

Archival and current photos, narratives, art and videos presented by Jewish Voice for Peace-Detroit and Friends of Sabeel North America with support from Michigan Peace Team and Palestine Cultural Office. Contributions from Detroit-area Nakba survivors; ActiveStills.org; photographers, videographers and artists from Israel, Palestine and elsewhere.

BEYOND THE WALL

Images of Israel-Palestine from Nakba to Ni'lin

SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES PEACE CENTER & GALLERY | 33 E. Adams Ave., Detroit

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Photo by Lisa Nesson

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“ While Israel provided a safe haven for countless Jewish refugees who had nowhere else to go ... the terrible fact is that over 700,000 Palestinians were made into refugees to make room for the future state of Israel. Sixty-three years and several generations later, that number has swelled to an estimated 7 million. Many live in 58 registered refugee camps dispersed throughout the Middle East, and some 4 million Palestinians in the Occupied Territories continue to endure reprehensible collective punishment to this day. ”

—www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

The struggle for peace in Israel-Palestine is often in the news both locally and internationally, but few in America have seen the dehumanizing conditions for Palestinians on the ground due to the Israeli Military Occupation, debilitating checkpoints, land confiscation with no compensation, home demolitions, target assassination of Palestinian activists or, their imprisonment without charges, and the massive winding Separation Wall. With a potential vote for UN statehood recognition making headlines, and as Palestinians continue their struggle for independence, it is an excellent and timely opportunity to present “Beyond the Wall” exhibit showing reality of life in the Occupied Territories.

In a collaborative effort to present a picture of life of Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank, Jewish Voice for Peace-Detroit, Friends of Sabeel-North America, the Michigan Peace Team and Palestine Cultural Office present this photographic and multi-media exhibit.

The 1948 creation of Israel is often seen as a triumph for Jewish people, but it was a “Nakba” —Arabic for catastrophe—for Palestinians, many of whom became displaced refugees and were stripped of their right to return to their homes. We hope our exhibition will promote a deeper understanding of the history and current status of the Palestinians, a narrative that has been largely hidden and erased.

Ni'lin, the West Bank village referenced in the exhibit's title, is a site of weekly nonviolent demonstrations against Israel's Separation Wall. These actions reflect an emerging pattern of nonviolent resistance to the Occupation by Palestinians and their supporters—coalitions of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Israelis and national and international peace and justice activists.

The exhibit fills two floors of the gallery. Please join us on the upper level to view the photo collection by Friends of Sabeel North America, a Christian ecumenical organization seeking justice and peace in the Israel-Palestine through nonviolence and education. It features historic photos from before, during and beyond the 1948 Nakba. Also on the upper level, on view is video art curated by Israeli art scholar Noga Bernstein.

On the main floor are photos originally assembled for the U.S. Social Forum held in June 2010 when about 20,000 activists gathered in Detroit to strategize and network. Several new works have been added and narratives have been updated. The exhibit also includes video presentations of Detroit-area Nakba survivors speaking about their experiences in a preview from the film “Voices Across the Divide” by Alice Rothchild and Sharon Mullally.

The power of images helps viewers reconsider history. The dominant Israeli story has led to unconditional US support of the Israeli government, with \$3 billion a year of US taxes to maintain an illegal occupation and violate Palestinians' human rights. The status-quo is dangerous and soul-destroying to both Israelis as well as Palestinians. A new history of Israel-Palestine is essential to attain a just resolution that will lead to an end to the Occupation and establish lasting peace with equality, justice and peace.



Confiscation=Destruction

“Everybody has to move, run and grab as many [Palestinian] hilltops as they can to enlarge the [Jewish] settlements because everything we take now will stay ours ... Everything we don’t grab will go to them.”

