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MAHDI SABBAGH

Introduction

RENEWING SOLIDARITY

"How can you live in this place?" shouted our history and geography teacher, entering our tenth-grade classroom.[1] "I do not understand how anyone can live like this!" She was late, flustered, and, as we soon learned, had just crossed a checkpoint where Israeli soldiers had harassed her. Although she was not Palestinian, she had chosen to live in a Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem during the depths of the second Intifada, and her experience at the checkpoint reflected a daily occurrence for her Palestinian students. She was right to be angry: the ways our lives were endangered, our environment besieged and reduced to a military experiment, were hard to bear.

At that moment, she had the option to pack up and leave Jerusalem. But she returned to our classroom daily, and crossed the checkpoint daily, until we had all passed our *baccalauréat* and graduated. The simple, inconceivable act of staying in Palestine exemplified solidarity as it's typically discussed: a foreigner eschewed many easier lifestyles to live among us, choosing to contribute to our community despite its many challenges. But solidarity was a way of life that we as Palestinians already understood intimately. We protected each other on the streets, on buses, in schools, at checkpoints. Solidarity was and continues to be a collective culture in which we're raised and a code of ethics that we continue to practice. Perhaps those who visited or

moved to Palestine to be with us hadn't brought solidarity with them but had simply learned how to be Palestinian.

Many of us carry sensibilities of solidarity in our day-to-day life. We know when to hide, but also when to render ourselves visible in order to support each other. We develop languages—textual, oral, and bodily; through symbolism, through image, through sound—that make the political legible. The genesis of this volume lay in the questions I asked of my own subjectivity in relation to solidarity, and soon enough that inquiry encompassed a plurality of knowledge based on the infinitely diverse experiences of its authors. Solidarities and the many forms they can take are always new, because they require constant renewal, updating, adjusting in order to move side by side with struggles and movements. *Their Borders, Our World* is a reflection on what we perhaps already know because we are in it daily, attempting to make sense of the great struggles—but also the great possibilities—that come when we stand beyond the limitations imposed on our imaginations to be in solidarity with each other.

"Thank you for resisting the invitation to dance on our graves,"[2] or Making Choices Under Siege

To step outside the distinctly complex negotiations central to Palestinian life for a moment, writing about, and thinking clearly within, our dystopian reality is not a simple task. The term "burnout" has become inadequate to describe the level of emotional exhaustion that individuals and communities face as they grapple with the ongoing pandemic, the clearer-than-ever disposability of our lives, and the devaluing of our labor. The Covid-19 pandemic, of course, isn't the culprit; it merely slipped comfortably into the gaps of our societies and made them larger, more visible, more concrete, harder to patch. Inequality, we keep repeating to ourselves, is at an all-time high in virtually every sector of society. Inequality is discussed as a condition to be remedied by policies, by law, by economics, by taxes, by charity, by capital. But those who cannot make ends meet, whose livelihoods and lives are violated, experience inequality not as a bureaucratic operation but as injustice, as a continuous siege. The pandemic, and governments' kneejerk reactions to it, besieged communities already dispossessed by capitalism's extractive properties. This is where relationality steps in as a tactical remedy to this condition: it calls for us to come together. But drawing connections between different realities—each of which grapples with inequality differently—can be difficult and reductive, prone to an infinity of errors. And yet, my hope is that this very act, of drawing connections, can lead to novel possibilities, maybe even solutions.

Because I come from Jerusalem, I have learned to see injustice vividly, often to my own detriment and sometimes even erroneously. It has been ingrained in me since my birth in a city under siege where the oppression of a colonized people is visible to the most untrained of naked eyes: from the daily violence inflicted on Palestinian youth by Israeli soldiers at Damascus Gate, to the policing and harassment of Palestinian bodies at dozens of now permanently constructed checkpoints, to the planning policies that expropriate Palestinian lands and that refuse to give out building permits, then send in the bulldozers when Palestinians build.

