

# ***NEW*** OBSERVATIONS

*From the River to the Sea, Palestine  
will be FREE!*

**Contributors:**

Jihad Abdulmumit  
Alaa Albaba  
Amiri Baraka  
Rehaf Al Batniji  
Reem Alnatsheh  
Mia Feroletto  
Samar Ghattas  
Chris Hedges  
Ahmed Hmeedat  
Haya Kaabneh  
Dr Martin Luther King Jr  
Ati Maier  
Lucio Pozzi  
Mazin Qumsiyeh  
Jamie Stern-Weiner  
Ahmad Thaher  
Allicette Torres  
Amir Toumie  
James Tunney  
Annie Wenger-Nabigon



# **GAZA**

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ISSN #0737-5387.

**Cover:** *Nowadays*, by Lucio Pozzi,  
20 Jan. 2024, marker on paper,  
8 1/4 x 5 3/4 inches

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To pre-order or support  
please send check or money  
order to:  
New Observations  
P.O. Box 335  
Chester, VT 05143  
For additional information  
and to contact the publisher,  
please email:  
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## *From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be FREE!*

# GAZA

**Editor and Publisher: Mia Feroletto**



*The Eschaton of the Golden Records* by Alicette Torres, 2023  
35" width x 42" length. Wood, gold leaf, acrylic, metal, dirt, plastic, rocks, dirt, and enamel

**Alicette Torres Artist Statement:** We are teetering on the precipice of history's next great chapter. A species in conflict, we are a dichotomy between dreamers and those entrenched in the muck and mire of wars and divisiveness. There exists within us a primal urge for survival, deeply rooted in our DNA, a whisper of wisdom passed down through countless generations. Yet we cannot escape the gravitational pull of tribalism, a relentless focus on what distinguishes rather than what unites. We hover on the brink of a precipice; the ominous specter of global war looms overhead. My wreath symbolizes this volatile landscape, the potential for an explosion, for destruction that could reshape our world in unforeseeable ways. Yet, instead of facing our concrete problems head-on, we yearn for distant realms

like Mars, a tantalizing escape from our earthly woes. But could this turbulent juncture not be an impending doom but a rebirth, a painful but necessary rite of passage for our young and evolving species? It's the crucible where we test our mettle, where we must first fail before triumphing in some distant future. The question that haunts our thoughts is whether we will even reach that point. Will our children inherit a world marred by the scars of our divisions, or will they rise above, steering us toward a brighter, more unified destiny?

Alicette Torres, Visual Artist, Curator & Creative Director  
allicette.com @allicette; Curator Revolú Gallery [revolugallery.com](http://revolugallery.com)  
[@revolugallery](https://www.instagram.com/revolugallery); Regional Chair Northeast, Women's Caucus for Art [nationalwca.org](http://nationalwca.org), [wcainternationalcaucus.org/](http://wcainternationalcaucus.org/)

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# WHO BENEFITS FROM THE BLOOD LETTING IN THE WORLD?

*What would a day without bloodshed, anywhere in the world, feel like? Who benefits from the continual loss of blood all over the world? "Power concedes nothing without a demand."*

— Frederick Douglass

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 the world saw first hand what genocide looks like as it began in GAZA. We all know the story. Hamas broke through the fence in Gaza and killed 1,200 Israeli citizens, taking hostages. Israel released their assault on the Palestinians that continues to this day. With a death count of close to 45,000 Palestinian men, women and children and counting, there is no indication that Israel will be satisfied until all Palestinians are dead and buried. The world watches this massacre in real time. It is captured online and by social media for everyone to see. Student protesters are sanctioned and silenced, as homes, hospitals, and schools are leveled to the ground. The Palestinians are left without food, water, electricity and any hope of survival as the world continues to watch at a level that, at best is one or two steps above complacency. What does it take for each and everyone one of us to stand up and say, "Enough is Enough!" and definitively, "NO MORE!" Protests are being held around the planet but only when the average person withholds their money and their time will events change. We are the grease that keeps this particular wheel turning.

This is not about race. This is about economics. GAZA represents a valuable piece of land and Israel has continued to gobble up property that is not theirs, expanding their settlements at an alarming rate. The American people endorse the actions of Israel through the billions of dollars of support the U.S. provides each year. This is not acceptable. Our tax dollars must not be used to support genocide. ANYWHERE. NOWHERE. NO MORE!

New Observations Magazine was founded in 1985 by the artist Lucio Pozzi. Along with his art and philosophy, the magazine has proven to be one of Pozzi's gifts to the contemporary art world. I took over as publisher in 2018 and under my leadership the magazine has become more involved in activism. Personally, I stopped making art when I understood that my work in the world was my art form. In fact, during these troubling times, I feel it would be frivolous of me to make art. On the one hand, we need more creativity to problem solve and build a better world. On the other hand, it seems self-indulgent to spend my time making something that makes me happy first and has little or no direct effect on the good of the collective.

As a not-for-profit organization, New Observations is not to participate in politics or endorse any single politician. We all know that American politics influences the entire world and has done so for more than a century. In this issue, we will not attempt to influence you during a presidential election year. The landscape is grim and those who have the vision to build a new political structure, at present, most likely do not have the political capital to succeed. Even if a third party candidate should be fortunate enough to win the popular vote, it is unlikely they would ever get past the electoral college which really decides the election.

I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue, especially Jihad Abdulmumit, whose essay on halting genocide highlights the fact that there really is no difference in the two main political parties in America, which is why voters have the option to check "no preference" on their voting ballot.

I have taken the liberty to include the text (or the link to the text, depending on copyright permission) to the speech given by Nobel Prize playwright Harold Pinter in 2005 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDmDgSgSvgs>). Pinter goes to great length to talk about the difference between the reality of America and the projection of the American image. The profound speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Riverside Church on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1967 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJhgXKGldUk>) is shared here in the same way so that people can easily take the time to review the words of two great minds. The links included afford us the gift of hearing them both in their own words. Their cadence and life-force shine through from beginning to end. Where are our leaders now when we need them most, when current crimes against humanity are at their most insidious? Have we learned nothing from two World Wars and the genocide of the Jews, the Armenians, the genocide in Rwanda, the Indigenous People all around the world and countless others?

I had been given the chance to interview Robert Kennedy, Jr. for this issue of New Observations. I was told in advance that I could not ask any questions about GAZA (even though they had been told in advance the topic for the issue) but that he would be happy to discuss Indigenous issues. In recent years, I have become deeply involved in

the repatriation of the artifacts stolen from the dead at the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. I know genocide when I see it. I did not learn anything new from RFK, Jr. about Indigenous people although he agreed with me 100% on a couple of points I made. I will not be including our chat in this issue of New Observations as it is not relevant to our focus at present on GAZA.

New Observations Magazine is not endorsing any one candidate, nor are we including interviews with multiple candidates. At the time I reached out to RFK Jr. I reached out to Dr. Cornel West's team, multiple times in fact, but have not received a response. I have been an admirer of Dr. West for many years and respect his spiritual standing. I question why he has gone down this particular road when it seems clear that he harbors qualms over what is required of him to participate in the electoral process. I love jazz, too, but jazz is not appropriate all of the time.

The conversation I am including is between Dr. Jill Stein and myself. It is a personal conversation, one of several we have shared, and one that conveys the power of humanity when it taps into that spiritual force that exists within each and every one of us. We have examples to follow. We have the words of Gandhi and Dr. King. Our own internal compass guides each of us every single day if we will only pay attention and listen. We must acknowledge what needs to be fixed then roll up our sleeves and fix it. Dr. Jill Stein represents a private person, a physician, living her life when she became aware of the workings of government and its interface with society and how that asks of us to get involved and answer a call to action. In Jill's case, that call represents her third campaign for president in 2024.

In closing, I would like to thank the newly founded Palestinian art consortium that has allowed us to reproduce works by some of their members. These visionaries are able to make art to inspire us during these dark days and are prime examples of humanity at its best. They are living in the Middle East surrounded by conflict and are still able to create beauty for themselves and the world at large.

As a New York City radio personality says, "Demand more in 24!" When you read through this issue of New Observations Magazine, you will see that I have made a few demands of my own.

"From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be FREE!"

In Peace,  
Mia



February 14th, 2024

His Holiness Pope Francis  
Apostolic Palace  
00120 Vatican City

Dear Pope Francis,

2024 is proving to be one of the most challenging years in the history of humanity, a fact that cannot be lost on you in your position as the leader of the Catholic Church. I was raised a Catholic and many members of my extended family remain members of the Catholic Church.

I, for one, cannot reconcile the extreme practice of pedophilia by the Catholic clergy and the doctrine that we, as Catholics, are called to believe. While my own family was spared the experience of direct sexual abuse, childhood friends of my siblings and I were molested repeatedly by priests and even Monsignor William Genuario, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Bridgeport who moved the pedophile priests in the diocese around from parish to parish once they were caught abusing children. As a grammar school friend of my mother, he was a fixture in my extended family while growing up and a complete horror as the man who was ordained a priest on the exact day I was born. Needless to say, I am no longer a practicing Catholic. There is a certain circle in Hell for those with spiritual titles who abuse children, sexually or otherwise.

The Catholic Church has taken some steps to assuage its guilt and settle with some of its accusers/victims in recent years. The cost of these settlements represents a drop in the bucket in comparison to the vast wealth of the Church. Given the state of the world and the pervasive poverty and suffering circling the globe for millions and millions of people, this letter represents the calling out for the Catholic Church to exercise true contrition and give away the vast majority of its wealth to support those in need all over the planet. There is no greater way for the Church to make amends for the actions of countless corrupt clergy and to lighten the burden for mankind. It is what Jesus, the ultimate Fisherman, would do.

As a child of the 1960s, I was fortunate to be surrounded by the inspiration provided by such people as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy as well as Malcolm X, William Sloan Coffin and many others. Gandhi's life and example were still very much in view for me. We know that war and poverty are wrong, yet we are hesitant to acknowledge that we have the means to eliminate them from our world. 1968 marks the death of Dr. King as well as Robert Kennedy and we have been hard-pressed to find powerful leaders who incorporate the spiritual dimensions of who we are and what God calls on us to do each and every day always. You are being called to become such a leader.

To that goal, I have attached an article I wrote back in the spring of 2019. At the time, the Mid-Western States in America were experiencing extreme flooding and part of the Pine Ridge Reservation was underwater. Pine Ridge and Haiti are the two poorest places in our hemisphere

and the suffering materially, psychologically, and spiritually is endless. The article discusses a film starring Anthony Quinn as a political prisoner, a clergyman who becomes pope after spending twenty years in a Soviet concentration camp. The movie was made in 1968. We have already established what a critical year that was in America, yet the film, "The Shoes of the Fisherman" is a movie asking global questions and, in the case of the young priest played by Oscar Werner, a character inspired by Teilhard de Chardin, was questioning his faith and profound universal questions. I have included my article with this letter and am asking you now to release the majority of the wealth held for centuries by the Catholic Church to lift the quality of life for those who need it on our beautiful planet Earth. Jesus led a life of service to others. It is time for you and the other leaders of the Catholic clergy to make the choice to do the same.

To quote Arthur Soloman in "Songs for the People: Teachings on the Natural Way,"

"We are only visitors here in this part of Creation,  
We are guests of the one who owns this Creation.  
We are always to keep in mind that we  
Can own nothing here, not even our own lives.  
So the purpose of life then, is  
Not to acquire possessions  
But to honour the Creator by how we live."

I am sending this letter as well as my article published in Veterans Today in April of 2019 to the cardinals, bishops and archbishops in the United States. I will be contacting the members of the media whom I have worked with over the years. Most recently, as an authorized representative of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, I negotiated the return of 131 artifacts stolen from the dead at the Wounded Knee Massacre back to the Lakota people. My life is based on service and activism and I have raised millions of dollars for the homeless population of New York City. I can no longer remain silent when such ill-gotten wealth is being hoarded instead of being used to alleviate the suffering of mankind.

Please follow in the footsteps of Kiril Lakota, the character who chose to walk in the shoes of the Fisherman, and lift up those in need. The genocide in Gaza, destruction in the Ukraine, and war and starvation around the world need to be stopped. That is the most effective way that you can teach others about God and the true meaning of Faith.

Kind regards,  
Mia Feroletto

P.O. Box 335 Chester, VT 05143  
802 952 6217  
mia.feroletto@gmail.com

# Living your faith, or not

By Mia Feroletto, on the road in South Dakota

## Easter Sunday, 2019

We celebrated Easter Sunday yesterday. The risen Christ. The triumph over darkness by the light. Easter followed a series of unforeseen events that included the burning of Notre Dame Cathedral, the arrest of Julian Assange, and on Easter itself, the bombings in Sri Lanka. Some may feel these three events are unrelated. I beg to differ. They represent different aspects of the same instability we are all experiencing to some degree throughout our world.

Currently living temporarily in South Dakota, I had a quiet Sunday. A month ago, the area where I am staying experienced extensive flooding caused by intense rain following blizzard conditions. The melted snow had no where to go when the ground was already soaked with moisture and the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation was under water in some areas, while others were covered in mud.

Either way, residents were stuck in their homes without food, clean water and medical supplies. It was a disaster of the first magnitude, one where you would expect the Federal government to jump into action on behalf of the Lakota people. One would expect.

The average person on the Pine Ridge Reservation lives on \$3,500.00 a year. The poverty, as well as the beauty of the people and the land, is profound. After the flooding, I contacted friends and everyone I could think of who might be interested in helping out in whatever way they could. One friend contacted is a member of the Catholic clergy and has lived a life of exemplary service to those in need.

He told me he had been following the plight of the Lakota people in the aftermath of the flooding but that the mandate of his particular order was specific. He offered suggestions for me to follow-up on in my area. I did contact a convent here in South Dakota and was offered \$100 while the small Congregational church I am connected to in Vermont held three collections specifically for the flood victims on the reservation.

**My response to my friend who is a member of the Catholic clergy was that I believed that Pope Francis needed to wear the “shoes of the fisherman” as in the film, and be the pope who gives away the wealth of the Catholic Church to the poor. I did not get a response.**

On Sunday afternoon, I was fortunate to be able to catch Anthony Quinn playing the Russian pope who chose to respond appropriately to the poverty in the world by pledging the wealth of the Church to be given to those in need, while the Church itself would take a vow of poverty. I had not seen this film in many years and it moved me to tears.

You first see the Quinn character in Siberia where he has been imprisoned for the past twenty years because he would not renounce his faith. Fate stepped in—in the form of the Russian political leader who feared that he might need someone in the outside world who knew him well enough to be able to give a somewhat balanced representation of him and life in Russia and ensure that he was not seen as a monster. In other words, he was motivated by self-interest. Reconnecting to the world after 20 years would be a challenge for anyone. Yet it was the pain and suffering that the Quinn character experienced year after year that inspired one cardinal in particular to stand up and endorse him as pope, breaking with tradition and not choosing an Italian vicar of Christ.

The humility of the Quinn character inspired the conclave to join in their support and it appeared in the film that he was elected unanimously. The name of the Anthony Quinn character is Kiril Lakota and the film “The Shoes of the Fisherman” was released in 1968. 1968 was a year like this year in so many ways. Our country was at war in Vietnam. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April of that year. Bobby Kennedy’s death would follow in June. We are lacking individuals of their moral stature today, but the violence remains with new forms of technology for implementation. The military industrial complex continues to prevail and now, with the corporate takeover of our politics, we are on the verge of living in a global totalitarian state.

A film such as “The Shoes of the Fisherman” was able to be made in 1968 because the greater good of our society in 1968 understood that poverty must be erased in order to avoid war. We as a collective understood that connecting to



One of the great Anthony Quinn movies



The Shoes of the Fisherman, Anthony Quinn, 1968

our spiritual selves was available to us in ways that included equality and fairness for all. Today, dead bodies are simply seen as collateral damage.

In the film, the Russian political figure understood that if the people of China starved, there would be war with Russia. He used his relationship with the new pope to open a dialogue with the Chinese leader, who asked Kiril Lakota what it was that he was risking by saying he would help.

The Chinese leader said that if he went back to China empty-handed, he would be killed. The pope could simply go back to his life of luxury in the Vatican without consequence. The result of Pope Kiril’s soul searching was the gifting of the wealth of the Catholic Church to the world.

This imaginary pope donned the clothes of a lowly priest and wandered the streets of Rome to feel close to the people. Could that have happened without his spending all those years in Siberia? Probably not. Profound loss can be the path to profound understanding.

In 2019, we do not need figureheads who are living privileged lives to make decisions for the more than seven billion people on this planet. There is not a reason in the world why every person on earth does not have what they need to live a good life.

Food, shelter, medical care and the opportunity for an education should be available to each and every one of us. Clearly our leaders are making the wrong decisions and putting self-interest first.

**The groundswell of compassion and genuine love in the highest sense of the word should be fostered in our hearts as we recognize ourselves in each other. We are capable of true greatness. It is time for humanity to express that greatness in each and every one of us.**

Our power comes from telling the truth and caring about each other. Share what you have. It will come back to you in countless ways. And please, do not overlook the name of the pope in this story, Kiril Lakota. He chose to keep his given name as pope. He gave away everything that he had to give after intense isolation and suffering, just like the Lakota people.

The movie, “The Shoes of the Fisherman” is available to watch for free on YouTube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7Pa567w314>



# Martin Luther King, Jr.

## *Beyond Vietnam — A Time to Break Silence*

*Delivered 4 April 1967, Riverside Church, New York City*

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen:

I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here tonight, and how very delighted I am to see you expressing your concern about the issues that will be discussed tonight by turning out in such large numbers. I also want to say that I consider it a great honor to share this program with Dr. Bennett, Dr. Commager, and Rabbi Heschel, and some of the distinguished leaders and personalities of our nation. And of course it's always good to come back to Riverside church. Over the last eight years, I have had the privilege of preaching here almost every year in that period, and it is always a rich and rewarding experience to come to this great church and this great pulpit.

I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. I join you in this meeting because I'm in deepest agreement with the aims and work of the organization which has brought us together: Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. The recent statements of your executive committee are the sentiments of my own heart, and I found myself in full accord when I read its opening lines: "A time comes when silence is betrayal." And that time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

The truth of these words is beyond doubt, but the mission to which they call us is a most difficult one. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of this dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty; but we must move on.

And some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. And we must rejoice as well, for surely this is the first time in our nation's history that a significant number of its religious leaders have chosen to move beyond the prophesying of smooth patriotism to the high grounds of a firm dissent based upon the mandates of conscience and the reading of history. Perhaps a new spirit is rising among us. If it is, let us trace its movements and pray that our own inner being may be sensitive to its guidance, for we

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are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

Over the past two years, as I have moved to break the betrayal of my own silences and to speak from the burnings of my own heart, as I have called for radical departures from the destruction of Vietnam, many persons have questioned me about the wisdom of my path. At the heart of their concerns this query has often loomed large and loud: "Why are you speaking about the war, Dr. King?" "Why are you joining the voices of dissent?" "Peace and civil rights don't mix," they say. "Aren't you hurting the cause of your people," they ask? And when I hear them, though I often understand the source of their concern, I am nevertheless greatly saddened, for such questions mean that the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live.

In the light of such tragic misunderstanding, I deem it of signal importance to try to state clearly, and I trust concisely, why I believe that the path from Dexter Avenue Baptist Church — the church in Montgomery, Alabama, where I began my pastorate — leads clearly to this sanctuary tonight.

I come to this platform tonight to make a passionate plea to my beloved nation. This speech is not addressed to Hanoi or to the National Liberation Front. It is not addressed to China or to Russia. Nor is it an attempt to overlook the ambiguity of the total situation and the need for a collective solution to the tragedy of Vietnam. Neither is it an attempt to make North Vietnam or the National Liberation Front paragons of virtue, nor to overlook the role they must play in the successful resolution of the problem. While they both may have justifiable reasons to be suspicious of the good faith of the United States, life and history give eloquent testimony to the fact that conflicts are never resolved without trustful give and take on both sides.

Tonight, however, I wish not to speak with Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, but rather to my fellow Americans.

Since I am a preacher by calling, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor — both black and white — through the

poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam, and I watched this program broken and eviscerated, as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So, I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps a more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. And so we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. And so we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years — especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they ask — and rightly so — what about Vietnam? They ask if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent.

For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957 when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from

itself until the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. In a way we were agreeing with Langston Hughes, that black bard of Harlem, who had written earlier:

*O, yes,  
I say it plain,  
America never was America to me,  
And yet I swear this oath —  
America will be!*

Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read: Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that America will be — are — are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.

As if the weight of such a commitment to the life and health of America were not enough, another burden of responsibility was placed upon me in 1954;<sup>1</sup> and I cannot forget that the Nobel Peace Prize was also a commission, a commission to work harder than I had ever worked before for "the brotherhood of man." This is a calling that takes me beyond national allegiances, but even if it were not present I would yet have to live with the meaning of my commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ. To me the relationship of this ministry to the making of peace is so obvious that I sometimes marvel at those who ask me why I'm speaking against the war. Could it be that they do not know that the good news was meant for all men — for Communist and capitalist, for their children and ours, for black and for white, for revolutionary and conservative? Have they forgotten that my ministry is in obedience to the One who loved his enemies so fully that he died for them? What then can I say to the Vietcong or to Castro or to Mao as a faithful minister of this One? Can I threaten them with death or must I not share with them my life?

And finally, as I try to explain for you and for myself the road that leads from Montgomery to this place I would have offered all that was most valid if I simply said that I must be true to my conviction that I share with all men the calling to be a son of the living God. Beyond the calling of race or nation or creed is this vocation of sonship and brotherhood, and because I believe that the Father is deeply concerned especially for his suffering and helpless and outcast children, I come tonight to speak for them.

This I believe to be the privilege and the burden of all of us who deem ourselves bound by allegiances and loyalties

1. King stated "1954." That year was notable for the Civil Rights Movement in the USSC's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. However, given the statement's discursive thrust, King may have meant to say "1964" — the year he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Alternatively, as noted by Steve Goldberg, King may have identified 1954's "burden of responsibility" as the year he became a minister.

which are broader and deeper than nationalism and which go beyond our nation's self-defined goals and positions. We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation and for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers.

And as I ponder the madness of Vietnam and search within myself for ways to understand and respond in compassion, my mind goes constantly to the people of that peninsula. I speak now not of the soldiers of each side, not of the ideologies of the Liberation Front, not of the junta in Saigon, but simply of the people who have been living under the curse of war for almost three continuous decades now. I think of them, too, because it is clear to me that there will be no meaningful solution there until some attempt is made to know them and hear their broken cries.

They must see Americans as strange liberators. The Vietnamese people proclaimed their own independence in 1954 — in 1945 rather — after a combined French and Japanese occupation and before the communist revolution in China. They were led by Ho Chi Minh. Even though they quoted the American Declaration of Independence in their own document of freedom, we refused to recognize them. Instead, we decided to support France in its reconquest of her former colony. Our government felt then that the Vietnamese people were not ready for independence, and we again fell victim to the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long. With that tragic decision we rejected a revolutionary government seeking self-determination and a government that had been established not by China — for whom the Vietnamese have no great love — but by clearly indigenous forces that included some communists. For the peasants this new government meant real land reform, one of the most important needs in their lives.

For nine years following 1945 we denied the people of Vietnam the right of independence. For nine years we vigorously supported the French in their abortive effort to recolonize Vietnam. Before the end of the war we were meeting eighty percent of the French war costs. Even before the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, they began to despair of their reckless action, but we did not. We encouraged them with our huge financial and military supplies to continue the war even after they had lost the will. Soon we would be paying almost the full costs of this tragic attempt at recolonization.

After the French were defeated, it looked as if independence and land reform would come again through the Geneva Agreement. But instead there came the United States, determined that Ho should not unify the temporarily divided nation, and the peasants watched again as we supported one of the most vicious modern dictators, our chosen man, Premier Diem. The peasants watched and cringed as Diem ruthlessly rooted out all opposition, supported their extor-

tionist landlords, and refused even to discuss reunification with the North. The peasants watched as all this was presided over by United States' influence and then by increasing numbers of United States troops who came to help quell the insurgency that Diem's methods had aroused. When Diem was overthrown they may have been happy, but the long line of military dictators seemed to offer no real change, especially in terms of their need for land and peace.

The only change came from America, as we increased our troop commitments in support of governments which were singularly corrupt, inept, and without popular support. All the while the people read our leaflets and received the regular promises of peace and democracy and land reform. Now they languish under our bombs and consider us, not their fellow Vietnamese, the real enemy. They move sadly and apathetically as we herd them off the land of their fathers into concentration camps where minimal social needs are rarely met. They know they must move on or be destroyed by our bombs.

So they go, primarily women and children and the aged. They watch as we poison their water, as we kill a million acres of their crops. They must weep as the bulldozers roar through their areas preparing to destroy the precious trees. They wander into the hospitals with at least twenty casualties from American firepower for one Vietcong-inflicted injury. So far we may have killed a million of them, mostly children. They wander into the towns and see thousands of the children, homeless, without clothes, running in packs on the streets like animals. They see the children degraded by our soldiers as they beg for food. They see the children selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.

What do the peasants think as we ally ourselves with the landlords and as we refuse to put any action into our many words concerning land reform? What do they think as we test out our latest weapons on them, just as the Germans tested out new medicine and new tortures in the concentration camps of Europe? Where are the roots of the independent Vietnam we claim to be building? Is it among these voiceless ones?

We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions: the family and the village. We have destroyed their land and their crops. We have cooperated in the crushing — in the crushing of the nation's only non-Communist revolutionary political force, the unified Buddhist Church. We have supported the enemies of the peasants of Saigon. We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.

