In many respects, ICAHD's alternative educational tours, and the rebuilding camp's programme of talks and civil society panels are designed to mirror the tours provided by Israel's Ministries of Education and Tourism to the Jewish Diaspora⁴⁵ and international journalists and politicians. Both types of tours are similar in nature in that the primary aim is to provide participants with intimate knowledge of the lay-of-the-land in order to build a relationship with the place and its residents, and ultimately to encourage participants to advocate the respective perspective upon return. The biggest difference between these tours, aside from the political framework and perspective, is related to resources. The Israeli state usually finances and/or subsidises its tours; while an organisation such as ICAHD relies on participants financing themselves by fundraising through civil society connections such as churches, trade unions and independent supporters. Many Palestinian civil society organisations and transnational solidarity groups are also increasingly

⁴⁴ Many of the camp's participants wanted to join the Nabi Saleh demonstration against the Wall on our second Friday, but the organisers prevented us due to safety concerns. On that day twelve international activists were arrested and deported before the demonstration's start (Relayed by ICAHD organiser Maya Rotem).

⁴⁵ I participated in one such tour, organised by the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), in the summer of 2006.

working to provide similar alternative tours to combat the much better resourced propaganda of the Israeli state.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, similar to Landy (2008) I also noted that Palestinian perspectives and experiences were likely to be received far better when corroborated by a corresponding Israeli organisation or activist perspective. However, some of the more experienced activists who participated were very critical of the security discourse employed by Breaking the Silence (BtS) during their presentation following the screening of *To See if I'm Smiling*. For example, activists complained that the BtS representative refused to acknowledge that Palestinian armed resistance is legitimate under International Law, and it is in fact the occupation forces who are illegally present in the Occupied Territories. She was similarly criticised for using Israel's discourse to describe the Occupied Territories as 'disputed'.

Furthermore, despite the growing rhetoric of and support for a one-state alternative among Palestinian civil society actors, particularly those active in coordinating the BDS campaign, Israel's movement restrictions between the West Bank and East Jerusalem and hence Israel within the 1948 borders, means that it is often left to Jewish Israeli activists to conduct tours and presentations within the 1948 territory, thus inadvertently reaffirming Jewish sovereignty and hegemony within that space. Moreover, while ICAHD is increasingly working to link its resistance activities against demolitions in the West Bank with the resistance activities of Palestinian communities within Israel's 1948 borders, according to Jeff Halper there has been a great deal of reluctance among Palestinian Israelis to cooperate with ICAHD as they do not wish to be associated with the Occupation but rather see their struggle as a struggle for equal Israeli citizenship.

⁴⁶ I participated in such a tour organised by the UK student organisation Action Palestine in the summer of 2009.

Such tensions testify to the continuity of the discourse of separation which only works to create a chasm between Israelis and Palestinians, but also between Palestinians themselves.

Jeff Halper (2012) further identifies Palestinian calls for anti-normalization as an increasing obstacle to co-resistance. The call for anti-normalization arrived in 2007 during the first Palestinian BDS conference held in Ramallah. It defines normalization as participation in ‘any project or initiative or activity, local or international, specifically designed for gathering (either directly or indirectly) Palestinians (and/or Arabs) and Israelis, whether individuals or institutions; that does not explicitly aim to expose and resist the occupation and all forms of discrimination against the Palestinian people’ (Kassis, 2011, Kindle Edition). While an organisation such as ICAHD clearly falls outside the defined criteria of normalisation, Halper has argued that it is increasingly used by some Palestinians to refuse to work with all Israeli groups and individuals including critical ones such as ICAHD and Zochrot.⁴⁷

The inconsistent application of normalization was further highlighted during an incident which led to Jeff Halper’s decision to pull ICAHD out of the Jerusalem March in 2012 due to the organisers’ insistence that ICAHD could only participate on the condition that the ‘Israeli’ part of ICAHD be dropped as a ‘no brainer expression of solidarity’. Susan Abulhawa (2012) defends this request by arguing that the removal of ‘Israeli’, which she unwittingly conflates with ‘Israel’, is a necessary act of apology for the violence perpetrated against the Palestinian people by Israel. Yet, Israel and Israeli are not symbiotic. Israeli is a national and cultural identity, which although the product of the establishment of the settler colonial state of Israel, does not necessitate its continuation as

⁴⁷ Zochrot was forced to cancel a counter-mapping workshop in Ramallah in early 2012 due to protests that working with the organisation constitutes normalisation (Miller, 2012).

a settler colony to exist as a form of identification. In many respects, envisaging the possibility of the continuation of Israeli identity beyond Israel is not very different from the fact that Palestinian identity has not relied on the existence of Palestine as a nation-state. Moreover, as a longstanding solidarity activist, Halper has explicitly referred to himself as ‘an Israeli in Palestine’, and furthermore, it is precisely the symbolism of ‘Israeli’ resistance to the occupation that is most significant in relation to enacting practical solidarity with the Palestinians in a joint struggle for just peace.

Halper has argued that much of this tension is due to growing ‘deligitimization of the Israeli narrative, of everything Israeli: everything Israeli is colonial, is not legitimate and so on’ (in Kaufman-Lacusta, 2011: 460). However, the prominent Israeli activist Michael Warschawski (Mikado) sees the decline in joint struggle differently. For him Palestinian interest in cooperating with critical Israeli groups and individuals is proportionate to the size and influence of critical Israeli activism within Israeli society. Thus, he argues that if and when the Israeli peace movement re-emerges as a serious partner for just peace, then Palestinians will have more reason to engage. At the moment, he argues, the Palestinians are conserving their energies and concentrating on transnational activism and advocacy instead (ibid: 460 - 461). Conversations with Palestinian activists confirm this analysis. In particular, many Palestinian activists, while acknowledging the contributions of critical Israeli groups, are nevertheless frustrated by the fact that these groups have disproportionate influence on setting the agenda, given their marginality within Israeli society.

ICAHD itself is a prime example of the small number of critical Israeli groups and individuals currently in existence. For despite its broad and diverse transnational base of supporters, ICAHD Israel is comprised of a very small core group of activists who are strongly dependent on Halper’s leadership and direction. In fact, many long-term

supporters have expressed concerns that without Halper's charismatic leadership ICAHD could cease to exist. Also, during my engagement with the organisation in the past few years I have seen little evidence of any attempt to increase the Jewish Israeli membership of ICAHD, with the organisation becoming increasingly over-reliant on transnational activists for its practical activities. Much of this is to do with Halper's patriarchal and institutionally-centralised style of running the organisation which leaves little room for the advancement of other activists, and is also in strong contrast with the preferred model of non-hierarchical organising among contemporary activists.

Nevertheless, at present and for the foreseeable future, Halper's astute political analysis continues to have a significant international reach, certainly a greater reach than ICAHD's physical capacity as an NGO, and, as such, statements issued by ICAHD are seriously debated and discussed by Palestinian counterparts. Moreover, given the growing tendency for Palestinian supporters and proponents of BDS to argue for a single state in Israel-Palestine, refusals to engage in joint struggle with critical Israelis, and/or to recognise their right to identify as Israelis, have significant implications for the type of one-state being envisioned. Least of all such refusal implies the lack of desire among some Palestinian counterparts to envisage a more egalitarian state which will not simply reproduce an inverse situation of minority/majority dichotomisation and domination.

From Decolonisation to Binationalism?

In the past decade, largely due to disillusionment with the Oslo Peace Process, debates and discussions surrounding a one-state alternative have been gaining momentum particularly among Palestinian activists and thinkers, but also increasingly among critical Israelis (Farsakh, 2011; Loewenstein and Moor, 2012). This debate is also increasingly focused on the question of collective self-determination both in relation to the Palestinian people, but more so in relation to the Jewish Israeli settler colonial population. Much of

the tension surrounding the question of a one-state solution revolves around the twin questions of binationalism and the right to collective self-determination in Israel-Palestine. This tension largely stems from the logic of separation inherent in the two-state discourse which continues to structure contemporary activist and normative thought.

From the Zionist Israeli perspective, there has never been a 'desire' to live with the Palestinians, certainly not as equals. The Zionist narrative has always conceptualised the land inhabited by the Jewish Israeli community as an exclusively Jewish space, ideally devoid of any others, but at the very least those others, as in the Palestinian citizens of Israel, should accept their place in the Jewish polity as a minority with minoritarian rights. This discourse is characterised by hyper-vigilance regarding the perceived threat to the Jewish character of the state. This fear is often articulated in terms of an impending demographic 'time-bomb' which would challenge the Jewish majority, either as a result of the natural growth of the Palestinian minority population within the 1948 boundaries, or from the growing possibility of admitting to the existence of an apartheid-like situation vis-à-vis the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, leading to their demand for equal rights under one government in Israel-Palestine.

Nevertheless, in the immediate present and the foreseeable future, and despite the likelihood of the emergence of an anti-apartheid rights-based struggle for a single state, the Jewish character of the 1948 territory is indisputable and well established. Moreover, with the closure of the OPTs and consistent emphasis on the physically violent aspects of the conflict, in particular the threat of rocket attacks from Gaza, it is relatively easy for the Israeli state to present the Palestinians as a security question rather than as a question of political domination. The coexistence of these two possibilities, impending coexistence on the one hand and the desire for separation on the other, presents a significant dilemma for the majority of Jewish Israelis. This dichotomy is riddled with internal contradictions,

for despite emphasis on separation, coexistence, albeit unequal and repressive, is already taking place by none other than Israel's political design. This refers to the embedded presence of 520,000 Jewish Israeli settler-colonists living and working in the Occupied Territories, a presence that is set to increase with continuous settlement expansion.

While Israel is preoccupied with containing the oppressed, Palestinians are doing a lot more work to resolve the current situation, albeit their strategies and tactics point towards the simultaneous coexistence and workings of multiple, overlapping and contradictory discourses about Israel-Palestine. There are at least three irreconcilable scenarios being articulated, sometimes at the same time. These can be seen as the two-state versus one state version, with the latter splitting into an Algerian option⁴⁸ versus a binational and/or one-person-one-vote option. The two-state option equally emphasises separation, but with the end of the Oslo process and the failure of the 2011 UN bid for statehood, and the subsequent failure of the 2012 non-member state status granted at the UN to bring about an end to the Occupation, it is relatively easy to put this version to rest.

However, we cannot dispense with a discussion on the significance of the logic of separation even if we discount the viability of a two-state solution. On the contrary, proclamations of a one-state discourse themselves embody the logic of separation. Apartheid or, the Hebrew version, *hafrada* (separation), is one manifestation of a one-state solution based on ethno-national separation. Binationalism is another; however, given the vast structural inequality with which the two collectivities may enter a binational union, it could possibly end as just another version of apartheid. For some Palestinians, particularly those with an Islamist persuasion, but also many from non-

⁴⁸ This refers to the notion that Palestine will be liberated through a long and protracted military struggle, in a similar way to the Algerian national liberation struggle against the French, resulting in the inevitable departure of the Jewish Israeli population and the establishment of a single Palestinian ethno-national, and possibly Islamic, state in all of historic Palestine.

religious and secular backgrounds, an Algerian type decolonisation struggle during which the settler-colonial population would either decide to repatriate to their country of origin or remain as a small minority in a new Palestine represents a theoretically viable alternative in the case of the failure of calls for a one-person-one-vote solution within Israel-Palestine. The example of Abulhawa's criticism of the 'Israeli' in ICAHD is an illustration of this underlying discourse. Despite the militant rhetorical devices employed in articulating an Algerian type process, the reality and practicalities of the situation in Israel-Palestine point more towards the unfolding of a long and laborious anti-apartheid struggle which is only beginning to be articulated among Palestinians, not just in the Occupied Territories and Israel but more so internationally, and is attracting a very small number of critical Jewish Israelis at present (Farsakh, 2011).