Much like in Manu Karuka's framework on the North American continent, Palestine is reduced to a state of "frontier," where a suspension of morals and ethics allows the allegedly democratic government, benefiting corporations, businesses, and individual settlers to cross "the line from civilization to savagery" with complete impunity.[3] In the case of Palestine, this frontier, of course, isn't a line but a spatial condition that occurs whenever Israeli settler colonialism approaches a Palestinian space, Palestinian built environment, or Palestinian body. But far from inducing despair (how much injustice can our societies put up with?) this has made me attuned to settler colonialism's banality—the banality of its architecture, of its predictable similarity wherever humans might inflict it. This hyperawareness to injustice in settler-colonial formations is the backdrop for my own subjectivity. In New York, from which I am writing this reflection, injustice is also painfully visible, albeit in very different contexts than in Jerusalem. It is visible in the movement of people through the city's gentrifying neighborhoods. Simply walk down any street and observe the contrast in people's lives: Who commutes at 6:00 a.m.? Who gets to work from home or from a coffeeshop? Who delivers food to whose door? Who takes the subway, who drives, who gets driven? There are infinite examples of inequity's everyday manifestations that need not be listed here to acknowledge that they also (when applied systemically) result in a condition where injustice dominates. Instead, the fundamental questions through which I would like to frame this reflection are: What does one do, how does one act, and where does one position oneself vis-à-vis the banality of inequality, vis-à-vis injustice? While this volume doesn't directly answer the questions here, it uses them as a backdrop to explore solidarity with and from Palestine.

This volume floats in the flows of liberatory ideas that come from under and in spite of settler-colonial geographies. It understands solidarity as a collective work in progress with immense potential and possibility for a liberated, just future. Solidarity—coming or acting together based on or in order to achieve a shared set of goals and principles—has been at the heart of the Palestine Festival of Literature (PalFest), itself the product of a network of writers and thinkers concerned with Palestine. Solidarity has always been there, explicitly and implicitly, and this volume invites us to discuss solidarity as an epistemology. Good solidarity work is continuous: it doesn't cease to move and expand; it builds, it amasses people and knowledge. In his 2008 letter to the Palestine Festival of Literature, which was published in the 2017 volume *This Is Not a Border*, Mahmoud Darwish describes solidarity visits to Palestine as "an expression of what Palestine has come to mean to the living human conscience."[4] For Darwish, visiting Palestine for the exclusive sake of being in solidarity is an act of engagement, of understanding one's role, of truth-searching. Many of the essays in this book directly and indirectly propose ways of doing, acting, and positioning, both taking Darwish's letter to heart and proving that the letter's call is well and alive.

The Palestinian people have never ceased to struggle for the liberation of our lands and built environments. However, at least prior to October 2023, promises

and tactics proposed by old leadership—in the occupied territories, but also in 1948 Palestine (Israel)—have failed because, simply put, that leadership has profited from gradual Israeli settler-colonialist expansion on Palestinian houses, lands, and resources. Scholar Ahmad El Hirbawi pointed to how the Palestinian public, at least in 2022, had largely ceased to see its single-party political leadership in Gaza and the West Bank as representative of or effective in communal and political life; against the will of the public, the leadership had instead defaulted to tribalism, meaning to modes of governance based on loyalty to political parties.[5] This observation was written prior to the genocidal war on Gaza, whose political, human, environmental, psychological, and moral ramifications we have yet to fully comprehend. What we do understand is that it has eclipsed much of what we believed and simultaneously provided us with a painful clarity that we are not safe from genocide. This ongoing Nakba propels us to organize even more, and proudly. The 2021 Unity Intifada rendered clear to many that Palestinians, and especially young Palestinians, have been shifting their collective discourse toward new grassroots narratives and directions throughout 1948 Palestine, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, refugee camps across the Arab world, and the diaspora beyond. On the ground, this shift is seen in the pluralization of activist voices coming from Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan, Gaza, Haifa, Nazareth, and the Naqab, but also importantly in growing ties to other liberatory movements across the planet, such as the Black Lives Matter and NoDAPL movements and other Indigenous and landed struggles. Today's conditions of settler colonialism in Palestine are as dire as ever, but even a genocide could not crush the poetry of Refaat Alareer, who was martyred on December 6, 2023, in Gaza. His gargantuan words, "If I must die / . . . / let it be a tale," ricochet through cities across the planet in solidarity with Palestine.