Now there is little left to build on, save bitterness. Soon, the only solid — solid physical foundations remaining will be found at our military bases and in the concrete of the concentration camps we call "fortified hamlets." The peasants may well wonder if we plan to build our new Vietnam on such grounds as these. Could we blame them for such thoughts? We must speak for them and raise the questions

they cannot raise. These, too, are our brothers.

Perhaps a more difficult but no less necessary task is to speak for those who have been designated as our enemies. What of the National Liberation Front, that strangely anonymous group we call "VC" or "communists"? What must they think of the United States of America when they realize that we permitted the repression and cruelty of Diem, which helped to bring them into being as a resistance group in the South? What do they think of our condoning the violence which led to their own taking up of arms? How can they believe in our integrity when now we speak of "aggression from the North" as if there were nothing more essential to the war? How can they trust us when now we charge them with violence after the murderous reign of Diem and charge them with violence while we pour every new weapon of death into their land? Surely we must understand their feelings, even if we do not condone their actions. Surely we must see that the men we supported pressed them to their violence. Surely we must see that our own computerized plans of destruction simply dwarf their greatest acts.

How do they judge us when our officials know that their membership is less than twenty-five percent communist, and yet insist on giving them the blanket name? What must they be thinking when they know that we are aware of their control of major sections of Vietnam, and yet we appear ready to allow national elections in which this highly organized political parallel government will not have a part? They ask how we can speak of free elections when the Saigon press is censored and controlled by the military junta. And they are surely right to wonder what kind of new government we plan to help form without them, the only party in real touch with the peasants. They question our political goals and they deny the reality of a peace settlement from which they will be excluded. Their questions are frighteningly relevant. Is our nation planning to build on political myth again, and then shore it up upon the power of new violence?

Here is the true meaning and value of compassion and nonviolence, when it helps us to see the enemy's point of view, to hear his questions, to know his assessment of ourselves. For from his view we may indeed see the basic weaknesses of our own condition, and if we are mature, we may learn and grow and profit from the wisdom of the brothers who are called the opposition.

So, too, with Hanoi. In the North, where our bombs now pummel the land, and our mines endanger the waterways, we are met by a deep but understandable mistrust. To speak for them is to explain this lack of confidence in Western words, and especially their distrust of American intentions now. In Hanoi are the men who led the nation to independence against the Japanese and the French, the men who sought membership in the French Commonwealth and were betrayed by the weakness of Paris and the willfulness of the colonial armies. It was they who led a second strug-

gle against French domination at tremendous costs, and then were persuaded to give up the land they controlled between the thirteenth and seventeenth parallel as a temporary measure at Geneva. After 1954 they watched us conspire with Diem to prevent elections which could have surely brought Ho Chi Minh to power over a united Vietnam, and they realized they had been betrayed again. When we ask why they do not leap to negotiate, these things must be remembered.

Also, it must be clear that the leaders of Hanoi considered the presence of American troops in support of the Diem regime to have been the initial military breach of the Geneva Agreement concerning foreign troops. They remind us that they did not begin to send troops in large numbers and even supplies into the South until American forces had moved into the tens of thousands.

Hanoi remembers how our leaders refused to tell us the truth about the earlier North Vietnamese overtures for peace, how the president claimed that none existed when they had clearly been made. Ho Chi Minh has watched as America has spoken of peace and built up its forces, and now he has surely heard the increasing international rumors of American plans for an invasion of the North. He knows the bombing and shelling and mining we are doing are part of traditional pre-invasion strategy. Perhaps only his sense of humor and of irony can save him when he hears the most powerful nation of the world speaking of aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than eight hundred — rather, eight thousand miles away from its shores.

At this point I should make it clear that while I have tried in these last few minutes to give a voice to the voiceless in Vietnam and to understand the arguments of those who are called "enemy," I am as deeply concerned about our own troops there as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy, and the secure, while we create a hell for the poor.

Somehow this madness must cease. We must stop now. I speak as a child of God and brother to the suffering poor of Vietnam. I speak for those whose land is being laid waste, whose homes are being destroyed, whose culture is being subverted. I speak of the — for the poor of America who are paying the double price of smashed hopes at home, and death and corruption in Vietnam. I speak as a citizen of the world, for the world as it stands aghast at the path we have taken. I speak as one who loves America, to the leaders of



our own nation: The great initiative in this war is ours; the initiative to stop it must be ours.

This is the message of the great Buddhist leaders of Vietnam. Recently one of them wrote these words, and I quote:

*Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the heart of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat. The image of America will never again be the image of revolution, freedom, and democracy, but the image of violence and militarism (unquote).*

If we continue, there will be no doubt in my mind and in the mind of the world that we have no honorable intentions in Vietnam. If we do not stop our war against the people of Vietnam immediately, the world will be left with no other alternative than to see this as some horrible, clumsy, and deadly game we have decided to play. The world now demands a maturity of America that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam, that we have been detrimental to the life of the Vietnamese people. The situation is one in which we must be ready to turn sharply from our present ways. In order to atone for our sins and errors in Vietnam, we should take the initiative in bringing a halt to this tragic war.

I would like to suggest five concrete things that our government should do [immediately] to begin the long and difficult process of extricating ourselves from this nightmarish conflict:

**Number one:** End all bombing in North and South Vietnam.

**Number two:** Declare a unilateral cease-fire in the hope that such action will create the atmosphere for negotiation.

**Three:** Take immediate steps to prevent other battlegrounds in Southeast Asia by curtailing our military buildup in Thailand and our interference in Laos.

**Four:** Realistically accept the fact that the National Liberation Front has substantial support in South Vietnam and must thereby play a role in any meaningful negotiations and any future Vietnam government.

**Five:** Set a date that we will remove all foreign troops from Vietnam in accordance with the 1954 Geneva Agreement.

Part of our ongoing — Part of our ongoing commitment might well express itself in an offer to grant asylum to any Vietnamese who fears for his life under a new regime which included the Liberation Front. Then we must make what

reparations we can for the damage we have done. We must provide the medical aid that is badly needed, making it available in this country, if necessary. Meanwhile — Meanwhile, we in the churches and synagogues have a continuing task while we urge our government to disengage itself from a disgraceful commitment. We must continue to raise our voices and our lives if our nation persists in its perverse ways in Vietnam. We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible.

As we counsel young men concerning military service, we must clarify for them our nation's role in Vietnam and challenge them with the alternative of conscientious objection. I am pleased to say that this is a path now chosen by more than seventy students at my own alma mater, Morehouse College, and I recommend it to all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one. Moreover, I would encourage all ministers of draft age to give up their ministerial exemptions and seek status as conscientious objectors. These are the times for real choices and not false ones. We are at the moment when our lives must be placed on the line if our nation is to survive its own folly. Every man of humane convictions must decide on the protest that best suits his convictions, but we must all protest.

Now there is something seductively tempting about stopping there and sending us all off on what in some circles has become a popular crusade against the war in Vietnam. I say we must enter that struggle, but I wish to go on now to say something even more disturbing.

The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality...and if we ignore this sobering reality, we will find ourselves organizing "clergy and laymen concerned" committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala — Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end, unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy.

And so, such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as sons of the living God.

In 1957, a sensitive American official overseas said that it seemed to him that our nation was on the wrong side of a world revolution. During the past ten years, we have seen emerge a pattern of suppression which has now justified the presence of U.S. military advisors in Venezuela. This need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces in Guatemala. It tells why American helicopters are being used against guerrillas in Cambodia and why American napalm and Green Beret forces have already been active against rebels in Peru.

It is with such activity in mind that the words of the late

John F. Kennedy come back to haunt us. Five years ago he said, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." Increasingly, by choice or by accident, this is the role our nation has taken, the role of those who make peaceful revolution impossible by refusing to give up the privileges and the pleasures that come from the immense profits of overseas investments. I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin...we must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say, "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of South America and say, "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just.

A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of peoples normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from molding a recalcitrant status quo with bruised hands until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

This kind of positive revolution of values is our best de-

fense against communism. War is not the answer. Communism will never be defeated by the use of atomic bombs or nuclear weapons. Let us not join those who shout war and, through their misguided passions, urge the United States to relinquish its participation in the United Nations. These are days which demand wise restraint and calm reasonableness. We must not engage in a negative anticommunism, but rather in a positive thrust for democracy, realizing that our greatest defense against communism is to take offensive action in behalf of justice. We must with positive action seek to remove those conditions of poverty, insecurity, and injustice, which are the fertile soil in which the seed of communism grows and develops.

These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wounds of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."<sup>2</sup> We in the West must support these revolutions.

It is a sad fact that because of comfort, complacency, a morbid fear of communism, and our proneness to adjust to injustice, the Western nations that initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit of the modern world have now become the arch antirevolutionaries. This has driven many to feel that only Marxism has a revolutionary spirit. Therefore, communism is a judgment against our failure to make democracy real and follow through on the revolutions that we initiated. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores, and thereby speed the day when "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."<sup>3</sup>

A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.

This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing — embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 9:2/Matthew 4:16

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 40:4

which leads to ultimate reality. This Hindu-Muslim-Christian-Jewish-Buddhist belief about ultimate — ultimate reality is beautifully summed up in the first epistle of Saint John: “Let us love one another, for love is God. And every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.”<sup>4</sup> “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us.”<sup>4</sup> Let us hope that this spirit will become the order of the day.

We can no longer afford to worship the god of hate or bow before the altar of retaliation. The oceans of history are made turbulent by the ever-rising tides of hate. And history is cluttered with the wreckage of nations and individuals that pursued this self-defeating path of hate. As Arnold Toynbee says:

*Love is the ultimate force that makes for the saving choice of life and good against the damning choice of death and evil. Therefore the first hope in our inventory must be the hope that love is going to have the last word (unquote).*

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The tide in the affairs of men does not remain at flood — it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residues of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words, “Too late.” There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. Omar Khayyam is right: “The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on.”

We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace in Vietnam and justice throughout the developing world, a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight.

Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter, but beautiful, struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the sons of God, and our brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Will our message be that the forces of American life militate against their arrival as full men, and we send our deepest regrets? Or will there be another message — of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:7-8, 12

As that noble bard of yesterday, James Russell Lowell, eloquently stated:

*Once to every man and nation  
comes a moment to decide,  
In the strife of truth and falsehood,  
for the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah offering  
each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt  
that darkness and that light.  
Though the cause of evil prosper,  
yet 'tis truth alone is strong  
Though her portions be the scaffold,  
and upon the throne be wrong  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
keeping watch above his own.*

And if we will only make the right choice, we will be able to transform this pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of peace. If we will make the right choice, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our world into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when “justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Amos 5:24

Transcript reprinted from [www.thekingcenter.org](http://www.thekingcenter.org)

# The “NoVote4Genocide” Campaign

By Jihad Abdulmumit

There is a direct relationship between the Genocide of the Palestinian People and the “Slow-Genocide” of Black, Brown, and Indigenous People in the United States.

On October 22-25, 2021, the Spirit of Mandela Coalition ([www.spiritofmandela.org](http://www.spiritofmandela.org)) organized and hosted an International Tribunal which charged the United States government, its states, and specific agencies with the genocide of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. This genocide began with the kidnapping and bringing of African slaves to the Americas, and in this case North America, and the slaughter and decimation of the Indigenous population.

An international panel of nine jurists found the United States guilty as charged on the following counts, all in direct violation of the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide:

- Racist police killings of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.
- Mass incarcerations of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.
- Political incarcerations of Civil Rights/National Liberation era revolutionaries and activists, as well as present day activists.
- Environmental racism and its impact on Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.
- Public Health racism and disparities and its impact on Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.

Fast forward—in the current situation, more and more Americans are seeing that the U.S. government, by its complicit, blatant and shameful support for the Zionist Israel apartheid state’s genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people of Gaza, has shown callous disregard for the sentiment and will of the American people calling for a “cease fire” (which is not a solution but gives immediate relief for the people of Gaza). The US government’s complicity with Israel is insidious. Years ago, Joe Biden as Senator stated very emphatically that if there were no Israel the United States would have to create one. And, recently, he declared that you don’t have to be a Jew to be a Zionist. “I am a Zionist!” These statements make perfectly clear the historical and present position of the United States government toward supporting the genocide against Palestinian people in Gaza. For years the United States has been sending billions of dollars and military support to Israel, and now it’s supporting Israel’s genocidal scorched earth policy against women, children and unarmed people.

It is clear that the same colonizer mindset and the same racist supremacist settler thinking that kidnapped Africans

from Africa and submitted them to the most inhumane treatment is the same as that committing the genocide of the Palestinian people. And when any periodic effort to fight back is made, the genocidal onslaught becomes more intense.

So when Nat Turner, Denmark Vessey, Gabriel Prosser, and many more fought back, the slave masters’ response was exponentially more vicious, callous, pervasive, and savage than the everyday miserable slave plantation life, destruction of families and culture, rape and violence beset upon all people of African descent. Thus, you have Israel’s response to Hamas’ October 7th response to the Palestinian people’s 70 years of oppression, usurpation of their land, and confinement in the world’s largest open air prison on the Gaza strip. In the United States, the slave revolts, street rebellions, Black liberation movement, and leftist responses to 400 years of ongoing oppression and genocide has seen the same reactions from their U.S. colonizers, i.e. government and the white settler population. Gaza is the world’s largest open-air prison. The United States has the world’s largest closed air prison population.

The “NoVote4Genocide” (#NoVote4Genocide) campaign joins with other similar campaigns to compel the United States government to honor the calls for a cease fire and stop supporting Israel’s genocide campaign. The NoVote4Genocide campaign mobilizes organized resistance and protests by the people against the government’s policies and practices of funding and supporting genocide by calling on the people to go vote! ...just don’t vote for any candidate who supports genocide and fails to call for a permanent ceasefire. It also leads to the opportunity to present progressive alternatives to governance and establishing authentic voice to articulate the needs and aspirations of the people.

The “Peoples’ Senate” initiative is that alternative. It is essential that when protest strategies are initiated (such as NoVote4Genocide or checking “No Preference” at the primaries, or demonstrations in the street, or boycotts of Israeli products) that attention and effort be given to seriously building infrastructure and mechanisms to unify the progressive voice of the people, share resources and vetted information, and develop alternative representation and governance right here in the United States.

Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!!!

Jihad Abdulmumit  
Spirit of Mandela Coordinating Committee Member

# **STRIKE**

## **FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS IN GAZA — THEY ARE YOUR RIGHTS TOO**

***“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”***

— Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham, Alabama jail, April 16, 1963.

By Mia Feroletto

Long before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 the world has watched genocide committed on the Palestinian people by the State of Israel accomplished with the financial support of America. Since that date, we have seen the death of 15,000 Palestinians, 8,000 of them who are children, and the total destruction and annihilation of their homes, hospitals and communities. We can no longer stand by and allow this to continue. The plight of the Palestinians is our shared plight and is happening all around the globe to a greater or lesser degree. We can no longer allow ourselves to be complicit in these atrocities for we already have blood on our hands for doing too little or nothing for far too long going back to the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 when the United States stole the land from Indigenous People and committed genocide in the process, just as Israel is doing today.

Americans are being called to take action using the leverage and tools we have at our disposal. It is the 99% who provide the fuel for the privileged 1%, and in the spirit of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the general strikes held in India during the time of British rule, it is time for Americans of all races, creeds, and colors to refuse to go to work or spend a single dollar for one day, one week, one month, one year if necessary. It is time for Americans to be willing to risk something. Lip service will not do. Worrying about voting for the lesser of two evils will not do. We must blow open the two party duopoly and invite a new group of candidates through the third party system to get involved in politics. Change cannot happen unless we force it forward. The path is there and we have been provided the inspiration needed by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hammer, and many, many others.

Justice and morality are universal. Supporting the military industrial complex instead of the needs of humanity will no longer be tolerated. In fact, as people, we want nothing to do with war and bloodshed. We want peace. We want a cease fire in Gaza and for the Palestinians to be given their own land, their communities rebuilt, clean water, nutritious

food, medical care, and all the support they need to recover from this brutality.

During the 1930s and 40s the population of India was 350 million people, the same as in America today. 100,000 British controlled the population, which is comparable to the combined total of political and corporate leaders in the United States. Without social media or the Internet,

***“A small group of determined and like-minded people can change the course of history.”***

—Mahatma Gandhi

the backs of the British were broken when Gandhi and his followers marched to the sea to make salt, which was illegal under British law. In 1950s Montgomery, Alabama, a young Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. using the teachings of Gandhi, organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott to demand the right for Blacks to sit at the front of the bus. After more than a year of boycotting city transportation and White businesses on Main Street, the buses in Montgomery were integrated. It is time for all of us to

galvanize our energy and make a stand and simply say with all of our hearts, “NO MORE WAR! NO MORE GENOCIDE! NO MORE POVERTY! NOW!!!”

This information is the beginning of informing the public of our plans and will be updated as plans develop. We have less than six weeks to organize a national strike to end the current genocide in Gaza. Third party and Independent presidential candidates Dr. Jill Stein, Dr. Cornel West, and Claudia de la Cruz have all been invited to participate in this strike. We are already mobilizing Pro-Palestinian groups around the country along with students, labor unions and everyday people like you and I.

Please keep in mind that this is my vision of what we can do to tell the United States government that we do not support how they are handling the genocide in Gaza. There are countless numbers of groups of activists and protesters active all around the country. If we can consolidate one group working together, we can accomplish many things in 2024. Or we can remain particles moving in space without the full creative force of our potential.

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, two days after the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King’s birth, we are calling on everyone

to stay home and not spend a single dollar on anything. Do not pay your bills. Be prepared. Have food in the house. Do not order a movie on Amazon. We will communicate our solidarity and will to protest through continual strikes and send our message loud and clear that we will no longer simply accept “business as usual.” We will begin 2024 empowered and ready. Let America rise up from the historic coat of quick sand that encases all of us as a direct result of the actions of our government. Let us become the authentic role model we claim to be. The war machine is a cancer on our

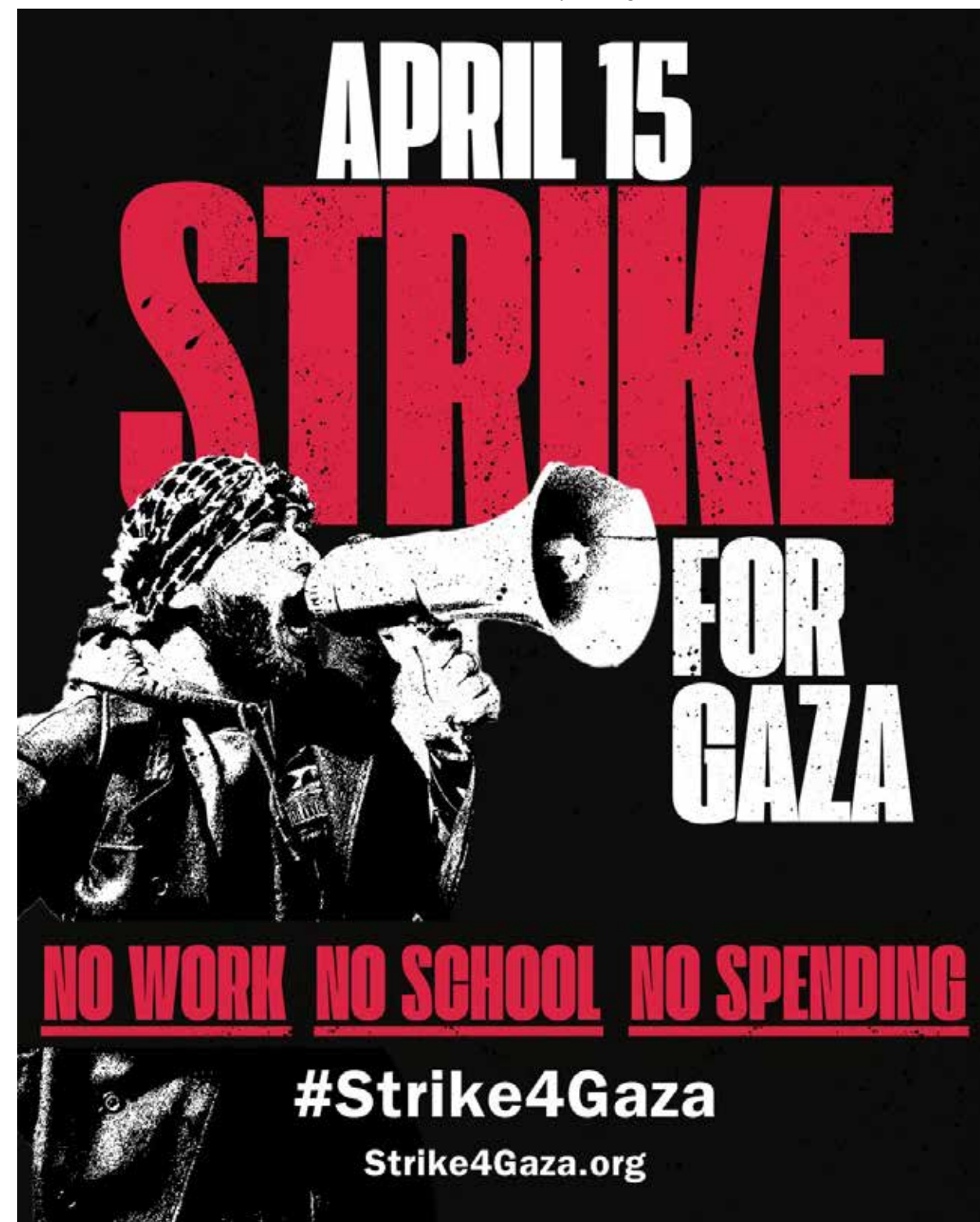
collective soul. It is time to remove it, once and for all.

For further information, please contact Mia Feroletto at [mia.feroletto@gmail.com](mailto:mia.feroletto@gmail.com) or call 802-952-6217.

And if you need an example of what the American government is supporting at this time, here is one: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/29/middleeast/gaza-truce-israel-grandfather-returns-home-intl-hnk/index.html>

**“By any means necessary.”** —Malcolm X

*This document was written on December 8, 2023 and circulated the following week.*







Art by James Tunney

## Eyeless in Gaza

By James Tunney

The term *Eyeless in Gaza* refers to an expression of Milton in a work in 1671 based on Samson in the Bible. Handel made an oratorio out of Milton's work. Aldous Huxley used it as the title for one of his novels. We should recall that the Eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean is an historic crossroads that brought conflict to civilization for thousands of years. Context cannot be comprehended in an amnesiac way.

But now with technology at our fingertips, the scale of destruction that can be wrought rapidly is unprecedented. The civilian inevitably suffers. They often suffer because of 'games' between international constellations of powers. One game involves the establishment of global governance by technology.

But even in brutal struggles we have sought to condition the conduct of armed conflict. From 697 in Ireland, for example, we have the *Lex Innocentium* calculated to protect non-combatants in time of war. Today there are present, binding international restrictions that render certain actions criminal and impose obligations on the international community and individual soldiers. Power often turns a blind eye when it suits those who exert it.

War makes us all blind and innocents even literally so. Justice has always sought to be blind in a calculated manner. We must be careful not to be selective about innocent victims whom we may like better than other innocent victims. There are innocent victims on both sides and they generally have no direct role in decision-making. The categorical imperative of Kant aims at a universal. Paradoxically we put humans into categories and may particularize innocence. We cannot divide the world in simple divisions that suit wider narratives or over-simplify complex contexts. We must strive for a genuine justice in law that allows enforceable rights to all.

That which is fought for by crimes, terrorism, and conflagration even in awfully tense confrontations seldom yields good fruit. Let us see, prevent, and punish obvious crimes and let us strive so justice can be seen to be done as well in a consistent way. Let us see innocent victims and not their labels. Let us see our common humanity, lest we become spiritually eyeless. Let our thoughts be with the innocent victims and by focusing on them begin the painful process of limiting volatility especially through geopolitical games.

I am struck how the images in art of the Madonna refer to a context of power games that persists for individual mothers today in the same part of the world.

# Somebody Blew Up America

By Amiri Baraka

Somebody Blew Up America

They say its some terrorist,  
some barbaric  
A Rab,  
in Afghanistan  
It wasn't our American terrorists  
It wasn't the Klan or the Skin heads  
Or the them that blows up nigger  
Churches, or reincarnates us on Death Row  
It wasn't Trent Lott  
Or David Duke or Giuliani  
Or Schundler, Helms retiring

It wasn't  
The gonorrhea in costume  
The white sheet diseases  
That have murdered black people  
Terrorized reason and sanity  
Most of humanity, as they pleases

They say (who say?)  
Who do the saying  
Who is them paying  
Who tell the lies  
Who in disguise  
Who had the slaves  
Who got the bux out the Bucks

Who got fat from plantations  
Who genocided Indians  
Tried to waste the Black nation

Who live on Wall Street  
The first plantation  
Who cut your nuts off  
Who rape your ma  
Who lynched your pa

Who got the tar, who got the feathers  
Who had the match, who set the fires  
Who killed and hired  
Who say they God & still be the Devil

Who the biggest only  
Who the most goodest  
Who do Jesus resemble

Who created everything  
Who the smartest

24

Who the greatest  
Who the richest  
Who say you ugly and they the goodlookingest

Who define art  
Who define science

Who made the bombs  
Who made the guns

Who bought the slaves, who sold them

Who called you them names  
Who say Dahmer wasn't insane

Who? Who? Who?

Who stole Puerto Rico  
Who stole the Indies, the Philipines, Manhattan  
Australia & The Hebrides  
Who forced opium on the Chinese

Who own them buildings  
Who got the money  
Who think you funny  
Who locked you up  
Who own the papers

Who owned the slave ship  
Who run the army

Who the fake president  
Who the ruler  
Who the banker

Who? Who? Who?