ICAHD, under the auspices of Jeff Halper, is in many respects one of the leading Israeli organisations that has spoken out on the subject of a one-state solution for Israel-Palestine; albeit at present there are as many visions of a one state as there are visionaries. In September 2012 ICAHD which had previously withheld its position on a given state solution, issued a statement officially in support of a one-state solution. 'In the Name of Justice: Key Issues around a Single State' (2012) was welcomed by Palestinian counterparts for accepting Israeli-Palestinian cohabitation in a single state as a desirable resolution, but was nevertheless criticised on key aspects. Ali Abunimah, a prominent Palestinian Diaspora activist, founder of The Electronic Intifada: an online publication for critical debate and discussion, and author of *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse* (2006), criticised ICAHD for the underlying binationalism in their statement which granted equal right to self-determination to the Jewish Israeli settler collectivity and the displaced and colonised indigenous Palestinians (Abunimah, 2012).

Up until the publication of 'In the Name of Justice: Key Issues around a Single State', Halper (2012) had been a strong proponent of what he refers to as a 'Regional Confederation'. The concept of the regional confederation is inspired by the belief that Israel-Palestine is too small a unit to solve all of the key issues concerning the right of return, water, trade, security, borders, and population settlement. Instead he argues for a regional set-up in which the Occupation of the 1967 territories would be dismantled, a viable and contiguous Palestinian state would be established on all of the 1967 territories, and a regional confederation, similar to the European Union would emerge between Palestine, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and possibly Egypt, where there would be free and unrestricted movement between the territories for the purpose of trade, settlement, and visiting friends and relatives, and the member states would collectively coordinate their security and environmental policy to ensure peace and the fair regional distribution of resources such as water.

Despite a number of problematic assumptions underlying this proposal, it contributes two important points to the discussion on the nature of the possible solution to Israel-Palestine's predicament. Firstly, there is the idea that it is possible and desirable for Jewish Israelis to cooperate and integrate into the region as equal and valuable partners, thus debunking the security pretext for Israel's exceptionalist militarism. Secondly, it responds practically to the problem I envisaged in chapter four regarding the danger that an implementation of the right of return without regional cooperation can lead to the expulsion of Palestinian refugees who might in fact wish to remain and settle in their host country rather than physically return to Israel-Palestine. In this respect, a regional confederation could ensure the security and human rights of both individuals and national collectivities in the region. However, underlying the federal proposal is reluctance towards the possibility of a full implementation of the right of return which may inevitably lead to the minoritarian status of Jewish Israelis within Israel-Palestine and all

this can imply, including the possibility of facing discrimination, oppression and expulsion. This is perhaps one of the key reasons why ICAHD's 2012 statement on a single state places great emphasis on a 'binational' government in Israel-Palestine based on the principle of self-determination for Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. ICAHD's statement on the subject of a single state in Israel-Palestine states:

There seems to be only one useful starting point for a joint effort to construct a single state for all: the principle of self-determination mitigated by the necessity of creating a single political entity. Beginning with the idea that two peoples share the country and, given their own national identities and needs, must also create a common political space (ICAHD, 2012).

This proposal was welcomed by key Palestinian proponents of the one state solution, including Ali Abunimah, for its emphasis on the creation of a single political unit in Israel-Palestine. Nevertheless, one of the key contentions regarding ICAHD's formulation has revolved around the right to self-determination. Both Ali Abunimah (2010, 2012) and Omar Barghouti (2012), two prominent Palestinian proponents of the one-state solution, have vocally rejected the application of the principle of self-determination to the Jewish collectivity in Israel-Palestine. Abunimah (2012) argues that as a settler colonial nation Jewish Israelis are not entitled to collective self-determination in the manner that Palestinians are. He does not argue that Jewish Israelis do not constitute a nation as such. Rather, he argues that the historical-political situation in which Jewish Israeli nationalism emerged in Israel-Palestine was only possible because of the dispossession of the Palestinian people. Therefore, Jewish Israeli nationhood, which is settler-colonial and exogenous to Palestine, cannot claim self-determination in the manner that the Palestinian people are entitled to by virtue of their indigeneity and their shared collective experience of political discrimination and dispossession.

There are a number of problems with this configuration, including the issue of exogeneity, for while most Israelis immigrant or settler origins, the exilic nature of Jewish nationalism which predates modern state-centric Zionism, means that ‘return to the motherland’ is not a viable option. Here, Abunimah is not being accused of asking Jewish Israelis to leave, rather what is being highlighted is that Jewish settlement in Palestine is different from, let us say, French settler colonialism in Algeria. For while the French settlers saw Algeria as their true home, they were nevertheless fully aware of their French ethno-national origins. The notion of Jewish nationhood⁴⁹ on the other hand, including that which is shared by those who reject Zionism outright and even the idea of return to the promised land, at least not until the Messiah returns, as in some ultra-orthodox accounts, has always been based on the idea that Palestine/Israel is the point of Jewish origin, exile, and return, and this has been the case for centuries. Other possible issues with a denial of the right to self-determination to Jewish Israelis in a future one state scenario stems from the fact that self-determination under international legal conventions has often been reserved for ethnic-minority groups. In the eventuality of a full or even large-scale return by Palestinians, Jewish Israelis will become an ethnic minority in Israel-Palestine. Honouring the entitlement to self-determination for those who are settled and resident in Israel-Palestine may be necessary in order to avoid real or imagined fears of persecution or reprisal in the context of a long history of Jewish persecution in other ethnic majority polities in which Jews have constituted a minority.

Nevertheless, Abunimah raises a pertinent point not so much in relation to the principle of self-determination as to the question of return. Should Jewish return be suspended temporarily while the Palestinian refugee return is implemented? Or should the Law of Return be suspended permanently? In fact, would the Jewish Diaspora have a

⁴⁹ For a discussion on whether the Jewish people are an invented nation or the true blood descendants of the biblical Hebrews see Sand, 2010

right to 'return' after decolonisation? These are fundamental questions that have no easy answers. The writing of Judith Butler, and Jeff Halper, ICAHD's founder who is himself a diasporic oleh (returnee) originally from the United States, suggest that there is an unseverable link between Jewishness and the desire to choose, or not, to emigrate to Israel-Palestine, or rather that even if one is to choose exile, return must still be an unquestioned option. Abunimah's argument that Israelis are not entitled to a right to national self-determination on the basis that they are not indigenous, or at least not in the recent millennium, and moreover, that their constitution as a nation is based on violent and dispossessive settler colonialism, raises a question in relation to Jewish right to ongoing settlement in Israel-Palestine in the case of decolonisation. Moreover, this conceptualisation further raises the subject of whether giving up the diasporic Jewish right of return might be a necessary prerequisite to the process of decolonisation.

Omar Barghouti (2012) rejects outright both the idea of Jewish self-determination in Israel-Palestine and the notion that Jewish Israelis constitute a nation. He argues that 'Bi-nationalism, initially espoused by liberal Zionist intellectuals, is premised on a Jewish national right in Palestine, on par and to be reconciled with the national right of the indigenous, predominantly Arab population. Bi-nationalism today, despite its many variations, still upholds this ahistorical national right of colonial-settlers' (ibid: 198). He goes on to dismiss the existence of an Israeli nationality on the basis of the fact that the contemporary Israeli state does not recognise Israeli or even Jewish Israeli as a nationality, only Jewish is recognised as a nationality under current Israeli law.

Barghouti cites two different international legal definitions pertaining to what constitutes a national collectivity one of which is the 'Kirby definition' adopted by UNESCO which stipulates that a people are 'a group of individual human beings who enjoy some or all of the following common features: history, ethnic identity, culture,

language, territorial connection etc' (ibid: 204). This definition is further extended to include that 'the group as a people must have the will to be identified as a people or the consciousness of being a people' (ibid: 204). Barghouti dismisses both of these definitions as inapplicable to Jewish Israelis. This is highly problematic on a number of levels.

First of all, for at least the past 60 years Jewish Israelis residing in Israel-Palestine have had a common language and culture, namely Hebrew, which is distinct from other Jewish collectivities around the world; and they share a common territorial identity corresponding to the 1948 borders, with the exception of post-1967 government settler-colonial designs which have for the most part been disputed by the majority of Israelis. To imply that Jewish Israelis lack a consciousness as a people makes it very difficult to understand why the vast majority of Israelis are willing to be conscripted into the Israeli army in order to defend the state of Israel and their fellow citizens. Even if one is to invoke the fact that many Israelis might speak another language or have family in another country, it would be similar to stating that US nationals, in spite of their multicultural and transnational origins, do not constitute a people with a perceived common identity as Americans. In short, the fact that the Israeli state refuses to inaugurate an Israeli nationality, which is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles to its democratisation, merely testifies to the extra-territorial schemes of the state rather than to a lack of identification among the Jewish Israeli population as a people.

Moreover, as I have already argued in chapter four, it is important to view Jewish peoplehood as distinct from Jewish Israeli nationhood. In other words, I am making a case for the Israeli nation to be viewed as a constituent part of the Jewish people, thus acknowledging a transnational ethno-religious connection, at the same time as acknowledging and treating it in practice as a distinct national collective; a national

collective which has by virtue of its long-term residence in Israel-Palestine acquired certain rights, including the right to return/remain and self-determine. Conversely, other non-Israeli Jewish individuals and communities who might wish to migrate to Israel-Palestine would then be subject to open and fair migration procedures in the same way as all other exogenous individuals and collectivities wishing to reside in Israel-Palestine. For this reason I would advocate a Jewish Israeli right to self-determination, but I oppose the notion of an unlimited and unrestricted Jewish right of return, especially one based on the basis of denying the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in Israel-Palestine.

Thus, the question of rearticulating Jewish Israeli identity in order to bring about a more just situation in Israel-Palestine remains pertinent. However, an emphasis on disavowal and self-negation is neither just nor practical for building a joint struggle for an egalitarian and just resolution to the ongoing settler-colonial apartheid. As Laila Farsakh (2011) writes, presently 'Most of the Palestinian debate on the one-state solution, while inclusive of Jews, avoids engaging with the complexity of Jewish identity and history. It clearly repudiates Zionism, but seeks to incorporate the Jewish person as a neutral repentant entity' (ibid: 70). She calls for Palestinian advocates of the one-state solution to build alliances with critical anti-Zionist Israelis and to create and have:

an open discussion on identity and a free open space to understand Israeli culture in its Western dimensions as much as in its Arab roots which it often negates...The second debate that needs to take place is about multiculturalism in Israel as well as in the Arab world and within Palestinian society, and how to reinvigorate the present Arab identity with the cosmopolitan character it once had (ibid: 70).

Chapter six will focus more closely on the implications of multiculturalism in Israel-Palestine. The section below examines more the ongoing debates concerned with

Israel's definition as a settler-colonial enterprise and the question of self-determination in relation to decolonisation and indigenous rights. Moreover, claims and counter claims to indigeneity and exogeneity, justice in, and rights to the land of Israel-Palestine need to be carefully unpacked and considered in relation to actual and lived realities as well as aspirations for a just future. This discussion demands a critical engagement with settler colonialism and the practical potential for decolonisation.

Reframing Belonging

To begin with, it is paramount that some of the more unique aspects and particularities of the Israel-Palestine situation be acknowledged in order to examine possibilities for decolonisation in a way that is constructive and involves the least amount of symbolic and/or real violence in the long term. The diasporic character of Israel-Palestine cannot be ignored or downplayed. Israel-Palestine is not only a state created and settled by a population of diasporic origin, but moreover, the creation of the Jewish settler colonial state, in the process of expelling the majority of the indigenous Palestinian population in 1948, has in turn resulted in the birth of one of the largest Diasporas in the world. Half of all Palestinians currently live in the Diaspora. This makes the geo-political dimensions of the conflict and any rights-based claims transnational and extraterritorial in a way that is not comparable to any other settler colonial state.