In fact, central to the Palestinian struggle is the telling and retelling of tales, stories, memories that are both real and imagined. There is a veritable sprouting of new Palestinian critical perspectives on our history and geography, embodied in archival projects such as حكايا غزة (*Gaza Story*); Grassroots Al-Quds; Sabil Library; Rasha Salti and Kristine Khouri's *Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978*; the Palestinian Museum Digital Archive; Mohanad Yaqubi (Subversive Film)'s *Tokyo Reels*; Lama Suleiman's *Parallax Haifa*; Danah Abdulla and Sarona Abuaker's *Countless Palestinian Futures*; Skin Deep's *Palestine: Ways of Being*, curated by Zena Agha; and Lifta Volumes. These and many other projects begin to suggest a diversification of liberatory narratives that reformulate existing archives, build archives where there are none, and infuse Palestinian history with feminist ideologies and futurism. This, in turn, produces a potentiality for many futures for Palestine, despite an entrenching settler-colonial apparatus. Throughout this long political shift, the praxis of solidarity appears like a thread, weaving through different movements back and forth and enabling the exchange of ideas, tactics, and tools.

In *Time-Space Colonialism*, Juliana Hu Pegues studies Asian laborers' and Indigenous Tlingit people's experiences in

settler colonialism in Alaska.[6] Through their (forced) labor in canneries, each community has a window onto the other's commonality, and this, Hu Pegues shows, subsequently forms a potential bedrock for mutuality in solidarity. This potential lies in tapping into the possibility of solidarity from muddled and complex realities where it is infinitely easier to conform to the illusion of assimilation through hard labor—not having a choice in where you get displaced to but certainly having a choice in how you position yourself politically. The *Funambulist*'s numerous publications form another example of solidarity praxis, becoming an aggregate of writings that highlight liberation activism and fuel solidarity work. Jewish American allies and Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) activists such as those in Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) enact through their work a future possibility that Zionism categorically denies us. Coerced or performative coexistence runs amok and typically upholds severely unequal sharing of power and resources—a "peacewashing." But JVP's important work, on the contrary, not only assists and complements the liberatory narratives coming out of Palestine but also fundamentally enacts a future inevitability of pluralism and genuine coexistence.

Solidarity with Palestine is, of course, a decades-long project. In their research and exhibition work, curators Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti touch on the *International Art Exhibition for Palestine*, organized by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1978 in Beirut. The exhibition was an important culmination of art and media with the dual function of garnering solidarity and educating a Palestinian and larger Arab population on the struggle. It also had international ambitions: parts of the exhibition traveled to Japan, then to Iran, then to Norway.[7] Khouri and Salti describe solidarity as simultaneously "an incarnation" and "a projection."[8] Grassroots solidarity work here led to a larger cultural project that benefited the PLO, and Khouri and Salti remind us that "the first pillar of international solidarity with the Palestinian struggle was spontaneous, grassroots pan-Arab mobilization."[9] Solidarity is a possibility harnessed by both organizational bodies and grassroots movements, and, ultimately, solidarity is a tool available to us all, as individuals, as collectives, as families, and as communities. Remembering historical solidarity, pondering the relationalities that result from solidarity, and tapping into a contemporary web of solidarity thought is perhaps an attempt to exist in this world, for many of us marginalized and violated by the day-to-day violence of existing structures of power.

Witnessing

A fundamental precursor for solidarity building is the act of witnessing. It is certainly possible to understand settler colonialism in Palestine by reading, looking at maps, and so on. But witnessing—what Gil Hochberg calls "countervisual practice" that undermines "Israeli visual dominance"—allows us to visualize what, in the case of Palestine, is often unfathomable injustice.[10] Through her study of photography and Palestinian art, Alessandra Amin reminds us that to "bear witness" to Palestinian suffering from outside of Palestine constitutes a gaze that can "substitute the impotent and voyeuristic act of looking for meaningful intervention against the atrocities depicted."[11] Witnessing

by itself is in fact futile. Witnessing must be integrated into a practice of solidarity to formulate meaningful change. To witness injustice, seared into the landscape, into the built environment, allows the mind to ask a cascade of questions: How do people experience injustice? Why are they subjugated to injustice? Who designed this injustice? How was it funded? Who benefits from it? Witnessing the built environment helps us begin to tackle these questions, as the answer lies right in front of us. As entrenched and complex as settler colonialism might seem at first, the forms in which it manifests itself spatially are self-evident, their function mundanely obvious.