Who own the mine  
Who twist your mind  
Who got bread  
Who need peace  
Who you think need war

Who own the oil  
Who do no toil  
Who own the soil  
Who is not a nigger  
Who is so great ain't nobody bigger

Who own this city

Who own the air  
Who own the water

Who own your crib  
Who rob and steal and cheat and murder  
and make lies the truth  
Who call you uncouth

Who live in the biggest house  
Who do the biggest crime  
Who go on vacation anytime

Who killed the most niggers  
Who killed the most Jews  
Who killed the most Italians  
Who killed the most Irish  
Who killed the most Africans  
Who killed the most Japanese  
Who killed the most Latinos

Who? Who? Who?

Who own the ocean  
Who own the airplanes  
Who own the malls  
Who own television  
Who own radio

Who own what ain't even known to be owned  
Who own the owners that ain't the real owners

Who own the suburbs  
Who suck the cities  
Who make the laws

Who made Bush president  
Who believe the confederate flag need to be flying  
Who talk about democracy and be lying

Who the Beast in Revelations  
Who 666  
Who know who decide  
Jesus get crucified

Who the Devil on the real side  
Who got rich from Armenian genocide

Who the biggest terrorist  
Who change the bible  
Who killed the most people  
Who do the most evil  
Who don't worry about survival

Who have the colonies  
Who stole the most land  
Who rule the world  
Who say they good but only do evil  
Who the biggest executioner

Who? Who? Who?

Who own the oil  
Who want more oil  
Who told you what you think that later you find out a lie

Who? Who? Who?

Who found Bin Laden, maybe they Satan  
Who pay the CIA,  
Who knew the bomb was gonna blow  
Who know why the terrorists  
Learned to fly in Florida, San Diego

Who know why Five Israelis was filming the explosion  
And cracking they sides at the notion

Who need fossil fuel when the sun ain't goin' nowhere

Who make the credit cards  
Who get the biggest tax cut  
Who walked out of the Conference  
Against Racism  
Who killed Malcolm, Kennedy & his Brother  
Who killed Dr King, Who would want such a thing?  
Are they linked to the murder of Lincoln?

Who invaded Grenada  
Who made money from apartheid  
Who keep the Irish a colony  
Who overthrow Chile and Nicaragua later

Who killed David Sibeko, Chris Hani,  
the same ones who killed Biko, Cabral,  
Neruda, Allende, Che Guevara, Sandino,

Who killed Kabila, the ones who wasted Lumumba, Mondlane,  
Betty Shabazz, Die, Princess Di, Ralph Featherstone,  
Little Bobby

Who locked up Mandela, Dhoruba, Geronimo,  
Assata, Mumia, Garvey, Dashiell Hammett, Alphaeus Hutton

Who killed Huey Newton, Fred Hampton,  
Medgar Evers, Mikey Smith, Walter Rodney,  
Was it the ones who tried to poison Fidel  
Who tried to keep the Vietnamese Oppressed



Who put a price on Lenin's head

Who put the Jews in ovens,  
and who helped them do it  
Who said "America First"  
and ok'd the yellow stars

Who killed Rosa Luxembourg, Liebnick  
Who murdered the Rosenbergs  
And all the good people iced,  
tortured, assassinated, vanished

Who got rich from Algeria, Libya, Haiti,  
Iran, Iraq, Saudi, Kuwait, Lebanon,  
Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine,

Who cut off peoples hands in the Congo  
Who invented Aids  
Who put the germs  
In the Indians' blankets  
Who thought up "The Trail of Tears"

Who blew up the Maine  
& started the Spanish American War

Who got Sharon back in Power  
Who backed Batista, Hitler, Bilbo,  
Chiang kai Chek

Who decided Affirmative Action had to go  
Reconstruction, The New Deal,  
The New Frontier, The Great Society,

Who do Tom Ass Clarence Work for  
Who doo doo come out the Colon's mouth  
Who know what kind of Skeeza is a Condoleeza  
Who pay Connelly to be a wooden negro  
Who give Genius Awards to Homo Locus  
Subsidere

Who overthrew Nkrumah, Bishop,  
Who poison Robeson,  
who try to put DuBois in Jail  
Who frame Rap Jamil al Amin, Who  
frame the Rosenbergs, Garvey,  
The Scottsboro Boys,  
The Hollywood Ten

Who set the Reichstag Fire

Who knew the World Trade Center was gonna get bombed  
Who told 4000 Israeli workers at the Twin Towers  
To stay home that day  
Why did Sharon stay away?

Who? Who? Who?

Explosion of Owl the newspaper say  
The devil face cd be seen

Who make money from war  
Who make dough from fear and lies  
Who want the world like it is  
Who want the world to be ruled by imperialism and national  
oppression and terror violence, and hunger and poverty.

Who is the ruler of Hell?  
Who is the most powerful

Who you know ever  
Seen God?

But everybody seen  
The Devil

Like an Owl exploding  
In your life in your brain in your self  
Like an Owl who know the devil  
All night, all day if you listen, Like an Owl  
Exploding in fire. We hear the questions rise  
In terrible flame like the whistle of a crazy dog

Like the acid vomit of the fire of Hell  
Who and Who and WHO who who  
Whoooo and Whoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

# Gaza: An Inquest into its Martyrdom

Reviewed by Annie Wenger-Nabigon, Ph.D.

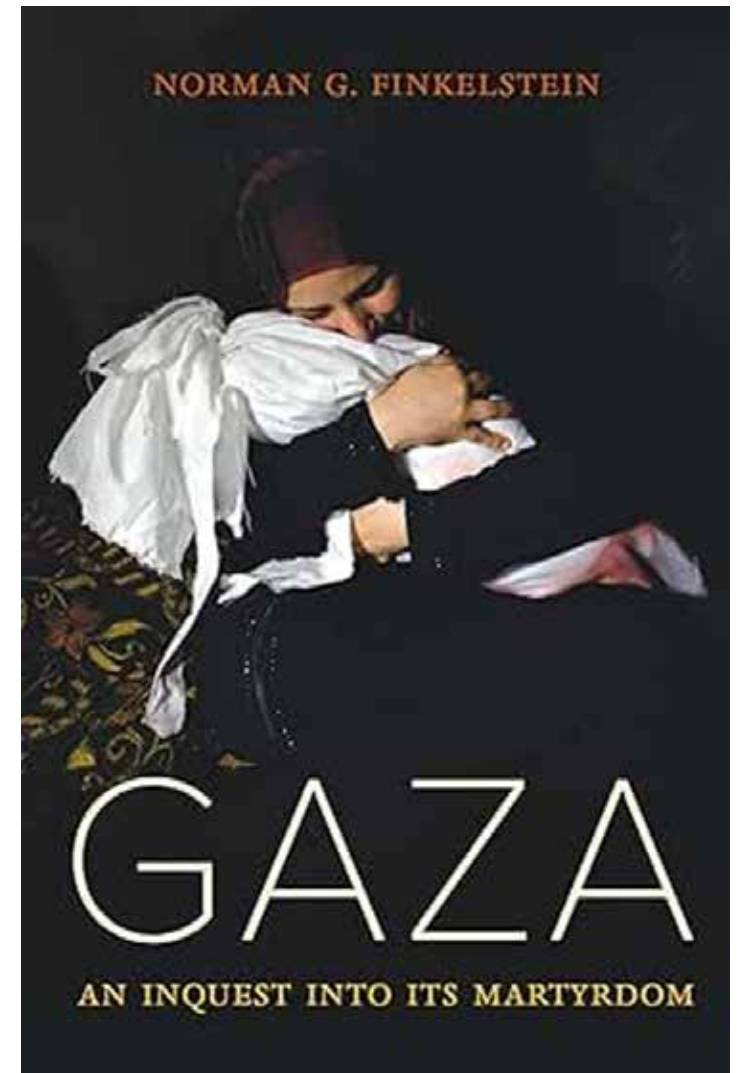
*Gaza: An Inquest into its Martyrdom* (Norman G. Finkelstein, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018) offers a vital perspective into current events in that war-torn place on this needful planet. Gaza scalds our souls, and its horrors emanate into our lives, consciously or not. We are compelled to respond.

Finkelstein presents a coroner's report which details the long ordeal of Palestinians following the 1947 UN resolution which partitioned Palestine into a location of homeland to Jewish peoples (56% of the territory). The subsequent war by which the State of Israel gained dominance of 80% of the Palestinian homeland (p.3) continues today. The current conflict is foreshadowed by events over the past seventy-six years with ever increasing cycles of violent response and counter-response escalating to unimaginable levels of human suffering. The world watches – and turns away.

This searing inquest does not shy away from careful, if passionate, detailing of events whose origin tales have roots in deep history, and in ancient, timeless conflicts over precious land, water, food, and resources. The average Palestinian family in Gaza today lives in conditions as dire and wretched as is humanly imaginable, yet the juggernaut of conflict rolls on with devastating damage to all peoples in the region. Finkelstein's critical analysis of this situation is searingly detailed in ways that challenge the reader to deeply consider the complicity of a world which turns a blind eye to genocidal forces, and the way the people of the world lend to the suffering of all who dwell in the region once known as "Palestine." He leaves no one off the hook.

There are real issues stretching beyond the theatre of violence and desperation in the Palestinian territory. Long before the State of Israel began its slow turn toward dominance as a conquering power, there were forces bearing down on the region, which was ripe for the "othering" of a neighbor, the yet unknown friend, that fed the depersonalization and racialization of contests over land and resources. The ever-present specter of antisemitism helped to fuel a rigid dualistic polarization that spiraled into a constriction, a dichotomy of the "good vs. bad, the right vs. wrong" appraisal of any and all interactions among many forces. Never again should the Jewish peoples of the world face the nihilistic genocidal forces that have scarred us all. AND never should genocide become something that the world turns a blind eye toward and pretends does not exist. It is not something to make light of.

Norman Finkelstein's book on events in Gaza, albeit almost half a dozen years past, turns a stark light on the realities in that theatre of violence which Gaza has become while the world snoozes, and the powerful moneyed nations support the death and destruction. War is never nec-



essary to solve a problem. It creates more problems, which must eventually be settled through painful and careful diplomatic effort to broker and settle a peaceful détente. The imperative is present, yet past efforts toward a true détente have time and time again been sabotaged by outside interests, internal power struggles, and unadulterated economic greed with no concern for those who suffer and die, whether they be Israeli or Palestinian.

Finkelstein's book focuses on the particulars of the State of Israel and the progressive escalation of violence. His inquest does not focus on the particulars of Gaza leadership with the same detail as that is not the focus of the book. His personal outrage is clear – Israel has betrayed its highest ideals in the demonization of a native peoples and their confinement into what has become a shooting gallery, eroding the spirits and identity of those who inflict the violence on all sides. The escalation of this ongoing conflict only intensifies the trauma, pain and narcissism, a closed loop of



injury and retaliation. The report, in four parts, focuses on detailing pivotal events, illustrating how each has fed the other, like yeast raising the loaf of bread, yet no one is nourished, all are deprived of basic human dignity.

*Part One* illustrates the fine points of self-defense, deterrence and how the State apparatus moved to dispossess Palestinians of their land, farms, homes, access to water and other necessities of life. As the report unfolds, a stark picture emerges through the documentation Finkelstein details as he tells the story of how opportunities for peaceful resolution deteriorate time and time again. His passion and anger are evident in the pointed questions he inserts into the narrative, and the reader is struck by his incisive, bitter confrontations, his pain and sense of betrayal as opportunities for peace are deterred, rather than conflict deferred.

*Part Two* of Finkelstein's inquest focuses on the Goldstone Report in two chapters: "A Zionist Bears Witness" (pp.87-116), and "The Star Witness Recants" (pp.117-132). In 2009 the UN Human Rights Council appointed Richard Goldstone, a staunch Zionist and experienced judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, to conduct a mandated inquiry into violations on both sides of the conflict (p.87). The Goldstone Report described the Israeli 'Cast Lead' offensive (2008-2009, 22 days of military assault on Gaza) as: "...a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever-increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability" (Goldstone Report, para.1893, as cited in Finkelstein, p.88).

Finkelstein details the specifics of the Goldstone Report, which shone a light on Israel's war crimes in 'Cast Lead' and firmly locates the responsibility for the "criminal offenses" in Israel's lap. Goldstone was excoriated and condemned by the world, labeled a sucker who produced a "half-baked" report (p.106), and eventually the UN also betrayed his truth-telling report.

Goldstone, at the time he issued his Report, could not turn away from his conclusion that the evidence he uncovered "...endured as a standing indictment of [Israel's] criminal behavior" (p.116). Yet he did, eventually, succumb to the pressure to "recant," under the force of a world-wide backlash against his original report. Finkelstein delineates the details of how this process rolled out as one after another, world leaders and organizations backpedaled any support for Goldstone's work, eventually leading to his public disownment of the report via an article in the *Washington Post*, April 1, 2011 (p.117). Finkelstein holds nothing back in his treatment of this bombshell. He accuses Goldstone of "...shameful double standards riddling his recantation"

(p.128). He goes on to make a devastating pronouncement: "The one lesson Israel truly learned from the Goldstone Report was that it was never too late to rupture the spine of human rights advocates and resume its killing spree. Indeed, the singular distinction of Goldstone's recantation was that it renewed Israel's license to kill" (p.129).

*Part Three* of the Finkelstein inquest does a deep dive into the events and issues surrounding the *Mavi Marmara*, a flotilla bringing essential humanitarian supplies to Gaza that was attacked by Israel in the middle of the night on May 31, 2010, with six civilians murdered. He states:

"If Israel sought to justify its attack on the *Mavi Marmara* on the grounds of self-defense, it came up against the tenet of law that no legal benefit or right could be derived from an illegal act...Israel couldn't claim a right of self-defense if its resort to violent force was triggered by its enforcement of the illegal blockade" (p.143).

Finkelstein goes on to excoriate the United States, the US Senate, and the United Nations for their complicity (p.147). It brings to mind the genocidal nature of the history of the US which from its inception condoned and conducted extermination campaigns against the indigenous populations of the continent, much as European nations had done around the world during centuries of colonial projects. Finkelstein names his chapters in this section as: *Murder on the High Seas* (pp.137-156), *Whitewash I: The Turkel Report* (pp.157-176), and, *Whitewash II: The UN Panel Report* (pp.177-197). He holds nothing back in the intensity of documenting and detailing his findings, and it is clear that he is not only deeply hurt by Israel's justification of illegalities, but he is passionately committed to the need for mutually assured peaceful resolution once and for all.

*Part Four* of the Finkelstein inquest report, titled "*Operation Protective Edge*," plays out a crescendo of betrayal trauma experienced by people who have believed in the dream of the land of Israel, a homeland for the Jewish people, where those whose allegiance to peaceful coexistence and cooperation have been betrayed by their leaders and the rest of the complicit world. Like Gabor Maté, MD, a leading trauma scholar and an early passionate Zionist who has lamented the knowledge that the dream of Zion was based on the nightmare of the Palestinians (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ph9XF39yjjU>), Finkelstein clearly grieves what might have been, what could be, and the pain of waning hope for either justice or peace. The chapters in *Part Four* indict a "Stalled Juggernaut," detail the betrayals of Amnesty International and the UN Human Rights Council, and lead to a searing and grief-stricken conclusion:

"But a state that every couple of years launches – with overwhelming popular support and without a hint

of remorse – yet another high-tech blitzkrieg against a defenseless, trapped civilian population is profoundly sick" (pp.355-356).

The *Conclusion* section of this inquest report is less than seven pages long, with a bleak prognosis. It does not delineate exacting and precise steps and recommendations to relevant organizations and governments. At the time of its publication the world had yet to see the recent apocalyptic inferno of Israel's response ("Operation Swords of Iron") to Hamas's terrorist attack on Oct. 7, 2023. The genocidal nightmare since imposed on Gaza belongs to the world. It is enacted by a polarity of whose "right to existence" must prevail. Atrocities be damned! The juggernaut of imposition of power and control evidently will dominate, yet Finkelstein still believed at the time of his writing, "Gaza has not yet crossed the threshold of no return. . . [A] strategy of mass nonviolent resistance, by contrast, might yet turn the tide" (p.363). Finkelstein goes on to state, "If this book rises to a crescendo of anger and indignation, it's because the endless lies about Gaza by those who know better cause one's innards to writhe" (p. 364).

Interestingly, Finkelstein wraps up his inquest report by referencing the "destruction of the Native American population by conscious, willful government policy" (p. 364). The parallel is not mistaken. It is part of a seemingly eternal human problem – the impulse to settle a conflict with violence and to misperceive the action of oppression as normal and justifiable. Finkelstein's last sentence of his inquest is this:

"...what was done to the Cherokee. Is it not certain that one day the black record of Gaza's martyrdom will in retrospect also seem well-nigh incredible?" (p.165).

An inquest is a unique report with legal ramifications. It has a straightforward mission: to describe the injury/disease of the victim(s) and the instrument(s) of the wounding, consider carefully all the possible causes of death, call to the inquest witnesses and reports to document the findings, and then distribute to all interested parties the answers of the findings. A report of an inquest is laid out much like any other legal document, painstakingly detailed with all possibilities covered, and it elucidates the findings with recommendations for all relevant agencies, organizations and people. Finkelstein's inquest report is in narrative format, acknowledging areas of insufficient evidence. His searing confrontation unreservedly challenges the world to look, and look again and again, at the truth about Gaza. He deserves all our deepest gratitude for sharing his unflinching witness.



# A Letter to the Children of Gaza

By Chris Hedges

Dear child. It is past midnight. I am flying at hundreds of miles an hour in the darkness, thousands of feet over the Atlantic Ocean. I am traveling to Egypt. I will go to the border of Gaza at Rafah. I go because of you.

You have never been in a plane. You have never left Gaza. You know only the densely packed streets and alleys. The concrete hovels. You know only the security barriers and fences patrolled by soldiers that surround Gaza. Planes, for you, are terrifying. Fighter jets. Attack helicopters. Drones. They circle above you. They drop missiles and bombs. Deafening explosions. The ground shakes. Buildings fall. The dead. The screams. The muffled calls for help from beneath the rubble. It does not stop. Night and day. Trapped under the piles of smashed concrete. Your playmates. Your schoolmates. Your neighbors. Gone in seconds. You see the chalky faces and limp bodies when they are dug out. I am a reporter. It is my job to see this. You are a child. You should never see this.

The stench of death. Rotting corpses under broken concrete. You hold your breath. You cover your mouth with cloth. You walk faster. Your neighborhood has become a graveyard. All that was familiar is gone. You stare in amazement. You wonder where you are.

You are afraid. Explosion after explosion. You cry. You cling to your mother or father. You cover your ears. You see the white light of the missile and wait for the blast. Why do they kill children? What did you do? Why can't anyone protect you? Will you be wounded? Will you lose a leg or an arm? Will you go blind or be in a wheelchair? Why were you born? Was it for something good? Or was it for this? Will you grow up? Will you be happy? What will it be like without your friends? Who will die next? Your mother? Your father? Your brothers and sisters? Someone you know will be injured. Soon. Someone you know will die. Soon.

At night you lie in the dark on the cold cement floor. The phones are cut. The Internet is off. You do not know what is happening. There are flashes of light. There are waves of blast concussions. There are screams. It does not stop.

When your father or mother hunts for food or water you wait. That terrible feeling in your stomach. Will they come back? Will you see them again? Will your tiny home be next? Will the bombs find you? Are these your last moments on earth?

You drink salty, dirty water. It makes you very sick. Your stomach hurts. You are hungry. The bakeries are destroyed. There is no bread. You eat one meal a day. Pasta. A cucumber. Soon this will seem like a feast.

You do not play with your soccer ball made of rags. You do not fly your kite made from old newspapers.

You have seen foreign reporters. We wear flak jackets with the word PRESS written on it. We have helmets. We have cameras. We drive jeeps. We appear after a bombing or a shooting. We sit over coffee for a long time and talk to the adults. Then we disappear. We do not usually interview children. But

I have done interviews when groups of you crowded around us. Laughing. Pointing. Asking us to take your picture.

I have been bombed by jets in Gaza. I have been bombed in other wars, wars that happened before you were born. I too was very, very scared. I still have dreams about it. When I see the pictures of Gaza these wars return to me with the force of thunder and lightning. I think of you.

All of us who have been to war hate war most of all because of what it does to children.

I tried to tell your story. I tried to tell the world that when you are cruel to people, week after week, month after month, year after year, decade after decade, when you deny people freedom and dignity, when you humiliate and trap them in an open-air prison, when you kill them as if they were beasts, they become very angry. They do to others what was done to them. I told it over and over. I told it for seven years. Few listened. And now this.

There are very brave Palestinian journalists. Thirty-nine of them have been killed since this bombing began. They are heroes. So are the doctors and nurses in your hospitals. So are the U.N. workers. Eighty-nine of whom have died. So are the ambulance drivers and the medics. So are the rescue parties that lift up the slabs of concrete with their hands. So are the mothers and fathers who shield you from the bombs.

But we are not there. Not this time. We cannot get in. We are locked out.

Reporters from all over the world are going to the border crossing at Rafah. We are going because we cannot watch this slaughter and do nothing. We are going because hundreds of people are dying a day, including 160 children. We are going because this genocide must stop. We are going because we have children. Like you. Precious. Innocent. Loved. We are going because we want you to live.

I hope one day we will meet. You will be an adult. I will be an old man, although to you I am already very old. In my dream for you I will find you free and safe and happy. No one will be trying to kill you. You will fly in airplanes filled with people, not bombs. You will not be trapped in a concentration camp. You will see the world. You will grow up and have children. You will become old. You will remember this suffering, but you will know it means you must help others who suffer. This is my hope. My prayer.

We have failed you. This is the awful guilt we carry. We tried. But we did not try hard enough. We will go to Rafah. Many of us. Reporters. We will stand outside the border with Gaza in protest. We will write and film. This is what we do. It is not much. But it is something. We will tell your story again.

Maybe it will be enough to earn the right to ask for your forgiveness.



Children of Gaza by Mr. Fish

MR.F



# Let Them Eat Dirt

*The final stage of Israel's genocide in Gaza, an orchestrated mass starvation, has begun.  
The international community does not intend to stop it.*

By Chris Hedges

There was never any possibility that the Israeli government would agree to a pause in the fighting proposed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, much less a ceasefire. Israel is on the verge of delivering the coup de grâce in its war on Palestinians in Gaza – mass starvation. When Israeli leaders use the term “absolute victory,” they mean total decimation, total elimination. The Nazis in 1942 systematically starved the 500,000 men, women and children in the Warsaw Ghetto. This is a number Israel intends to exceed.

Israel, and its chief patron the United States, by attempting to shut down the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides food and aid to Gaza, is not only committing a war crime, but is in flagrant defiance of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court found the charges of genocide brought by South Africa, which included statements and facts gathered by UNRWA, plausible. It ordered Israel to abide by six provisional measures to prevent genocide and alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe. The fourth provisional measure calls on Israel to secure immediate and effective steps to provide humanitarian assistance and essential services in Gaza.

UNRWA's reports on conditions in Gaza, which I covered as a reporter for seven years, and its documentation of indiscriminate Israeli attacks illustrate that, as UNRWA said, “unilaterally declared ‘safe zones’ are not safe at all. Nowhere in Gaza is safe.”

UNRWA's role in documenting the genocide, as well as providing food and aid to the Palestinians, infuriates the Israeli government. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused UNRWA after the ruling of providing false information to the ICC. Israel decided that UNRWA, already an Israeli target for decades, which supports 5.9 million Palestinian refugees across the Middle East with clinics, schools and food, had to be eliminated. Israel's destruction of UNRWA serves a political as well as material objective.

The evidence-free Israeli accusations against UNRWA that a dozen of the 13,000 employees had links to those who carried out the attacks in Israel on October 7 did the trick. It saw 16 major donors, including the United States, the U.K., Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Estonia, and Japan, suspend financial support for the relief agency on which nearly every Palestinian in Gaza depends for food.

Israel has killed 152 UNRWA workers and damaged 147 UNRWA installations since the attacks inside Israel by Hamas and other resistance groups on Oct. 7 that killed some 1,200 Israelis. Israel has also bombed UNRWA relief trucks.

More than 27,708 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, some 67,000 have been wounded and at least 7,000 are missing, most likely dead and buried under the rubble.

More than half a million Palestinians – one in four – are starving in Gaza, according to the U.N. Starvation will soon be ubiquitous. Palestinians in Gaza, 1.7 million of whom have been internally displaced, lack not only sufficient food, but clean water, shelter, and medicine. There are few fruits or vegetables. There is little flour to make bread. Pasta, along with meat, cheese, and eggs, have disappeared. Black market prices for dry goods such as lentils and beans have increased 25 times from pre-war prices. A bag of flour on the black market has risen from \$8.00 to \$200. The healthcare system in Gaza, with only three of Gaza's 36 hospitals left partially functioning, has largely collapsed. Some 1.3 million displaced Palestinians live on the streets of the southern city of Rafah, which Israel designated a “safe zone,” but has begun to bomb. Families shiver in the winter rains under flimsy tarps amid pools of raw sewage. An estimated 90 percent of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes.

“There is no instance since the Second World War in which an entire population has been reduced to extreme hunger and destitution with such speed,” writes Alex de Waal, executive director of the World Peace Foundation at Tufts University and the author of “Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine,” in the Guardian. “And there's no case in which the international obligation to stop it has been so clear.”

The United States, formerly UNRWA's largest contributor, provided \$422 million to the agency in 2023. The severance of funds ensures that UNRWA food deliveries, already in very short supply because of blockages by Israel, will largely come to a halt by the end of February or the beginning of March.

Israel has given the Palestinians in Gaza two choices. Leave or die.

I covered the famine in Sudan in 1988 that took 250,000 lives. There are streaks in my lungs, scars from standing amid hundreds of Sudanese who were dying of tuberculosis.