Furthermore, from its very inception as a settlement and state project, Israel-Palestine has been enmeshed in a complex matrix of inter and transnational configurations, current and former manifestations of imperialism, colonialism, and population resettlement, and it continues to figure prominently in the debates and decisions of international governance and legal institutions and frameworks. As such it is distinctive as an ongoing transnational project. For this reason, Israel-Palestine stands out as a geo-political project that has been at the heart of much international legal and

political debate. Yet, these debates, which have largely centred on the right to self-determination for both parties, have been largely state-centric, and moreover ethno-centric. However, given the diasporic nature and origins of the two collectivities, cosmopolitan approaches to framing and understanding the situation in Israel-Palestine have been largely absent from the discussion.

Indeed, the diasporic aspect of the relationship between the settler and indigenous population further complicates questions of rights within Israel-Palestine, not least because both populations can claim belonging even if not indigeneity. Thus, while Ali Abunimah (2010; 2012) is correct in arguing that the principle of self-determination only applies to indigenous and/or minority ethnic groups, nevertheless some form of acknowledgement of Jewish Israeli identity has to take place given the long history of intransigence and the undeniable presence of two national groups which are very strongly defined and established along ethno-national lines. In the long term, entrenched binationalism can lead to national separatism and as such an ultimately successful democratic one-state would require that divisive identities yield to the emergence of a 'rainbow' nation which allows and encourages its citizens to identify in non-nationalist terms.

Thus, what is being proposed here is a multi-dimensional approach to rights-based justice claims in Israel-Palestine; an approach that does not necessarily negate the role of the state but rather calls it to account for its actions in relation to 'all affected'. Moreover, given the diasporic nature of the affected population, and here the emphasis is on the displaced indigenous Palestinian Diaspora, the state of Israel does not stand alone in relation to refusing to engage with the principle of justice as conceptualised and proposed in this thesis. In fact settler colonialism in Israel-Palestine has only been possible because of the myriad of intertwined international institutions involved in the enabling of Jewish

migration to Palestine and the establishment of a settler colonial state. The concept of self-determination in international law does not refer to the right to set up an independent nation state, but the right to claim group rights in a situation in which the majority population and/or government is oppressing and discriminating against a minority or the indigenous population (Pedersen, 2005). As such, self-determination is a principle which seeks to further democratise states rather than lead to their break up into smaller units.

Therefore, not only has the principle of self-determination been routinely applied to the Israel-Palestine situation in an erroneous state and ethno-centric manner, but moreover, since the beginning of Jewish settlement in Palestine it has been routinely applied in a racially hierarchical way; hence, the privileging of Jewish nationalism in the Balfour Declaration during the British Mandate. Susan Pedersen (2005) also highlights the role of the League of Nations in encouraging settler colonialism in Palestine, a policy which was generally at odds with the League's view on pan-European settlement in mandated lands in Africa and elsewhere. This is partly explained with respect to sensitivity around anti-Semitism, but one must also wonder whether it was not in fact underlying anti-Semitism which drove the League's encouragement of 'self-transfer' among European Jews, in a way that contrasts with their strong opposition to white South African settler colonialism in Namibia and British settlement in Kenya.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the League of Nations and the British Mandate's privileging of Jewish nationalism and simultaneous suppression and exclusion of Palestinian aspirations for national independence were inherited by the United Nations. The legacy of European anti-Semitism once again played a role in consolidating Jewish settler colonialism in Palestine, resulting in the almost unanimous UN decision to partition Palestine into two states for two people in the aftermath of the European Holocaust. This is yet another example of the exceptional transnational

character of Israel-Palestine; no other settler colonial enterprise has ever declared a state as a result of an international resolution, a resolution justified on the basis of a European inter-state crisis which led to the displacement and resettlement of millions of people.

While acknowledging the role of the Holocaust in contributing to large Jewish migration to Palestine in the 1940s and 1950s, it is important not to read the history of Israel-Palestine in a Eurocentric fashion. To echo Walter Mignolo (2000), unpacking the dichotomous identity of Israel-Palestine requires a critical and dialogic cosmopolitanism devised and enacted from the perspective of colonial difference. He envisages critical cosmopolitanism as ‘border thinking’ characterised by an emphasis on ‘a pluricentric world built on the ruins of ancient non-Western cultures and civilizations with the debris of Western civilization. A cosmopolitanism which only connects from the centre of the large circle outward, and leaves the outer places disconnected from each other, would be a cosmopolitanism from above’ (ibid: 745).

A reading of Israel-Palestine from the perspective of colonial difference would be firmly based on the premise that Zionist Israel is a settler colonial state in its origin, and a settler colonial apartheid in its contemporary guise and as such the focus must be on the displaced indigenous population and their call for justice which has been addressed to the colonising collectivity. At the same time, the history of anti-Semitism and what the Diasporic nature of Jewishness has to say about belonging and displacement cannot be neglected by any critical attempts to understand the making and make-up of Israel-Palestine. Moreover, it is also important to emphasise that Jewishness and Zionism are not the same things and must not be used interchangeably. Neither does the historical experience of anti-Semitism negate or justify the brutality and racism of Zionist settler colonialism and the violence it has done and continues to do to the Palestinian people.

As far back as the 1930s, Jewish intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt and Martin Buber, who considered themselves cultural Zionists, strongly opposed the formation of a Jewish ethno-national state in Palestine and argued for binational coexistence. Arendt (2007) in fact argued, in a rather prophetic manner, that a Jewish state formed against the wishes of its Arab neighbours would lock itself in perpetual conflict. As someone who spent the majority of her life theorising the violence produced by statelessness as a result of nation-states purging themselves of their undesirable cohabitants, Arendt was also highly critical of the expulsion of the Palestinians in 1948.

Judith Butler (2012) builds on the binational Jewish intellectual tradition represented by Arendt and Benjamin among others, to argue for the emergence of Jewish nationhood which is divorced from the concept of state sovereignty. Instead, she envisages a polity comprised of a federation of nations or pluralities, affirming collective identity and difference, with its main role being to guarantee individual and collective rights through decision-making in common. Addressing contemporary Zionist Jewish nationalism, she calls for a reappraisal of the Jewish exilic tradition which teaches us that the basis for cohabitation is unchosenness: ‘we not only live with those we never chose and to whom we may feel no social sense of belonging, but we are also obliged to preserve their lives and the plurality of which they form a part’ (ibid: 151).

Furthermore, Butler emphasises International Law as the framework which would guard citizens against potential state abuses. Drawing on Benhabib’s work on cosmopolitanism and the origins of International Human Rights Law in the aftermath of Fascist Totalitarianism, Butler refers to adherence to International Law as ‘Jewish politics’ which the Israeli state has a proven track record for flouting and disregarding. She is in particular invoking Israel’s failure to adhere to hundreds of UN Resolutions, especially UN Resolution 194 which calls for the return of the Palestinian refugees,

instead upholding the discriminatory Law of Return which only applies to Diaspora Jews. In reference to the Nazi dispossession of the European Jews, often cited as a reason for the necessity of the Jewish state, she responds that ‘no rights to refugees are legitimate that by their very exercise produce a new population of stateless’ (ibid: 216). Thus, for her binationalism in Israel-Palestine would constitute ‘a cohabitation guided by the memory and the call to justice that emerges from dispossession, exile, and forced containment, not just for two peoples, but for all peoples’ (ibid: 180).

Thus, at the core of articulating an egalitarian solution to the predicament of Israel-Palestine is a commitment to the principles of justice, equality and freedom from oppression. This commitment demands mobilisations across real and perceived borders of separation. Moreover, I would add that this commitment should not be purely based on a binational or indigenous principle of self-determination but on the principle of ‘all affected’ which was established at the beginning of the thesis as the most encompassing principle of justice. The ‘all affected’ principle and the co-responsibility it entails is a commitment to diversity and plurality which seeks to ensure individual and collective rights without sacrificing one at the expense of the other. This would, in turn, entail examining the reality of Israel-Palestine not simply through a binational or majoritarian perspective which reaffirms the conflicting dichotomy of Jewish Israeli versus Palestinian, but also acknowledges the need to address the rights and needs of other individuals and collectivities such as African refugees and other African, Asian and Eastern European migrants who reside in Israel-Palestine in the present and are often ignored and neglected by all visions of a future resolution, whether that be one or two state versions.

The above theoretical/political reflection was inspired by the debate which ensued following ICAHD’s statement in support of a binational state solution in Israel-Palestine.

As a critical Israeli organisation, ICAHD has perhaps been most explicit in articulating a demand for the recognition of Jewish Israeli collective self-determination in the eventuality of decolonisation. ICAHD's founder, Jeff Halper (2012), has been very open and vocal about his fears that in their struggle for decolonisation radical Palestinian counterparts are increasingly moving away from cohabitation. As I have already articulated in the above theoretical-political discussion, both ICAHD's vision of a binational state and Palestinian counterparts version of a single liberal-democratic state fail to articulate a vision of Israel-Palestine that would avoid reproducing self-determination as non-statist and non-dominating.

In Abunimah and Barghouti's case self-determination only applies to the indigenous majority, thus a future state would be based on the political rule of the Palestinian ethno-national majority. In ICAHD's case minoritarian status is perceived as what it is, namely reduced and secondary rights, but the solution is seen as creating a binational state between the current and future ruling ethno-nations, namely Israeli Jews and Palestinians. However, Halper fails to adequately theorise the problematic relationship between the Jewish and Israeli in his concept of Jewish Israeli self-determination. This is perhaps what makes Palestinian counterparts uncomfortable: the possibility that Jewish self-determination might not only be a 'reward' for past and ongoing colonisation of Israel-Palestine, but that it might serve as a future justification for claims for transnational Jewish rights in a single bi-national state, thereby constituting the continuation of Jewish settler colonialism by other means. Thus, both of these approaches fail to articulate self-determination in non-statist and non ethno-nationalist terms, and therefore as not based on domination and majority/minority dichotomisation.

This chapter's focus on self-determination in relation to settler-colonialism nevertheless reflects the growing debate among critical Israeli and Palestinian

counterparts on the subject of the future of Israel-Palestine. Critical Israeli groups, and in particular, ICAHD which is highly respected for its on-the-ground solidarity and resistance activities, its effective international advocacy, and its founder's ability to reframe the dominant discourse on Israel-Palestine, have a significant role to play in rearticulating Israel-Palestine as a more democratic and open place. ICAHD's statement in support of a binational state, despite its stated limitations, is an example of critical and ongoing attempts to do precisely that. Chapter six will examine the way the work of Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW) in Israel and the Occupied Territories goes some way to address the issues raised by the challenge of binational and/or majority/minority formulations of rights in Israel-Palestine.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the transnational advocacy, political framing, and practical rebuilding work of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. The analysis focused in particular on the normative framing of the Occupation and joint struggle in Israel-Palestine provided by ICAHD's founder, Jeff Halper, particularly his stance on binationalism as a precondition for cohabitation. Critical Palestinian responses to ICAHD's one state solution statement and ensuing criticisms of Jewish Israeli right to self-determination in Israel-Palestine were also examined in relation to contemporary debates on the possibility for and future of decolonisation. The chapter concluded with a caution that binationalist and/or minority/majority configurations of rights can serve to reproduce similar formulations to the current dichotomy at play in Israel-Palestine. The principle of 'all affected' was invoked to remind of the need to consciously include and address the rights and needs of non-Palestinian and non-Jewish Israeli individuals and collectivities residing in Israel-Palestine in any solution which intends to be truly democratic and inclusive.