In Palestine, as in other geographies plagued by settler colonialism, witnessing has become an ingrained tradition. It is a skill we pick up shortly after birth. We learn to cry, to eat, to walk, and then to witness. During the second Intifada, we were mostly locked up at home in Beit Hanina, Jerusalem. In 2004, on a cool summer night, my father called me to go with him to the roof of our apartment building. From the roof he pointed in the direction of Ramallah: "Look." You could see Ramallah's dark skyline (like us in East Jerusalem, they had also lost electricity) and every few minutes a bright flash of light would fall from the sky onto the buildings, followed by a long, faint boom. I will always remember this day as a lesson in witnessing. The importance is to pay attention, to turn to where the crime is happening, to observe, to remember. Witnessing is perhaps important because it acts as a foundation for undeniability, a foundation on which one can begin to reach out once the violence has paused. A foundation for solidarity.

Witnessing is also an act that can help solidify an existing understanding of injustice. Maybe we ought to understand witnessing as an active approach, not a passive one. During the 2020 Black Lives Matter uprising in the United States, protesters learned to pause and observe anytime a police officer stopped a Black individual on the street, sometimes through the cameras on their phones. It became, one would hope, common knowledge that it is one's civic responsibility to observe, to not turn one's back on an interaction that by its very design is an enactment of white supremacy. The documentation of state-sponsored brutality—as we have seen in St. Louis, in Standing Rock, in Cairo, in Hong Kong, in Jerusalem—not only becomes active witnessing but also suggests how savvy our societies have become at building bodies of evidence and disseminating them quickly. Through his work on mutual aid in moments of crisis, Dean Spade reminds us that "contact with the complex realities of injustice" eventually births a commitment to solidarity.[12]

Witnessing can also be applied as a spatial and visual lens to see buildings, streets, cities and how they operate and behave. Witnessing allows the witness to develop a spatial index of injustice. On a recent visit to the American Southwest, I went to visit the ancestral land of the O'odham and Piipaash people in Arizona. I was, of course, aware of their ongoing dispossession, but it wasn't until I saw Phoenix and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Reservation that I understood what exactly dispossession looked like—and how hauntingly familiar it felt. Dispossession, here and elsewhere, is a condition that

permeates all aspects of daily life and every granule of the built environment. Witnessing the stark contrast between the wealthy Scottsdale urban sprawl—manicured, desertscape lawns, serviced by golf courses and immaculately paved roads—and the Salt River Reservation's roadside trash and cracked asphalt roads revealed in just how many ways dispossession manifests itself spatially on the reservation. Settlement expanded throughout the 1800s, and then-president Rutherford B. Hayes's 1879 Executive Order established a 680,000-acre reservation that solidified and legalized settlement expansion by confining the Indigenous population. Later that year, Hayes signed another executive order that reduced the Salt River Reservation to just 46,627 acres, effectively cutting off the O'odham and Piipaash peoples from the majority of their land and access to the river that had been their source of food, culture, and identity, and making way for what became the city of Phoenix.[13] America is especially skilled at constructing inequality, and thresholds between unequal allocations of resources can be seen everywhere: from disparities in street and water infrastructure between Scottsdale and the Salt River Reservation, to how supermarkets and fresh produce are allocated along racial lines in New York's Hunts Point, to how access to abortion begins and ends along shifting invisible borders at the strike of a Supreme Court justice's pen. In actively witnessing what oppressive systems do to communities and their environments we begin to build a tradition of witnessing, one that makes solidarity not only possible but inevitable.

"Although I often feel lost on this trail, I know I am not alone,"[14] or Mutuality

Solidarity with Palestine also inspired Palestinians to look outward toward the possibility of new coalitions: with other Indigenous people, with Black liberation, with movements to open borders. We have much in common with others who have been crushed by settler colonialism elsewhere, and this commonality can become mutual solidarity, or mutuality, if we act on it. This important political space, between silence and appropriation, is difficult and uncomfortable, as it perhaps should be. There is also a particular danger of diluting, of muddling, of confusing, that happens when we attempt to equate conditions across disparate timelines, disparate geographies, and disparate configurations of racial and colonial formations. Meaningful mutuality does not flatten this difference, nor does it accept its limitations and walk away; it instead recognizes difference and learns from it.

Kanaka Maoli activist and educator J. Kēhaulani Kauanui describes how in the 2019 mobilization to protect the sacred, living mountain of Mauna Kea in Hawai'i, solidarity in many forms poured in from neighboring islands and from around the globe and that the key was "responding to what people on the ground are calling for."[15] This can happen in many ways: by amplifying the voices of those on the ground, by using the language that they put forward, by respecting and solidifying their picket lines. Solidarity can only be effective in response to guidance from those directly affected, and when solidarity moves in both directions it becomes exponentially more powerful.