— Ariel Sharon, Israeli Foreign Minister

addressing a meeting of the Tsomet Party, Agence France Presse, Nov. 15, 1998

Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish wrote, *“If the olive trees knew the hands that planted them, their oil would have become tears ...”*

The olive tree for Palestinians is a symbol of hope, of peace, of life itself. Since 2000, over 500,000 Palestinian olive trees have been destroyed by the Israeli military and dozens of greenhouses have been destroyed. Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) have burned numerous other groves. Destruction of orchards and groves is often part of the confiscation of land to build the separation barrier and Israeli settlements.



An olive tree lies on the road, uprooted by bulldozers brought by the Israeli army to build the route of the Wall in the West Bank city of Beit Jala, March 2010. Land owned by 35 families are subject to confiscation for the purpose of building the Wall. Beit Jala has already lost three-quarters of its lands because of the building of Road 60 and the Gilo settlement.

Water is also a cherished resource in the West Bank that is being used as a weapon by Israel. Israeli settlers in the OPT extract a grossly disproportionate share of water compared to Palestinians, who are prohibited even from collecting rainwater. Although Palestinians and Israelis largely live over shared aquifers, the average Israeli uses over three times as much water as the average Palestinian, largely due to restrictions on Palestinian extraction or prohibitively high costs charged by Mekorot, Israel's national water company and the only company allowed to distribute piped water.

Eighty-three percent of the water in the West Bank, for example, is being used by Israelis with a mere 17 percent left for Palestinians. According to international law, it is illegal for Israel to expropriate water from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. International law also requires Israel to pay reparations to Palestinians for this water theft. Israel also prohibits Palestinians from drilling new water wells and has confiscated many existing wells. In Gaza, where only 7 percent of its water meets World Health Organizations standards, Israel is over-pumping, resulting in well water that is infiltrated with sea water and not fit for human consumption.



Refugees

“On October 31, 1948, the commander of the Northern Front, Moshe Carmel, issued an order in writing to his units to expedite the removal of the Arab population ... There is no doubt in my mind that this order originated with Ben-Gurion [the first Prime Minister of Israel].”

— Israeli Historian Benny Morris, in *Ha’aretz*

“Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

— Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Photo: UNRWA, 1948

A Palestinian refugee woman cut off from her home by the “Green Line,” the armistice line established after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Palestinian refugees are currently denied this fundamental right.

The largest and longest-standing group of displaced persons in the world today, Palestinian refugees include those from 1948, 1967, and others in the global diaspora. The largest group of refugees—approximately 5.7 million who are descended from some 700,000 refugees— were displaced between 1947 and 1949. Currently, there are at least 7.1 million displaced Palestinians, representing 67 percent of the worldwide Palestinian population.

Today, approximately 20.7 percent of the total Palestinian refugee population live in 58 UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East) camps while hundreds of thousands

live in at least seventeen “unofficial” camps in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The United Nations estimates that there are a total of 1.9 million refugees in Jordan, 467,000 in Syria, and 425, 000 in Lebanon.

As a result of Operation Cast Lead, between 80,000 and 90,000 Gazans, many of them 1948 refugees, have been internally displaced. Palestinian communities most vulnerable to displacement today include:

Palestinians in the Jordan Valley, the eastern section of Jerusalem, Hebron, the southern area of Gaza, and Gaza’s buffer zone. Among Palestinian citizens of Israel, the most vulnerable include Bedouin in the Negev, Palestinian communities in the Galilee, and Palestinians living in what are called “mixed cities.”



Photo: Barbara Barefield

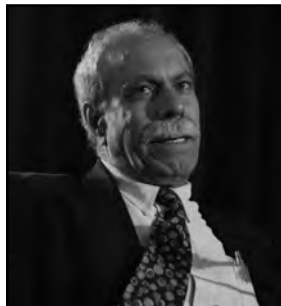


Photo: Barbara Barefield

George Khoury and Hasan Newwash, Metro-Detroit Nakba survivors.