6. Armed with Nonviolence and Solidarity

This chapter examines the embodied solidarity activism and reflexive thought of Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW), a non-hierarchical collective of radical left Israeli activists who are active in the joint struggle against the Separation Wall in the West Bank. The chapter begins with an introduction to the key issues and background of AATW, providing a critical analysis of the dynamics at play in critical solidarity activism in Israel-Palestine. The main discussion focuses on the challenges facing attempts to articulate the intersections between different forms of oppression in an attempt to build a prefigurative community which will avoid the pitfalls of minority/majority dichotomisation and other forms of domination. This question is further related to the issue of self-determination and its possible redefinition outside of dominant statist frameworks.

Activists Against the Wall

Examining the work and thought of the critical Israeli direct action group Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW) can help to illuminate some of the outstanding issues in relation to the questions of solidarity and self-determination in Israel-Palestine which were raised in chapters four and five. Moreover, such an examination can also serve to highlight further questions for consideration in relation to the nature and direction of joint struggle in Israel-Palestine. In many respects, due to its pluralistic and non-hierarchical nature and the lack of a singular grand-narrative about its role and agenda, AATW most clearly embodies the inherent contradictions and tensions that characterise contemporary critical Israeli activism. While most critical Israeli groups and activists shy away from the label 'radical' and prefer to emphasise the left-liberal democratic agenda underpinning their efforts, AATW has embraced radicalism as its defining attribute. This

openness and acceptance of the characteristic of ‘radical’, in turn implying an acceptance of marginalisation within Israeli society, but also more broadly signifying a separation from mainstream methods of political engagement, has nevertheless placed AATW in a relatively privileged and significant position within the joint struggle.

Thus, unlike the two previous case study organisations, AATW has faced fewer accusations of normalisation by Palestinian allies and, in spite of its anarchist name AATW’s activism has attracted considerable media and academic interest, featuring in the writings of Uri Gordon (2008), and Judith Butler (2013), alongside a recently published volume edited by Uri Gordon and Ohal Grietzer (2013) which is dedicated to and features former AATW announcements and reflective essays by some of the group’s leading activists. It is important to note that while the question of solidarity has been at the heart of many of these debates, the question of self-determination, either in its collective or individual guise, has not been discussed explicitly by AATW activists and/or those writing about them and their work, with the exception of Judith Butler (2013). Further, given that the question of self-determination remains tied to the notion of statehood, it should not be surprising that a group which identifies with anarchist principles has not engaged and/or is not engaging with the question of self-determination in Israel-Palestine. As such, the consideration of the question of self-determination in relation to AATW is a question posed by the author of this thesis and is not to be taken as a reflection of the group’s position on the subject. Before proceeding to discuss the question of self-determination, it is important to provide context and introduce the work of AATW in more detail.

Anarchists Against The Wall emerged as a direct action group in 2003 during a protest camp held in the Palestinian village of Mas’ha which was jointly set up by Palestinian, Israeli and International activists on the proposed route of the West Bank

Separation Wall. The name AATW was not in fact given by the activists themselves but by the media in the aftermath of a highly publicised event following a solidarity action during which an Israeli soldier shot and wounded one of the Israeli activists. Up to this point different names had circulated in relation to the affinity groups comprising what was to become AATW, including ‘Anarchists Against the Fence’ and ‘Jews Against Ghettos’. Gordon and Grietzer (2013) define the Mas’ha camp as a moment which provided Israeli activists with an opportunity to differentiate themselves from the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) and to make the presence of radical Israeli activists more visible and prominent within the protest.

While the name Anarchists Against the Wall has stuck with the group, nevertheless many activists have said that they see themselves more as ‘activists’ rather than as ‘anarchists’⁵⁰ against the Wall, and as such the group is comprised of a wide variety and plurality of opinions and political positions. Nevertheless, the group does organise on the basis of anarchist principles which include non-hierarchy, direct action, and consensus decision-making. In relation to the Palestinian popular nonviolent struggle against the Separation Wall, which AATW refers to as ‘The Apartheid Wall’ (Ayalon, 2004), the anarchists see their position as providing on-the-ground solidarity to a struggle that is led first and foremost by those who it affects, namely the Palestinian residents of the villages along the Wall’s route. Secondly, at least during the early years of the struggle, AATW activists felt that their presence as privileged Israeli citizens provides some form of protection against unchecked Israeli military violence and the likelihood of the army using live ammunition on the protesters. As one anarchist activist explains:

We believe that a non-violent struggle puts more pressure on the Israelis. When the army has to deal with civilians, it has to bring in a far

⁵⁰ Personal conversation with Ronnie Barkan.

larger number of soldiers. They can't open fire at them freely, at least we hope not. In spite of the best efforts of organizers, almost every week of demonstrations ends with at least a few wounded. 262 people have been injured and 5 killed in the village of Bidu, near Jerusalem. One of these killed was a boy of 11 (Ayalon, 2004: 11).

In the early years of the anti-Wall protests, with the Israeli army fearing the outbreak of a third intifada, Israeli and international presence bolstered the nonviolent Palestinian struggle. However, over time, proportional to the lack of public interest in Israel, the army's violence has continually escalated. While the weekly Friday protests in Budrus and Bil'in, two flagship villages, won some legal gains, forcing changes in the planned route of the Wall, and increasing international awareness of the popular struggle, later protests in other Palestinian villages such as Ni'lin⁵¹, and particularly Nabi Saleh, have been violently suppressed, with tear gas and live ammunition being used by the IDF to disperse protesters, sometimes before the start of the actual demonstration. In relation to attending a protest in Nabi Saleh, widely considered to be one of the villages which has faced the most violence from the Israeli army, AATW activist Chen Misgav writes about one Friday afternoon in the past few years when gas canisters 'rained' on gathering protesters before the planned start of the demonstration, leading to him and other activists having to run for cover, bursting through the door of an unknown Palestinian woman who immediately gave them raw onions to help with the effects of the gas:

It wasn't my first visit to a Palestinian home, but it was certainly the first time in which I burst into a house whose owner I didn't know. The

⁵¹ I attended a demonstration in July 2009 during which two "Mistaravim" secret service soldiers dressed to look like Palestinians encouraged the children from the village to throw stones and then pulled out guns loaded with live ammunition. In the ensuing panic the army swooped in and arrested two young men from the village. The event was recorded by AATW activists; the video has since been removed from the web. The young men were released from administrative detention some weeks later following widespread international protest.

physical experience and the fear of what was going on outside were shared by all of us, Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, and to a large extent, eased the differences between us. The borders placed between us were crossed within a few minutes of the start of the demonstration. But other borders were also crossed – borders between public and private spaces, between home and outside, and between safe and dangerous places. For the first time in my life I felt safer in a Palestinian home than outside with soldiers from the very army I had served in (Chen Misgav, 2013: 133).

Many of the reflective essays featured in Gordon and Grietzer's edited volume as well as personal conversations with activists reflect the sentiment in the above quote, namely the emerging and sustained moments of identification between Israelis and Palestinians during solidarity actions. The physical embodiment of sharing similar experiences of violent assault on one's physical safety and integrity, facing violent arrest, injury, or even the possibility of death, helps to create bonds and understanding that go beyond mere rhetoric. As well as crossing real and metaphorical borders of enmity, the embodied activism of AATW also helps to create relations between Palestinians and Israelis that are based on friendship as well as solidarity; rearticulating an Israeli Jewishness as non-dominating and anti-Zionist. This in turn serves not only to rearticulate Israeli identity otherwise but also to construct a different relationship with the Palestinian people; as 15 year old Iltezam reflects in relation to the joint struggle in Budrus: 'I have never dealt with Israelis as friends before. Israelis were always occupiers and soldiers' (Morrar, 2004: 42).

This approach to embodied activism is moreover highly critical of joint Palestinian-Israeli cooperation based on inter-faith or dialogue groups which avoid physical activism in the Occupied Territories. According to AATW activists, this type of

cooperation, apart from being normalising, also panders to the racism of Israelis and their fear of the Palestinian people. For many of the activists, making the effort to experience the reality of the Occupied Territories is the first step to overcoming the fear of the Other, leading to a radical transformation of one's perception as an Israeli and what it means to be Israeli in relation to the Palestinian people (Snitz, 2004).

Nevertheless, despite acknowledging and appreciating the important role played by Israeli solidarity activism, many Palestinian activists are increasingly placing the onus on critical Israelis to raise awareness within Israeli society (Kaufman-Lacusta, 2010). For most AATW activists the expectation to raise awareness among the average Israeli is seen as a particularly daunting and difficult task due to the aforementioned fear and racial attitudes which prevail in relation to the Palestinian people. Together with increasing identification with the Palestinian people and their struggle against the Occupation, many AATW activists describe their relation with mainstream Israeli society, including friends and relatives, as one of alienation and disconnection.

For most Israelis the West Bank is a world apart despite being a forty-five minute drive from Tel Aviv, and as such the concept of Israelis going to protests alongside Palestinians who are thought of as a terrorist threat, against a Wall that is supposed to keep Israelis safe from this threat, is perceived as 'immature' at best, and as 'irrational', 'crazy' and even 'dangerous' (Snitz, 2013). While some of the activists, the majority of whom are in their twenties and early thirties, find themselves lucky to have liberal and/or understanding friends and family, who are at least curious and willing to debate the issues, others choose to remain silent about their activities in the West Bank due to fear of rejection, or the possibility that they might lose financial support provided by their families and become ostracised and homeless in the process (Edmonds, 2013).

Another typical obstacle to drawing more Israeli support for Palestinian popular resistance is the particular opinion received by those more sophisticated than us. It is that political activism is generally futile. This idea is communicated with empathy in the form of “very good of you, but do you think any of it makes a difference?” The almost universal prevalence of this idea generally reflects the anti-democratic tendencies in societies where people are governed by other people and is not unique to Israel. It is both personally convenient and convenient for governments when people believe their role is essentially as spectator. The fact that the belief in political impotence is the product of indoctrination and personal psychology is reflected in the fact that it is typical exactly for those who do have the most political power and as such are subjects to the most indoctrination (Snitz, 2004: 26).

The J14⁵² protests in the summer of 2011 which to a great degree dispelled the notion of Israeli apathy are an apt example of the above unwillingness to engage politically with the oppression of the Palestinian people. J14 protesters were more concerned with Jewish Israeli solidarity and wellbeing, consistently refusing to engage with the question of the Occupation. Indeed, the argument for excluding the subject of the Palestinians from the biggest public discussion of justice in Israeli society was largely based on the premise that issues of a ‘political’ nature should be avoided in order to maintain unity. It would almost be a cliché to point out that Israel’s rising living costs are directly linked to the ever-expanding settler colonial project in the West Bank which is maintained by none other than an advanced system of state welfare subsidy that has been almost completely absent from Israel’s 1948 borders since the 1980s, and therefore, that an economy reliant on a military Occupation is nothing but political. Notably, the

⁵² The name of the Israeli ‘social justice’ protests which sprung up in the summer of 2011, protesting the rising cost of living in Israel.

suggestion by the settler leadership that Israelis struggling to pay their rent in Tel Aviv should move to the ‘neighbourhoods’ of the Occupied Territories, where housing is state subsidised, was not perceived as ‘political’. While the J14 protests ended by raising more questions than answers, they represented a spectacular failure by the largest Israeli civil society movement calling for justice to address the Palestinian people’s call for a just peace. The 2013 Israeli parliamentary elections which led to a former settler leader becoming the Housing Minister might be yet another indication of the normalisation of the Occupation within Israeli society.