Mutuality is a tactic that first requires and then further enables communities to listen and learn from one another to form ideological ties, coalitions, and triangulations of knowledge exchange.[16] Mutuality is power.

Under our mutually devastated environments, one need not look far to find shared struggles and opportunities for mutuality. For example, although concerns of land and housing in Palestine (such as in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan) and issues of houselessness in Indigenous communities on Turtle Island originated in different temporal, political, and social formations, people confronting these conditions could, in recognizing each other, learn from each other's perseverance.[17] Prisoner movements in Palestine and abolitionist ideology in Black communities and Indigenous communities in North America have much to learn from each other as well. One can imagine future possibilities for mutual learning between Palestine and endless other Indigenous geographies: Armenia, Kurdistan, Western Sahara, Haudenosaunee territory, Puerto Rico, Dinétah, Guatemala, Hawai'i, Aotearoa, among many others. The intention isn't to reduce liberatory struggles to abstractions or metaphors, nor is it to cover every ground, but to propose and demonstrate the infinite possibility of relating to one another, of mutualities yet to come.

Mutuality, of course, is already occurring. For example the Indigenous group the Red Nation has made a pledge of solidarity to Palestinian liberation, highlighting the important role of what they call "lateral solidarity" in the Indigenous liberation movement.[18] Their position paper "The Right of Return Is LANDBACK" makes clear connections between Palestine's Land Day, a day when Palestinians commemorate the expropriation of their land and the killing of their people in 1976 by the Israeli state, and LANDBACK, a call to give land back to Indigenous people on Turtle Island.[19] Another example is the slogan "No Ban on Stolen Land" deployed by Melanie Yazzie and Nick Estes at a protest against the Trump administration's Executive Order 13769, which banned travelers from several majority-Muslim countries. The slogan, and its subsequent viral spread on social media, called into question our understanding of borders imposed by settler states by instead turning to "migrant and refugee justice grounded in Indigenous sovereignty."[20] The decades-long relationship between South African and Palestinian anti-apartheid, grassroots movements has steadily grown in impact in recent decades. In July 2022, South Africa's minister of international relations and cooperation, Naledi Pandor, called for Israel to be designated an apartheid state. "As oppressed South Africans," she stated, "we experienced firsthand the effects of racial inequality, discrimination, and denial, and we cannot stand by while another generation of Palestinians are left behind."[21] The possibility for a different relationality, for kinship, occurs when we reach out and attempt to be in mutual solidarity. Palestinian American writer Steven Salaita calls this "inter/nationalism" and reminds us that this shift in thought, in practice, and in worldview can and should also occur in scholarship.[22]

Settler colonialism pushes colonized people into silos and forces them onto islands of resistance. Building mutuality reminds us that we in fact are not alone. Visual

cues—for example, a large, hand-painted "NO DAPL" sign tucked behind a local eatery at the Salt River Reservation, a George Floyd mural painted on a destroyed building in Gaza City, the raising of an Algerian flag next to a Palestinian one over al-Aqsa Mosque or at a football game—all remind us of the power of mutual solidarity to transcend geographic distance and isolation. They remind us that our struggles are interconnected in a number of ways: not only are there multiple struggles occurring simultaneously against colonial regimes that behave with expected similarities, but also our traditions of resistance, or what Estes calls an "accumulation of resistance"[23] have the potential to be interconnected, to teach us, and to give us moral and ideological grounding on which to continue what often feels like an impossible task.

Still Steadfast, Still Persevering, or صمود

In the Palestinian context, this "accumulation of resistance" has a particular context: that of صمود (*sumud*), or steadfast perseverance. Palestinians have developed a collective praxis of resistance that has become ingrained and can be conceptualized in many ways. The practice of sumud is an ideological principle developed after the 1967 war, when the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell under Israeli occupation. Sumud suggests a third way of existing, beyond submission or exile.[24] Some practices of sumud look inward—for example, when one stays put on one's land.[25] This *static* sumud is a practice seen, for example, in Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah, where Palestinians' lives are made unlivable by Israel's policies of ethnic cleansing, as well as by settler organizations that view Palestinian lives as disposable, as less than human. Palestinians' will and ability to stay in their homes despite daily harassment is a practice of sumud. This also appears in the acts of building and renovating homes. This *architectural* sumud is a defiant practice that puts the needs of the residents before the bureaucracy that illegalizes the very act of building on one's own land.[26]