Destruction of Civil Rights

“It would be better to drown these prisoners, in the Dead Sea if possible, since that’s the lowest point in the world.”
— Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman
speaking on the release of Palestinian prisoners

Palestinians in the OPT are subject to 1,500 Israeli military regulations that can be issued by any Israeli military commander in the area. These military declarations are often not immediately known by Palestinians, are rarely communicated in Arabic, are virtually impossible to successfully challenge and can be enforced retroactively.

Palestinians in the OPT are tried under a separate military tribunal system fraught with injustices. Many are held in Administrative Detention, without charge or meaningful judicial review. Numerous others are tortured or coerced to make false confessions. Trials often use ‘secret’ evidence that cannot be challenged. Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1967, approximately 24 percent of the total Palestinian population in the OPT, including 40 percent of the males in the OPT, have been detained. Thousands of Palestinians are currently held in Israeli prisons, and in Israeli military detention centers and interrogation facilities throughout the West Bank, including hundreds of children.

Political arrest is one of the means that the Israeli occupation uses to suppress resistance. Every Friday, women protest outside the Red Cross offices in Tulkarem, Hebron, Jenin, Qalqilia, and elsewhere in solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners—their fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, sisters, and mothers.



Photo: Active Still.org

Israeli soldiers often harass Palestinian kids. For example, in 2007, border police shot to death Abir Aramin, a 10 year-old girl on her way home from Anata school, with a rubber bullet. Her father is active in Combatants for Peace (a movement started by Palestinians and former Israeli soldiers to stop the cycle of violence). The file investigating her death was closed for insufficient evidence.



Photo: Lisa Nesean

A young woman holds a photo of her sister during a demonstration in Hebron in support of Palestinian prisoners, 2005.



Separation

“We declare openly that the Arabs have no right to settle on even one centimeter of Eretz Israel ... Force is all they do or ever will understand. We shall use the ultimate force until the Palestinians come crawling to us on all fours.”

— Rafael Eitan, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces
Gad Becker, Yediot Ahronot and *New York Times*, April 1983



Photo: Jimmy Johnson

From the early decades of the 20th Century, the Zionist movement aimed to create what historian Gabriel Piterberg calls a “pure settlement colony”—where Jewish colonists would be separated entirely from the indigenous Palestinian population. Following the establishment of the Israeli state, Palestinian citizens of Israel lived under a separate Israeli military government for two decades after the end of the

1947-49 war. Today Palestinians from the OPT live under a separate Israeli military government, denied access to Jews-only communities, often relegated to secondary roads and prohibited even from driving on the same roads as Israelis.

Since 2002, Israeli has been building a 470-mile long separation barrier, a serpentine wall that winds inside the West Bank where it gobbles up Palestinian farmland and separates neighbor from neighbor. Measuring 25 feet in places, the wall has come to represent a system of separation that some have compared to South African Apartheid. In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the wall is in violation of international law and must be dismantled.

Numerous other walls separate Israelis and Palestinians, no matter where in Israel-Palestine Palestinians are living. Separation is enforced through checkpoints, which restrict Palestinian mobility, and countless other restrictions physical, social and legal.



Photo: ActivesStill.org

Al Quds university students look towards the future that Israel is building for them. After completion of the Wall, many students cannot reach their studies.



Home Demolitions

“Any humanitarian looking at the sheer number of innocent civilians who have lost their homes can only condemn Israel’s house demolition policy as a hugely disproportionate military response by an occupation army ... It is a policy that creates only hardship and bitterness, and in the end can only undermine hope for future reconciliation and peace.”

— Peter Hansen, Commissioner General of UNRWA

Salim Shawamreh’s home, in Anata on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, was demolished five times, each time for lack of a building permit that is almost impossible to get. He calls it “not just a home demolition, but a family demolition.” Homes are the locations of familiar objects, a space of intimacy, a space of security. When homes are demolished, this is lost for Salim’s family, five times over.