As chapters three and four demonstrated, the education system and the media play a major role in propagating an anti-Palestinian message, circulating narratives and images which bolster Jewish Israeli supremacy and righteousness, and portray Palestinians as violent and threatening, and at best as faceless others (Dor, 2005; Hass, 2002; Peled-Elhanan, 2012). This in turn provides normative justification for the oppression and violence carried out against the Palestinian people. In many respects the militarisation of Israeli society which begins from birth with family military connections, and is strengthened through the education system, normalises relations vis-à-vis the occupied Palestinians, making the actions of activists such as AATW which are deemed to be against Israel’s military regime appear irrational and traitorous:

wherever you go you are surrounded by soldiers. Soldiers in uniforms carrying guns. Reserve soldiers, living their civilian lives, except for one month a year, when they go back to being proper soldiers. Former soldiers, who think you too should be a soldier. Mothers, fathers, wives of soldiers. People who think soldiers are always right, and that they deserve a 10 percent discount in shawarma stands, and that they keep us safe. Border police soldiers on civil police duty. Oh, and there’s that

depressed, alienated, self-loathing soldier that used to be me (Wagner, 2013: 60).

The above quote by an AATW activist not only affirms my analysis in relation to the foundational normativity of militarism in Israeli society but moreover highlights the tensions embodied in critical and/or radical Israeli activism. For while most AATW activists on the whole reject military service in the Occupied Territories and in the Israeli army in general, many of the activists are in fact former soldiers who have since come to a different perspective about Israeli-Palestinian relations. However, while Judith Butler and I have argued that objection to military service remains the primary means through which to refuse to reproduce Israel's regime of violence and oppression, nevertheless, these young activists exemplify the possibility for Israeli civil society as a whole to be awakened to a different type of solidarity, one not based on ethno-centric communalism, but rather one based on shared humanity and a desire for justice.

Radicalised Through Struggle

A closer examination of the profiles of AATW activists demonstrates the diversity of routes of engagement which have led them to solidarity activism in the struggle against the separation Wall. Similar to most leftwing Israeli activists, AATW are primarily, though not exclusively, middle class Ashkenazi Jews, largely in their twenties and early thirties. Many of the activists were radicalised through other forms of activism, while some found themselves visiting the Occupied Territories by invitation from more active friends and then became active in AATW as a result of the repression and brutality they witnessed (Gordon and Grietzer, 2013). The majority of AATW activists have been and continue to be active in other radical left and libertarian struggles within Israel's 1948 borders concerned with women's, workers', queer and LGBT rights, as well as migrant and refugee rights. Add to to this solidarity activism, particularly with Bedouin citizens

fighting Israel's discrimination and dispossession policies in the Negev/Naqab, as well as the Judaization policies affecting Palestinian Israeli citizens in the Galilee (Ayalon, 2004; Gordon, 2008; Gordon and Grietzer, 2013; Svirsky, 2012).⁵³

AATW members' activism in the West Bank began during the outbreak of the Second Intifada, with many members having been involved in the joint Palestinian and Jewish Israeli grassroots solidarity group Ta'ayush ('partnership' in Arabic) which worked alongside the ISM to bring food to besieged cities in the West Bank, as well as helping farmers to work their land during military-imposed curfews. The associated queer LGBT rights group Black Laundry (Kvisa Schora) was the first Israeli group to politicise LGBT opposition to the Occupation and to display solidarity with the Palestinian struggle during the 2001 Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade when activists marched with placards proclaiming 'There's no pride in the Occupation'. Black Laundry largely ceased to act as an independent group by 2003 with many of its members migrating to AATW and solidarity activism in the Occupied Territories (Ziv, 2010). While solidarity with Palestinians has often meant 'going back to the closet' during joint actions, the group's politics remain highly relevant in relation to questions of minority rights in a post-apartheid scenario, and contemporarily in relation to responding to 'pinkwashing'⁵⁴ endeavours by the Israeli state.

Women's and gay rights have in particular been the focus of contestation and tension, often being used as a differentiating marker and as a means to create a hierarchy between the alleged liberalism of the Israeli state and the patriarchy of the Arab Palestinian culture. This in turn has served to justify and/or distract from the racial

⁵³ Many of these struggles, particularly the latter three, have been documented by the activist photography collective ActiveStills.org.

⁵⁴ A term used by Palestinian Solidarity activists to refer to Israel's attempt to brand itself as a progressive and gay friendly state surrounded by backwards and homophobic Arabs in order to create LGBT solidarity with Israel (Elia, 2012; Krebs and Olwan; 2012; Morgensen, 2012).

apartheid policies under Occupation and within Israel's 1948 borders. While most other peace groups tend to avoid the subject of gender and sexuality, with the exception of feminist and women's groups, AATW activists attempt to link the struggles for freedom, equality and justice and to create solidarity among those affected. In the Occupied Territories priority is given to ending the Occupation given the fact that it affects men, women, LGBT, and heterosexual Palestinians in equal measures. Nevertheless, within the 1948 borders an emphasis on intersecting interests and solidarity among sexual and ethnic minorities and other oppressed people plays an important democratising role, serving to disrupt the heteronormative racialised order.

However, AATW's activism in the Occupied Territories has often been criticised for being inconsistent with their radical anarchist, sexual and feminist politics, and their activism within the 1948 territories. AATW has also been criticised for what is seen by some as a contradiction, namely anarchists supporting a national independence struggle. In his book *Anarchy Alive*, Uri Gordon (2008) addresses some of these criticisms by responding that (i) the nature of solidarity is inconsistent, and moreover, those giving solidarity cannot be the ones' who dictate the nature of the struggle they are showing support to; (ii) the Palestinian people already live under an oppressive state, and a Palestinian state might in fact be a little less violent and oppressive towards them; (iii) solidarity now is a strategic choice which will result in creating space for more radical prefigurative politics⁵⁵ in the future; (iv) no one cares what anarchists think about states anyway (ibid: 149-157).

While these points are indeed relevant to the discussion, Judith Butler's (2013) critique of Gordon highlights some of the inconsistency in his response, and I would add

⁵⁵ Prefigurative politics refers to the desire or attempt to live and/or enact politics in a way one wishes to see society structured in the future. For example, being a vegan or refusing to participate in unethical consumption practices.

it also highlights the continuity of the logic of separation which remains active in the discourses and narratives of AATW activism. However, it is also important to emphasise that Uri Gordon's narrative is only one among many which coexist among AATW activists, and therefore to a degree Butler mistakenly takes Gordon's narrative as representative of AATW as a collective. However, Butler's critique remains relevant on the whole. She criticises Gordon for his uncritical assumption that the anti-Wall struggle is a statist struggle, thus ignoring or sidestepping ongoing debates on a single and/or binational state in Israeli-Palestine. However, this criticism in turn ignores the fact that Palestinians are split on the question of national independence or cohabitation, and in fact a small majority in the West Bank continues to support a two state solution.

Butler further criticises AATW's failure to engage with vocal queer Palestinian organisations for BDS such as Al Qawas and Aswat, the existence of which challenges some of the problematic assumptions that minority rights and voices are absent and/or silenced from Palestinian society. This is indeed a very important criticism given that joint struggle is often represented as radical queer and feminist Israelis showing solidarity with conservative and patriarchal Palestinians, and making links with queer and feminist Palestinian groups can work to strengthen a prefigurative political agenda. However, as Rima (2013) from Aswat points out, emphasis on the politicisation of queer Palestinian subjects can place a significant burden on queer Palestinians, detracting from others', particularly international and even more significantly Israeli, responsibility to oppose the Occupation in solidarity with the Palestinian people whether queer or not. Thus, as Israelis the onus on AATW activists continues to be anti-Occupation activism which does not place identitarian conditions on those whose struggle it supports.

More problematic perhaps is Gordon's narration of Israeli anarchism as emerging from a progressive and unproblematic version of Israel's early settlement project in

Palestine, which fails to account for the founding racialism of the Zionist settler colonial project. Moreover, such an account shows a failure to engage with contemporary critical anti-colonialist politics among Palestinian thinkers and activists. Thus, Gordon's account inadvertently reaffirms the dominant left discourse of the 'good little Israel' within its 1948 borders versus the 'bad expansionist Israel' which is refusing to leave the Occupied Territories. Moreover, Gordon's narration of Israeli anarchism also conflicts with more critical readings among AATW activists.

In an interview with Aaron Lakoff (2005), one of the founding AATW activists, Yossi Bartal, argues that most of the anarchists who went to Palestine in the early years of Jewish settlement left Israel shortly after its creation as it failed to meet their expectations and clashed with their anti-statist principles. Rather, the emergence of contemporary Israeli anarchism is inspired by and can be traced to the 1980s and 1990s transnational anti-globalization movements which saw the convergence of a number of different struggles for social and economic justice against exploitative and oppressive corporate and state interests. The following statement by the Anarchist-Communist Initiative, an AATW associated affinity group, better reflects the complex social, economic and political analysis which underpins AATW's opposition to Israeli apartheid, and distinguishes it from the mainstream Israeli Left:

The left, the so called "peace" camp", will never be able to establish a real lasting peace, as long as it denies the responsibility of Zionism in the displacement of the Palestinian people from their land, and as long as it refuses to understand that a country in which more than a fifth of the population is not Jewish cannot be both Zionist (a "Jewish State") and truly democratic. The best that the Zionist left can afford itself is a "military democracy" with second-class citizens (Palestinian, Bedouin, Druze and foreign workers) and "generous offerings" a la Barak of a

“recognition of a Palestinian State” a la Sharon, which means nothing but the establishment of poor Palestinian ghettos, separated and devoid of hope, to become easy dumping grounds for products, sweatshop infrastructure and a source for cheap labour for Israeli industries – Shimon Peres’ “New Middle East” (Anarchist-Communist Initiative, 2004: 54-55).

The above analysis demonstrates the intersection of political and economic interests, highlighting the importance of historical narrative and responsibility in addressing the oppression of the Palestinian people. Moreover, it emphasises an awareness of Israel’s Occupation as a continuation of an ongoing and long-standing settler colonial project in Palestine. Such an analysis further challenges at home and abroad the dominance of Israel’s security and separation discourse, articulating an alternative anti-apartheid discourse which calls for solidarity and equality and suggests that there are and could be more just and fair alternatives to living under a militarised apartheid. Nevertheless, Gordon’s narrative of Israeli anarchism is not entirely inconsistent with some activists’ view of the Occupation as an aberration of Israeli democracy, or even as a process of de-democratisation of Israeli society as this statement demonstrates: ‘Direct action is the democratic act when democracy stops functioning... The ethnic cleansing is occurring before our eyes and we have only one option: to use the few rights we still have from the remnants of Israeli democracy and break the racist, immoral law’ (AATW, 2004: 50, my emphasis).

Although the above statement demonstrates an awareness of privilege, the privilege of Israeli citizenship, it shows a lack of awareness and/or reflexivity in relation to the ‘we’ who have access to or can view Israel as a democracy. For whom is Israel a democracy? It is certainly not a democracy for the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, or the two million in the West Bank who are subject to Israel’s military occupation without a

right to citizenship or redress. Nor is it a democracy for its one and a half million Palestinian and Bedouin citizens whose non-Jewish nationality excludes them from equality. As such the notion of using the few rights 'we still have from the remnants of Israeli democracy' implies an uncritical acceptance of the privilege of Jewish citizenship which in fact challenges the very notion of Israel as a democracy.

Similarly, a number of the leaflets issued following the wounding of AATW activist Gil Na'amati in 2003 emphasise his recent military service, playing on the outrage of a former Israeli soldier being wounded by the army he once belonged to and which should be protecting him as a Jewish citizen. The same leaflets, which call for Israelis to join an upcoming protest following the shooting, refer to the Palestinian village of Deir Balut, where the protest is to take place, as being located in 'Samaria', the biblical name for parts of the West Bank which is used in official Israeli state discourse as a justification for illegal Jewish Israeli settlement and colonisation (AATW, 2004: 46-47).