*Let Them Eat Dirt* by Mr. Fish

I was strong and healthy and fought off the contagion. They were weak and emaciated and did not. The international community, as is in Gaza, did little to intervene.

The precursor to starvation, undernourishment, already affects most Palestinians in Gaza. Those who starve lack enough calories to sustain themselves. In desperation people begin to eat animal fodder, grass, leaves, insects, rodents, even dirt. They suffer from diarrhea and respiratory infections. They rip up tiny bits of food, often spoiled, and ration it.

Soon, lacking enough iron to produce hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to the body, and myoglobin, a protein that provides oxygen to muscles, coupled with a lack of vitamin B1, they become anemic. The body feeds on itself. Tissue and muscle waste away. It is impossible to regulate body temperature. Kidneys shut down. Immune systems crash. Vital organs – brain, heart, lungs, ovaries, and testes – atrophy. Blood circulation slows. The volume of blood decreases. Infectious diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis, and cholera become

epidemic, killing people by the thousands.

It is impossible to concentrate. Emaciated victims succumb to mental and emotional withdrawal and apathy. They do not want to be touched or moved. The heart muscle is weakened. Victims, even at rest, are in a state of virtual heart failure. Wounds do not heal. Vision is impaired with cataracts, even among the young. Finally, the body wracked by convulsions and hallucinations, the heart stops. This process can last up to 40 days for an adult. Children, the elderly, and the sick expire at faster rates.

I saw hundreds of skeletal figures, specters of human beings, moving forlornly at a glacial pace across the barren Sudanese landscape. Hyenas, accustomed to eating human flesh, routinely picked off small children. I stood over clusters of bleached human bones on the outskirts of villages where dozens of people, too weak to walk, had laid down in a group and never gotten up. Many were the remains of entire families.

In the abandoned town of Maya Abun, bats dangled from the rafters of the gutted Italian mission church. The streets



were overgrown with tussocks of grass. The dirt airstrip was flanked by hundreds of human bones, skulls and the remnants of iron bracelets, colored beads, baskets, and tattering strips of clothing. The palm trees had been cut in half. People had eaten the leaves and the pulp inside. There had been a rumor that food would be delivered by plane. People had walked for days to the airstrip. They waited and waited and waited. No plane arrived. No one buried the dead.

Now, from a distance, I watch this happen in another land in another time. I know the indifference that doomed the Sudanese, mostly Dinkas, and today dooms the Palestinians. The poor, especially when they are of color, do not count. They can be killed like flies. The starvation in Gaza is not a natural disaster. It is Israel's master plan.

There will be scholars and historians who will write of this genocide, falsely believing that we can learn from the past, that we are different, that history can prevent us from being, once again, barbarians. They will hold academic conferences. They will say "Never again!" They will praise themselves for being more humane and civilized. But when it comes time to speak out with each new genocide, fearful of losing their status or academic positions, they will scurry like rats into their holes. Human history is one long atrocity for the world's poor and vulnerable. Gaza is another chapter.

# Aaron Bushnell's Divine Violence

*Aaron Bushnell's self-immolation was ultimately a religious act, one that radically delineates good and evil and calls us to resist.*

By Chris Hedges

Aaron Bushnell, when he placed his cell phone on the ground to set up a livestream and lit himself on fire in front of the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., resulting in his death, pitted divine violence against radical evil. As an active duty member of the U.S. Air Force, he was part of the vast machinery that sustains the ongoing genocide in Gaza, no less morally culpable than the German soldiers, technocrats, engineers, scientists and bureaucrats who oiled the apparatus of the Nazi Holocaust. This was a role he could no longer accept. He died for our sins.

"I will no longer be complicit in genocide," he said calmly in his video as he walked to the gate of the embassy. "I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest. But compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonizers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

Young men and women sign up for the military for many reasons, but starving, bombing, and killing women and children is usually not amongst them. Shouldn't, in a just world, the U.S. fleet break the Israeli blockade of Gaza to provide food, shelter, and medicine? Shouldn't U.S. warplanes impose a no-fly zone over Gaza to halt the saturation bombing? Shouldn't Israel be issued an ultimatum to withdraw its forces from Gaza? Shouldn't the weapons shipments, billions in military aid and intelligence provided to Israel, be halted? Shouldn't those who commit genocide, as well as those who support genocide, be held accountable?

These simple questions are the ones Bushnell's death forces us to confront.

"Many of us like to ask ourselves," he posted shortly before his suicide, "What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

The coalition forces intervened in northern Iraq in 1991 to protect the Kurds following the first Gulf War. The suffering of the Kurds was extensive, but dwarfed by the genocide in Gaza. A no-fly zone for the Iraqi air force was imposed. The Iraqi military was pushed out of the northern Kurdish areas. Humanitarian aid saved Kurds from starvation, infectious diseases and death from exposure.

But that was another time, another war. Genocide is evil when it is carried out by our enemies. It is defended and sustained when carried out by our allies.

Walter Benjamin — whose friends Fritz Heinle and Rika Seligson committed suicide in 1914 to protest German mil-

itarism and the First World War — in his essay "Critique of Violence," examines acts of violence undertaken by individuals who confront radical evil. Any act that defies radical evil breaks the law in the name of justice. It affirms the sovereignty and dignity of the individual. It condemns the coercive violence of the state. It entails a willingness to die. Benjamin called these extreme acts of resistance "divine violence."

"Only for the sake of the hopeless ones have we been given hope," Benjamin writes.

Bushnell's self-immolation — one most social media posts and news organizations have heavily censored — is the point. It is meant to be seen. Bushnell extinguished his life in the same way thousands of Palestinians, including children, have been extinguished. We could watch him burn to death. This is what it looks like. This is what happens to Palestinians because of us.

The image of Bushnell's self-immolation, like that of the Buddhist monk Thích Quảng Đức in Vietnam in 1963 or Mohamed Bouazizi, a young fruit seller in Tunisia, in 2010, is a potent political message. It jolts the viewer out of somnolence. It forces the viewer to question assumptions. It begs the viewer to act. It is political theater, or perhaps religious ritual, in its most potent form. Buddhist monk, Thích Nhất Hạnh said of self-immolation: "To express will by burning oneself, therefore, is not to commit an act of destruction but to perform an act of construction, that is, to suffer and to die for the sake of one's people."

If Bushnell was willing to die, repeatedly shouting out "Free Palestine!" as he burned, then something must be terribly, terribly wrong.

These individual self-sacrifices often become rallying points for mass opposition. They can ignite, as they did in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria revolutionary upheavals. Bouazizi, who was incensed that local authorities had confiscated his scales and produce, did not intend to start a revolution. But the petty and humiliating injustices he endured under the corrupt Ben Ali regime resonated with an abused public. If he could die, they could take to the streets.

These acts are sacrificial births. They presage something new. They are the complete rejection, in its most dramatic form, of conventions and reigning systems of power. They are designed to be horrific. They are meant to shock. Burning to death is one of the most dreaded ways to die.

Self-immolation comes from the Latin stem *immolāre*, to



*Divine Violence* by Mr. Fish

sprinkle with salted flour when offering up a consecrated victim for sacrifice. Self-immolations, like Bushnell's, link the sacred and the profane through the medium of sacrificial death.

But to go to this extreme requires what the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr calls "a sublime madness in the soul." He notes that "nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and spiritual wickedness in high places." This madness is dangerous, but it is necessary when confronting radical evil because without it "truth is obscured." Liberalism, Niebuhr warns, "lacks the spirit of enthusiasm, not to say fanaticism, which is so necessary to move the world out of its beaten tracks. It is too intellectual and too little emotional to be an efficient force in history."

This extreme protest, this "sublime madness," has been a potent weapon in the hands of the oppressed throughout history.

The some 160 self-immolations in Tibet since 2009 to protest Chinese occupation are perceived as religious rites, acts that declare the independence of the victims from the

control of the state. Self-immolation calls us to a different way of being. These sacrificial victims become martyrs.

Communities of resistance, even if they are secular, are bound together by the sacrifices of martyrs. Only apostates betray their memory. The martyr, through his or her example of self-sacrifice, weakens and severs the bonds and the coercive power of the state. The martyr represents a total rejection of the status quo. This is why all states seek to discredit the martyr or turn the martyr into a nonperson. They know and fear the power of the martyr, even in death.

Daniel Ellsberg in 1965 witnessed a 22-year-old anti-war activist, Norman Morrison douse himself with kerosene and light himself on fire — the flames shot 10 feet into the air — outside the office of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara at The Pentagon, to protest the Vietnam War. Ellsberg cited the self-immolation, along with the nationwide anti-war protests, as one of the factors that led him to release the Pentagon Papers.

The radical Catholic priest, Daniel Berrigan, after traveling to North Vietnam with a peace delegation during the

war, visited the hospital room of Ronald Brazee. Brazee was a high school student who had drenched himself with kerosene and immolated himself outside the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Syracuse, New York to protest the war.

"He was still living a month later," Berrigan writes. "I was able to gain access to him. I smelled the odor of burning flesh and I understood anew what I had seen in North Vietnam. The boy was dying in torment, his body like a great piece of meat cast upon a grill. He died shortly thereafter. I felt that my senses had been invaded in a new way. I had understood the power of death in the modern world. I knew I must speak and act against death because this boy's death was being multiplied a thousandfold in the Land of Burning Children. So I went to Catonsville because I had gone to Hanoi."

In Catonsville, Maryland Berrigan and eight other activists, known as the Catonsville Nine, broke into a draft board on May 17, 1968. They took 378 draft files and burned them with homemade napalm in the parking lot. Berrigan was sentenced to three years in a federal prison.

I was in Prague in 1989 for the Velvet Revolution. I attended the commemoration of the self-immolation of a 20-year-old university student named Jan Palach. Palach had stood on the steps outside the National Theatre in Wenceslas Square in 1969, poured petrol over himself and lit himself on fire. He died of his wounds three days later. He left behind a note saying that this act was the only way left to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which had taken place five months earlier. His funeral procession was broken up by police. When frequent candlelit vigils were held at his grave at Olsany cemetery, the communist authorities, determined to stamp out his memory, disinterred his body, cremated it and handed the ashes to his mother.

During the winter of 1989, posters with Palach's face covered the walls of Prague. His death two decades earlier was lionized as the supreme act of resistance against the Soviets and pro-Soviet regime installed after the overthrow of Alexander Dubček. Thousands of people marched to the Square of Red Army Soldiers and renamed it Jan Palach Square. He won.

One day, if the corporate state and apartheid state of Israel are dismantled, the street where Bushnell lit himself on fire will bear his name. He will, like Palach, be honored for his moral courage. Palestinians, betrayed by most of the world, already look to him as a hero. Because of him, it will be impossible to demonize all of us.

Divine violence terrifies a corrupt and discredited ruling class. It exposes their depravity. It illustrates that not everyone is paralyzed by fear. It is a siren call to battle radical evil. That is what Bushnell intended. His sacrifice speaks to our better selves.

# The Gaza Strip lights the way globally as colonizer masks all fall

By Mazin Qumsiyeh

My ancestors are the indigenous people of the Land of Canaan, the area that human ancestors first settled in their migration out of Africa. Then they moved on to other parts of Asia and then other continents. Humans migrated as hunter-gatherers but first settled and domesticated plants and animals here in the Fertile Crescent some 12 millennia ago. Developing agriculture and domesticating animals gave our ancestors food security which allowed increase in number and first civilizations here in Western Asia. This also allowed development of law and language (first writing, alphabet, first music etc). We are proud of this heritage. For millennia, Palestine was multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and even multi-lingual society. People lived in relative harmony with the land. After all even the conquering Hebrews in their bible called Canaan “Land of Milk and Honey.” Conflict was rare compared to many other countries. For comparison, check how many wars any country in Europe had in the past 3-4,000 years. Further these conflicts in Canaan were mostly initiated by invasions from abroad (Roman Empire, Byzantium, Crusaders, Egyptian, Persian). Some of these conflicts were to expand an empire and gather resources. But in the past 2000 years, two conflicts were colonial in nature (to displace the local people and reshape a new country filled with settler colonialists). Those were the Crusaders and the Zionists. Israel’s expansionism, like the crusaders, was rooted in genocide and ethnic cleansing and is built on ideology of superiority and racism rooted in Messianic beliefs derived from a mythological past. What is this ideology (Zionism) and what is the future in light of what happened in the past 126 years since the first World Zionist Congress?

## A bit of history

Britain and France competed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to expand their empires into Western Asia, an area of crucial value as a link of Europe to Asia including overseeing trade routes and sea routes. The UK was especially intent in connecting seamlessly to the Jewel of the Crown of the empire: INDIA. They thus contracted Lt. Col. George Gawler to study the situation and the guy wrote a report issued 1845 titled “Tranquilization of Syria and the East: Observations and Practical Suggestions, in Furtherance of the Establishment of Jewish Colonies in Palestine, the Most Sober and Sensible Remedy for the Miseries of Asiatic Turkey”.<sup>1</sup> His contention was that you have to convince enough Christians and Jews to agree and this took awhile.

The first two colonies (not Jewish “settlements” since there were native Jews in Palestine) were established 1880 (Petah Tikva and Rishon L’Tzion). Hibat Zion (lovers of Zion) was formalized as a group in 1881 justified by the Russian pogroms. Nathan Birnbaum coined the term *Zionism* in 1891

<sup>1</sup> See Mohameden Ould-Mey, *The non-Jewish Origin of Zionism*, The Arab World Geographer, Vol. 5, pp. 34--52,( 2002)

and Theodore Hertzl took up the cause after his father by calling for a first “World Zionist Congress” in 1897. Because Palestine and all of Canaan was under Ottoman rule, Zionists pushed the Ottoman Empire to allow colonial settlements in Palestine. Since the Zionist movement had partial success, they moved their fourth congress to London in 1900 to effect policy of the British Empire. It took the opportunity of the Great War and the Zionist help to get the U.S. to enter the war on behalf of the allies in a quid-pro-quo to get the Balfour and Cambon declarations in 1917. To effect implementation, the British Empire ruled Palestine after the war by bringing in the first Zionist ruler Herbert Samuels, who instituted laws of segregation and colonial monopoly of many natural resources and other economic interests.

The state of Israel was created by overwhelming power of the Zionist terror militia, by massacres and by ethnic cleansing and with the collusion of the Western governments and the subservient Arab leaders in nearby countries. Palestinians were left on their own and most became refugees.<sup>2</sup> I remember my late mother telling us of the 33 massacres that happened during the *Nakba* of 1948 and the ethnic cleansing she witnessed at the tender age of 16 where 850,000 Palestinians were forcibly removed or escaped from the Zionist onslaught, intended to create a Jewish state where there was a pluralistic society in Palestine before. 530 villages and towns were ethnically cleansed. She remembered her friend and school mate Hayah Balbisi (a teacher murdered by the Zionists with her students in Deir Yassin 9 April 1948). She remembered the refugees who came to Bethlehem area (later set-up in three refugee camps). She remembered the American Friends Service Committee and then UNRWA who helped them. My mother died in April this year at almost 91. In a way, it is a blessing that she did not live to witness the carnage and genocide in Gaza. In number of people displaced and those killed a bigger *Nakba/Catastrophe* than the one she witnessed in 1948. Yet her life after 1948 was not the same as before 1948. Thus, at 16 she became a lifelong activist. She died having lived all her 91 years on earth with what they used to call in Northern Ireland “The troubles” and what we call in Palestine the ongoing *Nakba* (catastrophe). I myself witnessed conflict that killed many Palestinian civilians in 1967, 1970, 1973, 1979, 1982, 1987-91, 200-2005, 208-2009, 2014, 2019-2020, 2021, and most recently October 2023 to date. Few of those gave us some temporary hope of being the last conflict.

The surprise October 1973 war when Syria and Egypt tried to reclaim their land from Israel showed that Israel does not have an invincible army and that only the direct intervention of the U.S. (led by Zionist Secretary of State Henry

<sup>2</sup> Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oneworld Publications (2007); Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, Vintage Books, New York, 1979; Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab Israeli Conflict 1947-1951*, New York: I. B. Tauris, 1992

Kissinger) was able to save Israel. Fifty years later, there is a similar attempt to save Israel from facing the music and having to compromise following the surprise attack by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) but Zionist Secretary of State Anthony Blinken is playing with a different deck of cards. He will not succeed. The October 1973 war as we know now was a way to move diplomacy not to liberate the areas. It succeeded in that. As the Soviet Union was threatened and backed down due to direct intervention in the war that strengthened Israeli and US hegemony in our region.

The so-called Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty allowed Israel to neutralize the largest Arab country and keep its tentacles in the Sinai. Side ramification included strengthening the capitulation parts of the PLO that led to the 10-point program of 1974 which in turn led to the 1988 PLO acceptance of partition of Palestine declaring a fictional statehood and effectively ending the liberation phase especially in the so called Oslo Process.<sup>3</sup> This is what opened the space for new liberation resistance movements to emerge including the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad.

The PLO was decimated and replaced by the Palestinian Authority whose main tasks were reduced to 1) civil administration (healthcare, education, etc.), removing the burden on the occupation, and 2) suppressing all acts of resistance. From 1993 to 2023 settler population mushroomed, Palestinians were squeezed, and Israel normalized its relations with dozens of countries (including Arab countries). The Gaza strip was blockaded and impoverished much more than the West Bank since 2006, until there was a ghetto uprising in October 2023. Since then over 3.5% of the 2.3 million people in Gaza were killed or injured by the Israeli occupation authorities and a majority of all buildings in the strip were leveled by bombings. 65,000 tons of bombs — equivalent to two nuclear bombs — were dropped on an area of 360 square kilometers. This, combined with denying food, water, medicine, fuel, and electricity created a system of genocide. Israel also intensified its apartheid system with laws like the “nation-state” law which codifies racism against non-Jewish population (the indigenous people).<sup>4</sup>

South Africa petitioned the International Court of Justice (ICJ) charging Israel based on the International Convention on Genocide. On 26 January 2024 (after 112 days of carnage), the ICJ issued a decision /injunction. The interim decision had six provisional measures to attempt to stop the carnage.<sup>5</sup> The resolution opened with a summary of the conflict from 7 October and the contentions of South Africa and Israel about what transpired since. The most reputable court on earth has effectively ruled and with a huge majority that: 1) there is plausible evidence of genocidal acts re-

<sup>3</sup> Petter Bauk and Mohammed Omer (editors). *The Oslo Accords: A critical Assessment*, American University in Cairo Press 2013; Mandy Turner (editor), *From the River to the Sea: Palestine and Israel in the Shadow of “Peace”*. Lexington Books, Lanham, Maryland, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Jabareen, Yousef. “The nation-state Law and Jewish supremacy.” *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 23, no. 4 (2018): 16-22

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

quiring immediate intervention justifying taking the case, 2) that Palestinians are at grave risk of genocide (warranting six injunctions noted above). The decision constitutes an undermining of the persistent use of the Jewish holocaust to justify another holocaust and that Israel is above the law having proclaimed itself (falsely) as representing Jews. Yet, there is a growing rebellion especially among young Jews who oppose Zionism. *Jewish Voice for Peace* and *Not in My Name* groups are growing faster than the traditional Jewish organizations in the West.<sup>6</sup>

This must be built upon and strengthened in a global popular effort (growing global movement) not only to force compliance of ending the genocide per the ICJ’s order (pending final ruling which might take months). The resolution implicitly but not explicitly stipulates a ceasefire. But the decision orders refraining from killing Palestinian civilians and refraining from causing any physical or psychological harm under Article Two of the convention. The decision demands the immediate provision of basic services and humanitarian aid (food, water, medicine, fuel) denied by the Israeli army since 7 October 2023 and demands a report by the occupier regime within one month.

## Geopolitics

The horrors of WWII on all sides led to formation of a “United Nations” to replace the “League of Nations.” However, the UN suffered from the same weakness which is a dominance by the winners of the war and their insistence on dominance (e.g. veto power at the UN SC). Thus, the U.S., France, and Britain push for “partition” produced a weak UN General Assembly resolution 181 in favor a partition in 1947 (the first violation of the UN Charter which spoke of self-determination of indigenous people away from colonial dictates). While not implemented and not supported by the UN Security Council, the resolution was taken as an excuse to ethnically cleanse Palestine in a war started by the Zionist movement.<sup>7</sup> The refugee rights were recognized in UNGA 194 which was not implemented despite being feasible and possible and denied only on racist grounds.<sup>8</sup> The public relations campaign was that a Jewish state is needed as an affirmative action kind of recompense for the Jewish victims. The reality hidden was not only who will pay the price (Palestinian natives) but also about the collaboration of the Zionists with the Nazis.<sup>9</sup> That the Zionist project was only able to flourish with lies is now well established.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Jews led and were arrested in congress in Washington DC and blocking Grand Central station in New York <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/28/protesters-shut-new-yorks-grand-central-station-demanding-gaza-ceasefire> as they opposed the genocide

<sup>7</sup> Nur Masalha, “Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of ‘Transfer’; in *Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948*”, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992

<sup>8</sup> Salman Abu Sitta, “From Refugees to Citizens at Home”, *Palestine Land Society and the Palestinian Return Centre*, London, September 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement: The Dramatic Story of the Pact Between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine* (New York : Carroll & Graf, 2001); Marc H. Ellis, *Israel and Palestine: Out of the Ashes*, (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Naeim Giladi, *Ben Gurion’s Scandals* (Flushing: Gilit Pub. Co., 1995); Lenni Brenner, *The Iron Wall: Zionist Revisionism from Jabotinsky to Shamir* (London: Zed Books, 1984).

<sup>10</sup> Shlomo Sand., *The Invention of the Jewish People*, Verso, NY 2009; see also <https://>



Since it was founded with Western imperial support in 1948, these same countries continued to funnel what now amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars to keep the Zionist project going. For a very brief period, the Soviet Union stopped supporting Israel and challenged NATO/US structures in the Middle East (1950s to 1970s).

The US government is now leading in financing, arming, and protecting Israel's ethnic cleansing and genocide of the native Palestinians. This is not surprising considering the strength of the Zionist lobby<sup>11</sup> and also the history of the U.S. after having committed a number of genocides itself: native Americans, Blacks with slavery, Cambodia, Vietnam, Iraq, Yemen, and many other countries, and its leadership in spreading unfettered consumerism globally that destroyed our planet with climate change. These accumulated sins will not allow the state to remain a superpower and its might is declining. The U.S. is now reduced to being a hired gunman to defend the thug. Hence, it has Navy ships in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to attack any country that is trying to stop attempts to end the genocide and illegal blockade of Gaza.

This is not far-fetched. The war machine is only succeeding in killing civilians (nearly 30,000 so far including about 9000 children) and injuring some 55,000 civilians, which they bomb from the air. In the land battle against resistance forces, they are losing<sup>12</sup> or at best it is a stalemate since 7 October. The Israeli army is losing soldiers by the hundreds. Over 1100 military vehicles (tanks, APCs, bulldozers) have been damaged or destroyed. Their economy and social order cannot sustain the prolonged war that their government keeps talking about. The resistance now says they will not discuss prisoner swaps (139 Israelis vs 11,500 Palestinians) until a complete ceasefire. The Netanyahu regime is not willing to accept it, because that would mean he and his other corrupt lieutenants will end up in jail. More and more Jews around the world now openly oppose Zionism. Political Zionism is a racist movement that is intended to transform Palestine (multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multilingual) to a monolithic Jewish state.

While 94% of Israelis supported the killings in Gaza in a poll conducted in November, there is now growing disillusionment. Most Israelis no longer believe their government (military or political leadership). After all, they lied about what happened 7 October 2023 (including beheaded babies, rapes, etc. read [ongaza.org](http://ongaza.org)). The most remarkable transformation is that the truth is coming out about the history of Palestine, about the Nakba, about the genocide, about the statements of Israeli leaders, and about the impact on the globe of a massive fraud. This despite the hundreds of millions spent, and the hundreds of thousands of agents working for Israel in other countries. The truth spread through hundreds of billions of posts on social media (Facebook, X/

[popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/11/does-truth-matter.html](https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/11/does-truth-matter.html)

<sup>11</sup> <https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/11/israel-lobby-in-usa.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/dec/21/israel-losing-war-against-hamas-netanyahu-idf>

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Twitter, Telegram, Instagram etc.) cannot be silenced by the money being spent by the rich Zionist movement. We say in Arabic "*Ma Bitghati AlShams biGhorbal*" (you cannot cover the sun with a sieve).

### Concluding remarks

Palestinians have been victimized for the past 76 years, and now eight million are refugees/ displaced people, millions who remain in Palestine stored in ghettos/Bantustans/ concentration camps. Palestinians and their supporters asking for human rights are also dehumanized and defamed as hating Jews, etc. (ironic since thousands of Jews were willing to be arrested and even brutalized for their support of Palestinian rights). I

t is an existential struggle as you know: we either allow subjugation of people or we all achieve freedom and peace. As many of us predicted before, these pains are the birth pains of a new era. It always happens when empires collapse and new powers come to be. The U.S./Israeli Empire is waning. The Western Roman Empire declined in the 5th century AD. Every empire declines, and the U.S. decline is accelerating because both Democratic and Republican parties are under the thumb of the Zionist lobby that puts racism and greed first. Corruption is rampant at the highest levels (Netanyahu, Biden, Trump). Many are starting to realize that and to realize that the repercussions of this allowed genocide is not just local but regional and global. Israel/USA are destabilizing the whole world.

A new multi-polar world is emerging and cannot be stopped. Our task is to shape it so that it is more just. We the people of earth cannot continue to let the greedy 0.1% control our lives. Only love of all humanity and all nature that can work the miracles needed. So let us talk of that.