Sumud can be practiced individually, but when practiced collectively it begins to also produce communal awareness. Practiced at the scale of an entire community, it is a sumud that aims to build political consciousness, establish relational bonds of care, and develop politically active communities. *Communal* sumud is especially critical because it has the ability to break down fear: fear of waving a Palestinian flag, fear of taking the Israeli municipality to court, fear of saying no to exploitation, fear of pushing back. After the 2014 kidnapping, torture, and murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir by Israeli right-wing nationalists, his family did not have to deal with the tragedy alone: the entirety of Shu'fat and Beit Hanina rose in rebellion to protest the murder, creating a condition of high visibility that ultimately forced Israeli authorities to arrest and try the murderers. Jerusalem's Palestinians rose again, in unison, after the Israeli army executed Shireen Abu Akleh in 2022, forcing the world to witness and to react to the frontier condition that exposes the lack of democratic practices in Israel, but also warning the Israeli authorities that Palestinians will reject their assumed disposability and honor every living being. Protest, even when it might appear futile, is a practice of sumud. Another crucial example of communal sumud is seen in the ability of Gazans to remain alive and defiant despite the crushing Israeli-Egyptian blockade, the inadequate nutritional rations dictated by the blockade, and a total lack of accountability for Israeli war crimes committed during the almost annual military assaults on Gaza between 2006 and 2022.[27] Gaza practiced sumud through the Great Marches of Return, but also through the people's daily lives, constantly coming up with new solutions to cope with unfathomable conditions. Such practices of coming together in protest constitute communal sumud. These moments become critical in Palestinian teaching, in witnessing and rendering visible what Israel tries desperately to conceal abroad through elaborate public relations campaigns and as popular political education.

We typically think of sumud as a principle that one enacts on the land, in Palestine, under occupation. But what if repertoires of sumud are also useful to those who are not in Palestine, but who work toward justice in Palestine? Other critical practices of sumud look further afield, toward the world outside of historic Palestine. As more Palestinians find themselves in refugee camps, in the diaspora, in self-imposed exiles at all four corners of the planet, sumud takes on new forms, ones that reach outward and bring in allyships, networks of solidarity. What does it mean to hold on to sumud in exile? How does this relate to solidarity? Palestine activism is regularly suppressed and censored in the West, in ways that at times echo the suppression of freedom of expression and of political affiliation under direct Israeli rule. In exile, solidarity also requires steadfastness, the ability to continue to act in solidarity despite attempts at silencing and censorship. Sumud is an increasingly effective Palestinian praxis that latches on to solidarity and helps it build ties across the planet, reaching out to new locales, emboldening allies, and forming unprecedented connections with other struggles. This *global* sumud has historically, ironically been fueled by the forced exiles of Palestinian thinkers and activists who learned to be steadfast under Israeli rule first. For example, in 1970 Sabri Jiryis was forced out of historic Palestine and resettled in Beirut. Instead of stopping his activism, he brought his political knowledge from the Land Movement (Al Ard) to the PLO's work in Lebanon. His exile, far from ending his sumud, intensified it—now as an outward-facing tactic that allowed him to take part in a nascent network of solidarity. Global sumud teaches us that one need not be in Palestine, or even Palestinian, to remain steadfast in solidarity with Palestine.

This volume takes this question further by asking whether tactics of steadfast perseverance can be helpful when adopted by other communities that work toward decolonization, wherever they might be. With mutuality in mind, the volume also asks whether Palestinians in their sumud can learn from Black and Indigenous societies and their tactics of survival and resistance. What might a kind of sumud that learns from other struggles and returns to Palestine with a more expanded repertoire of resistance look like?

Writing on Solidarities as "Poetic Knowledge"[28]

While the catalyst of this volume was the May 2021 Palestinian Unity Intifada, much of the writing and editing work occurred

closer to the assassination of Shireen Abu Akleh, another act of heinous colonial violence that garnered immense international solidarity with Palestine across the planet.