Both these statements unwittingly reaffirm AATW's belonging and relation to the Jewish Israeli mainstream, even if they remain highly critical of it. Moreover, the shock and surprise at Gil Na'amati's shooting highlights the unequal valuation of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli life, with the wounding or killing of the former being perceived as 'normal' and/or 'inevitable', while the wounding of the latter represents the 'unthinkable'. It is for this reason that Israel's liberal media interest in the protests against the Wall arrived with Na'amati's shooting and has similarly dwindled as a result of the lack of Israeli casualties in the past few years. On the other hand, the killing of dozens of Palestinian protesters since 2002 has been met with complete lack of media interest.

At the same time the increasing 'woundability' and even 'killability' of radical Israeli activists suggests a growing convergence between the Palestinian struggle for justice and those Israelis who are deemed by the regime as posing a threat by challenging

its domination and hegemony; this in turn creates and strengthens previously unthinkable affinities and solidarities. Moreover, AATW activists have continuously critically engaged with the question of privilege in an attempt to redress some of the imbalance between themselves and the Palestinian people. They try to use this privilege, particularly their Israeli citizenship which affords them greater international mobility, in order to spread the message of the struggle. However, the use of this privilege itself has negative repercussions with the danger of Israelis being perceived as the struggle's spokespeople. Given that members of the Popular Committees are often denied the right to leave by Israel or the right to enter by Western states, this can lead to Israeli involvement overshadowing the role of Palestinian organisers who are primarily affected by the Wall. Similarly, the presence of radical Israelis can equally serve to appease the conscience of mainstream Israeli society:

The over-attention on Israeli demonstrators is motivated in part by the Israeli press' familiarity with the Israeli propaganda device known as "shooting and crying"... Indeed a receptive Haaretz readership always feels flattered by depoliticised depictions of the beautiful Israeli leftie' (Snitz, 2004: 25).

On the whole, despite or perhaps because of their anti-hierarchical and non-institutionalised form of organising AATW has not only inspired significant interest from the liberal Israeli media, but has also been featured in two internationally acclaimed and award-winning documentary films about the popular struggle against the Wall, *Budrus* (dir. Julia Bacha, 2009) and *5 Broken Cameras* (dir. Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi, 2011). These two films perhaps best exemplify the potentially problematic manner in which the struggle can be mis/represented. *Budrus* which documents the early years of the struggle against the Wall in the Palestinian village of the same name has been described by a number of activists as 'apolitical' for featuring the testimonies and narratives of

Palestinian residents of the village, Israeli activists, and Israeli soldiers in equal measure, and therefore detracting from the fact that these constituents play a very different role in respectively leading, supporting, and oppressing, a struggle for freedom and justice.

Equally, the individuation of participants, while it can serve to create greater understanding of the motivations driving the individuals involved in the protest, in this case works to equalise power dynamics, failing to adequately convey the unequal power relations which underpin the Occupation, the Wall, and the Palestinian struggle against these injustices. Much of these omissions can be attributed to the fact that the film has a primarily Israeli audience in mind, and as such is structured and saturated by the parameters of acceptable discourse. In this case acceptable discourse relates to the necessity to represent Israeli apartheid as a situation of conflict between two relatively equal sides, with the added bonus of the presence of radical Israelis testifying to the ‘goodness’ of Israelis in general.

On the other hand, *5 Broken Cameras* which is based on the personal experiences of Emad Burnat, a resident of Bil’in who has documented the struggle of his village over a period of four years, reclaims the centrality of the Palestinian experience and leading role in the struggle against the Wall. The tone of the film is considerably darker, showing the escalating military violence and brutality which faces protests against the Wall. While the documentary features a number of Israeli activists, they are primarily seen in a supporting role, with the focus being on the village’s residents who daily live and bear the brunt of the Occupation.

It is precisely because of the danger of overshadowing the Palestinian struggle that in reality AATW activists insist on the centrality of pragmatic direct action, avoiding political dogma, focusing on getting Israelis out on demonstrations, and avoiding being

seen as spokespeople. Moreover, Kobi Snitz⁵⁶ identifies five principles of working as an ‘outsider’, principles he applies to both Israelis and internationals: (i) First and foremost the struggle is a Palestinian struggle; (ii) outsiders should never speak to soldiers in a situation of conflict, or show overt familiarity, unless Palestinians trust you and have asked you to do so; (iii) there needs to be awareness of and respect towards cultural roles; (iv) outsiders need to familiarise themselves with existing social relations, e.g. gender; (v) observing and raising awareness about BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) is the primary task after leaving a demonstration.

For most activists the above principles are relatively straightforward and unproblematic with the exception of gender relations, including the question of what constitutes ‘modest’ clothing for women and the issue of sexual harassment of female solidarity activists during protests, which is a point of particular contention. One of the ways in which feminist activists have dealt with the issue of patriarchy in Palestinian society has been by insisting on women’s participation in demonstrations, with diversity in terms of women, men, different generations, and factions being involved often being cited as the catalyst for success, with the village of Budrus being a flagship example.

Conversely the failure to engage with other forms of oppression and discrimination which coexist in the struggle, whether because of prioritising the protests over building a supportive community or wishing to appear tough, is resulting in unresolved trauma and burnout, with many activists increasingly leaving the struggle and some even the country (Arieli, 2013; Shapiro, 2013). Yossi Bartal (2013) argues that burnout and the growing sentiment of cynicism and pessimism among radical activists stems from the refusal to engage in and/or envisage an alternative to the current situation of oppression; the need to find a future to fight for not only to be fighting against.

⁵⁶ Presentation given during ICAHD’s 2011 rebuilding camp

Reframing Community

Much of the tension surrounding the question of community also relates to the question of self-determination. The anarchist refusal to engage in a conversation about the nature of Israel-Palestine, particularly if the conversation is centred on the topic of a state or two, is a principled objection. Nevertheless, the refusal of relatively privileged citizens, in this case Jewish Israelis, to engage with the possible direction of Israel-Palestine leaves the power to decide in the hands of those who have no intention to choose an egalitarian option. Perhaps two obstacles to envisaging an alternative community in Israel-Palestine can be identified in the thinking of AATW. The first relates to the continuing logic of separation which operates in most Israeli and Palestinian narratives and discourses. This is to do with the idea that although the two-state solution is seen as an impossibility or as a window of opportunity that has closed in the past decade, and although the current situation is understood as an apartheid, the simpler solution is still seen as a solution involving ethno-national separation.

This manner of thinking is not entirely representative of AATW, for as mentioned before, even in a two state scenario based on the 1967 borders, AATW activists believe that Israel has to become a state of all its citizens and that the Palestinian right of return should be implemented. However, where the logic of separation still operates or remains in place is in relation to envisaging cohabitation with the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Similarly, even if one is to assume that most Palestinians want an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, the question of binationalism and/or multiculturalism, and self-determination for cultural collectivities remains relevant in light of the right of return and the possibility for equal citizenship within Israel's 1948 borders.

Moreover, a case can be made that activists such as AATW, who have engaged and are engaged with a full diversity of socio-cultural and economic struggles in Israel-

Palestine, and who are in fact most familiar with the realities of multiculturalism and the attempt to eliminate and/or suppress it under Zionism, are perhaps best placed to encourage a conversation about self-determination in a manner that avoids reproducing majority/minority dichotomies and dominations. Furthermore, a conceptualisation of self-determination as mutual respect, non-domination and reciprocity between autonomous socio-cultural units (Young, 2007: 65) is fully compatible with anarchist principles and does not have to be based on a statist model, or certainly not a statist model based on ethno-centrism and centralised institutionalised power. Thus, a conversation which examines the question of cultural self-determination does not have to be focused on the state as a unit of organisation. At the same time, such a model of self-determination can better account for the manner in which multiple interests and effects intersect and are mutually-determined and/or determining, seeking to ensure reciprocal relations based on the 'all effected' principle which takes justice as its premise.

A criticism of the above approach might be Gordon's (2008) retort that 'no one cares what anarchists think about states anyway'. However, such an attitude is deeply problematic in a context in which the state is not, if it ever has been, an institution separately identifiable and separate from social relations in a given locality. In other words, 'the state is not a homogeneous medium separated from civil society by a ditch, but an uneven set of branches and functions, only relatively integrated by the hegemonic practices which take place within' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 180). The very idea that the state is a framework which functions separately from social practices must be understood as the product of the effects of this very frame (Mitchell, 2006):

By establishing a territorial boundary to enclose a population and exercising absolute control over movement across it, governmental powers define and help to constitute a national entity. Setting up and policing a frontier involves a variety of fairly modern social practices –

continuous barbed-wire fencing, passports, immigration laws, inspections, currency control and so on. These mundane arrangements, most of them unknown one hundred years ago, help manufacture an almost transcendental entity, the nation-state (ibid: 180).

In other words, and perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in Israel-Palestine, social life is fully structured and reproduced within a statist framework, and the experiences and opportunities of anarchists are not exempt. For the notion of Jewish Israeli privilege, and the opportunities of freedom of movement and/or relative protection from state abuse and violence it affords, hinges on none other than the privilege afforded to it by the Israeli state which defines itself as a Jewish nation-state, and in the process excludes most of its other residents and subjects from full citizenship rights. Therefore, principled anti-statism does not afford privileged subjects the right to selectively elect which aspects of state practices to accept or reject, i.e. enjoying the transnational freedom of movement, settlement and employment an Israeli passport affords, while refusing to engage with the question of what might and/or should a more egalitarian state formation in Israel-Palestine look like. Such practices can in fact inadvertently reaffirm and normalise privilege.

The second obstacle to AATW's articulation of an alternative community in Israel-Palestine that might serve to better sustain waning Israeli activism is directly related to activists' reluctance to engage with the question of self-determination and largely stems from the structure of anarchist activist practice itself. A number of the activist essays in *Anarchists Against the Wall* (2013) focus on the subject of alienation and burnout. Of particular relevance to this discussion are the writings of Tali Shapiro, Roy Wagner, Sarah Assouline, and Ruth Edmonds which feature in the above edited volume and critically reflect on the questions of alienation, belonging, inter-group dynamics, and confronting Israeli society about its racist and oppressive nature. Some of

the key issues which emerge across the critical accounts point towards a common problem in anarchist organising, namely the tendency to withdraw in marginal socio-political activist subcultures as a means to create a buffer against the political alienation and marginalisation felt in mainstream society. This in turn has a negative repercussion in the context of Israel-Palestine by making it difficult for Israeli activists to challenge fellow citizens and attempt to have a more critical conversation about the oppression of the Palestinian people.

In many of the cases the alienation experienced does not lead to activists being physically ostracised by their family and ‘non-aligned’ friends but rather to them leading a double-life where they do radical activism in relative secret and spend the rest of their time being an ‘ordinary’ Israeli who drinks coffee in Tel Aviv bars (Edmonds, 2013). This is not necessarily a negative thing in itself as activists have a right to family life and the right to maintain relations with family members who do not share their political views and affiliations. However, perhaps more problematic is the radical activist tendency to refuse to collaborate and engage with other Israelis who are left-leaning but perhaps might not be as radical as themselves. This has particularly been the case around the Solidarity Sheikh Jerrah⁵⁷ movement which diminished in the aftermath of anarchist activists pulling out of the protest because they felt that their leftwing counterparts were not radical enough because they subscribe to the two-state solution as an alleged means to block the right of return (Svirsky, 2012; Wagner, 2013).