While our hearts go to all who lost loved ones we must thank the millions who did not remain silent. Those who fought against Nakba denial. Those who worked for human rights and justice. Those millions like Greta Thunberg who understand the connection between climate justice, environmental justice, and land justice. Thousands of organizations (*Jewish Voice for Peace, CodePink, etc.*) engaged in civil disobedience, in boycotts, divestments, and sanctions. People of all faiths and no religious faith mobilized and acted. We thank you all. You are the love that conquers the fear and gives us hope of a better humanity and a sustainable earth. Of course, it will not be easy and no worthy cause is easy.

We must muster all our resources, all our will, all our energy to stop this genocide, stop all wars, seriously tackle climate change, reshape the failing world order to not allow any future silence on genocide, and remove the rampant capitalist/consumerist system that exploits people. We must all stop being consumers of (mis)information and of products to become engaged, compassionate, caring people. This is not easy for any of us. After all, we are all fragile "human beings" and doubts and fears and the devil on one shoulder keep nagging at us. Let me to give you a small example from

myself. If they want to be saved, they should sit with the resistance forces (Hamas, Islamic Jihad etc), with Iran, Russia, Brazil, Venezuela, and China to implement return of Palestinian refugees per UNGA 194, democracy (right of self-determination), and end apartheid and militarism locally and globally. They must also address creating a truth and reconciliation committee and tribunals to address war crimes and crimes against humanity along the same trajectory that happened in South Africa.<sup>13</sup>

There are eight million Palestinian refugees or displaced Palestinians in the world. Their spirit of resilience seems stronger than ever (many led the millions who protested the war on Gaza). There are some two billion Muslims and even more Christians in the world. This Holy Land is holy to them as it is to Jews, Samaritans, and Bahai and others. Twenty years ago in my book *Sharing the Land of Canaan*, I documented the rational way to stop the onslaught on people and nature in historic Palestine (now under the boot of Israel), a solution supported by vast majority of Palestinians and some Israelis, a process of ending apartheid and decolonization (the same happened in South Africa).<sup>14</sup> And, despite the well documented carnage in the occupied Palestinian territories,<sup>15</sup> there are still 15 million dedicated Palestinians globally.

I wrote a message to the people of Gaza apologizing as a fellow Palestinian and fellow human being for failing them I stated, "We can't imagine the terror all 2.4 million of you face. I am not sure if some of you who still have Internet will see this and I am sure you definitely have more urgent things on your mind (like your children's starvation) than to read this note of contrition/ note of regret. We are all so ashamed and feel we let you down. .... The UN failed. WE ALL FAILED. We failed even after we saw five other wars waged on you, the people of Gaza each more horrific than those before. We failed as we saw your economy destroyed by 17 years of a cruel siege, which now evolved to blockade for thirst and starvation. We failed when we did not act against the fascist government of Israel strong enough at the time it was elected. The collusion of so many who shook hands and normalized your tormentors will haunt them forever. The Western governments who were complicit in killing you delegitimized themselves. They also drop the last remaining fig leaf of international law (now it is social Darwinism and might makes right that rules). Did they also kill the last vestige of humanity?... Yet, your heroism and dignity as you die in your hundreds every day and the living risk their lives and with their bare hands extract the dead and the living. I will never forget one medic's haunting prayer lullaby to a girl who lost her entire family. You teach us humanity which so many millions have forgotten. Please teach us the living dead more. I would gladly exchange what is left of my life to let one child in Gaza live a decent life. Please continue to teach us about

<sup>13</sup> Sonneborn, Liz. *The end of apartheid in South Africa*. Infobase Publishing, 2010

<sup>14</sup> Mazin Qumsiyeh, *Sharing the Land of Canaan*, London, Pluto Press, 2004

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org>

life and death. Will you teach us about the imminent death of 'international law,' death of decency in many, or death of humanity? But maybe you can also teach us about life, what we call *sumud*, how miraculously you always rise from the ashes, how you will transcend this horror. You and I are after all descendants of Canaanites who gave the world the alphabet and agriculture who fought and triumphed over many invaders (Persians, Crusaders etc.) and how you will triumph over these newest invaders."<sup>16</sup>

Our history is not only a prolonged history of oppression,<sup>17</sup> but a history of resistance, hope, and empowerment.<sup>18</sup> In this long history what we chose to emphasize determines our future. And our future is linked to the future not just of our small (but highly charged) corner of the world but of the whole global order. If the Western world governments persist in demolishing international law and human rights for the sake of a strong Zionist lobby,<sup>19</sup> that means they are jeopardizing the future for all of us. Here we recall Martin Luther King Jr, who stated that his government (the U.S.) is the biggest purveyor of violence in the world and that "we either live together as fellow human beings or die together as fools." And we must act on knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

### I end with a quote from Howard Zinn related to hope:

"There is a tendency to think that what we see in the present moment we will continue to see. We forget how often in this century we have been astonished by the sudden crumbling of institutions, by extraordinary changes in people's thoughts, by unexpected eruptions of rebellion against tyrannies, by the quick collapse of systems of power that seemed invincible. To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places — and there are so many — where people behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand Utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/10/letter-to-gaza.html>

<sup>17</sup> Massad, Joseph. "The persistence of the Palestinian Question." *Cultural Critique* 59 (2005): 1-23; Inbar, Efraim, and Eitan Shamir. "Mowing the Grass: Israel's Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 65-90

<sup>18</sup> Qumsiyeh, Mazin *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment*. Pluto Press (2012).

<sup>19</sup> <https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/11/israel-lobby-in-usa.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://popular-resistance.blogspot.com/2023/11/are-we-being-duped-to-focus-only-on.html>

<sup>21</sup> Howard Zinn, *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times*, Beacon Press, 2010

# The Palestinian Artists Consortium: Art as a Final Appeal in Mid of War

**“In the times of human rights dystopia, diplomatic endeavors failure, and political talks fall, the war on Gaza and the West Bank has proven art is the last refuge to tell the Palestinian story” — Ahmed Hmeedat, an artist and the founder of the Palestinian Artists’ Consortium.**

The Consortium is a group of Palestinian artists who seek to empower themselves by sharing their artwork in one virtual venue and to reach a wider community of Palestinian art lovers. It has artists from historical Palestine, the West Bank, and Gaza and also is looking to recruit other talented Palestinian artists who live in the diaspora.

After 15 years of daily encounters and experience with the arts in their different forms and genres, Ahmed Hmeedat, concluded that beauty is bigger than politics. Art should not be limited to only representing political positions, despite its importance in doing so, he argues that the arts should be left to react and evolve alone without interventions from the market or the political context. Markets, as part of the political process, tend to dictate to the artist what to create.

Ahmed states that this position does not deny the power of the political, but it steps back to make a balance between what artists feel and intend to create and what the market or the political atmosphere is demanding. In this political position, we are dissenting from the mainstream by encouraging Palestinian artists to create art that transcends the political and is not limited by it. The kind of art we seek to create is the kind that imagines the future and calls for actions, changes, and breakthroughs. The kind that prioritizes aesthetics and reveals new methods and techniques. It is not a call for forming disciplines, rather, it is about going beyond disciplines with novel innovations and ideas.

In its manifesto, the Consortium aims to bring all Palestinian artists who live in Palestine and the diaspora together on one virtual platform to share their work professionally with a wider community, a community that is interested in seeing and obtaining excellent original artwork from artists who believe that they belong to the consortium.

In this article, New Observation is the first magazine in the USA to highlight the emergence of this new Palestinian artists’ platform. Here, we share with the readers the artwork of seven Palestinian artists who joined in consortium to present Palestinian artwork.

Ahmed Hmeedat, an artist from Bethlehem and founder of the Consortium

Haya Kaabneh, an artist from Jericho

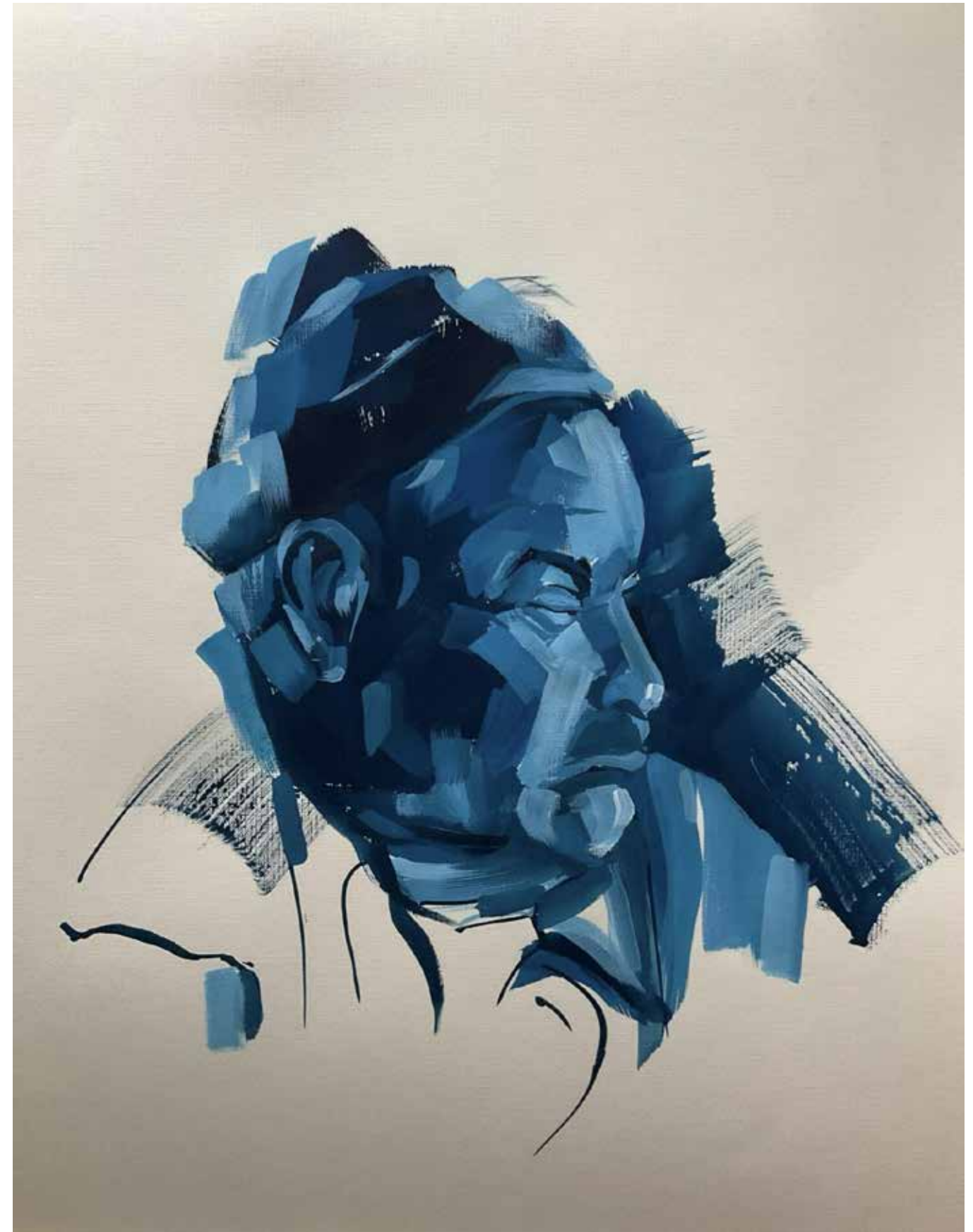
Ahmad Thaher, an artist from Ramallah

Samar Ghattas, an artist from Bethlehem

Alaa Albaba, an artist from Ramallah

Rehaf Al-Batniji: an artist from Gaza

Reem Alnatsheh: an artist from Hebron.



*A Palestinian Worker on this way to Jerusalem, by Ahmed Hmeedat*

A portrait caught by Ahmed’s camera and then transferred to the canvas using quick brush strokes soaked in Gouache paints. Dimensions: 16 X 20 inches – Medium: Acrylics





*Bethlehem Dove*, by Ahmed Hmeedat, 2023  
 39 X 35 inches – Medium: Acrylics  
 Exhibited at Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale, Virginia. (permanent collection. )



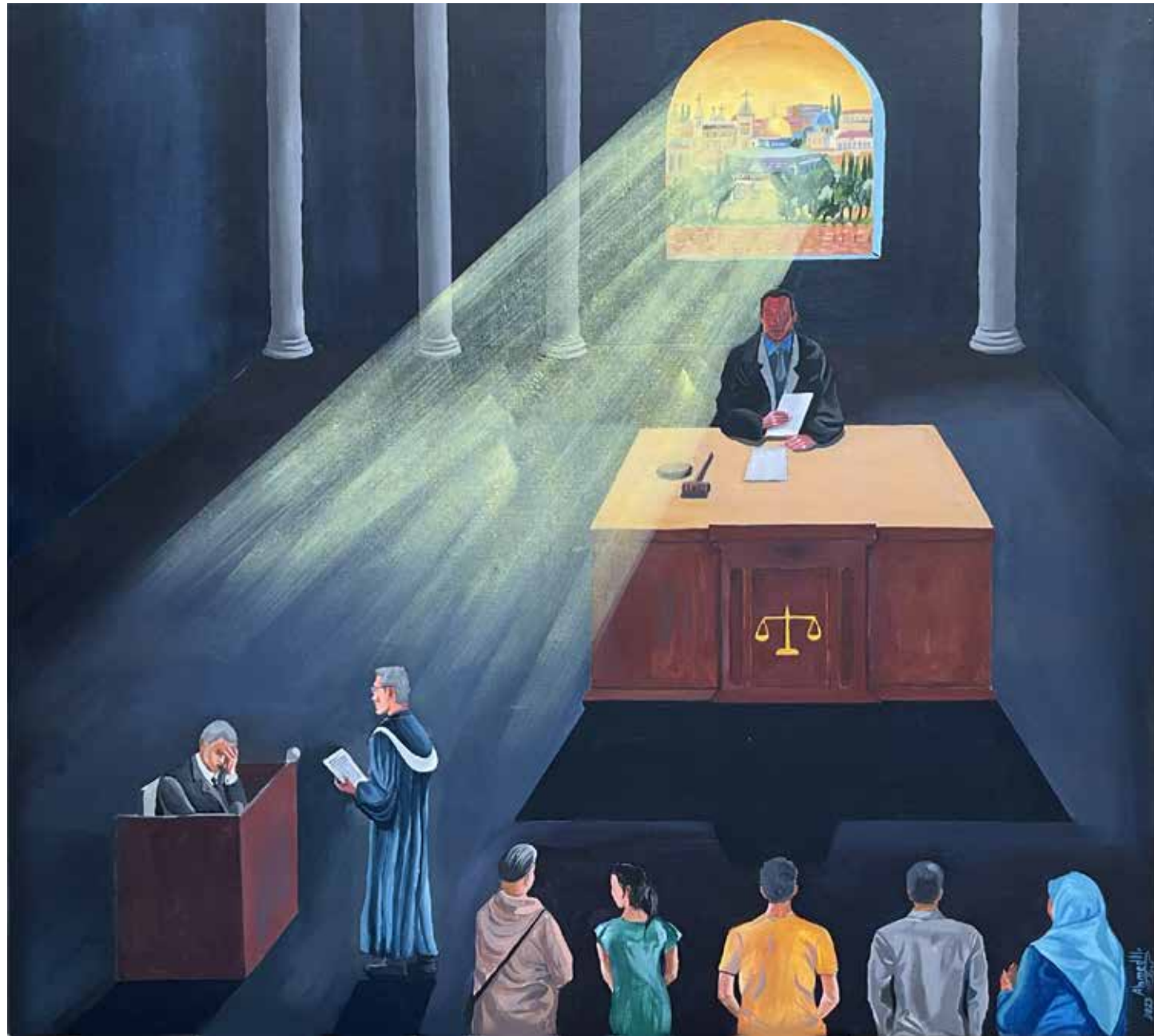
*Modern Nativity Scene*, by Ahmed Hmeedat 2024  
 39 X 35 inches – Medium, Acrylics  
 Exhibited at Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale, Virginia.(permanent collection. )

**Ahmed Hmeedat**

Ahmed Hmeedat is an artist who holds a BA degree in International Law from Al-Quds Bard College in East Jerusalem (the only liberal arts college in the Middle East), a Master of Law from Syracuse University College of Law in Upstate New York, as well as rich experience working in the immigration law field (business and humanitarian immigration) and non-profit organizations in the United States.

Ahmed took art courses at Al-Quds Bard College, and the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, VA. He is also an artist who contributed to establishing the first Palestinian museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of the Palestinian People, in 2019. The opening co-exhibit, "Re-imagining A Future in Palestine," featured some of Ahmed's artwork. Ahmed is a self-taught artist who experiments with a variety of media, including watercolors, acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, and digital. His recent work, *Searching for the Blue*, has been featured by Symposium Magazine in the United States.





*The Trial*, by Ahmed Hmeedat 2023  
 39 X 35 inches – Medium: Acrylics  
 Exhibited at Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale, Virginia. (permanent collection. )

### Haya Kaabneh

Haya Kaabneh is a Palestinian visual artist, born in 1991 in Jordan. She has participated in a number of exhibitions in Palestine and abroad, displaying works in Gallery One, the A.M. Qattan Foundation, and the Museum of the Palestinian People (USA), among others. In 2019, Haya launched her first solo exhibition in collaboration with The Walled Off Hotel, Bethlehem. Primarily using watercolor and acrylic, the artist has produced a large body of work focusing on the plight of Palestinian women as they struggle to change their status quo.

The words carry their own impact, conveying feelings of pain, joy, and sadness. However, in this situation, both letters and words have failed us. Meaning has vanished from the letters, and speech has lost its message. All meanings and words have fallen by the wayside in an attempt to stop a tragedy greater than all emotions and sorrows combined. They have all fallen to leave behind one word: "Gaza."

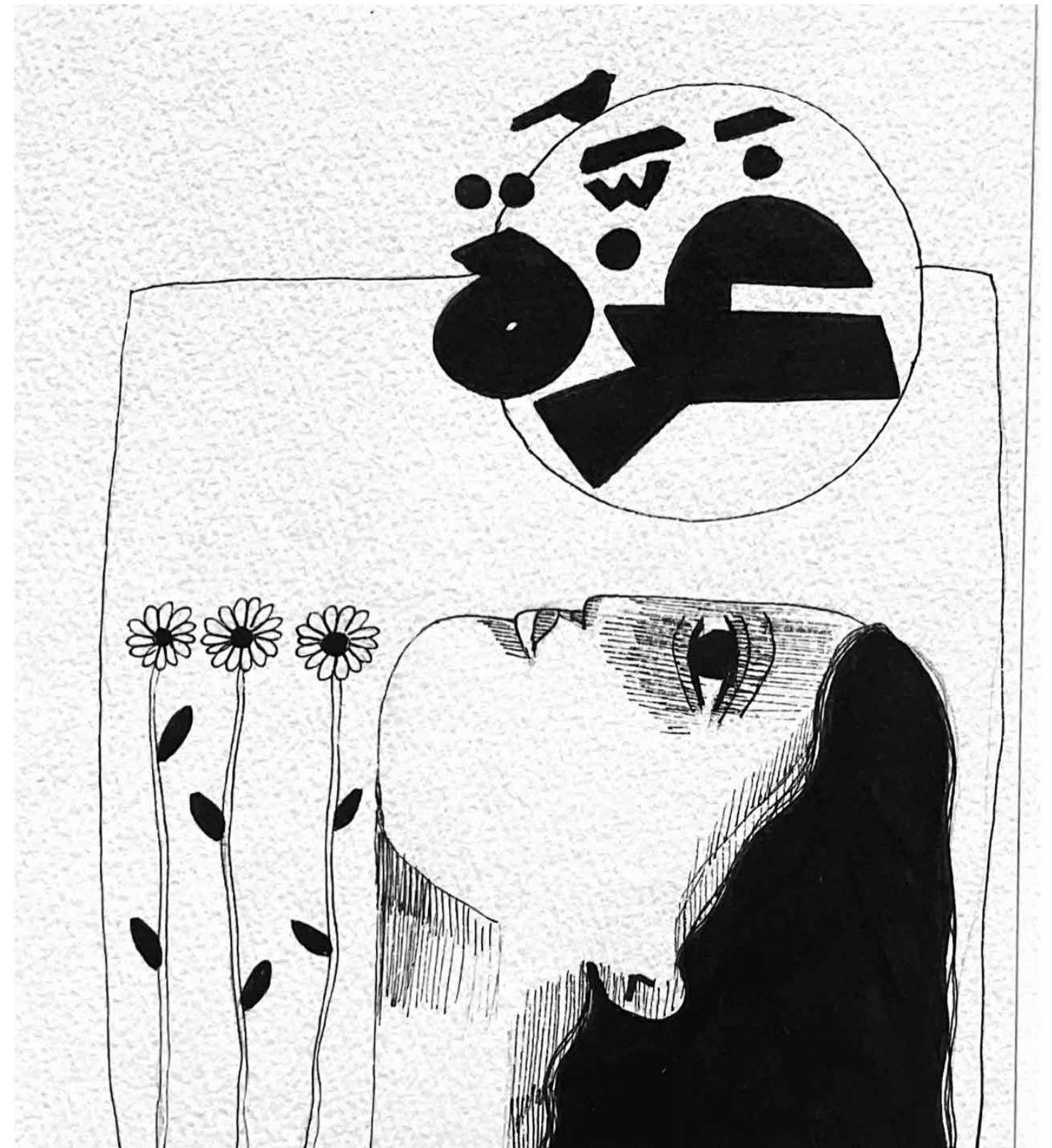
This single word encapsulates all feelings, all sorrow, and all pain. One word that nullifies all alphabets, letters, and meanings, standing alone to ask us whether there is any meaning to humanity in the face of what is happening before us.



*Gaza*, 2023 by Haya Kaabneh  
 15.5 X 15.5 inches, Medium: Ink on Paper.



*Gaza Wish*, 2023 by Haya Kaabneh  
8 X 5 inches  
Medium: Ink on Paper.



*Gaza*, 2023 by Haya Kaabneh  
8 X 5 inches, Medium: Ink on Paper.



## Samar Ghattas

Samar Ghattas is a modern Palestinian visual Artist. She received her Master's degree in fine arts and graphic design from the Academy of Fine Arts in Kiev, Ukraine. After that she returned to her homeland Bethlehem, Palestine, where she had different experiences in different fields of art. She then had been a lecturer in fine arts at the University of Bethlehem and other associations.

Her work includes watercolor paintings, mixed media, Ink, Iconography, Ceramic, and Photoshop Digital Media. Her artwork was displayed in various exhibitions through

Palestine, Europe, India, and the USA. Samar's Art is unique in many aspects. Being one of a few Palestinian woman artists, she is able to merge the Palestinian culture and its social issues through her personal experience and point of view. Samar currently lives and works in her homeland and conveys real life in Palestine. Her main goal is to reflect the Palestinian life and its various dimensions. Samar hopes to continue creating and exhibiting her work in different venues throughout the Palestinian areas and in the whole world.