Photo: ActiveStill.org

Three generations of the Siam family become homeless in Silwan. Between 1994-2006, 678 houses were demolished in East Jerusalem alone.

Over 24,000 Palestinian homes have been demolished by Israel inside the OPT since 1967. This figure does not include hundreds of demolitions carried out annually inside Israel, against Israel’s Palestinian citizens; demolitions carried out in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon during Israel’s various invasions and occupations of the country; in the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip and Jordanian-controlled West Bank between 1949 and 1967; nor the homes in the many hundreds of entire villages destroyed after the 1947-49 war.

Articles 33 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly prohibit collective punishment and destruction of property during wartime and military occupations. These home and family demolitions are violations of international law, war crimes. The Israel Defense Force itself has recognized this. After the 2008-09 attack on the Gaza Strip, an internal IDF review found that in part of the Gaza Strip “immeasurable damage was caused, and that is very difficult to justify from a legal perspective, particularly if such justifications are called for in legal proceedings with international organizations.”

SOURCES for this booklet: OXFAM, Institute for Middle East Understanding, International Middle East Media Center; Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions; Palestine Monitor; Addameer Prisoners’ Support and Human Rights Association; Defense for Children International; ADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights; If Americans Knew; B’Tselem; Stop the Wall; Jewish Voice for Peace



Nonviolent Struggle

"Just as a simple man named Gandhi led the successful nonviolent struggle in India and simple people such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King led the struggle for civil rights in the United States, simple people here in Bil'in are leading a nonviolent struggle that will bring them their freedom. The South Africa experience proves that injustice can be dismantled."

— Desmond Tutu, South African activist and retired Anglican bishop who rose to worldwide fame during the 1980s as an opponent of apartheid.

Jayyous, Budrus, Ni'in, Bethlehem and Walaja are just of a few of the places where Palestinians are waging nonviolent struggle against occupation and oppression. The symbol of this struggle is Bil'in, a small Palestinian village of 1,600 near the West Bank city of Ramallah. Nearly 60 percent of Bil'in's land has been confiscated for Israeli settlements and the construction of a separation wall, denying Palestinian farmers access to their fields and orchards.

The popular resistance in Bil'in is courageous, tenacious, and grounded in the same kind of creative nonviolence associated with the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, India's Satyagraha Campaign, South Africa's Anti-Apartheid struggle, and other historically celebrated liberation movements. This same spirit of nonviolent resistance is the impetus behind the Free Gaza movement and the Gaza Freedom Flotillas.

Bil'in residents, along with Israeli and international activists, have peacefully demonstrated every Friday since 2005. Each week the Israeli army responds with violence, using tear gas, percussion grenades, and rubber bullets against the people of Bil'in and their supporters. Countless residents and activists have been injured there. A brother and sister, Bassem and Jawahar Abu Rahmah, were both killed a few months apart after Israeli soldiers shot them with teargas canisters. Other have lost eyes, been beaten and been arrested for months at a time. Where is the world's response?

Barbara Barefield, Exhibit Coordinator/Curator
Jewish Voice for Peace-Detroit
Supported with a grant from the Buck Dinner

George Khoury
Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA)
Exhibit: Our Story, Commemorating
60 years of Dispossession

Writing & Research: **Kim Redigan-Michigan
Peace Team; Jimmy Johnson**

Curator of video artists: **Noga Bernstein**
Hasan Newash, Palestine Cultural Office
Conception & Research

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Central United Methodist Church

Alice Rothchild & Sharon Mullally
Interviews with Nakba survivors
"Voices From the Divide" excerpts

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... and many others

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Here are a few of the many sites to learn more:

jewishvoiceforpeace.org
michiganpeaceteam.org
palestineculturaloffice.org

fosna.org
wedivest.org
www.muzzlewatch.com

theonlydemocracy.org
btselem.org
mondoweiss.net

icahd.org
bdsmovement.net
endtheoccupation.org