⁵⁷ The movement emerged in protest at the Israeli court’s decision in 2009 to evict four Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem on the basis that these homes belonged to Jews prior to 1949. Since then the homes have been settled by Jewish settlers who in fact have no original claims to the properties. The Sheikh Jerrah protests have been one of the few events which brought together left-liberal and radical activists in the past decade. Many liberals joined on the basis that this decision contradicted the state’s refusal to recognise the claims of Palestinians who were expelled in 1948, fearing that this decision could set a future precedent for evicting Jews from the former properties of Palestinians.

Although this analysis of mainstream leftwing Israelis is to a large extent correct, nevertheless, given the overwhelming rightwing attitude prevailing in Israeli society there is a great need for critical activists to engage their less radical or critical leftwing counterparts who are at the very least sympathetic to the message of ending the Occupation. A blanket refusal to engage with less radical counterparts can have the adverse effect of pushing the few remaining leftwing Israelis further into the mainstream right, foreclosing all possibilities to encourage their engagement with the very serious and necessary questions of the right of return, self-determination, and creating a more egalitarian society in Israel-Palestine.

Furthermore, radical activists can at times act in a dogmatic fashion, forgetting and/or choosing to ignore that they themselves were not always radical and aware of their own privileges and bigotry. And moreover, that radicalisation is nothing more than an ongoing process of unlearning and challenging ingrained socio-cultural practices and ways of seeing the world, with many of these tensions being clearly embodied in the writings of AATW activists. Furthermore, and this is something the aforementioned activists show awareness of in their reflective essays, applying excessively high standards for people of a similar background, i.e. Israeli Jews, while downplaying the bigotry and/or intolerance of Palestinian allies, can itself be a form of racism and classism.

In particular, this refers to the failure of the predominantly middle class Ashkenazi activist milieu to be able to articulate and forge links between the Palestinian struggle for justice and freedom with the cultural and economic concerns of the majority of Israeli Jews who are working class and of Arab descent, and those Israelis who arguably have the most to win from a more egalitarian set-up in Israel-Palestine. This failure can be attributed to the historical and continuing dominance of the Ashkenazi ethnicity in Zionist Israeli discourses. However, the continuity of this racialised and class dominance among

radical activists is also partly to do with the reluctance among many of them to challenge their relative privilege not only in relation to the oppressed Palestinians, but also in relation to the majority of non-European Israelis who have been the second biggest victims of Zionism's settler colonialism which has sought to eradicate not only Israel-Palestine's Arab Palestinian heritage, but also the Arab heritage of Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews:

There are not, for example, necessary links between anti-sexism and anti-capitalism, and a unity between the two can only be the result of a hegemonic articulation (p. 178)... The strengthening of specific democratic struggles requires, therefore, the expansion of chains of equivalence which extend to other struggles. The equivalential articulation between anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-capitalism, for example, requires a hegemonic construction which, in certain circumstances, may be the condition for the consolidation of each one of these struggles. The logic of equivalence, then, taken to its ultimate consequences, would imply the dissolution of the autonomy of the spaces in which each one of these struggles is constituted; not necessarily because any of them become subordinated to others, but because they have all become, strictly speaking, equivalent symbols of a unique and indivisible struggle (Laclau and Mauffe, 1985: 182).

In other words, Laclau and Mauffe highlight the manner in which forging links between different forms of oppression and their necessary unity in a struggle against injustice requires active articulation or in the case of Israel-Palestine a rearticulation of existing social relations. Thus, the necessity to fight for women's and LGBT liberation, justice for the Palestinian people, and freedom from ethnic discrimination among Israeli Jews in Israel-Palestine might not be immediately obvious to those affected by the

different forms of oppression they face. However, just as Zionism has made it possible to speak about a coherent and unified Jewish nation in Israel-Palestine despite ethno-national and class differences, so can an active anti-Zionist discourse based on the principle of justice attempt to articulate the manner in which the shared, though different, forms of oppression facing women, Palestinians, Mizrahi Jews and other non-Ashkenazi Israelis, can be overcome by working together for justice, freedom and equality.

This is not to say that a case is being made here for seeing different experiences of oppression as the same, or for that matter that some of those suffering class and/or ethnic oppression are not themselves complicit and responsible for reproducing the oppression of others. For example, as has already been mentioned, the majority of Israeli soldiers serving in the Occupied Territories are working class Mizrahi and/or Russian speakers. On the contrary, I am arguing that it is not only possible but in fact it is necessary for radical activists to actively work to articulate and forge alliances between different oppressed groups in order to demonstrate that justice and freedom in Israel-Palestine are beneficial for all, or at the very least for the vast majority of those who reside in Israel-Palestine.

Feminist activists, when not faced with accusations of ‘trouble making’ and trying to take away attention from ‘more pressing’ issues, have been particularly adept at drawing analogies between racialised military occupation, and its accompanying violation of personal and private space, and the violation of women’s bodies as a means of control and repression (see Shapiro, 2013). However, socialist politics in Israel have historically been heavily influenced by the racialist dynamics of Zionism, and as such this continues to pose a barrier to attempts to articulate equivalence between the experiences of Mizrahi Jews and Palestinians. Moreover, the emphasis on Jewish unity at the expense of possible

class solidarity precludes a more nuanced understanding of intersecting interests and the experiences of race and class in Israel-Palestine.

The J14 ‘social justice’ protests, with their emphasis on mythical Jewish unity, represent another missed opportunity to articulate the manner in which the continued military occupation of the Palestinian people, and the economic subsidy of the ongoing settler-colonial project in the Occupied Territories, is placing a social and economic burden on the differentially racialised working class Mizrahi population who bear the brunt of having to live in substandard housing and impoverished and dilapidated neighbourhoods inside Israel. Instead, the vacuum left by the leftwing Israeli failure in the past three decades to attempt to articulate a convergence between different class and racial interests in Israel-Palestine has been filled by growing rightwing radicalisation, characterised by rampant racism and national chauvinism, exemplified by the violent racist riots against African refugees which took place in Tel Aviv in May 2012.

The growing social shift to the right has in turn meant that many young people who are becoming active in contemporary Israeli society face an increasingly harder task as far as raising awareness and confronting fellow citizens in Israel is concerned. This is one of the reasons why a growing number of young radical activists and the signatories of BOYCOTT! From Within increasingly feel that change from within Israeli society is a very distant possibility, thus placing the onus on transnational Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). Many critical Israelis are also increasingly opting to leave the country to focus on transnational campaigning for BDS⁵⁸, as they feel they can make more difference putting political pressure from outside (Assouline, 2013).

The growing sentiment among Israeli dissidents that pressure from outside is the most effective strategy in the immediate future could potentially open up new

⁵⁸ Personal conversations with activists

transnational spaces for critical voices from the Palestinian and Israeli Diasporas to meet and articulate alternative versions of cohabitation in Israel-Palestine. These versions of cohabitation will hopefully take into account not only those who are resident, hold citizenship, and/or wish to return, but also the future society's responsibility to other refugees seeking protection and wishing to live in peace and security in Israel-Palestine. Moreover, given the continuing primacy of Jewishness in Zionist discourse, and de facto Jewish diasporic support for Israel as a Zionist settler-colonial project, the role and responsibility of the critical Jewish Israeli Diaspora to address transnational Jewish communities with the question of justice in Israel-Palestine becomes pertinent. In other words, do critical Jewish Israelis living abroad have a responsibility to use their Jewish and Israeli privilege to address the Zionist aspirations and support for Israel's settler colonial project among the transnational Jewish Diaspora? And if so, what form would this responsibility take? The scope of this thesis does not permit an affirmative answer or an opportunity to delve deeper into this question. However, it raises the need for further investigation on the subject.

Despite the above criticisms, the work of AATW activists alludes to the fact that there is a growing, even if very slow and reluctant, articulation and convergence between different struggles for justice. Even if at present this is taking place among a minority of critical individuals. As mentioned previously, AATW is largely comprised of many activists who are active and have been active and in solidarity with different groups which seek to challenge the many forms of injustice and oppression which coexist in Israel-Palestine. Thus, in many respects AATW's embodied activist practices are themselves articulations of equivalence and many of the activists personally embody this equivalence by being predominantly female, queer, and/or from marginalised ethnic and class groups. Moreover, the writings of AATW activists demonstrate a remarkable amount of analysis, reflexivity and theorisation on key issues pertaining to privilege and solidarity, something

that is often absent from other critical Israeli accounts. The challenge remains for this sort of reflexivity and deep understanding of the intersections of power and oppression to be articulated among the majority of residents in Israel-Palestine.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the embodied solidarity activism and reflexive analysis of Anarchists Against the Wall (AATW). In particular, the radical anti-Zionist politics of AATW activists were highlighted as a means to rearticulate Jewish Israeli subjectivity as non-dominating in relation to the Palestinian people. AATW's commitment to supporting the joint struggle against the 'apartheid' Wall in the West Bank testifies to the possibility to articulate new alliances between Palestinians and critical Israelis which can lead to the expansion of the field of democratic struggle in Israel-Palestine. Moreover, AATW's commitment to other radical social struggles pertaining to gender, sexuality, and worker and migrant rights serves to articulate equivalence between different democratic struggles. The discussion demonstrated, however, that this articulation is faced by considerable resistance and challenges on multiple levels. In the final analysis, some criticisms were levelled at AATW for refusing to actively engage with the question of self-determination, which is understood as not having to be defined by statist parameters, and is moreover a discussion which can benefit by taking into account the multiplicity of power and oppression that operates in Israel-Palestine.

Conclusion

The thesis drew upon feminist critical theories and postcolonial critique to theorise the emergence of a non-statist and non-dominating peace politics in Israel-Palestine. This theoretical-political approach was applied to the critical analysis of the activist thought and practices of three critical Israeli civil society groups, examining the way they reframe the geopolitical and narrative space of Israel-Palestine in response to the Palestinian call for just peace. Thus, this thesis is simultaneously a critical reflection on activist practice, and a critical activist-academic intervention on the topic of just peace in Israel-Palestine.

The activist narratives and practices examined testify to the continuation of the logic of separation inherent in the dominant call for ethno-national partition. At the same time, they also testify to the way in which critical Israelis assuming ethical nonviolent responsibility towards the Palestinian people can result in unprecedented narrative convergence, practical solidarity, and the possibility for non-domination and cohabitation. In the final instance, critical activist practices reveal just peace in Israel-Palestine as an emergent and ongoing project to reframe and rearticulate the contemporary relations of oppression and domination.

Moreover, the theoretical-political framework and critical analysis of non/anti-Zionist Israeli activism in Israel-Palestine drew attention to the need to move away from the logic of separation which underpins traditional state-centred approaches to peace. In particular, the analysis departed from the position that the post-Oslo Accords framework which structures life in contemporary Israel-Palestine is largely responsible for the present impasse. Further to this, the thesis made the case that statist approaches to peace have been based on an inherent power disparity between the state of Israel and the Palestinian people, who are on the whole a geographically dispersed and stateless collectivity. As

such, a solution based on statist principles fails to respond to the calls for justice made by the Palestinian people. Therefore, it was proposed that only a framework based on Nancy Fraser's principle of the 'all affected', which takes into account the right to redress by all those who are enmeshed in power relations with a given institution and its representatives, can serve to adequately address the question of justice in Israel-Palestine.

The tenets underpinning the 2005 Palestinian civil society call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) of Israel, namely (i) an end to colonisation of Arab Palestinian Lands, (ii) equal right for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and (iii) implementation of the Palestinian refugees' right of return, are identified as the framework underpinning the Palestinian call for just peace. Moreover, the principles of the BDS campaign most closely resemble the conceptualisation of the all affected principle. Further, the evolution of the widespread civil society support for the BDS campaign between 2009 and early 2013, the time period this study covers, testifies to the growing importance of transnational civil society and its role in reconceptualising and reframing Israel-Palestine and the accompanying understanding of justice and peace.