*Gaza in the Present: Destroying Mishal Building*, by Samar Ghattas  
11.5 X 16.5 inches, Medium: Ink & Mixed Media on Paper

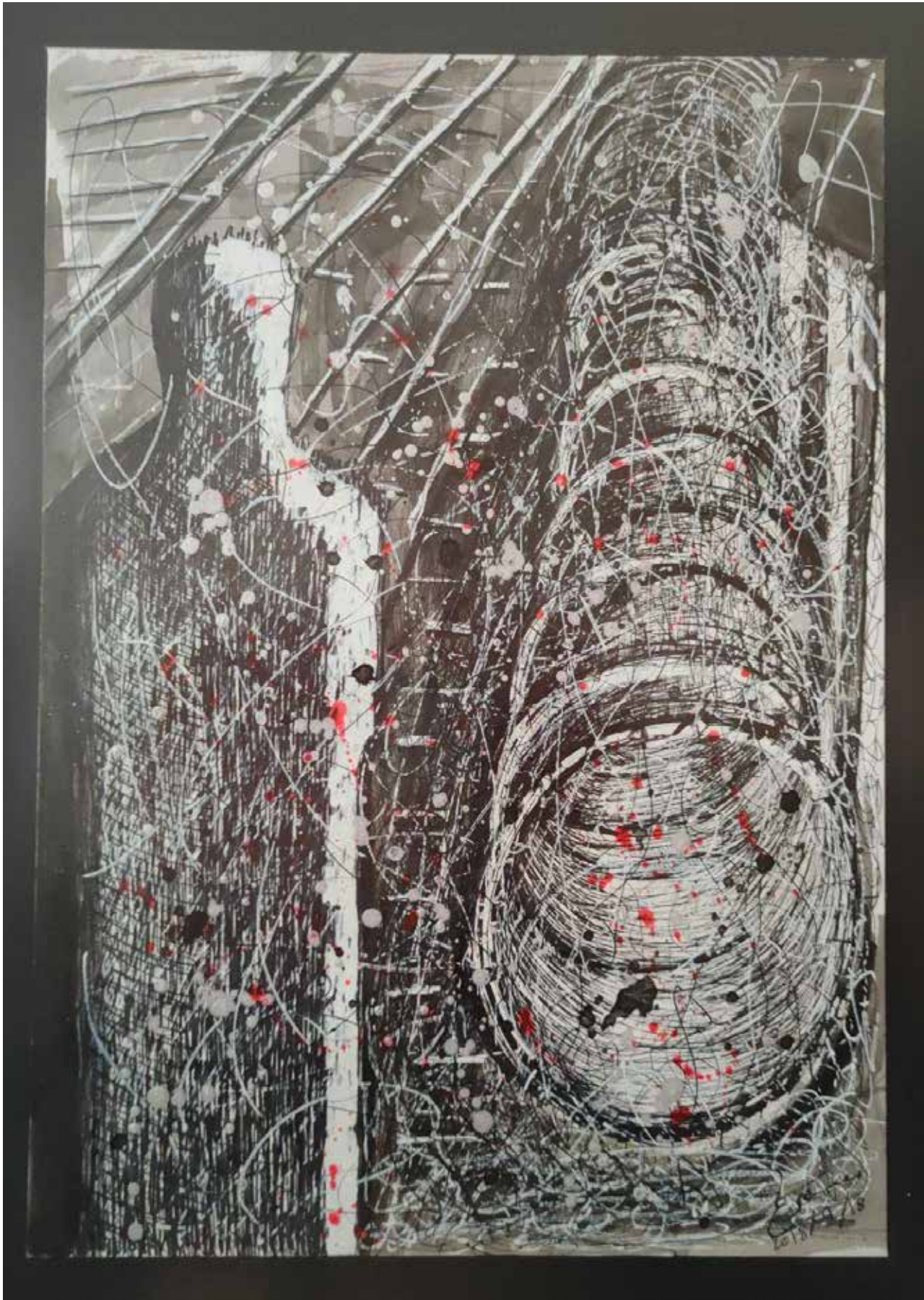
"Gaza in the Present" is a collection of paintings by the artist Samar. In May of 2018, the return marches began in the Palestinian city of Gaza near the separation fence, we all watched the marches on social media and TV screens. The irony is that the world at the present time is advancing and enacting many contemporary concepts about freedom,

human rights, women's rights ... and even animal rights, the environment, democracy, technology and its progress, scientific excellence and inventions, and the wheel of development, But Gaza is currently Under Siege. It is experiencing its worst situation since 2007



*Destroyed Hopes & Dreams*, 2018 by Samar Ghattas  
11.6 X 16.5 inches, Medium: Ink & Mixed Media on Paper





*Way to Egypt*, 2018 by Samar Ghattas  
11.6 X 16.5 inches, Medium: Ink & Mixed Media on Paper

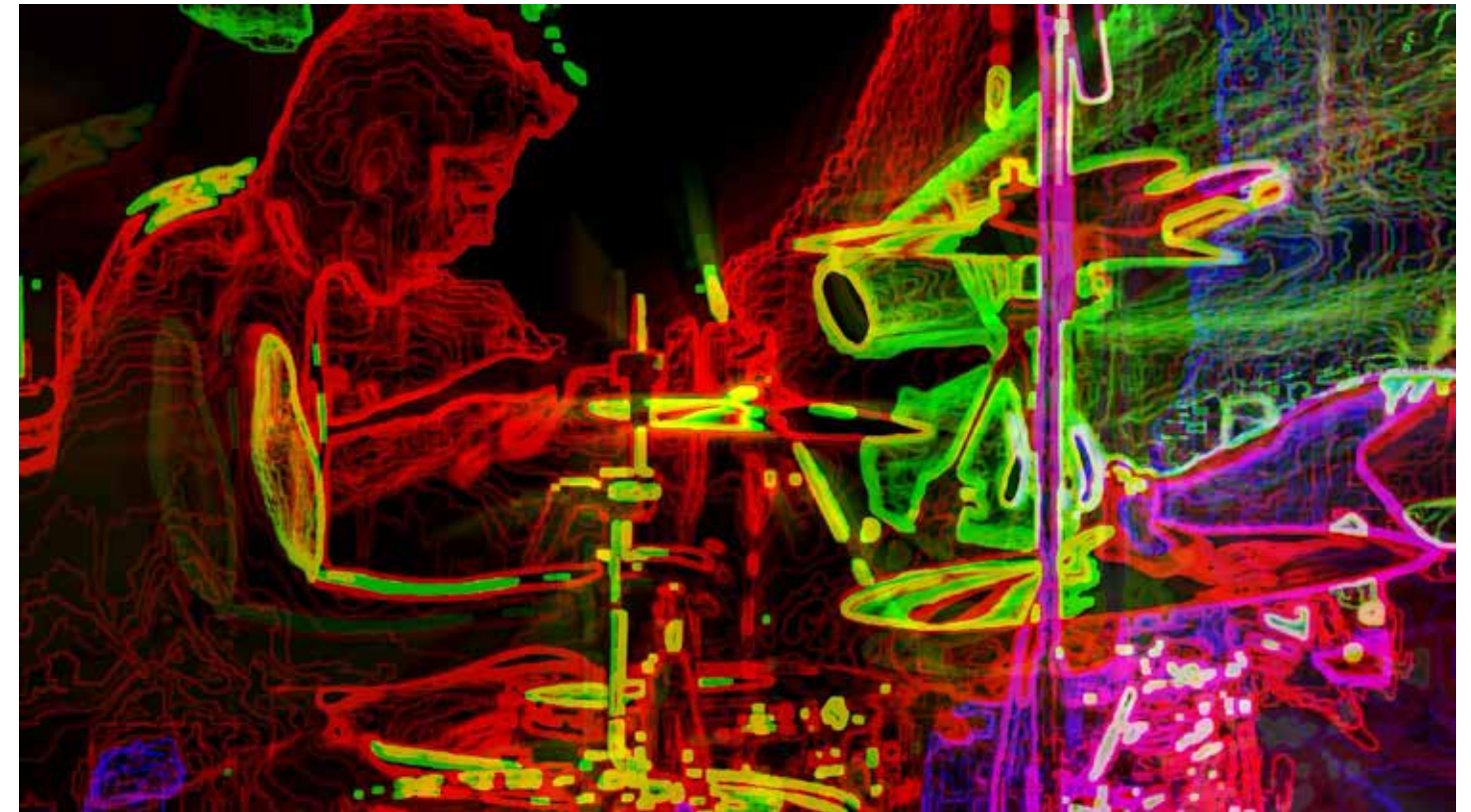
### Ahmad Thaher

Ahmad Thaher is a visual artist who always hunting and capturing contrast in the surroundings, staring and analyzing color light, and texture at each scene. Most of his works present Kufi calligraphy, geometric (Islamic) patterns, and abstract and psychedelic arts, emphasizing simplicity and the complexity of life.



*Kan Ya Zamakan* by Ahmad Thaher  
Digital Art – Dimensions 44 X 5.5 inches.

This is a fusion abstract realm between the east and the west, the earth and the space, the known and the unknown. This artwork is part of the “Abstract Nectar” series, where Ahmad is experimenting in shapeless and structured expressions of geometric and natural abstract art.



*Drum Trip*, by Ahmad Thaher  
Digital Art – 15.5 X 9 inches.

We all have experienced that feeling while listening to our favorite song or artist. This piece of art is visualizing Ahmad’s feelings in one of these concerts, living a magical momentum. This artwork is part of the “Abstract Nectar” series.





*Jadal Fishes*, by Ahmad Thaher (Collection)

As a Jadal Band Fan, Ahmed Thaher developed this mini-creation series of digital artwork, using a part of the chorus lyrics. The fish's inspiration came from their album cover.

### Ala'a Albaba

Ala'a Albaba, born in 1984 in Jerusalem, is a distinguished Visual Community Artist and a Teaching Artist. In 2015, he pursued a Bachelor of Arts at the International Academy of Art Palestine, a pursuit he undertook from 2010 to 2015 through a scholarship awarded by Kio University in Norway.

He honed his skills at the Visual Arts Forum in Ramallah from 2008 to 2010. In 2011 Albaba founded the ON THE WALL Studio "Almarsam" in the Al Amari Refugee Camp.

Throughout his career, Albaba has been actively involved in various artistic residencies both within and outside Palestine. Notably, he participated in a Beirut residency fo-

cused on the Borj Al Shamali Refugee Camp and the Alhola massacre.

There, he produced impactful sketches and murals rooted in the real-life stories of the camp. The camp wasn't built to last forever; at best, it was a stop along the path of return.

The Am'ari camp, near the City of Ramallah, as a stand-alone urban unit, was UNRWA's quick fix to house a few thousand Palestinian refugees after the 1948 War. They were granted 100-year lease contracts; it gave them a place to stay but a poorly thought-out deadline to return home; those 100 years, or even until 2052 at the latest. In any case, the deadline wasn't far, as hopes were pinned on a week or two for the return, or maybe a year or two.



*The Refugee Camp # 1*, by Ala'a Albaba  
9.8 X 13.7 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2020





*The Refugee Camp # 4* by Ala'a Albaba  
(Collection – 5 Pieces)  
5.9 X 3.9 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2023



*The Refugee Camp # 6*, by Ala'a Albaba  
9.8 X 9.8 inches, Acrylic on Canvas, 2021



## Rehaf Batniji

Rehaf Al Batniji is a self-taught photographer and visual artist from Gaza City, Palestine, who has participated in several local and international exhibitions. Most recently Al Batniji was awarded the Institute of France X Cité internationale des arts residency programme. Al Batniji is also a member of Dahaleez Art Collection.

Al-Batniji employs color as a tool of resistance to reflect the vitality of life in Gaza. She has published extensively in print media including *Le Monde Diplomatique* and other international magazines. Until recently, she trained young adolescents in Gaza City in photography and drawing before she moved to France to pursue an art residency at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris.

And she has shown her work during several exhibitions being collective: "What Palestine brings to the world" (Institute le monde Arabe) and Participated (AWAN festival), (Jaou Tunis festival, October 2022), or solo ("A fable of the sea" in Institut francais de Gaza, October 2022). Her work was featured in the September 2022 issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* magazine. She also participated in a residency program at FilepaManuela in Madrid (Dec 21- Feb 22).

Her first solo exhibition was in the backyard (Al Hakoorra) of her house in Gaza City in 2020. Previously, Al Batniji has collaborated with several organizations including Qat-

tan Foundation (Palestine), Goethe (Palestine), Institut francais de Gaza (Palestine), Institut français de Tunis (Tunis), Kamel Lazaar foundation (Tunis), Darat al Funun (Jordan), Cairo Photo week (Egypt), and Gulf Photo Plus (United Arab Emirates).

Rehaf Al Batniji also paints and draws, and works as an educator teaching photography to youth and adults for different institutions in Gaza.

In her photographic practice, Al Batniji is interested in street photography, as she feels that the street is a portal through which she learns about the lives, cultures, and identities of the people who dwell in her city. She feels that the streets have the power to represent the culture of a country, both the light and dark sides, and that photography has the power to do the same.

A native Palestinian, Batniji has lived through four major conflicts in Gaza through which she continued to produce work in various contexts and incorporating different mediums. Her work is imbued with social purpose, yet with refreshing positivity, Refah Al Batniji's photography rejects the brutal imagery of conflict and instead uses color as a tool for resistance to reflect the vibrance of life in Gaza. She has developed a unique and personal visual language through her intimate observations of details in the landscape and the beauty found in its relationship to the people populating it.



*The early hours of that day I*, 2016-2019, by Refah Al Batniji  
60x80, Hahnemuhle photo paper on foamboard 3cm



*The early hours of that day II*, 2016-2019 by Refah Al Batniji  
60x80, Hahnemuhle photo paper on foamboard 3cm





51 Land, 2018-2023 by Rehaf Al Batniji  
Matte Photo paper on foamboard 2cm

### Reem Al-Natsheh

Reem Alnatsheh holds a Bachelor's degree in Fine arts at An-Najah National University 2014-2018. She was awarded the Ismail Shamout award by Dar El Kalima Uni for Art and Culture in Bethlehem 2019. She has participated in group exhibitions like: *Rituals exhibition* – POUH art center 2023, *Egypt INT'L Art fair 2022*, Binal del sur – Venezuela 2021, *DAR Art Fair* – Jordan 2021, *Telling the Palestinian story* - Palestine Museum US 2020, and 'where to?' at Dar El Kalima Uni for Art and Culture 2019. Solo exhibitions include: *Layers of Identity* – La Maison Bruneau - Paris 2023, *Stories First* at Najac Library – South of France 2022, and *Nos Nsais* – Bab Iddeir Art Gallery Bethlehem 2020. She also participated in art residencies and France and Palestine, like: Verg-er in Jugon – Bretagne 2023, La Maison Bruneau in Paris November 2022 – December 2023, Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris June-September 2022, Hosh Qndah Compound residency by Ramallah Municipality 2021 and A.M Qattan Foundation's visual arts studio residency 2020.

Alnatsheh explores questions of displacement, resistance, and identity through Palestinian folktales and creates parallels between folktales and the reality of contemporary Palestinian culture. Her work speaks to both personal and political struggles, inviting the viewer to explore the inter-connections between the two and to engage with the world around them in new and meaningful ways.

In *Layers of Identity*, Reem, who grew up in Hebron and later moved to Paris, draws her own personal experiences to delve into questions of identity and belonging and describes her journey of moving from one place to another. Through this art project, she reconsiders the concept of "home" as a loose idea open to interpretation as a place and she seeks to convey the idea that identity is not a fixed, singular concept, but rather a multi-layered and constantly evolving one. She views identity as something that is shaped by personal experiences, memories, and cultural influences, and that these various layers of identity can manifest themselves in different ways at different times and Through the use of abstraction and distortion.



*Layers of Identity #1*, by Reem Alnatsheh  
2023, Paris- France  
Oil on canvas, 75x75 cm.





*Layers of Identity # 3*, by Reem Alnatsheh  
2023, Paris - France.  
Oil on canvas, 114x73 cm



*Layers of Identity #8*, by Reem Alnatsheh  
2023. Oil on canvas, 115x115 cm.



# HAROLD PINTER IS TURNING OVER IN HIS GRAVE!

*“We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state founded on terrorism, massacres and the dispossession of another people from their land. We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state that even now engages in ethnic cleansing, that violates international law, that is inflicting a monstrous collective punishment on the civilian population of Gaza and that continues to deny to Palestinians their human rights and national aspirations. We will celebrate when Arab and Jew live as equals in a peaceful Middle East.”*

— Harold Pinter

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, I wrote to the Nobel Prize organization to ask for permission to include Harold Pinter’s Nobel Laureate speech, “Art, Truth and Politics” in this New Observations Magazine issue on Gaza. His speech, which could have been written yesterday, was delivered in 2005 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Here is my email to the Nobel Organization which was sent via a standard form posted on their website:

Sent from: mia.Feroletto@gmail.com

Hello. We would like to reproduce Harold Pinter’s Nobel speech in New Observations Magazine for our upcoming issue on GAZA.

www.newobservations.org

Please let me know what we need to do.

Thank you. Mia Feroletto Publisher

This morning, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, I awoke to this response from their media department:

<b>Media &lt;media@nobelprize.org&gt;</b>
to me

Dear Mia,

Thank you for your request.

Unfortunately, we can not allow permission to publish Pinters speech in this context.

Kind regards,

Ulrika Magnusson

Please take note that the media department does not spell “Pinter’s” speech correctly in their email. Sloppy work from the Nobel Organization.

Pinter spent almost his entire Nobel speech admonishing the United States government for the same global dominance it exhibits today in its support of Israel’s genocide of the Palestinian people. Since we cannot reproduce the text here, I encourage everyone to simply Google Pinter’s address. If you are already familiar with it, now would be a good time to review his words because frankly nothing has changed in almost 20 years. His presentation is posted multiple times on YouTube alone. Pinter’s words are even more important now as the world watches the slaughter of innocent men, women and children in real time.

It is ironic that the Nobel Prize has been awarded to Harold Pinter, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi for their great humanitarian work, yet New Observations is not given permission to reproduce Harold Pinter’s address when it will spread his powerful ideas and passion for justice.

In the Monday 29, December 2008 Letters to The Guardian, Mike Barnes writes:

Reviews of Harold Pinter’s life have mentioned that he was Jewish and stated his strong criticism of US policies, but do not refer to his persistent criticism of Israel and Zionism (Obituary, 27 December 2008). Earlier this year, he was one of the signatories of a letter published in the Guardian (30 April) that read in part: “We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state founded on terrorism, massacres and the dispossession of another people from their land. We cannot celebrate the birthday of a state that even now engages in ethnic cleansing, that violates international law, that is inflicting a monstrous collective punishment on the civilian population of Gaza and that continues to deny to Palestinians their human rights and national aspirations. We will celebrate when Arab and Jew live as equals in a peaceful Middle East.” He would probably have strongly criticized the Israeli air attack on Gaza which is occurring right now.

— Mike Barnes Watford





*The Peace Rider*, by Ati Maier, 2024

# Gaza After the Deluge

By Jamie Stern-Weiner

On October 7, 2023, hundreds of Palestinian militants burst the gates of Gaza, overwhelmed multiple military bases, then rampaged across southern Israel. The operation was shocking in its boldness, the ensuing massacre for its brutality. But the conditions that led to the Hamas attack were long-standing.

Gaza is a speck of coastline that is among the most densely populated areas on Earth. Some 75 percent of its inhabitants are refugees driven from their homes to make way for the State of Israel in 1948, and their descendants. Israel occupied the strip in 1967 and *de facto* annexed it without extending rights of citizenship to the inhabitants.

After Palestinians revolted against Israeli military rule in 1987 (the first *intifada*), Israel crushed the uprising and then strengthened its grip on Gaza through various forms of confinement. By 2004, the head of Israel's National Security Council could describe Gaza as "a huge concentration camp."<sup>1</sup>

In January 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, won democratic elections in Gaza and the West Bank. Israel and its allies responded by subjecting the occupied Palestinian population—already enduring the "worst economic depression in modern history"—to "possibly the most rigorous form of international sanctions imposed in modern times."<sup>2</sup> After Hamas consolidated control in Gaza the following year, Israel tightened the screws further as it put Gaza under a comprehensive closure that has been enforced with varying degrees of intensity ever since.<sup>3</sup>

The siege extinguished Gaza's economy and reduced its people to penury. "The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet," a senior Israeli official explained, "but not to make them die of hunger."<sup>4</sup>

The unemployment rate soared to among the highest in the world, four-fifths of the population were forced to rely on humanitarian assistance, three-quarters became dependent on food aid, more than half faced "acute food insecurity," one in ten children were stunted by malnutrition, and over 96 percent of potable water became unsafe for human

consumption.<sup>5</sup>

The head of the United Nations (UN) agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, observed in 2008 that

*Gaza is on the threshold of becoming the first territory to be intentionally reduced to a state of abject destitution, with the knowledge, acquiescence and—some would say—encouragement of the international community.*<sup>6</sup>

The UN warned in 2015 that the cumulative impact of this induced "humanitarian implosion" might render Gaza "unlivable" within a half-decade. Israeli military intelligence agreed, whereas a subsequent UN analysis judged the projection overly optimistic.<sup>7</sup>

Long before October 2023, then, Israel had turned Gaza into what the Economist termed a "human rubbish heap," the *Ha'aretz* editorial board—a "ghetto," the International Committee of the Red Cross—a "sinking ship."<sup>8</sup> It had reduced Gaza to what the UN high commissioner for human rights called a "toxic slum," in which above two million people were "caged...from birth to death."<sup>9</sup> An Israeli officer stationed on the Gaza border distilled his mission there: "no development, no prosperity, only humanitarian dependency."<sup>10</sup> He might have added, *forever*.

Many in Gaza did not share this vision for their future, and so Israel found it prudent to periodically massacre them—what Israeli officials termed "mowing the lawn."<sup>11</sup> Some of these onslaughts responded to resistance emanating from Gaza — armed, as when Hamas fired projectiles into Israel in

5. Amnesty International et al., *The Gaza Strip: A Humanitarian Implosion* (6 March 2008), p. 4 (food). World Bank, Economic Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (27 May 2015), pp. 5, 21. (unemployment) UN Country Team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNOPT), *Gaza Ten Years Later* (July 2017), p. 20 (water). Medical Aid for Palestinians, "New Film from MAP's Team in Gaza: Combatting Child Malnutrition," *map.org.uk* (4 February 2020) (stunted). Larry Elliott, "UN Report: 80% of Gaza Inhabitants Relied on International Aid Before War," *Guardian* (25 October 2023) (assistance). Oxfam, "The World Cannot Stand By as Starvation Is Used as a Weapon of War in Gaza," *oxfam.org* (19 November 2023) ("acute"). Most Gazans had to rely on more expensive sources of water—desalinated, bottled—including from Israel.

6. Karen Koning AbuZayd, "This Brutal Siege of Gaza Can Only Breed Violence," *Guardian* (23 January 2008).

7. Amnesty, *Implosion*. UN Conference on Trade and Development, *Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (6 July 2015), p. 12 ("unlivable"). "IDF Intel Chief Warns Despair in Gaza Could Explode Toward Israel," *timesofisrael.com* (24 February 2016) (agreed). UNOPT, Gaza, pp. 2-3, 28 (optimistic).

8. Editorial, "It's Been a Decade. Open the Palestinian Ghetto," *Ha'aretz* (17 May 2016). Editorial, "How to End the Endless Conflict Between Israel and the Palestinians," *Economist* (17 May 2018). Stephanie Nebehay, "Red Cross Sends War Surgeons to 'Sinking Ship' Gaza," *Reuters* (31 May 2018).

9. Tom Miles, "U.N. Sets Up Human Rights Probe into Gaza Killings, to Israel's Fury," *Reuters* (18 May 2018).

10. International Crisis Group, *After Gaza* (2 August 2007), p. 24n210.

11. Mouin Rabbani, "Israel Mows the Lawn," *London Review of Books* 36.15 (31 July 2014).

1. Giora Eiland quoted in US Ambassador to Israel Daniel C. Kurtzer, "Israeli Officials Brief Djerejian on Improved Regional Security Situation; Unilateral Disengagement Plans," 04TELAVIV1952\_a (31 March 2004), Wikileaks.

2. Sara Roy, "'A Dubai on the Mediterranean,'" *London Review of Books* 27.21 (3 November 2005) ("depression"). United Nations Special Rapporteur John Dugard, *Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied Since 1967* (27 September 2006), para. 70 ("sanctions").

3. Sara Roy, "Econocide in Gaza," in Jamie Stern-Weiner ed., *Deluge: Gaza and Israel from Crisis to Cataclysm* (OR Books, 2024).

4. Dov Weisglass quoted in Conal Urquhart, "Gaza on Brink of Implosion as Aid Cut-Off Starts to Bite," *Observer* (16 April 2006).

May 2021 following settler encroachments in occupied East Jerusalem, or unarmed, as in early 2018, when Palestinians demonstrated nonviolently along Gaza’s perimeter fence—scores were killed and thousands injured by Israeli snipers arrayed on the other side.<sup>12</sup> But Israel’s most devastating offensives, in 2008-09 and 2014, were motivated by broader political objectives: to inspire fear in the Arab world and to thwart Hamas “peace offensives” that threatened to make Israel’s rejectionist diplomatic posture—its refusal to withdraw from Palestinian territory in exchange for peace—untenable.<sup>13</sup> In the 2014 assault alone, approximately 1,600 civilians in Gaza were killed, including 550 children, and fully 18,000 homes were destroyed.<sup>14</sup>

Expulsion. Annexation. Siege. Massacre. Injustice layered on injustice, atrocity compounding atrocity, sedimented savagery amounting in sum to a colossal crime against humanity—culminating in the blockade and bombardment of a refugee population, confined in a concentration camp, *one-half of whom were children*.<sup>15</sup> It would surprise if suffering of this severity were a recipe for long-term stability.

Israeli officials knew the “humanitarian condition in Gaza” was “progressively deteriorating”—this being the intended outcome of Israeli policy—and could predict that, “if it blows up, it’ll be in Israel’s direction.”<sup>16</sup> But they apparently believed that by oscillating “between [military] operations and providing that level of aid to Gaza” sufficient to prevent its complete “collapse,” Palestinian eruptions could be contained within tolerable limits. Hamas will “rise up from time to time and hit us,” Israel’s former national security advisor acknowledged in 2018, but “[i]t can’t cause us any real damage.”<sup>17</sup> If the timing, scale, and character of the October 7 attack came as a shock, the fact that people in Gaza would strike out at some point and in some fashion was not just predictable, but priced in to Israel’s “conflict management” policy. Indeed, a former deputy to Israel’s national security advisor found in the Hamas-led assault, not proof of Gazans’ irrational barbarism, but confirmation of a historical universal: “Eventually the oppressed will rise against their oppressor.”<sup>18</sup>

12. R. J., “Rule Number One of Nonviolent Resistance: It Can’t Work If It’s Misrepresented as Violent,” in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

13. Norman G. Finkelstein, *Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom* (University of California Press, 2018), pp. 17-38, 212-214. Cf. Colter Louwerse, “Is Hamas to Blame for the Failure to Resolve the Israel-Palestine Conflict?” and Khaled Hroub, “Nothing Fails Like Success: Hamas and the Gaza Explosion,” both in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

14. Finkelstein, *Gaza*, p. 311. Six Israeli civilians were killed and one house in Israel was destroyed.

15. Cf. John Dugard et al., *Report of the Independent Fact Finding Committee on Gaza Presented to the League of Arab States* (30 April 2009), para. 27. *Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict* (25 September 2009), para. 75.

16. “IDF Intel Chief.”

17. Yaakov Amidror, “Finding a Humanitarian Solution to the Gaza Problem,” *jiss.org.il* (8 July 2018) (“operations”). [Hebrew] Yaakov Amidror, “Yaakov Amidror: ‘Whoever Proposes to Occupy Gaza Is Talking Nonsense,’” *Ma’ariv* (15 August 2018) (“rise”). [Hebrew]

18. Shlomo Brom, “The Crisis Shows the Failure of Israeli Policy Towards Palestinian, Says Shlomo Brom,” *Economist* (10 October 2023).