Nevertheless, this volume is not to be understood as a response to a specific event, year, or phase of settler colonialism, but rather as a reflection that can travel back and forth in time with the ebbs and flows of resistance movements. Perhaps it can aim to be added to the Palestinian critical perspectives mentioned above, and hope to be understood, in the words of Robin D. G. Kelley, as "poetic knowledge," meaning an imagination, an effort to see future possibility in the present. Kelley reminds us that "things need not always be this way."[29]

Israel exports techniques and technologies of war and biopolitical governmentality (of debilitation) to the world,[30] and Palestine becomes the testing ground for resistance, for life, for cultural production, and for global solidarities in the seams of nation-states and at the peripheries of state-sanctioned narratives. What Palestine can offer the world is a manual for *means*: means for twenty-first-century life, for kinship, for hiding, for survival under extreme disparities of wealth and harsh environmental conditions. This increasingly vital knowledge is not always tangible or written. It is produced once we practice relationality and solidarity work.

Although some of the thinkers who tirelessly contributed here experienced Palestine through PalFest's 2019 festival, this volume became a reality once I reached out to them two years later with a prompt on solidarity and its future. It is difficult to write about violence, let alone to build solidarity knowledge in the face of it, when its pain is fresh in one's mind. The hope is that the various essays of this volume are legible to our readers in any and all stages of witnessing structural violence, attempting mutuality work, and practicing sumud.

The ten authors you will read here each cover a world of ideas. In contributions loosely grouped in three parts, Choices under Siege, Witnessing, and Mutuality, the authors share their political choice-making, their perceptive vision, and their efforts at mutual understanding. When we begin to ask questions, how do we confront the need to take difficult political stances? Keller Easterling takes deep cuts through time to encourage us to try to be in Palestine. Tareq Baconi takes us to Gaza where he asks us to confront the abject. Dina Omar embarks on the difficult journey of unlearning by seeing the ways Palestinians are perpetually gaslit by those who uphold structural power today. How do we make sense of the destruction, of the uprooting, of the pain that we witness? Samia Henni takes us back in time to look at records that expose French and Israeli practices of nuclear destruction in the colonized deserts of Algeria and Palestine. Omer Shah takes us back and forth between the holy sanctuaries of Islam and the hegemonies of power that coerce them. Kareem Rabie shows us how people form identities within worlds of capitalist alienation in which exile is often inevitable. Given this seemingly impossible reality, how is mutuality then constructed? Ellen van Neerven intimately gears us through the possibility of surviving unfathomable erasure together. Omar Robert Hamilton stitches Cairo and Jerusalem together, reflecting on the urban changes transforming both cities into ugly, hypersurveilled,

anti-cities. Mabel O. Wilson, through her attentive eyes, teaches us how to read the violence of architecture, leaving us with the guiding words of Frantz Fanon.

This anthology in no way claims to function as a complete aggregate of solidarities, as that would be impossible. It should instead be understood as a humble contribution to an increasingly expanding web of solidarity thought that connects archipelagos severed from each other by design. Read this volume as an instigation, a call to continue to think differently. Read it for its proposed language, proposed analysis, proposed futures that might help us continue to weave this web of defiance that relentlessly grabs the attention of the fragile and insecure power structures of planetary settler colonialism. Read it as a catalyst for connections, a window into the propelling world of possibilities that solidarities grant us.

ENDNOTES

1. My use of the pronouns "we," "us," and "ours" here and later in this introduction refer to a collective state of being Palestinian. Many of the events we, as Palestinians, go through—such as crossing a checkpoint—are experienced as a collective.

2. Mahmoud Darwish, "Welcome," in *This Is Not a Border: Reportage & Reflection from the Palestine Festival of Literature*, ed. Ahdaf Soueif and Omar Robert Hamilton (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 9.

3. Manu Karuka, *Empire's Tracks: Indigenous Nations, Chinese Workers, and the Transcontinental Railroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 169.

4. Darwish, "Welcome," 7.

5. Suleiman Abu Arshid, Discussion | The Palestinian Authority between state failure and a return to tribalism, Arab 48 Online, July 26, 2022.
[سليمان أبو ارشيد، حوار | السلطة الفلسطينية بين فشل الدولة وعودة القبيلة، عرب ٤٨]

6. Juliana Hu Pegues, *Space-Time Colonialism: Alaska's Indigenous and Asian Entanglements* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

7. Kristine Khouri & Rasha Salti, eds., *Past Disquiet: Artists, International Solidarity and Museums in Exile* (Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2019), 33.

8. Khouri and Salti, *Past Disquiet*, 21.

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