Support for the principles of BDS has further emerged over the past few years as the differentiating marker between the declining significance of the traditional Israeli leftwing peace movement, characterised by its support for the ethno-nationalist two-state solution and Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, and the emerging critical and/or radical Israeli voices studied in this thesis. The latter are characterised by their non/anti-Zionist critique of the Israeli state and its Judeo-supremacist policies within the 1967 Occupied Territories and in the 1948 borders. The emergence of these critical Israeli voices has in recent years converged with critical Palestinian calls for decolonisation, characterisations of Israel as an 'apartheid' state, and calls for Israel to become 'a state for all its citizens'. More recently these discussions have also been accompanied by greater emphasis and

debate on the possibility of cohabitation in a single and/or binational state in Israel-Palestine. This in turn has placed emphasis on solidarity and ‘joint-struggle’ for decolonisation and democratisation, in contrast to the dominant state-centred tendency to view Jewish Israelis and Palestinians as two national collectivities with diametrically opposed interests.

Overall, this study should be viewed as a modest theoretical-political contribution to the growing academic interest in transnational civil society efforts for justice, peace and reconciliation. In relation to Israel-Palestine, this thesis can also be seen as a critical accompaniment to emergent literature on the joint-struggle, the BDS campaign, and transnational solidarity activism. On the whole, the thesis engaged with, built upon, and problematised emergent academic and activist literature and practices which have dealt with the themes of joint struggle, activist reframing of Israel-Palestine, and the possibility for binational cohabitation. Works dealing with these topics include, among others, Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta’s (2011) *Refusing to be Enemies*, Marcelo Svirsky’s (2012) *Arab-Jewish Activism in Israel-Palestine*; and Loewenstein and Moor’s (2012) edited volume, *After Zionism: One State for Israel and Palestine*; and Atalia Omer’s (2013) *When Peace is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp thinks about Religion, Nationalism and Justice*.

This thesis differs from these works in that it not only examined and analysed existing activist thought and practice, but it also utilised the emergent analysis in order to theorise the ongoing process of political reframing, and in turn to highlight discrepancies and/or omissions in current activist thought and practice, concluding with some tentative suggestions for future direction. Moreover, the thesis focused on the role of intersectionality and intertextuality in the transnational movement for just peace in Israel-Palestine, thus demonstrating the manner in which solidarity activism, critical academic

research, and artistic practices converge and intersect in articulating an alternative vision of/for Israel-Palestine. The multiplicity of actors involved in the transnational solidarity movement for just peace in Israel-Palestine, including critical historians, political scientists, and other academics, as well as critical filmmakers, professional and grassroots civil society activists, alongside others, with many of these actors slipping in and out of multiple roles, testifies to the futility of compartmentalising different fields of activity. This is even more the case in Israel-Palestine where the society is more divided along the lines of whether one is critical of or relatively complacent towards Israel's governance regime towards the Palestinians and non-Jewish citizens.

This division is particularly evident in chapters three and four. Chapter three examined the declining movement for conscientious objection in Israel alongside contemporary critical documentaries on the subject of military service. The relevance of these texts is not so much to do with who produced them, whether civil society groups or critical filmmakers. Rather, what matters is that these documentaries circulate and are appropriated by different actors to do similar discursive work on the subject of military service and its effects, and moreover, despite their critical stance, they nevertheless testify to the prevalence of the dominant Israeli discourse of 'shooting and crying'. An important question arose as a result of this critical reflection, namely, that if the tendency to 'shoot and cry' remains dominant within Israeli society, and if as the evidence suggests conscientious objection is in fact declining, then what are the necessary steps to break with the violence-reproducing frame which enables the continuing oppression of the Palestinian people? How can Jewish Israeliness be rearticulated as non-violent and non-dominating?

Throughout the thesis, narrative continuously emerges as a key site of articulating, transmitting, and reproducing existing oppressive subjectivities and relations. It is for this

reason in particular that at the end of Chapter Three and in Chapter Four the necessary Israeli confrontation with the Palestinian narrative of the Nakba is highlighted as the first step in ethically and non-violently engaging with the Palestinian Other in order to articulate Israeli-Palestinian relations otherwise. The significance of historical narrative in relation to 1948, but also in relation to the ongoing Zionist settler colonial project in Israel-Palestine, is also highlighted in Chapter Five through my critical reflection on the debates on the right to collective self-determination and binationalism which have taken place between ICAHD's Jeff Halper and the critical Palestinian activists Ali Abunimah and Omar Barghouti.

Indeed, as a result of taking the necessary steps to engage with Palestinian narratives, critical Israelis are increasingly moving towards a one state or binational perspective, as exemplified in the positions of Zochrot and ICAHD. However, the growing move towards advocating for egalitarian cohabitation in a shared geo-political space is not free of contradictions and tensions. Accepting the label of colonisers has been difficult for critical Israelis. Similarly, accepting the possibility of decolonisation, resulting not only in an end to Jewish privilege in Israel-Palestine, but more so the possibility of impending minoritarian status in a future Arab Palestinian majority state, is similarly experienced as problematic and undesirable. It is for this reason for example, that Halper argues in favour of a binational state as a precondition of cohabitation, while Zochrot's earlier reflection on the Palestinian refugee return envisages a loose federation of autonomous cultural collectivities coexisting in a decolonised Israel-Palestine.

My contribution to these debates has been to suggest a rethinking of the relationship between the Jewish and the Israeli in Jewish Israeli identity by foregrounding the manner in which the use of 'Jewish' in the Zionist settler colonial project continues to justify diasporic settler colonialism, while denying the rights of the Palestinian refugee Diaspora

to return. Thus, a rearticulation of Jewish Israeliness as a civic, cultural and linguistic community might better serve to break with settler colonial privilege, while acknowledging and affirming the specificity and history of Hebrew cultural life in Israel-Palestine. In that respect, the practical solidarity activism of Anarchists Against the Wall (AATW), who explicitly act as Israelis in support of the Palestinian popular struggle against the Separation Wall, serves as one example of the articulation of Jewish Israeliness as non-dominating and non-Zionist. The act of taking direction from the Palestinian organisers of the popular struggle, and physically standing as a barrier against Israeli military violence, while refusing to reproduce it, breaks with the dominant notion of Israeli unity in the processes of oppressing the Palestinians, and is perhaps the ultimate symbol of rupturing the logic of separation.

Nevertheless, as I have expressed in my critique of AATW in Chapter Six, the activists' assumption that the Palestinian popular struggle is an ethno-national statist struggle, coupled with their discomfort or reluctance to confront Israeli society, reproduces the logic of separation and irreconcilability between Israelis and Palestinians, and is resulting in activist burnout, with many activists leaving Israel-Palestine altogether. However, as the thesis has emphasised, critical Israeli civil society groups should not be simply seen as a small part of Israel's declining Left but rather as the Jewish Israeli component of the transnational movement for just peace in Israel-Palestine. As such, the thesis's findings suggest, both in relation to ICAHD and AATW, but also more recently in relation to Zochrot, that critical Israeli groups are increasingly moving towards transnational advocacy and campaigning in light of Israeli society's intransigence.

Zochrot, is perhaps one of the few critical groups in Israel-Palestine which accepts the tenets of just peace while continuing to place emphasis on working within Jewish Israeli society, and placing the onus on the Jewish Israeli public's acceptance of the Palestinian

right of return as a precondition for cohabitation. This approach is highly valued by Palestinian counterparts, with many increasingly emphasising the need for critical Israelis to address Israeli society rather than simply showing solidarity with the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. However, at present the majority of critical Israelis find this request difficult to fulfil. Nevertheless, the move towards transnational activism is resulting in interesting and productive convergence and collaboration between critical Israeli and Palestinian Diaspora activists, particularly in Europe and North America. These emerging alliances, which were alluded to in the thesis, point towards future directions for research.

Future research could engage with a number of interrelated questions which have emerged in the process of theorising just peace politics in Israel-Palestine. These questions concern the transnational role of critical Jewish Israeli and Palestinian Diaspora activism, as well as the role of transnational Jewish activism in supporting or contesting Israel's Zionist settler colonial project in Israel-Palestine. These questions remain pertinent given the fact that Israel-Palestine has been and continues to be a transnational project. It began as a transnational project in its inception as a settler colonial state established via an international resolution in 1947-8. It is also an ongoing transnational Jewish settler colonial project in the Occupied Territories, and within Israel's 1948 borders, bolstered by the exclusionary Law of Return, and the accompanying denial of the Palestinian refugees' return.

A limitation to this research thesis, and perhaps a limitation that is best addressed in the future by someone other than myself, has been that despite my attempt to theorise Israel-Palestine as a contiguous unit and to account for all those affected by the oppressive apartheid situation, Israel's political designs continue to structure and inhibit both theoretical and practical possibilities for engagement. As a researcher and a solidarity activist I have been unable to visit Gaza due to the ongoing blockade, and similarly the

critical Israeli groups which I have examined in this thesis are no longer able to provide on-the-ground solidarity to the people of Gaza. The geo-political isolation of Gaza, coupled with Israel's particularly extreme militarist violence against its population since 2008-09, is undoubtedly creating a very different set of relations between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. My analysis of the documentary *Concrete* in chapter three goes some way to reveal the Israeli perspective and the barriers to the possibility to break with the reproduction of oppressive violence. However, one can only imagine what it must be like to be a resident of Gaza, and that from that perspective cohabitation with your coloniser and oppressor might not seem like such a desirable option.

Nevertheless, what this complex reality testifies to is that theorising from the perspective of the 'all affected' is not the easy option. On the contrary, theorising in such a way demands that all those who are affected are accounted for, whether their interests are mutually exclusive or mutually dependent, and irrespective of the possibility of reaching a synthesis, at least in the short term. It is only by attempting to understand all the relations at play in a given space and/or situation that ethical nonviolent responsibility for the other can begin to take place. Theorising Israel-Palestine is one example of the attempt to do so. Nonetheless, the all affected framework lends itself to theorising relations in all situations of conflict, and transnational political life in general. My thesis's contribution to this principle has been to emphasise that placing the onus on those who are affected to seek redress can reproduce domination; rather, the onus to end violent and oppressive relations must be placed on the privileged. Thus, this thesis focused on the role and contributions of critical Israeli civil society actors in reframing Israel-Palestine, and moreover, it emphasised the importance of Israeli refusal to engage in the reproduction of oppressive racialised state violence against the Palestinians as a means to take nonviolent ethical responsibility for the Other.

However, in a world characterised by transnational mobility and interconnection, there is no reason why state and interstate institutions, such as the United Nations, might not consider moving towards a less statist mode of governance. What might international governance based on the ‘all affected’ principle look like? What would this mean for conflict resolution and reconciliation? A world better equipped to consider the ‘all affected’, a world in which the privileged choose to use their privilege to end conflict rather than fuel it, might be a world with fewer refugee problems, and with fewer national collectivities wishing to break away from oppressive ethno-majoritarian states. It might also be a world in which multicultural cohabitation might be seen as the norm and not a distant aspiration, in which self-determination is not about groupthink but simply about the right to exist in freedom and equality.

Nevertheless, this thesis is not merely a utopian project; it engaged with real obstacles and considered tangible possibilities to overcome them. Applying this theoretical-political frame to a different geo-political case study will undoubtedly lead to its necessary modification and transformation. However, what remains at the core of this approach is the demand to think and theorise from the bottom up, to think from the perspective of the marginalised and excluded in order to examine how power operates and how it can be rearticulated in a more responsible and less oppressive manner for the benefit of all concerned.

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