If the “root causes”<sup>19</sup> of the Gaza catastrophe were familiar, and if the resort to terrorism by Israel as well as Hamas had ample precedent, still, four critical aspects of the crisis marked a departure:

*First*, there was a radical intensification in the magnitude of death and destruction inflicted. The authorities in Israel reported that Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people on October 7, including more than 800 civilians, and took 240 more captive. If these figures are correct, this means Palestinians killed more Israelis in one day than during the entire second intifada (inclusive of the bloody suicide bombings).<sup>20</sup> Allegations that Hamas forces engaged in widespread mutilation, beheading, and rape have not, at the time of writing, been substantiated. If those claims prove accurate, this would constitute another grim novelty from an organization that has traditionally eschewed such tactics.

In retaliation for the Hamas operation and massacre, Israel turned Gaza into a howling wasteland. Over just the first two months, Israeli forces killed more than 17,000 people, including more than 7,700 children.<sup>21</sup> That’s almost as many children as were killed across all the world’s conflict zones over the previous three years combined.<sup>22</sup> Gazan hospitals developed the acronym “WCNSF”—Wounded Child No Surviving Family—as hundreds of extended family units were wiped out.<sup>23</sup>

Nearly 85 percent of the population was internally displaced. More than 60 percent of homes were damaged or destroyed.<sup>24</sup> Northern Gaza became “an uninhabitable moonscape” after broad swathes of the territory were erased. “Beit Hanoun is not only dead,” a correspondent for *Le Monde* reported in November, referring to a northern town. “Beit Hanoun no longer exists.”<sup>25</sup> In what might have been a first in the annals of modern warfare, Israeli forces systematically targeted hospitals as they “completely obliterated” Gaza’s “healthcare infrastructure.”<sup>26</sup> At the same time, Israel targeted water and sewage facilities and employed “starvation of civilians as a method of warfare”

19. Amnesty International, “Israel/OPT: Civilians Must Be Protected After Unprecedented Escalation in Violence,” *amnesty.org.uk* (7 October 2023).

20. B’Tselem, “Fatalities Since the Outbreak of the Second Intifada and Until Operation ‘Cast Lead,’” *btsalem.org* (n.d.).

21. UN OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel: Reported Impact, Day 64,” *ochaopt.org* (9 December 2023).

22. Based on Save the Children, “Gaza: 3,195 Children Killed in Three Weeks Surpasses Annual Number of Children Killed in Conflict Zones Since 2019,” *saveethechildren.org.uk* (29 October 2023).

23. Kate Nicholson, “Doctor Reveals New Medical Acronym ‘Unique to Gaza’ to Describe Particular War Victim,” *huffingtonpost.co.uk* (6 November 2023). Mai Khaled et al., “How the Loss of Entire Families Is Ravaging the Social Fabric of Gaza,” *Financial Times* (13 December 2023).

24. UN OCHA, “Day 64.”

25. Jean-Philippe Rémy, “Inside Gaza With the Israeli Army As It Hunts for Hamas Tunnels,” *Le Monde Diplomatique* (19 November 2023) (Beit Hanoun). Isabel Debre, “Gaza Has Become a Moonscape in War. When the Battles Stop, Many Fear It Will Remain Uninhabitable,” *apnews.com* (23 November 2023).

26. HRW, “Gaza: Unlawful Israeli Hospital Strikes Worsen Health Crisis,” *hrw.org* (14 November 2023) (hospitals). “Gaza: UN Expert Condemns ‘Unrelenting War’ on Health System Amid Airstrikes on Hospitals and Health Workers,” *ohchr.org* (7 December 2023) (“obliterated”).

as it prevented deliveries of food, fuel, water, medicines, and electricity to the battered enclave.<sup>27</sup> Inevitably, by mid-December, half the population of Gaza faced “severe hunger” while disease and lack of medical treatment threatened to increase the death toll by “multiples.”<sup>28</sup>

*Second*, this ramping up of violence reflected a shift in Israel’s strategy. Before October 7, Israel sought to manage its conflict with the Palestinians by deploying economic “carrots” alongside military “sticks” to co-opt as well as deter Palestinian resistance. In the West Bank, many Palestinians came to acquire a material investment in the status quo.<sup>29</sup> The emphasis in Gaza lay more on the “sticks”—those periodic bloodlettings—but there, too, a class of profiteers had congealed, even under the harsh blockade. Crucially, in the years leading up to 2023, Israeli planners thought that Hamas would prioritize control of a territory and ability to govern it over resistance. Hamas’s responsibility for providing public services in Gaza, together with its dependence on Israel for access to the resources needed to discharge this obligation, would induce the movement to abandon armed struggle and acquiesce in Israel’s overarching control.

The October 7 attack was an emphatic refusal of this role. Hamas would not become another Palestinian Authority, policing unlawfully annexed Palestinian territory on Israel’s behalf. Even as the Hamas assault made Israel’s “conflict management” approach a dead letter, the unqualified support extended to Israel by the U.S. and EU in its wake gave Israel an opportunity to “change the...strategic reality” in Gaza.<sup>30</sup> Israel’s strategy accordingly shifted from mowing the lawn in Gaza to salting the earth; from perpetually deferring the Gaza question to definitively resolving it.<sup>31</sup>

To this end, Israel has systematically destroyed the prerequisites for civilization in Gaza and sought to render the territory uninhabitable, while mobilizing US influence to persuade Egypt to accept masses of Gazan refugees. The refusal of Egypt and other Arab States to cooperate, together with mounting international pressure to limit the humanitarian disaster, may have precluded Israel from achieving these maximal objectives. But with half of Gaza reduced to rubble, half the population crammed into the southern city of Rafah, and Hamas not yet militarily vanquished, it was wholly unclear, at the time of writing,

27. UN OCHA, “Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel: Flash Update 30,” *ochaopt.org* (5 November 2023). Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Israel: Starvation Used as Weapon of War in Gaza,” *hrw.org* (18 December 2023).

28. UN World Food Programme, “WFP Palestine Emergency Response: Situation Report 11,” *wfp.org* (19 December 2023) (“hunger”). Henry Mance, “UN Aid Chief Martin Griffiths: ‘The War in Gaza Isn’t Halfway Through,’” *Financial Times* (18 December 2023) (“multiples”).

29. Musa Abuhashhash, “The Quiet Front: Reflections From the West Bank,” in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

30. Benny Gantz, a member of Israel’s emergency war cabinet, quoted in Jamie Stern-Weiner, “Gaza’s Last Stand? The Dangers of a Second Nakba,” *byline-times.com* (16 October 2023).

31. Yaniv Cogan, “Targeting Civilians: Its Logic in Gaza and Israel,” in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

what a viable “day after” might look like.<sup>32</sup>

*Third*, the conflict may now have entered a zero-sum phase. The mainstream Palestinian leadership has for decades sought a two-State settlement of the conflict, while Hamas also attempted, after its election in 2006, to achieve this.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, previous escalations in Gaza ended with the prospect, albeit never fulfilled, that the siege would be lifted and the possibility, however remote, that some kind of *modus vivendi* might be found. But after October 7, it is hard to foresee any Israeli government negotiating with Hamas on anything more substantial than a prisoner exchange. The constituencies represented by Hamas, for their part, may no longer be prepared to coexist with the State of Israel. On the one hand, Israel’s genocidal war will have multiplied ten-fold the bitterness and rage in Gaza, which was already substantial. On the other hand, if Hamas had previously reconciled to Israel’s existence as an immutable reality, the gravity of Israel’s operational and intelligence failures on October 7, together with Hamas’ impressive military performance, may have convinced them that Israel’s defeat is an option.

*Finally*, if there appears little short-term prospect of peace taking root in Gaza’s scorched soil, seeds of hope did sprout elsewhere, as a solidarity movement of unprecedented size and vigor sprang to Gaza’s defense. In Western Europe and North America, massive demonstrations mobilized for week after week opposing Israel’s onslaught. Progressive Jews were in the militant vanguard. In the U.S. and Britain public opinion backed an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, even as not one major political party endorsed this position.<sup>34</sup> And right in the heart of the political establishment, from the European Union to the U.S. State Department and White House, hundreds of officials risked their careers to demand an end to complicity in Israel’s war crimes.<sup>35</sup> In 2023, Gaza became a symbol for injustice, inequality, and the hypocrisies of power writ large, and around this symbol, the glimmer of a New International could be espied. If the Gaza cataclysm resonated so widely, especially among the young, it might be because in this age of yawning inequality, hollowed-out democracy, and a futureless future circumscribed by economic stagnation and climate crisis, the global “99 percent” saw in Gazans’ plight an extreme version of their own.

Excerpted from *Deluge: Gaza and Israel from Crisis to Cataclysm*, edited by Jamie Stern-Weiner and published by OR Books, 2024

32. Mouin Rabbani, “All Shook Up: Regional Dynamics of the Gaza War” and Nathan J. Brown, “Into the Abyss,” both in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

33. Louwerse, “Hamas.”

34. Mitchell Plitnick, “Breakthroughs and Backlash in the Belly of the Beast” and Talal Hangari, “Palestine Solidarity in Britain,” both in Stern-Weiner, *Deluge*.

35. Jacopo Barigazzi and Gregoria Sorgi, “Internal EU Discontent Grows at Von Der Leyen’s Neglect of Palestinian Statehood,” *politico.eu* (20 October 2023). Ellen Knickmeyer, “Dissent Over US Policy in the Israel-Hamas War Stirs Unusual Public Protests from Federal Employees,” *apnews.com* (19 November 2023). Tara Suter, “Biden Administration Staffers Call for Cease-Fire While Protesting Outside White House,” *thehill.com* (13 December 2023).



# A New Dawn for Palestinian Advocacy and Activism

By Amir Toumie

Israelis are not able to comprehend the fact that many college students, activists, and young people in the United States and around the world are simply pro-Palestinian — in a way that they deeply care about social justice from the perspective of dismantling colonialism in all its forms, and fixing long-standing mechanisms that fostered systemic racism against disadvantaged communities in the United States and the rest of the world, such as the Black and Indigenous communities.

Since the “Al-Aqsa Flood” operation started on October 7<sup>th</sup>, followed by the Israeli occupation’s war on Gaza, we have witnessed the burst of hundreds of pro-Palestinian protests and activist movements especially among college students, social justice activists, and young people in the U.S. These movements have included actions such as organizing protests and sit-ins, contacting decision makers, holding teach-ins on the situation in Palestine (specifically in Gaza), and leading campaigns to raise awareness on social media platforms about the Israeli atrocities that are being committed for the last 75 years, including the current attack on the Gaza Strip, and the killing of more than 35,000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are civilians, including a high number of children.

With this sudden rise in the visibility of the pro-Palestine movements in the U.S., Zionist pundits, activists, and officials in occupied Palestine and the U.S. have moved to denounce them, and dismiss them by proclaiming that they are insignificant, and that they are mainly driven by old-fashioned antisemitism and ignorance. However, this quasi-dismissal comes from Israeli shock that thousands of people in the U.S. are indeed pro-Palestinian and believe that the occupation and apartheid regime that are led by Israel must end. This Zionist perspective has been shared on social media, Israeli legacy media, and especially in Israeli newspapers and magazines.

Their main argument is that the supporters of the pro-Palestine movement in the U.S. have no real connection to Palestine and to the situation on the ground, and that they are ignorant, and cannot grasp the “complexity” of the situation in Palestine. They try to validate their claims by saying that young activists and college students in the U.S. mainly consume their knowledge about Palestine from misleading posts and videos on Tik-Tok, Instagram and other “Gen-Z-related” platforms without getting informed by mainstream media outlets (which are anyway biased towards the occupation’s side — but that’s a story for another time). This perspective has gained so much traction in Israeli

society that even Israelis who call themselves “leftists” and “liberals” have adopted it, and disseminated it through their main platform — Haaretz newspaper — despite their own years-long calling on the Israeli governments to dismantle the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, thus paving the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel in the framework of the two-state solution.

Writing from my own perspective as a Palestinian activist and former lobbyist for Palestinian rights in 48’ Palestine (1948 occupied Palestine / Israel-proper), and as an observer and researcher of Israeli society, politics, and media, this rhetoric constitutes a radical change in the discourse between the different Zionist camps in Israeli society; today we notice that all Israelis, regardless of their position on the occupation, are repeating the same arguments as long as they benefit the state during war-time — Israeli “leftists/liberals” shy away from voicing and defending their original positions which include criticizing the state and its occupation policies, and they join the collective Zionist effort to advance Israeli public diplomacy efforts, or “Hasbara,” no matter what the state does, including killing tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians, and withholding food and humanitarian necessities from around two million people.

Of course, there is no denying that the pro-Palestine movement is prevailing in the realm of social media, especially because nowadays it’s possible to obtain videos, testimonies, and direct information about the atrocities of the occupation on the ground, and share them online so the rest of the world can understand what is happening. But this is not the full story. For decades, a pro-Palestine camp that is mainly led by Palestinians in the diaspora has been growing by leading advocacy efforts in the American government and civil society. These Palestinian leaders have themselves established non-profit organizations for advocacy and protest action for Palestine, and with time have developed ties to other activist movements and non-profits who advocate for the rights of other disadvantaged communities in the U.S. The shared action and growing solidarity between the movements resulted in the rise of pro-Palestine positions, and the general understanding that occupation and all systems of oppression must be shut down — in Palestine, the U.S. and the rest of the world.

It was inevitable that these positions become popular among social justice activists, college students, and young people especially because of the successful advocacy and action movements of the Pro-Palestine camp specifically in American college campuses. It is also important to note

that the movement itself involves many aspects of education and learning about the history of the occupation of Palestine, supported by testimonies, personal experiences of dispossessed Palestinians, academic sources, and reliable data about the occupation that has been collected for many years by Palestinian and human-rights organizations.

The growth of activism for Palestine in the U.S. can be directly connected to the simultaneous growth in the patriotic and identity-based activism in Palestine — which has been guided by relatively new youth movements on the ground (in Haifa, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Yaffa, Nazareth etc.), which organize grassroots action emphasized by the undivided Palestinian people’s wish to live freely and get rid of the occupation and Jewish supremacy once and for all across all of historic Palestine. These same youth movements are the ones who led the protests and action during the Dignity Uprising of 2021 — during which the movements in all parts of the land worked together to rise up against the occupation everywhere on Palestinian land.

It was also noted that for the first time in decades, the Palestinian communities in 48’ territory also joined the protest, education and boycott efforts — signaling to the occupation, and the world, that the Palestinian people refuse to be divided, but yet will stay united in their struggle for liberation and equality wherever they may be in Palestine despite the 75-year-long Zionist effort to “Israelize” them.

I myself and my friends in Haifa took part in establishing the base for new Palestinian youth movements to operate and grow especially in 48’. Our projects mainly served the goal of preserving our Palestinian identity, and our love for the land — as passed down by our ancestors — and for volunteering efforts for our community and the people around us. When I moved to Chicago for my PhD a few years ago, I was able to witness that the same love for our land and people existed clearly in the hearts of the Palestinians in the diaspora as well. The half-a-world distance never had an effect on our communities in the U.S., and here we see

in reality the united rise against our oppressors plays out everywhere at the same time. I have had the distinct honor and privilege to get connected to people who are among the best Palestinian organizers in the U.S. here in Chicago, and to keep organizing with them for our people’s liberation back home. For the past two months since the beginning of the war, our activists here have been leading massive protests with tens of thousands of participants, to call for ending the U.S. funding and support for Israel, and to call for a free Palestine from the river to the sea.

The long-standing Palestinian-led activism is clearly bearing fruit, and Israelis cannot be allowed to dismiss it — because at the end, it does seem that the Zionist activists and pundits themselves are the ignorant ones. They are purposefully detaching themselves from reality just so they can keep living in their own bubble, thinking that the occupation can last for as many years as they wish, without resistance from the Palestinians under occupation and their allies around the world.

Nowadays we understand that the world is really changing, and more and more people are starting to understand that the situation in Palestine is not “complex” at all; there are indeed two sides — an occupying side, and an occupied side. The occupying Israeli side displaces, destroys, and kills — and the occupied Palestinian side fights for its survival and liberation on its lands.

The only way to deal with these ridiculous Zionist claims, is to continue the advocacy and protest movement for Palestine while thoroughly explaining our position to anyone who is willing to learn and understand our history, and the fact that we deserve to live freely and peacefully on our lands. We all know that the end of the Israeli occupation is inevitable, and that we are all moving in the right direction.

Amir Toumie  
29.3.2024

# THANK YOU, JILL STEIN, FOR CONTINUING TO CLIMB THAT ENDLESS HILL FOR ALL OF US.

*“Activism is my rent for living on the planet.”*  
— Alice Walker

By Mia Feroletto

As a woman approaching 70, I can say from experience that it is far more difficult for a woman to find her voice than it is for a man. Women are discouraged to speak out from every angle for fear of reprisal. We saw how swiftly Claudine Gay, the president of Harvard, stepped down when a wealthy donor took umbrage with her words and actions, and she was not the only one. A similar thing happened with the president of the University of Pennsylvania, M. Elizabeth Magill.

Jill Stein is a woman who has continually spoken truth to power and continues to do so, picking up the mantle when others abdicate their post, as we saw when Dr. Cornel West left the Green Party. Hers is the weathered, experienced voice of reason who witnesses the criminal war crimes against humanity that are being financed by the American people without our consent, and not only raises her voice in opposition but runs for president as the Green Party candidate election cycle after election cycle. 2024 will be her 3rd presidential campaign. Stein, along with the growing number of concerned citizens of all colors, are creating a combined cacophony of protester voices which is growing louder by the day. How many rotation cycles will it take for genocide to be stopped?

In a recent conversation, Stein stated that America needs a complete paradigm shift away from the need for global dominant power and the military industrial complex. President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned us of this threat to democracy, and approximately 70 years later it is alive and well. The military represents half of our Congressional budget and embroils us in major wars around the world that we have lost consistently, going back to Vietnam.

We are expending incredible amounts of our resources on wars that make us less secure, not more secure. These wars create failed states, mass refugee migrations, and ongoing and continuous threats to our country and the world. Currently, we have so called anti-terror operations in 85 countries, according to the Brown University Cost of War Project. There have been millions of deaths as a result of the war in Iraq. In the wake of searching for weapons of mass destruction that were a figment of the imagination of the security state, this falsehood was used to create a new war. Unfor-



Jill Stein

tunately, this is the name of the game. It is wreaking havoc around the planet and impoverishing Americans. Genocide is being inflicted on the Palestinian people while people in America do not have health care. Our resources have been hijacked without our consent.

People are ready for change. Even though the changes we need are major, they are entirely doable. That included demilitarizing our foreign policy and cutting our military budget at least in half so that we can put those resources where we actually need them. Health care is a human right. We can bail out young people from a lifetime of student debt. We can create an economic stimulus project that works for everyone. We need to protect Mother Earth. There are

many solutions ready to be put to work. We, the people, must demand a future of true democracy. Ability to grassroots organize and build new structures beyond corporate control will break the stronghold keeping these new products from reaching the hands of the people.

In 2016, there were 160 million voters who chose not to vote. We must inform and engage voters. We need candidates who are serving the public interest, not serving the corporate state.

Jill Stein went on to say that as a medical doctor, she understood quickly that our system is making us sick. The corporate system has degraded our food supply, polluted our air and our water. Corporations are exploiting working people and working them to the bone, which has enslaved labor in so many ways. We have a system where poverty is the fourth leading cause of mortality in America. Politics is the mother of all illnesses. It has to be fixed in order to fix all of the other things that are killing us. Communities need to clean up their environment. Currently, government is influenced by big money. Having an incorruptible grass-roots approach to local government allows us to open human conversations that are transformational. Half of all renters now are paying more than 30% of their income to keep a roof over their heads. People are hungry for real solutions. People are sick to death of the two party system with both of these parties being under corporate control.

The massacre of the Palestinian people in Gaza has provoked a grass-roots global engagement which demands a whole new paradigm. America is not a unipolar global power. We are putting money in the pockets of the warmongers. Strikes, auto workers, Starbucks, and grass-roots mobilization is taking place all over our country. We are facing potential nuclear threats which indicate a catastrophe is in the works globally.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. predicted that predatory capitalism, racism, militarism, and materialism are the four ingredients that when joined at the hip will produce disastrous consequences. The proliferation of nuclear power is the Trojan Horse for nuclear war. Fuel for nuclear weapons is all part of that process. The good news is that we, the people, are mobilizing independent of the parties of war and Wall Street.

The atrocities in Gaza represent the tip of the iceberg in terms of the abuses and the genocidal nature of colonialism, the economic and military domination that is characteristic of the United States Empire. Prior to the U.S. Empire, we had the British Empire dominating the globe.

Gaza is an echo of the genocide of Indigenous People and a reflection of the deep murderous nature of Colonialism. We need to stop the slaughter immediately. Israel has been the United States perch in the Middle East from which the U.S. can control the supply of oil. As Ronald Reagan said, Israel is “the unsinkable battle ship.” It is one of the components that allows the United States full-spectrum domi-

nance. Empire is not serving humanity anywhere on the planet. We must stand up and demand justice on all fronts.

As Jill says, “we are faced with an existential human rights emergency” as Israel carries out an extinction-level genocide — in broad daylight and on camera — against the people of Gaza with American weapons, American funding, and American political backing. As I write this message, nearly two million Palestinians are facing famine or waiting for the next barrage of bombs to drop from Israel. Our president, his cabinet members, and our members of Congress act powerless to stop this extermination that we could end with a single phone call.”

Each of us can get involved in whatever way makes sense in our own lives. Carry signs on the street corner fighting for rent control in your neighborhood. Get behind any single piece of the people’s agenda and commit to moving that message forward. As Alice Walker said, the biggest way people give up power is to not know they have it in the first place. We have the power available to each and every one of us. We have the necessity. We have the moral imperative. The air has gone out of the balloon for the Empire and it is lying flat on the ground. It is up to all of us to sweep it away.

As Dr. Jill Stein says, seize the moment! Be proud. Embrace the courage of your convictions and the breadth of your vision. There is a series of people-powered solutions that are looming on the horizon. There has never been a more important time for us to stand up and assert our democracy and create a future that will work for all of us.

Get involved.  
Make a stand!





# Contributors

**JIHAD ABDULMUMIT** is a former Black Panther/Black Liberation Army political prisoner, held in the federal system for 23 years. He is presently the National Chairperson for the Jericho Movement ([www.thejerichomovement.com](http://www.thejerichomovement.com)); a representative of the Jamaat of the Shehu Uthman dan Fodio; and sits on the Coordinating Committee of the Spirit of Mandela's 2021 International Tribunal which successfully charged the United States government and its States with the crime of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous people ([www.spiritofmandela.org](http://www.spiritofmandela.org)). Jihad is a playwright and has written and produced dozens of original plays. He is also an adjunct professor in the African American Studies Department at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. Jihad is married to Magdalene Moonsamy, a jurist and human rights and criminal defense attorney in South Africa. Finally, he works as a Senior Community Case Manager at Health Brigade, a community health clinic ([www.healthbrigade.org](http://www.healthbrigade.org)), servicing the needs of HIV positive individuals being released from incarceration. He has a Master's in business and a minor in Public Health.

**ALA'A ALBABA**, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, born in 1984 in Jerusalem, is a distinguished Visual Community Artist and a Teaching Artist. In 2015, he pursued a Bachelor of Arts at the International Academy of Art Palestine, a pursuit he undertook from 2010 to 2015 through a scholarship awarded by Kio University in Norway. Additionally, he honed his skills at the Visual Arts Forum in Ramallah from 2008 to 2010. In 2011 Albaba founded the ON THE WALL Studio "Almarsam" in the Al Amari Refugee Camp. Throughout his career, Albaba has been actively involved in various artistic residencies both within and outside Palestine. Notably, he partici-

pated in a Beirut residency focused on the Borj Al Shamali Refugee Camp and the Alhola massacre. There, he produced impactful sketches and murals rooted in the real-life stories of the camp. His artistic footprint extends to Spain, Norway, Jordan, and Palestine, where he has created paintings and murals reflecting diverse themes such as life, beauty, the future, community, and freedom. These works were particularly significant in the Jordan Valley, Bil'in, and France. Between 2015 and 2018, Albaba embarked on a notable project titled "The Fish Path." Starting from Nabi Saleh Village and extending to the Al Amari Refugee Camp, he created 18 murals across Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan. These murals featured fishes as a symbol of refugees, drawing inspiration from reality. Albaba also initiated "The Camp" project, an introspective exploration of his relationship with the refugee camp, capturing its essence and his interpretation through horizontal architecture. This project led to the creation of 15 paintings. His exhibition portfolio is extensive, with recent two participations in 2019 in Holland and in Qattan Foundation at the same period. In 2020, Albaba opened his Camp Personal Exhibition at the Gallery *almustawda'* in Ramallah. The following year, he initiated an artistic residency in collaboration with the Ramallah municipality in the old city. Most recently, in 2022, he launched a personal exhibition at the Bab Al-Deir Gallery in Bethlehem, continuing to showcase his unique artistic vision and commitment to community engagement through his work. In 2023, Alaa Albaba further expanded his impressive body of work by creating an open studio exhibition. This event, a testament to his ongoing commitment to accessible art and community engagement, was held in cooperation with Al-Zawiya Gallery in Ramallah. This exhibition not only showcased Albaba's latest creations but also provided a platform for interactive dialogue

and cultural exchange, reinforcing his status as a pivotal figure in the contemporary art scene of the region.

**REHAF AL BATNIJI**, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, is a self-taught photographer and visual artist based in Gaza City, Palestine, who has participated in several local and international exhibitions. Most recently Al Batniji was awarded the Institute of France X Cité internationale des arts residency programme. Al Batniji is also a member of Dahaleez Art Collection. She has shown her work during several exhibitions being collective, "What Palestine brings to the world (Insitute le monde Arabe) and Particpated (AWAN festival), (Jaou Tunis festival, October 2022) or solo (A fable of the sea in Institut francais de Gaza, October 2022). Her work was featured in the September 2022 issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* magazine. She also participated in a residency program at Filepa Manuela in Madrid (Dec 21- Feb 22). Her first solo exhibition was in the backyard (Al Hakoora) of her house in Gaza City in 2020. Previously, Al Batniji has collaborated with several organizations including Qattan Foundation (Palestine), Goethe (Palestine), Institut francais de Gaza (Palestine), Institut français de Tunis (Tunis), Kamel Lazaar foundation (Tunis), Darat al Funun (Jordan), Cairo Photo week (Egypt), Gulf Photo Plus (United Arab Emirates). A self-taught artist, Rehaf Al Batniji also paints and draws, and works as an educator teaching photography to Youth and Adults for different institutions in Gaza. In her photographic practice, Al Batniji is interested in street photography as she feels that the street is a portal through which she learns about the lives, cultures and identities of the people who dwell in her city. She feels that the streets have the power to represent the culture of a country, both the light and dark sides, and that photography has the power to do the same. A native Palestinian, Batniji has

lived through four major conflicts in Gaza through which she continued to produce work in various contexts and incorporating different mediums. Her work is imbued with social purpose yet with refreshing positivity, Rehaf Al Batniji's photography reject's the brutal imagery of conflict and instead use color as a tool for resistance to reflect the vibrance of life in Gaza. She has developed a unique and personal visual language through her intimate observations of details in the landscape and the beauty found in its relationship to the people populating it.

**REEM ALNATSHEH**, 1993, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, born and raised in Hebron, Palestine, based in Paris, holds a bachelor's degree in Fine arts at An-Najah National University 2014-2018. Awarded the Ismail Shamout award by Dar El Kalima for Art and Culture in Bethlehem 2019, she has participated in group exhibitions like: *Rituals exhibition* – POUCH art center 2023, Egypt INT'L Art fair 2022, Binal del sur – Venezuela 2021, DAR Art Fair – Jordan 2021, *Telling the Palestinian story* - Palestine Museum US 2020, *where to?* at Dar El Kalima for Art and Culture 2019. And solo exhibitions: *Layers of Identity* – La Maison Bruneau - Paris 2023, *Stories* First at Najac Library – South of France 2022 and *Nos Nsais* – Bab Iddeir Art Gallery Bethlehem 2020. She also participated in art residencies and France and Palestine, like: Verger in Jugon – Bretagne 2023, La Maison Bruneau in Paris November 2022 – December 2023, Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris June-September 2022, Hosh Qndah Compound residency by Ramallah Municipality 2021 and A.M Qattan Foundation's visual arts studio residency 2020. Reem Alnatsheh explores questions of displacement, resistance, and identity through Palestinian folktales and creates parallels between folktales and the reality of contemporary Palestinian culture. Her work speaks to both personal and political struggles inviting the viewer to explore

the interconnections between the two and to engage with the world around them in new and meaningful ways.

**AMIRI BARAKA** (October 7, 1934 – January 9, 2014), born Everett Leroy "LeRoi" Jones in Newark, was one of Greenwich Village's most outspoken poets of the Black Arts Movement during the 1960s and '70s. His political advocacy was both illuminating and confrontational, as he attempted to use his writing to document his experience of blackness in America. Originally joining the military in 1954, Jones quickly found its treatment of African Americans unbearable, and he moved to New York City to attend Columbia University and the New School for Social Research. Through the 1950s, he resided in Greenwich Village, where he encountered the Beat poets like Allen Ginsburg and Jack Kerouac, and became inspired to write poetry to process his experiences. His poetry is methodically confrontational in tone, meant to shock and awaken audiences to the political concerns of Black Americans and the larger civil rights movement. Together with his partner, Hettie Jones (née Cohen), they founded Totem Press and Yugen Magazine, both of which focused on printing Beat and Beat-influenced literature during the 1950s and '60s. Later, following the Murder of Malcolm X in 1965, Jones formally changed his name to Amiri Baraka and moved to Harlem, where he founded the Black Arts Theatre and Repertory School and the Black Arts Movement. Black Arts sought to redefine creative standards of beauty and value to celebrate "Blackness" and allow Black creatives to find self-validation. Through the '70s and '80s, Baraka's politics grew more radical and shifted further towards Black Nationalism and Marxist Third-World Liberation. Baraka was still writing poetry into the 1990s, and his work has been lauded and recognized with a PEN/Faulkner Award, a Rocke-

efeller Foundation Award for Drama, the Langston Hughes Award from City College of New York, while Baraka himself was been awarded honorary fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He passed away in 2014 at the age of 79.

**MIA FEROLETO** has used her spiritual life as a means to guide her work since childhood. Even in grammar school, Feroletto wrote letters to the editors of the local newspapers on key topics such as poverty and animal abuse that were published. Her lifelong commitment is to be part of the solution. She has been known to ruffle a few feathers in the process. Feroletto is a well-known art advisor, activist and artist who divides her time between Vermont and South Dakota. She was the creator of A SHELTER FROM THE STORM: ARTISTS FOR THE HOMELESS OF NEW YORK and ARTWALK NY, an annual event for Coalition for the Homeless that has been copied all around the country since beginning in 1995. Feroletto has organized numerous benefit auctions and large-scale special events at major auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's, and has served on the board of directors of such organizations as Dance Theater Workshop and Sculpture Center. She most recently joined the board of directors of the Tatanka Ska Institute, the Indigenous school being founded by Paula Looking Horse, wife of Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf Woman Pipe. She is the publisher of *New Observations Magazine*, the producer/creator of *HEMP NY CITY*, a partner in the founding of the Thunderheart Center for the Arts in Wasta, South Dakota and the creator and producer of the *Consciousness and Contact* conferences that have received world-wide recognition. She is the host of the *New Observations* podcast on Unknown Country, the channel for all



things Whitley Strieber. Feroletto is a committed animal rights and animal welfare activist. She is determined to maximize visibility for the arts and our cultural world and is currently developing the Adopt An Artist Program to send artists to destinations around the globe in order to create and develop their art. She can be reached at mia.feroletto@gmail.com.

**SAMAR GHATTAS**, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, received her Master's degree in Fine Arts and Graphic Design from the Academy of Fine Arts in Kiev, Ukraine. Thereafter, she returned to her homeland Bethlehem, Palestine, where she had different experiences in different fields of art, then had been a lecturer in fine arts at the University of Bethlehem and other associations. Her work includes watercolor paintings, mixed media, ink, iconography, ceramics, and Photoshop digital media. Her artwork was displayed in various exhibitions through Palestine, Europe, India and the U.S.A. Samar's Art is unique in many aspects. Being one of a few Palestinian woman artists, she is able to merge the Palestinian culture and its social issues through her personal experience and point of view. Samar currently lives and works in her homeland and conveys real life in Palestine. Her main goal is to reflect the Palestinian life and its various dimensions. Samar hopes to continue creating and exhibiting her work in different venues through the Palestinian areas and in the whole world.

**CHRIS HEDGES** is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who was a foreign correspondent and bureau chief in the Middle East and the Balkans for fifteen years for *The New York Times*. He previously worked overseas for *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and NPR. He is host of the Emmy Award-nominated RT America show *On Contact*. Hedges, who holds a Master of Divinity from Harvard Univer-

sity, is the author of numerous books, and was a National Book Critics Circle finalist for *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. He has taught at Columbia University, New York University, Princeton University, and the University of Toronto. He has taught college credit courses through Rutgers University in the New Jersey prison system since 2013.

**AHMED HMEEDAT**, is an artist and the founder of the Palestinian Artists' Consortium. He holds a BA degree in International Law from Al-Quds Bard College in East Jerusalem (the only liberal arts college in the Middle East), a Master of Law from Syracuse University College of Law in Upstate New York, as well as rich experience working in the immigration law field (business and humanitarian immigration) and non-profit organizations in the United States. He is also an artist who contributed to establishing the first Palestinian museum in Washington, D.C., the Museum of the Palestinian People, in 2019. The opening co-exhibit, "Re-imagining A Future in Palestine," featured some of Ahmed's artwork. Ahmed is a self-taught artist who experiments with a variety of media, including watercolors, acrylic, oil, ink, charcoal, and digital. His recent work, "Searching for the Blue," has been featured by Symposium Magazine in the United States.

**HAYA KAABNEH**, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, is a Palestinian visual artist, born in 1991 in Jordan. She has participated in a number of exhibitions in Palestine and abroad, displaying works in Gallery One, the A.M. Qattan Foundation, and the Museum of the Palestinian People (USA), among others. In 2019, Haya launched her first solo exhibition, in collaboration with The Walled Off Hotel, Bethlehem. Primarily using watercolor and acrylic, the artist has produced a large body of work focusing on the plight of Palestinian women as they struggle to change their status quo.

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR** was a Baptist minister and social rights activist in the United States in the 1950s and '60s. He was a leader of the American civil rights movement. He organized a number of peaceful protests as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, including the March on Washington in 1963 and the Montgomery Bus Boycott from 1955 to 1956. His influence has been felt all around the world in the fight for freedom and equality for all people.

**ATI MAIER** is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice includes:

- drawing
- painting
- photography
- 3-D video animation
- installation performance and
- life action video.

She was born in Munich, Germany in 1962 and has studied, lived and worked in Vienna, Berlin and New York City. Maier's 3D video animation was included in the Fokus Bienial in Łódź, Poland and her paintings are part of the permanent collections at the Museum of Modern Art (NYC) and the Museum der bildenden Kuenste Leipzig (Germany), amongst others. She is a recipient of the Pollack-Krasner Foundation grant and a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant. Maier's work has been featured in exhibitions at the Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg (Germany) and "Remote Viewing" at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Her work is included in numerous public collections, including The Museum of Modern Art, The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection, New York; Parrish Art Museum, Montauk, NY; Aspen Art Collection; MART, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Rovereto and Trentino, Italy; Staedtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany; Museum der bildenden Kuenste Leipzig, Bergmeier Collection, Germany; BAM

Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; Guilin Art Museum, Guilin, Guangxi, P.R. China. She currently lives in Brooklyn and New Mexico.

**HAROLD PINTER** Harold Pinter was a British writer, born in London where he lived his whole life. He grew up in a working-class neighborhood in the Hackney district, the son of Jewish immigrants. World War II and the prevailing anti-Semitic sentiment have characterized his writing. Pinter was politically involved in left-wing causes and active in the peace movement. Harold Pinter's writing consists primarily of dramas. A recurring theme in his plays is an inability to communicate in relationships. While the dialog is often clear-cut, the expressions of relationships—balances of power, class and gender divisions—lie beneath the words. His plays sometimes include violence. Combined with their unpredictability, this makes them frightening. At the same time, they also include dark humor. Pinter's writing also has a political dimension, inciting revolt against ruling power.

**LUCIO POZZI** was born in 1935 in Milan, Italy. After living a few years in Rome, where he studied architecture, he came to the United States in 1962, as a guest of the Harvard International Summer Seminar. He then settled in New York and took the U.S. citizenship. After a while, his art began to be seen here and abroad in galleries such as Bykert, John Weber, Gianenzo Sperone, Yvon Lambert, Leo Castelli. He currently lives and works in Hudson, NY, and Valeggio s/M (Verona) Italy. Pozzi is a painter who likes to pursue his painterly concerns in other media as well. In 1978 the Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibited his early videotapes in one of the first single-artist exhibitions of the Projects:Video series. He also sets up large installations and presents performances. He occasionally writes and has taught at the Cooper Union, Yale Graduate Sculpture Program, Princeton University, School of Visual

Arts NY and the Maryland Institute of Art. He currently is an occasional visiting professor at American art schools and European Academies.

His art is represented in great many public and private collections. His paintings are exhibited in public and private galleries worldwide. Retrospectives of his art were held at Kunsthalle Bielefeld (1982) and Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (1983), Germany, and at the Museum of New Art (2001), Detroit, MI, Kalamazoo Institute of Art, MI (2002); Works on Paper, Mus. Contemp. Art, Genova Italy, 2005; Fabrikulture, Hegenheim (Basel), France (2011). His work has been presented at Documenta 6 (1977) and at the Venice Biennale (American Pavilion) in 1980. Lucio Pozzi <lucio Pozzi@gmail.com>

Professor **MAZIN QUMSIYEH** previously served at U.S. universities including Tennessee, Duke and Yale. He is founder and volunteer director of the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (PIBS) at Bethlehem University (<http://palestinature.org> and read accomplishments here <https://www.palestinature.org/annual-reports/10-Years-PIBS.pdf>).

Qumsiyeh published over 180 scientific papers, over 30 book chapters, hundreds of articles, and several books including "Sharing the Land of Canaan" and "Popular Resistance in Palestine" on topics ranging from environmental impact of colonization to environmental and climate justice to cultural heritage to human rights to biodiversity conservation to cancer. He oversaw a number of projects ranging from formulating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to empowerment projects with farmers, women, and children that benefitted tens of thousands.

He is laureate of the Paul K. Feyerabend Foundation award the Takreem award, peacemaker of the year award, among others. See also <http://qumsiyeh.org> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazin\\_Qumsiyeh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mazin_Qumsiyeh)

**JAMIE STERN-WEINER** was born in Israel and raised in London, UK. A doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford and associate editor at OR Books, his edited and authored publications include *Moment of Truth: Tackling Israel-Palestine's Toughest Questions* (OR Books, 2018), *How the EHRC Got It So Wrong* (Verso, 2021), and *Deluge: Gaza and Israel from Crisis to Cataclysm* (2024).

**AHMAD THAHER**, member of the Palestinian Artists Consortium, is a visual artist always hunting and capturing contrast in the surroundings, staring and analyzing color light and texture at each scene. Most of his works presents Kufi calligraphy, geometric (Islamic) patterns, abstract and psychedelic arts, emphasizing simplicity and the complexity of life.

**ALLICETTE TORRES** is a Puerto Rican artist, curator, and arts writer who has lived in Harlem for over 25 years. As a photographer and visual composer, the core of her work is about memory. She includes aspects of film, performance art, and sculpture in her schemes, orchestrating scenarios that imbue the pain of the past and its ramifications in the present. Often she explores highly charged themes such as repression, history, and race; her photographs ask, "How does history coupled with choices or inactions shape the fabric and legacy of who we are?" During her years of living in New York City, she has been part of the founding of many Harlem based arts organizations, some of those being artHarlem, Harlem Art Walking Tour (open studio tour), Parlour 153, an artist salon space, and ArtFormsUs a Harlem based artist collective. Additionally, she created Evidence of Things Not Seen, an artist collective founded to address the invisibility of Latinx artists in the arts in New York City, and Clear Nude magazine, a print publication focusing on the photographic nude. Currently, she serves as the chair of the International Caucus of the WCA,



a national women's arts organization that also has NGO status in the United Nations. Allicette's work practice is partially art activist, with flourishes of photojournalism, magical realism, and Latino narratives. Her works speak to women's issues, post-colonial thought, and what it is to be a Puerto Rican. She has exhibited locally, nationally, and Internationally. Web site: [www.allicette.com](http://www.allicette.com) Instagram: @allicette

**AMIR TOUMIE** is a political and social activist for Palestinian liberation and rights in both the Palestinian communities in 48' and Chicago. He worked as the Director of Government Relations in the Mossawa Center - The Advocacy Center for the rights of Palestinian Citizens in Israel. As an activist, Amir co-founded and served as president of Haifa Youth Movement, and as a member of the youth movement in his displaced Palestinian village of Iqrit. While engaging in activism in all fields, he has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Asian Studies from the University of Haifa, and a dual Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the University of Haifa and the University of Warsaw. Amir is now a 4th year PhD candidate of Political Science in the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), and a board member of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at UIC.

**JAMES TUNNEY** comes from Dublin and studied law at Trinity before qualifying as a barrister through The King's Inn and also engaging in postgraduate study at Queen Mary College, University of London. He taught English to all ages and painted in Spain before going back to teach law in Scotland for many years at two universities. He established innovative modules and degree programmes, teaching and publishing on subjects such as EU, IP, Communications Technology, Antitrust, World Trade, and Indigenous Rights. As well

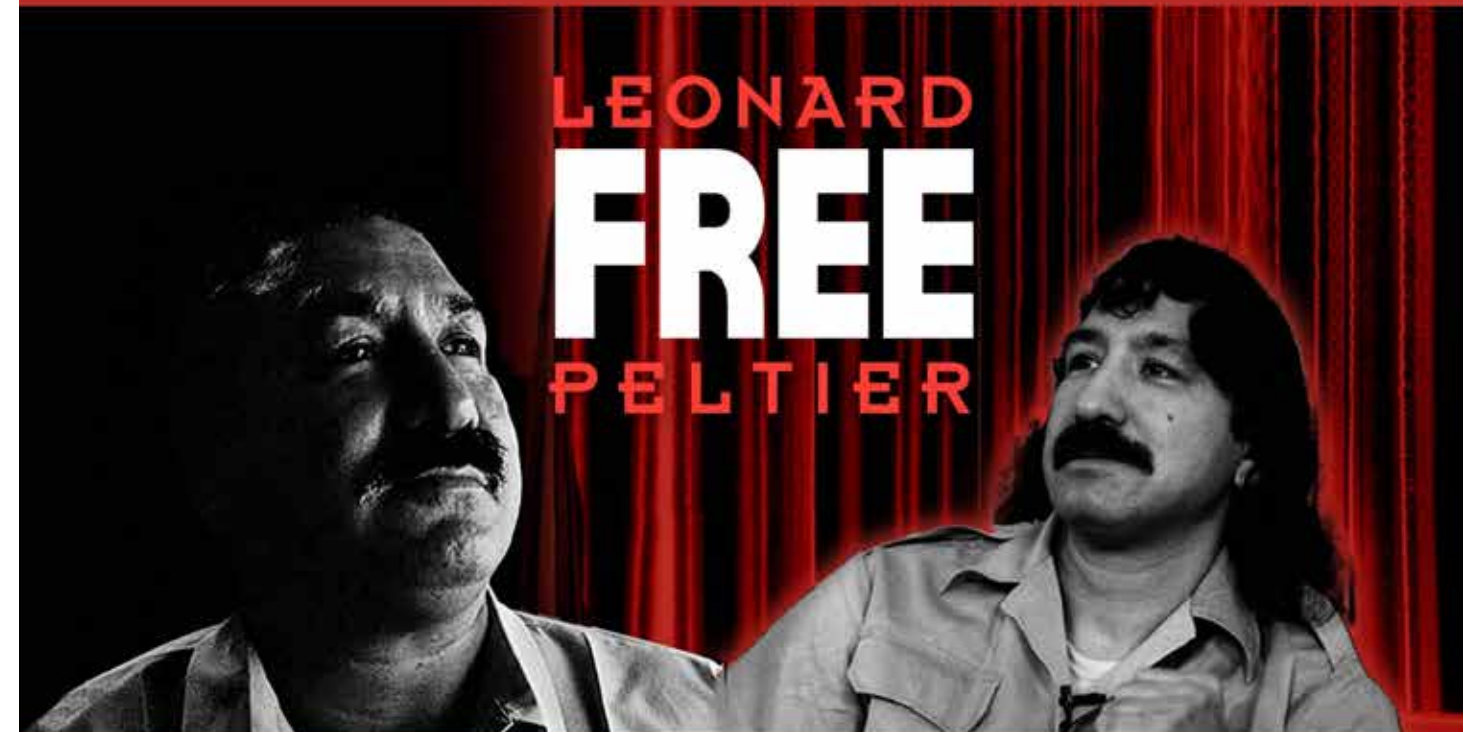
as being a lecturer, senior lecturer and Visiting Professor, he was a member, director or advisor of a number of professional bodies, nationally and internationally. He also worked as a legal consultant for international bodies such as the UNDP, to propose legislation to governments in Africa and elsewhere, and talked in many countries, as well as giving high level seminars in places like China. Then he left the academic and legal world entirely to solely concentrate on artistic and spiritual pursuits. He has exhibited mainly in Sweden, Norway and the UK and his paintings are in private collections as far afield as New Zealand. He has written two dystopian novels and two books on mystical consciousness, the most recent being *The Mystery of the Trapped Light: Mystical Thoughts in the Dark Age of Scientism*. He is currently a Professional Member of the Galileo Commission. His chief concern is to promote individual spiritual evolution and to warn against collectivism and the technological straitjacket.

**ANNIE WENGER-NABIGON**, Ph.D., is a retired therapist and social work educator. She was born in mountainous southern territory of the Osage Peoples (northcentral Arkansas), the oldest child of Mennonite medical missionaries, and spent most of her childhood years in a Mennonite community in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, the traditional territory of the Susquehannock Peoples. Between the beginning of her story and the current time, she has traveled across many territories, borders and boundaries, always learning, always finding the Light. She is the author of *Enough Light for the Next Step*. She is a dual citizen of Canada and the United States, honouring her family on all sides of the borders.



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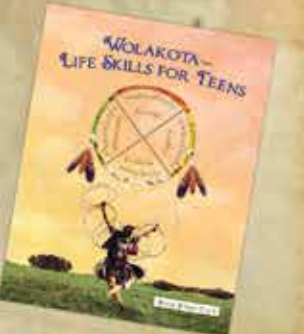
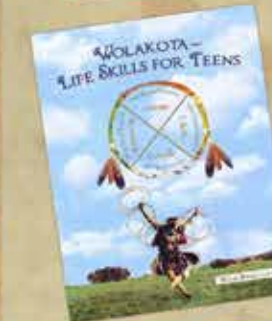
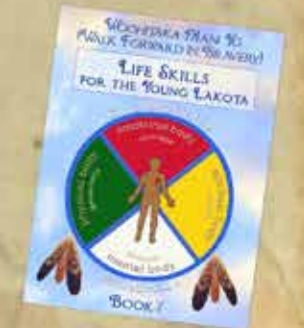
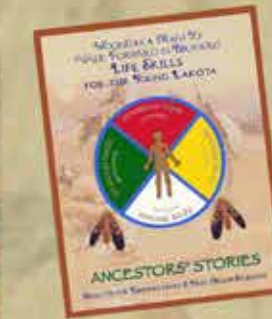
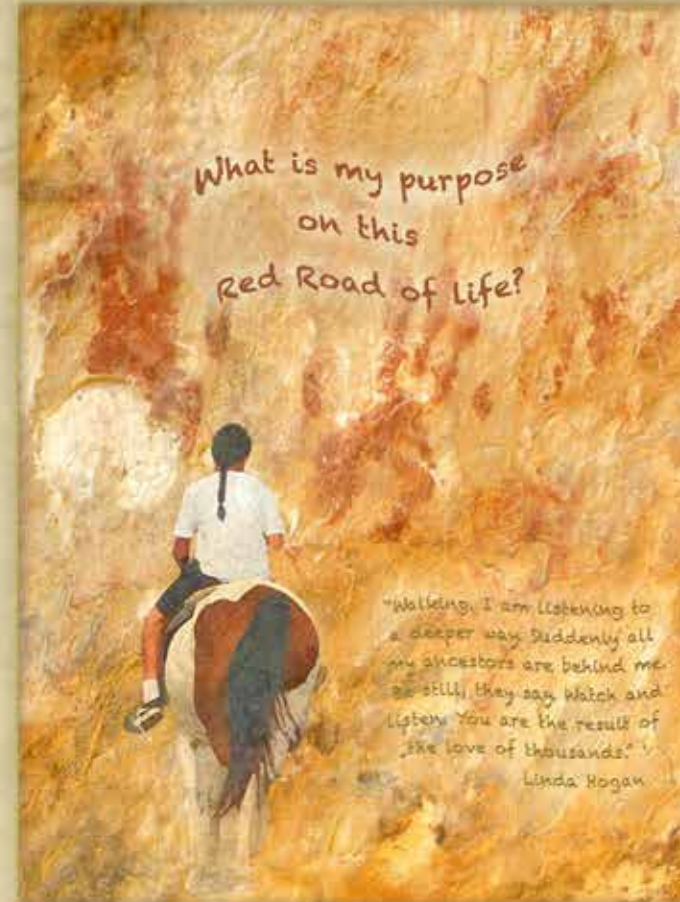
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OCETI WAKAN  
P.O. BOX 1958  
PINE RIDGE, SD 57770  
[OCETIWAKAN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:OCETIWAKAN@GMAIL.COM)  
(605) 454-1489

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We create culturally-based, life skills curriculum for students in grades K-12 for the prevention of addiction and suicide, the preservation of the culture and language, and healing of the people. It is currently being used by thousands of students in 17 reservation schools in South Dakota. Your support will help it grow to reach more of our children who are at risk and in need. Wopila!



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## Adopt an Artist Program

### THE ADOPT AN ARTIST PROGRAM

#### Background

The Adopt an Artist Program is a new organization created and produced by Mia Feroletto, the originator of ARTWALK NY and other groundbreaking events in the New York City contemporary art world. Feroletto has now conceived of the creation of the Fresh Art Fund for artists. Creator of The Adopt An Artist Program, Mia Feroletto, was trained as a painter and holds an MA in lithography. She feels that her art education was the most important gift of her life in that it taught her to create from nothing each and every day. Whether it be working on a blank piece of canvas or envisioning a project such as ARTWALK NY, or The Adopt An Artist Program, the same principles apply in terms of combining the seeds of creativity with the practical needs of developing a project in the world. The Adopt An Artist Program re-configures the present-day art world and brings it home to the daily lives of all of us. It holds the possibility of supporting creativity in each and every one of us.

#### Objective

Stimulate creativity and create a catalyst for the growth of the art industry.

#### Strategy

Create a domestic and international exchange program for artists and the public.

For more information contact Mia Feroletto at [mia.feroletto@gmail.com](mailto:mia.feroletto@gmail.com)



Source: Ocha